

Civilization 150

Chapter 150 Questions and Fate Part 2

"This is the prayer room of the Guardian God Huitzilopochtli. Before ascending to the throne, your elder brother Asayacatl fasted here for seven days, contemplating the self and the gods."

"My child, you will do the same. Seven days from now will be your coronation ceremony."

The towering figure of the elder vanished behind the stone door. The stone door closed again with a solemn "boom," plunging the chamber back into utter darkness.

Aweit remained steadfast, sitting cross-legged against the wall, a sense of relief in his heart as he slowly sank into tranquil breathing. Before the lengthy meditation, there was only one concern: How was Xiulote faring now?

At that very moment, deep underground and not too far away, Xiulote leaned against a wall in the same pitch-black and freezing conditions, blankly staring into space. He wondered if he had taken the wrong script—this development was completely different from what he had anticipated. After fully demonstrating the potential of a great inventor, he had been thrown into a dark prison.

Xiulote sniffed; the air carried a faint scent of animal musk. Fumbling around, his hand touched something cold. Just as he was startled, a cold, slimy sensation slithered up his arm and eventually rested on his warm chest. A pointed tail poked at his chin before coiling around the boy's neck like a big "?" resting on his chest and neck.

The boy instantly froze, sweat breaking out, daring not to move an inch. He had determined it was a small snake. But in the absence of light, he couldn't tell whether the snake was venomous. Soon, the snake quietly fell asleep on the boy's comfortable chest, leaving behind someone who could not find sleep.

Time passed excruciatingly slowly, as if an entire century had gone by. Leaning against the wall, the boy finally succumbed to exhaustion and fell into a fitful slumber, drool dripping from the corner of his mouth, moistening his chest along the snake's body. In his dreams, there was an opulent feast.

After an undeterminable time, he was awakened by the snake's writhing movements. He blinked his groggy eyes open and, by the dim candlelight, saw a small green snake straightening into a "!" on his chest before quickly twisting away, driven by the scent of some unidentified herbs, and disappearing behind the boy.

Following the scent of the herbs, Xiulote lifted his head and dimly saw an old man with white hair, seemingly smiling faintly. Rubbing his eyes for a clearer look, he only saw the lean figure of the elder, and his gaze that was indifferent and unfeeling. Taking a deeper sniff, he could detect a hint of old man's scent mixed with blended herbal aromas in the enclosed space.

The elder observed the boy in silence, and it was unclear how long he had been standing there. But it couldn't have been too long, as the water moccasin's sense of smell was very keen. Yes, it was a small green water moccasin with a white "cottonmouth," a triangular head, knife-shaped pupils, and sharp fangs.

Xiulote vividly recalled the appearance of the snake, breaking into a cold sweat. The water moccasin's venom was highly potent; if it bit someone, symptoms would manifest in a matter of minutes. The bite would blacken and bleed, spreading inward, and once internal bleeding began, without antivenom, nothing could save the victim.

Of course, he wasn't aware that the water moccasin's aggression was actually quite low. As long as he didn't threaten or harm the little green snake, it wouldn't use its precious venom on him. Like most snakes, its diet consisted of frogs, lizards, birds, or small shallow-water fish.

The elder looked at Xiulote. The child had a peaceful mind and was not rash, which seemed to make for a good relationship with the water moccasin. He regarded the boy with a heavy gaze, offering no words.

After some thought, Xiulote bowed his head respectfully. He didn't regard the elder as a deity, but simply revered him. He admired the grand achievements of establishing the Aztec Empire and shaping the Mexica people.

"Respected elder, grand architect of the Mexica, descendant of Acamapichtli, Xiulote greets you!"

By relation, he was the five-times-great-grandson of the first King Acamapichtli of Tenochtitlan, Aweit was the four-times-great-grandson, and if the elder was Acamapichtli's grandson, then he should also be the elder's great-grandson?

The elder closed his eyes briefly, and when he opened them again, they were filled with cold indifference and a chilling intent to kill. His gaze pierced into the boy's eyes, the unmistakable authority hitting him with the overwhelming sense of imminent death. The boy took an instinctive step back. Trembling, he leaned against the wall for support, averting his eyes from the elder.

"Child, you killed Tizoc, your King. Do you admit your guilt?"

Xiulote considered for a moment and decisively shook his head, still shivering.

"I am not guilty! Tizoc tried to kill me multiple times. My killing him was first and foremost for self-defense. And for the Alliance, Tizoc was not a suitable King, Aweit is more fitting."

"Child, you killed the King, and your crime is unforgivable."

The words of the elder were cold as snow, hard as iron.

"Then take my life as atonement! I'm the only one responsible for my actions; it has nothing to do with my ancestors or with Aweit."

Xiulote's legs were still weak. But this time, he boldly raised his head, meeting the elder's gaze with the courage of a samurai, attempting to reduce his tremors.

The elder was silent for a moment before speaking softly.

"Child, are you willing to offer your life to the gods?"

Xiulote hesitated. He thought of the sacrificial ceremony and shuddered again, shaking his head resolutely.