

Civilization 264

Chapter 264: Date and Science Popularization Part 2

The gentle breeze blew over a thousand miles, wrinkling a pond's surface, scattering petals on the ground, and tossing their long hair. At this moment, their hair intertwined, as if the paths of their lives had merged, temples touching in a transmission of affection. In the chilly wind, they embraced each other more closely, cherishing the warmth it brought to their souls.

After holding each other for a long time, Xiulote finally released his embrace, still tightly gripping Alisa's hand. He gazed into the girl's eyes, which were as clear as autumn waters, not realizing that when she looked at him, her eyes blazed like twin flames.

The youth stared intently for a while, letting the autumn waters extinguish the flames. Only then did he turn his head to look at the scattered fallen leaves, covering the roots of the flowers, and spoke with a smile,

"Alisa, now that we are in the garden, let me tell you a story about plants!"

The girl leaned in to listen, her smile as clear as water.

"Alisa, the world is a cycle. The story of plants is the cycle of plants."

"There are two kinds of cycles for plants, one is the cycle of generations. A seed falls into the soil, just as your image falls into my heart. It will begin to sprout, grow slowly, and absorb the nutrients from the soil, as if absorbing my longing for you..."

Then, it will grow vibrant green leaves, rejoicing in the sunlight, frolicking in the dew and rain, just like every encounter with you. Next, beautiful flowers bloom, like your bright smile, and from then on, we stay together. Soon, the flowers will bear fruit, containing the seeds of the next season, which is the fusion of love, giving birth to new life...

In the end, the new seeds will leave, starting a new cycle..."

Xiulote spoke softly, his voice tinged with a hint of melancholy towards the end.

Alisa widened her eyes in surprise upon hearing the ending, looking innocently at the youth.

"Our love fuses, giving birth to new life? Xiulote, do you want to be with me..."

Xiulote's face froze as he looked at the innocent girl, and he quickly interrupted,

"Ah, yes, the love of people can move the spirits, bestowing new life... Alisa, listen to me continue.

Alisa bit back her words. She looked at the embarrassed youth, then suddenly smiled like a sprite, happily nodding her head.

This time, Xiulote's story became much more serious.

"The other cycle is that of nutrients. There are two kinds of nutrient cycles, one being the nutrients of plants, including nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, uh, I'll explain these names to you later... Yes, you can think of them as the Divine Power of the Earth Mother. Most of the nutrition for plants comes from the earth, except for beans, which can capture it from the air. That's why rotating bean crops is necessary... Beans depend on bacteria in their roots... Indeed, the effect of bacteria differs, and some are beneficial to humans...

The nutrients enter into the plants' bodies, and also into the flowers, leaves, and fruits... When the flowers and leaves die and fall to the ground, they are slowly consumed by bacteria, turning back into nutrients. The fruits are eaten by humans and animals and are excreted back to the earth...

So, to support the growth of crops, we Mexica people need to replenish the floating gardens with dug-up river mud, fermented manure, and the ash of burned plants... Of these nutrients, nitrogen is the most important. In the future, we need to occupy islands and salt ponds rich in nitrogen, to fertilize the lands of the Alliance and also to create powerful weapons...

Ah, you asked about the spirits? The spirits created the materials of the world and also the rules of change. And what happens next in the world is for us to decide..."

Alisa looked at the youth, her bright eyes flickering, absorbing this new world, and asked curious questions.

"Plants also provide nutrition for us humans, like corn, beans, and squash. This kind of nutrition is called carbon, and its cycle is known as the carbon cycle... Yes, this is a gift from the maize god to humankind... The carbon in plants comes from the air... Mmm, yes, air is tangible, filled with many substances, and I will prove it to you later..."

The sunlight infuses plants with vitality, and with the help of water and time, gathers these nutrients into fruits edible by humans... Humans gain vitality from the fruits and then expend it in daily activities, releasing it back into the air with every breath...

No, Alisa, you can't do that, even without breathing, the vitality will still be consumed!"

At this point, Xiulote stretched out his hands and held Alisa's puffy cheeks, her breath blowing on his face with the refreshing scent of peach tree gum.

Indeed, in this era without toothpaste, the Aztec and Maya nobility chewed the milky gum of the peach tree to maintain oral hygiene and keep their teeth white. This tree gum also became the raw material for natural chewing gum in later times. The peach, also known as the ginseng fruit, is heart-shaped. It also, decades later, alongside corn, squash, and chili peppers, entered the Ming Dynasty, possibly related to the ginseng fruit in the classic tale 'Journey to the West'.

At this moment, Xiulote held the girl's cheeks, staring at her lips pursed by the pressure, and suddenly stood transfixed. Then, as if enticed, the youth unconsciously leaned forward, coming closer and closer.

Alisa blinked and then gave a sly smile. She lightly stepped back, and the youth kissed the air. Then the girl took his hand again, cheerfully saying,

"Xiulote, let's go see the adorable animals!"

As the sun sloped westward, Xiulote took Alisa by the hand, sitting close together. Beneath the twenty-meter-high Peach Blossom Heartwood tree, they looked up at the spider monkeys frolicking and climbing among the tree tops.