

## Civilization 155

### Chapter 155 The Coronation Ceremony: Song and Dance, Sacrifices, Light, and Blood\_3

From the Great Temple stretched a long, blue procession of Sacrifices. Under the escort of fully-armed War Priests, they took another step forward. At today's Sacrificial Rite, 365 Otomi nobles were to be sacrificed at the War God's Temple, symbolizing the 365 days of the Haab' Sun Calendar. Every day, the Sun God required the blood and heart of a noble descendant to maintain the world's rotation.

In this era, under the control of Trakel Er, the scale of the sacrifices was limited. The rites emphasized the sacredness of the ritual process and the nobility of the Sacrifices' bloodline, focusing on the quality of the Sacrifices, rather than merely increasing the quantity. Most ordinary captives were consigned to labor on massive construction projects. And Maya blue was the Heavenly Divine's dye, symbolizing those sent to the Divine Kingdom as Sacrifices.

Hearing the familiar voice, Xiulote looked towards the uniformly elevated War God Hall and saw the Chief Priest, Quetzal, presiding over the sacrifice.

Draped in a feathered cloak and Divine Crown, Quetzal was smiling as he tossed the fresh offering into the flames, sacrificing it to the Sun God. Then another blue Sacrifice arrived. He was a young Otomi noble with wild tattoos on his face. He stood tall, resolutely facing the death that lay ahead.

"Child, what is your name?" Quetzal asked with a kindly, benevolent smile.

"I am the descendant of Coyote, Huanaztle of Pamus. The offspring of the Coyote never fear death, and I will continue to fight in the Divine Kingdom!" Huanaztle proudly replied.

"Child, you are admirable. You will fight against darkness for four years in the Divine Kingdom. Then your spirit will fall to the mortal realm, transforming into a precious bird. You may choose to become a Hummingbird, Oriole, Canary, or a white butterfly, drinking nectar from various flowers. What do you wish to become?" Quetzal smiled, praising the warrior's courage.

Huanaztle blinked his eyes slightly, recollecting the beauty from his memories, and then donned a smile.

"I wish to become a white butterfly, dancing in the valleys of my northern homeland, gathering wildflowers from in front of her tomb."

"You will! Rest assured, child, your wish will soon come true!" Quetzal reassured with a genuine smile, soothing the young noble's soul.

Unbelievable as it might sound, but in the Aztec belief, both the blood-and-fire warriors and the Sacrifices heading for the Divine Kingdom would float in the heavens, fighting for the Sun for four years. They would then descend to earth, transforming into all things beautiful, including birds and flowers.

Next, Huanaztle lay on the sacrificial stone, baring his chest with the Coyote tattoo. Quetzal took the lead, the other four from the Chief Priesthood each seized his limbs, and Uguel with his plump hands gripped his neck. This was also why it was customary for the Chief Priesthood to consist of six people.

Soon, the ancient and sharp Obsidian Dagger fell, and the Coyote tattoo lost its head. Quetzal's incision was precise and swift. Huanaztle's eyes suddenly widened with a violent and powerless twitch of his limbs, and then he was still.

Quetzal then raised the throbbing heart high with his right hand, an act meant for the War God to enjoy. He then chanted loudly, with praise in his tone.

"The brave Huanaztle of Pamus' Coyotes, goes to the War God's domain! He will fight fearlessly for four years, then transform into a beautiful white butterfly, gathering wildflowers from the hills of the north!"

Cheers of admiration came from below the Great Temple. This praise was recognition of the Sacrifices' courage, preserving the most beautiful demeanor of a warrior!

Then, Pamus' heart fell into the flames, offered to the Sun God. His body rolled down the temple stairs, landing before the Moon Goddess. His blood returned to the earth. In the simple view of life and death among the Mexica, this was the perfect return.

"Child, what is your name?" Quetzal asked, smiling as usual, facing the next Sacrifice.

"I am Tlalhuicole of Xilotepec. I will face death calmly, but my spirit will not go to the War God's domain. The Primordial God, Ometeotl, will surely provide me guidance!" Tlalhuicole said calmly, his eyes brimming with conviction.

Quetzal maintained his smile: "Perhaps." He did not say more, only continued skillfully.

Tlalhuicole lay down, closed his eyes, then trembled violently, weakened to a stop, and finally rolled with the wind.

"The devout noble Tlalhuicole of Xilotepec, goes to the War God's domain! After four years, his spirit will follow his own will, flying freely!"

Once more, intense cheers followed, as natural as the laws of nature. The Mexica simply praised the splendor of death.

"Next." Another blue Sacrifice staggered forward.

"Child, what is your name?" Quetzal asked kindly, looking at the slightly plump young noble.

Clenching his teeth tightly, holding back tears in his eyes, he refused to speak.

"Child, leave your name, and I shall guide you on the path to the Divine Kingdom." Quetzal gently persuaded.

But the noble remained silent, not opening his mouth. It seemed he simply believed that this way, he might avoid death.

Quetzal frowned slightly. "Continue." He gestured with his hand to proceed to the next step.

The plump noble was pressed against the sacrificial stone, his chest laid out flat. He collapsed instantly, sobbing uncontrollably. Uguel's burly hand gripped his throat, cutting off his cries, leaving only tears to flow.

The Obsidian Dagger fell again, making its incision. Soon, the crying stopped completely. Then the plump body, streaming with divine fluid, rolled once more down the steps.