

Civilization 176

Chapter 176: Analysis of Social Classes in Mexica: Land and Labor Force

The setting sun cast a slanting glow, painting the sky with picturesque reds and pinks. An eastward breeze carried the rich scent of blooming flowers.

After leaving the Montezuma Palace, Xiulote headed to his new home not far away. Walking through the zoo of wild animals, passing the city lake in the palace district, he arrived at a Priest Mansion topped with white stone and red tiles.

Not long ago, his grandfather had moved from Teotihuacan, and he had moved out of Aweit's residence to live here. Aweit had become quite busy since his accession. Apart from the first night when they had feasted together, they had hardly seen each other over the past few weeks.

In public, the King had to maintain a solemn and majestic demeanor, and Xiulote too had to observe the proper etiquette. If not for the adorable Alisa as a link between them, the two of them would probably have gradually drifted apart into a relationship of monarch and servant.

The new mansion wasn't large, and there weren't many servants. However, there were quite a few Samurai, roughly one to two hundred, and about a dozen Longbowmen. Most of the Samurai were familiar faces from Teotihuacan, whereas the Longbowmen were followers of Xiulote. After all, his family had been away from the Capital City for some time, and it was necessary to bring trusted people from the Holy City. The Samurai were armed to the teeth, not shedding their armor, and they all saluted respectfully when they saw Xiulote return to the mansion. He responded with a slight nod of acknowledgement.

Beneath the calm facade of the Capital City, there were turbulent undercurrents. The Great and the Nobility all had private armies and family Samurai on their Fiefs. Without a certain amount of force, it was impossible to live peacefully at the center of Mexica power. Moreover, his grandfather was

undertaking a massive religious reform, which was bound to harm the interests of the Great Nobility and some Priests. Enemies would certainly not be in short supply.

Before entering the house, Xiulote heard the incessant "chirping" sound. He wondered in his heart: Could the little golden eagle actually know he was coming back, and be calling out to welcome him?

He then strode into the house, only to see little Aviloztli hiding in the innermost layer of a wooden box nest, calling out in fright and helplessness. Not far away, a little green snake was hissing behind a wooden board, threatening the little golden eagle with its head raised high.

Xiulote couldn't help but chuckle. Ah, a golden eagle being threatened by a Water Serpent.

The little green snake couldn't really do anything from behind the wooden box. It hissed for a while, and upon seeing Xiulote return to the room, slithered over nimbly. It then wriggled into the boy's pant leg and coiled around his calf to rest warmly.

Having regained his freedom, Xiulote had gone to the elder to ask for little green. Snakes were common pets among the Priests, signifying the favor of the spirits. The elder pondered for a moment, then gave a slight nod without saying anything. He handed the boy two bottles of a pale yellow Potion for external application on Snake Poison and a bottle of a pale green Potion for internal use, which needed to be carried at all times.

After that, Xiulote kept little green in the house, even fitting its tail with a Priest's copper ring to prevent it from being accidentally hurt by the servants. During the day, the little green snake would go to swim in the city lake and stealthily feast on beautiful tropical ornamental fish, sometimes even bringing one back for the boy. At night, it would punctually return, scare the little golden eagle, and then find a warm spot to sleep.

Xiulote looked again at little Aviloztli. The little golden eagle was now five months old, and its body was steadily growing. Its wings were now entirely covered with new brown Feathers and could flap to fly a short distance. When its feathers became fully grown and black, it would be able to soar freely in the sky. Its size was many times that of the little green snake, but it was still somewhat timid and unaware of its own strength.

Seeing Xiulote approach, little Aviloztli flapped its wings joyfully, crashing into the boy's arms and then calling incessantly with a "woo woo" sound. The boy's hands felt the weight, and he swiftly caught the little golden eagle, feeling the warmth and softness of its feathers. Then, he gently rubbed its head, and the little bird cooperatively swayed back and forth. Hmm, Aweit had trained it well. It was just that he had been too busy recently to take much notice of it.

"Perhaps, I should invite Aweit over here for a relaxed chat," Xiulote pondered quietly to himself.

There was no conversation overnight, and he slept well. Early the next morning, Gillim came to visit in simple casual wear. Xiulote placed the little golden eagle on a high stone platform and called for Bertade and a few followers. They set out from the house simply and discreetly.

The market of Tenochtitlan was still bustling, with merchants coming and going from all directions, seemingly unchanged.

However, Xiulote knew that merchants were the most common spies among the Mexica tribes. The news of the extermination of the Texcoco Royal Family and the consolidation of power within the Mexica Alliance had certainly been spread by the merchants from all parts. The religious reforms had just started and were still brewing, not drawing too much attention yet.

Gillim led Xiulote to a secluded Lake Bay in the Capital City. Two small boats were already waiting there. Gillim invited him with a bow, and Xiulote boarded one boat with Bertade. The guards took another canoe. Then, swiftly sailing out, the three of them headed toward the Chinampa clusters in the middle of the lake.

Protected by the embankments, the entire Texcoco Lake was completely under control and divided into several sections by Long Bridges. The Mexica constructed extensive Chinampa floating fields in the lake, with neat canals built between them. The Mexican Valley was warm enough, and the Chinampas never lacked water. As long as fertility was timely replenished, crops could be grown all year round.

The three men landed on the Royal Family's Chinampa. Xiulote looked out to see hundreds of farmers laboring on different plots, working tirelessly throughout the year. The lake's floating fields required labor-intensive agriculture, calling for careful and precise farming. The Royal Family and the Great Nobility owned a large number of skilled peasants and slaves engaged in cultivation. The Nobility wielded strong control over their vassal peasants, and the price for slaves skilled in farming was also extremely high.