

Civilization 821

Chapter 821: The Sacred Wedding Part 3

"Praise the Chief Divine! Divine blessing on the wedding!..."

The earth-shaking shout echoed through the Capital City, rising like a tide, blazing like a wildfire, and swirling like a whirlwind, unceasingly!

The High Priest raised the Divine Staff high, standing atop the Great Temple, relishing the fervent shouts. Looking down, tens of thousands of citizens prostrated together, praying devoutly to the sky above, resembling an endless swarm of ants. He looked up, and the second hot air balloon, "Heart of the Divine," floated at more than two hundred meters high, swaying with the wind, pulsing like the heart of a deity.

"A divine miracle descends... spreading the glory of the Chief Divine!..."

The High Priest, with a face like a divine entity, was filled with emotion. With such a divine object, future evangelism would be much easier.

He then looked around. All the Elder Priests were looking up at the huge balloon floating in the sky. Their expressions were either shocked, solemn, dazed, or pleasantly surprised.

The "Heart of the Divine" in the sky was mainly a paper balloon coated with rubber, a ceramic fire basin heating the air below, and a long hemp rope falling from the tail.

The Second Level Divine Revelation Priest of the Kingdom of the Lake, Chimere, calculated the height and fixed one end of the rope on top of the Great Temple, carefully guiding and securing the paper balloon. Craftsman Priests from the Grand Kingdom were busily working in an orderly manner, some measuring the wind speed, some observing the flame, and others holding the ropes, always ready.

"Divine Revelation Priest... an unprecedented revelation!..."

Seeing this scene, the High Priest pondered in silence. After a while, he glanced in the direction of His Highness Xiulote, a smile forming on his lips.

"Bless you, my child!"

The sound of prayers rose to the sky, reaching everyone's ears. Inside the Chief Palace not far from the Great Temple, an elder woke up suddenly. He opened his murky eyes and looked through the open top at the red heart in the air... for once, his usually expressionless face showed a trace of confusion.

"Hmm, what is this?..."

"Respected Elder, today is the wedding of His Highness Xiulote and Princess Alisa."

Guard Commander Cevali stepped forward. He looked at the elder with concern while reporting in a low voice.

"The 'Heart of the Divine' in the sky is a creation of the Divine Revelation Place of the Kingdom of the Lake. It can ascend with heat and fly when heated."

"Ascend with heat, fly when heated..."

The elder murmured, pondering in silence. He listened intently, hearing the fervent calls, the devout blessings, and prayers of thousands of citizens. He turned slightly, watching the High Priest on the Great Temple. Xutel stood tall, raising the ancient Divine Staff at the highest point in the Lake Capital City, receiving the bow and salute of tens of thousands of people.

Seeing this, the elder slightly lowered his eyes, rose slightly, and looked towards the King's Palace. Under Cacamatzin's supervision, the sacred wedding was taking place. The Mexica Divine Tree extended two strong roots, occupying the east and west lands, tightly bonding through marriage, solidifying the Royal Family's power, and paving the way for future generations!

"Bless you, my child!"

After a long time, the elder smiled faintly and whispered to himself. Then he looked at the hot air balloon hanging high in the sky again and then at the High Priest who dominated the Capital City, closing his eyes peacefully.

"In the name of the gods, witnessing the wedding... Young Xutel... you should have no regrets!..."

The charcoal in the fire basin burnt for a few quarters, and the flame gradually dimmed. Chimere watched for a while, personally directing the craftsman priests to tighten the ropes of the hot air balloon. Under the ropes' guidance, the "Heart of the Divine" slowly descended, finally landing on top of the Great Temple and being transported into the spacious Chief Temple.

"Praise be to Huitzilopochtli! His power is infinite, controlling the sky, earth, and lakes!... The Chief Divine sends blessings, blessing the sacred wedding, and promising divine protection for the couple!"

With the descent of the "Heart of the Divine," the High Priest chanted again. Behind him, the pudgy Uguel's expression changed slightly. He opened his mouth but made no sound, just muttering to himself.

"Blessed wedding by the Chief Divine, a couple promised by the Chief Divine?... If this spreads... Sigh, High Priest!..."

The priests chanted in unison, and the prayer sound in the Capital City became intense. Tens of thousands of fervent believers, eyes filled with tears, chanted the final hymn.

"Praise the Chief Divine! Belief in Huitzilopochtli! He is supreme and omnipotent!..."

In the King's Palace, Aweit's expression was solemn, his hand gripping the Scepter tightly, his body sitting upright. He watched intently as the enormous "Heart of the Divine" rose and fell. Even though he was prepared, his heart was still filled with surprise.

Aweit's expression was complex, and he said nothing. After a long while, until the cheering and prayer sounds gradually subsided, he glanced at the High Priest from a distance, his gaze deep.

"A divine miracle descends to bless the wedding..."

"Indeed, truly wonderful!"

Cacamatzin's face was solemn, with a smile. This was the most sacred wedding he had ever presided over, and it would be the grandest in all the lands!

After inquiring intentions, divining omens, nobilities offering dances, and the divine miracle's ascension, the remaining procedures were like a normal wedding, held in the residences of both parties.

Thinking of this, Cacamatzin looked up at the slightly westward setting sun and sang aloud.

"... The ancestors' blessing on the wedding! The sacred wedding, welcoming guests from all directions, holding the first feast in the ancestors' palace!"

With this chant, the viewing crowd in the King's Palace gradually dispersed. The atmosphere in the field relaxed, familiar guests whispered, inquiring about the divine miracle just witnessed. Hundreds of servants flocked into the King's Palace, setting up seats in the open-air and interiors, also preparing the feast's delicacies in the palace's corners.

In just a moment, the tempting aroma of food filled the air. Seated in a side hall, Xiulote smelled the scent of tortillas and grilled meat, unable to help swallowing hard. He had been sitting there, maintaining a solemn posture, motionless since morning, and by now was extremely hungry.

"The feast is about to begin... well, it's okay if I stay a bit hungry."

Xiulote licked his lips, his stomach growling. He looked worriedly towards the right wall.

"My little Alisa, you must not go hungry!..."

In the adjacent hall, an elderly woman with a dignified demeanor walked in, surrounded by several noblewomen. She then extended her hand, warmly taking Alisa's arm.

"Come, little Alisa, come with me!"

"Yes, Aunt."

Alisa stood up gracefully, like a light bird, led by Cacamatzin's wife, leaving the King's Great Hall towards the palace's backyard. Before leaving, she glanced over to the left side hall where Xiulote was.

"Aunt, Xiulote hasn't eaten anything all day..."

"It's fine. As a Samurai, going hungry for a day is not a big deal."

The elderly woman smiled. She extended her hand, taking a small pot of honey water from a maid, and handed it to Alisa.

"Here, little Alisa, have some honey water first. There are honey pastries and dried fruits in the backyard."

"But Xiulote hasn't eaten anything all day..."

"Haha! Silly child, you are the most beautiful lotus of the Royal Family! If little Xiulote wants to marry you, he must endure some hardships."

The elderly woman smiled kindly, looking at Alisa. This was her great-niece whom she had watched grow up, kind-hearted and lively, most lovable.

"...My little Alisa, remember, you are the Princess of the Royal Family. Even in front of little Xiulote, you must have your own opinions. Never let him have the upper hand completely!..."

"Ah? This..."

"Silly child..."

The elderly woman looked at Alisa's worried face and shook her head with a laugh.

"Little Alisa, do you want little Xiulote to love you more?"

"This, Aunt..."

Alisa blushed slightly and nodded gently.

"I do!"

"Good, let Aunt tell you some experience!... In the future, you should be good to little Xiulote, but also make demands, so he puts more thought into you... Sometimes, you can act a bit distant, and other times more open... Give him unforgettable tenderness, but also have your little temper..."

With a smile, the elderly woman gently guided her.

"...Remember, men are greedy monkeys. You must be the top peach, enticing him with fragrance and color. Make him jump to reach, and a single bite will be sweet and unforgettable... The harder it is to obtain, the more he pays; the more he treasures... Your Uncle Cacamatzin, all these years, I always gave him enough face outside... and at home... hehe..."

"Ah? Peach and monkey... Aunt and Uncle?..."

Alisa blinked, slightly tilting her head with a surprised expression. She listened to her Aunt's teachings, smiled with curved eyes. That smile was so pure, like a lotus emerging from water, such beauty like a snow lotus in bloom.

"..."

Seeing Alisa's beautiful smile, the elderly woman was momentarily dazed. She reached out, touched her niece's smooth face, and sighed.

"Sigh! Such a beautiful girl... truly benefits little Xiulote... truly benefits the lineage of the Holy City..."

So, the two left the preparations for the banquet in the front hall, smiling and whispering.

The first dinner was held at the bride's home, that is, the King's Palace. This was the last segment of the Royal Wedding during the day. And in the first dinner, the bride Alisa could not appear. She needed to wash and dress up with the help of the wedding envoy, changing into a gorgeous wedding dress and waiting quietly in the backyard.

A few quarters later, the banquet was prepared in the front hall, and the palace became bustling. Although the guests came from all directions, those with insufficient status, envoys, nobilities, and Samurai could leave. There were special banquets outside the Kings Palace for ordinary Samurai, thousands in number. Those who remained in the palace were the elder members of the Royal Family, Great Nobility of the Alliance, and a few foreign envoy representatives.

Aweit gripping the Scepter, sat in the center of the front hall, though smiling, was somewhat disinterested. He was the bride's guardian, the host of the banquet, and the King of the Alliance. Great Nobility from the Alliance came forward to express their blessings, some even offering poems.

"Chief Divine bless! The Princess is as pure as a cloud, His Highness as majestic as the mountains. Clouds meeting mountains is entwined spring rain, beautiful and moving!..."

"Praise the Chief Divine! The Princess's beauty, unseen in my life; His Highness's demeanor, known throughout the lands. The Princess and His Highness are a perfectly blessed pair!"

Listening to the compliments, Aweit's smile grew stiff. Thinking of the precious daughter he had meticulously raised, now becoming Xiulote's wife, managing his household, raising children...

"Xiulote, you brat!..."

Aweit pursed his lips, gripping the Scepter tightly, his heart aching.

"If you ever treat Alisa badly..."

In the King's Palace, the aroma of food grew stronger. The mixture of spices and chili made everyone's mouth water. A guard hurried in, reporting to the King.

"Your Majesty, the banquet is ready!... Shall we invite His Highness Xiulote to join the banquet now?"

"Oh? The banquet is ready?"

Aweit stood up and looked at the brilliant western sunset. The glow shone over the splendid gardens and courtyards, reflecting in everyone's eyes and smiles, making it the perfect time for the wedding banquet.

"Good! Ask Uncle Cacamatzin to announce the start of the banquet!"

Aweit ordered solemnly. Then, glancing at the side hall, he smiled slightly.

"As for Xiulote... let him stay hungry in the side hall a bit longer!..."

Chapter 822: The Sacred Wedding Conclusion

The grand banquet, accompanied by song and dance, was held in the magnificent King's Palace. According to rank and age, the guests of the royal wedding took their seats in order. Everyone's face was filled with enthusiastic smiles.

Soon, cheerful flute music resounded in the palace, and the servants served the dishes one by one like running water, filling the bamboo mats in front of the nobles' seats.

The main courses included honey-glazed roast venison, spice-smoked roast turkey, slightly spicy roast fish... The carefully seasoned roast meats were fragrant and tender, filled with juices with each bite; side dishes included soft cooked beans, crisp zucchini, thin-skinned mimbontan... Fresh vegetables were brightly colored, tender and refreshing, with a delightful sweetness; staples included soft and crispy corn tortillas, slightly salty black bean paste, rich pumpkin soup... The aromatic staples could be complemented with chili sauce and dried fruits.

In the corners of the palace, there were pineapples, guavas, sugar apples, mamey fruits, cactus fruits, purple figs... Various tropical fruits piled up like mountains, exuding enticing aromas, waiting for the guests to taste.

It was only at this moment that Xiulote, dressed in ceremonial attire, was escorted by guards and seated beside Aweit. Seeing the main character of the wedding arrive, the royal nobles stood up to greet him, smiling and offering their congratulations and blessings.

Xiulote smiled and nodded, returning the greetings to each of the nobles. His smile was a bit stiff as he returned the greetings, the words entering and exiting his ears, his eyes occasionally glancing at the abundant food on the bamboo mats. Today, after starving for so long, he was already famished, his body's hunger waves overshadowing his wedding nerves, but it was not yet time to eat.

The sun set in the west, nightfall approached, and hundreds of Alliance nobles gathered. The elder, Cacamatzin, spoke first, praising the Supreme Divine, recounting the glory of the royal family, and finally extolling the newlyweds. Then, King Aweit spoke again, praising the Divine and the ancestors, emphasizing the divine blessing of the royal family, and wishing the marriage lasting happiness and prosperity.

"... My Ruby Scepter, from my maternal grandfather, the great Montezuma II! It possesses the divinity of the Sun God, inlaid with the largest ruby in the world!"

Aweit stood up from the throne, his voice gradually becoming passionate. He received the Ruby Scepter, respectfully presented by his close attendant, raised his left hand high, and solemnly declared while sweeping his gaze across the crowd. Seeing this scene, Female Snake Gillim's heart skipped a beat, and she suddenly pressed her lips tightly.

"This scepter was inherited from my mother, Atotoztli III! My honored maternal grandfather passed it to my blessed mother. My blessed mother entrusted it to me! Now, in front of you all, in the name of the ancestors, I declare: this scepter I will pass to my eldest daughter, the royal eldest Princess, Alisa, after the royal wedding!"

Hearing this, all the nobles present were shocked. They couldn't help but raise their heads to look at the extraordinary divine object in the King's hand, the illustrious Ruby Scepter!

The Mexica Alliance's scepters total two. One is the Yellow Gemstone Scepter passed down through generations, from the ancestral tribes; the other is the Ruby Scepter crafted by Montezuma I, symbolizing the rise of royal power. In the eyes of traditional nobles, both scepters symbolize supreme royal power, closely linked with the history of the Mexica, encompassing a certain indescribable divinity.

In an instant, the King's Palace fell silent, only the breath of the crowd could be heard. Many pondered in silence, many were dazzled, many were shaken...

Aweit's expression was calm as he glanced around the crowd. No one dared to openly oppose or question the scepter's inheritance. Then, he looked deeply at Xiulote before smiling and announcing.

"Praise the Chief Divine! The banquet begins, enjoy the feast to your heart's content!"

"Praise the Chief Divine! Praise the King!"

Upon hearing the familiar blessings, the nobles responded in unison, and the atmosphere relaxed. The nobles began to enjoy the feast while greeting each other, talking and laughing loudly. The envoys witnessing from various states mostly lowered their heads, slowly chewing the food in their mouths, pondering the royal succession behind the scepter of the Mexica Alliance.

Xiulote was dazed for a moment, staring at the Ruby Scepter close at hand. The star-lit ruby on the scepter had perfect lines and dazzling starlight, its weight certainly over a hundred carats. He had always yearned for such a national treasure and had been thinking about it for a long time.

"... Alisa's... My wife's... Well... It could be considered mine... right?"

After a while, Xiulote gently swallowed his saliva, lowered his head, and focused on the sumptuous dinner. There were many activities to come in the evening, and he needed to quickly replenish his energy.

The first banquet was grand and prolonged, lasting from sunset into the night, with bonfires lit in the King's Palace. Everyone ate heartily, but there was no drinking.

According to Mexica wedding traditions, two banquets are held, one at the bride's house and one at the groom's; the first one involves no alcohol, while the second allows drinking for those over thirty.

Cacamatzin looked at the sky, the moon rose from the East, obscured by the night clouds, it was a perfectly dark night. He smiled and came to the center of the palace, raising his hands high, and loudly announced.

"... The firelight brings blessings! Light the blazing torches, dispel the thick darkness, escort the groom and bride to the High Priest's Mansion!"

Chapter 823: The Sacred Wedding Finale Part 2

"Alright! Everyone light the torches!"

"The clouds protect the newlyweds, shielding the evil moon!..."

"The Black Wolf escorts the sun, awaiting the rise of the new day!..."

The crowd gradually stood up, murmuring blessings, and in their hands, they lit prepared torches. Soon, the points of light surrounded Xiulote. Then, the torches split into a path, and a dignified elderly woman walked in, carrying a stunningly beautiful delicate girl to Xiulote's side.

"Alisa!..."

Xiulote's eyes widened, focusing intently as his heart raced. Alisa was dressed in a pure white cotton robe, her dark hair tied up, her crystal-clear jade feet bare, lying on the back of the wedding envoy. Her white robe first tightened slightly, outlining her slender waist, then loosened a bit, revealing her snowy pink long legs.

"Xiulote..."

Upon hearing her lover's call, Alisa slightly raised her head, boldly taking a look at Xiulote, and softly responded.

Her eyes were like water, her expression shy yet charming. Her delicate face had a faint blush, resembling a freshly ripe apple with a hint of enticing youthfulness. Her soft lips were tinted with rouge, pink and moist like cherries, tempting one to taste. Under the glow of the fire, the girl was shrouded in a warm orange light, evoking a strong desire to embrace her.

Xiulote pressed his lips together and swallowed hard. Seeing the elderly woman struggling, he took a step forward, reaching out his large hand towards the delicate girl...

"Snap!"

Aweit swiftly blocked Xiulote's hand with a raise of his scepter. He glared fiercely at Xiulote before turning his head and speaking to the elderly woman.

"Thank you, Aunt!"

"Haha, no problem! Carrying Alisa to her wedding fulfills one of my wishes!"

The elderly woman laughed heartily, her demeanor calm and amiable. According to Alliance customs, the bride must be carried from her family's home to the groom's by a highly respected elderly woman. The entire process must be uninterrupted, and the bride cannot touch the ground. Once the ceremony is completed, the bride officially transforms from her father's daughter to the man's wife.

"Sigh..."

Thinking of this, Aweit slightly lowered his eyes, feeling a bit emotional. He bit his lip, glared at Xiulote again, and shouted in a deep voice.

"Let's go!"

Upon hearing the King's command, the crowd raised their torches and surged out of the palace, forming a wedding procession of hundreds. At the center of the procession were the families of the bride and groom, flanked by Alliance nobles, surrounded by musicians and singers, with Royal Warriors clad in armor under long robes forming the outermost circle.

As the crowd walked slowly while singing and playing music, a large group of Capital City citizens was attracted, observing the wedding from afar and singing praises loudly. From the Royal Palace to the High Priest's Mansion, the short journey took nearly half an hour before they arrived at the brightly lit mansion.

The High Priest Xutel, dressed in elaborate ceremonial attire and adorned with a bright Feather Crown, was already waiting at the main entrance of the mansion. As the groom's guardian, he had been waiting in the mansion, preparing for the second feast.

"Greetings, High Priest Xutel! The Chief Divine casts a glorious light, the red sparrow brings joyful news!"

Cacamatzin stood at the forefront of the procession, holding a torch. He lowered his head slightly, a smile radiating from his face.

"Ancestors' blessings! The sacred wedding is approaching, and the blissful marriage, like the night sky, will be forever merged and never parted!"

"Greetings, Elder Cacamatzin!"

The High Priest Xutel stood at the entrance, glancing at Xiulote from afar. Then, he bowed his head deeply.

"The Chief Divine witnesses, ancestors' blessings! The grand door has opened, welcoming the sacred wedding. The bride and groom, like the sky and earth, will merge in the night, giving birth to divine offspring! From now on, only the Chief Divine's call will separate them!"

Upon finishing, the two elders exchanged understanding smiles, touched arms, and led the procession into the main entrance of the High Priest's Mansion. The two had known each other for many years, were of similar age, and were family brothers through their mutual grandfather.

The wedding procession filed into the mansion, gathering again in the garden. The garden was vast, with the altar of the Chief Divine at the center. A large newly dug fire pit filled with grass, pine branches, and spices was in front of the altar, and a seven to eight square meter hemp mat lay before the pit.

"Light the new bonfire! Under the ancestors' watch, the bride and groom sit on the mat, connecting through ancient rituals!"

With that, Cacamatzin extended the torch and personally ignited the bonfire. Warm flames rose immediately, and wisps of green smoke curled up from the grass pile. Quickly, with the help of pine resin, the fire grew stronger, blending the pine's fresh fragrance with aromatic spices, spreading throughout the garden.

Seeing this, Xiulote became somewhat anxious. Next was the most crucial part of the wedding, the connecting ceremony between the bride and groom!

Under the crowd's expectant gazes, he was led by Uncle Cacamatzin to sit on the left side of the hemp mat. Uncle Cacamatzin removed his outer robe and shirt, exposing his youthful, well-defined chest.

Meanwhile, the elderly woman, sweating and panting, put down the carried Alisa. Though over fifty years old and robust, carrying Alisa for so long had indeed tired her. Thankfully, Alisa, despite her full figure, was light and delicate like a cloud.

Chapter 824: The Holy Wedding End_3

"Aunt, thank you!"

The girl in white expressed her gratitude, revealing a joyful smile. She cast a shy glance at Xiuluo, then bent her knees, barefoot, and sat on the right side of the straw mat.

Xiuluo was sitting on the mat, his right shoulder slightly weighted as a warm and soft figure leaned against him. A flame rose in his heart, and he extended his arm powerfully, embracing the soft girl in his arms.

"Ah!"

Alisa exclaimed softly, her eyelids drooping as her face reddened. She slightly turned her face and pressed it against Xiuluo's chest.

"Haha! The heroic Jaguar and the beautiful White Deer... truly blessed by the Chief Divine, a wedding bestowed by the Divine!"

Seeing this scene, the surrounding great nobles laughed heartily, sincerely praising. The Mexica Alliance had been founded for only fifty years, retaining many traditions of the tribal clans with its simple and robust customs.

Xiuluo held his beloved, feeling the tenderness in his arms. He gently inhaled, and the girl's fragrance enveloped him, making his mind wander.

"...the wedding ceremony, let it proceed faster!"

As if hearing his call, Cacamatzin laughed heartily. Holding a black, wide cloak, he walked to the mat where the couple was leaning together.

"Xiuluo, Alisa! The ancestors of the Mexican Royal Family are watching you in the firelight, witnessing this sacred wedding!"

The elder Cacamatzin called their names aloud. The garden instantly fell silent, and everyone held their breath, focusing intently. Among countless expectant gazes, Cacamatzin personally unfolded the loose cloak and draped it over the couple embraced together!

As the cloak fell, Xiuluo's joy subsided, and his expression turned solemn. He tightened his embrace, somewhat forcefully holding the beloved girl firmly in his arms. Then, the young man silently bowed his head, making a solemn vow in his heart! He vowed with ancestors, bloodline, divine beings, and all he revered, to promise a lifetime of love and companionship!

Alisa's face initially showed joy, then a hint of sorrow. She gently lifted her head, glancing at her father not far away, revealing a clear sense of reluctance. However, after a few breaths, she turned her head and leaned firmly against her lover's strong chest, her lips curling into a sweet, heartfelt smile.

Seeing his daughter's action, Aweit gripped the divine staff in his hand, feeling infinite bitterness. He stood there, experiencing a blend of bitterness and joy, with a touch of melancholy. At that moment, the appearance of his deceased wife suddenly surfaced in his mind, making his eyes moist as he smiled.

Further away, the High Priest Xutel stood straight, watching the couple under the cloak. His eyes were full of relief, and a satisfied smile appeared on his aged face. Yet, unconsciously, his spine hunched. Within that relieved smile, there was a profound sense of reluctance and regret.

Beside the High Priest, Xiuxoke was laughing heartily, even spreading his arms unconsciously. He looked at his heroic son, his face filled with pride and joy. Moments later, he glanced at his growing belly, and as he laughed, tears inexplicably overflowed.

"The clan is passed down in the firelight! The immortal ancestors of the Royal Family have passed the divine bloodline to you!"

Under the gaze of hundreds of great nobles, Cacamatzin spoke again. He reached out, grasping the cloak's corners, and then tied them together tightly!

"Xiuluo, Alisa! From this moment on, you are officially husband and wife! You will form a noble family, you will bear the descendants of the Divine, you will continue the royal bloodline! You will merge like blood and water, journeying together to life's end, until the day of death!!"

Chapter 825: The Spirit of the Clouds

"Blood mingles, life and death intertwined. Holding your hand, never apart in life or death!..."

Before the raging flames, Xiulote tightly embraced the maiden in white in his arms. With a solemn expression, he recited loud and clear in a language no one could understand, as if praying with divine words.

Then, he took out a sharp Obsidian Dagger and slowly but surely made a long cut in the center of his left palm. The pain in his hand came instantly, followed by the piercing red blood.

"Alisa, with the Divine and Ancestors as witnesses, you are my eternal wife! I swear by the heart where my soul resides, to love you, protect you, understand you, and meld with you with an undying soul!"

Xiulote gazed into Alisa's eyes, raised his bleeding left hand, and swore with utmost seriousness. He made an eternal vow to his beloved from the heart.

"No matter how time changes, no matter how the world shifts, I will always be by your side, life and death interdependent, never abandoning!..."

"Xiulote!..."

Alisa's eyes widened, gazing lovingly at her beloved, emotionally calling out. Moments later, she took Xiulote's dagger without hesitation, and under her father's low exclamation, also cut her left hand.

"Xiulote, with the Divine and Ancestors as witnesses, you are my only husband! I am your spirit, you are my day and night. The spirit will dance in the day and night until she dies, her soul dispersed into the wind... I will entwine with you as well..."

Hearing this, Xiulote's heart trembled. He extended his left hand, and Alisa also extended her left hand. In an instant, the two bleeding palms pressed tightly together, fingers interlocking, blood mingling!

"Alisa!..."

At this moment, Xiulote felt his heart beating violently. Surging love filled his heart, making him tremble all over, etched deeply in his soul.

"Praise the Chief Divine! It is the blood oath ceremony!..."

Seeing this scene, the Great Nobility participating in the wedding exclaimed in surprise. According to Alliance customs, the groom and bride cutting their palms and pressing them together symbolized loyalty and vows - the blood oath ceremony! This ritual is a solemn promise to the Divine, only held when both parties are Divine Descendants, and is rarely seen at weddings.

"Good! Very good!"

Cacamatzin praised with a laugh. He extended his right hand, holding the elderly woman beside him, and raised the scepter in his left hand, shouting loudly.

"Release the flying fireworks! Offer the most splendid blessings to the Chief Divine gazing from the sky, to be sung throughout the Lake Capital City!"

Upon hearing this, the High Priest waved his hand with a smile. Twenty kingdom craftsmen were well-prepared, igniting bamboo fireworks in hand and pointing the mouths towards the sky.

"Whoosh whoosh whoosh! Whoosh whoosh whoosh!"

Twenty fireworks swiftly ascended into the air, blossoming dazzling lights! Red, green, yellow, purple... in an instant, the night sky glittered brightly, like the feathered serpent swinging long feathers, as well as the fiery Divine Tree spreading its branches. The magical flames flickered in the sky, shocking the entire Lake Capital City and thousands of citizens in the Capital City.

"Whoosh whoosh whoosh! Whoosh whoosh whoosh!"

In a matter of moments, another twenty fireworks bloomed in the night sky. A burst of multicolored light blooming and fading, astonishing the Great Nobility gazing up. Only then did the people beneath the fireworks react, rendering a mountain and sea-like cheer.

"Praise the Chief Divine! This is the Divine's brilliance!"

"Flowing fire in the night sky, a sign of Great Prosperity!..."

"Blessings to His Highness and the Princess!..."

Aweit raised his head, gazing at the fireworks in the sky, silent for a long time. The fireworks shone brightly in the sky, a marvelous sight that stirred hearts. Moments later, his gaze shifted downwards, looking at the tightly embraced couple, a smile quietly spreading across his lips.

Xiulote held Alisa's hand tightly, embracing his wife, gently inhaling her long hair. The maiden's cheek slightly lifted, her hair clinging close to the youth's neck. The two quietly embraced, watching the splendid sky, hearts filled with happiness.

"Alisa, I invented these fireworks for you."

Xiulote slightly lowered his head, whispering in the maiden's ear.

"Do you like them?"

Alisa blinked her sparkling eyes, like hiding a spring pool.

"I like them! As long as it's from you, I would like it, uh..."

The maiden thought for a moment, turned her head. Her beautiful eyes curved into a smile, then she embraced her beloved tightly, boldly kissing him.

"Uh, love you..."

"Ah..."

Xiulote was caught off guard, his lips slightly parted, feeling the soft touch moving his soul. He dazedly kissed for a few breaths, his eyes igniting flames, then responded forcefully entwining.

"Haha!"

The fireworks in the sky didn't last long, but the newlyweds' deep kiss persisted. Seeing this, the elder Cacamatzin laughed heartily. He patiently waited for a moment, then once more waved the scepter, loudly joyously calling.

"Praise the Chief Divine! The second banquet begins, indulge in wine!"

"Great! Drink, play music, celebrate joyously!"

The nobility cheerfully responded, dispersing from the fire pit, taking seats at the arranged placements. Several maidservants hurriedly approached, bandaging the injuries on His Highness and the Princess' palms, then leading the couple to seats at the head of the table.

Everyone held the first banquet at the bride's home, then lit torches escorting, carrying the bride to the High Priest's Mansion. Afterwards, they ignited raging bonfires, fastened cloaks, conducted the hand-in-hand blood oath, and released magical fireworks. Until now, with the start of the second banquet, all wedding procedures were completed. After this, the newlyweds would leave the banquet, entering the bridal chamber together...

The second banquet differed from the first; guests could drink but must strictly adhere to the rules. Only nobility and guards over thirty years old were eligible to drink.

Chapter 826: The Spirit of the Clouds_2

"Praise the Chief Divine! Celebrate the auspicious day of the Alliance, celebrate the Royal Family's wedding!"

The elder Cacamatzin led the toast, downing the tequila in one go. Then, the King Aweit followed, happily gulping a drink. Next were High Priest Xutel and the Eagle Leader Xiuxoke. After the four had their drink, it was the turn of the Great Nobility of each state.

Finally, it was the turn of the two newlyweds. Xiulote and Alisa sat side by side, raised their cups of chocolate, and smilingly drank deeply. Unlike the tradition of the Celestial Empire, in such a sacred wedding, the young newlyweds were not allowed to drink alcohol but could drink chocolate instead.

Everyone raised their cups and drank together, then enjoyed a lavish feast. Xiulote gazed at Alisa beside him. Although he hadn't had any alcohol, he was already intoxicated. He couldn't hear anything, see anything, other than the girl in white, his breathtaking wife.

Alisa also turned her head, her eyes following her lover's movements, a gentle smile on her face.

Their eyes met, inseparable, feeding each other some fruits and vegetables, with no more interest in the food. Cacamatzin laughed heartily and said a few words in a deep voice. Xiulote then led Alisa in a bow to everyone before withdrawing from the lively banquet. Under Nashu's escort, the two tightly linked arms and proceeded to the bridal chamber in the backyard.

Alisa blinked and looked at Nashu leading the way. She seemed a bit puzzled, tilting her head to ask her lover beside her.

"Xiulote, who is she?"

"Uh... she's my shadow slave."

"Shadow slave..."

Alisa slightly raised her eyebrows, thinking. She naturally knew the existence of shadow slaves and their purpose. A few moments later, Alisa pouted, secretly pinching Xiulote's waist, and asked softly.

"Xiulote, have you ever... received some guidance from the shadow slave?"

"Uh..."

Upon hearing this, Xiulote felt a little guilty.

"What... guidance?"

"Hmm..."

Alisa blinked, stood on tiptoes, leaned to Xiulote's ear, and bit his ear.

"Naughty monkey, is this your first time?"

"Ah!"

Xiulote's body trembled as his ear was bitten. He nodded, stammering.

"Hmm... Alisa, I haven't truly explored... the mysteries of passion."

"Hmm, swear to the Divine?"

"Divine witness!"

Xiulote said firmly. Although he passively received some services from the shadow slave, he had not truly explored the mysteries of the opposite sex. Even in his lifetime memory, spanning decades, no matter how rich the theory, he had no practical experience.

"Hmm, good brother... Divine witness! This is my first time too. I've always been waiting for you, waiting for this day..." Alisa's eyes glimmered, seeming to drip with emotion. She looked at the expansive bridal chamber ahead and pulled Xiulote's hand, quickly entering it.

The bridal chamber was very spacious, divided into two rooms. The outer room was packed with precious wedding gifts, all kinds of gemstones, gold, silver, and jade artifacts were dazzling.

The two glanced around briefly, then walked directly into the inner room. The inner room was also large, with a sturdy ebony bed in the center, adorned with beautiful patterns emitting a pleasant fragrance. In the corner of the room, an exquisite table held daily sundries, with a few large wooden paintings leaning against the stone walls. Xiulote glanced at the paintings and was immediately stunned.

The paintings were divided into grids of different sizes, depicting lifelike men and women in various poses and expressions.

"Ah? This is..."

"Hehe, this is the painting of the Goddess of Spring, brought from the Goddess's temple."

Alisa took a few glances and understood. Her eyes smiled with a mix of shyness and allure, speaking tenderly.

"Xiulote, no need to look! These paintings, I have consulted with the Priestesses in the Goddess's temple... Since you don't understand, let me teach you!"

"Alisa, you..."

Xiulote was stunned. He looked at the stunning girl, who walked to the table, took some slippery ointment. The ointment had a faint fragrance mixed with a subtle fishy smell, seemingly a blend of fish oil and honey.

"Good brother..."

Like a light butterfly, the girl fluttered back. She stretched out her tender arms, hugged Xiulote's neck, and boldly pressed her body against his.

"Hmm, Xiulote, do you know? The lotus only blooms for the hummingbird, which has a long beak that can reach deep into the flower's heart and taste the sweet nectar..."

The girl's breath, like orchids, whispered temptations in the youth's ear. Xiulote felt the soft and warm jade in his arms, a hot flame rising in his heart. He suddenly hugged the delicate girl tightly and then lowered his head for a passionate deep kiss.

"Ah!... Hmm..."

Alisa exclaimed, then responded passionately. Their lips and teeth intertwined, two small fishes entangling in the mouth, occasionally licking, gently biting, and sucking each other... The intense kiss didn't last long, and the young couple was already aroused, like water and fire meeting. On the stone floor, their clothes had already fallen.

"Hmm, Xiulote, let me teach you..."

Candlelight flickered in the bridal chamber, illuminating the two people who had shed their clothes. Alisa called out emotionally, her expression shy, but her movements were alluring and bold. She gently extended her hand, dipped it in some slippery ointment, bit her lip, and reached down.

"Ah!"

Within a few moments, Xiulote gritted his teeth and called out, shivering violently. The flame in his heart burned into a fire, as if he wanted to devour the lovely person in front of him. After several explorations, he couldn't contain himself anymore and directly lifted the delicate girl, placing her on the plush bed.

The flame burned intensely, while the water was gentle and moist. Water and fire were closely connected, finally blending together in an instant after mutual exploration. Two low cries of pain sounded in the room at the same time. At that moment, the girl became a woman, and the boy became a man.

"Alisa, does it hurt?"

Xiulote stopped, gently kissed her, and asked softly.

"Yes."

In Alisa's eyes, tears of pain and joy overflowed. She nodded, hugged her lover tightly, and whispered.

"Xiulote, and you?"

"...Uh, it doesn't hurt."

Xiulote clenched his teeth and shook his head.

"Hmm... naughty brother! You're supposed to feel pain too."

Alisa's eyes sparkled. She suddenly lifted her head, leaned toward his shoulder, and bit hard.

"Ah!"

Xiulote cried out in pain, his shoulder burning with pain, leaving deep marks.

"Alisa!..."

"Love me..."

The pain ignited the intensity of the fire. The fierce fire stirred violently, changing into intense postures, trying to turn the water into steam. The delicate water passively endured, becoming softer and wetter, wrapping around the fire deeply.

Under the girl's guidance, Xiulote followed his body's instincts, like a traveler exploring the world, greedily seeking every beautiful scene.

He saw the spirit of a flower blossoming beautifully beneath him, swaying with an exquisite posture, bringing the fragrance of the bloom. He saw the spirit of a butterfly with astonishing flexibility and resilience. The girl's tender white legs turned into the butterfly's wings, fluttering in the air under the traveler's pursuit. The traveler stretched out his hand to catch the dancing butterfly, seeing the crystal toes tightly clasped, with feet arched upwards.

He felt the spirit of the wind, hearing the calls in the breeze, deeply entangled in the wind. The traveler trekked through the wind, feeling different kinds of tangles and constraints with each step, bringing bone-deep pleasure.

He felt the spirit of the clouds, so pure and soft, intoxicating him. From the pure clouds, rain mist overflowed, veiling the girl's eyes, dripping down into the young man's heart...

"Alisa, you are the spirit of flowers, the spirit of butterflies, the spirit of wind, the spirit of clouds... and my spirit!"

Xiulote shouted in his heart, his eyes burning intensely, unable to stop the desire for exploration. That night was so long and unforgettable, the fire and water could not be calmed.

Nashu stood in the outer room, like a stone lotus, alert and vigilant. She listened to the blossoming flowers, the flapping butterflies, the howling wind, and the falling clouds... Listening, she gradually bit her lips, her face reddening, her legs tightening.

Until a low roar came, accompanied by a soft cry. She shivered all over, letting out a low moan. The cold female Samurai instantly lost strength, leaning softly against the wall. She looked outside in a daze. The banquet's firelight hadn't died out all night, the moonlight hidden in the clouds, with spirits faintly flitting about.

Chapter 827: Plan for Medical Research

The moon sets and the sun rises, after a night of turbulence, the skies are clear again. The morning sunlight spills over the Lake Capital City, and the devout morning prayers are recited in the wind. The citizens of the Capital City, having experienced yesterday's wedding and witnessed many miracles, are all the more devout in their prayers this morning. The rolling waves of sound shake the heavens, like rumbling thunder.

Xiulote woke up amidst the prayers, feeling sore all over, and his shoulders burning with pain. He felt the warmth beside him, turning his head to see his sleeping wife. Alisa was curled up like a cat, her face still streaked with tear marks, clutching tightly to his arm.

The young man leaned down gently, planting a soft kiss on the "cat's" lips. The cat twitched her nose, wrinkled her cute face, and murmured unconsciously. The young man listened closely, only vaguely catching some indistinct words.

"Mmm... no... naughty brother..."

Xiulote chuckled, touching Alisa's cheek. Then, he carefully pulled his arm out and got out of bed.

Nashu was waiting in the outer room, having already prepared breakfast. The cold-faced female samurai was calmly composed, respectfully greeting the prince, though her eyes seemed to avoid his for some reason.

Xiulote had a simple breakfast, stretched his muscles, and took some small snacks back to the inner room to wait for Alisa to wake up.

Until the sun was high in the sky, the two of them, faces flushed, finally emerged from the bridal chamber together. Xiulote, escorting his wife, first went to pay respects at his grandfather's house.

The High Priest was seated cross-legged in the room, smiling gently, though he seemed to have aged somewhat. He first took out the ancestral obsidian necklace as a gift for Alisa. Then, he pondered for a moment and solemnly instructed.

"Xiulote, Alisa... as a married couple, you must support each other and advance together, like beans twining around corn, inseparable. Your marriage not only concerns your happiness but also the stability of the entire alliance!..."

"Xiulote, my child, always maintain respect for the King. If you encounter difficulties, discuss them thoroughly with your wife, do not hide anything. Alisa, please stand by Xiulote's side, support his endeavors, and maintain his trust with the King... As long as the two royal families remain closely united, the powerful Mexica Alliance will have no weaknesses. The future of the entire world will ultimately be in your hands!..."

After hearing his grandfather's advice, Xiulote and Alisa exchanged a glance and silently held hands. Then, they both bowed their heads in salute to the elder before them.

"Respected Grandfather, thank you for your guidance. We will follow your will!"

Seeing their mutual understanding, the High Priest smiled slightly and nodded. He said a few more words with a smile, then gave a solemn command.

"May the Chief Divine protect you! I have nothing more for you. Go pay respects to the King!"

"May the Chief Divine protect you! May you stay evergreen like pine and cypress!"

Xiulote, holding Alisa's hand, saluted respectfully and withdrew from the room. Then, they hurriedly proceeded to the King's Palace, escorted by the Imperial Guard Warriors.

The King's Great Hall was bright and clean, with no one else present. Aweit, dressed in splendid royal attire, wearing the Feather Crown of the Quetzal bird, awaited alone on the throne.

Seeing the two enter the hall and salute together, a smile appeared on Aweit's face. He looked at his daughter with a smile for a moment, then inexplicably lowered his eyes, emotions fluctuating in his heart but not knowing what to say. After a moment, he looked up again with a gentle smile.

"Come, sit closer."

Aweit beckoned them to sit closer.

Alisa blinked and came to her father's side, clutching his arm and shaking it vigorously.

"Father, did you drink a lot last night? Let me make you some hangover potion... Your daughter misses you... Yesterday's wedding was busy and tiring, I didn't get a chance to talk to you..."

"It's fine. Yesterday's wine was for your wedding, your father was only happy."

Faced with his daughter's coquettishness, Aweit's eyes were gentle, with no sign of the King's sternness. He chatted with a smile for a few moments until he looked at Xiulote, and his expression became serious.

"Xiulote, my child."

Aweit's eyes were somewhat complex. He looked at his student, now his son-in-law, thought for a moment, and finally spoke solemnly.

"After the wedding, Alisa will accompany you to the kingdom to live in Qinchongcan City. She has hundreds of handmaidens and five hundred family warriors, you must arrange them properly!"

"Huh?"

Alisa blinked her eyes in response. Her daily life was quite simple, and she never thought she would need so many attendants.

"Yes. Rest assured!"

Xiulote held his wife's hand and nodded. He understood what Aweit implied, which was the distribution of royal power.

"I will arrange these warriors, handmaidens, and servants properly. In the kingdom, there will be many things for Alisa to manage, and she will need people to assist her."

Upon hearing this, Aweit nodded slightly. He lovingly glanced at his daughter, then asked again.

"Alisa, what do you want to do in the future?"

"Father... I want to be with Xiulote, take care of him, and manage the household well."

Alisa leaned on her lover's shoulder, blinking gently, her eyes seemingly shining.

"And what else?"

"Mmm... I like plants, and I like flowers. I want to continue studying alchemy. That way, if someone close to me falls ill, I can help..."

"Hmm. Good girl..."

Aweit reached out and rubbed his daughter's hair. Then, he looked calmly at his son-in-law.

"Xiulote, what do you plan for Alisa to manage when you return to the kingdom?"

Xiulote pondered for a moment, looked at his wife's doe-like pure eyes, and smiled as he replied.

"Alisa has brought many retainers; she can help me manage the kingdom's gemstone trade. She can also handle matters in the Palace of Wind... In the long term, I plan to establish a new Medical Institute in the kingdom, fully managed by Alisa, to research injuries, diseases, alchemy, and treatments. Among the Kingdom Priests, there will be a new branch of Medical Priests, incorporating herb priests and doctors. At Divine Power University, there will be new medical courses to address various human diseases and abnormalities."

"Medical Institute? Medical Priests? Medicine... the knowledge of sacrifices and alchemy?"

Upon hearing this, Aweit's eyebrows raised slightly. The Mexica Alliance revered sacrifices, and the High Priests often practiced this art, having deep anatomical studies of the human body. In the priestly traditions, there are specialized murals recording the different positions of human organs, the heart's function for blood supply, and how to cut blood vessels to avoid blood spillage... And the study of alchemy relies on the various mystical plants and animals of tropical America, achieving effects such as anesthesia, hallucination, sedation, and anti-inflammation...

In the language of the alliance, medicine refers to sacrifices and alchemy, combined with the treatment of trauma. This knowledge is not widely disseminated among the common people but is usually monopolized by the High Priests as a symbol of their divine power.

"Yes. I have some divine revelations regarding medicine, which are complex and profound. I want Alisa to help me organize them comprehensively..."

Xiulote thought for a moment and then added.

"In the near future, the Medical Institute will become one of the kingdom's most important institutions. A large number of medical priests will go into the army to treat soldiers' injuries and diseases, reducing military casualties. Medical centers will also be established in cities for the nobility and commoners to seek treatment... Both the Medical Institute and the medical priests will be under Alisa's jurisdiction."

At this point, Xiulote's resolve was firm and his demeanor steady. He was serious about emphasizing medicine and making the Medical Institute a critical institution.

With the approach of European colonizers, the threat of Old Continent diseases loomed. The Old Continent was thousands of miles away, and in this era, their projection capabilities were extremely limited. With the alliance's current military strength, they were not afraid of hundreds or thousands of European troops. The real terror came from the contagious diseases of the Old Continent, various dreadful pandemics.

Smallpox, measles, plague, typhoid fever, cholera, diphtheria, mumps... Each disease could claim tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, or even millions of lives! In the tropical rainforest, there would also be acute malaria and yellow fever from Africa, forever altering the rainforest's ecology.

All these required organized research from the American Empire to find countermeasures. Xiulote had long planned to establish a grand Medical Institute for groundbreaking medical research. He would pool the kingdom's resources, sparing no manpower or material, to pave the way for medical advancement.

Hence, the Medical Institute would also integrate with divine authority to minimize any obstacles. When a pandemic struck, and medicine proved effective, the entire medical institution would be shrouded in a sacred aura, and the person in charge would surely be deified...

"I can be at ease only if the Medical Institute is entrusted to Alisa..."

Xiulote contemplated, his eyes shifting. After a few moments, he smiled serenely and squeezed his wife's hand.

Aweit's expression changed, and he slowly nodded. Caring for warriors and treating the nobility, medicine could win people's hearts without much danger. He looked at his daughter again.

"Alisa, my daughter, will you be willing?"

Alisa's eyes were crescent-shaped with a smiling expression, and she clung to her husband's arm, nodding vigorously.

"Yes, Father, I am willing. What Xiulote said is for my good, and I like them too..."

"... Ah."

Watching his daughter's innocent demeanor, Aweit lowered his eyes. He wanted to give more advice but lacked the interest to speak further.

"Alright, let it be! The ancestors will bless you!"

"May the ancestors protect you!"

Xiulote, holding Alisa's hand, saluted his father-in-law and took his leave. Just as he was turning to leave, a familiar voice called out.

"Xiulote!"

"Teacher?"

Xiulote turned, looking towards the great hall behind him.

At some point, Aweit had stood up, leaving the cold throne. He took a few steps forward and came to Xiulote, looking at his student, now taller than himself. After a moment of silence, he only said one thing.

"My daughter is entrusted to you... Treat her well..."

Chapter 828: Boating on the Lake and Dancing with Butterflies

The highland sky has just cleared after the clouds and rain, the fields in the valley are filled with the fragrance of grain. September heralds a bountiful harvest, and the farmers are busy in the fields, their faces brimming with hopeful joy. The Mexican Valley enjoys a warm climate and fertile soil, and the Lake Texcoco irrigation channels are well-maintained and tamed over the years. The fields by the lake have highly stable yields, with no fear of droughts or floods, nor worries about saline and alkaline soils.

"Along the shores of the Great Lake, the fields are lush and green, the villages densely populated and prosperous, it's truly delightful!"

Xiulote is boating on the lake, looking at the endless fields along the shore, and the countless busy farmers, he can't help but exclaim. The pumpkins in the fields have been harvested, the beans are being gathered, and the corn has just ripened too, it looks like another abundant year!

Alisa is smiling brightly, softly snuggling in Xiulote's arms. She looks at the large flocks of birds by the lake, attracted by the aroma of the grains in the fields, circling back and forth in the sky, changing their flying forms, unwilling to leave for a long time. Her heart wanders with the birds, dancing in the free sky, then it falls back into her lover's embrace.

"Xiulo, the birds are attracted by the aroma of corn, flying here from distant skies... um... if I became a stalk of corn, would you become a bird, flying around me?"

Alisa blinks, looking at the young man's solemn face.

Xiulote is momentarily stunned, looking at the soft beauty in his arms, he nods in response.

"Lisa, if you became a stalk of corn, then I would also become a stalk of corn. From birth to withering, we would always stand side by side."

"Ah..."

Hearing this answer, Alisa's eyes widen, filled with longing. A few breaths later, she suddenly extends her arms and tightly hugs the young man. Her face pressed against his firm chest, she lets out a low murmur.

"...then I want to be a bean plant... intertwining with you, from life to death..."

"Lisa..."

Xiulote feels the softness in his arms, and his hardened heart also softens. He tightly hugs his wife, as if holding a part of his own life. He recalls an old poem and softly recites it.

"I wish to be with you, sharing all of life's joys and sorrows!... We will stand together like trees, ruling over the land beneath our feet, standing in front of countless citizens... Our roots will grasp firmly underground, our leaves will touch in the clouds... sharing the cold, the wind, and the thunder together, sharing the mist, the fog, and the rainbow together..."

The two embrace tightly, whispering many words of love, then soon fall silent. The small boat is quiet, only the sound of two hearts beating closely together in affection.

Nashu, dressed in leather armor, leads a dozen small boats and a hundred Imperial Guard Warriors, patrolling the periphery from afar. She occasionally turns her head to glance at the couple on the small boat kissing, then quickly moves her gaze away.

After a while, Alisa, her face flushed red, escapes from her lover's lips. She looks at the familiar Texcoco Lake District, and the magnificent Lake Capital City. This is her hometown, where she has grown up.

"Xiulo, what is the Kingdom of the Lake like?"

"The Kingdom of the Lake... is quite similar to the Alliance, only not as prosperous. Lake Patzcuaro is also very beautiful, with the flat lake reflecting the mountains, and many small islands in the lake. I've already picked out two islands, to be our garden and botanical garden... The Kingdom will be our home, and you will be the mistress of the house. We will manage the Patzcuaro Lake region together, making it as rich and beautiful as the heart of the Alliance!"

Xiulote said with a smile. Then, after pondering a bit, he added a few more words.

"Of course, my grandfather, father, and father-in-law are all here. We will come back and visit them often!"

"Yes! Xiulo, I will listen to you. Wherever you go, I will go with you..."

Alisa's eyes and brows curved, showing a pure and beautiful smile. Her pink lips opened slightly, exhaling a breath like orchids, with shyness hidden within her charm.

Xiulote blushed as he looked, licking his lips, feeling a bit warm. Several breaths later, he suddenly bent down, extending his strong hand, gently searching within the softness of the clouds, seeking the dew hidden within.

"Caw! Caw caw!"

A group of black crows flew by in the sky, curiously looking at the swaying boat in the lake, unable to tell if it was one person or two. The crows circled the boat once, then flew westward, leaving behind an unnoticed cawing, like a hidden omen of destiny.

The lake, as smooth as a mirror, gently swayed the boat. After a while, the young couple, breathless from their embrace, lay on the boat, looking up at the sky.

"Lisa, life is short, yet full of wonders. Our existence is but a fleeting moment in the vastness of the universe. If life is a dream, I wish to be a butterfly in that dream, flying with you, day and night in the clouds!..."

Xiulote gazed at the clouds, lost in thought. Holding his lover, he felt a happiness he had never known, his heart filled with love. For some reason, he thought of Zhuang Zhou dreaming of butterflies, then of Liang Zhu transforming into butterflies, and felt a bit dazed.

"Xiulo, why would people be butterflies in dreams?... The Goddess of Spring gave us the spring of life, which turned into the blood in our bodies. Our blood mingles, truly feeling each other's heartbeat, feeling our lover's life... To me, you exist, truly, by my side, in my heart, and within my body..."

Alisa blinked, leaning on Xiulote's shoulder, biting her lover's ear.

"Naughty brother, if you are a butterfly, then I will be a lantern flower, drawing you in... then wrapping around you..."

"Ah? Biting me again?!"

Xiulote felt a sharp pain in his ear and immediately snapped out of his reverie. Pretending to be angry, he turned to capture his mischievous wife, wanting to punish the cat that loved to bite, but could not muster the strength. In the end, he could only kiss her rosy cheeks and cute ears, declaring in a deep voice.

"Brother is not a butterfly... but a hummingbird..."

"Um... is that so? I don't believe it. Hummingbirds are very greedy, hehe..."

The small boat rocked continuously as the newlyweds began to frolic again. Their sweet moments seemed endless, until the sun rose high in the sky, and Xiulote remembered their plan for the day.

"Lisa, are you hungry?"

"Yeah... a little..."

Alisa's neck turned red, tilting her head, she licked her lips. Her bright eyes seemed to be filled with spring water.

"Bro... can we eat?..."

"Uh... the guards have brought lunch and desserts, we will have them at the botanical garden later. We'll spend the afternoon there admiring the flowers and butterflies. In the evening, we'll go to the bird sanctuary on the floating island to see flamingos and snowy herons. And then in the evening, we'll head to the aquatic lake to see the tropical colorful fish. Finally, we'll go to the pyramid to watch the stars, just like our last date..."

Looking at the person he desired, Xiulote tried to suppress the fire within him, saving some strength for the evening.

After their wedding, he had handed over the High Priesthood's duties, settling down to enjoy the honeymoon with his beloved wife. They were inseparable, exploring mountains and waters each day, temporarily forgetting the troubles of the Alliance and the world, seeing only each other, and feeling only tenderness in their hearts.

Xiulote knew that the eastward expedition of the Alliance was imminent, as the Commander-in-Chief of the Southern Army, he could only rest for at most a month. Once the expedition began, it was uncertain how long it would last. The future would be a time of brief reunions and long separations, making the newlywed days all the more precious.

"Shall we go to the garden?"

Alisa nodded joyfully. At the end of summer and the beginning of autumn, the weather on the lake remained warm. Boating around the lake, their bodies were drenched in sweat, making the botanical garden a perfect place to cool down. The garden was in full bloom, with flowers and butterflies, making it an ideal time for a visit.

"Xiulo, when we go to the garden, I want... to dance for you."

"Ah? Dance..."

The small boat sailed smoothly, swiftly approaching the floating island ahead. Xiulote rowed the oars, pausing slightly at her words. His thoughts flew, his eyes lowered, gleaming like water.

"Lisa, what kind of dance... do you want to perform?"

"Hehe."

Alisa tilted her head, a sly smile on her face. She was like a cute little fox, leaning close to her lover's ear.

"Naughty brother, what's your favorite dance? I can do all of them."

"Well... I don't really watch dancers, I don't know much about dances."

"Really don't know?"

"Really."

"Hmm, let me think..."

Alisa's bright eyes sparkled. She puffed out her chest, looking at Xiulote's expression, speaking earnestly.

"I'll perform the Mistec's Dance of the Deer and the Vastec's Dance of the Cat. Xiulo, you'll definitely like it!"

"Ah! I... okay..."

Upon hearing this, Xiulote's gaze wavered, feeling a bit guilty.

"Xiulo, do you want to see it?"

"Uh... I want to watch it."

"Is it beautiful?"

"It's beautiful..."

"Hmph!"

Alisa suddenly got a little angry. She lifted her fair long leg, bent her glistening toe, lightly tapping Xiulote's heart.

"Hmph! Xiulo, in your heart, is there another beautiful woman who can dance?"

"Ah? No... no! The Chief Divine bears witness! Alisa, I only love you!"

Xiulote put down the oars, quickly making a fist and swearing. He looked around, unknowingly, the small boat had reached the floating island of the botanical garden, resting on a shallow beach. Ahead in the garden, large flowers were in bloom. They blushed with coquettish faces, swaying their slim waists, silently inviting visitors.

"Look, we've arrived, the beautiful lake garden!"

"Hmph!"

The girl tilted her head and pouted, still a bit unhappy. She had eyes only for her lover, and hoped that her lover's heart also had room only for her.

"Lisa... I..."

Xiulote was left speechless. After a moment's thought, he swiftly reached out, grabbing the girl's ankle.

"Um! Naughty brother... what are you going to do?"

Alisa batted her eyes, pretending to be a frightened little fox, she shrank back a little in fear. However, her strength was too weak to escape from the Hunter's grasp, only exposing more enticing vulnerabilities.

"Haha!"

Xiulote laughed heartily, showing the strength and agility of a warrior, easily pinning down the little fox, lifting her up in his arms. Then, barefoot, he jumped off the boat, stepping on the shallow waves, striding towards the garden.

"What am I going to do?"

The young man held the light girl, like holding a butterfly. The butterfly shyly folded its long wings, appearing delicate and crystalline.

"Of course, I'm dancing the Dance of the Butterfly with you!..."

The young man chuckled, his steps unwavering, heading straight into the beargrass bed with white flowers. The beargrass had soft lines, with curled and dense leaves, forming a naturally comfortable grass carpet. Soon, the wind carried away only his cheerful laughter, and the girl's soft calls.

A butterfly fluttered its wings, following the sound of the wind. It opened and closed its wings in the breeze, changing into different postures, its graceful dance captivating. After a long time, it blinked its eyes and landed on a lantern flower, watching as a hummingbird nestled into the flower, the petals wrapped around it, and it disappeared~

Chapter 829: Venturing Out into the Wilds

By the end of September, the skies were clear and the sun shone brightly. The moist southeasterly winds gradually ceased, replaced by dry, cold air from the northern highlands. The rainy season has now departed, and the dry season has gracefully arrived. The fields were lush and fragrant, with the villagers tirelessly busy. Pumpkins were drying, beans were being harvested, and the corn was just ripening.

By the shores of Lake Texcoco, a royal procession was winding its way along the abundant fields, heading towards Mount Estrella to the west. The villagers along the way knelt in respect, while the priests and village chiefs greeted them from afar, not daring to approach.

Five hundred Imperial Guard Warriors, wearing copper helmets and leather armor, carrying copper spears and longbows on their backs, marched in unity. They upheld the banner of the Black Wolf, also protecting the banner of the royal family beneath which traveled two noble Divine Descendant couples, Xiulote and Alisa.

The two had been married for a month, spending each day exploring exotic places and each night entwined in passion. Having visited every scenic spot around the Lake Capital City, their current journey aimed to pray at the Temple of the Sun atop the Holy Mountain, a few dozen li west of the capital. They would then vacation in the sacred grounds at the base of the Holy Mountain, enjoying the mountain's flowers and birdlife, the hot springs, and a restful one or two weeks to conclude their honeymoon.

Xiulote was not wearing armor, only a loose short robe, as he strolled through the early autumn fields. He gazed around at the hustle and happiness just before the harvest. A genuine smile spread across the young man's face as he recalled a phrase of unknown origin, which he recited softly.

"To wander aimlessly without knowing the hardships of the farmers and the prosperity and toil of the land and its people, is to..."

"Hmm? Xiulote, what are you saying?"

Alisa, dressed in a white robe and delicately crafted cloth shoes, with a silver bracelet securing her hair, looked pure and beautiful like a snow lotus, even without makeup. Hearing her lover's whisper, she blinked her eyes curiously.

"Hahaha, I mean to govern the Alliance well and manage the people, one must know the details of agricultural work, the poverty of the villages, the yield of the land, and the toil of the people! As the heir to the Alliance, if I don't know these things, I deserve to be whipped..."

Xiulote replied with a laugh, but his expression was serious. He watched the scene of the harvest in the fields, contemplating the foundation of the kingdom. The basis of all warfare lay in agriculture.

"Hmm... whipped?"

Upon hearing this, Alisa looked at her lover, her face blushing. She licked her lips, like a tempting little fox, and asked softly.

"Xiulote, who will whip you?"

"Of course, I will do it myself! As the High Priest, I need to periodically engage in self-reflection before the symbol of the Chief Divine..."

Xiulote confidently proclaimed, his voice loud and clear. A moment later, he was momentarily stunned, looking towards the shy maiden.

"Alisa?...You..."

"Hmm... According to the mythology, the Monkey God 'Ozomatli' is the partner of the God of Music and Dance 'Xochipilli'. But, you know, the Monkey God is always amorous and lively, hard to restrain his desires... If he misbehaves, the Goddess Xochipilli would take out a writhing snake whip, and snap..."

Alisa whispered with a red face, her voice becoming increasingly faint.

Xiulote found it hard to believe. He looked at the delicate girl and muttered.

"A punishment for cheating?... Alisa... do you think... well, it's not that I wouldn't..."

"Ah, stop it, it's so embarrassing, let's not talk about this anymore!"

The girl's neck turned red with shyness, and she stomped her foot in vexation. Turning her head as if to escape, she looked at the fields on both sides.

"Xiulote, look, the corn in the fields is already ripe. Why are these people sleeping by the fields instead of harvesting the corn?"

Upon hearing this, Xiulote smiled and gazed at the vast farmland. The expansive milpa was filled with ripe corn. Throughout the fields, thousands of Mexica villagers had brought the entire village to sleep in the fields. Occasionally, villagers in the distance waved sticks, and militia even launched stones to drive away birds and beasts eyeing the corn.

"Ah, Alisa, it's like this. Although the corn in the fields is ripe, it's not fully ripened. The birds and beasts are attracted by the fragrance of the ripening corn. The villagers have to drive them away while waiting for the corn to further ripen."

Xiulote pondered briefly and then explained in detail. Unlike other crops, corn doesn't easily fall off when mature. It completes its post-ripening on the plant, absorbing the last nutrients from the plant, thereby increasing the yield. Delaying the harvest by one or two weeks can increase the yield by nearly ten percent!

In these times of low yields, every bit of increase in food production is invaluable. Therefore, this was the most labor-intensive period just before the autumn harvest. The villagers had to sleep by the fields for one or two weeks, tending to the mature crops, allowing the fresh corn to fully ripen into shriveled old corn.

Hearing this knowledge about agriculture, Nashu's eyes sparkled, and she remained silent. She quietly studied the prince, seemingly understanding her master from a new perspective.

Bertade, standing a few steps away, guarding the periphery, smiled and commended Xiulote's explanation.

"His Highness is right! The corn needs to wait a bit longer to harvest more. About waiting until the milk line in the corn kernels completely disappears, the seeds become very hard, and the husks dry out, turn white, and loosen. At that time, the village priests and elders will urge the villagers to harvest day and night."

Alisa blinked and nodded. She was adept at growing flowers and herbs, and quickly grasped agricultural matters.

"Xiulote, I understand! You've told me that the vitality of crops comes from the sunlight bestowed by the Sun Supreme God, the rain from the God of Wind and Rain, and the nutrients from the Earth Mother Goddess. The longer the corn takes to mature, the more it yields. And now, with ample sunlight and no rain, there's no worry of it molding!"

"Exactly!"

Xiulote nodded in satisfaction, reaching out to gently pinch his lover's cheek. The group continued their journey, passing through the extended cornfields, and arriving at vast cotton fields. The scenery changed from endless yellow and green to a blend of gray and bright green.

"Your Highness, these are the Alliance's cotton fields. Not far to the west stands the towering Holy Mountain, surrounded by steam-emitting hot springs and fertile land, mostly controlled by the nobility and warriors of the capital, taking advantage of the best irrigation canals to plant valuable cotton."

Listening to the Head Warrior's explanation, Xiulote nodded slightly. He stopped, casting his gaze over the low cotton bushes, deep in thought.

Cotton is a highly water-consuming and soil-depleting crop. In the Mexica Alliance, naturally, they cultivate the higher-yielding Mexican short-staple cotton.

Compared to the coarse-staple cotton from India on the Old Continent, Mexican short-staple cotton has a shorter growth period by about ten days, a much higher yield, and significantly better quality cotton fibers, making it easier to weave into cloth. This was a coveted economic crop for the Old Continent and key to the mid to late Ming Dynasty's cotton production boom.

Cotton-weaving fabrics were globally traded commodities. In the realm of Central America, cotton cloth was used similarly to cacao as a currency, accepted as direct trade currency in rural areas and towns.

The Black Wolf banner fluttered as the warriors solemnly surrounded the field. Xiulote paused momentarily, and the busy workers in the cotton fields halted, bowing in homage to the royal procession. Most villagers knelt fully to the ground in a commoner's salute, while a few knelt on one knee, offering the warrior's salute.

After watching for a while, Xiulote asked in a deep voice.

"Bertade, have you ever picked cotton?"

"I have, Your Highness,"

The Head Warrior answered calmly, a look of reminiscence on his face.

"In the Alliance, cotton is generally planted in April. If the land isn't fertile enough, it's sown sparsely. By the end of August, the first batch of cotton can be picked. Then, every five to seven days, more cotton will ripen and can be harvested. Usually, picking lasts until the end of October, sometimes continuing into December. However, the further into the season, the poorer the cotton quality..."

"...Picking cotton is truly laborious, much more so than farming. Of course, the profit from the cotton is also incomparable to farming. The Great Nobility of the Alliance would employ hordes of agricultural slaves to plant, pick, and weave cotton, yielding direct trade currency. If the families of common warriors were populous and had fertile chinampas, they would also plant some cotton... After all, corn is just food, but cotton is money."

Xiulote nodded slowly. Picking cotton was incredibly tedious, spanning a long period and draining manpower. The transatlantic triangular trade of later centuries thrived largely due to the endless labor demands of the tropical American cotton, sugarcane, and tobacco fields.

"Bertade, how much cotton can one mu of the Alliance's cotton field produce in one season?"

Upon hearing this, Bertade thought for a long time before giving a hesitant reply.

"Not considering the high-yielding chinampas, one mu of cotton fields by the lake can produce about 20 jin of cotton per season. That could make one or two sets of sturdy cotton armor for the family's warriors."

"20 jin per mu?"

Xiulote raised his voice, somewhat surprised. Looking at the Alliance's cotton fields again, he smiled slightly.

"The Alliance's heartland is truly fertile, for cotton to have such a high yield!"

Indeed, in those times, a yield of 20 jin per mu was an exceptionally high figure, surpassing that of the Old Continent's India, and contemporary Ming Dynasty. This ought to be credited to the excellent variety of Mexican short-staple cotton and the tropical climate with synchronized rain and heat. The domestication of various crops by the Central American ancestors truly benefited human civilization as a whole.

Bertade smiled serenely. After thinking for a while, he reminded Xiulote once more.

"Your Highness, the Alliance is situated in highlands, prioritizing food production, so it does not produce much cotton. The greatest cotton producers among all the regions are Mistla and the Zapotecs in the southern rainforest, and the Maya in the eastern rainforest."

"Yes. The Mayan merchant Tikalo also told me that the city-state of Tutulxiu in the north of the Yucatan Peninsula is a wealthy state known for producing cotton."

Xiulote turned, looking towards the distant east, lost in thought.

With the current navigation technology, the most reliable sea route to the Cuban archipelago still follows the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, heading northeast along the Yucatan Peninsula. After reaching the northern Yucatan Peninsula, one turns eastward and, after sailing three to four hundred li, can arrive

safely. This coastal route had long been mastered by the Mayans, minimizing the risk of getting lost. However, to take this route, one must first secure a temporary foothold on the Yucatan Peninsula.

"River Otter city, Tutulxiu city... eastern route..."

Alisa tilted her head, her bright eyes sparkling. She watched her thoughtful lover as if reading a mysterious and captivating book.

"Xiulote, what are you thinking about? Hmm, I can think along with you..."

"Haha! I'm thinking..."

Xiulote snapped out of his thoughts and smiled slightly. He reached out, drawing the girl into his arms and giving her a deep kiss.

"I'm thinking, by this time tomorrow, we can soak in the hot springs and watch the sun set together!"

"Ah! So many people..."

Alisa exclaimed, her face once again blushing. She pursed her lips and snuggled into her lover's embrace. Then, she spoke softly, her voice as faint as a mosquito's buzz.

"Then, what about after the sun sets?..."

"After the sun sets... naturally, we watch the fish swim in the water!"

"Huh? There are no fish in the hot springs."

"There are. If you don't believe me, I'll show you then..."

"Hmm... You naughty monkey!..."

"Hahaha!"

The young man's laughter echoed far and wide, and the Black Wolf banner moved again. The loyal guards surrounded the king and queen as they continued towards the sacred western mountains, where the ancient Temple of the Sun and its ever-burning Sacred Fire have blazed since times immemorial, continuing to burn into the present and the future!

Chapter 830: The Legend of Quetzalcoatl

The sky in early autumn was as clear as being washed clean, with eagles soaring high above, overlooking the land full of life. The azure mountains of Yun Qing were layered and undulating, stretching continuously from the northwest border of the city-state to the southeast of the lake region.

Everyone headed west, then turned south. The trees became denser, and the terrain gradually steepened. After trekking forty or fifty miles, the trees on the roadside suddenly thinned out, revealing the towering Mount Estrella. Mount Estrella was located southwest of the capital city, on the edge of the Ajusco volcanic area. From here, heading further southwest for more than forty miles was the famous Xitle volcano.

Alisa walked to the foot of the Holy Mountain, stopping to rest. Her face was flushed with the exertion, her eyes sparkling with the joy of the outing. She jumped onto a large boulder, chuckling softly as she turned around, like a proud little fox, with one hand on her hip and the other pointing southeast.

"Xiulote, do you know? At the foot of the Xitle volcano, there's a magnificent ancient city! Legend says, it's the place where all mythology begins, the origin of all gods, Divine City Cuicuilco!"

"The origin of all gods, Divine City Cuicuilco?"

Xiulote murmured softly, feeling somewhat familiar with the name. He looked towards the southeast, seeing only high peaks and continuous forests, with no trace of any city-state. Suddenly, his gaze intensified as he saw the solidified lava and obsidian stone at the foot of the mountains, and he recalled his grandfather's tales and those oral legends.

"Are you talking about the ancient divine city buried under volcanic lava?"

"Yes!"

Alisa blinked, extending her fair finger, gesturing in the air about the city, temple, and people.

"...A long, long time ago, the gods created mankind and gave birth to the first divine descendants. Subsequently, these divine descendants proliferated and grew strong, leading countless citizens to establish many ancient city-states. And in the Mexican Valley, perhaps a thousand years ago, or maybe two thousand years ago, the first divine descendants first established Divine City Cuicuilco, then Holy City Teotihuacan!"

"Hmm, and then?"

Xiulote nodded, looking at his adorable wife and smiling as he asked. According to later archaeological sites, Divine City Cuicuilco was established around 800 BC, during the late Western Zhou Dynasty of the Celestial Empire, and was one of the oldest city-states in the Mexican Valley, almost contemporaneous with the Olmec civilization.

"Then, Holy City Teotihuacan grew stronger and gradually opposed Divine City Cuicuilco. The two great cities, one in the south and the other in the north, respectively ruled half of the Mexican Valley. Subsequently, the divine descendants of Holy City Teotihuacan mobilized ten thousand citizens to build the immortal pyramids of the Moon and Sun. It's said that when the pyramids were completed, the priest divine descendants held a large-scale blood sacrifice, communicating with the primordial evil sealed underground, Xipactli..."

"Hmm? Primordial evil, Xipactli?"

Upon hearing this, Xiulote was startled, looking at Alisa. He had never heard of the details of this myth.

Alisa paused, a smile appearing on her lips. She looked at her patient listener, extended her arm, and made a cute fox face. Then, the elegant young girl softly opened her red lips and narrated gently.

"Boom!... Although Xipactli was suppressed by the gods, it still possessed infinite brute force. It made a pact with the divine descendants of Teotihuacan, triggering the flames deep within the earth to burst through the Xitle Mountain Pass. Then, flames fell from the sky, countless dust rose, and torrential lava began to flow! In just two quarters of an hour, the entire Divine City Cuicuilco, along with countless noble divine descendants, were submerged under the lava!..."

"The divine descendants of Teotihuacan were overjoyed! Because, from then on, they became the sole rulers of the entire Mexican Valley. And after completely ruling the prosperous Mexican Valley, Teotihuacan's era of great conquest arrived!..."

"Within two hundred years of Cuicuilco's destruction, the Teotihuacan people conquered nearly all the land under the heavens, building a powerful nation unprecedented in history. From the Great Lake to the west to the Great Lake in the East, from the northern wilderness to the southern rainforest, almost all the city-states and tribes bowed and paid tribute to them!..."

"The ambition of the Teotihuacan people was never satisfied. After conquering the world, they formed powerful expeditionary armies, led by the fire king, advancing along the coast to conquer the distant eastern Maya!... They marched thousands of miles, breaking through all obstacles, finally capturing the divine city Tikalo, sacrificing the Maya divine descendants in the city, and leaving divine steles there!..."

Upon hearing this, Xiulote nodded slightly, his expression full of longing.

"The destruction of Cuicuilco, the rise of Teotihuacan... conquering the world, eastward expedition against the Maya..."

Alisa's bright eyes sparkled. She raised her head, looking into her lover's eyes, and asked softly.

"Hmm... Xiulote, do you know how the mighty Teotihuacan people who conquered the world were eventually destroyed?"

"Ah? The downfall of Teotihuacan..."

Xiulote fell into thought upon hearing this. The Teotihuacan Empire was at its peak around 600 AD. During the time of ancient Central America, they had virtually no worthy opponents to challenge their

dominance. However, after reaching their zenith, within a mere hundred years, the empire abruptly declined and collapsed. As the center of the empire, Holy City Teotihuacan was enormous, once home to a populace of two hundred thousand people, but rapidly became desolate and abandoned within decades. All ancient empire heritage almost vanished without a trace, becoming an unsolved mystery for future generations.