

## Civilization 258

### Chapter 258 New Year Sacrificial Rite and Reform Advancement

The morning sun illuminated the earth, and the celebratory songs soared into the sky. The burning fragrance of sandalwood wafted between heaven and earth, also lingering in the bustling palace district where the celebration was in full swing. A divine aura enveloped every street, so the will of the Chief Divine was omnipresent and also descended upon Xiulote.

The youth, wearing a Feather Crown and dressed in a splendid ceremonial dress, followed behind the High Priest adorned like a deity and solemnly arrived at Montezuma Palace. Afterwards, he conjured a small golden eagle from within his ample ceremonial dress and, with a smile, handed it to the girl in white, seizing the opportunity to hold Alisa in his embrace.

The girl let out a soft cry of "Ah." She carefully protected the charming eagle, awkwardly attempting to flee, but still received a kiss on her ear, her face blooming with a layer of red blush. Aweit immediately coughed lightly, and little Aviloztli also struggled in his arms with "cheep-cheep" noises, so Xiulote winked at the girl and squeezed her slender hand before returning to his place in the procession.

Aweit, dressed in royal attire, said goodbye to his daughter whose face was flushed. He did not bring his beloved Alisa with him because he did not want her to witness the bloodshed.

A moment later, everyone exited the palace. The King, in his imposing might, led the way, with the High Priest solemnly following. The youth trailed two steps behind, looking up towards the Great Temple not far away. His gaze lingered on the palace of the Chief Minister. There, a tall and elderly figure could be vaguely seen, standing firm like a mountain, calm like the sea.

Entering the Temple District, holy flames were lit in the Temples along the way, with the green smoke of pine branches rising. The Priests began to chant hymns and sounded their mysterious clay flutes, welcoming the arrival of the esteemed ones.

The Chief Divine walked among men, and when he halted, it was at the grand Great Temple. Xiulote ascended the top of the majestic Temple, observing the changes within. The War God's gold sculpture was as towering and resplendent as ever, surrounded by countless flowers and gemstones, with three-colored feathers of the Feathered Serpent Divine inserted behind; yet the Rain Divine's sculpture had its decorations removed, encircled by the War God's banners, as though enveloped by the Chief Divine's glory.

Seeing this, Xiulote nodded. The changes within the Temple were all prearranged by the High Priesthood and carried hidden meanings. The Supreme Chief Divine would ultimately rise to become a conceptual deity without an idol, but the time had not yet come.

Subsequently, everyone took their places with solemn expressions. The High Priest stood at the forefront, holding the Obsidian Dagger for sacrifice, leading the twelve Priesthoods ranged around the two Sacrificial Stones. Slightly behind, Aweit presided from his throne, imperiously overseeing tens of thousands of citizens, small as ants.

The youth stood calmly at the rear, staring across at the Chief Palace, his gaze meeting that of the equally calm elder. Then, he bowed sincerely, shifting his gaze once more towards the distance. From this vantage point, everything seemed so clear.

Below the Temple, were the Citizens celebrating the gods. The Priests chanted and danced with devotion, as if communicating with the deities. The Nobility sat at their tables, their expressions slightly tense, their banter not as relaxed as before. The Samurai immersed themselves in competitions and rituals, waving their arms and letting out involuntary roars of excitement. The common people indulged in songs and dances, praising poetry and theater, performing the mythologies and legends of the Mexica.

Among this land of the Divine Kingdom, the only ones unable to blend in were the foreign envoys. They looked on with reverence and serious expressions, silently watching the Otomi Nobility being led into the arena.

The esteemed ones took their places in the sacred area, and the Citizens of the Capital City eagerly awaited the first act, which was the opening ceremony.

The King raised high the Yellow Gemstone Divine Staff, saluting the Heavenly Divine, and the tens of thousands in the Temple District kneeled in homage like rippling waves. Afterwards, Aweit spread his arms wide, receiving the acclaims of the multitude and basking in the supreme enjoyment. Amidst the tidal waves of voices, his eyes shone brilliantly, his chest surged powerfully, and he laughed heartily. It was intoxicating exhilaration!

The acclamation continued for a full quarter of an hour. Then, the High Priest raised the Sun Divine Staff high, chanting in the ancient dialect of the Holy City.

"The sun rises high, and the Chief Divine Huitzilopochtli ascends to the utmost heights! He shall devour the darkness, he shall control all things! He shall reign over all, omnipotent!"

Hearing these obscure words of the divine, a few of the Great Nobility standing at the front nodded silently. Below the Temple, most people who did not understand nonetheless cheered just the same. Then, a somber drumbeat started, sharp conch sounds blared, and the crowd gradually quieted, leaving only the Priests chanting loudly, praising the names of the gods.

The Priests called for the deities, and when the deities arrived, the second act began with sacrifice.

The sacrifices at the ballcourt kicked things off. In the four semi-underground ballcourts designated for human sacrifice, the Otomi Nobility competed fiercely, battling brutally. But today, their fates had been predetermined: the victors sacrificed at the Temple, the losers executed in obscurity, all of them inevitably meeting death.

Engrossed in the exciting ballgame, the Nobility gradually got involved, cheering one moment, cursing the next. Their emotions finally found solace, their hearts filling with a hint of satisfaction.

Meanwhile, in the smaller Temples, hundreds of Tlacopan Nobility were stained blue and silently sacrificed to the Chief Divine, quietly warning the ambitious among the Great Nobility.

Next, the Rain Divine's sacrifice was altered. The rites became much simpler, and the scale of the sacrifice greatly reduced. On the platform before the Rain God Temple, there were only one-on-one duels, pleasing the great War God. Under fair duels but with unfair equipment, the captive Otomi leaders died in succession, adding more blossoming blood flowers to the ceremony.