

Perish 411

Chapter 411: Relocating the Main Camp

"Alright." Maximus was satisfied with Quintus' statement and turned to another Chief Officer of the Military Department: "Lebilus, did the convoy from the Arms Department come with you?"

"Yes, leader, but they are at a camp near Lin Kou Village with the First Legion."

"Next, you need to bring the convoy to transport all the grain collected from each village back to this camp, and you also need to bring the weapons we previously seized from the Pannonian Army to this camp for storage, ready to arm our new Reserve Tribe Members, especially the Skodisqi people. With such a vast land, and several enemies around, relying on only two legions is not enough."

"Yes." Lebilus quickly responded, but after thinking awhile, couldn't help adding: "Leader, the grain collected from the Segestica villages will definitely accumulate more and more, and by then we'll need to build granaries, otherwise, it would be difficult to store for a long time."

Maximus nodded and said: "Granaries have to be built! But you need to make a plan first — when to build the granary, where to build it, how many to build... then bring it to the Political Affairs Hall for discussion before implementing."

"Yes." Lebilus relaxed.

Quintus also relaxed; he had just felt that the military force in the Segestica Territory was somewhat inadequate and had intended to bring it up later. He hadn't expected Maximus to have considered forming auxiliary troops, which relieved him.

"Gaius, the grain transported back by the Arms Department, as well as the goods seized by the soldiers, including houses, will be managed by your Finance Department. You need to control the distribution of grain so that the people don't go hungry while ensuring the grain consumption lasts until next autumn. Also, the allocation of houses and goods for new Reserve Tribe Members must be fair and reasonable to avoid complaints, or I will hold you accountable!"

"Leader, rest assured, I will do my best to accomplish the tasks you've entrusted!" Gaius readily accepted the order, then began to complain: "But the Finance Department already has few

subordinates, and I still have to keep a few managing the Kupa River side. The grain and goods in Segestica are a huge number. We need to receive, count, verify, archive, distribute, and re-check... manpower is far from enough!"

"The distribution will be assisted by the Arms Department. As for the lack of personnel, I can't increase the staff of the Finance Department temporarily; you'll have to find ways to borrow people to help."

Maximus' words woke up Gaius, who immediately looked toward Volenus.

Volenus quickly waved his hand: "Next, the Agricultural Department will also be very busy. We probably won't have enough manpower either, no extra people to lend you."

Gaius smirked slightly and scanned others, naturally ignoring Capito. Then his eyes lit up: "Kefisofon, could you do me a favor and get some mathematically skilled children from the tribal school to help our Finance Department?"

Kefisofon thought about it and felt that giving the children such a practical opportunity was a good thing, so he said: "Of course, but the Finance Department must ensure their safety, and mistakes shouldn't be overly criticized. They should be encouraged more, and their accommodation and meals need to be well arranged..."

"Rest assured! When the leader first formed the team, I often worked with children; I know how to take care of them." While making assurances, Gaius inadvertently showcased his experience.

Volenus suddenly spoke up: "Kefisofon, you also have to lend some capable children to our Agricultural Department!"

"Volenus, what do you mean! You wouldn't lend people when I asked, and now that I've secured people, you're here to fight for them!" Gaius immediately expressed his dissatisfaction.

"I'm truly sorry!" Volenus apologized: "I just remembered that the next affairs of the Agricultural Department will also be very heavy, and like you, we lack manpower, so—"

"Your Agricultural Department lacks manpower, so you come to snatch my people, isn't that unreasonable!"

"How did the children from the tribal school become the Finance Department's people!" After being reprimanded several times, the usually good-tempered Volenus flared up: "Moreover, there are so many kids in the school, and your Finance Department doesn't need that many!"

"There are quite a few kids in the school, but not many who can write and count. You want to take them from my hands, that's impossible!—"

"Enough, two department Chief Officers quarrelling over kids, what does it look like!" Maximus spoke sternly to scold them, which immediately silenced them.

Then Maximus looked at the Ritual Officer, his tone turning gentle: "The children from the tribal school are in such demand, which just shows, Kefisofon, how well you teach!"

"Leader, it was your foresight, guiding everyone to learn and valuing children's education from the beginning, forming such a good atmosphere that led to today's good results."

Kefisofon was not flattering but stating a fact, so Maximus listened comfortably and smiled.

Kefisofon continued: "This is a great exercise opportunity for the school children. I want to bring them all here to help the various departments work, which can also enhance their ability to apply knowledge, allowing them to grow faster... I hope the leader will agree!"

"Sure, let's do that." Maximus readily agreed, and he thought further: bringing the children to work would also allow the Segestica citizens to see how much importance the Nix Tribe places on children's growth and education, further increasing their longing for the tribe.

"Is the leader planning to build a school here, so that the children of the Segestica and Skodisqi citizens joining the tribe can also study?" Kefisofon immediately asked.

"Of course I have such thoughts, but today is not the time to discuss this." After answering Kefisofon, Maximus then looked at his trusted Agricultural Officer: "Volenus, your judgment is correct, the Agricultural Department will be very busy! The busyness will lie in land measurement and distribution!"

Starting tomorrow, you'll need to organize personnel to measure the land of all the villages where the First Legion is stationed. Once a portion of the land is measured, distribute part of it, measuring and distributing simultaneously, so that the newly joined Segestica citizens and Skodisqi slaves can immediately benefit! But the land distribution targets are not only them, but also the soldiers of the First and Third Legions— "

Everyone was stunned.

Quintus quickly reacted: "Leader, are you planning to relocate the soldiers of the First and Third Legions to live here?"

"That's right." Maximus said seriously: "A permanent military presence is required here to defend against the Pannonians and stabilize the order of this land. But if soldiers who live on the Kupa River side are made to stay here for an extended period, it would consume grain and make them dissatisfied, so they can only be relocated."

"Even though they'll be reallocated land and houses here, the soldiers of the First and Third Legions are unlikely to want to move here after working hard to cultivate their land and build their houses on the Kupa River side!" Quintus reminded.

Maximus was about to speak, but Volenus interjected: "I think the soldiers of the First and Third Legions would be willing, because after this war, all soldiers will be promoted for their meritorious service. Most of the veterans will become First-class Tribesmen, and a few can even attain Knight status. All new recruits will be converted to Official Tribe Members, and the tribe will need to allocate them a considerable amount of land. But now there's no extra land on the Kupa River side—"

"Incorrect! Didn't we just capture two Segestica camps and gain a lot of land along the Kupa River?" Quintus immediately objected.

"Those newly acquired Kupa River lands aren't much, and don't forget, Quintus, that the Second Legion, Fourth Legion, and the craftsmen and officials, who also achieved merits, will also receive new land upon their promotion, so there's really not enough land there!"

Volenus seriously stated: "On the contrary, there's ample land here, and when I arrived, I carefully inspected the soil. It's even better than the Kupa River lands. It seems the Segestica people tended to their lands more meticulously. Furthermore, this area is vast, full of villages. The damage from wildlife on fields is bound to be less than that on the Kupa River side, and the roads here are also better.

Regarding houses, there are so many villages. If we assign the good houses to the veterans, to make them feel that there's no drop in standard compared to their previous residences, they will surely be willing to move here as long as these advantages are explained to them clearly... Oh, also, considering they can harvest the vegetables and beans they planted after the autumn harvest, they can move the land on that side to others once harvested—"

Quintus, being focused on military affairs and not much familiar with agricultural matters, felt what Volenus said made some sense and could only say: "I hope so."

"It seems that everyone has no objection to the relocation of the First and Third Legions' soldiers here. Actually, not only do they need to relocate, but also I, all of you, and the main house of the Nix Tribe, the Political Affairs Hall, and the nine departments must relocate here."

Maximus once again made a shocking statement, but this time, he didn't wait for others to oppose him and continued: "If we just seek stability, we can continue to stay in Snowdonia, just like the Aldeans; if we want to continue to grow stronger, we should make this our Main Camp and quickly realize the annexation of the Segestica Territory before further expanding into other Pannonian Tribes' territories... Which choice do you think is better?"

"Of course, make this the Main Camp!" everyone responded in unison. Without much consideration, their thoughts quickly aligned.

Chapter 412: Planning for the New Territory

Maximus smiled, "Of course, the relocation of the main camp can be discussed later. Right now, we need to focus on handling current affairs. I hope that within the next three days, the Agricultural Department can start distributing land to the tribesmen. During the distribution, there should be a

ceremony to gather people from every village, reward the tribesmen who are to receive land, and distribute it publicly to help those hesitating Segestica people make up their minds quickly.

I believe the tribesmen of each village should be composed of a part of the Skodisqi Reserve Tribes, a part of the Segestica Reserve Tribe, a part of the Skodisqi Reserve Tribes, a very few Segestica Official Tribe Members, and some old Nix tribesmen... This way, it ensures the stability of every village while speeding up the integration of new tribesmen, and it also helps Segestica people and Skodisqi people, who are enemies, gradually adapt to each other's existence—"

When Maximus said this, he noticed Volenus furrowed his brow, like the character "川", so he continued, "Of course, measuring land, arranging suitable tribesmen to settle in the villages, accurately allocating land according to merit, holding a reward ceremony... this is quite a heavy and complex set of tasks, not something the Agricultural Department can accomplish alone!

I will be stationed here and will work together with the chief officers of other departments to assist the Agricultural Department to complete this most important task of our conquest of Segestica. Starting tomorrow, the Political Affairs Hall meeting will be held at any time, we will stay in this courtyard, solving problems immediately through discussion, what do you all think?"

"Good!" Volenus responded first, finally relieved. With the leader's support and assistance from other departments, the pressure was significantly reduced.

Everyone else also agreed readily; they all understood that at this crucial moment, united effort was necessary.

Maximus turned to his trusted Public Works Officer, "Capito, the foremost task of the Public Works Department is to quickly build a wooden bridge over the Sava River, connecting the camp across the river, allowing us to support Camillus, stabilize the situation in the eastern territory of Segestica more quickly, and expedite the annexation of the eastern territory!"

Capito raised his head and replied, "Leader, after receiving your order, our Public Works Department is ready. Gaius has brought the engineering team over with the First Legion, accompanied by engineers like Spukala. We have also brought some timber, but it's definitely not sufficient to build a bridge over the Sava River, although I heard Segestica people excel at boat-building and fishing. I believe there should be plenty of timber in this camp and other villages, and we will need the First Legion's soldiers to help us collect..."

"Very well, Capito, your Public Works Department has prepared well!" Maximus nodded in satisfaction and promised, "Today we've indeed found a lot of timber in this camp, as well as some iron materials. After the First Legion soldiers have garrisoned all villages, collecting timber will also become their task. I believe, in four or five days, we'll have gathered the materials needed to build the bridge!"

"Spukala and others will need a few days to carefully survey the Sava River, measure the terrain on both sides, then draw out the bridge design..." Having personally supervised the engineering team in building two wooden bridges over the Kupa River, Capito, with some experience, confidently promised: "As long as materials are adequate and manpower is sufficient, within a month, we will have a wooden bridge on the Sava River, connecting the east and west camps."

Maximus was very pleased, "Good! Good! If you can build a wooden bridge over the Sava River within a month, I believe it will indeed greatly shock the Segestica citizens, making them more in awe of us Nicos!"

"However, the Segestica territory is not stable; a wooden bridge under construction, exposed outside, is easily sabotaged, so you should ask the leader to send troops for protection!" Capito reminded.

"Quintus, you are in charge of the task of protecting the bridge and the engineering team. It must not go wrong!" Maximus said in a serious tone.

"Yes." As the temporary military leader of Segestica territory, Quintus was naturally eager for the wooden bridge to be completed as soon as possible, so protecting the bridge was his undeniable responsibility.

"Capito, besides building the wooden bridge, the Public Works Department might also need to build a temporary camp next to this settlement to accommodate the increasing number of Foreign Auxiliaries."

"Leader, our Public Works Department can design and supervise the construction of the camp, but we don't have much manpower. We hope that soldiers of the Third Legion in the settlement and the newly joined Skodisqi slaves can become the main force for building the camp."

"Hmm... that's feasible. By then, you can discuss with Quintus and Volenus."

"Understood."

"Sidonius, your Legal Department also needs to take action. Actively publicize our tribe's decrees to the Segestica citizens and Skodisqi slaves in this camp and all villages. The courts should also be established quickly and be ready at all times to handle any potential disputes..."

"Yes."

"Karina, the Civil Affairs Department must quickly sort out the achievements and rewards that the team officers and soldiers of the First and Third Legions should receive, to facilitate the Agricultural Department in land distribution. In addition, the new tribesmen joining the tribe and the allocated land must also be documented and archived well..."

"Yes."

"Horace, although our attack here went smoothly without any casualties, your Medical Department will still be quite busy. Hospitals in the camp need to be established quickly, but the people here are not used to going to hospitals in the short term, so you'll need to assign medical teams to the villages to check patients and provide treatment... The Medical Department has always been a powerful tool for quickly integrating outsiders into the tribe, and I believe this time will be no exception."

"Rest assured, Leader. Our doctors and nurses take pride in treating patients and will do their best."

"Excellent! Pigeris, when Budocaribas comes over tomorrow, you will come to see them with me."

"Yes, Leader."

"Everyone, let's end tonight's meeting here. We've spent so much time that you all couldn't have dinner properly. You wouldn't blame me, would you?"

"No, no, compared with the crucial task of conquering Segestica, what is one meal worth."

"Pigeris, what you said is something everyone loves to hear! Too bad there's no wine tonight, let's just have a bowl of porridge, and start working hard from tomorrow!"

.....

The next day, a group of people from the Alde Tribe walked into the Segestica West Village Chief House.

Maximus, with a full smile, warmly came out to greet them, "Elder Budocaribas, Elder Xisaites... welcome, welcome! It is such a pleasure to see you all here!"

Budocaribas and others immediately bowed and in unison said, "Leader Maximus, congratulations on defeating the Pannonians and winning a glorious victory!"

Maximus immediately sensed that these leaders from the Alde showed a much different attitude towards him than before, not only much more respectful but also seemingly rehearsed, otherwise diverse leaders from Alde wouldn't have spoken so uniformly.

When one bestows favor upon others, one surely expects something in return... Maximus thought to himself, his expression turning solemn, "Thanks to the Danu Goddess's protection, otherwise, with the Pannonian army invading, we Nix were indeed at risk of being wiped out!"

Danu Goddess... Hearing this, Budocaribas and the others had a slightly strange expression. They had long heard from Nix helpers that in the past few months, the Nix Tribe began venerating the Celtic Deities, and there were even rumors that "Maximus is the offspring of the Celtic Deities."

They're opinionated on this, believing Maximus, being Illyrian, should, like other Illyrians, venerate deities such as Ares and Poseidon, instead of mixing with the Celtic Druids.

But at this moment, everyone just glanced at each other without speaking.

Maximus noticed this and still kept smiling, "Come, come, let's go inside; we can sit down and talk at leisure."

The group entered the hall, where attendants had already arranged an equal number of wooden chairs inside.

Once everyone sat down, Maximus knowingly asked, "After we defeated the main force of the Panoni Alliance Army in the Kolana River Hills area, learning that the allied forces of Segestica and Desitia had crossed the dense forest, preparing to attack our Nix's Kupa River territory, I hastily led the army back to the tribe. How did the battle go on your side afterward? Was the main force of the Panoni Alliance Army driven away? Were the lost lands along the Kolana River recovered?"

"The Pannonians have all been driven away, and the lands along the Kolana River have been recovered..." Budocaribas expressed gratitude, "Thanks to Leader Maximus leading the army to defeat the Pannonians in a great battle, they completely lost the courage to continue fighting, so we drove them away without experiencing any battle, and recaptured the lost land. Once again, it was the Nix who saved our Alde!"

"Nix and Alde are allies, it's what we ought to do!" Maximus responded solemnly.

"Once, when Great Chief Acoupaigos agreed to let Leader Maximus and his tribesmen settle on our territory, some people opposed it, but now it seems it was the wisest decision!" Budocaribas commented with great emotion.

"Not only that, the agreement that Nix signed with our tribes last year was also opposed by some at the time, but now it is clear it was a very wise decision indeed!" Similarly emotional, Xisaites said, with a hint of deeper meaning.

Chapter 413: Negotiations with the Aldean Leaders

But Maximus did not respond to the conversation, instead frowning and saying, "Ah, but I heard that because I led the army away too quickly, your Great Chief Alistacas thought I was unwilling to meet him, and so he got very angry. I fear this might affect the friendship between our two tribes!"

"Bah, what does Alistacas count as? He thinks he can shake the alliance between our two tribes—" Xisaites scoffed, but was interrupted by Budocaribas's coughing.

"Leader Maximus, Alistacas just became the Great Chief, and he's still a bit unsettled, so he might act rashly. But he's very open to advice. After he got angry that day, he regretted it and even said he would send someone to apologize to you..." Budocaribas said solemnly, "Actually, he's very grateful to the Nix Tribe, and he holds you in high regard. More so, you are kin by marriage... Our alliance between the two tribes is unbreakable."

Alistacas respects me a lot? Is that true?... Maximus looked at the earnest expression of Budocaribas and secretly smiled to himself: Although you fabricate lies to defend your Great Chief, you inadvertently reveal your attitude towards him, "a bit rash," Alistacas is over 40 years old, and in your eyes, he's still a child?...

"Hearing you say all this, I feel relieved." Maximus displayed a relaxed demeanor, then remembered something and said, "You've come from far away, and I should have entertained you warmly, but now with ongoing battles and tight resources, I can't offer anything good to host you, and I hope you can forgive me!"

"Leader Maximus, it is us who should apologize. You are so busy, and we shouldn't have come to disturb you, but—" Budocaribas deliberated his tone, trying to speak more tactfully.

Beside him, Xisaites grew somewhat impatient and interjected, "Leader Maximus, let's speak frankly. We had no involvement in Alistacas's mission to reclaim the Kolana River banks. It had nothing to do with us. At the time, we heard you were leading troops back to Nix, intending to fight the Segestica Army once more. We wanted to rush over with our tribesmen to help you, but Pigeris persuaded us not to worry, saying you'd easily defeat the Segestica Army again—"

"Leader, they indeed wanted to do so, but I stopped them... I forgot to mention it earlier," Pigeris said quietly and with some embarrassment.

Maximus nodded slightly.

"...Sure enough, it wasn't long before we heard that the Segestica Army was surrounded and annihilated, and the camp by the Kupa River was also captured by you. Then we heard you led your army into the Segestica territory. After deliberation, we decided to follow your tribe's troops and come along—"

Xisaites paused for a moment, seemingly brewing something, then bit his lip and loudly said, "Leader Maximus, last year we signed an agreement where you promised, 'Once the Nix Tribe occupied enough land, you would give us some...'

Now you've defeated the Pannonians and own all the lands along the middle course of the Kupa River and have captured the main camp of the Segestica people, occupying even more land... So... so this time we came... to ask... to ask..."

Under the piercing gaze of Maximus, Xisaites began to stutter.

Before he could voice his final request, Maximus smiled slightly and said, "Don't worry, our Nix Tribe has always honored its commitments. I think now is the time to fulfill the agreement."

The Aldean leaders immediately rejoiced, and Xisaites felt a weight lifted from his heart, randomly blurting out, "Really?!"

"Of course it's true!" Maximus answered with utmost seriousness, "However, I must be honest with you, I don't plan to give you the lands along the Kupa River because I intend to make that the stable rear for the Nix Tribe!"

Paying no mind to the commotion in the hall, Maximus continued, "The land I plan to allocate to you is here—the land along the Sava River! You've come all the way here, I trust you've seen it yourself; this land is as flat and fertile as that of the Kupa River, but even more expansive, with more convenient roads, wider rivers, and fewer wild animals... Settling here is certainly better than by the Kupa River!"

Utilizing Volenus's previous words, Maximus emphasized further, "Moreover, I assure you, the lands I intend to give you here won't be near the Pannonians, subjecting you to war, nor close to flood-prone riverbanks, exposing you to floods, nor near mountain ranges that would make farming difficult. In short, you can peacefully and securely settle on the land I'm giving you, and foster a safe and thriving agricultural life that revitalizes your tribe!"

After Maximus's speech, the hall became even more lively. A flock of Aldean leaders, heedless of politeness, gathered in small groups, passionately discussing and even arguing, including Budocaribas and Xisaites.

Maximus leaned back in his chair, ready to watch and wait.

After a while, Budocaribas could no longer hold back and loudly said, "Leader Maximus, we are grateful that you honor your promise and allocate land to us! But... but the Sava River is too far from our main camp! And it doesn't border our former Aldean Territory. If we settle here, it feels like... like we'd be breaking away from the tribe, which won't be approved by the Great Chief and other elders! Moreover, the people of our tribe would find it hard to accept!"

"So you're rejecting my proposal and do not wish for me to fulfill the agreement?" Maximus asked quietly.

"No, not at all!" Budocaribas hesitated, "We humbly ask you to reconsider granting us some land along the Kupa River?"

"As I mentioned earlier, I won't give away the lands along the Kupa River!" Maximus said sternly, "You're all well aware that our Nix rebuilt the Westeni and Slodia camps, constructed wooden bridges, water wheels, and so many empty houses, painstakingly cultivating the land there... The effort and dedication of the people are immense, do you think they'd be willing to give up their own land?"

"Leader Maximus," Budocaribas hurriedly explained, "We're not hoping for the lands of Snowdonia or Westeni, but could you reconsider the newly captured camps along the Kupa Riverbank from two days ago and allocate some land to us?"

Maximus laughed heartily, "I find your thinking strange. Does the newly acquired Kupa Riverbank land connect with the Aldean Territory?"

Budocaribas's face immediately changed.

"It does not connect," Maximus replied directly, "It is even closer to Brochi Territory. So how far is that land from your Aldean Main Camp?"

Budocaribas remained silent.

"If you travel quickly, it takes three to four days," Maximus continued, "And how long does it take to get here from the newly acquired Kupa River lands?—Just one or two days. This means getting from here to your Aldean Main Camp takes less time than for those from Karsipengpas and the tribes living in the western mountains."

At this, Maximus shrugged, "You see, not bordering Aldean Territory and being too far from the main camp... these aren't reasons! I don't know what you're thinking, but you initially came to me to sign the agreement because you had lost your homeland, your tribespeople were struggling, the Aldean Great Chief and other elders couldn't help you at all, and to prevent your tribe from waning, you sought me out, correct? Now I have fulfilled the agreement. If you don't accept, I think such an opportunity will never come again!"

The hall fell into silence.

"To hell with it!" Xisaites suddenly shouted out loud, "Let Alistacas and those guys blame us, they have no right to help us reclaim land, and they often look down on us! I will lead my people to settle here, without any intention to break away from the tribe. If there's a tribe meeting at the main camp, I'll rush back to participate! If there's a ceremony at the main camp, I'll also rush back to join! And I'll no longer plead with them at every meeting... Leader Maximus, I am willing to lead my people to settle here!"

"Leader Xisaites," Maximus looked at him with eyes full of appreciation and encouragement, "I believe this is the wisest decision since Great Chief Acoupaigos!"

The speeches by Xisaites not only persuaded himself but also convinced his companions, so several leaders expressed their intentions to settle their tribes by the Sava River.

Other leaders looked at Budocaribas.

Among these Aldean leaders and nobles in the hall, they appeared united but were in fact divided into two parts: one consists of those originally living on the plains along the Kupa River, led by Budocaribas; the other consists of those from the hilly areas east of the Kolana River, mainly led by Xisaites... Maximus was already clear about this.

Under the silent urging of his anxious companions, Budocaribas made a final attempt, "Leader Maximus, if we all decide to settle by the Sava River, it might provoke more dissatisfaction from Leader Alistacas towards you, significantly affecting the friendship between our two tribes!"

Maximus, smiling, said, "Quite the opposite; I believe Alistacas would be very grateful to me because he can solve the problem his father could never resolve after he took office. He will no longer feel the pain of every tribal assembly when you complain to him and he's unable to help. Wouldn't you agree?"

Chapter 414: Siris

Budocaribas exchanged glances with him for a moment, his knotted brow slowly relaxing: "In that case, I am also willing to lead the tribesmen to settle at the Sava River, but I would like to ask if we can choose our own territory?"

Maximus replied solemnly, "Didn't I just say? You will be allotted fertile land, and the safety of your tribe is guaranteed, what more are you dissatisfied with?!"

Seeing Maximus' displeasure, Budocaribas felt a bit uneasy and quickly defended, "It's not that we are dissatisfied, we just want to know how much land we can get..."

Maximus surveyed the crowd, seeing them all looking at him with tense expressions, he emphasized his words, "I can guarantee each household of your tribe will have 20 acres of fertile land!"

Most of the Aldean leaders showed joy on their faces, but some were dissatisfied: "Only 20 acres? Your tribesmen each have at least 50 acres!"

Maximus' gaze immediately turned sharp: "Our Nix tribesmen can get 50 acres of land because they've earned it with blood and hard work, and the Nix Tribe was established because of them! What contribution have your tribesmen made to my Nix Tribe that you want 50 acres of land for!? And you think 20 acres is small, did you ever have 3 acres of good land before?!"

The words left the person speechless, and others glared at him, feeling extremely dissatisfied with his ignorance provoking the Nix Leader.

"Leader Maximus is already fulfilling the agreement in such a short time, allotting us land, we are already grateful, how could we ask for more!" Budocaribas instantly tried to ease the situation.

"Yes, yes, Leader Maximus indeed is a great benefactor to our tribe!" Others also spoke one after another, expressing gratitude, instantly easing the atmosphere.

Maximus then softened his tone, saying, "Since you all agree with my suggestion, just report the population and households of your respective tribes to Pigeris first, once our tribe completely occupies the land and the situation stabilizes, I'll allocate land according to the conditions of your tribes. Then Pigeris will inform you, and you can bring your tribesmen over to settle..."

"Thank you, Leader Maximus!!"

.....

After the attendant sent off Budocaribas, Xisaites, and others, Pigeris presented Maximus with the newly compiled population register of these Aldean tribes migrating to the Sava River.

While paging through it diligently, Maximus sighed: "There are twenty-three Aldean tribes preparing to migrate here, yet there are less than 4,000 households, with a total population of just over 14,000. No wonder they are discriminated against in the entire Aldean Tribe, this population isn't even more than the first two Segestica villages we conquered!"

Pigeris explained from the side, "I just asked Budocaribas about this too, they told me that before the Segestica people's invasion, these tribes had a population of over forty thousand, but due to war, injuries, hunger, and a small portion of tribesmen joining other Aldean tribes for survival... that's why only so few are left.

If not for this, they probably wouldn't agree to your demands, moving away from their familiar homeland to settle on what was once enemy land. Leader, I think their small number is also a good thing, at least we don't have to grant much land."

"Pigeris, while it is your duty as the tribe's Commerce Officer to be frugal in negotiations with other racial powers, one must have a long-term perspective and a broad vision when considering issues..."

Maximus earnestly taught him: "Now we are not lacking land, but population. At this stage, the tribesmen of these Aldean tribes are more reliable than the Segestica people forced to join us. Their joining will enhance our strength and allow us to occupy more land in a short time, thus accelerating the stabilization of the situation here.

In addition, if these tribes, like Budocaribas', live well here, will it affect other Aldean tribes? For example, tribes on the Karsipengpas side.

Besides, the land we've toiled to conquer isn't given to these Aldean tribes for free. The land allocated to them is within our territory, their tribesmen feel our tribe's strength and distinctive system day and night, you say, would they have other thoughts?"

Maximus' words left Pigeris deep in thought, then he sincerely exclaimed, "Leader, everyone says I'm clever and sharp, but compared to you, I'm far behind!"

Maximus laughed and said, "To make the tribe strong, one has to be a bit shrewd."

Pigeris then asked softly, "Leader, do you really think Aldean Great Chief Alistacas won't be angry about these tribes migrating here?"

Maximus replied with implied meaning: "Perhaps his anger might even be better."

Pigeris was initially taken aback, and then nodded thoughtfully.

.....

The experience of Siris can be described as rough.

He was born into an ordinary Segestica tribesman family, with their tribe not far from the Segestica Western Village. In his youth, the Segestica Great Leader, to please the Skodisqi people, gathered a group of youths from the tribe to serve the Skodisqi Nobles in Sava toir (the name for Segestica Main Camp during Skodisqi rule) city, he was among them.

His luck wasn't bad, being assigned to a relatively kind Skodisqi Noble family. Because of his cleverness and diligence, he received several praises and rewards from his master, and within a few years, became the master's trusted servant. Upon reaching adulthood, he even accompanied his master to suppress his compatriots' unrest.

In the war between the Skodisqi people and the Romans, he witnessed firsthand the great defeat of the Skodisqi people, and after much peril brought his severely wounded master home, but his master soon died. Instead of receiving rewards, he was beaten and detained on charges of "failing to protect the master" and detained.

Just when he thought his life was at risk, the Segestica people launched a war against the Skodisqi, and amid the chaos in the city, he managed to escape and joined the resistance army led by the Segestica Great Leader. In subsequent battles, he displayed bravery and repeatedly achieved battle merit, but due to his past "aiding the tyrant," he was never trusted with important tasks.

Although discontented, he continued to fulfill his duties, from breaking through Sava toir and completely overthrowing the Skodisqi's rule, to pursuing and eradicating the remnants of the Skodisqi and preventing them from making a comeback. For three to four years, he never stopped fighting, until the last of the bandits were cleared, and the Sava River Plain mostly restored to peace; only then did he return to his tribe, carrying scars and injuries.

Though he was still an ordinary tribesman at that time, he had already proven himself, cleared his past defamation, and became a warrior in the tribe, respected by the tribesmen. He then married, had children, and lived a happy life for ten years.

After Andres succeeded as the Great Leader, he broke the peace of the tribe. The ambitious Great Leader soon launched a war against the Aldeans, and because Siris was already old, the tribe did not summon him.

However, this war still affected his life. The grain they submitted to the tribe leader was considerably more than in previous years, and there were occasional temporary levies, causing discontent among the tribesmen.

Furthermore, Andres broke the tradition of the Great Leader not interfering in the internal affairs of each tribe by issuing a decree that tribesmen who participated in the war could voluntarily join newly established tribes and receive fertile land by the Kupa River. Due to Andres' strong stance, even the

tribal leaders and nobles dared not oppose him. Thus, Siris found that many young people in the tribe never returned after being summoned, causing the entire tribe to grow increasingly desolate...

Although life had changed considerably, and days were getting worse, the continued victories gave Siris the motivation to hold on. After all, he hoped to see the tribe grow stronger.

Seeing that the tribe had already occupied lands along the Kupa River and driven the Aldeans to more remote places, Siris thought the tough days would soon end.

Unexpectedly, last year the Aldeans brought in a foreign mercenary force, and disaster struck the Segestica tribe.

First, they conquered two of their villages, then Andres assembled the army to attack but suffered a crushing defeat. The participating tribesmen were either captured or killed, with few able to escape back. In Siris' tribe, almost every family had someone weeping, and he himself was filled with sorrow.

Soon he could no longer worry for others because Andres regrouped the army to attack the enemy, and due to the loss of many young tribesmen, the scope of the draft had to be expanded. As a past warrior of the tribe, Siris, despite his age, couldn't avoid being drafted into the troops.

At this time, used to a simple life, and with old wounds, he had long lost the vigor of charging into battle from his younger days.

Moreover, this time they were assaulting the enemy's camp, and although Siris had experienced many battles, it was his first time witnessing a camp so complex in structure and heavily fortified. Before even fighting, he felt apprehensive, and relying on his past war experience, he evaded danger during the assault, but ended up with a minor injury, thus missing the brutal siege battles that followed.

Later, when the army finally breached the camp's perimeter, they were ambushed by the enemy again.

Chapter 415: Siris's Transformation

At that time, Siris was recovering from his injuries in the outside camp. When the ambush occurred, he quickly realized it and, enduring the pain, fled outside, barely escaping the sea of fire.

When Andres fell into the Kupa River, he witnessed it not far away, and a thought unexpectedly surfaced in his mind: If Andres dies just like that, it might be a good thing for the entire tribe.

Unexpectedly, he was unfortunately proven right, Andres died from illness, and Cabdes became the new spokesperson for the entire Segestica Tribe, and even took the initiative to sign a ceasefire agreement with the Nix people.

Yes, that band of mercenaries settled by the Kupa River, calling themselves the Nix people.

When the news of the ceasefire agreement reached the tribe, Siris, like the other tribesmen, breathed a huge sigh of relief because they had developed a fear of the Nix people. But unlike his tribesmen, his fear was not only because he nearly lost his life in their ambush but also because the attire of the Nix people during battle was strikingly similar to the weapons and equipment of the Roman Soldiers he saw in his youth that defeated the Skodisqi army, a shadow that had always lingered in his heart.

However, the hard-won peaceful life only lasted for half a year. The newly appointed Great Chief Cabdes once again provoked a war against the Nix people. This time, it was led by the tribal alliance, assembling a large Alliance Army. Due to unhealed old injuries, he was not summoned this time.

When the army left the Main Camp, many tribesmen stood by the road to see them off, placing great hope on Cabdes, wishing he could achieve revenge, destroy the Nix people, and rescue the missing relatives.

Siris did not go, as he felt somewhat uneasy.

A few days later, bad news arrived: the Segestica Army suffered a crushing defeat, and the Great Chief died in battle!

The Segestica citizens mourned deeply, their fear of the Nix people growing even stronger.

Just as they were holding onto a glimmer of hope that the Alliance Army would defeat the Nix people, the Nix Army appeared right before them.

Once again, the territory of the Segestica was invaded, but no one dared to resist. The Nix people had already become a more terrifying presence than their former masters, the Skodisqi, in the words of the Segestica citizens. Even without seeing the enemy's shadow, the tribesmen began to flee, including the Clan Leader who constantly cursed the Nix people.

Siris also wanted to flee, but his old injuries left him incapacitated. To avoid burdening his wife and children, he decided to stay behind alone, letting his wife escape with the children.

However, his deeply loving wife stubbornly refused to leave him behind. Just as they were arguing, the Nix Army was already approaching.

With no other option, Siris had to take his wife and children and hide inside their house. In the dark, they huddled together, silently praying to the Divine.

Siris felt the bodies of his wife and children trembling uncontrollably with fear, and the only thought in his heart at that moment was: If the enemy breaks in, even if he has to kneel and surrender to become a slave, he would save his wife and children's lives!

But after a long time, no enemy broke in. Gathering his courage, he pushed open the door, finding the village silent, without any fallen bodies or horrifying bloodstains, and the enemy troops had long disappeared...

The Siris family survived, but this wasn't due to the Divine's blessing, as he walked around the village and found all the houses intact, undamaged, and even discovered many hiding Scodisqi slaves who had not fled, all safe and sound.

Recalling what his tribesmen had done after overthrowing the Skodisqi's rule, and hearing about what Andres had done after invading the Aldean Territory these years, the Nix Army seemed very different... Siris stood at the eastern end of the village, gazing at the distant Main Camp, pondering for a while, then turned back inside, telling his wife and children they no longer needed to hide, and began to personally prepare dinner. After dinner, he finally managed to soothe his wife and children to sleep peacefully...

The night passed uneventfully.

Waking up the next day, Siris found that some of the tribesmen who had fled had returned.

In their anxious recollection, Siris learned the shocking news that the West Village had been captured by the enemy and the floating bridge connecting the banks was dismantled, sending his mood plummeting: the leaders and the Nobles had no power to resist the enemy's attack; Segestica was likely doomed!

But Siris also learned that the Nix Army had not massacred. They released all the captives in the West Village, even cooking for them and tending to their wounds... confirming his earlier suspicions.

Though his mood was dejected, his worries greatly diminished.

That day, the tribesmen in the village gradually returned. Some of them had not fled to the Main Camp yesterday but escaped to other villages not on the Nix people's attack route. Seeing that each village seemed unharmed, they mustered the courage to quietly return, bringing back some life to the village that was nearly dead silent the previous night.

On this day, no Nix people attacked the village. Occasionally glimpsing a Nix Cavalry was to see them bypassing the village, as if, in the eyes of the Nix people, this village did not exist.

This eerie calm left the village residents both puzzled and uneasy, and rumors about the Nix Army quickly spread in the village. The residents initially wanted to gather and discuss what to do next but feared that large gatherings might draw the attention of the Nix people, giving them a reason to attack. So, most of them secretly exchanged opinions by visiting each other. Although there were two elderly Clan Leaders in the village, the person most visited by the residents was Siris.

After all, as a famed warrior in the tribe, his heroic deeds were well-known, having once faced the Nix people and survived. Yesterday, he was the only family in the village that had not fled and lived well. It showed his courage and apparent blessing by the Divine, leading many to eagerly seek his guidance.

"Stay in the village and continue as normal," was Siris's response to everyone seeking his advice.

"But what if the Nix people enter our tribe?" someone asked worriedly.

"They didn't kill the captured tribesmen in the Main Camp yesterday; I suspect they won't do so in the future. As for anything else... just do as they request, and I believe you and your family will remain safe."

Some took his words to heart, while others showed resistance: "You're telling us to surrender to these foreigners occupying our lands and slaughtering our people?!"

"Do we have another option?" Siris calmly replied, "Fight, we cannot win; flee, where can we run to? Even if we escape to other tribes, we'd still encounter the Nix people. Running to Brochi or Desitia, not to mention the long journey, can you succeed in bringing your family? And if you arrive, will life be better there than at home?"

You all know how Asimis, the Brochi who lived in our village for years, fared. In the end, to obtain land, he followed the Great Chief's army to fight the Aldeans, and he wasn't killed later!

Moreover, I've heard that both Desitia and Brochi suffered grave defeats this time. If one day the Nix people attack them, where will you flee to?..."

The tribesmen no longer resisted Siris's words but left feeling uncertain.

Of course, some didn't come for advice, like their Clan Leader Icarus.

Icarus, due to his age, did not participate in this battle against the Nix and thereby avoided disaster.

This fortune seemed to add to his fear of the Nix. When the Nix troops invaded, he was the first in the village to flee with his family.

However, when he arrived at Siris's house, he showed no signs of panic and did not display the authority of his position, but instead advised in a tone of an elder, "Siris, this time, our Segestica suffered a disastrous defeat, bringing Nix people's invasion, taking over our Main Camp. It seems our entire tribe is hopeless, but we can't easily yield to the Nix people! You're a famous warrior in our tribe; you should rekindle the fighting spirit in our tribesmen. So when the Nix people come to our tribe, they'll know we are not easy to deal with, which will make them more willing to hear some of our demands—"

"Why don't you lead everyone to resist the Nix people? You are our Clan Leader, protecting the homeland is your duty! As for me, I'm just a regular tribesman, injured and unable to even lift a Wooden Shield; sorry, I can't do anything!" Siris bluntly refused.

Icarus's face immediately changed, and he said sternly, "Siris, since you know I am your Clan Leader, you must understand that during this time of war, you must obey my orders!"

"I refuse!" Siris resolutely replied.

"Siris, how dare you disobey a Clan Leader's order; I will definitely—" Icarus, in anger, just started to scold before seeing the other person stand up, moving towards him fiercely. He was so frightened that he darted outside like a rabbit, shouting, "Siris, you wait and see! Watch how I deal with you!..."

His bewildered wife came over from the yard, anxiously complaining, "How did you provoke Icarus to anger?! He already had issues with you, and now if he seizes the chance to punish you through tribal rules, what will you do?!"

"He wanted me to offend the Nix people. I'm no fool; why would I agree to do such a foolish thing?" Siris embraced his wife, comfortingly chuckling, "Don't worry, it's not like it used to be. He's nothing more than a toothless old dog now; he can't harm me at all."