

Civilization 285

Chapter 285 Loyalty and Appointment_2

According to Ezpan's description, that place must be the Colima region, with its continuous mountain ranges and complex terrain, as well as the fickle Tekos Tribe. The black blade should be an oxidized iron sword; considering the tribe's metallurgy level, an iron sword indeed wouldn't be much sharper than bronze weapons. And given the local mining capabilities, they could only pick up scattered pieces of iron ore from the surface, hence forging just a single weapon.

The iron mines of Colima are deeply buried beneath the ground, with shallow deposits dozens of meters down, and even deeper ones at hundreds of meters. For the Alliance, these sporadic pieces of iron ore are merely a drop in the bucket. However, their existence is significant, as they help pinpoint the locations of shallow iron deposits, so that the Alliance can then invest significant manpower and resources to excavate...

Thinking about this, Xiulote once again turned his gaze to Ezpan, his eyes now holding a trace of warmth. He smiled slightly and nodded his head.

"Ezpan, may the Chief Divine bless you, for you have returned alive from countless battles and taken refuge in the great Alliance's embrace, and also have been granted an audience with me. Set aside the matter of the black blade for now, and continue to prove your loyalty!"

Seeing the prince's smile, Ezpan breathed a sigh of relief. Although he did not know where he had managed to please His Highness, the future seemed much brighter all of a sudden. He replied with invigorated enthusiasm.

"Respected Your Highness, the grand Alliance is far stronger than the decayed Kingdom. The Lake Capital City is unparalleled and is like a Divine Kingdom on earth that I have never seen in my life. The

warriors of the Alliance number in the hundreds of thousands, and no one in the world can stand in their way...

And Your Highness, blessed with Divine Revelation and wise decisiveness, is far more simple and kind than the greedy and cruel Tarasco nobility. You value ability over birth in your appointments. Not only can you promote a craftsman to military nobility, but you can also elevate commoners to Camp Commander and Legion Commander; you are the common people's only hope... By the highest Chief Divine as my witness, I am willing to offer my loyalty and life to follow you forever!"

At this point, Ezpan once again prostrated on the ground, bowing deeply. Then, with a look of longing toward His Highness, his heart was filled with anticipation.

Xiulote's expression had already returned to calm. He gazed indifferently at the Tarasco man before him, also waiting for something.

On seeing His Highness's unmoved expression, a chill went through Ezpan's heart. As a Tarasco defector, proving his loyalty and earning the trust of the king was incredibly difficult!

Ezpan gritted his teeth. He remembered the rumors that had recently spread from the Priesthood, remembered the rituals of the northern samurais pledging loyalty to the Alliance... He suddenly bowed his head deeply and saluted the Head Warrior.

"Sir, please lend me a dagger. Under the Chief Divine's witness, let me offer my flesh and blood to prove my loyalty!"

Bertade was slightly taken aback, and he looked toward Xiulote. The young priest pondered for a moment and then nodded his head. The Head Warrior then took out the War Club, held it warily in his hand, and handed his obsidian Short Dagger to Ezpan.

Ezpan took the Short Dagger and knelt on the ground. He extended his non-dominant left hand, poked out his little finger, curled up his other four fingers, and then pressed them to the ground. His right hand clutched the sharp dagger, first positioning it half way up the finger as though marking it, then with gritted teeth, he moved it toward the weaker joint at the base of the finger, and forcefully cut down.

The face of the Tarasco training Adjutant suddenly twisted. As he exerted a slow and resolute force, fine beads of sweat rapidly emerged on his forehead, then gathered into small streams on his face and poured down. When the flesh finally separated, he let out a low guttural roar, his already pained face turning pale.

Xiulote nodded in approval of Ezpan's determination and perseverance, his regard for him rising a few notches in his heart. Then, the young priest stood up and moved the brazier to the center of the tent, softly chanting the blessings of the Chief Divine.

"Praise Chief Divine Huitzilopochtli! I pray to the highest Him, offering the flesh of the Devotee and the soul of the convert... This is the loyalty under the Chief Divine's watchful eye!"

Listening to His Highness's prayer, Ezpan dropped the bloodied dagger, struggled forward a few steps, and with his intact right hand, he clutched the finger that was about to be offered. He gave it a final fond look before abruptly throwing it into the fire. Quickly, a smell of burning flesh and fat arose and dispersed in the wind. The faint blue smoke rose and took away a part of his body, and truly, a part of his soul, ascending into the distant Divine Kingdom.

Seeing Ezpan's performance, Xiulote showed an approving smile and said warmly.

"Ezpan, from now on, under the highest Chief Divine's witness, you have sworn an oath to Him, you receive a sacred duty to glorify the Chief Divine's majesty!... Come, join me in chanting His sacred name, praise the highest Huitzilopochtli!"

Ezpan obediently knelt again, tilting his head upward slightly, looking at the burning "Sacred Fire." He was somewhat bewildered but also expectant, quietly murmuring with the satisfaction of finally being acknowledged.

"Highest Huitzilopochtli, I offer all my loyalty, to fight for the Alliance!"

"Highest Huitzilopochtli, I offer all my loyalty, to fight for Your Highness!"

"Highest Huitzilopochtli, I offer all my loyalty to Your Highness, to fight for Your Highness!"

Listening to Ezpan's deliberately varied prayers, Xiulote paused for a moment, then smiled with satisfaction. He waved over the Head Warrior.

"Dress his wounds, use the best herbs."

Bertade nodded calmly, took out boiled cotton cloth and finely prepared herbs from his bosom. He then bent down, took Ezpan's left arm, and helped the Tarasco Adjutant, who had collapsed on the ground, to stop the bleeding before carefully bandaging him. On the ground, the pool of blood drops formed a mirror, reflecting Ezpan's oddly smiling face.

