

Civilization 153

Chapter 153 The Coronation Ceremony: Song and Dance, Sacrifices, Light, and Blood

The clear and joyful flute sound pierced through the thick stone walls, echoed in the pitch-black chamber along with the distinct rhythm of orderly drumbeats. Xiulote sat up and listened intently, while the little green snake wobbled with his movements, faintly harmonizing with the ancient chants of the priests.

After a while, the little green snake swiftly slithered across his chest, its cool tail sweeping over his neck, and then mysteriously vanished. Xiulote then lifted his head and looked toward the direction of the door. As expected, moments later, the stone door rumbled open.

In the faint candlelight, the elder nodded at him. He glanced at the pale yellow potion on the ground, then at the unharmed youth, before turning and walking away. Xiulote quickly stood and followed the elder. The Guard Captain effortlessly applied force and closed the heavy stone door. The three of them then headed towards the palace's summit.

Xiulote's steps were a bit unsteady from lack of recent movement. Fortunately, the elder walked slowly, so slowly that the pleasant flute had already transitioned through ten different melodies, and the pulsing of the drumbeats was now mixed with the loud gongs, with the music also incorporating the clear sound of copper bells. Gradually, he began to hear high-pitched chants, multitudes of singing voices, and the boiling cheers of hundreds of thousands.

At last, Xiulote finally reached the top of the palace, standing at the open window. He first closed his eyes to adjust, then opened them to gaze down: from the Temple of the Great Temple down, his view was now infinite brightness, a sea brimming with joy!

Looking down from sixty meters high, under the dazzling sunlight, was the ten-plus square kilometers of the Capital City, with a crowd of three hundred thousand celebrating. On the outer edges of the Texcoco

lake, countless boats had docked, with tens of thousands of villagers dressed up, traveling from dozens of miles away. Young men and women in vibrant clothing, wealthy families waving banners of deities, singing and dancing, gradually converged towards the city center, led by the village priests.

"The respected King Aweit will be crowned today; a new sun blesses the citizens of Mexico. Celebrate! Cheer! This is a festival of gods and men!" Priests chanted loudly, marching along the way.

And as the crowd moved, Xiulote's gaze followed into the Capital City's inner districts where the ceremonies had already begun.

Nearly a hundred communities, both north and south of the Capital, began their prayer rituals in the Temples at the same time. The scent of pine and sandalwood filled the entire Capital. Outside the Temples, priests set up altars, singing and performing the sacrificial dances. The residents of the communities gathered in circles, waving and stepping, belting out songs, praying for the blessing of the Guardian God, praying for a harvest in the coming year.

Energetic young men and women clashed in dance within the circles. They were adorned with strings of crisp stones, beautiful shells, or delicate copper bells. In their joyful movements, continuous collisions produced a clinking and clanging. Along with the group dance, there were also bold exchanges of gazes and confident displays of bodies. Occasionally, young men would recite impromptu poems to the girls in front of them.

"My spirit yearns for the nourishment of flowers, I endure the agony of music, my heart contains only the deity and you!" A young man boldly took the hand of the girl he adored, offering her the most beautiful shell.

The surrounding crowd offered praise. The girl lowered her head slightly, withdrawing her hand. She stealthily pointed to the sun above, gestured a falling motion, then pointed towards the boats by the

lake. The young man nodded excitedly, dancing enthusiastically around the girl as laughter erupted from the onlookers. This was a commoner's chorus.

Overwhelmed, Xiulote continued to look towards the beautiful inner districts of the Capital. In the central square of the Capital and the surrounding Nobility courtyards, more professional music, dance, drama, and poetry performances were taking place.

Nobility and Samurai built their family altars from stone, striving to place costly jade jewelry, vibrant feather shells, glittering gold and silver ornaments, beautiful clothes and feather fans, as well as majestic weapons and shields on them. Of course, there were also richly fragrant fresh flowers, blessings for the deities.

Professional bands and dancers performed around the stone altars. The most popular instrument was the cheerful and melodious flute, single flutes had already begun to use quarter notes, while double and triple flutes even had sixteen pitch-adjusting tones. The flute sound soared to the sky at times and swirled at one's feet at others, but always wound its way into the heart. Noble young ladies danced gracefully to the beautiful melodies, their skirts fluttering, their sweet singing voices harmonizing with the flute.

"I am a bounding red sparrow, trilling out perfect notes, much like the songthroat of a painted bunting, waiting for your stooping kiss." This was the Nobility's chorus.

Further out, experienced musicians picked up rubber war clubs, alternating between striking the solid wooden gongs of the Teponaztli with a thumping sound, and then the hollow wooden drums of the Huexolotlin with a booming sound. To this distinct rhythm, Samurai began performing the vigorous War Dance, swinging gold and jade-adorned war clubs, rotating ornate shell-covered shields, and valiantly extolling war and death.

"A Samurai should be like falling petals, watering the earth with blood, elevating the soul to the Divine Kingdom!" This was the Samurai's chorus.

At the highest seats of honor, professional actors performed plays praising the deities, reciting beautiful poems one after another. Maids clad in short gowns that economized fabric, gracefully danced around the actors. Esteemed family elders and seniors sat with dignity around them,

wearing jade and feather cloaks, sipping agave and fruit wines in moderation, nibbling on assorted delicacies, including corn tortillas, sweet potatoes, grilled fish pieces, smoked meat jerkies, raw tomatoes, pumpkin seeds, roasted algae, baked worms, and the rare and expensive ant eggs. Sometimes, in high spirits, elders would also take to the floor, elegantly dancing a number, then reciting a poem to the cheers of everyone around.