

Tuesday, 7/11/2010

The meeting with the Dio'ablo was actually pleasant. Not only was the Dio'ablo much nicer than that horrible human known as Jeano Qua, but I also got a glimpse of Aya. However, since Sara was there, all she could do was wave at me. I like Aya, but I'm not sure if I want to... well, sleep with her. I did like talking to her, however.

The Dio'ablo lived in a small corner of what had been the mansion of the Spanish governor's house, before they had been removed violently by the first Turo Cataro. The mansion had been gutted to be a gathering place for the Camaboisoui to meet with priests (called Dio'ablaos Menraos,) attend religious ceremonies, or conduct business like the monthly meeting of Jefes.

When I walked into the Dio'ablo's room, I realized it must have once been a storage closet of some kind. I wondered if I should start with my sales pitch or small talk. The Dio'ablo smiled. "So," he said, "Ayabella been teaching you about de traditions of our island?"

I remained silent. I cocked my head after a while to indicate confusion. The Dio'ablo laughed. "It is also tradition," he said, his eyes still laughing, "for the offerings to be sneakin' a preview of the one they be offered too."

I sighed in relief. "It's only natural. After all it's their first time." He smiled. "Good, I thought Ayabella would be a good match for you."

"So," I asked him, "when did this tradition start?" The Dio'ablo shrugged. "Does it matter?"

"It does," I said, "I personally believe that it's easier to know where you're going if you know where you've been. Also, I just love history." He nodded. "Maybe after you be confirmed as king I'll tell you. But be you havin' a proposition for me."

I nodded. "I'm going to be needing some help. I want to put a school in your district. In fact, it should be right next to this building."

The Dio'ablo began to ask questions. "So, who be in charge of this school?" I shrugged. "You could teach a few classes, be the principal maybe. Most of the teachers would be foreign, unless you know anyone good at math, or has a good understanding of foreign cultures."

He seemed to accept this, then asked "How big is this school gonna be? And where you be putting the people it be displacing?" That was easy. "Some will be housed in tenements in various existing tetraos, others will be in the new tetraos." Then I suddenly realized something. "This sounds like a powerplay, doesn't it?"

The Dio'ablo waved this away. "Politics *be* a power play. That be why we Camaboisoui call politics *lao teatrao de coup*. You be gettin' this?" I nodded. "I think so. Sink or swim, right?"

I paused after a moment. "So..." I started. I was going to ask about Aya, then I realized that the Dio'ablo hadn't said yes or now. "What do you think of my proposition?"

"Where be these new tetraos?" The Dio'ablo asked. I told him about the immigration plan and the roads and plan to settle the plateau. He considered it, then said he would consider it. He was playing it coy, apparently. I was annoyed. The least he could have done was give me a straight answer. I decided to make small talk instead.

"Well," I said, "it's too bad you can't make up your mind. What does this tetrao do?" The Dio'ablo relaxed as he responded. "We farm and hunt to be keepin' ourselves alive. Well, the

ones who don't work at the temple."

Suddenly, I was curious. "Why does Aya work here?" The Dio'ablo leaned back. "It is tradition to keep ten low priests. A pool of successors, in case one or two aren't good." I nodded. "Yeah, increase the chance you find the best."

He nodded. "Aya is my second or third choice. She gets in so much trouble that I be afraid someone can be usin' that against her."

"I can believe that," I said. Everything about Aya indicated a rebellious streak. The Dio'ablo continued. "Her parents were among a small number who wanted peace for the island. Bein' politically neutral is a rare thing here. They were killed. Her sister blamed one side, her brother blamed the other, and Aya left them both arguing and came to work at the temple. She was six years old."

I mentally filed this away. We talked for a while, but the rest was nothing really of note. So we said our goodbyes and I walked back to the palace, a squad of soldiers in tow.