

Civilization 229

Chapter 229 Great Love and Petty Love, Heartlessness and Light Song

Birds took flight, accompanied by the afterglow of the setting sun. The wide world was open, a place where all creations strive for freedom amidst the frosty heavens. The torrent of history, always vast like the earth and sky, rushed towards the end of time, never ceasing, never knowing its end. And heroes were but riding the tempest, seeking the moment and the trajectory of flight, yearning to transcend mortality and ascend to immortality.

Xiulote stood with his hands behind his back, looking up at the flock of soaring birds. His young face bore a world-weariness not befitting his age. Everything he had seen that day, like fleeting light dancing, remained etched in his heart. As if the bygone years returned to him, accompanied by five thousand years of war and slaughter, unforgettable and long-lasting.

The setting sun gradually descended, the evening glow burst forth with its final brilliance, resembling falling cherry blossoms, carrying the beauty of the withering Samurai. Not until the red fully filled Xiulote's eyes did he wistfully watch the days of old go down, like an era slowly fading into the distance.

The youth's thoughts wandered, then returned, from the Nine Heavens to the Nine Abysses. He laughed heartily, enlightened and elevated in spirit.

"It turns out, what I need to be is not a hero, but a diligent farmer. In the soil of the era, I plant seed after seed, nurturing them carefully, fostering the undercurrent of history. Until the fields are lush, until the fruit trees rise from the ground, until civilization grows as dense as forests, then naturally birds will come to roost, and all heroes will fall within my grasp!"

At that moment, Xiulote finally understood the elders. His gaze grew deep, his emotions profound.

From thought to innovation, from production to technology, from politics to society, the diligent farmer needs to till the land meticulously. He must wield the hoe, breaking the hardened clods, removing obstructing weeds, indifferent to the withering before his eyes, focusing only on the growth of the future. In his heart, life took on a new meaning: from the Monarch to the common folk, love without attachment, just as heaven and earth are impartial.

The long night was upon them, and new fires were lit. Inside the Divine Revelation Place, the Samurai had just kindled the bonfire, the flickering flames piercing the evening sky, the present brightness surpassing the distant Crescent Moon and stars. Amidst the firelight, the attendants surrounded the wise junior member of the Royal Family in solemn silence, standing respectfully awaiting the next command.

Coming to his senses, Xiulote smiled warmly. He waved his hand to the crowd.

"There's no hurry. Let's call it a day! The northern district's military Craftsmen have done well, and they will be rewarded. Have the southern district's civilian Craftsmen ready. I'll come to see their progress tomorrow morning."

With that, he smiled and gestured for everyone to disperse. The Craftsmen breathed sighs of relief, quietly discussing tonight's plans, wondering if they should open a cask of aged wine to celebrate the junior Royal's praise.

Bertade watched the young man silently. He smiled contentedly, his face displaying the signs of age. In the previous days, the junior Royal had been busy rushing around the Capital City like a refreshing breeze, supervising with severity, as cold as the morning dew. But now, smiling gently, he bore the weight of mountains, like a youthful sun.

Dew nourishes the earth, tasted cold and sweet. The sun shines upon all things, where it's ruthless, it sets the world ablaze. Rising from the earth to the heavens, such should be the King. With radiance shining upon the world, what does it matter if one stands alone!

Xiulote seemed to sense something and looked towards the Head Warrior. Bertade knelt on one knee and saluted, just as when they first met. The two faced each other for a moment, and the young man calmly extended his hand, touching the Head Warrior's hair. The surrounding Samurai exchanged glances for an instant and then, without hesitation, knelt to salute.

This moment was like a silent painting, frozen in the long night. The leftover fire crossed a thousand years, blazing anew under the historical starry sky, and also burning in the heart of the King.

Without a word throughout the night, Xiulote slept soundly. He was relaxed, even his sleeping posture calm and peaceful. The next day, as usual, after completing his morning exercises, the youth smiled slightly and turned to his loyal Head Warrior.

"I haven't visited the Royal Palace for a while. Since it's still early, let's go see my beloved first!"

Bertade nodded calmly. The two of them took off their sweat-soaked martial garments and changed into clean, simple white robes, setting out lightly and unencumbered.

Upon arriving at Montezuma's Royal Palace, the heavy stone doors slowly opened, revealing the grand hall and flowing water. The guards respectfully invited the junior Royal to step inside but firmly stopped the accompanying Head Warrior and Escorts.

Xiulote nodded with a smile and waved his hand to stay the Head Warrior. Bertade pondered for a moment and then obediently complied, waiting outside the door.

The young man strode in, but Aweit was not in the grand hall. He asked with a smile, and the attending guard replied with respect.

"His Majesty the King left early in the morning and may already be at the Royal Palace dealing with state affairs."

...

Xiulote was indifferent. With a slight smile, he strode down the familiar path, heading straight to the rose garden inside.

Soon, the young man entered the garden, seeing spring approach lightly, stepping into a world vibrant with purples and reds and a fragrant breeze. Not far away, a gentle wind carried over a young girl's soft singing. Her pure voice soared between heaven and earth like a cloud falling to the human world, settling into the young man's heart.

"In the garden of roses, I started to sing.

Blooms fill the earth, and my song echoes through the sky.

Will he hear it? Will he shake the bellflowers to the tune of the flowers' song?

That bell resonates through the sky, those blooms fill the earth, and also in my heart...

"

The young man stopped to listen; this was "Spring Song" by Texcoco's royal poet, King Coyote Nesawar. In the mouth of the young girl, it had taken on subtle changes, like clouds shaped into hearts, heavy with deep longing.

"On the flowers of spring, is the song of the thrush, shimmering with ripples over Lake Texcoco.

Countless birds reply, yet she waits quietly, for a red sparrow to arrive.

The lotus blossoms on the water's surface, will the hummingbird see it?

Will it come from afar, also singing a beautiful song, landing by my side...

"

Hearing this, Xiulote could no longer hold back. He rushed over and, to Alisa's astonished gaze, took hold of her soft hand, embracing her tightly, unwilling to let go. Clad in white, the two resembled clouds merging with the sky.

After a long moment, the young man finally looked at the young girl, his eyes filled with profound passion. The girl shyly averted her gaze from his burning eyes but heard a tender song. It was the following verse of the "Spring Song," also infused with the fervor of spring.

"Your heart is a canvas awaiting my brush to paint myself upon. You sing, and I will beat the drum. You dance, in the depths of the Spring Garden, I will hold you close!"

Alisa's cheeks flushed. She sat down quietly, in front of the pure white roses, still holding onto Xiulote's hand.

The young man was also led to sit down, the girl quietly leaning on his shoulder. Together they gazed at the red roses, quietly joining in the most fiery coda of the song.

"You are the beautiful flower, the intoxicating flower. Your arrival in this world was destined to become part of me. We sing and dance lightly in the depths of the Spring Garden, holding each other close, forever etched into body and soul..."

Singing the simplest love song, a flame rose up from Xiulote's heart, spreading to every corner of his body. He firmly pulled the girl onto his lap, gazing into her bright eyes, ready to kiss her deeply.

But Alisa playfully blinked. She leaned forward, hugging the young man tightly again, resting her head on his broad shoulder and blowing gently into his ear, allowing his breath to pass over her sensitive earlobes.

Xiulote paused, his emotions calming slightly, but his heart began to beat violently. The girl felt the same. In silence, their hearts beat in unison, feeling each other's heartbeat, time forgotten.

It took a while before Xiulote looked into the girl's eyes again, softly inquiring.

"Alisa, what are you doing sitting in the garden? Are you waiting for me?"

There was a blush on the girl's face. She slightly bowed her head, docile as a fawn.

"No, not really. This morning I took Chimalpahin to play in the garden. We watched butterflies dance and listened to swifts twitter softly. I also told him the stories of our ancestors. But not long ago, the guards and the nanny took Chimalpahin away, and I just sat alone on the grass, beginning to sing."

Xiulote was slightly startled, his brows gently furrowing. Chimalpahin? The three-year-old legitimate son of Aweit? Taken away? The youth closed his eyes, suppressing the turmoil within his heart. At this moment, he did not wish to ponder worldly matters; he only wanted to quietly enjoy the beautiful sensations.

Seeing the expression on the youth's face, Alisa thought for a moment. She instinctively embraced him, her soft touch bringing a faint fragrance that seeped into the youth's heart.

Xiulote smiled, leaning close to the girl's long hair.

"Alisa, my oriole, what were you thinking about when you were singing?"

Upon hearing this, the girl lowered her head, her expression darkening.

"I was missing my mother a little."

Xiulote felt a pang in his heart and, with pity, extended his arms and also held the girl tightly. They embraced each other snugly. After a good while, the youth whispered in her ear.

"Then, did you miss me?"

"Hmm, I did."

"How much?"

"...Hmm, a whole heartfelt!"

Xiulote's heart skipped a beat. He steadied the girl's shoulders and bent his head once more, attempting to kiss the person in front of him.

Alisa's face turned completely red. She instinctively put her hand up, blocking her lips, and the youth kissed the center of her hand instead.

"Ah, how embarrassing! So many people are watching."

Hearing this, Xiulote paused. He turned his head to look around; through the garden, distant guards stood solemnly still, their eyes not straying like statues. And on the two-story palace, a hundred meters away, the dark divine curtains fluttered in the wind, just as devoid of people.

While the youth was distracted looking around, he felt a slip in his hand and a lightness on his lap. Turning his head, he saw that the girl, like a breeze, had run off as swiftly as smoke, leaving only a faint fragrance behind.

Xiulote looked at his hands, feeling a sense of loss in his heart. His thoughts shifted lightly, and he smiled faintly. Next time, he would bring the adorable Aviloztli with him. If Alisa held her in her arms, she wouldn't be able to run away.

The breeze continued to drift afar, reaching the top of the two-story building. It once again lifted the divine curtains and wandered past the heavy wooden walls, only to suddenly spot two tall figures.

Behind the curtain and wooden wall, Aweit was dressed in casual home attire. He watched everything in the garden with a calm smile, his eyes full of tenderness.

Behind him, Gillim slightly frowned, the wounds on his shoulders neatly bandaged but still tingling faintly. Between his ears, black and red scabs, already treated with medicine powder, now did no harm.

The intelligence officer, also observing the scene, felt a headache coming on. He pondered silently and then spoke softly.

"Your Majesty, although the prince is currently..."

Aweit calmly returned his gaze, slowly but firmly shaking his head, his eyes still tender.

Gillim remained silent. If the best strategy could not be followed, then he would have to suggest the next best thing. He pondered again and then began to speak slowly.

"Your Majesty, I have been reflecting these past few days and have come up with a perfect solution."

The king regarded the intelligence officer with a scrutinizing look.

Gillim's heart tightened, and he replied respectfully.

"With this solution, if all goes well, we could eliminate the threat, satisfy all parties, and also give the princess a hopeful future."

Aweit leaned forward slightly, and the intelligence officer moved closer, whispering in his ear.

"...just like this."

The king's eyes first deepened, then brightened, and finally, he nodded solemnly. He took another examining look at Gillim, smiling meaningfully.

"Gillim, your efforts are truly commendable. But why go to such lengths? Is it purely out of loyalty?"

"As the gods are my witness, Your Majesty!"

The intelligence officer earnestly met the king's gaze without hesitation.

Aweit's expression did not change, as he continued to wait.

"I swear by the ancestors of the Royal Family!"

Gillim ceremonially lowered his head in a bow, his mind recalling the visages of the predecessor monarchs.

Hearing these words, Aweit smiled and said no more. He looked again towards the Rose Garden, Xiulote already having disappeared. And his adorable daughter had returned, floating like a cloud. The palace and the garden were once again quiet, and the gentle breeze returned, lifting the girl's long hair.

In the Spring Garden, Alisa twisted her hair and sat quietly in front of the white roses. The girl propped her cheeks with her hands and stared blankly into the sky, her thoughts drifting far away.

Far away, between the wide heavens and earth, the sun was rising. But the white clouds were drifting away.