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# **Kaloomte**

Wars for Supremacy in the  
Mayan World



# **Book 1**

Mutul

and

The Snake Kingdom



# **Volume 2**

The Reawakening  
of the Serpent



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The Kan kingdom had been defeated and retreated north where it slept for almost four hundred years. Through Mutul (Tikal), Teotihuacan culture dominated the Mayan lowlands and the cities flourished. But there were signs that the snake dynasty was reawakening. An envoy was sent to Maasal, the border city in the north, to verify it had not turned and allied itself to the new king of Kan, Yuknoom Cheen...

**485 March 20? (9.2.10.0.0?) Kan Kitam (70) of Mutul sends Nacom Balam (26?) to raid Maasal**

The jaguar sun showered its brilliance over the farms and villages of the Maya lowlands and the light baked the sacbe that drew white strokes through the land, collecting heat in pools of shimmering illusions that evaporated upon approach of pedestrians who trafficked the road with goods on their backs like thousands of farmer ants streaming without interruption.

The festivities of the half Katun of 9.2.10.0.0 had just concluded and teams of families and merchants were returning from their pilgrimages, ventures, and visits. In the flow of pedestrians, a pair of travelers, including one who wore the cloth of a lord labored on their trek to Mutul (Tikal). Sweat wet the brow and backs almost as fast as the sun could burn it off, but it was not only exhaustion that poured down as every other step left behind a scarlet drop that instantly baked as a dry maroon dot on the stucco road. The ambassador, who we can call First Bird, delicately touched the back of his head and felt that his hair was saturated with blood.

As the sun reached its apogee, most of the traveling population scattered to hide from the

stinging radiance of the sun, finding shelter under every tree that bordered the road. The two travelers took their rest and refreshed themselves with a drink of water flavored with grinds of toasted corn. After resting and allowing their bodies to cool, urgency won over and they climbed up onto the highway and resumed their hard journey while the rest of the population rested quietly beside the road.

That evening, the pair approached the great skyline of Mutul in which every temple and pyramid was lit up with torches that set a glow on the red, white, yellow, and green buildings. The sight gave joy and motivation and they fought against their worn bodies and weary minds to reach their destination. Farms turned into suburbs of clustered huts of thatch and stucco. Dirt yards and roads gave way to domestic plazas paved with stucco and as the two envoys entered the urban location of Mutul, the ground was chalky white and every wall was painted with red, green, and yellow pigments to reproduce images of nature, deities, or memories of favorite parties and parades.

The ambassador and his assistant parted ways to their homes to be greeted by their wives and children with surprise and cheer. The ambassador was served cold leftovers after which he collapsed on his cot but not before being forced by his wife to take a bath and clean his wound.

The next morning, unseen birds and dogs echoed

voices in the city with announcements of the approaching jaguar sun. The secretary called for his master from the street and after a hot and creamy maize drink of atole, the ambassador stood up despite the aches of his joints, and was on his way to the palace.

In the palace courtyard, the ambassador encountered the young queen Ix Tzutz Nic (Lady Flower Bud) who was already well up and about on home cleanup and renovation after the festivities, instructing artists on the refreshments of frescoes and ordering new curtains and decor for the royal chambers. The queen carried herself with pride taught for her status, but underneath she was actually congenial and optimistic by nature and youth. She was the third wife of Kan Kitam (Yellow Peccary), but the first to bear him a son, as the first two queens proved to be barren. First Bird approached Ix Tzutz Nic who was glad to see him and asked him how the festivities went at the vassal state of Maasal (Naachtun). First Bird revealed that although his mission was to oversee the festival, things did not turn out as planned, and asked for an audience with her husband.

The king of Mutul, Kan Kitam, received the ambassador with Ix Tzutz Nic to his left, Nacom Balam (General Jaguar) to his right, and a servant who supported the pillow at his back. Kan Kitam, was the son of Siyaj Chan Kawiil II, and grandson of Yax

Nuun Ajiin, was an old man of 70 years of age. A cousin sat on the floor to record the words spoken in the meeting in a book made of pleats of bark coated with white stucco.

First Bird narrated his adventure and said that upon his arrival at Maasal, he saw that the king had also hosted another guest. When he asked who they were, he was told that they were the ambassador and entourage from Ts'iiba'anche' (Painted Wood), the capital of the Kan (Snake) Dynasty, and that they were there to oversee the festival.

First Bird understood that Maasal had just allied with his enemy, and at that moment he and his assistant were arrested and restrained for the duration of the festival as a spectacle. After the festival of the half Katun was concluded, the ambassador of Kan Kingdom summoned First Bird to the plaza where he was ridiculed in front of the population and sent away with a blow to the back of his head. It was clear that Maasal had changed alliance and would not be paying tribute to Mutul this year.

First Bird concluded his story and while the sun cooked the palace courtyard outside the cotton curtain of the entrance, the royal chamber was dark and gravely silent. Nacom Balam reflected that almost four hundred years ago, Mutul escaped from the grips of the Kan Kingdom and forced the Kan dynasty to retreat north to Ts'iiba'anche' where it would rule the remnant of its domain. Maasal was a city state that sat

on the northern limit of Mutul influence, and for many ages marked the border of culture, dialect, trade, and power between Mutul and Kan.

Not having end to end control of the trade corridor from the riverine routes of the southern lowlands to the wide populations of northern peninsula, the Kan domain stagnated in power, forced to comply to the demands of their neighbors, competitors, and enemies in order to feed on at least the poor end of trade.

But now there was a new name that came from the shadows of the northern jungle, Yuknoom Cheen, and unlike the bones of his ancestors, this king of Kan had an appetite for new prey. The great snake kingdom was awakening from its long slumber, and quick and decisive action was required to beat back this new threat. King Kan Kitam overcame a flash of fear and dedicated himself to lead a response and recapture Maasal but Ix Tzutz Nic rejected that proposal, pointing out that her husband was old and unfit for such a critical battle.

Instead, leadership of the operation was delegated to the elected general, Nacom Balam. This military leader of Mutul was the youngest man to ever be elected to the prestigious post of nacom as he was very athletic, fiercely ambitious, and above all extremely charismatic. When he listened, he smoked a cigar which was always in his mouth, and he looked the speaker in the eyes, reading not only the words

but the mind. He spoke little, and when he did he spoke slowly and softly, forcing the attention and respect of everyone. He never smiled. After a moment of silence, he accepted the task with solemnity and concealed the zeal that simmered under his skin.

Nacom Balam put on his battle gear. His headdress was made of the head of a jaguar. On his shoulders he wore a capelet of feathers. His waist was covered by a kilt also of feathers. He held up a shield made of an array of wooden dowels woven together so that the shield draped down the length of his body. As always, in his mouth he smoked a cigar which created an aromatic cloud around his head. He visited homes, and with whispers enlisted his most trusted friends as holcanes (warriors) for the operation. The jaguar sun had not even risen when the men walked the streets among the farmers on the way to tend the maize, squash, and other vegetables in the milpas. By looks and signals, they collected and traveled stealthily the dirt paths that connected one village to the next, avoiding the white highway to Maasal. By mid afternoon, the warriors rested in shadows of trees and sat still so as to not heat up their bodies, lose water, or spend energy. The heavy air in the forest remained quiet, and the city before them also lay still and silent, as the people slept under submission of the jaguar sun.

Nacom Balam took up his spear, and his men readied. The warriors ran through the vacant streets

only stirring barking dogs from behind stone walls and it was not until they nearly reached the royal homes at the center of the city that they raised their voices with chilling cries of battle.

The men entered the homes with spears of flint and fell upon the men who slept inside on their cots, capturing them and dragging them into the streets. Nacom Balam entered the palace and captured Kutz, the king of Maasul, who surrendered without a struggle. The citizens of Maasal gathered to observe their king and lords be towed away, stripped of their cloths, bound by the hands, and suppressed in spirit. The only sound in the city were of the wives and toddlers who cried and clawed and followed the captors until they were at some distance on the sacbe, and then they collapsed on the road, crying and pulling their hair and dresses until their voices were lost and their clothes were shredded.

The citizens of Mutul had already received word of the event and a crowd was gathering on the northern road to Mutul. The people looked into the distance, quietly and patiently waiting. Beyond the rippling air above the white road, young Nacom Balam appeared in full warrior costume, smoking a cigar. Ahead of him, his lieutenant who we will call Tseek' Peek' (Dog Skull), held up high on a pole the round feathered standard of Mutul. Behind followed the party of holcanes, some towing miserable captives from Maasal.

The crowd parted and the army squeezed its way into the city among cheers. The people held up palms to shade the warriors from the sun and threw more palm leaves on the road to honor their steps. Nacom Balam led the procession to the palace and was received by Kan Kitam and Ix Tzutz Nic where captives of Maasal were collected at the bottom of the steps, and before the audience their fingernails were pulled back and torn off with screams of torture. The nacom grabbed the king of Maasal by the hair and brought him before Kan Kitam to hear his desperate plea, and the plea was heard.

The life of Kutz was to be saved, but not out of mercy, for as long as he remained in captivity, Maasal could not legitimately name a new king, and the city would be forced to subjugate itself as vassal to Mutul.

But the plea was denied for the lords of Maasal, and Nacom Balam used an ax of obsidian blade and with little effort severed the heads, allowing the bodies to instantly fall as a pile of lifeless limbs. The people of Mutul cheered as each of the captives were sacrificed in the same manner, and the spectacle having been executed, the people chanted for the glory of Nacom Balam, the sun warrior, the victor of Maasal, and the killer of the king of Maasal.

Ix Tzutz Nic was satisfied that the security of the realm was reestablished, but the adoration that the people showered on Nacom Balam disturbed the Kan Kitam, and stirred a stinging envy that he felt he

should have been safe from.

For many days after the victory, Nacom Balam received many gifts at his home. As he was still a bachelor, many families presented themselves with proposals of marriage, but he consulted with Tseek' Peek' who found fault for each girl. Nacom Balam felt greatness was ahead of him and he wanted to know it, so he arranged for a session with the chilam, or soothsayer. The ceremony was set in his home, and with only Tseek' Peek' to witness and the daughter of the chilam to assist, the chilam was presented with generous offerings and the old man cast lots of beans marked on one side.

After some meditation, the noble chilam revealed that on the death of the king of Mutul, Nacom Balam would accede the throne and become Kaloomte Balam, the overlord of kings. But he also revealed a second prediction, that an heir would in return kill the occupant of the throne of Mutul.

The young nacom and his lieutenant rejoiced at the news, and with the intoxication of glory in his mind, he negotiated a marriage with the daughter of the chilam who we will call Ix Ch'upul T'u'ul (Lady Rabbit). The marriage was set and invitations sent out all over the kingdom of Mutul such that the people prepared with great anticipation. On the day of the wedding, scores of women gathered in the garden behind the homes of the family of the nacom, and the air was soon saturated with black smoke of roasting

chili peppers and smells of venison ragout.

The size and spectacle of the ceremony and festivities rivaled and even surpassed any royal event, and the fame of Nacom Balam extended to the most remote home of Mutul.

Despite the marriage, the nacom was required to live a life of celibacy and simplicity, and he remained in the home that was assigned to the nacom, while Ix Ch'upul T'u'ul was given a home behind that of her father, the chilam. Prohibited from receiving his wife in the sacred home, Nacom Balam spent many days in the company of his holcanes, and when Ix Ch'upul T'u'ul came to leave dinner at his door, she often heard behind the cotton curtain the voices of her husband and his lieutenant, Tseek' Peek'.

## **486 October Chak Tóok Íich'ak II (10) performs pre-accession rite**

A year after the victory at Maasal, Kan Kitam and Ix Tzutz Nic prepared for the pre-accession rite of their son Chak Tóok Íich'ak II (Great Flint Claw), so that the people would know him as the heir apparent and benefit from his blessings. The boy was named in honor of the ancient king who attempted to resist Teotihuacan, but the name did not do much to strengthen the dynasty, as the boy was born small and with a cleft lip. Rumors blamed Kan Kitam, and the word was that the boy was a manifestation of his weakness.

The priest taught the sacrificial procedure to the ten year old child who was not happy when it was described to him that he would puncture his penis and bleed into a bowl in front of thousands of spectators. The day of the pre-accession rite, the city assembled in the plaza with food and festivities. Dressed in their finest costumes, Kan Kitam and Ix Tzutz Nic led a procession from the palace to the foot of the temple. There, Chak Tóok Íich'ak II looked up the stairs at the temple that billowed smoke into heaven. The boy panicked and would not climb the steps, so the priests grabbed him by the arms and dragged him up as he screamed and writhed. Kan Kitam did not look back and pretended not to notice the embarrassing struggle. At the apex of the pyramid and before the temple, the

boy could not move, so Nacom Balam assisted and performed the sacrifice on the crying boy. Nacom Balam told Tseek' Peek' he understood why he was destined to be king instead of that feeble brat.

The boy grew up with all the attention and care of a prince, but the same privileges were also a curse, as he learned to prefer comfort over adversity, and grew accustomed to the company of the ladies of the palace, and shied away from brawny interests of the other boys. Kan Kitam had little patience for his son, and his son had even less patience with himself, and the young prince simply walked out of the ball court with the first scrape or bruise, or used the sun as an excuse to avoid hunting. He was only happy studying the histories and almanacs in the libraries of the palace and the temples, and spent many days even into the night, obsessed with learning the lineages of the dynasties around him, or learning of the cycles of the wandering stars.

Despite his poor body and his odd personality, he was liked by everyone, as he was very amiable and approachable, even to the point of being reproachable, and was often scolded even by his servants and slaves even as a young man, but only out of frustration, and never without affection.

For Nacom Balam, who was promised the throne of Mutul, the years were long, and with a fading patience grew to disdain the chilam who gave him the illusion that tore at him each day. His affection for Ix

Ch'upul T'u'ul also faded and he could only see in her a poor bargain. The woman felt deep empathy for her husband, and for each abuse, doubled her care and affection for him, in belief that someday he would understand her love and realize that she was worthy, but at every turn Tseek' Peek' was there before her and was the close companion of her husband day and night.

Nacom Balam was stuck, and like a pent up animal, responded with fits of craze and rage, but then trained himself into a deep depression, and in this spiritual sleep he survived and his wife endured.

## **488? – Kan Kitam (73?) dies and Chak Tóok Íich'ak II (12?) made king**

Nacom Balam knew that at last his reward came the day that Kutz, the captive king of Maasal was found dead by a guard. Ix Tzutz Nic ordered Nacom Balam to make sure the body was buried in the dirt floor, the hut remained guarded, and food brought as if the prisoner was still alive, in effort to prevent the lords of Maasal from learning.

But somehow the news traveled through the streets and within days Maasal had chosen a new king, and worse, reset their alliance to Yuknoom Chen of the Kan kingdom. In the city and plaza of Mutul, words were murmured that blamed the weakness of Kan Kitam for the loss of Maasal.

The chill of winter gusted over the city, and in their chores and tasks, the citizens felt fear, like a prey feels the approach of an invisible predator. Kan Kitam saw an opportunity to redeem his honor, and called for a new campaign, only this time there would be no mercy, and he would be the savior of his people, even against the wishes of Ix Tzutz Nic.

In contrast to the last engagement, Kan Kitam conscripted a great army of young men from the farms and villages around Mutul, rather than the small band of trained halcones that Nacom Balam assembled. The treasury was spent to dress his soldiers with skins and paint, and arm each one with a

flint spear. The king himself was armored in the pelt of a wild peccary, and his headdress bore the head of the animal, with the crest adorned with long iridescent green feathers of the quetzal bird.

Under the brilliant jaguar sun, and from the sea of cheering spectators and hawking vendors, the feathered standards of Mutul rose followed by tall flint spears that pricked the air. A great band of horns and drums played the anthem and Kan Kitam boarded his litter to have his figure lifted above the heads of the people of Mutul.

Behind the king marched Nacom Balam, military advisor of the king and the head of the army, also distinguished with skins and feathers like his king but less than his king. He smoked a cigar and waved to cheering fans. Behind him were his lieutenant Tseek' Peek' and the halcones, each of them proud and loyal to their admirable nacom.

The procession out of the city was a spectacle in sound and sight, and the intent was no secret, as Kan Kitam wanted the lords of Maasal to know their superior adversary was coming, and that they should be struck with fear and despair. But as the army disappeared over the hills, Ix Tzutz Nic wrung her hands, with a dread that nauseated her belly and spun her head.

Outside the city of Maasal, the new king and his lords chose a small hill before a corn field to receive Kan Kitam, and when the enemy did arrive, they

watched the great army stretch out its flanks almost from one horizon to the other, and they were dwarfed, as they were only one tenth the size and poor in comparison.

The two armies stood quiet so as not to spend any energy under the jaguar sun that burned anything it could see, and the nacomes were sent to negotiate the peace before them. The earth was baked, and touching the soil or rocks burned the foot as the nacomes walked to the middle of the field and greeted each other, but the negotiation was just a formality, as Maasal would not submit and Mutul could not concede.

The nacomes returned to their warriors and shrill war cries lifted from the valley and echoed through the trees that shaded the spectators of Maasal. Kan Kitam commanded the center from his litter, and delegated Nacom Balam to command the left flank and Tseek' Peek' to command the right, and with his word the drums and horns sounded and the standards of Mutul advanced forward. The eagerness of the king inspired his men with bellicose thrill that eradicated any notion of fear or logic and the emotion was so intense that some of his bodyguards broke from the ranks and sprinted into the front line of the Maasal army, to be impaled by flint and fall with martyrdom that filled their peers with envy and propelled the army forward with increasing velocity.

Failing to keep formation, Kan Kitam led his

bodyguards to plow into the front line of Maasal. He never took his eye off of the king of Maasal, and his bodyguards thrust the spears and pushed the shields with such energy that overwhelmed the enemy and the center lines of Maasal began to give and recede.

Spectators of Maasal cheered and jeered with a roar that filled the air above, and feeling victory, Kan Kitam pushed on forward, intent on penetrating the defenses and capturing the king of Maasal for a quick and efficient victory, but Nacom Balam saw that the center line advanced too far out of line. He saw the danger, and felt the urge to save the king and prove his honor, but a powerful instinct stayed his command, and he preserved the integrity of his flank.

Kan Kitam dove further forward and broke away from the flanks, and the lines of Maasal closed in behind him. Nacom Balam watched Kan Kitam turn to see the trap close behind him and then look straight back at him with horror in his eyes. The king disappeared behind a curtain of warriors, and the enemy closed in until his litter toppled and sank below the tempest of spears. Nacom Balam was now the leader of the army of Mutul, and having lost the king, ordered a full retreat to save the surviving men. They gathered and wept for the death of the king of Mutul. Nacom Balam reassembled the ranks, and seeing a disorder in the victorious enemy, charged forward to recover the body of Kan Kitam and then commanded a final retreat. The defeated warriors of

Mutul evacuated the battle field and were assaulted by spectators with rocks, cheers, and insults like miserable street dogs.

The ladies of Mutul waited anxiously at the northern gate of the city, having already received notice that the battle went badly for their men, they braced themselves not knowing what to receive. The army appeared on the sacbe and the women of Mutul ran out to the procession and searched for their husbands and sons. Screams and lamentation filled the street upon seeing the dead or hearing of the loss. Ladies called out for their loved ones who were left behind.

On a makeshift litter, the body of Kan Kitam was carried, and Ix Tzutz Nic ran and fell upon the god who was reduced to lifeless flesh of rot and foul smell.

The citizens of Mutul were still and silent because they saw that dynasty of Kan had reached out and struck their king and they were afraid, but Nacom Balam stood tall, and all eyes were on him for strength, while Chak Tóok Íich'ak II sat on a rock and wept for his father and for Mutul.

A council was soon to assemble and discuss the accession of the next king of Mutul, and there was talk in the palace complex and in the city that a strong king was needed to survive the threat that was encroaching from the north. Walking in the streets and plazas, the nacom could hear calls from the

crowds hailing him as Kaloomte Balam (Overlord Jaguar) and every eye he met was deferential and welcoming. Ix Ch'upul T'u'ul was relieved to see her husband finally in cheerful, if not yet affectionate, spirit, for he would stay late into the night dining and speaking with his confidant Tseek' Peek', and even visit her father the chilam for consultation.

The nacom was finally summoned to participate in the accession council, and confident of the intent of the meeting, did not force his point too obtusely. The council opened up discussion on the state of the state, and many members made points of recent events and others lauded Nacom Balam for protecting the city and its dominion, but then Ix Tzutz Nic spoke of the strength of lineage, tradition, and faith, and her words were eloquent, and her tone was solemn and steady, that the council swayed to the persuasion of her presence, and one by one, each lord expressed his confidence in Chak Tóok Íich'ak II as the next king of Mutul. Nacom Balam was the last to agree.

That night Ix Ch'upul T'u'ul did not suspect the turn in her husband, but upon seeing his eyes she braced herself and hid deep inside her soul. The pots she prized and cared for were smashed on the walls, the dinner she had prepared for her husband was kicked and spilled on the floor, her body was struck, and outside she could hear her own voice cry, but inside her mind she sought refuge, and she welcomed her own death without hesitation if her body broke

and failed.

## **495 January 27 (9.3.0.0.0) Third Katun Celebrated**

The city of Mutul celebrated the new king, Chak Tóok Íich'ak II who was called the wise one for his intellect and mercy. The young king loved to build, and conscripted villagers for the augmentation of temples and maintenance of major roads that were critical for the trade and political network in the domain. He also sponsored many of the calendar festivals, attracting merchants from all over the domain to the market and drawing in pilgrims to the temples with a wealth of offerings.

The great festival of the third katun was to be held on 495 January 27 (9.3.0.0.0). As Mutul boasted the greatest temples, programmed the most spectacular rituals and dances, and promised the most generous feasts, the highways were crowded with pilgrims who came to seek blessings and merchants who came to win good profits. Families who were weary from the punishment of the long march arrived at the gates of old friends. Men sat on the doorstep and shared news while women gossiped over an open hearth and children played in the patio.

On the days of the festivals, people visited the temple acropolis and gave their offerings of maize and other produce. In the market, merchants sold for currency of cacao beans, all kinds of imported goods including salt and honey from the coast of Yucatan,

and obsidian and flint blades from the highlands.

Women shopped for dyed cotton threads for weaving and bought new sets of ceramic wares for their kitchen. Children were indulged with toys such as ocarinas or wheeled ceramic toys in the form of animals which they pulled along with strings. Ambulant vendors sold snacks of tamales with chili sauce, boiled yucca dipped in honey, and squash or papaya candied in honey.

While the people in the market shopped and ate, actors got up on stage and performed, mocking Nacom Balam and Chak Tóok Íich'ak II of their mannerisms with accurate imitations that made the crowd laugh.

The snake is coming to eat Mutul,  
What are we going to do?  
But here comes great Nacom Balam  
To ax the snake in two.

Chilam said that he would be king  
But while Nacom did wait,  
Chak Tóok Íich'ak became the king  
Nacom Balam was late.

He wants to rule over Mutul  
And have his name in stone  
He better learn to accept his fate  
and take a humble tone.

Ix Ch'upul T'u'ul is home alone  
No children in her arms  
When fate is forced against the stars  
Who next will come to harm?

But for all the wealth that was earned in the markets in the morning, men were tempted to multiply their profits at the ball game in the evening. A tournament was programmed for every day of the festival, and each game drew crowds of spectators who occupied stands constructed of poles, branches, and palm leaves which creaked and swayed under the weight.

On the last day of the tournament, royal guests occupied the spectator box on top of the ball court wall, and among them were the king of Rio Azul and his daughter who we will call Ix Chak Mo' (Lady Macaw). With the fanfare of trumpets and drums, Chak Tóok Íich'ak II presented himself with his chest girded in a wooden yoke and his legs protected by a deerskin skirt. The spectators cheered for their king, then Nacom Balam presented himself in ball player gear and with a cigar in his mouth, and the people cheered even louder. When he saw the princess looking down at him, he intended to impress her.

The king of Rio Azul dropped a large rubber ball from the cornice and let it bounce down the apron and into the playing ally. In turn, the players lunged at the

ball, striking it with the yoke and sending it along the bench.

Chak Tóok Íich'ak II played the best he could, but Nacom Balam employed his skill for strategy, and sent the ball so that his opponent was forced to run. When Chack Tok Ichaak II could no longer defend his side, Nacom Balam sent the ball into the far end, and scored his winning points. Those who won their bets cheered, and those who lost fled the stands, but Ix Chak Mo' was not impressed.

At the palace, the courtiers assembled in the royal chamber to hear the vassals and negotiate business. When the king of Rio Azul was let in the chamber, Nacom Balam proposed to the lords that a marriage be arranged between him and princess Ix Chak Mo', so that the alliance with Rio Azul be strengthened. But his proposal was not only inappropriate; it was untimely, as Ix Tzutz Nic had already met with the king and arranged the marriage between Ix Chak Mo' and her son Chak Tóok Íich'ak II.

**504 Sept 1 (9.3.9.13.5) Ix Kin born of first queen Ix Chak Mo', 508? - Wak Chan K'awil born of second queen Ix K'ab**

Ix Chak Mo' became the first wife of Chak Tóok Íich'ak II, and on 504, September, 1, (9.3.9.13.5 ) she gave birth to his first child, Ix Kin (Lady Sun) whom he adored. In a few years, another political marriage won Mutul a second queen, Ix K'ab (Lady Hand), and she soon gave birth to the king's first son, Wak Chan K'awil (Excessively Looking [at the god] K'awil). Despite being the first queen of Mutul, Ix Chak Mo' had no jealous ambition, and happily acknowledged the son of her junior queen to be the heir apparent of Mutul. Ix Kin, four years older than her half brother, spent every moment of her days playing with the baby boy and soon the two mothers learned to trust that wherever the Wak Chan K'awil was, he was safely in the care of Ix Kin.

Ix Kin took daily walks, wandering the streets of the city with her little brother on her hip. They were welcomed by everyone they met. They visited the market to observe the wares and entertainment, and vendors would give them snacks and treats. One day, their exploration took them to a small hill at the edge of the city. She noticed a small cave and peered inside, and when their eyes adjusted they saw a group of beautiful jaguar cubs. The children smiled and laughed but left the cubs alone.

Ix Kin sat the toddler under the shade of a tree while she looked for wild flowers. On her way back, she saw a jaguar approach the boy who froze in awe of the beautiful creature whose colors and patches danced in the waving shadows of the leaves above. The animal attacked but she picked up a stick and yelled, so the jaguar turned its attention and slashed the girl on her arm before she gave it a nasty knock on the head. The jaguar backed away but did not retreat, and Ix Kin picked up her brother and ran down the hill where a farmer found them and carried the children to a home where their wounds were washed and dressed with cotton bindings. Upon returning to the palace, Ix Chak Mo' and Ix K'ab took care of the children and the heroism of the brave little Ix Kin became famous in the city by the next day.

## 510? Chak Tóok Íich'ak II (24) dies

Nacom Balam met whenever Chak Tóok Íich'ak II humored him, although the king did not care much for the alarmist rants, and thought the fifty year old military leader was getting a bit old fashioned, but repetition begets reality, and the lords eventually came about to demand attention once more on Maasal.

The nacom recommended that the king lead action, else risk the pain of representing weak leadership, and that the attack be a raid at night, like the tactic that brought them victory thirty years before. The young king trusted the advice and the campaign was organized.

The night of the raid, Ix Tzutz Nic, Ix Chak Mo' and Ix K'ab kept vigil with Ix Ch'upul T'u'ul, offering incense and bleeding their ears to feed the braziers and hope to bend fortune to their favor. A servant entered the chamber with a pot to supply the chamber with water. Ix Kin took care of Wak Chan K'awil until he slept in her arms. They spoke softly, and guessed at the actions of Chack Tok Ichaak II, when he would have reached Maasal and begun the raid, and when the raid would have been concluded.

Throughout the night, one queen would panic but be strengthened by the faith of the other, and then the other would cry only to be steadied by the first with prayer. And the ladies breathed in the cool air of the

night to avoid the suffocation of despair and to tread above the depths of sleep, but illusions slipped into dreams, and not knowing the fate of their husband, they escaped the torture of time.

Then the air and sounds of dawn approached, and the ladies awoke and comforted each other, imagining their husbands were on their way back home with an easy victory. Light came to the heart of Ix Ch'upul T'u'ul when she heard the voice of Nacom Balam call from beyond the curtain of the chamber. The ladies allowed him in, but the king was absent, and they braced themselves for the news.

With a solemn face and voice, the nacom narrated the scene of the raid. The king of Maasal heard the violence in the streets and stood up when Chak Tóok Íich'ak II entered the home followed by Nacom Balam. The two men grappled on the ground and Chak Tóok Íich'ak II, being weaker, was unable to overcome the ferocious defense of his opponent. Nacom Balam appeared at the door and the king called out for help but he stood back and responded that he could not see in the darkness of the house, but his king called out for help again and he finally went forward and impaled the enemy, but only to discover that Chak Tóok Íich'ak was already mortally wounded in the neck. The faithful nacom held his king in his arms, who asked him to take care of his wives and save Mutul, before releasing his soul.

Ix Tzutz Nic wept, but the queens took the news

with strength and silence, and excused the nacom from their chamber. Making sure they were alone, they spoke softly. They sensed great danger in the situation. Their husband and king, Chak Tóok Íich'ak II was now gone, and the only heir to the throne, Wak Chan K'awil was only a two year old child. Nacom Balam held on to the post of nacom many more years than usual, and in that time he had built fame with the people, popularity with the lords, and loyalty with the halcones. They felt at last the deceit, and realized they were too late in the game to survive, but they resolved to play the hard options that were left to them.

**511 April 21 (9.3.16.8.4) Kaloomte Balam(51?), marries 6 year old Ix Kin and accedes throne of Mutul**

The lords of Mutul called for a council of succession. Ix Chak Mo' proposed that a pre-accession rite be conducted to assure the city of Wak Chan K'awil as the heir apparent, and to name Ix K'ab as regent until the boy was old enough to rule. The lords balked, and argued that Mutul already suffered the political damage of two weak kings and they could not afford a child to take the throne while a woman defended the realm against the threat of the Kan kingdom that was approaching. But Nacom Balam partly defended the queen, and proposed, as it would not be fit for a woman to rule as kaloomte (overlord), he should marry Ix Chak Mo' as the senior queen, and so become king and kaloomte, but also promise to name Wak Chan K'awil as his adopted son and heir. Ix Tzutz Nic refused and said it would be an abomination for a nacom to marry above his station to become king, but seeing that opinion was against her, proposed that Nacom Balam could rule as regent until Wak Chan K'awil was old enough to command his role.

The announcement for the pre-accession rite would be announced to the city tomorrow. The council members were angry, but they could not legitimately counter the queens proposal and

dissolved the meeting. The queens embraced, as they survived at least this day.

That evening, the blood red Mars journeyed across heaven, leading the mother moon which was just beginning to wax, followed by her children Jupiter, and Saturn. Ix K'ab woke up to get her son a drink of water when she noticed the pot empty. She exited her chamber to fetch the servant, when she kicked the pot left on the ground. She looked and the palace courtyard was vacant. There was not a single guard or servant to her sight or hearing and she ran next door to the chamber of Ix Chak Mo' and woke her up with desperate whispering.

The two women fetched their children and attempted to escape the palace when they encountered approaching torches and ran into the chamber of their mother in law, Ix Tutz Nik. There they hid. The children were hushed children and prevented from crying. Through the curtain, Ix K'ab saw warriors enter her chamber with spears and exit when they discovered it was empty. While the assailants invaded the next chamber, the women took the children and fled the palace.

In the streets the women ran as fast as they could, letting their feet find their way in the near absolute darkness, but the children cried, and drums began to beat throughout the city. They were discovered by a squad of soldiers at the end of a street. The old Ix Tutz Nik cried that she could not keep up. Seeing that

they were going to be caught, Ix Chak Mo' told Ix K'ab to keep running, for she knew they were after her son, and she fled into the night. Ix Chak Mo' then gave her daughter to her mother in law and pushed them into a vendor stall to remain hidden. She found a bundle of cotton cloth and ran back into the street where she caught the attention of their pursuers.

Under the brilliance of the morning star, Ix Chak Mo' ran into the plaza and entered the acropolis where she scaled the stairs of a pyramid with the bundle still in her arms. The twilight of the jaguar morning sun was wrestling into the sky, and her ascent caught the attention of the holcanes below. At the apex of the pyramid, she entered the temple where she surprised the priests and knelt before the brazier and hurriedly bled herself and made her offering to her late husband Chak Tóok Íich'ak II.

While in her prayer, she was surrounded and a shadow fell upon her. She turned to see Nacom Balam standing before her. She told him that Wak Chan K'awil was gone from the city long ago. He hid his anger and replied that whether or not Wak Chan K'awil survived, the child was not destined to be king. All he needed was to marry her to make his accession legitimate. She replied that she would never marry him for the evil he did to her husband. She knew of the prophecy too, but the king did not die, he was murdered, and fate cannot be made. And she knew of one more prophecy, that Wak Chan K'awil would

escape and survive, and the day that Kaloomte Balam discovered the heir to the throne of Mutul, that would be the day he died.

He scoffed at her, but during this discussion, she neared herself to the stairs, with the bundle of cotton still in her arms. He demanded that she marry him, but she promised to die before marrying him. He threatened that if she refused to marry him, he would marry her daughter. Disgusted, she rejected and cursed Nacom Balam, and when he attempted to capture her, he saw not fear and submission in her eyes, but resistance and resolve. She walked back and disappeared over the edge of the platform, dropping below the horizon where the jaguar sun was just being born into the sky.

At the bottom of the pyramid, Nacom Balam discovered the broken body of Ix Chak Mo', and cursed when he saw only the unraveled bundle of cloth, and he continued the search for the children. Ix Tutz Nik did not have the condition to escape the search, and was discovered hiding in a home with Ix Kin. She did not survive the encounter and the child was brought before Nacom Balam and Tseek' Peek' and the halcones cheered for the victory.

There was no delay, and on the day of April 21, 511 AD (9.3.16.8.4), fifty one year old Nacom Balam, who raided Masul twenty five years before, married six year old Ix Kin and acceded throne of Mutul, finally claiming the title Kaloomte Balam. He

presented a necklace of beads and pendant of red spondylus shell, and so marked her as the Queen of Mutul. But where Ix Kin sat to his left, Tseek' Peek' sat to his right, dressed in a gown of elaborate embroidery, a wealth of jade jewelry, and a headdress blossoming with fine feathers. And it was this old companion who received the blessings and gifts on behalf of the marriage while the little girl sat paralyzed in fear.

That night Kaloomte Balam and Tseek' Peek' feasted and drank with the lords, priests, and halcones, and the city celebrated until morning for their new king who would bring strength and security back to Mutul. But Ix Kin was taken away to her mother's chamber which would now be hers alone. And that night Ix Ch'upul T'u'ul lay alone in her cot and wept, for her husband would never enter her home again, and she was now destined to live her remaining days alone in that home, empty of a husband and barren of children.

Ix K'ab carried two year old Wak Chan K'awil in a baby sling and traveled on the northeast sacbe. Early in the morning, she traded her royal dress for a simple huipil so as not to be recognized. She broke her necklace and traded each jade bead along the road when she and her child needed food or drink. They passed the city of Uaxactun and on the second day finally reached Xultun, the city where Ix K'ab grew up. They were quietly received by Upakal Kinich and

there they prepared for a life in exile for many years to come.

**514 October 14 (9.4.0.0.0) 4<sup>th</sup> Katun was celebrated. Stela 23 was presented.**

Soon after the accession of Kaloomte Balam to the throne of Mutul, construction and preparations began to celebrate the fourth Katun on 514 October 14 (9.4.0.0.0). In commemoration of the festival and to reinforce the legitimacy of the reign of Kaloomte Balam, a stela was commissioned to illustrate the portrait of Ix Kin and her father and mother.

The festival brought in pilgrims and royal visitors from the vassal states. Among them, Ix Kin was able to befriend Ix Ek, a princess of her age from the small city of Waka' (Six Water, El Peru) at the head of the San Pedro River to the west. That city served as a key riverine port that received goods shipped by canoe from the west and then transported on foot to Mutul.

The ball game tournament was played in the final days of the festival. Ix Kin and her friend Ix Ek were accommodated in the spectator box and all eyes were upon them for their beauty and fame. But when the ball players presented themselves, the eyes of the two girls were upon a handsome and dashing young athlete named Ch'iich' Mo'ol (Bird Claw). The boy played with such skill and grace, the girls shared their romantic fantasies about him, and when he won the game, he looked up at them with a smile.

## **520? Kaltuun Hix accedes as king of Kan and conquers Rio Azul and Maasal**

The fifth Katun seemed to bring good luck to Mutul, and for six years the people of the realm enjoyed stability and prosperity under the new kaloomte. But then news came that Yuknoom Cheen had died, and the throne of Kan kingdom was acceded by Kaltuun Hix, and this new king felt he had to make his mark. In that same year, he started a new military campaign and attacked Rio Azul, another northern border city that was located between Maasal and Xultun.

Just as Waka' connected Mutul to riverine shipments to the west, Rio Azul controlled riverine shipments to the east along the Rio Hondo. The loss of Rio Azul severed a major arm of trade for Mutul. The lords demanded swift action to reclaim the city, and expected Kaloomte Balam to show his strength. But the new king of Mutul was not himself. He secluded himself for days in his chamber and only Tseek' Peek' was allowed to visit him.

Tseek' Peek' asked him why he would not strike back, and he told the friend he loved that he saw the chilam, the one who told him of the prophecy that he would be king, and the sight of the old man gave him a deathly chill. The chilam long ago had told him of another prophecy, that when he discovered the heir to Mutul, he would die that day. Tseek' Peek' consoled

the king, assuring that as he had promised never to consume the marriage with Ix Kin, she could never bear an heir.

Kaloomte Balam said this meant that Wak Chan K'awil would have his revenge, but Tseek' Peek' also rejected the words of the old chilam. The first prophecy did not come true until Kaloomte Balam made it come true. And this second prophecy could just as easily be denied. But the paranoid king could not be consoled, and he swore that the chilam had cursed him for divorcing Ix Ch'upul T'u'ul, and accused Tseek' Peek' of allowing the prince to escape. The beloved friend was violently driven from the royal chamber, and with tears and rage, Tseek' Peek' chose three of his closest holcanes, including a young man named Ch'iich' Mo'ol (Bird Claw), and approached the chilam in the temple where he prayed. They approached him and accused him of cursing the king, but the old man replied that it was no curse, but a prophecy that was read long ago, and not by his own invention. Tseek' Peek' once more demanded that the old man remove the curse, but being refused, they tried to drag the priest out of the temple but he clung onto the altar.

A crowd had started to gather, and fearing that their intention be interrupted, the holcanes impaled the chilam. The old man fell to his knees but he was not dead, so Tseek' Peek' found an ax of obsidian and brought it down with such force that it severed the

crown of the head, of which contents spilled to the floor. The nacom declared that the old man would not be able to curse again and the murderers fled the temple. However the death of the chilam did not appease the sickness of Kaloomte Balam, and he would not go out for fear of encountering the curse and falling victim to the fruits of his own machinations.

For these ten years Mutul was on the precipice of decline, and as Kaloomte Balam became weaker, the ruler of Kan, Kaltuun Hix grew bolder. Maasal again secretly joined Kan in alliance, and many other polities followed.

The event of the half katun (9.4.10.0.0) was near, and Wak Chan K'awiil, now fifteen years old, had heard of the abuses on his half sister, Ix Kin, who was now nineteen, of the king's sickness, and of the scandals of Nacom Tseek' Peek'. Ix K'ab was losing her health, and Wak Chan K'awil felt the pressure of time. He learned Ix Kin was visiting Ix Ek at Waka' (Six Waters, El Peru) for the half katun festival, and he decided to go and compete in the ball game tournament. He approached his sister who did not recognize him in the ball game gear, but then reacted with astonishment. He told her he was ready to return to Mutul, and only needed her to communicate to the lords that he was alive and ready to accede as king so they could be free of Kaloomte Balam and his nacom. Ix Kin said that her husband was still too strong, and

that the lords would not turn against the man they put into power.

Wak Chan K'awiil then offered to save her, and help her escape. She asked where they could go. He told her of his refuge in Xultun, but she hesitated, saying that Kaloomte Balam feared him more than he feared Kan, and if it was ever discovered where he was hiding, he would be hunted down and she would die with him. He begged her again to escape with her, but she trembled and cried for fear, and refused to leave then, but begged him to wait for her if she found the chance someday. They embraced and Wak Chan K'awiil exited the city, now with a feeling of loss and despair like he never felt before.

## **520? Kaltuun Hix marries Ix Ek of Waka' (El Peru) and defeats Yaxchilan**

Ix Kin slept in her cot for days and did not have the energy to leave her chamber. She looked at her bruises, and looked at the scar she got when she saved her little brother from the jaguar. But the ugliness of her body did not sadden her as much as her loneliness. She was nothing but a pawn, and had no value except for her title.

A courier called from outside the curtain and she received a letter from Ix Ek of Waka'. She read the letter slowly. In it her friend let her know the news that she was betrothed to marry Kaltuun Hix, the king of Kan. Ix Kin collapsed with nausea. Ix Ek begged Ix Kin to forgive her, but the only other option was to receive the punishment of Kan and the city be destroyed and she and her family killed. She asked that Ix Kin see reason, and concede that the power of Mutul was failing, and the safest action was to submit to Kan.

Ix Ek was right. With the fall of Waka', Mutul now lost its connection to the west. Already in that same year Kaltuun Hix took Rio Azul by force, Mutul's tribute and trade connection to the northeast. Now, by marriage, Kaltuun Hix took Waka', Mutul's riverine connection to the west.

Just a few years later the lords of Mutul suffered more bad news as Kaltuun Hix had extended his

campaign and defeated Mo'ol Balam (Jaguar Paw) of Yaxchilan on the Usumacinta River, and so severed Mutul's last riverine connection to the southwest. Like a great snake, Kan was wrapping its coils around Mutul, stealing the vassal states that fed it tribute of maize, leaving it to die a death of asphyxiation. There was yet only one channel of tribute and trade from the world, and that was via the powerful southeast states of Saal (Naranjo) and Ox Wits' Ja' (Three Hill Water, Caracol). Losing this last route would be the death of Mutul.

But the lords turned their backs and covered their mouths when speaking of their fears, for no one had the courage to address Kaloonte Balam, and any man would be marked for the slightest word and be found dead and his children disinherited. In public everyone loved Kaloonte Balam, but in secret they despised him. They made him king because they thought he could save Mutul, but they mistook ambition for strength, and it was this ambition that gave him power, but the same ambition that now paralyzed him with fear. There was one more reason that the lords feared for the future, as over the years the king had failed to produce an heir, and everyone knew Tseek' Peek' was the reason for this.

The old king was now sixty seven years old, and every day he became more dangerous and unpredictable, and the only man who was safe was Tseek' Peek', who he depended on to spy for him,

and eliminate traitors from him. Every lord was expected to attend court, only to fear that his name would be called and accusations brought against him, and condemnation piled upon him from spineless peers. If a lord was too reluctant, he was named, but if another lord was too eager, he was also suspect. The purge terrified the lords, and no one trusted his neighbor, and every man suspected his friend. Kaloomte Balam became so suspicious of treason, that Tseek' Peek' slept with him every night, to protect him from any sign of murder.

The city observed the fifth Katun on 534 AD, July 1 (9.5.0.0.0) but the festivities were in poor spirits. There was no new construction to celebrate, and the pilgrims were few and spent little. Fear kept the lords quiet, but the people of Mutul had no reservation in speaking their minds about Kaloomte Balam. Ladies queued to be heard by the king and complained that they were required to pay fees and taxes even when Kaloomte Balam failed to do his part and bring in commerce and customers. They asked what kind of god is their king, if he himself spent all his time hiding in fear. Kaloomte Balam was so annoyed by the nagging that he suspended public hearings, but when Tseek' Peek' ventured into the market, the ladies mumbled around him, saying the king was not even man enough to have children, and his perverted habits with his nacom was likely the cause of the bad luck Mutul suffered.



## **535? Ix Kin (30) gives birth from affair with Lord Ch'íich' Mo'ol**

It is in this air of misery and discontent, that Ch'íich' Mo'ol approached Ix Kin who was now thirty years old, and befriended her. He spoke with wit that lit up the eyes of every woman, and a charm that sped their hearts with nothing more than his proximity. But his attention was wholly on Ix Kin, and he patiently listened, allowing her to pour her heart, her abuses, her memories, and her regrets, for which he was able to return hope, and comfort, and affection. Her love for Ch'íich' Mo'ol was obsessive, and her every breath and thought was for him. But the love was dangerous and kept secret, until the day that she felt sick.

The servants attended her, and the women knew that the queen was not ill, but pregnant with a child. This was a deadly position, and they accused the father for his reckless passion. Ix Kin was kept confined and it was reported to the king and the lords that she was gravely ill and would not bear company or aggravation. This tactic was only a delay, and one night she gave birth. It would be impossible to hold this secret any more, and Ch'íich' Mo'ol spoke with Ix Kin privately, and convinced her of the action required to survive before discovery. She was with him, for if she lacked will for her own being, she had every strength to protect her child.

Ch'iich' Mo'ol was not to be surprised, and since many months had been winning support from the lords and priests for a change in power. The next morning Ch'iich' Mo'ol requested an audience with Kaloomte Balam, on grounds he had news of a tribute that was forthcoming. The lords had gathered at the royal chamber to hear the king. Kaloomte Balam was now elderly at the age of seventy five. He sat on the stone throne and rested on the cotton pillow supported by a slave. By his side, as always, was Tseek' Peek' at his ear. Ch'iich' Mo'ol sat before the king and narrated the king's history, celebrating his victories and recounting the hopes the lords and people of Mutul had for his reign. He then told of the broken promises, of the defeats and abuses, and of the decline and misery of Mutul, but then mentioned that salvation had come at last. Tseek' Peek' stood and asked how Ch'iich' Mo'ol dared to accuse the king of such things, and of what salvation he was talking about. Before the priests, Ch'iich' Mo'ol reminded the court of the prophecy that promised Kaloomte Balam would reign until the day he discovered the heir to Mutul. Kaloomte Balam said there was no heir. Ch'iich' Mo'ol answered, today there was an heir. Kaloomte Balam cried out: Where? The curtains were drawn and outside the entrance stood Ix Kin, with her baby in her arms. Kaloomte Balam asked whose baby it was. Ix Kin replied that it was hers, and his, meaning Ch'iich' Mo'ol's. And with these words

Ch'íich' Mo'ol fell upon the king who cried out: This is violence! And in turn, the lords stabbed and slashed the king so that no one of them could be singled out and accused, and the king cried and wept for his wounds and his death. Kaloomte Balam died on the floor of the royal chamber; blood oozed from his body to form a scarlet puddle, and smoke rose from the cigar in his mouth to form a cloud that curled and danced into the air. Then the lords apprehended Tseek' Peek', and with a spear impaled him in a strange and horrible way they saw befitting of his crimes.

The city of Mutul celebrated the riddance of Kaloomte Balam and birth of the new heir apparent. Every family clan held a feast in the common area behind their houses. Turkeys were hung by their feet from trees and their throats slit for blood to be offered to idols. The birds were then dipped in boiling water to be deplumed and disemboweled, and then have all their members boiled again in a black broth of charred chili peppers. Neighbors visited each other with gifts of squash candied in honey or plums spiced with salt and chili. The disastrous reign of Kaloomte Balam brought in an era of decline, fear, and poverty for Mutul, but the people had hope that just as one bad king had ruined its fortunes, a good king could bring Mutul back under the jaguar sun.

After several days of revelry, the palace stank of rotting food, vomit, and feces. Ix Kin had the palace

cleaned up and refreshed the walls and ground with a new coat of stucco and paint. Surrounded by construction, she called an audience of the lords and priests in the royal chamber. In the shadows of the throne, she was a broken spirit, but now, on the throne and pillow of Mutul, and with the baby in her arms, she was transformed into a figure of power. With a new voice of authority, she dictated her vision of the future of Mutul, and in this vision was a shocking proposal. Everyone expected Ch'íich' Mo'ol, the husband of the queen and father of the heir apparent, and catalyst for the overthrow of Kaloomte Balam, to be named king, or at least regent and temporary ruler of Mutul. But Ix Kin dismissed any move that would steal away her power or jeopardize the future of her son. As mother of the heir apparent, she named herself regent and ruler in name of her child, and delegated Ch'íich' Mo'ol with nothing more than the role of nacom and the title of consort to the queen. Ch'íich' Mo'ol was stunned. He used his charm and wit to outplay everyone in the game for power, including Kaloomte Balam and Ix Kin, but it turned out that he had underestimated Ix Kin. She denied him his victory, and furthermore by rewarding him the esteemed office of the nacom, practically banished him from any intimate contact with her, for as long as a man held that responsibility, he was bound to live in the house of the nacom, and forbidden from private and intimate contact with any

woman, including his own wife, the queen of Mutul. The lords were also taken aback, she did not explicitly take the title of kaloomte, but it was unprecedented for a woman to take on the roles of military leader, supreme priest, and king of kings.

Ix Kin intended to lift Mutul back to the apex of its glory and initiated many projects to maintain roads, paint frescoes, and renovate the edifices in the market. With her will, the city was able to keep up appearances, but the paint on the face only covered up a crumbling foundation. As there were few vassals to supply labor, the queen pressed the people of Mutul into the stone quarries. She demanded the wealth that was required to execute her office as supreme priest, and charged Saal and Ox Wits' Ja' triple tribute, and where tribute could not provide, she reduced rations of maize for the citizens of Mutul and extracted tariffs from merchants who were not used to interference. So while the people of Mutul suffered the burdens of the queen, she frequented the streets and the plaza so that all could see the wealth of her dresses of finely woven cotton and jewelry of green jade and red spondylus shells.

## **537 December 27 (9.5.3.9.15) Wak Chan K'awil (29) returns from exile and accedes throne of Mutul**

Upakal Kinich, the king of Xultun, called for his nephew Wak Chan K'awil, who he was entrusted to hide and protect. News came from Mutul that Kaloomte Balam was dead, and succeeded by Ix Kin in the name of her son. Wak Chan K'awil was glad to hear the death of the tyrant, but when he was told of his sister's triumph, he sat down under the weight of betrayal. How was it possible that Ix Kin would take advantage of his misfortune and serve her own ambition? He realized that since he was exiled, in weakness and in strength, Ix Kin supported him as thinly as string over stone. Upakal Kinich told him not to be dismayed and reminded the prince since Kaloomte Balam was now gone, in effect, he was no longer exiled. Wak Chan K'awil was the king of Mutul by right, and if he looked like it, and acted like it, his destiny would be realized.

Wak Chan K'awil was dressed in the jaguar skins and quetzal feathers of a royal warrior, and a procession was assembled of musicians with drums and horns, holcanes and body guards armed with ceremonial spears of flint, and boys bearing the plumed standards of Mutul. The procession marched southeast on the road to Uaxactun and through each village the musicians beat their drums and blew their

horns so that the people would come out and marvel at the return of the lost prince. Young men grabbed their spears and joined the holcanes, and mothers and wives collected posol and chili peppers and followed the march as spectators, so that for each village that was passed, the party grew. At Uaxactun, the great ally and neighbor of Mutul, Wak Chan K'awil was received with great honors, and the king supported him with more holcanes.

Ch'iich' Mo'ol received intelligence and alerted Ix Kin that her brother was traveling on the road to Mutul. Her eyes teared and reddened with panic but her husband was at a loss for advice. She took her child and her servants and visited the temple of her father in the acropolis. Before the billowing brazier, she prayed for protection, and as she prayed, drums began to echo from beyond the hills. She and her servants sat quiet and still, and listened as each beat grew louder. The people of Mutul looked north, and from the distant echo of drums and horns, standards of Mutul appeared from over hill. Wak Chan K'awil, a young man now of twenty nine years, walked down the highway and behind him emerged a great crowd of followers, so that it looked like a great army was upon the city. The prince approached the northern gate of the city, and he was greeted by old men and women recognized him and knew him as a boy. Children ran to spread the news, and people lined up along the sides of the road to observe and salute the

prince. Many threw palms and leaves on the road before him, and the group of spectators grew into a crowd.

Some of the people wept for what Mutul had suffered in his absence and for pity of what he had endured for twenty seven years. When he saw the tears, Wak Chan K'awil also began to weep, as much of his life was taken from him, and much of its pride was taken from the city. He approached the palace and at that moment Ix Kin saw the limitations of her gender. For who he was and for his popularity, she did not have the grounds nor the power to banish him. She came forward and embraced her little brother, but in her heart she did not love him, but feared him.

The next day, a great feast was held in the plaza, and the people of Mutul celebrated the return of their lost prince. Every lord competed to sit close to Wak Chan K'awil, and as the evening grew late, the men abused food and drink, and amused themselves with mischief and laughter. The ladies had excused themselves from the feast, and although Ix Kin remained at the head of the table, she became invisible and isolated, until, overwhelmed by the debauchery, she also retired to her chamber, not noticed and not missed by the lords.

The next morning a ball game was programmed as part of the celebrations, and as Ch'íich' Mo'ol conducted his business to tax the merchants, entertainers climbed up on an open stage in the plaza

and called an audience to them. One acted the part of Ch'iich' Mo'ol, mocking his strut and pose with excellent accuracy so that the crowd laughed.

The queen Ix Kin was all alone  
her husband kept away  
Along came I, a handsome lord  
her heart I came to sway

She fell in love with me of course  
And then I killed the king  
I did not get to take the throne  
She used me for my thing.

Then a second actor got up on stage and pranced about as Wak Chan K'awil.

It's true he killed old King Balam,  
I feared him since a tot.  
When I returned the people cheered,  
You like me quite a lot.

I did not come to take the throne,  
I came to look at it.  
But then compared to this young man,  
I would be better fit.

The actors asked the audience who they wanted to rule Mutul, and all the ladies cheered and favored

Wak Chan K'awil. Ch'íich' Mo'ol was handsome and charming, but Wak Chan K'awil was royal, young, and a bachelor.

This play stirred a blinding jealousy in Ch'íich' Mo'ol who returned to the palace and in secrecy consulted the lords. The longer Wak Chan K'awil stayed in Mutul, the greater his popularity would grow, and soon the people would believe him to be the king of Mutul. There were already looks and whispers, and in the streets opinions were splitting into two factions, and the lords also began to make bids, so that conflict seemed inevitable. The loyal lords turned to Ch'íich' Mo'ol who had dared to kill one king before, and demanded that he act again, now as nacom in his duty to defend the queen.

Wak Chan K'awil visited the temple acropolis to observe the offerings and sacrifices to his father and ancestors. He was in the temple of his father when Ch'íich' Mo'ol and three bodyguards approached him with flint knives. They managed to wound the prince on the left arm and on the temple of the head before the priests interfered. Having been foiled in the murder, Ch'íich' Mo'ol and his followers fled the temple when the people in the plaza looked up to see Wak Chan K'awil emerge from the temple, wounded and bloody, but still standing, and they were roused for revenge. Ch'íich' Mo'ol and his bodyguards were apprehended by men loyal to the prince, and taken to the steps of the temple, where the people asked action

from Wak Chan K'awil. The prince asked Ch'iich' Mo'ol why he tried to kill him. Ch'iich' Mo'ol answered that he was told. No more words could be gotten from the treacherous lord and he was taken away. The words "he was told" echoed in the crowd, and a conflict was triggered with fighting that spread from the temple complex to the city below. Wak Chan K'awil urged the mob not to take justice upon themselves, but the tide of violence was beyond him. Rumbles were fought in the streets and lords were captured or murdered in their homes and it was a day of great horror.

Wak Chan K'awil was taken to the palace where loyal lords intended to protect him. With the wounds still fresh and stinging, he sat on the steps of the royal chamber and asked that first his sister and her husband and her son be brought before him. Before the court, the lords argued that Ch'iich' Mo'ol attempted to kill Wak Chan K'awil, and that he must be beheaded for treason. They further argued that, while the son of Ix Kin was innocent, he must also die to save Mutul from further violence. Hearing these words, Ix Kin looked up at her brother and promised him that if he would kill her son, she would die with him. Annoyed by her strength, Wak Chan K'awil slapped his forehead and gnashed his teeth. He rested his bloody brow on his wrist and then looked up at his sister. He could not let histories tell that he was the cause of his sister's death. He would not make that

decision. Instead, he would play against Ch'iich' Mo'ol at the ball court as planned, and would let the gods decide the fate of Ch'iich' Mo'ol, Ix Kin, and their son.

In her chamber, Ix Kin solemnly spread red paint over the body of Ch'iich' Mo'ol and then fitted him with his ball game gear. He wore a deer skin skirt to protect his thighs from hitting the bench, pads to protect his knees from scraping the floor, a wooden yoke to protect his chest, and the headdress of a crane to give him the spirit of agility. Ix Kin looked at her husband with trepidation in her eyes, but Ch'iich' Mo'ol steadied her with his confidence.

Thousands of people occupied the stadium that was built around the ballcourt. Tiers were built on poles and the floors were made of beams and woven branches covered by a layer of thatch. The whole structure creaked and swayed with the weight of the population of Mutul. Among the spectators, ambulant vendors took the opportunity to sell snacks and drink for the ladies and ceramic and wooden toys for the children. Men argued and their wagers favored Ch'iich' Mo'ol, while damsels compared romantic fantasies and many favored Wak Chan K'awil.

The crowd cheered and Ix Kin took her place in the spectator box that occupied the cornice of the ball court. Then they cheered even louder when Wak Chan K'awil and his teammate made their appearance at one end of the court. Then they booed when Ch'iich'

Mo'ol and his teammate made his appearance at the opposite end of the court. The head priest stood on the cornice and held a great black rubber ball that was filled with air and that had a circumference of nine handspans. It is then that he announced the significance of the match, being that this was in fact a trial by combat, where Ch'íich' Mo'ol would have the chance to save the life of his son and himself. The spectators gasped and murmured; the original stake of the game was honor, but now it was about life and death. The men reacted and traded higher wages, and the fair admirers of Ch'íich' Mo'ol covered their mouths for worry.

The priest dropped the ball from the cornice and let it bounce down the slope of the apron and into the playing alley. Ch'íich' Mo'ol and Wak Chan K'awiil leapt and collided in the air in an attempt to strike the ball first. The ball bounced to Ch'íich' Mo'ol's end but his teammate was able to rally the ball, sending it over the head of Wak Chan K'awiil. Wak Chan K'awil's partner rallied the ball and when it bounced on the other end of the alley, Ch'íich' Mo'ol was ready to receive it. He lunged and rallied the ball along the bench so that it carried farther and bounced in the end zone. A point was called for Ch'íich' Mo'ol and the crowd cheered. Ix Kin inhaled a breath of hope and hugged her child tight in her arms. The priest served the ball again and the ball was in play. Wal Chan K'awil rallied the ball along the bench and

sent it to the endzone, for which the crowd cheered. But the priests conferred, and the point was denied to Wak Chan K'awil because he stepped over the ballcourt marker that marked the middle and boundary between the two ends. The ball was served again and Ch'iich' Mo'ol hit the ball off the opposite bench so that Wak Chan K'awil and his teammate were not able to return it before it lost its bounce and rolled in the alley, meaning a second point for Ch'iich' Mo'ol. Wak Chan K'awil met with his teammate and resumed playing positions. The priest served the ball, but Wak Chan K'awil was more conservative in his play. Carefully, he rallied the ball to alternating sides of the alley, forcing Ch'iich' Mo'ol to constantly run to meet the ball. But when the ball was returned, Wak Chan K'awil, due to his wounds, did not exert himself and allowed Ch'iich' Mo'ol to score points against him.

Ix Kin was happy to see her husband succeed and smiled for the thought of salvation, and Ch'iich' Mo'ol grew more confident. At half time, Ch'iich' Mo'ol was up 13 points and he walked the length of the alley, raising his arms to beckon the cheers of the crowd. At this point, Ch'iich' Mo'ol challenged Wak Chan K'awil to get rid of the teammates and continue the game as a singles match. In front of thousands of spectators, Wak Chan K'awil could not turn down this challenge to his honor, but Ix Kin felt the sting of foreboding. The game resumed, but as Wak Chan

K'awil overcame the pains of his wounds, Ch'íich' Mo'ol succumbed to the exhaustion of his efforts. Wak Chan K'awil now commanded the game, forcing Ch'íich' Mo'ol to give up points for lack of air in his lungs and lack of strength in his legs. In desperation, Ch'íich' Mo'ol lunged, avoiding the ball and instead smashing into Wak Chan K'awil, opening up his wound again with cutting pain. Wak Chan K'awil rolled on the ground in pain, but the agony ignited his rage, and his rage gave him new energy. He got up, with blood dripping down to his feet, and continued the game. The opponents were both at 19 points each, with the winning point being played. Ch'íich' Mo'ol volleyed the ball which incredibly landed in the endzone for the winning point. The crowd cheered for the victory and Ix Kin ran down into the ball court to embrace Ch'íich' Mo'ol for joy. But the priests met, and declared the point to be invalid because Ch'íich' Mo'ol had stepped over the center ballcourt marker. Ix Kin was stunned but Ch'íich' Mo'ol took the penalty and agreed to one more play. The priest served the ball, and the enemies rallied and vollied the ball with every ounce of energy. Ch'íich' Mo'ol lunged on the bench and intended to send the ball along the slope of the apron and into the endzone, but his aim was too high, and it hit the ballcourt marker that protruded from the side of the cornice, and the ball bounced back into his end of the alley. Ch'íich' Mo'ol ran desperately after the ball and tried to keep

it in play, but it rolled across the center of the alley and out of his reach. The thousands of spectators were silent. Ix Kin could not breath for what just happened. Musicians blew the horns and didgeridoos and beat the drums. Wak Chan K'awil did not celebrate, but looked down on his defeated enemy. Soldiers entered the alley and apprehended Ch'iich' Mo'ol. Without delay, and before the people of Mutul, Ch'iich' Mo'ol was brought to his knees at the center ballcourt marker and with a single strike was beheaded. In the spectator box, Ix Kin and the lords of her faction were apprehended and taken away.

Ix Kin was taken to the palace where the baby was torn from her arms and taken to a chamber where the evil deed was done. Ix Kin screamed and cried and fell to the floor. All her life she had known violence and loss, but this was more than she could bear. She turned to her brother and with evil on her tongue, cursed him with such violent words that he shrunk back. Guards apprehended the wretched queen and dragged to her chamber. The people of the court were astounded by the violence, and the servants of the court wept and ran after the queen. Wak Chan K'awil took the tears for treason and demanded that each of the accused conspirators be brought to him in order. For each lord that was accused and bound, he heard the name and family, and swiftly spoke his judgment. For each beheading, the citizens of the city could hear the screams and cries of mothers, wives,

and daughters rise from the palace in waves of horror and grief.

A slave of Ix Kin, overcome with despair, escaped the chamber of the queen. With bloody spondylus shells in her hands and her gown stained in scarlet, she cried that the queen was dead. Wak Chan K'awil was overcome by the disloyalty of his sister and gave out a great cry.

In the temple acropolis, a tomb was dug out and prepared with stucco facing and frescoes. A solemn but sumptuous procession emerged from the palace. In the middle of the file, lords carried two litters. Ch'íich' Mo'ol lay in one litter. Ix Kin lay in the other with her baby in her arms. The people of Mutul flooded the street and the plaza on the way to the temples, yet the air was silent. Among the thousands of people present, not one spoke a word. The bodies of Ix Kin, her husband, and her child were lowered into the tomb. Ix Kin's servants wept and cried as they placed in the tomb her personal comforts and possessions; the vessels from which she ate and drank, the stingray spike she used for her sacrifices, and foods she preferred. The tomb was then covered by slabs of limestone, and sealed with a coat of stucco. Priests fed the braziers with great amounts of fuel and incense of resin of the copal tree.

As plumes of smoke, the spirits of Ix Kin, Ch'íich' Mo'ol, and their child streamed up into the sky and wandered among clouds. That evening, the

snake night wrestled the jaguar sun down below the horizon, and it dominated the sky. The eyes of the queen and her family shone among thousands of spirits who looked down on the earth to watch the world and there they saw on 537 December 27 (9.5.3.9.15), Wak Chan K'awil sit on the throne left vacant by his sister Ix Kin, and before by his father Chak Tóok Íich'ak II.

## **546 AD? Kaltuun Hix of Kan oversees Aj Wosal Chan Kinich access throne of Saal**

Wak Chan K'awil was now king of Mutul, and may have been the ajaw of surrounding city states, but he did not rule the Mayan world and he wanted the title of Kaloomte. He looked down on the city of crumbling walls and fading frescoes. Mutul was dying. The new nacom received grave intelligence and Wak Chan K'awil called the lords and priests to court. The nacom said the vassal king of Saal, Tajal Chaal had died and instead of notifying Wak Chan K'awil as his overlord, the new king, Aj Wosal Chan Kinich, had already acceded the throne, and his coronation was done in the presence and oversight of the great rival, Kaltuun Hix (Stone Bound Jaguar) of the Kan kingdom.

With these words, there was a heaviness in the air. The elder lords spoke. Under Chak Tóok Íich'ak II, Mutul was still a great city, but its greatness fed on tribute from the cities in its dominion. Every farmer of every village paid their taxes in maize, and every village sent a portion of maize to the petty kings of Ucanal, Bital, Xultun, or Maasal, who in turn paid tribute to the ajaw lords of Saal, Ox Wits' Ja', or Uaxactun. And the ajaw paid tribute to Mutul, by which baskets upon baskets of maize, honey, cacao, and the produce of the Maya land flowed into the city. The granaries were full and the people of Mutul were

fed.

Every dry season, farmers for each village and kingdom were sent to Mutul and pressed into labor. Great fires burned blocks of limestone to powder to be used as mortar and stucco. Laborers cut blocks in the quarries and built new temples for each Katun celebration. Roads were patched and smoothed with fresh layers of chalky stucco, and temples and palaces were painted and decorated with colors of red, white, yellow, and green. But though the work was hard, every laborer, servant, and slave was well fed with drinks of posol, breads of polcanes, soups of beans, and fresh chili peppers.

But then rumors came from the north, and village by village, and kingdom by kingdom, each polity was quietly taken in the grip of the Kan kingdom. Then Kan came closer. Chak Tóok Íich'ak II tried to defend the dominion. Though Kaloomte Balam was once strong, he became mad, and Kan lurked unseen.

The enemy first took Maasal, and then took many other vassal kingdoms. For each village and vassal that was taken away, another source of maize and labor that was lost. At the side of Kaloomte Balam and then Ch'íich' Mo'ol, Ix Kin did not have the charisma to save the vassals from beguilement or the strength to hunt down the invisible enemy that lurked among them. It had lost its arms of trade and tribute to the north, west, and south, but it still had a good hold on access to the coastal trade in the Caribbean

sea. Seafaring canoes that traveled up the coast would paddle up the Belmopan River and land upriver at Saal (Naranjo) where pedestrian merchants then carried the goods over the sacbeob to Mutul.

But now even Saal had turned away from Mutul, and Ox Wits' Ja' remained as the last ally to Mutul, and its last access to the Caribbean and the world. The elders saw that Mutul was only a skeleton of what it once was, and if it ever lost Ox Wits' Ja', Kan would finally emerge from the shadows, and kill Mutul with one final strike.

## **553 April 16 (9.5.19.1.2) Wak Chan K'awil supervises accession of Yajaw Te Ki'inich II at Ox Wits' Ja'**

Wak Chan K'awil was determined to maintain the greatness of Mutul. Having lost every other ally and vassal, he demanded double tribute from Ox Wits' Ja', and the king suffered the burden for loyalty. When the king of Ox Wits' Ja' died, Wak Chan K'awil traveled to the city to witness and oversee the accession of his friend, Yajaw Te Ki'inich II (Vassal to [his] Majesty) on 553 April 16 (9.5.19.1.2). But the Sixth Katun celebration was near, and Wak Chan K'awil demanded more food and labor from Ox Wits' Ja' for the construction of a new temple complex in his honor. Yajaw Te Ki'inich II endured the cost, but he could not afford such loyalty for long.

The following year, Wak Chan K'awil hosted his friend for the Sixth Katun celebrations on 554 AD March 18 (9.6.0.0.0). On the first day, the king presented and consecrated a new stela that depicted his image and his story. At the final dinner on the final day of the festivities, Yajaw Te Ki'inich II sat with Wak Chan K'awil. He mentioned that he would always be loyal, and always protect his overlord with his words and his wealth. And now he had words to save his ajaw and friend. Wak Chan K'awil asked where the danger was and Yajaw Te Ki'inich II explained that Kan had conquered the whole of the

Mayan heartland, and the only way to save Mutul would be to join Kan as a vassal, rather than die as prey. Wak Chan K'awil stood up and accused Yajaw Te Ki'inich II of betrayal. Yajaw Te Ki'inich II asked him to let go of his pride and his vision, and join Kan to survive and be friends once more. Wak Chan K'awil stood silent and ready to strike, but Yajaw Te Ki'inich II and the lords of Ox Wits' Ja' withdrew from the feast, and exited the palace of Mutul. In front of the public, Wak Chan K'awil followed his friend and screamed and cursed him with an apoplectic craze.

## **556 April 11 (9.6.2.1.11) Wak Chan K'awil attacks Yajaw Te Ki'inich II**

Yajaw Te Ki'inich II joined the rest of the Mayan lowlands and defected to Kan, and by this Mutul had lost its last vassal. There was no more tribute, no more trade, and no more protection from the aggression of the Kan kingdom. Granary chambers that were once filled to the ceiling with maize had only grains and chafe on the floor, and the day came when the ladies were turned away with empty baskets. Homes were empty of food, and citizens began to fear hunger. Crowds forced their way into the granary, and finding them empty, they panicked and went to the palace, where they trespassed into the courtyard and complained to Wak Chan K'awil. The young king promised he would perform a sacrifice so that the gods would turn the fortune of Mutul, but the ladies scoffed; they didn't need rain, they needed maize. Wak Chan K'awil promised he would find food, but the ladies mumbled and called him a liar.

That evening, Wak Chan K'awil observed the people beginning to leave Mutul so he called the courtiers to the royal chamber. The nacom was the first to speak, declaring the urgency of the situation and demanding the market administrator to feed the people. The administrator said there was nothing to give as the granaries were empty and in turn asked why the tax collector had not supplied him with more

maize. The tax collector revealed that shipments from Ox Wits' Ja' had dwindled and finally stopped. With Mutul on the edge of famine, and the people on the verge of rebellion, the lords turned to Wak Chan K'awil to save the city. The young king called for holcanes and drafted every man and boy for a final campaign.

On 556 AD, April 11 (9.6.2.1.11) Wak Chan K'awil entered the city of Ox Wits' Ja' and met the defenses of Yajaw Te Ki'inich II. Wak Chan K'awil addressed his friend, and demanded that he continue the payments of tribute, as they were in need to preserve the greatness of Mutul. Yajaw Te Ki'inich II refused to subsidize such illusions on the pain of his own people. Wak Chan K'awil then begged on behalf of friendship and loyalty. But upon those words, a lord and his bodyguards came to the front of the army of Ox Wits' Ja' and stood beside Yajaw Te Ki'inich II. Above him was held the feathered standard that showed the colors of Kan. Wak Chan K'awil trembled with rage and accused his friend of betrayal. With a terrible cry, he attacked the forces of Ox Wits' Ja', but the holcanes and bodyguards repelled every charge. The people of Ox Wits' Ja' laughed and jeered the king of Mutul, and assaulted him with rotten food saying that was their tribute, until finally he was repelled and retreated from the city in humiliation.

## **562 May 1 (9.6.8.4.6) Kan, with Ox Wits' Ja' and Saal, defeat Mutul**

The lords of Kan watched as Mutul weakened with famine. With the stresses of scarcity of food, factions and conspiracies plagued Wak Chan K'awil as empty stomachs knew no loyalty.

But Kan waited. And then a new king, Ch'úuysa'an Jaajkunaj (Sky Witness), acceded the throne of Kan in Ts'iiba'anche'. Ch'úuysa'an Jaajkunaj was young and ready to capture fame and glory, and when he saw the sorry state of Mutul, he found his prey.

Ch'úuysa'an Jaajkunaj called all the vassals to arms. Aj Wosal of Saal and Yajaw Te Ki'inich II of Ox Wits' Ja' responded, along with the rulers of Maasal, Xultun, and others. Ch'úuysa'an Jaajkunaj marched his army to meet Yajaw Te Ki'inich II, and then marched through Saal on the way to Mutul. Never was there a procession of such scale and pomp. Families came out to see the famous kings in person, and the young men grabbed their spears and joined for fear of missing out on the glory.

From the summit of a pyramid, Wak Chan K'awil heard in the distance what seemed like the whole world coming down on him. He entered the temple where his sister was entombed, and lit a flame in a brazier. Alone, he bled himself and tossed the blood soaked paper into the urn. A black smoke poured out

and filled the temple chamber with a cloud. The king prayed, and spoke to the smoke, eliciting and addressing the spirit of his sister. The stress on his body made him nauseous and almost faint in cold sweat. He could not see his sister, but he had faith that she was there. He said he failed to save anyone, but what was worse, his efforts only hurt everyone around him. His efforts killed her son, and killed her. He could speak no more and cried compulsively. He then saw the light of the falling jaguar sun shine on the figure of his sister in the smoke. He heard her say that everything was done as had to be done, and there was no way to resist fate. She said that this day, when the jaguar sun falls into the underworld, he will die and Mutul will die, but that he must play his part in history, so that everyone would know how he lived and died, and how Mutul grew and fell. Wak Chan K'awil nodded but said nothing more than that he felt alone. He saw her smile and extend her arms to console him. He reached out but her image disappeared in the rising smoke. In the empty chamber he said he loved her, and that was the first time he ever uttered those words.

Wak Chan K'awil exited the temple and from the height of the pyramid he witnessed all the armies of the Mayan world appear from the horizon and approach every gate of Mutul. As deathly drums of Kan pulsed in the sky, Wak Chan K'awil took up his spear, and descended the stairs of the pyramid before

the orange light of the dying jaguar sun. He joined the few lords that remained loyal and waited at the southern gate of Mutul. They were dressed in the full splendor of military costume, each taking the power of their animal familiars by wearing the skins as armor and heads as headdresses. But they were alone, as their bodyguards and servants had since abandoned the city and their masters.

The great armies of Kan approached and confronted them at the gate of the city. The air was hot and quiet. Wak Kan Kawiil saw Yajaw Te Ki'inich in the ranks but did not speak. Then he saw his enemy at last. On a great litter that carried the effigy of a jaguar, rode the young king of Kan, Ch'úuysa'an Jaajkunaj. He looked down on the pitiful remnants of royalty and nobility of Mutul, then with the wave of the hand, musicians sounded the tune for attack.

Wak Chan K'awil did not recoil, but walked towards the armies that confronted him. His feet accelerated to a run, and with peace in his heart, he smashed into the warriors and wielded his spear with such natural skill and ease that he felt himself merely an observer of his own actions. The zeal of the halcones was too great for discipline, and they broke from their ranks and charged with chilling war cries. Wak Chan K'awil saw his army dissolve around him when he saw the face of Yajaw Te Ki'inich II. Wak Chan K'awil attempted to spar, but he was overwhelmed, and immediately disarmed and brought

to his knees. He was taken to the palace, and from there he watched the city of Mutul be overtaken by the enemy. The citizens were defenseless and unable to protect their homes or themselves.

Wak Chan K'awil was presented before Ch'úuysa'an Jaajkunaj, Aj Wosal, and Yajaw Te Ki'inich where he was given permission to beg for his life. The king replied that he would not beg for his life, as he would not sacrifice his honor. Ch'úuysa'an Jaajkunaj said that on this day, Wak Chan K'awil would die, and for his failure, Mutul would die with him. On these walls and monuments were written the lives of men and women, the birth of their children and death of their fathers, but these will be broken and erased. On books were written the triumphs and tragedies, their confessions and their communications with the gods, but these will be burned. Almost two hundred years ago, the ancestors of Wak Chan K'awil came from Teotihuacan to rule over the Maya, and propelled Mutul to glory and elevated the Maya world with it. Today was the end of that great journey, and Mutul will be erased from the earth and forgotten by time, so that the people will only know the glory of Kan.

Then by the command of Ch'úuysa'an Jaajkunaj, the holcanes were unleashed into the city. Wak Chan K'awil and the lords of Mutul watched as the monuments were turned to rubble and returned to earth, and as the hundreds of books and idols were

turned to smoke and returned to heaven. Aj Wosal came upon the stela of Wak Chan K'awil, and with a great blow of a stone axe, split the image asunder so that the face fell and was lost. The jaguar sun touched the earth, and Wak Chan K'awil watched as it was consumed by the underworld. He then closed his eyes and prepared to enter the next life. Seeing that victory was complete, Ch'úuysa'an Jaajkunaj gave his instruction, and Yajaw Te Ki'inich II took Wak Chan K'awil by the knot of his hair and chopped off his head with a single swing of the obsidian ax. The brilliant evening star appeared in the twilight just above the horizon, and followed the sun in its journey to death.

The army of Kan exited the gates with captured slaves and left behind a dead city. In smoke and ash, the spirit of Mutul rose into heaven and the last cast of the jaguar sun lit up the crimson curls which twisted and writhed a deathly dance before being consumed by the spangled serpent night. Darkness consumed every crook and crevice of the city, and into a damp pit by the side of the causeway, the warriors of Kan tumbled the dead and faceless stone that was once the stela that showed the image and story of Wak Chan K'awil.

Facing famine, the people of Mutul migrated to other cities in search of prosperity and stability. Mutul was reduced to a petty kingdom, and the city being too large to sustain, was all abandoned except for the

very center.

And so Mutul was left to be consumed by the jungle for the next 133 years...

# Volume 3

Serpent Strikes the Gods



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13.0.8.2.2 LC, 1 Ik', 5 K'ank'in

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The Kan dynasty had finally defeated Mutul (Tikal) and consumed its lands, growing its dominion from the central Yucatan Peninsula to the southern lowlands. But it was not satisfied, and the new king of Dzibanche, U Kay Kan (Song of Serpent) turned his eyes to the west, and saw one more prey. Baakal Waywal (Palenque) was the great city on the western edge of the Maya world, and to capture it was to capture the gate of trade to Teotihuacan. But that city was invulnerable, for its dynasty was descended from Triad Gods who protected it. So Kan prepared for a new war, not a war to fight a king, but a war to kill the gods.



## **582 October 17? (9.7.9.0.0?) New Tun Celebration**

The dying jaguar sun fell to touch the earth, dressing great swirling clouds with fiery plumes of red and pink, and casting an orange hue over maize crops that blanketed the lowland under the foothills of the Northern Mountain. Round standards featuring the colors of the macaw in concentric patterns waved high in the air on long staffs above the drone of didgeridoos, the deep pulse of drums, and the song of horns. Behind them, a great effigy of the god Unen Kawiil, god of earth and mortal life, journeyed above the shoulders of eight litter bearers. The idol was a cross carved from wood into the likeness of a maize plant, with the face of a monkey, and holding a human head in each arm. The image of a quetzal bird perched above it to assign divine royalty to the god.

The litter was followed by priests dressed in tunics and crowned with miters of colored feathers, and accompanied by holcanes (warriors) armored in jaguar skins and headdresses and armed with decorative flint spears. Noble ladies followed in another group, dressed in voluminous white cotton huipiles (dresses) and green jade necklaces that contrasted their bare dark brown shoulders, and carrying as accessories a white feather fan in one hand and a red shawl in the crook of the arm. Behind them, thousands of commoners, all dressed in their finest clothes and carrying all sorts of food and

offerings, followed the procession on the sacbe (white road) from the northern gate to Baakal (Palenque), the great red city that sprawled above them along the northern edge of the Chiapas highlands.

The procession entered the city and followed the inclined streets and crossed plazas between rushing waterfalls. The palace and temple reliefs and frescoes were freshly painted with colors of red, yellow, green, black, and white, and roads were just patched and smoothed with a layer of white stucco. Six blue rivers coursed through the city, dividing it along the face of the hills and serving as an unlimited fountain for cold beverage and baths.

The colorful parade arrived in the forum before the temple, and in the presence of the King Kan Balam (Snake Jaguar), the effigy of the god Unen Kawiil was carried up the steps and placed in the entrance of a temple chamber. Fire was lit under a great brazier that was fashioned in the form of the head of the goddess, Ix Muwaan Mat, and on the hot ceramic bowl the priests tossed in fifty three grains of ground maize which toasted and smoldered. They threw stones of incense of the sap of the copal tree that evaporated and scented the air with an aroma that was sweet and fresh, and placed in it a rubber ball that ignited in the heat of the brazier. The citizens of Baakal then came forward and laid their offerings to Unen Kawiil at the steps of the palace and offered steamed breads of maize in the forms of yellow egg

yolks, red deer hearts, or red peppers. More offered turkeys tied at their feet and clipped at their wings, bundles of cotton, and hundreds of ears of maize. Many then drew blood from the lobes of their ears, and did the same to their children by force, and with their hands painted the god scarlet red.

The offerings had been presented in enormous amounts, and the dances began with acrobats on tall stilts who proceeded in circles to the beat of conga drums and horns. A troupe of ladies performed a dance with clay dogs in their hands, tapping and skipping in single file and led by the daughter and only child of Kan Balam, Ix Yohl Iknal (Lady Heart Wind Place), who was just a damsel, light in movement and bright with youth. The girl turned the line into a great circle and led a tighter path inwards, at the center of which a dog waited while leashed to a pole. The ladies danced around a concentric spiral until they reached the center when the music stopped and the senior women then came upon the dog and poked its neck with an obsidian knife. The dog flinched and stood back, surprised by the attack and not noticing the blood that poured down. In a moment it grew faint and finally collapsed against its will, upon which it was picked up. Ix Yohl Iknal turned and wove her way back out until the train of dancers unraveled and she approached the god on the steps of the palace. The dog was placed among the offerings and the king was proud of his daughter.

The morning after the ceremonies were completed, the priests took the mountain of offerings that were deposited on the steps and carried them to the inner courtyard of the palace and then down the stairs into the underground tunnels. Torches broke the darkness in the cool chambers and threw a rare light upon troves of maize, cacao, squash, obsidian, salt, and many other goods and treasures. There they cached the newly earned wealth.

The rest of the food was portioned out by the ladies of the court to be prepared for the royal feast. Turkeys were slaughtered and thrown into a stew, and vegetables prepared as ragouts that were spiced with precious salt imported from the salt flats of Yucatan, heated with chili peppers and flavored with herbs. The ladies shed maize kernels off the cobs and softened in water with lime powder, and then all the women of the palace, no matter their honor or rank, sat together to grind on stone metates and create fresh paste which was filled with turkey meat and packaged in banana leaves to be steamed in great pots over the flames of open hearths.

The night snake consumed the heaven with its dark shadow, and thousands of spirits that rode on its back opened their twinkling eyes to gaze upon their mortal children. Guests and pilgrims arrived and covered the white stucco plaza with thousands of colorful cotton blankets. All the ladies, slaves, and servants of Baakal filled dishes from the cauldrons and distributed the

food so that every guest was equally served. Under the warm glow of torches, the people enjoyed the repast and thanked the king and the Triad Gods for the food and blessings.

During the feast, the children played games, and Ix Yohl Iknal was chased by her friends through the passages and between the houses of the palace. She hid in a toilet chamber and closed the curtain, and there she hid until her friends were gone. Fearing they might come back, she ran out to the back of the palace where she came upon a group of poor children who sat outside and watched the chases as if it was a spectacle. She felt proud to be apart from them, but then she saw one of the girls; her tunic was worn and stained, and her hair and skin as brown and dusty, so that she seemed almost one with the dirt she sat on. The girl sat in misery, and stared at Ix Yohl Iknal from another world. The princess beckoned the group of children, and stealthily led them into the back of the palace to the underground chambers where the offerings were stored, and she distributed as much of the goods as they could hold so that the poor children smiled and ran away with their prizes.

Ix Yohl Iknal followed and spied on the children, thinking that they would descend to the poor neighborhoods at the northern perimeter of the city. But the paupers walked west through the plazas along the foothills of the Northern mountain, crossing two rivers of cold blue water, until they entered a forum

surrounded by temples of faded paint and crumbling facades. Weeds grew in every crack of the plaza floor and temple cornices. These were the temples of the forgotten gods, and Ix Yohl Iknal never ventured here before, as the priests cared for a cult that was strange and apart from the people of Baakal. The children took their prizes into a temple entrance and curiosity commanded the princess to follow them. Inside, three idols of fearsome form sculpted on rotten wood stood behind three burning braziers. The offerings were meager, and the humble priests happily received the children and took the goods and presented them to the gods. Ix Yohl Iknal had never known these priests because they were not in the attention of her father Kan Balam. While they were shunned and poor, they were fiercely devout, because while common understanding was that theirs were lesser gods, they knew of their true history. They knew the original ruler of the dynasty was Kuk Balam, but he was not of Baakal, but of Toktan, and before that from Teotihuacan, and with him he brought the original Triad Gods: Balun Chan Yoon, Waxaklajun Yoon, and Balun Tzakbu Ajaw. The ancient people of Baakal were not accustomed to worship the foreign gods, so the priests found Mayan gods, Hun Ajaw, Kinich Ajaw, and Unen Kawiil, and said they were the same. In this way the priests of Toktan won the worship and wealth of the people of Baakal, but there was always a small faction who refused to abandon the original

identity of their deities, despite their humiliation and hardship.

For the next days the banquets continued, and the lords in the palace of Baakal feasted until they could eat no more. Then they drank the viscous white pulque of the agave plant until they suffered incontinence and passed out. Kan Balam was not in the habit of suffering excessive spiritual gluttony, and sat alone to enjoy his pipe of tobacco. Ix Yohl Iknal visited her father who told her he was made aware of the theft of the offerings and of her petty conspiracy. Such unforgivable crimes would make the gods angry and attract their wrath. She smiled and widened her eyes in denial. He continued to smoke and she asked why those children were poor, and why she was fortunate. Her father told her that from the beginning of time, their family was set apart from the people. In the previous era, there was a goddess Ix Muwaan Mat who bore three gods, Hun Ajaw, Kinich Ajaw, and Unen Kawiil, and then became rulers of the sky, underworld, and earth of Baakal, thereby founding the royal lineage of the city. These gods passed on the titles for many generations, and now passed on the title to Kan Balam. And soon it would be time for Ix Yohl Iknal to marry, and pass on the title to her children so the blood of the dynasty would continue. Ix Yohl Iknal lost her humor with those words. So soon would she have to become a solemn adult and leave her childhood behind.

### **583 January 30 (9.7.9.5.5) Kan Balam (59) of Baakal dies. Ix Yohl Iknal (15)**

Before a match for Ix Yohl Iknal could be made, her father, Kan Balam who was now fifty nine years old, fell ill. For many years he had suffered the discomforts of unquenchable thirst, and grew thin despite a healthy diet. He suffered diseases in his feet that rotted them, and now he felt the very core of his soul and body turning the pains of death. The priests conducted rituals in his chamber, exorcising evil spirits and shielding the perimeter from any attempt of breach. But the king did not improve. Ix Yohl Iknal nursed him and did not abandon him, even sleeping on the floor to watch over him at night. Her father called her. He said that her mother for many years tried to give him a son, but there were many miscarriages. At last, she gave birth to a live child, and this was Ix Yohl Iknal, but the birth was hard and she died that same night, crying for the knowledge she would never be able to care for her baby girl. Since the beginning of time, there was an heir apparent ready to inherit the title, and now the male line was broken, but the dynasty was not lost. Kan Balam called an audience of the priests and lords and announced his daughter would accede upon his death, but to preserve the dynasty, she must rule as queen regnant, and reserve all ritual and political power to be passed on to her sons. The Toktan priests were quick to point out that there was no precedence for

this request, and proposed that they consult their gods and choose a male heir apparent, but the chief of the priests saw their ambition and abuse, and countered that preserving the blood line was more important than promoting masculinity, and reminded that Ix Muwaan Mat, the founder of the dynasty was herself a goddess. The patrilineal dynasty was not law but mere convention. With that, the old king was satisfied and every one agreed to the accession. Just a few days later, on 583 February 1 (9.6.9.5.5), and with his mind at peace, Kan Balam expelled his breath and spirit with Ix Yohl Iknal at his side. The girl fell and cried out with absolute despair, as she was only fifteen and too young to be orphaned and left alone.

## **583 December 21 (9.7.10.3.8) Daughter of Kan Balam, Ix Yohl Iknal (15) accedes throne of Baakal**

Ix Yohl Iknal mourned silently each day, and aloud every night with cries that were terrible to hear. She could not eat anything and lost weight for the dread of the death of her father and for her loneliness. But arrangements were made and invitations sent out for the coronation. Appearances had to be kept up and strength portrayed, so as not to put fear into the petty kings of the Baakal domain which would tempt them to ally to foreign power. Temples were refreshed with red and white paint and the palace dressed in new curtains of every color to receive and impress guests and pilgrims. People from every surrounding village arrived with goods and wares to trade, and the smoke and smell of cooked meats and sauces filled every courtyard and the noise of commerce filled every street. The kings of Pipa and Sak Tzi arrived with conspicuous pomp and declarative fanfare arrived at the gates of the city drawing awe and babble from the people, but their glory was superseded by the arrival of the king of Wakaab (Poko Unik) whose headdress flowed with green feathers and entourage marched with terrific beats of drums and turtle shells.

The jaguar sun fell into the underworld, and the creatures of the land that hid from its radiance now sang out and celebrated the cool of the night serpent. The city came to life with men and women and

children, refreshed and bathed, who made their way to the northern plaza. Vendors took advantage of the crowds and on blankets of cotton, sold ragouts, steamed tamales, and drinks of toasted maize and honey, while collecting payments of cacao beans in little piles of wealth. Guards separated the crowd and provided a path from the palace to the temple complex. With the world now in the shade of the night, horns sounded and drums beat a thrill into the air. After the musicians, dancers, and guards, Ix Yohl Iknal appeared at the top of the steps adorned with a great collar of jade plates that covered her shoulders and chest, cuffs of jade plates, and a great medallion that symbolized her majesty. Her headdress was an effigy of a cormorant that was plumed with the iridescent feathers of the quetzal bird. The crowds cheered for her presence and she descended the stairs and stepped into her litter. The procession proceeded through the plaza and passed the ball court that lay to the right, and the people pressed to get a better look at the girl who was about to become their queen. At the north pyramid, the people watched Ix Yohl Iknal climb the steps to be received by the nobles and priests of Baakal at the summit. She entered the temple and took her place on a dais. Nuk Yajaw Chan, the chief of the priests, was presented a book and he read from it the lineage of the dynasty.

<On 3121 BC December 5 (12.19.13. 4.0) (1Ajaw 13 Tzek) in the previous Pictun, Ix Muwaan Mat cormorant goddess, came from the heaven and touched the earth.

Then on 3114 BC August 11 (13.0.0.0.0) (4 Ajaw 3 K'ank'in) the new Pictun came of age and the Baktuns were reset.

Then on 2360 BC November 8 (1.18.5.4.2) (9 Ik' 15 Keh) Hun Ajaw, the Jupiter god, first son of Ix Muwaan Mat, descended from heaven and touched the earth.

Then on 2360 BC November 12 (1.18.5.4.6) (13 Kimi 19 Keh) Kinich Ajaw, the Mars god, second son of Ix Muwaan Mat, descended from heaven and touched the earth.

Then on 2360 BC November 26 (1.18.5.5.0) (1 Ajaw 13 Mak) Unen Kawiil, the Saturn god, third son of Ix Muwaan Mat, descended from heaven and touched the earth.

Then on 2325 BC, September 5 (2.0.0.10.2) (2 Ik, 0 Sak), Ix Muwaan Mat, cormorant goddess, acceded the throne Baakal.

Then her children, the Triad Gods, reigned, and Hun Ajaw was lord of the heaven, Kinich Ajaw was lord of the underworld, and Unen Kawiil was lord on earth.

Then on 431 March 10 (8.19.15.3.4 1 K'an 2 K'ayab) Kuk Balam acceded to the throne of Baakal.

Then on 435 August 9 (8.19.19.11.17 2 Kaban 10 Xul) Kiikel acceded the throne of Baakal.

Then on 487 July 28 (9.2.12.6.18 3 Etz'nab 11 Xul) Butz Sak Chiik acceded the throne of Baakal.

Then on 501 June 3 (9.3.6.7.17 5 Kaban 0 Sotz') Ahkal Mo Nab acceded the throne of Baakal.

Then on 529 February 23 (9.4.14.10.4 5 K'an 12 K'ayab) Kan Joy Chitam acceded the throne of Baakal.

Then on 565 May 2 (9.6.11.5.1 1 Imix 4 Sip) Akal Mo Nab II acceded the throne of Baakal.

Then on 572 April 6 (9.6.18.5.12 10 Eb 0 Wo) Kan Balam acceded the throne of Baakal.

Now on 583 December 21 (9.7.10.3.8) Ix Yohl Ik'nal, accedes the throne of Baakal.

And for Ix Yohl Ik'nal, the dynasty from Ix Muwaan Mat is unbroken. And through Ix Yohl Ik'nal, Baakal makes its offerings to Ix Muwaan Mat and her sons. And through Ix Yohl Ik'nal, Ix Muwaan Mat and the her sons bring down their blessings to Baakal.>

And before the thousands of spectators below her, she received a sculpted glyph representing Baakal wrapped in fine cotton gauze. Before the temple, the vassals of Baakal formed a queue, and in succession climbed the pyramid and presented gifts of cotton bundles and quetzal feathers, in tandem with words of praise to her beauty and allegiance to her polity. In this way, on 583 December 21 (9.7.10.3.8) the daughter of Kan Balam, Ix Yohl Ik'nal (Lady Heart Wind Place), a girl of only fifteen years, acceded to the throne as the first queen regnant of Baakal.

Shortly after her accession to the throne of Baakal, the lords of the court went about the business of finding a husband for Ix Yohl Ik'nal. Many lords presented their sons, hoping to marry their families into the royal dynasty, but Ix Yohl Ik'nal, jealous of

her title, was reluctant to give up her power to a happy husband. Like a flame that attracts moths to their own demise, she entertained the advances of many young men, winning their affection and building their ambition, only to refuse them at the last moment, causing many to writhe in violent anger and others to weep and sink into despondent depression. But there was one young man, who we will call Yellow Turtle, who did not approach the queen for his pride. Instead, he aimed to shine brighter than her. For any girl he had the perfect profile and a solid build, but these features came natural to him. His passion was the sport of the ball game, and it is with his athletic skill that he drew admiration from the other players, and adoration from the lady spectators. Ix Yohl Iknal saw him attractive enough to be a lover, but also shallow and stupid enough to be a husband. So the marriage was arranged, with the condition that Yellow Turtle accept the title of consort to the queen, with no power beyond luxury and privileges.

Two years after the marriage, Ix Yohl Iknal gave birth to her first son, Ajen Yohl Mat. The lords, priests, and citizens of Baakal celebrated because in the boy they saw the continuance of the dynasty and salvation of Baakal fortunes. Ix Yohl Iknal was blessed with a second son, Janaab Pakal and the survival of the dynasty was assured.

For the next ten years, the people of Baakal expected to enjoy health and prosperity as Ix Yohl

Ikmal continued the blessings of the dynasty that was founded in ancient times. Each morning, before dawn, women fanned embers and cooked pots of atole made from maize dough dissolved in water and boiled to a thick hot drink they served their husbands. The men gathered in groups of twenty and quietly marched out of the city to help each other in turn, collectively slashing and burning brush till the earth was scorched and left blackened with ash and charcoal. They worked around bedrock and boulders and poked holes in the ash and dirt with long staffs, and in each tossed a few seeds. After the earth drank the torrents of rain, the work of the farmers covered the lands from horizon to horizon with fields of maize that sprang from the earth, spotted by gardens of green, red, and yellow chili peppers, squashes of many varieties, beans, and little forests of papaya fruit. From this labor, the men harvested a great amount of good from the land, and they hunted deer or peccary also in large groups, sharing the meats equally for each home. There were other fruits that nature presented for children and women to pick in their leisure. Children were accustomed to wander the gardens and forests and search for any prizes they might encounter. They were small and nimble enough to climb plum trees and toss down the fruits to their friends to bring home. If the plums were green and sour, they delighted in them more, taking home bags and having their mothers spice the fruits with salt and chili

pepper which the children enjoyed for the rest of day. A more exciting find was the discovery of a wasp nest, which the children stoned the stem till it fell. They broke off the paper and tossed the comb into the embers of an open fire until the larvae became brown and toasted and tasty to pick. Every twenty days a new month of the Haab calendar brought a new festival, and whatever surpassed the needs of their homes the women took to Baakal to sell in the market. A great plethora of produce was presented in the stalls and on the stucco floor, but among them were not only the local vendors but also professional traders who traveled east from Teotihuacan with bags of scarlet cochineal larvae, spalls of flint, and cores of black obsidian, or west from Mutul with baskets of salt, bales of cotton, and sacs of cacao beans. Much of the wealth in the city was taken to the temples as offerings, as the people of Baakal knew their blessings came from the whim of the Triad gods of Baakal who resided in the temples of the northern plaza, for as long as they appease the gods with offerings and sacrifice, they would escape plagues and droughts which was the rendering of supernatural anger and mischief. While Baakal remained under the favor of the Triad Gods, the city was protected from any natural event, and invulnerable to any enemy that might consider to challenge the queen.

The young queen ruled with such charisma and stability that every vassal remained loyal. Baakal was

located on the western frontier of the Mayan world, and merchants that arrived from Teotihuacan in the west were subject to pass through Baakal before continuing east, but directly to the east of the watery city were its economic rivals and political enemies, Tonina, Yaxchilan, Yokib (Piedras Negras), and Bonampak. In the last few generations, the influence of the Kan dynasty had taken the heart of the Mayan lowlands, and only Baakal in the western perimeter, and Copan in the eastern frontier, remained just out of the reach of the growing superpower. Baakal was challenged but not cut off, and it survived by channeling trade around its enemies by forwarding goods north to Pipa (Pomona), and then Moral Reforma, to be then shipped up the San Pedro Martir River to Mutul, or by sending traffic south to Waakal (Poco Uinik) and then up the Lacantun river to reach the cities in the Passion river basin. Ix Yoh Iknal must retain Pipa and Waakal, for Baakal to survive.

## **593 August 20 (9.8.0.0.0) Eighth Katun, Clothing of the Triad Gods**

On 593 August 20 (9.8.0.0.0) Baakal began celebrations for the Eighth Katun, a great festival that was observed every twenty years. The day gave way to the sparkling spirits that spangled the ceiling of the world. Below the stars the temples lit up with thousands of torches that glowed the reliefs and illustrations which colored the walls. From the crowd in the north plaza, and surrounded by a great entourage of priests and maidens, Ix Yohl Ik'nal, the young queen only twenty five years old, climbed the stairs of the pyramid. From the night air, she appeared at the edge of the stairs and stepped on the platform at the summit. The people of Baakal and the vassals of Pipa, Moral Reforma, and Waakal spectated from below as she entered the first temple, accompanied only by the priests, her husband, and the scribes.

Ix Yohl Ik'nal sat seiza before three great wooden idols. The first god, Hun Ajaw, ruler of the heaven, was carved in the image of a bejeweled tree with the night serpent traveling among its branches and a quetzal bird perched on its head. Before it burned a brazier in the form of Muwaan Mat, the cormorant mother goddess. The second god, Kinich Ajaw, god of the underworld, was a shield that presented the face of a vampire bat and was supported by crossed spears. Before this idol was a brazier in the form of a horizontal tube with the head of a jaguar in the middle

and serpent heads on each end. The brazier was filled with tobacco that smoked and smoldered out of the maws of snakes. Before the third god, Unen Kawiil, god of life on earth, burned a brazier in the form of Kawiil. Nuk Yajaw Chan threw resin of the Copal tree into the brim of the braziers and praised the idols of the Triad Gods. Then Ix Yohl Iknal advanced and clothed each of the three idols with twenty one scarves of fine cotton of every color and every pattern. Then on her command, servants presented bowls of balche to the priests. The young queen approached each of the idols with a bowl and poured the alcoholic drink in their mouths. The priests responded and also drank from their bowls, but the queen did not drink as she was a woman. Having given the gifts, Ix Yohl Iknal petitioned the idols to protect Baakal from war and plague, and to bless the land with rain and springs of water. The ceremony done, she retreated and exited the temple. The people of Baakal then queued to enter the temple and deposit bouquets of fragrant flowers, squash, corn, and chili peppers.

The priests rejoiced and recorded the quantities of their income in books of bark panels, but Nuk Yajaw Chan was distracted and saw a figure who spied the idols from the entrance. It was a little girl, six years old, who stood quietly, with a somber wisdom that depressed the cheer of childhood and into her eyes etched a hardness that protected her from the

sensibilities of her miserable life. Reddish brown dust covered her from the bare feet to the face, and the sun had bleached away the rich blackness from her hair, and had sunk in a deep color into her skin. Nuk Yajaw Chan took pity in the orphan and placed at her feet a bowl of plums. She returned a scowl, but she did not leave. The colors of the evening covered the city and the priests had already taken away the offerings from the temple.

Nuk Yajaw Chan sat and contemplated the greatness of the idols when melancholy swept through his soul. He then felt a presence and saw again the orphan girl, who after some silence, asked who the idols were. He said they were spirits of the founders of Baakal. In the previous age, a goddess named Ix Muwaan Mat (Cormorant) was born. When she wanted a son, she gave offerings and suffered sacrifice, and her first son Hun Ajaw touched the earth, and he would be the ruler of the heaven and the ancestor spirits who inhabited it as stars. Then she gave offerings and sacrificed again, and K'inich Ajaw, the warrior god, touched the earth, and he would be the ruler of the underworld and the cursed gods and the dead who dwelt there. Then she gave offerings and sacrificed once more, and Unen K'awiil, the third born, touched the earth, and he would be ruler of the earth and the mortals who lived there. Then Ix Muwaan Mat became queen and first ruler of Baakal and her sons were the beginning of the dynasty that

has lasted to Ix Yohl Iknal. Nuk Yajaw Chan asked the girl for her name, and she said it was Ix Sak Kuk. She asked if the three sons of Ix Muwaan Mat were dead, he said no, that they lived on as spirits, and if she helped take care of them, they would take care of her. And like a child develops affection for a doll as her baby, the girl placed her affection for the idols, although it was a hollow and yearning affection.

The vassals witnessed the great wealth that accumulated at the summit of the temple, and among them were Nun Ujol Chak of Waakal and Yax Kin of Pipa. Both were very young and had just become rulers of their petty kingdoms. In this way the festival of the eighth katun commenced. The next day the markets opened and all sorts of goods were traded between merchants, pilgrims, and farmers. On the third evening, the men gathered at the ball court to gamble their wealth. With the husband of Ix Yohl Iknal, Yellow Turtle, as the captain, the lords of Baakal presented themselves in the alley, dressed in armor, shin guards, and skirts of deer skin while great wooden yolks girded their bellies. Then entered the ball court were vassal kings who assembled as the challenging team, including Nun Ujol Chak and Yax Kin. The cheers turned to boos and bets were made between the spectators who crowded the rickety stands of poles, branches, and thatch that buckled and creaked with the weight. Ix Yohl Iknal stood at top of the wall and tossed a great inflated rubber ball which

rolled down the inclined apron and bounced between the benches and into the ally. The players leaped into the air to strike the ball with the wooden yokes, and the game was in play. The lords played with all their power to send the ball beyond the bounds of the opposite end, and the game lasted for three days until the vassals succumbed to a narrow defeat. Yax Kin fell to his knees in exhaustion and saw the people of Baakal above him laugh. He demanded the reason for their laughter, and one replied that as long as Baakal remained in favor of the Triad Gods, Baakal was invulnerable.

The market was full of commerce and thousands of pilgrims came to trade all kinds of goods. Among the merchants who sold their craft, wares, and produce, there were entertainers who intended to feed upon the wandering people. Actors got up on a stage and when they saw the defeated figures of Nun Ujol Chak and Yax Kin, they performed.

All celebrate our holy queen  
Our savior here on earth  
She keeps the dynasty alive  
Though feminine at birth.

Lord Nun Ujol Chak tried to play  
and challenge her in game  
By sweat and blood he tried and tried  
but dropped the ball in shame.

The secret in her victory  
Lies in the temple room.  
They will protect her majesty  
And bring her foes to doom.

By woman's grace they came to feast  
and pay the fifth of maize  
So that a woman can protect  
them from the enemy haze.

During the feast that evening, Nun Ujol Chak approached Yax Kin and reminded him that by the grace of Ix Yohl Iknal, they enjoyed the feast and drink among the nobles. And by her grace they played the ball game. And by her grace they were in her company. And for her grace they delivered the tribute. And by her grace they were protected from foreign incursions. Yax Kin flashed a moment of indignation and exclaimed how a woman can protect him.

Nun Ujol Chak and Yak Kin arranged for a meeting with Itzamnaj Balam, the king of Yaxchilan who was a vassal of the Snake Kingdom. Nun Ujol Chak said he understood U Kay Kan of the Snake Kingdom was interested in making his mark and expanding his dominion to the western gates of the Mayan world. Itzamnaj Balam rejected the idea and said the dynasty of Baakal had been in power from the beginning of time and was too strong to defeat.

Nuun Ujol Chaak said the dynasty was weakening, and reduced to a woman. Itzamnaj Balam countered this notion and reminded that the Triad Gods held a power that protected the city since the beginning of time, and since the beginning of time the dynasty has been invincible. Nun Ujol Chak proposed that if the dynasty of Baakal was invincible by the protection of the Triad Gods, then what if they struck the Triad Gods themselves. The city would have no protection and Ix Yohl Ik'nal would be defeated, and Itzamnaj Balam would be promoted in rank and wealth. With this, Itzamnaj Balam tasted the lust of greed and petitioned from U Kay Kan the rights and privilege of a campaign in the name of his overlord.

## **599 April 21 (9.8.5.13.10) Kan Kingdom makes war against the Triad Gods of Baakal**

For six years Ix Sak Kuk was the caretaker of the Triad Gods, and in return she was fed and provided for. She grew to belong to the community of priests and scribes, and by constant proximity she learned the writing which gave her access to the histories of Baakal and its gods, and as the priests understood time to be cyclical, learning the past meant also learning the prophecies of the future. The priests cared for her, but the three idols of ancient wood commanded her affection beyond even Nuk Yajaw Chan, the chief priest who had rescued her. Every day she fetched meals and presented them to the idols and ate with them, and even spoke with them of the things on her mind, in long monologues. Every evening, the girl rolled out a cotton blanket, and with only the chance of a faint moonlight, stared at her idols until her perceptions transitioned from the vision of her brown eyes transitioned to the random vision of her spirit.

But it was in one of these evenings that she felt an ill breeze that made her shiver. She sat up before the idols and turned her gaze from one to the other, as if listening to a conversation. Her face turned to the night sky beyond the entrance and she ran to the edge of the lofty platform and looked up to see Venus in conflict with Jupiter. She then looked down to peer at

the city below. She searched for the danger, but everything seemed to move in the shadows that hid in the black cloak of the new moon.

Ix Sak Kuk ran down the pyramid and to the home of Nuk Yajaw Chan to alarm him of the enemy. The priest listened to her and did not doubt. They both ran to the palace and entered the courtyard where they tried to raise the nacom, Chok Balam (Young Jaguar), and his bodyguards to arms, however the commotion drew out Queen Yohl Iknal wrapped in a cotton shawl. Ix Sak Kuk rubbed her arms and tugged her tunic with anxiety as she tried to utter the danger that was upon them. The queen looked down at the girl, stern and unmoved, and told the Chok Balam to stand down his flint and shield. She threw a reproaching glare at Nuk Yajaw Chan and parted the curtain of her chamber, when faint voices echoed into the palace courtyard from the city streets. Everyone stiffened to listen. The voices grew into a cry of a thousand warriors that surrounded the complex. The nacom said they were being attacked and horror washed over the eyes of Ix Yohl Iknal as the horns sounded. Guards scrambled to protect the queen and in a moment a great number of warriors converged on the palace and braced for the assault like a cornered herd. But Ix Sak Kuk felt they were not the target and a fear for her idols entered her as she realized she had abandoned them. She cried to Nuk Yajaw Chan that the Triad Gods were in danger and attempted to break

through the perimeter of guards, only to be apprehended by Ajen Yohl Mat who scolded her. But she scratched his eyes and ran through the plaza until before her she saw the destruction.

Hundreds of blazing torches rose up the face of the pyramid as, like an army of ants, strange warriors swarmed up the steps. The entrance of the temple was fed with so much fire that the chamber ignited and blew out a great burst of orange flame. The assailants, being no more than lightly armed scouts, retreated back into the streets, encountering meager resistance from random patrols, until the enemy had dissolved back into the shadows of the forest. Sensing the threat had passed, citizens came out to the plaza and let out pitiful cries for the destruction of their gods. Words of the tragedy traveled through the neighborhoods and spread distress and despair. Ix Sak Kuk hid in a corner of the plaza and looked up at the smoldering temple. She was now truly lost and alone in the world and there she sobbed and moaned until the dreams of dread and death led her mind into a sleep with her body exposed to the chill of the night.

The stinging smell of burn and smolder saturated the humid morning air as Ix Yohl Iknal assembled the nacom, nobles, and priests in the palace courtyard. Hoping to hide her worries, she asked who dared attack and why. Chok Balam revealed that while the party did not identify themselves with standards, he did identify Nun Ujol Chak (20) of Wakaab (Santa

Elena, Poco Uinik) and Ahiin Chan Ahk (Croc Sky Turtle) of Pipa or Pomona. The courtiers gasped at the information, as this betrayal from two of their most important vassals was stunning. They wondered how the two petty kings would have the audacity and means to turn against Baakal. The nacom responded that by themselves, they are too weak to rebel. He identified some other warriors, who protected themselves with the feathers and familiar animals of Yaxchilan, the rival kingdom to the east, and the domain of the powerful Itzamnaaj Balam. But still what was the purpose of the raid? Itzamnaaj Balam was not strong enough to make war with Baakal whose dynasty stood from before the beginning of the age. Nuk Yajaw Chan urged that whatever the motive of Yaxchilan and the betraying vassals, the damage was done and they needed to recover speedily; new idols had to be created and consecrated. A point was also made of Ix Sak Kuk, who sensed the presentiment of the attack, and all acknowledged that this orphan girl had come to possess a supernatural sentience. Nuk Yajaw Chan proposed that Ix Sak Kuk be recognized as the prophet and protector of the Triad Gods, and take the role of chilán (prophet) in consecration of the new idols. Despite the discomfort of Ix Yohl Iknal, the status of the girl was recognized. The fame of Ix Sak Kuk came from the breath of every housewife as they ground the maize and kneaded their laundry, and men in the maize fields

marveled at the miracle as they drank refreshments of soured posol from hicara cups, and with the news that the new chilán girl would be resurrecting the Triad Gods, the calamity of the night before was transformed to a new hope for the days to come.

## **599? Ix Sak Kuk (12) consecrates new idols**

Like a beggar, Nuk Yajaw Chan visited many homes searching for a man to volunteer as a carpenter. Many rejected the idea, fearing a curse if they executed the craft poorly, until finally a humble carpenter accepted the task. A site was selected and a new hut of sticks, mud, and thatch was built and painted with white stucco. Nuk Yajaw Chan arrived with Ix Sak Kuk who was now only 13 years old and the carpenter arrived with a great log of cedar borne on his back by a tumpline that crossed his forehead. The log was placed inside the hut and Nuk Yajaw Chan and Ix Sak Kuk entered and shut themselves in. The priest burned incense at each cardinal corner of the hut and they painted their bodies with black soot as they would fast for the duration and in this way protect the idol from evil spirits. He fed leaves of dried tobacco to the flames of a great brazier of the form of Ix Muwaan Mat which clouded the hut with a sweet and intoxicating aroma. Ix Sak Kuk fasted and prayed for the voice of Ix Muwaan Mat, but she was silent. On the second day she fasted and prayed again, but the goddess was still silent. On the third day she once more fasted and prayed, and brazier of Ix Muwaan Mat billowed and spoke, and spirit of Hun Ajaw emerged from its flames and danced and embraced the wood. The block of wood was given spirit, and now was to be given form. The carpenter was admitted into the hut, and with only the light of

flame the carpenter began his work with flint chisels and a wooden mallet and began to sculpt the image of Hun Ajaw, the first born of goddess Ix Muwaan Mat. Each day Ix Sak Kuk took a shard of flint and cut her earlobe and with the blood caressed the idol during its formation. She suffered many days of fasting and blood letting, and in the final days of the task the stress took her body near the limits of survival, but at last the labor was complete. Hun Ajaw, her first creation, stood on a block in the form of a bejeweled tree inhabited by the sky serpent and the quetzal bird, and she adored and loved it more than anything in the world. The girl wrapped the idol in cotton cloth as a baby and placed it in a box.

The priest and carpenter and the girl emerged from the hut, weakened and diminished, and were met by a silent crowd of men, women, and children, all with gifts and goods. Nuk Yajaw Chan led the way to the temple, followed by the carpenter who carried the idol, Ix Sak Kuk, and then the hundreds of worshipers. They climbed the steps and entered the temple which had been refurbished in their absence and there the idol was set. A brazier in the form of Ix Muwaan Mat was placed before it and the flame lit in it to dissolve and evaporate chunks of copal resin. Nuk Yajaw Chan recounted in the previous age the goddess Ix Muwaan Mat wanted a child, and sacrificed her blood and her first child, Hun Ajaw, touched the earth and became lord of the heaven. In

this new age, in the name of Ix Muwaan Mat, Ix Sak Kuk sacrificed her blood, and the soul of Hun Ajaw was resurrected and given a body of wood. Ix Sak Kuk sat seiza and stared at her idol with the love and satisfaction of any new mother. The devout of the city then queued to enter the temple and deposit gifts and pray for Hun Ajaw to bless them and protect them from evil.

Nuk Yajaw Chan did not delay, and in the next uinal (month) he arranged to repeat the ceremony for the second of the Triad Gods, Kinich Ajaw, the warrior god of the underworld, and so there the second idol was placed in the temple, The sacrifice had taxed Ix Sak Kuk so much that she rested for days in the temple, with little energy to lift her head from the floor, but the moments she was awake she looked at her idols and adored them and was filled with joy. Nuk Yajaw Chan observed her frailty and feared that he might push her beyond what her body could sustain, but there was one more iteration of this work before the city could be restored of its blessings from the Triad Gods.

## **602 June 23 (9.8.8.17.9) Ix Sak Kuk (16) becomes goddess Ix Muwaan Mat**

Nuk Yajaw Chan and Ix Sak Kuk entered the hut for the third time. Instead of withering from the weight of her role, Ix Sak Kuk dove into ritual with dedication day and night that impressed the priest as either divine power or madness, but she would not fail her god. The girl fasted and prayed but she heard nothing. More days passed and she began to fear. She cried to Ix Muwaan Mat to speak to her but the goddess did not speak. The last light of the waning moon melted away, and the moon was almost extinguished in the sky. The priest fed more tobacco to the brazier, but Ix Sak Kuk was on the verge of despair. Then a spirit filled her mind. She struggled to open her eyes as the stream of incense rose and danced and took the form of a buxom woman with the headdress of a cormorant. The image spoke and told the girl that after thousands of years, the dynasty she founded was about to come to an end with the death of Janaab Pacal. Her son, Unen Kawiil must be conceived in human form to start the dynasty anew, and carry Baakal until the end of the Pictun. For this, Ix Sak Kuk must lose herself, and allow to be reborn as the incarnation of Ix Muwaan Mat. Nuk Yajaw Chan listened to the words of the girl and read her lips as she spoke. She acknowledged her fate and then was pulled into a deep and heavy sleep.

The next morning, Nuk Yajaw Chan carried the girl out of the hut where a small party of priests waited. He placed the girl in a cotton hammock suspended by a pole that was born on the shoulders of the priests, and the party climbed the mountains that rose behind Baakal to the south. After

hiking for a day, they descended into a valley and commissioned a canoe to travel up the Xanil River. Another day, and the party faced another mountain range to the south. As the paddlers worked, a low and constant thunder echoed from beyond their sight. The canoe turned one final bend and a great waterfall revealed itself. Cold water tumbled down from the mountains over a series of waterfalls and pools until the tributary flowed into the left bank of the river, feeding it a turquoise hue that contrasted the dark water upriver. The party landed and carried Ix Sak Kuk in her litter on a trail that followed the falls up the mountain. Where the water was the widest, the party rested. Nuk Yajaw Chan led Ix Sak Kuk between two falls, where a pool of water swirled with turbulent water that tugged and threatened to draw down and drown her for the least misstep. The priest held the girl in his arms, and recited the history of Ix Muwaan Mat, her three sons, and the dynasty till that day. Then he said that the end of the dynasty was only its renewal. Ix Sak Kuk would die to be reborn as Ix Muwaan Mat. Ix Muwaan Mat would be reborn to conceive Unen Kawiil. And Unen Kawiil would be reborn and take the name of Janaab Pacal to restart the dynasty as lord of the earth and the mortals who live in it. Nuk Yajaw Chan released the girl into the water and she was pulled deep below into the realm of the underworld but she was still. She expelled air and the inhale of water caused her to panic, but after a moment of trial, the terror faded and she stopped breathing. A great comfort filled her soul. She looked below, and saw Saturn, the wandering spirit of Unen Kawiil, traveling among the twinkling spirits of the underworld. And from among the spirits, emerged the dark soul of Ix Muwaan Mat, who approached

and embraced her. She looked up to the surface and saw far above the golden sun who shot rays that danced to the white limestone bottom. The world of the living was far above and strange, and she accepted its farewell as she was pulled into the dark underworld and accepted death with joy.

She awoke on the bank of the falls with the torture of life entering her lungs once more. Nuk Yajaw Chan was satisfied that she had survived the transformation, and started the journey back to Baakal.

A procession brought the new idol of Unen Kawiil to the temple. That evening, weary and weak, Ix Sak Kuk was carried up the steps of pyramid under the moonless heaven where Saturn, the wandering spirit of Unen Kawiil, waited at the end of its retrograde, and she was led into the temple chamber of the Triad Gods. There Nuk Yajaw Chan isolated himself in the temple with Ix Sak Kuk for the duration of the ritual. Before the idols of Hun Ajaw, Kinich Ajaw, and Unen Kawiil, Ix Sak Kuk sat seiza and the brazier of Ix Muwaan Mat was filled with flame of wood and tobacco. The girl prayed, and when she was ready, she pierced her tongue with a stingray spine and inserted a barbed thread. After a pause for courage, with a shrill cry she pulled the thread in one motion which tore through her wound. She fell forward and let the blood rain from her mouth into the hollow of a conch. The priest saturated paper with her blood and fed the flames, and smoke bloomed from the brazier and flooded the ceiling. Ix Sak Kuk bled so much that her white tunic became stained with scarlet and her body wavered. Nuk Yajaw Chan fixed his gaze on her. She barely clung on to consciousness. He tossed one more bundle of dried

tobacco into the brazier and the room filled with a thick spell. She wavered and looked up to Saturn and said

“Unen Kawiil, come into my womb and be reborn on earth.”

He watched as her head fell back and her mouth opened agape. Her frail body collapsed to the scarlet stained stucco floor. Nuk Yajaw Chan quenched the brazier and torches, and a dark shadow consumed the temple chamber.

## **602 September? Ix Sak Kuk is banished for blasphemy and fornication.**

Nuk Yajaw Chan and the priests nurtured Ix Sak Kuk for her slow recovery. Her fame was now spreading, and pilgrims traveled to offer food and clothing hoping she could mediate their prayers and blessings. But the Triad Gods were still not complete, and Nuk Yajaw Chan met with his priests. He predicted that Ix Sak Kuk would conceive and give birth to the reincarnation of Unen Kawiil. If this was discovered, the girl and the baby would be in danger. He proposed they arrange a marriage to obfuscate the true origin of the baby. Any listener to these words would have balked, but such was their faith, and so strong was the charisma of Nuk Yajaw Chan, that none of the priests dared to challenge their leader. And so a marriage was arranged, and Ix Sak Kuk was married to a humble young man named Kan Mo Hix. Her mother in-law took her into her home while the men began to build a hut in the back. They built up a platform of limestone rubble and mortar, and upon it they erected wooden poles to support an oval wall of woven sticks. Gaps were filled with mud and thatch was inserted in the frame of the roof with such thickness that rain would not enter. Finally the walls and floor were smoothed and painted with stucco, and a cotton curtain provided for the front entrance. While the men worked on the home, Ix Sak Kuk learned the art of cooking with her mother in law, and they fed Kan Mo Hix and his father who always were grateful and ate as much as they were served. Although she felt strange, Ix Sak Kuk learned to trust her new family, just a little.

The home was nearly finished when Ix Sak Kuk began to feel ill. She woke up in her cot and ran outside to try to vomit but she could not bring up anymore than spit from her empty stomach. This sickness persisted for several days, and the mother-in-law brought in a shaman to read her health. He looked into her eyes and knew a spirit had entered and this caused her body to turn in attempt to expel it, but the old woman also saw her face and knew she carried a baby. The mother-in-law took her son by the arm and accosted him outside the house. He denied being responsible and received a harsh beating until his mother was satisfied with the punishment, not for consuming his marriage, but for allowing someone else to consume it for him. She then came back into the hut. Ix Sak Kuk looked up at her mother-in-law and saw the face of an enemy. A gang of dogs were aroused by the commotion and joined in the assault, and the old woman chased Ix Sak Kuk into the street with lashings of words and whip, and from behind the stone wall promised the girl would be punished for her promiscuity and fraud.

The fame of Ix Sak Kuk elevated the family quarrel to a scandal, and when she was brought to the palace for a hearing before Ix Yohl Ik'nal, a great crowd of people was already there to spectate. The people were amused to see the girl, recently elevated by sacrifice and devotion, brought back down and disgraced by earthly compulsion of the flesh, and today there was no restriction prohibiting the common people from entering and observing the judicial procedure. The horns sounded, and the court fell silent for respect. Ix Yohl Ik'nal emerged from her chamber and sat on a dais. She was now a mother of two teenage boys and carried herself with a haughty mood that would

be typical of a middle aged woman of 34 years who, despite wealth and power, saw her beauty and innocence slip away with the march of time. The guards allowed the mother-in-law to approach. She recounted the engagement, the wedding, and the discovery of the pregnancy. Women laughed and men whistled for the humiliation of Ix Sak Kuk, but the girl sat and looked at the queen without expression or movement. Queen Ix Yohl Iknal then turned to the girl and asked her how she got pregnant. The mother-in-law responded <Like a bitch in the street gets pregnant!>, but the old woman was silenced.

Ix Sak Kuk stood before the queen and told her story <In the previous age, Ix Muwaan Mat touched the earth, and with sacrifice she gave birth to three sons, and she became the first ruler of Baakal. She was succeeded by her third son Unen Kawiil who was the first living ruler on the earth. And till today, the dynasty of Ix Muwaan Mat has continued onto you, Ix Yohl Iknal. But the Triad Gods have been destroyed and the dynasty is no longer protected. Ix Sak Kuk prayed and heard the voice of Ix Muwaan Mat who told her that the dynasty will end with the death of the last born, Janaab Pakal.>

Ix Yohl Iknal was enraged by this story. She pointed to her sons Ajen Yohl Mat and Janaab Pakal who were young men seventeen and fifteen years old, and asked Ix Sak Kuk if she was putting a curse on her and her sons. Ix Sak Kuk pressed on, and said <These things will happen on account of fate which cannot be denied. The queen and king of Baakal will be lost, and Baakal will be lost. But Ix Muwaan Mat has already touched the earth again and gave sacrifice to conceive Unen Kawiil so that he would be reborn into this world, and save the dynasty.>

Ix Yohl Iknal asked <Where is Ix Muwaan Mat then?>

Ix Sak Kuk said <My name is Ix Muwaan Mat, and I carry Unen Kawiil in my womb, and he will be born as Kinich Janaab Pakal.>

Every person in the courtyard fell silent. The queen was stunned with astonishment, but to her left came forward Jun Yalaw Chan, head of the priests of the Forgotten Gods, who condemned Ix Muwaan Mat for fornication, blasphemy, and treason with a vehemence that fanned the anger of their ruler. To her right, Nuk Yajaw Chan attempted to defend the girl, but the current of revenge was already too strong. Queen Ix Yohl Iknal stood up and with apoplectic rage, banished Ix Muwaan Mat on such grounds.

### **603 March 23 (9.8.9.13.0) Ix Muwaan Mat gives birth to Kinich Janaab Pakal.**

Ix Muwaan Mat hiked among fields of maize that blanketed the face of the mountain range above Baakal. She had nothing with her except the blouse and woolen skirt she was given on her wedding day. She did not look back, and climbed to where the clouds swept by as they made their way over the mountain. A farmer spotted the girl, and might have recognized her, but only watched the girl silently without the boldness to interfere. She believed she was now truly cast away from humanity and envied women and children who were so lucky to belong to the world. But in fact she was not alone, and with her mind focused on her destination and despair, she did not notice her path was followed. Kan Mo Hix spied on her from behind every tree or boulder or hill, taking care not to be discovered for fear of being repelled. The evening laid on the mountain side and he saw her finally rest on the ground. He let her rest alone in the cold while he watched over her from the distance until he could not bear the pity and approached her. She startled, and when she recognized her husband she asked him what he was doing there with a voice that was cold and hard as if he was any stranger. The question hurt the boy, and he responded that he was to take care of her. She said she was not his wife and the child was not his son, but that either she was a goddess or a fool. He said that if she was a goddess, he would serve her, or if she was a fool, he would care for her. He presented a cold tamale he robbed from his mother, and fetched water from a spring, and they ate together silently until they slept. In the morning Ix Muwaan Mat and Kan Mo Hix continued

their journey down into the valley where they encountered a poor white road which they followed to its destination: the small city of Sak Tzi. There the young couple attracted the attention of the chieftain, Kab Chan Te, who was curious about the visitors and instructed his wife and sisters-in-law to feed them. A bean soup was boiled over an open fire, and cakes of pulcanes baked in the ashes and the hosts and guests ate the simple meal. At night, the women took care to bathe Ix Muwaan Mat and give her a fresh tunic, and ready for the night, the guests were provided a hut with three cots. Ix Muwaan Mat and Kan Mo Hix slept in their own cots, and the wife of Kab Chan Te slept between them. The young couple was cared for over the months, and finally Ix Muwaan Mat went into labor. The baby was born in the early morning of 603 March 23 (9.8.9.13.0), and Ix Muwaan Mat named it Kinich Janaab Pakal. News of the birth traveled to Baakal, and when Janaab Pakal, the son of Ix Yohl Iknal, heard the baby indeed shared his same name, he felt doom was upon him and fainted.

## **603 June 29 (9.8.10.0.0) Baakal celebrates the Half Katun**

Merchants marched from the horizon, carrying baskets of goods on their backs and walking around workers who paved the road with a new coat of smooth white stucco. The highway turned into an avenue, and the farms turned into clustered dwellings, with every man painting the walls, floors, and walkways with a wash of milky lime stone powder mixed in water. Ahead was a great sight to see, as the city of Baakal was prepared to host the festival of the Half Katun. The temples, palaces, and markets were enhanced with new construction and painted with stucco of red, white, green, and yellow so that the city bloomed with color against the mountainside. All of this was at the benefaction of Ix Yohl Ik'nal to pull in merchants who bring trade and pay tariffs, and attract pilgrims who offer goods to the gods of Baakal in return for blessings and protection from evil. But it was evident that she withheld attention to the temple of the Triad Gods, as the scandal had put Nuk Yajaw Chan and his faction out of favor, and instead she lavished much of the royal treasury to restore the temple complex of the Forgotten Gods Balu'n Chan Yoon, Waxaklaju'n Yoon, and Balu'n Tz'akbu Ajaw, to show favor for Jun Yalaw Chan and the faction that supported her in face of the challenge by Ix Muwaan Mat. However the faith of the people was not so fickle, and the queen was chagrined to know the pilgrims favored and visited the temple of the Triad Gods despite its diminished state, in part for fear that any further insult would surely bring catastrophe and curses upon them.

In contrast to Ix Yohl Iknal, her two sons, Ajen Yohl Mat who was seventeen years old, and Janaab Pakal who was only a couple of years younger, were very popular, for the promise of returning the dynasty to a male lineage and for their charisma and athleticism. Ignoring their studies, they spent their time hunting for jaguar and peccary or leading military drills. But most of all they loved playing the ball game, and such was their obsession, that none of the boys of Baakal could, or dared to, beat them at a match. The tournament of the ball game was the great highlight and attraction of the Half Katun festival of Baakal, and each evening instead of saving their profits for their wives and children, the men placed their bets on the princes, in hopes that they could multiply their wealth at the expense of others.

## **603 October 8 (9.8.10.4.19) Kinich Yonal Ahk of Yokib attacks the Triad Gods**

All seemed well, and the city was alive with festivities, but Nuun Ujol Chak who visited unannounced, saw the faith for the Triad Gods remained strong, but also noticed the schism between the priests, the people, and the queen, and he was proud of the poison he planted among them. The petty king reported this intelligence to U Kay Kan of the Snake Kingdom, and promised that another raid to destroy the idols a second time would paralyze the people of Baakal, and then there would be no will to defend against a final attack to wipe out the dynasty of Ix Muwaan Mat. Another attack from Yaxchilan would be predictable, so U Kay Kan gave Kinich Yonal Ahk (Radiant Turtle) of Yokib the honor of leading the campaign.

Within months of the festival, the powerful vassal, Kinich Yonal Ahk, approached Baakal with contingent forces led by Nun Ujol Chak (24) of Wakaab (Santa Elena, Poco Uinik) and Ahiin Chan Ahk (Croc Sky Turtle) of Pipa. The night concealed their identity and intentions, and the party stealthily sifted through the streets towards the main plaza. But Yellow Turtle, the consort of Queen Ix Yohl Iknal, would not be fooled a second time, and while Chok Balam and the two princes protected the palace, he led his holcanes across the plaza and to the temple of the Triad Gods and there they guarded against the unseen enemy. With ruthless fluidity, the aggressors struck the Baakal warriors with flint knives that stung from the darkness and they climbed the steps to the temple. Yellow Turtle attempted to resist, but he was overwhelmed and

was captured and his bodyguards were murdered before him. Without resistance, the aggressors executed the act of arson and destruction. Ajen Yohl Mat saw the flames from the temple and feared for his father, but he could not react in time. In a panic, the raiders retreated back down the pyramid with their captive and dissipated into the shadows of the city. With the city behind them once again smoldering in destruction, Kinich Yonal Ahk, Nun Ujol Chak, and Ahiin Chan Ahk took their captive up into the mountain, with happy intention of notifying their overlord that the war against the gods of Baakal had been won, and the dynasty of Baakal would not survive the final strike.

## **604 November 4 (9.8.11.6.12) Ix Yohl Iknal (36) dies**

The nacom Chok Balam and his warriors returned to the palace with torches in hand and they assembled before Queen Yohl Iknal in silence. She asked about the idols and he said the temple was destroyed. She looked about, and asked about her husband. The nacom reported that he was captured and taken away by Kinich Yonal Ahk. Ix Yohl Iknal showed no emotion and quietly retreated to her chamber and there she stayed hidden behind the curtain for many days. The city mourned. The Triad Gods had been desecrated a second time, now surely evil would come upon them. Although it was kept secret, it was said that the queen was gravely ill. The calamity proved to Ix Yohl Iknal that the curse of Muwaan Mat was true and terrible. Confronted by such supernatural adversity, she fell into deep despair and she did not eat or care for her body. Ajen Yohl Mat and Janaab Pakal implored her to save herself, but as she was strong as a queen, she was also stubborn for death. After some nights of vigil, Ix Yohl Iknal relented to despair and died on 604 November 4 (9.8.11.6.12). When Janaab Pakal, son of Ix Yohl Iknal saw his mother die, he panicked and ate the cotton blanket of his mothers death bed, but his older brother, Ahen Yohl Mat, as confident as ever, assured him that the words of a crazy girl could never bring down the dynasty of Baakal.

## **605 January 1 (9.8.11.9.10) Ajen Yohl Mat (19) accedes throne of Baakal**

By good governance, Baakal had been prosperous, and Ajen Yohl Mat took advantage of the healthy treasury to prepare a fantastic ceremony of accession. In the presence of all his servants and allies, Ajen Yohl Mat was given the crown of jade tiles, and presented the symbol of Baakal, sculpted from a block of jade, and the nobles, warriors, and priests declared him to be the king of Baakal. Vassal kings were instructed to pay song and tribute to the new king and everyone praised the reign of Ajen Yohl Mat as the salvation of the dynasty. After the exclusive ceremony, a parade amused spectators in the plaza, with characters dressed in fantastic costumes of all kinds of land and sea creatures. Musicians beat drums and played horns and didgeridoos and in the light of blazing torches, dancers spun and stomped. At the banquet, stews, ragouts, and tamales of deer and turkey were served to the nobles of the palace and vassals of the domain. And the overindulgence of food was followed by ritual inebriation served by beautifully painted prostitutes who served, by cup and enema, alcohol that was so strong they knew to support the men as they fell into seizure, retching and defecating before cheers and laughter. The noble women however parted themselves from the feast and secluded themselves in the palace, dressed in white tunics and adorned with long strands of jade

necklaces for rituals of bleeding and sacrifice they inflicted on themselves.

Despite the festivities, the people of Baakal were not so taken in by the splendor and debauchery of the royal and noble families. The common family lived on the edge of peril, and by the whim of the gods or fortune, the blessings of food and health one day often were soon followed by the misery of starvation or illness the next day, and many knew for the neglect of the Triad Gods, a great curse was about to inflict them. Such fear engendered defeatism, and as the people labored their work, eyes looked sideways at the new king; his hands failed to protect the gods, his wit failed to save his father from murder, and his will failed to protect the queen Yohl Iknal from destruction. However the sentiment towards the new king Ajen Yohl Mat was not that of spite, but of pity. In the market, where, as prince, Ajen Yohl Mat was accustomed to praise and gifts, but as king, the flowers and incense felt more like charity. Instead of the gaze of praise, strangers would pat him on the back as he walked through the crowds, and he heard murmurs that he could not see. These comments were disconcerting; surely he was marked by a scar on his eye, but he winked left and right, and verified his vision was not in any way impaired. He also noticed that girls in the streets and in the market used to stare and giggle, but now they whispered and moped a sad “hmm” and looked at him with soft eyes but not in

the way that was alluring. Even at ballgame matches, Ajen Yohl Mat and Janaab Pakal used to crush their rivals with riveting volleys, but now found the ball returned to them high and easy, with the losers commenting on the great skill of the brothers in comparison to their self deprecated qualities, followed by a chorus of “hmm”. Ajen Yohl Mat could not quite understand what was going on, but he felt becoming king felt strangely anticlimactic and became irritable.

## **611 April 4 (9.8.17.15.16) U Kay Kan Defeats Ajen Yohl Mat and Janaab Pakal**

It did not take intelligence for Ajen Yohl Mat to discover the Snake Kingdom was preparing a new campaign against him. He received an envoy from Dzibanche, the seat of the Kan dynasty located near the Chetumal Bay on the eastern coast of the Yucatan Peninsula. With a silence that made Ajen Yohl Mat feel awkward, the envoy sat before the royal throne and ate the food and drink that was presented to him. When he was done eating, the envoy stood up and signaled his porter to present a gift. The porter tipped a basket and let a rubber ball drop and bounce to the feet of the king, and without a word, the envoy put his fist over his heart and exited the royal chamber. Janaab Pakal commented how odd people from the Kan realm were, and then the court understood the bellicose challenge.

The army of Kan was already marching west from the Caribbean shore. In the heart of the Mayan land, U Kay Kan visited the great city of OxTeTun and noticed its strength as a crossroads of trade between the flint mines in the southern highlands, the salt mines in the northern Yucatan Peninsula, pigments and cotton from the western Mexican lands, and cacao and pelts from the Caribbean coastal trade routes. From there U Kay Kan continued his march west until he reached the edge of the Kan domain. The great overlord came to the western bank of the

Usumacinta River. Slow winding current carried muddy water slowly from the Petexbatun basin, the territory of his subjugated arch rival, Mutul, to be poured into the turbulent waters of the Gulf of Mexico. On the other side of the river he saw the aim of his conquest, the dominion of Baakal. To claim Baakal was to dominate and control all trade and tribute to the western frontier of the Mayan world. Dodging the traffic of merchant canoes that carried cargo and commoners, the great army of Kan forded the river and stepped on strange land. At Pipa (Pomona), Ahiin Chan Ahk, the petty vassal who had betrayed Baakal, offered quarters to the warriors of his overlord. Refreshed and ready, the army of U Kay Kan marched west a single day along the foot of the central highlands and camped in the farmlands just below Baakal.

That night, Ajen Yohl Mat and Janaab Pakal climbed the palace tower. There, the brothers stood and observed a thousand lights that spangled the plain below the city. They were giddy with anticipation, as this was their opportunity to fight a famous foe and become instant celebrities throughout the land, and perhaps this was the beginning of a new direction as overlords. At dawn, the army of Baakal descended from the city and confronted the enemy below. As the warriors dressed and prepared, the people of Baakal also came out and crowded the perimeter of the farm like spectators at the edge of an arena. Bathing in the

attention, Ajen Yohl Mat instructed his litter carriers to take him to the front line and addressed his warriors with an inspiring speech, declaring the curse to be null, and prophecy of the end of the Baakal dynasty to be false. He, the great Ajen Yohl Mat, would lead them to a great chapter in history that would impress generations in the future. The warriors listened respectfully, but as the king returned to the rear rank, he overheard his nacom Chok Balam utter “hmm” and he bent over and boxed his ear. U Kay Kan stood silent and unmoved, so Ajen Yohl Mat took the initiative, raising his spear and shouting the glory of himself. The people half heartily responded, and the king felt the luck and energy drain away from his spirit and from the field. Nevertheless, he believed in his greatness, and having the high ground, instructed Chok Balam and Janaab Pakal to stand their ground and protect his litter. U Kay Kan sounded the horns and the warriors of Kan charged up the hill, only to be repelled by the forces of Baakal. U Kay Kan commanded the same charge again, but this time the cells appeared badly beaten, as they threw down their spears and ran back down the hill, crying and waving their arms in the air. Janaab Pakal told Chok Balam to abuse the advantage and pursue the warriors in their retreat. Chok Balam at first advised against it, but as the prince had already started the charge, he was forced to follow and support the maneuver. U Kay Kan saw the two commanders

brake ranks, leaving their flank open, and ready for the counter strike, commanded his nacom to charge up the hill and penetrate the gap. At the top of the hill, Ajen Yohl Mat also saw the movements unfold, and violently shouted at his nacom and brother but they could not hear him. With alarm and astonishment, he saw the nacom of Kan break through his defenses and fight his way towards him. A spear impaled his eye, and at that same moment the royal litter bearers were slain, and the litter toppled with Ajen Yohl Mat tumbling out and onto the ground. Ajen Yohl Mat and Janaab Pakal were taken by the hair, and upon seeing the capture of the king, the lords and warriors of Baakal scattered like ants fleeing the stomping of feet, leaving him alone on the top of the hill.

The people of Baakal saw the great army of U Kay Kan approach the city, and knowing they were without the protection of their gods and king, let out cries of panic and fled the city. U Kay Kan then allowed his warriors the privilege of collecting their reward, and the army was let loose to pillage the city. The palace and market were plundered, temples and books burned, and stelae and monuments defaced and broken. The nobles, scribes, and priests who were discovered were disrobed and taken prisoner. Ajen Yohl Mat and Jabaab Pakal could do nothing else as the flames of destruction lit up the sky above Baakal.

After three days, the damage was done and the enemy satisfied. U Kay Kan commanded the retreat,

and a long procession was led through the avenues of the city, with many men of Baakal bound and led away among the cries and clawing of wives, mothers, and children. But at the head of this sorry procession were Ajen Yohl Mat and Jabaab Pakal, both stripped and bound and humiliated before their people. The city once again smoldered and the smell and smoke of defeat hung in the air. It was empty, as the remaining people feared more evil to come upon them and every family hid in their homes, offering blood and sacrifice with the hope that the pain was penance enough to ward off worse affliction. They prayed for the return of their gods, and for the salvation of Ajen Yohl Mat, for worse than losing a king to death was losing a king to capture. While the king was still alive, the people were still subjects of the king, but being captive, the king was not the ruler of his people.

## **612 August 8 (9.8.19.4.6) Ajen Yohl Mat (26) and Janaab Pakal (24) sacrificed**

Baakal languished as each day brought another iteration of hopelessness under the quiet sting of the jaguar sun. The market was almost empty, and few people could be seen in the plaza or the center. Ambulant vendors sat under trees and on the edge of the streets and highways with no customers, merchants left their stalls abandoned, and artisans stopped producing their goods. During the day, everybody laid as still as possible to endure the heat that baked ground and burned the air in which only flies prospered, plaguing man and animal with annoyance. But so little was brought home, that people looked to the mountains to provide their needs. Women foraged for fruits of the forest, and if they were lucky enough to discover the thorny blades of a pinuela plant, they plucked the fruits from its heart for the children who although warned, greedily sucked the pulps until they came crying with bleeding tongues and lips. When deer and peccary was not to be found, the men trapped iguanas with nooses of thin threads of sisal hemp as they crawled out of their little caves or crevices, Children took blowguns to the trees and shot down small birds with clay pellets, making more amusing snacks than satisfying meals.

In one of those miserable days a party of merchants arrived at Baakal and shared news from Dzibanche. The morning star was on its descent to the

underworld, appearing lower each morning in the moment before the jaguar sun touched the earth. U Kay Kan sponsored a ball game so that his captives had a chance to continue their lives in captivity and humiliation. Ajen Yohl Mat and Janaab Pakal were dressed in ball player gear and presented at the ball court before thousands of spectators. Nun Ujol Chak presented himself and received great cheers and acclaim from the people. Janaab Pakal was already pouting when Nun Ujol Chak looked into the eye of Ajen Yohl Mat and eviscerated the will from his soul. The game was played and the brothers of Baakal played their tragic roles, with their fate already written. In the final rally, with no more hope, and no more will, the ball fell into the end zone behind Janaab Pakal, and the brothers fell to their knees in despair. The brothers were tied to a pole in the plaza before the ball court and there left to wait for their final ritual.

On 612, March 30? (9.8.18.15.17?) Mercury, the white wasp of the jaguar sun, shined briefly just above the horizon, before dawn, to sting Saturn, the yellow star. The brothers, barely alive and each tied to a pole, were approached by a party of priests wielding spears tipped with sharp flint. A great crowd of pious and solemn citizens collected around the ball court and numbered in the thousands. From the temple above, a great drum was beaten, sending out a deep and mournful sound throughout the courts and plazas. The priests began to dance in a circle around Janaab

Pakal. Ajen Yohl Mat called out to his brother to take his death in honor, but Janaab Pakal panicked. He lost control of his bladder and bowels, and wept. Then the priests came to Janaab Pakal and pierced him in the heart. He did not endure the second spear, and before receiving the third in his heart, he cried out to his mother, Ix Yohl Ik'nal, and died on the pole. The priests continued to dance and stab the dead heart of Jabaan Pakal until the ritual was complete. And so prophesy was realized, and the last born of the Baakal dynasty lost his life.

On the dawn of 612 August 6 (9.8.19.4.6), just before the jaguar sun rose from the underworld, the dying Venus met with rising red Mars, in the sky. Ajen Yohl Mat was taken before the stela of an ancient king where the priests stretched him over an offering stone. A priest stood over him with an obsidian knife in his hand. Ajen Yohl Mat tried to fight free but he was restrained. The priest plunged an obsidian knife and swiftly cut around his heart, and with great ferocity, parted his ribs and ripped out his beating heart. Ajen Yohl Mat looked at the morning star, fighting for the last moment of life until the spirit left his body. U Kay Kan celebrated because with the death of Ajen Yohl Mat, the dynasty of Baakal was terminated.

With the last king of Baakal dead, the people could now contemplate the problem of succession without shame or punishment. But the dynasty that traced

back since before the beginning of the age was broken, as Ajen Yohl Mat was only a young bachelor twenty six years old on the day of his death and left no heir apparent. The aristocrats and priests assembled in the palace and attempted a discussion on the matter, but there was no clear leader, and ambitions poisoned the rivalries that until that day were stayed. In this crisis, friends became enemies, and trust gave way to betrayal, and kind men were possessed by a dark spirit could be observed in wild peering of the eyes and the cutting words from the tongue. But Jun Yalaw Chan and the priests of the Forgotten Gods would not endure a new regime to diminish them again. Evil was sensed in the air that hung in the streets and in the plaza that night. Screams of horror, and cries of mourning echoed from the palace and surrounding homes, but no one dared to come out and interfere. Among the factions that were wiped out were the priests of the Triad Gods. Nuk Yajaw Chan, who was absent from his home for ritual, barely escaped the clutches and cuts of the murderous mob. The deathly calls continued till dawn, and the jaguar sun put light on the violence that came to pass in the night. The bodies of the wealthiest and most powerful families were carried through the streets to be buried in the floors of their homes. With the aid of light, the priests of the forgotten temple pressed their power, and received the accused with mechanical execution, such that hands

were sticky with blood and white stucco floors were stained with scarlet pools. And the midday jaguar sun brought down the heat that lifted the smell of death and plagued the city with flies.

Nuk Yajaw Chan feared his wounds would draw attention from treacherous pedestrians, and he hid in the forests and farms as he stumbled his way up the mountains. The next day he reached the city of Sal Tzi, and his wretched approach so alarmed the citizens that murmurs preceded him as he wandered the streets, calling for Ix Muwaan Mat. When he reached the plaza, a crowd had gathered to observe him. On his knees, he called out her name, and a young woman holding a child came before the crowd. He looked up and saw her face and finally found her.

## **612 October 19 (9.8.19.7.18) Ix Muwaan Mat returns from banishment**

Priests of the Forgotten Gods had occupied the palace, but every candidate that was proposed for accession was met with bicker and blows. The streets of Baakal were still. In the day, women hid from the life of the light and wept in silence, but in the night the spirits afflicted their souls while they lay alone in their cots and widowers filled the city with mournful cries that were unbearable to hear. The temple of the Triad Gods was raided by the priests of the forgotten temple, and where the idols of Hun Ajaw, Kinich Ajaw, and Unen Kawiil once stood, now the idols of Balu'n Chan Yoon, Waxaklaju'n Yoon, and Balu'n Tz'akbu Ajaw were cared for with flowers, fruits, incense, and blood offerings.

So women made their own idols, and in the seclusion of their homes, began to pray for salvation, and the mourning and horror was met with the solace of rendering to the benevolence of Ix Muwaan Mat and her son gods. They praised and prayed till the voices from the huts seemed to sing in harmony and they prayed throughout the night and sought solace throughout the day.

Kan burned our idols, our gods were destroyed.  
Lost was our safety and lost was our pride.  
Ix Muwaan Mat, she was banished away.  
Lost was the goddess, the mother of gods.

Ix Yohl Iknal was defeated by Kan and she died.  
Lost was our queen and we wept our eyes dry.  
U Kay Kan came and killed Janaab Pakal.  
Lost was the last born of Ix Muwaan Mat.

Ajen Yohl Mat was the last king to die.  
Lost was our lord and Baakal was alone.  
Jun Yalaw Chan killed our men in the streets.  
Lost are our fathers and husbands and sons.

Ix Muwaan Mat we call you once more.  
bring back our gods and then bring back our king.

On the third day of praise and prayer, the children ran into the homes and claimed they saw Ix Muwaan Mat coming to the city.

Families exited their homes and followed their children to the western entrance of the city. People collected on the sides of the avenue, and before the warm rays of the descending jaguar sun, Nuk Yajaw Chan shuffled over the chalky surface, weary but inspired. Eyes peered to see the figures behind him. Ix Muwaan Mat, now twenty nine years old, with her son, Pakal, now nine years old, and Kan Mo Hix, walked slowly along the avenue in silence. Children climbed trees and plucked palm leaves which the men and women took to shade Ix Muwaan Mat and cover her path till all the length of the avenue was green.

Musicians arrived and played the horns and drums to praise the goddess and her son, and the silent reverence of the people grew to joyous jubilation. The priests of the forgotten Triad Gods arrived at the gates of the city, and moved to apprehend Nuk Yajaw Chan, but the people overwhelmed and restrained them. Ix Muwaan Mat walked through the plaza and came before the pyramid of the Triad Gods. She climbed the steps with her son at her hand and approached the entrance of the temple. Jun Yalaw Chan and the priests of the Forgotten Gods came out and stood in her way and before the people of Baakal, Jun Yalaw Chan condemned her as a false goddess and cursed her. But the day was against Jun Yalaw Chan, and the priests were apprehended and taken down the pyramid. Ix Muwaan Mat entered and ordered the three idols of Balu'n Chan Yoon, Waxaklaju'n Yoon, and Balu'n Tz'akbu Ajaw to be expelled from the temple. She emerged once more and looked down on the citizens of Baakal. A violence swelled up and Ix Muwaan Mat kicked the idols with the sole of her foot, and they toppled off the platform and tumbled down the pyramid to the feet of the rival priests who cried out with distress.

Alone before the temple, Ix Muwaan Mat addressed the people <The tragedies that passed had to pass, but now you all will look forward to a new life. The queen was lost at the hands of time. The king was lost at the hands of foreigners. Husbands

were lost at the hands of rivals. But from death comes new life. And in this way the children will carry on the spirits of their fathers, in their eyes, in their words. And the line of Ix Muwaan Mat ended with the death of queen Ix Yohl Ik'nal and her sons. But as each day the jaguar sun descends into the world of death, the moon and her children stars are born from it. And so I, Ix Muwaan Mat, touched the earth again, and from my womb Unen Kawiil was reborn as Kinich Janaab Pakal, and with him the line of Ix Muwaan Mat will continue, and the city of Baakal will survive and be happy again.>

These words came down from the temple and filled the people with a new spirit of bliss and hope, but filled Jun Yalaw Chan and the priests of the Forgotten Gods with fear and spite.

## **613 May 12 (9.9.0.0.0) Celebration of the 9th Katun**

Only ten months after Ix Muwaan Mat returned to Baakal, the city celebrated the Ninth Katun on 613 May 12 (9.9.0.0.0). The legend of the goddess and her son traveled the white highways from city to city to village to farm to home, and many families traveled in great caravans even from beyond the Usumacinta River, from the foreign domains of Yaxchilan, Yokib, and Bonampak. The temple of the Triad Gods was renovated and inside were installed the idols of Hun Ajaw, Kinich Ajawn, and Unen Kawiil.

The first night of the festival, the plaza was filled with people from the whole Mayan world, but every pilgrim was silent. Ix Muwaan Mat and her son Kinich Janaab Pakal appeared at the palace steps. Ix Muwaan Mat no longer wore the simple cotton huipil and woolen skirt, but now displayed a caplet and skirt both shrouded with nets of jadeite beads. She wore ear spools on her ears, cuffs on her wrists, and a cummerbund around her waist, all fashioned out of jadeite beads. And so she was transformed from a simple temple curator to a goddess on earth. Kinich Janaab Pakal was half naked, wearing only a kilt and adorned with ear spools, cuffs, a pendant, and a cummerbund all made of jadeite. The mother and son climbed the pyramid stairs and entered the temple of the Triad Gods. Before each of the idols, great ceramic braziers in the form of godly heads were

filled with flame, onto which Nuk Yajaw Chan threw rocks of copal resin that melted and evaporated, filling the chamber with a fragrance that was sweet and pure. Ix Muwaan Mat came forward and covered each idol with layers of colored cotton cloth. She was then given a crown encrusted with jadeite plates and adorned with iridescent green quetzal feathers and with this she coronated the idol of Unen Kawiil.

The priests then presented Kinich Janaab Pakal with a hollow wooden tube stuffed with dried tobacco leaves, and lit the tube with embers. Smoke saturated the chamber with an entrancing fragrance that released the spirits of the dead. The ceremony being initiated, the people climbed the stairs in a great queue and entered the temple in turn to deposit their gifts and pray to the Triad Gods for blessings and protection from evil.

But the priests of the Forgotten Gods were anguished; Ix Muwaan Mat did not visit their temple, and did not give cloth to the ancient gods of Balu'n Chan Yoon, Waxaklaju'n Yoon, and Balu'n Tz'akbu Ajaw. As before, the temple remained in the dark while the temple of the Triad Gods was lit and doted upon, and the priests of the forgotten gods lamented their bad fortune and mumbled their disdain for Ix Muwaan Mat.

Ix Muwaan Mat brought glory back to the Triad Gods, but her attention was narrow, obsessive, exclusive, and elitist. She improved and embellished

the structures of the Triad Gods, but the roads were riddled with potholes, the market in disrepair, and the stucco on the ball court faded and cracked. The storage chambers in the palace were full, but she was miserly, and rationed the distribution of maize to the citizens of Baakal. She wasted no expense on ball games and theater, and rather than wasting their time on frivolous entertainment, she wanted the citizens to dedicate their time to sacrifice and prayer. She had no interest in the issues of governance and state, allowing the lords and bureaucrats to embezzle the treasury and commit acts of corruption and injustice on the people, and permitting vassals to look for new opportunities among enemies.

## **615 July 26 (9.9.2.4.8) Kinich Janaab Pakal (12) accedes to the throne.**

Ix Muwaan Mat had brought back faith to the temple, but her most impassioned wish was to arrange the accession of her son Pakal and restore the dynasty of Baakal, in the way that in the beginning of the age, the first incarnation of Ix Muwaan Mat had overseen the accession of her son Unen Kawiil. Every vassal king attended and promised allegiance to the boy and proved their subservience with tribute. The event was so anticipated, that even kings from alien domains arrived to offer alliance and hope for favor from the most powerful overlord in the western side of the Mayan world. On 615 July 26 (9.9.2.4.8), the great ceremonial accession of Kinich Janaab Pakal, a young boy only 12 years old, was staged with spectacular pomp and sublime ceremony. Sacrifice and prayers were given in the temple of the Triad Gods. Then Ix Muwaan Mat led a royal procession from the pyramid and through the concourse where thousands upon thousands of citizens cheered and praised Ix Muwaan Mat and Kinich Janaab Pakal. The procession made its way to the temple of the Triad Gods and ascended the steps. Inside the royal chamber, Kinich Janaab Pakal was sat on a throne sculpted in the form of a double headed jaguar. Ix Muwaan Mat sat cross legged before the throne and presented a crown encrusted with jadeite plates and adorned with iridescent green quetzal feathers.

Nuk Yajaw Chan praised Kinich Janaab Pakal. The priest recognized Ix Muwaan Mat as the mother god of Baakal reincarnated, and he recognized her first born, the idol Hun Ajaw, as the lord of the heaven, and he recognized her second born, the idol of Kinich Ajaw, as the lord of the underworld, and he recognized her third born, Kinich Janaab Pakal, as the reincarnation of Unen Kawiil, the lord of life on earth. Then Chok Balam recognized Kinich Janaab Pakal as the king of Baakal and captain of the warriors. The lords of Baakal paid their respects to the god and king, and the vassals pledged homage and paid tribute of cups of jadeite, handfuls of quetzal feathers, bundles of cotton cloth, and baskets of cacao. But Jun Yalaw Chan and the priests of the Forgotten Gods were not welcome by Ix Muwaan Mat, and they were not present to recognize Kinich Janaab Pakal as their god and their king.

One king approached and announced himself to be Nun Ujol Chak of Wakaab, now thirty six years old. He recounted that his father was a loyal vassal of Baakal, but because of his youth and ambition, he betrayed Baakal and sought alliance with the Snake kingdom. But with age comes reflection, and regret. And the petty king fell to the ground and wept, and requested Kinich Janaab Pakal to prove his greatness with clemency, and accept tribute from Wakaab. Nuk Yajaw Chan could not protest with any violence

because Nun Ujol Chak had surrendered and submitted himself and his city.

## **626 February 28 (9.9.13.0.0) Kinich Janaab Pakal (23) marries Ix Tzakbu Ajaw (18) of UxTeKuh**

With Kinich Janaab Pakal as the new king, the dynasty was restored but the city was not whole. Priests embezzled offerings, warriors lent loyalty to charismatic leaders over duty to the king, and scribes and bureaucrats exercised favoritism and corrupt justice. Under the previous iteration of the dynasty, the factions in the palace seethed for many generations, but for the recent upsets and coups, rivals bickered with such hatred and jealousy that many feared that violence would destroy the stability of the new regime. Chok Balam, the elected nacom or military general, met with Kinich Janaab Pakal, Ix Muwaan Mat, and Nuk Yajaw Chan, and counseled them on the threat of betrayal and risk of life to the king, by which the kingdom would be cut asunder in civil war. He recommended the only solution would be to acknowledge the rival faction, and share power and privilege with the noble classes that identified with the Forgotten Gods. Ix Muwaan Mat bent forward and pressed her arms into the abdomen, and with unconstrained hysteria, lashed out at the priests in their absence, who had done so much destruction to her gods, her sons, her life, and her people. She would never forgive their evil, and forever remember their betrayal. The men feared to press the discussion further that night, but over many days, the strife in the

palace came to the murder of the son of Chok Balam, and the palace was on the verge of a melee that threatened the lives of every family. With sober restraint, Chok Balam noted that his son died a dishonorable death, rather than one in service to Baakal, and so the kingdom would suffer the same shameful destruction, and so the courtiers engaged Nuk Yajaw Chan of the Triad Gods faction, and Jun Yalaw Chan of the Forgotten Gods faction, in negotiation. The solution that brought satisfaction would be a marriage to fuse the splinters of the kingdom. Jun Yalaw Chan said that UxTeKuh (Three Gods) was city that dwelt in the shadows of the highlands, and its people, unaffected and protected from the influences of the Mexican valley, practiced archaic ways and were devout to the Forgotten Gods of the previous age. In that city lived a princess, and Kinich Janaab Pakal must marry her, and bring balance to the dynasty of Baakal. Mediated by Chok Balam, the great compromise was done.

In the valley of UxTeKuh, a maiden lifted her skirt and ran up the stairs of a pyramid. At the summit, she trespassed the smoke and vapor that billowed out of the entrance of the temple and entered the dark chamber. Three ancient idols stood behind braziers that were ablaze, and a lady sat seiza before them. The maiden alerted Ix Tzakbu Ajaw to the arrival of an army from Baakal, and the princess turned her head. Her eyes were wet with tears and her chin

stained with blood that streamed from her lips. With the support of her servants, she slowly stood up, and prepared to exit the chamber. With the princess by his side, the king of UxTeKuh received Chok Balam and Jun Yalaw Chan and negotiated the marriage. Risking insolence, she imposed the condition that she be given a temple to worship her gods, and the nacom granted it to her.

On 626 February 28 (9.9.13.0.0) Kinich Janaab Pakal married Ix Tzakbu Ajaw of UxTeKuh. He was now twenty three years old and five years older than her, and the young couple was celebrated with many gifts and blessings. Ix Tzakbu wore a headband of jade plates that marked her as the queen consort.

Among the faithful vassals, Nun Ujol Chak attended the wedding and blessed the new alliance, and pledged to donate his offerings at the temples. But when he visited the Temple of the Triad gods, he noticed that the idol of Unen Kawiil had the royal jade encrusted crown. He asked a pilgrim why this was so. The pilgrim answered that the crown represented the incarnation of Unen Kawiil as Kinich Janaab Pakal to rule the earth once again. With those words, Nun Ujol Chak reeled and bit his lip. This is how Baakal survived and resisted the Kan kingdom; he destroyed the idols, but neglected to destroy the living god.

At the river bank and over the stone walls, women commented on the beauty of the new queen Ix

Tzakbu Ajaw. In their yards, girls learned to copy the colors and patterns of her blouse and dress, and they wore the plaits in the fashion of the queen when they visited each other or fetched water at the falls. Ix Muwaan Mat observed this new obsession, and could not avoid jealous thoughts, as she was now almost forgotten. The the sting drove still deeper, she spied as every morning Ix Tzakbu Ajaw walked across the city, crossing two rivers till she reached the forgotten temple, and there many girls collected to observe her as she prayed in the temple against the rise of the jaguar sun.

## **(628?) Kinich Yonal Ahk of Yokib attempts to assassinate Kinich Janaab Pakal**

Over the days and weeks, the admirers of Ix Tzakbu Ajaw became followers, and many joined to learn the prayers and rituals, and the people of the Forgotten Gods had the ear of the queen. But the older generation remained devoted to Ix Muwaan Mat and the Triad Gods, and the people of the Triad Gods had the ear of Kinich Janaab Pakal, and all ambitions and abuses were controlled by the royal couple, allowing the city to prosper in harmony and happiness. Ix Muwaan Mat did not allow the faith of Ix Tzakbu Ajaw to distract her own, and daily she and her followers maintained and cared for the idols of Hun Ajaw and Kinich Ajaw, and assembled and praised Kinich Janaab Pakal with song and adulation.

One evening as the rituals were performed under the blaze of torches, Chok Balam called Ix Muwaan Mat with a distressed voice and said a military company was approaching the city. He presented Kab Chan Te, the vassal of Sak Tzi who had given refuge to Ix Muwaan Mat twenty five years earlier. He was decorated in war paint and accompanied by a couple hundred warriors. He learned that Yokib had secretly negotiated a new alliance with six vassals of Baakal. The alliance was to orchestrate one more attack on the temples of Baakal, with the purpose of striking the faith of the people as they had done before, and the attack was to be executed that night. Ix Muwaan Mat

instructed Chok Balam to defend the Triad Temple and she would take Kinich Janaab Pakal and Kan Mo Hix into hiding.

At the palace, Ix Tzakbu Ajaw asked the reason for the tumult and when she learned of the attack she was shocked that Ix Muwaan Mat would take Kinich Janaab Pakal into hiding when he should be leading the defense of the city as the king and god of Baakal. But Ix Muwaan Mat contested her, and she would not put her son in a battle that would risk the dynasty. The royal family climbed the tower of the palace and looked into the night but saw nothing more than the torches of the Baakal army in the perimeter of the temple of the Triad Gods.

All was silent, except for the barking of dogs. Then a roar came from the northern gate, and the armies collided in furious battle. But even with the help of Kab Chan Te, Chok Balam was not prepared, and the defenses were overwhelmed. But while the battle was being lost at the temple, battle cries rose from the palace below them. Chok Balam was distracted at the temple, but the main force of Kinich Yonal Ahk advanced on the palace. Violent cries surrounded the palace and the royal family heard the destruction of the warriors that guarded the palace, and they knew that they were the true target of the assault. They looked down from the tower and listened to screams of murder as the enemy penetrated each chamber in the palace complex. Knowing death

encroached upon them, they descended the tower, but on the ground they found they were trapped at every exit. With no other escape, Ix Muwaan Mat took them down into the mouth of the labyrinth of storage chambers and tunnels that ran under the palace. Blinded by absolute darkness, they followed the touch of their hands along the damp walls which pulled them deeper into the labyrinth. Ix Muwaan Mat knew the tunnels led to exit at the southern perimeter of the palace, but every path led to a dead end. Their eyes were blinded by infinite black, but their bodies were confined. Trapped, they stood quiet and listened for the enemy above. Perhaps they were safe under the earth. But the wet stucco walls reflected a warm light; and as the light approached, shadows tilted and shifted. The royal family stood still, attempting to conceal the sound of their own breath. Then the torch appeared, and Ix Tzakbu Ajaw saw the face of Nun Ujol Chak. Was it the face of life or death? He was approaching, and there was no escape for which the whole family would be discovered. Kan Mo Hix broke free from the clasp of Ix Muwaan Mat and walked into the light. The torch illuminated his face and Nun Ujol Chak first tensed, then smiled. Kan Mo Hix asked him for help, but Nun Ujol Chak asked where was Kinich Janaab Pakal, and at that moment Kan Mo Hix knew he confronted the enemy. Kan Mo Hix said he was alone, and Nun Ujol Chak had a smile that turned into a grisly grimace. Ix

Muwaan Mat and the others witnessed the confrontation while hidden in darkness and silence at the end of the tunnel. Warriors came forth and apprehended Kan Mo Hix, and Nun Ujol Chak retreated with his prize.

Ix Muwaan Mat, Kinich Janaab Pakal, and Ix Tzakbi Ajaw hid in the black and silent hole, listening for further danger. They could not return to the entrance, but the torch of Nun Ujol Chak had revealed an exit, and Ix Muwaan Mat led the survivors further down into the maze until the night air touched their faces and the faint light of the moon illuminated ahead. The tunnel exited outside the south side of the palace. The enemy was all around them, hunting for their prey. In the shadows of the night, they crawled into a canal that ran beside the palace and allowed themselves to be taken by the water to the river. Unseen by the surrounding enemy, they drifted silently to where the river came to the falls and slipped over rocks and fell into pools, but they suffered the bludgeoning in silence for fear that a single voice would bring attention they would not survive. The last fall dropped them into a bath, and there they hid the duration of the night as they listened to the horrors of destruction around them.

When the first twilight broke the night sky, the Ix Muwaan Mat, Ix Tzakbu Ajaw, and Kinich Janaab Pakal returned to the city. Before the people of Baakal, they arrived at the palace and looked upon the

damaged and defaced structures of the complex. In each chamber and in every passageway, they discovered the bodies of their friends, now stripped of life and beauty. The treasures of the palace were pillaged or smashed or burned, and all that was left was misery. Ix Tzakbu Ajaw became flushed with anger and humiliation and lashed out at Kinich Janaab Pakal, who instead of following his mother to hiding, should have stood his ground to protect the city and its people. Ix Muwaan Mat stepped before her son and said that while Ix Tzakbu Ajaw was queen consort, Ix Muwaan Mat was the mother of the king and god, and was queen regnant so long as she was alive, and she solemnly warned the girl against speaking any word against her or her son. But Ix Tzakbu Ajaw was enraged and could not cease her accusations. The lieutenant of the army approached the palace. Ix Muwaan Mat saw the absence of the nacom Chok Balam and the vassal king Kab Chan Te. The warriors wept, and said that they were captured and taken away by Kinich Yonal Ahk of Yokib. The temple of the Triad Gods was spared, because they had no interest in destroying the idols; they came to murder Kinich Janaab Pakal, the living Triad God. With the news being uttered, the people cried. Ix Muwaan Mat took the news with strength, and dismissed the lieutenant and his men, but in her heart, Ix Tzakbu Ajaw vowed a hateful revenge on Nun

Ujol Chak for the humiliation he brought on her husband.

## **633 January 22 (9.10.0.0.0) Baakal Celebrates Tenth Katun**

After the last assault on the Triad Gods and Kinich Janaab Pakal, Ix Muwaan Mat resented the insolence Ix Tzakbu Ajaw displayed in front of the people, and would not forgive her, and her resentment extended to the faction behind the girl. At the court, Ix Muwaan Mat grew stronger, and the priests of the Forgotten Gods needed not attend.

For five years, the mother of Unen Kawiil controlled Baakal and protected Kinich Janaab Pakal, and eventually on 633 January 22 (9.10.0.0.0) the tenth Katun came upon them. Nothing changed since the last katun celebration twenty years before. Ix Muwaan Mat conducted the rituals in the Triad Temple, covering the idols and her son with layers of cotton gauze. Then Kinich Janaab Pakal put the royal jade encrusted crown on the effigy of Unen Kawiil.

But Ix Muwaan Mat neglected any ritual in the Forgotten Temple, and her power was such that she forbade queen Ix Tzakbu Ajaw from giving cloth to the idols of the Forgotten Gods, so deep was her unrelenting hatred for the ancient faction.

The people of Baakal saw they had been saved from the abuse of the faction of the Forgotten Gods only to suffer the incompetence and tyranny of Ix Muwaan Mat. The regent was so taken by religious fervor, that she neglected public works needed by the people and even failed to repair and maintain the

palace. Instead of wealth and joy, the 10<sup>th</sup> Katun festival was about scarcity and solemnity. Actors took the stage not to utter jests and praise, but to voice words of lamentation.

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Eight Katun was when Ix Yohl Ik'nal doted  
Cloths of all colors to gods in their houses.

Ajen Yohl Mat was the lord of Baakal.  
Janaab Pakal was the last of his line.

Then came U Kay Kan and burned down the  
temple.

Lost was our queen and then lost was our lord.

Then Ix Muwaan Mat touched the earth once  
again.

She gave the cloth to the gods that she loved.

Jun Yalaw Chan could not show and present.  
Gods of the old house were lost for dissent.

Ix Muwaan Mat did not give colored cloth.  
Three gods forgotten were naked once more.

Baskets are empty and soups are now thin.  
Triad Gods feast but the children are poor.

Games are not held and the wages not set.  
Dancers don't spin and the actors are spent.

## **635 May 20 (9.10.2.6.6) Kinich Kan Balam II is born**

The power of Ix Muwaan Mat was absolute, but too much strength engendered resentment, and the dependencies of power eventually change. The flock that worshiped the Forgotten Gods resented the rejection. The priests of that faction, stripped of their power and influence, mumbled her name with treacherous wishes. Ix Tzakbu Ajaw who was the leader and sponsor of the cult, was shunned by Ix Muwaan Mat and unwelcome in the court of Kinich Janaab Pakal who, even at the age of thirty two, did not have the strength to support his own wife and queen. But then words from the maidens in the palace reached the ears of Ix Muwaan Mat, that queen Ix Tzakbu Ajaw at age twenty seven was pregnant. Ix Muwaan Mat was now forty eight years old, and she knew that a grandson would solidify her dynasty and legacy, but in her belly she felt uneasy. One evening, Ix Muwaan Mat felt restless and her eyes would not feel the heaviness of sleep. She pulled the curtain aside to view the evening star and out of boredom, paced between her cot and the star. From the shadows of twilight, her servant crossed the courtyard and told her the news, and so on 635 May 20 (9.10.2.6.6), in the purple heaven of dusk, when the new moon touched the rising evening star, Kinich Kan Balam II was born to Ix Tzakbu Ajaw and Kinich Janaab Pakal.

The people of Baakal rejoiced with the news, and every woman of the city cooperated to organize a great feast to celebrate the birth of Kinich Kan Balam II. Turkeys were captured and dipped in boiling water to be deplumed. Men dug holes and filled them with boulders and wood for fires and in the embers buried deer and peccary wrapped in banana to be roasted overnight, and the smoke stung the eyes and was delicious to smell. Ix Tzakbu Ajaw held the feast in the plaza, so that every citizen could approach the baby and bless it. But Ix Muwaan Mat did not expect for Ix Tzakbu Ajaw to stand up and take the baby in her arms. And without a word, the young mother began to walk through the crowd and across the plaza. The priests of the Forgotten Gods followed her, and her loyal followers followed her, and she led the whole city on a great walk to the Forgotten Temple. And there she entered the poor temple with her baby while everyone sat outside in complete silence and reverence, she made offerings to the Forgotten Gods and asked for Kinich Kan Balam II to be blessed and protected from evil. Then she exited the temple, and she did not speak but she looked at every citizen and smiled, and the people made way for her as she walked through the crowd, and she made way to the plaza. Ix Muwaan Mat saw her return to the plaza with the people of Baakal behind her, but Ix Tzakbu Ajaw turned and continued to the temple of the Triad Gods, and climbed the steps and entered the chamber.

Kinich Janaab Pakal left his place at the table, and followed his wife into the temple. Inside, the young mother worshiped the three idols and Kinich Janaab Pakal blessed the baby and protected it from evil. Nuk Yajaw Chan, the chief priest of the Triad Gods, witnessed this, and praised Queen Ix Tzakbu Ajaw and her child.

## **640 September 7 (9.10.7.13.5) Ix Muwaan Mat (53) Dies**

From that day, as the mother of the heir to the throne of Baakal, Ix Tzakbu Ajaw became the queen regnant of Baakal, and from that moment, Ix Muwaan Mat saw her power and relevance disintegrate. As queen regnant, Ix Tzakbu asked for the jade caplet and skirt, and Ix Muwaan Mat could not refuse to surrender them. Ix Tzakbu always presented herself in this garb of queens.

From then on, irrelevant to the world, Ix Muwaan Mat spent her days assisting Nuk Yajaw Chan with the care of the temple and the idols. Blood sacrifices became her compulsion and fasts became her obsession, and she scored her flesh and drained her body until she became diminished and weakened with endemic abuse, but the idols did not speak again. In time Ix Muwaan Mat became ill, and on 640 September 7 (9.10.7.13.5) at the age of 53 she collapsed in the temple. Nuk Yajaw Chan held her and wept as she released life from her body. Ancient and alone, Nuk Yajaw Chan lost his will and lost his strength. The world had no color in it. He laid down on the floor and wept silently. Finally, staring at the sky, Nuk Yajaw Chan let out the last breath of air.

Two years after the death of Ix Muwaan Mat, sorry news came to Baakal. As part of the festivities in Wakaab, Kan Mo Hix, the consort of Ix Muwaan Mat and adopted father of Kinich Janaab Pakal, was taken

before Nun Ujol Chak. He begged for mercy before being stretched over a stone table where Ahiin Chan Ahk cut out his heart and presented it to their gods. The wife of Nun Ujol Chak received the rest of the body of Kan Mo Hix and cooked his flesh in a stew that was then consumed at the banquet. A letter was then sent out to tell Baakal of the humiliating death of its king consort.

Less than ten years later, on 644 November 2 (9.10.11.17.0) Kinich Kan Joy Chitam II was born as the second son to Tzakbu Ajaw, better securing the future of the dynasty of Kinich Janaab Pakal.

## **652 October 9, (9.11.0.0.0) Baakal Celebrates Eleventh Katun and the Reign of Kinich Janaab Pakal**

Ix Tzakbu Ajaw understood the politics of the palace, but she also understood the contract between the king and the people. Where the people supplied foods and arts to the king, they required in return strength to protect them from enemy states, sanctity to protect them from evil spirits, and celebrity to bring in wealth to the markets and festivals. So the queen planned for the Eleventh Katun festival to be held on 652 October 9, (9.11.0.0.0) and she marked that date as the beginning of the golden age of Baakal under the reign of Kinich Janaab Pakal. Having rehearsed and learned his part, Kinich Janaab Pakal was programmed to finally lead the rituals of the cloth in both temples of the Triad Gods and Forgotten Gods, and the people loved Kinich Janaab Pakal who was the first king to lead the rituals after so many generations. By her boundless aspiration, she intended her husband to not only be a king among kings, but to be the greatest and most famous king of all, and she understood the difference between a king and a great king was presentation and image.

After the festival, Ix Tzakbu Ajaw commissioned a collection of new projects to be ready for the next Katun. She asked the architect to build a new hall in the palace to house the royal chamber for Kinich Janaab Pakal. All the halls in the palace were red, but

this one would stand out and be painted white and be called sak nuk naaj (white house). Artists and scribes were contracted to decorate the interior with frescoes that would depict the history of Kinich Janaab Pakal and the dynasty. After two years of designing the architecture and planning the project, construction of sak nuk naaj began on 654, November 9 (9.11.2.2.1).

To impose upon history the greatness of Kinich Janaab Pakal as a king, she also commissioned new project to build funerary temples for Kinich Janaab Pakal and herself next to the palace on the western side, with magnificent measures that would impress the gods of the underworld and pilgrims from beyond the domain. The foundation for the funerary temple of Kinich Janaab Pakal was set down. The border of the first step of the pyramid was defined and the walls of the tomb stood up, and in between them the structure was filled with limestone rubble by the work of hundreds of conscripted farmers and captured slaves. The labor was hard, and the jaguar sun choked their throats with thirst and lashed their backs with its stinging rays. The work also began for the funerary temple of Ix Tzakbu Ajaw.

At the quarry, another great work was underway and upon a stone slab of immense weight and under direction of the priests and astronomers, master scribes drew the lines to be chiseled to bas-relief. The lid portrayed the arrival of Kinich Janaab Pakal from the heaven, to be born as a mortal on earth. At the top of the image, towered the Milky Way represented by the idol of Hun Ajaw, the lord of the heaven, in the form of Six Sky, the bejeweled tree.

Breathing planets roamed the heaven while the double headed vision serpent wove through the branches of the Milky Way, transporting spirits of royal ancestors in the open maws. A quetzal bird perched on the pinnacle of the tree, granting royal quality to the spirit stars. Below the tree, flaring flames and swirling smoke scorched a brazier of the form of Ix Muwaan Mat, the Cormorant Goddess. On top of the brazier, a saucer roasted sacrificial elements of a bundle of tobacco, a spiny conch, and a stingray spine, all used as instruments of communication with the gods for the conception of Unen Kawiil, who was brought down from the heaven and born incarnate on top of the brazier in the form of Kinich Janaab Pakal, and given breath. The image was bordered by an array of glyphs that described the heavenly bodies on that day. The sides of the sarcophagus were carved to depict the lineage of the dynasty, including Ahkal Mo Nab, followed by Kan Joy Chitam, followed by Kan Balam, followed by Ix Yohl Iknal, followed by Ix Muwaan Mat and Kan Mo Hix. The sarcophagus was placed in the open tomb, and with great ceremony and spectacle the immense lid was transported from the quarry and laid over, leaving a small opening ajar. Another ceremony was conducted for the sarcophagus of Ix Tzakbu Ajaw, and the tombs were enclosed by corbel vaults and the pyramids built up.

Lastly, in honor of her cult, she commissioned the renovation of the Forgotten Temple. Ix Tzakbu Ajaw observed and managed the building of the new temples and palace structures, and the activity and construction filled the people with a feeling that Baakal was also building up its greatness.

But the queen saw that every temple and stela would need a story to tell the greatness of Kinich Janaab Pakal. So she needed a war, a victory, and a revenge.

## **659 August 5 (9.11.6.16.11) Kinich Janaab Pakal defeats Nuun Ujol Chak and defecting vassals.**

Queen Ix Tzakbu Ajaw wanted the dominion of Baakal to be whole again under the reign of Kinich Janaab Pakal. More than thirty years before, in a stinging act of treachery, Nuun Ujol Chak led Wakaab, Pipa, and four other vassal states to defect from Baakal and attempt the assassination of Kinich Janaab Pakal. By taking back these states, Ix Tzakbu Ajaw intended to reach the Usumacinta River, which she considered to be the natural border of the dominion of Baakal. She instructed an envoy to deliver a message to Nuun Ujol Chak, instructing him to submit to the rule of Kinich Janaab Pakal once more. Along with the message she sent a gift, a rubber ball which was tossed at the feet of the treacherous petty king. Nuun Ujol Chak, now an octogenarian, responded and invited Kinich Janaab Pakal to a diplomatic meeting to negotiate the terms of a new alliance. On the side, he also sent messengers to his allies and instructed them to raise their armies and join him at Wakaab so that they would receive Kinich Janaab Pakal and capture him and achieve a great honor for U Kay Kan, his overlord in Dzibanche. The captains reviewed the campaign with Kinich Janaab Pakal and noted that according to the map, Wakaab was a city rested on a high land that overlooked the valley farmland below.

It was well protected, with a cliff to the north before the valley and Mount Naj Chak to the west. Rapids and falls and canyons of the Jatate River rushed down the far side of the mountain and fed into the Tzaconeja River of the valley below. Wakaab was most easily approachable from the east, with a long uphill hike to the city, and the nacom proposed that route. But the queen said Nuun Ujol Chak would expect Kinich Janaab Pakal to arrive from the east, and would be sure to have his forces deployed there ready to ambush the king. She insisted that Kinich Janaab Pakal march around the far side of the mountain and along the foot of the canyon until they could hit the enemy from behind. The captains protested, saying that a march of the army that size in a route that enclosed them from either side would be risky, but she insisted, and Kinich Janaab Pakal relented to her opinion.

And so Kinich Janaab Pakal led the army from the southern gate of Baakal into the highlands. The army came into the valley of the Tzaconeja River. From there Kinich Janaab Pakal led his forces east down the valley until they reached the Jatate River that fed in as a tributary. Kinich Janaab Pakal looked up and the city of Waakab could be seen at the top of the cliff. They trekked on the sandy delta and followed the river up the far side of mount Naj Chak and the river turned into falls that had carved a deep canyon. Among the rocks and rapids, the army marched,

always looking up for fear of being spotted by scouts and spies, but the enemy was absent. Kinich Janaab Pakal reached the highland on 659 August 5 (9.11.6.16.11), and when he approached Wakaab, he encountered a great number of warriors all arranged for battle but anticipating and looking to the north down the slope. His warriors did not rest, and the march quickened to a jog, and when they were discovered, accelerated to a full charge. The armies of Wakaab, Pipa, and four other vassals were not prepared, and being surprised by the attack, put up little resistance before fleeing down the highland in panic. Leveraging the chaos, the captains of Kinich Janaab Pakal captured every one of the vassal kings, but Kinich Janaab Pakal had one request to fulfill for Ix Tzakbu Ajaw, and the ladies and children of the palace were also taken as prisoners.

After a three days march, Kinich Janaab Pakal and his army arrived at Baakal and all the people were there to receive the victors. They entered through the gate of Baakal and a great roar of acclaim burst out. The people threw flower petals over their heads and laid palm leaves at their feet. At the tail of the procession, children threw pebbles at the sorry captives. The men were taken to the plaza and kept there for humiliation while the ladies and children were taken away as slaves, and Ix Tzakbu Ajaw accepted the wife and child of Nuun Ujol Chak. The

people prepared and celebrated the victory celebration three days later.

As the jaguar sun emerged from the underworld and touched the earth, guards came to the plaza and collected the captives who were taken in tow behind the royal procession. At the bank of the falls, spectators watched as Nuun Ujol Chak, Yax Kin, and four other vassals in turn were put upon a stone and stretched long. With a blade of obsidian, the priest of the Triad Gods swiftly made an incision between the ribs and then with great ferocity, plunged his hands and drew out the beating heart. So quick was the procedure, that each victim suffered a brief moment to observe his own heart before life left his eyes. The priest spoke a brief prayer, declaring to deliver the heart of the petty king to the gods of the underworld in return for protection from evil. For each sacrifice, Kinich Janaab Pakal took the bloody heart and threw it into the falls, where it followed and fell with the water until it was consumed by the current and taken to the underworld. The spectators and the royal court withdrew and prepared for the feast. Ix Tzakbu Ajaw called the priests of the Forgotten Gods to take her slaves to help prepare the bodies for the evening. A great banquet was prepared in front of the palace and the people were freshly bathed and dressed, and the celebrations began with musicians who played horns and didgeridoos and drums. Kinich Janaab Pakal, Ix Tzakbu Ajaw, and the courtiers took their place at the

banquet and the priests of the Forgotten Gods instructed the slaves to serve the repast to the royal group, but the wife of Nuun Ujol Chak wept for every bowl of stew she served. Then the repast was distributed to the rest of the people according to rank. Kinich Janaab Pakal enjoyed his meal as he watched the reenactment of the battle performed on a stage.

The dancers marched and encircled the enemy. Then they surprised them and attacked them from behind. A battle was played out, with the actor of Kinich Janaab Pakal standing over his enemy. The traitors were stripped and bound, and there was a procession back to Baakal. The dancers reenacted the sacrifice, and then the actress of Ix Tzakbu Ajaw led the dancers to carry the bodies and place them in ceramic cauldrons. They then danced around the cauldrons, celebrating their victory, and with wooden spoons, ate the imaginary stew. Kinich Janaab Pakal turned to his wife but her eyes were fixed on the feast with grim satisfaction. The wife of Nun Ujol Chak sat on the ground and cried inconsolably.

## **672 June 26 (9.12.0.0.0) Kinich Janaab Pakal (69) Celebrates 12<sup>th</sup> Katun**

The people of Baakal looked forward to the festival of the 12<sup>th</sup> Katun and anticipated it to be the greatest of all festivals. The men fasted, denying themselves any kind of meat, and enduring meals without salt and pepper. They also avoided intimacy with their wives, and painted their bodies black to show their pious suffering. The festival would be a celebration of renewal, and the women prepared by throwing out their ceramic wares, tables, stools, and old clothing. The homes were patched with stucco and painted with a fresh coat of limestone whitewash.

Ix Tzakbu Ajaw was also prepared for the festival. The white hall in the middle of the palace was complete. On the first day of the 12<sup>th</sup> Katun festival, on 672 June 26 (9.12.0.0.0), as first order of the festival, she called all lords, priests, and vassals to assemble in the royal chamber. The walls were decorated with images of the Baakal dynasty. A throne of a double headed jaguar was set at the end of the chamber, and encrusted in on the wall behind it, a plaque showed the image of Ix Muwaan Mat crowning Kinich Janaab Pakal as the king of Baakal. Kinich Janaab Pakal, now sixty nine years old, took his place on the throne, and that morning accepted tribute and pledges of allegiance from all lords and vassals of Baakal.

After the royal assembly was concluded, the king, lords, and priests participated in a procession from the palace to the temple of the Triad Gods. There, the priests, all painted in red, sat in each corner of the temple chamber and stretched a rope between. Inside the perimeter of the rope, the priests lit fire in the braziers that were placed before each of the idols, and Kinich Janaab Pakal threw in each brazier rocks of copal incense so that the temple would be cleansed and evil spirits driven away. He then gave 21 white cotton cloths to the idols, and gave his jade encrusted crown to his effigy as Unen Kawiil.

This ceremony being done, Ix Tzakbu Ajaw led Kinich Janaab Pakal west across the concourse to the new temple of the Forgotten Gods. Kinich Janaab Pakal was presented with the idols of Balu'n Chan Yoon, Waxaklaju'n Yoon, and Balu'n Tz'akbu Ajaw, and he placed them inside the new temple chamber. Then, the cleansing ritual was performed there, as at the other temple.

After the king prepared the idols for reception, The priests opened up their books before the idols, cast their lots, and read the prophecies. With a solemn presentation, the priests announced the 12<sup>th</sup> Katun would begin with evil and death.

Once the idols were prepared and the rituals performed, the thousands of pilgrims formed great queues and climbed the pyramids and inside the

temples deposited their offerings of maize, birds, flowers, and other foods and goods for the idols.

That evening, the royal family treated the city with a great repast served in thousands of ceramic bowls, each decorated with the image of the festival as souvenirs. Kinich Janaab Pakal and the lords and priests retired to the palace where they ate food and drank balche with such debauchery that they purged themselves with vomit, shit, and urine until the palace smelled like something worse than death. But Ix Tzakbu Ajaw retired to her room and hid from the celebrations. There she wondered how the priests could predict such a miserable future? She personally managed every preparation and every ritual so that only blessings would come upon them.

Fearing that the gods intended her death, Ix Tzakbu Ajaw exited the palace with Lady Earth Deer, who accompanied and served her day and night as her unhappy yet diligent slave. She descended the western steps and crossed the concourse to approach her funerary temple that was more than half complete. The architect and priests led Ix Tzakbu Ajaw and Lady Earth Deer into the entrance that was kept open, later to be covered by the front stairs. Deep inside the pyramid, the tunnel turned and led the party to a chamber. In the middle of the chamber was a sarcophagus of solid stone that was placed there at the beginning of the construction, with the heavy lid kept ajar so that when the time came, Ix Tzakbu could be

placed inside and the lid slid shut. The priests gave a lecture on the funerary proceedings, detailing that upon the death of Ix Tzakbu Ajaw, her body would be painted in red cinnabar, dressed in her funerary garb, and adorned with her funerary jewelry. Ix Tzakbu was satisfied with the plan, but added one more request; she required that Lady Earth Deer and her son accompany and server her in her journey to the afterlife. Lady Earth Deer almost fainted from the thought, and begged the queen not to sacrifice her and her son upon her death. Ix Tzakbu Ajaw looked at her slave with no emotion in her eyes, and granted her request.

Despite every attempt of consolation or distraction, Iz Tzakbu Ajaw became ill in spirit. For every day, Ix Tzakbu Ajaw was plagued with anxiety, and for every night, she was tortured by nightmares. Lady Earth Deer, who was always by her side, asked her to tell her dreams. Ix Tzakbu Ajaw said that each night she suffered the same dream, that of hearing the rattle of a snake, but never being able to find it. The trauma developed a phobia in the mind of Ix Tzakbu Ajaw, and she ordered her slaves to keep a torch lit every night in her chamber to eliminate any shadows where pests might seek refuge until the moment came to surprise passing feet with a venomous strike. Only with this measure did the rattling stop and Ix Tzakbu Ajaw slept her nurturing sleep at last.

## **672 November 11 (9.12.0.6.18) Lady Tzakbu Ajaw Dies**

Ix Tzakbu Ajaw regained some of her health, but she still felt, day and night, the presence of doom about her like an energy or spirit that loomed and watched her, having marked her for summary execution. With paranoia eating her every nerve, she practiced every precaution, with the hope that her carefulness could save her from whatever tragedy was promised her. She did not walk at night, for fear of surprising death that waited in the shadows. She always wore a shawl even under the radiance of the sun or the heat of the torch, for fear of catching an ill wind. She made appointments but did not attend them, or went in one direction, only to turn and go another, or put on a dress and then changed into another and another, all with the intention of evading and tricking fate which she saw waiting for her down every path or in every chamber. She ordered one meal, but then before bringing the food to her lips, she pushed away the plate and asked for another. Eventually, she only trusted fresh fruits and nothing else, only left her chamber to visit the toilets that were only a few steps away.

But the fugitive from fate weakened from the wearisome chase, and one morning she awoke with barely the energy to stand up from her cot. Seeing that her chamber pot was missing, she called Lady Earth Deer. She called again but there was no answer

from outside her chamber. Irritated, she stood up and went to the toilets to relieve herself. As she sat down, she noticed an empty basket near her feet, and at that moment felt the most invasive prick. She jumped up and looked down the painful hole that stung her. She could not see, but from the hidden tunnels, she heard a rattle as evil as the sting. The servants came to her assistance and, with great hysteria among them, laid her in her cot. The priests came upon her and performed rituals to cleans her body, but every effort to save her was ineffective and slowly her body was consumed by the venom until, with Kinich Janaab Pakal at her side, the sting reached her heart and poisoned it until it was numb and still.

Crying for the death of Ix Tzakbu Ajaw spread over the city like a howling wind. Of all the queens of Baakal, she was the most loved and most bereaved. The priests prepared her body, painting her skin with red cinnabar and adorning her body with jewels of jadeite. Lady Earth Ajaw and her son were instructed to carry the belongings of the queen and present offerings every day so that she would be comforted in the afterlife. Lady Earth Deer asked how it would be possible to attend the queen, if the tomb was to be sealed. The priests answered that she would not be killed, but entombed with Ix Tzakbu Ajaw alive, as was her majesty's wish.

A solemn procession took her from her chamber, down the steps of the palace, and across the

concourse. The pallbearers carried the body of the queen on an open litter for all to observe. Lady Earth Deer and her son, stunned by their sudden fate, carried her belongings that would be buried with her. The procession entered the temple and walked through the tunnel deep into the heart of rock and rubble. The torches then put light on the entrance of the tomb. Ix Tzakbu Ajaw, adorned and prepared for the afterlife, was placed in the sarcophagus and the stone lid drawn over to seal her body. Lady Earth then panicked and screamed with uncontrollable hysteria and her son wept for the horror that was before them. Guards forced them into the tomb by force, and the masons, laying down blocks of stone and mortar, began sealing the entrance. The hysteria was hard to hear, and Kinich Janaab Pakal felt sick for the task that must be completed, but his loyalty to his wife controlled his will. The next layers of block and mortar were set, until only a small hole remained at the top of the entrance to the tomb. From the black chamber, the mother and son moaned and begged, and as the last block was put in place, the final screams escaped until the last gap of air was stopped and the world of death was trapped behind the wall. The mourners exited the pyramid and the architect immediately managed the building of the steps over the entrance of the tunnel.

## **683 August 28 (9.12.11.5.18) Kinich Janaab Pakal (80) dies and is buried in tomb**

Kinich Janaab Pakal survived Ix Tzakbu Ajaw a little over ten years. Without the strength of his mother, and without the direction of his wife, the old king became weak and without purpose. He initiated no new wars of conquest, nor did he author any new treaties or alliances. The elderly king sat on his throne in the empty royal chamber, each day weaker in body and mind. Absent of purpose or ambition, his only pleasure was to visit the farms and tend his fruit trees. He spent many days chatting with farmers about the seasons and the crops. In one of his walks among the corn fields, he collapsed and was taken to the palace. His sons looked on him, but although his body breathed, his spirit had left his body, and after several days, the body of Kinich Janaab Pakal also expired.

Kinich Jan Balam II oversaw the funeral ritual of Kinich Janaab Pakal. With the greatest procession ever witnessed, the old king was taken up to the top of the pyramid. A stone slab was removed from the floor of the temple, and the priests and pallbearers descended the steep stairs into the depth of the pyramid. At the heart of the building, Kinich Janaab Pakal was placed in his sarcophagus and sealed under the great lid. Over the next years, Kinich Janaab Pakal dedicated himself to the completion of the funerary temple of his father. He filled up the tunnel with rubble and sealed the floor of the temple with the

stone slab. He completed the inscriptions on the walls of the temples that told, and tell to this day, of the history of Baakal and of the greatness of Kinich Janaab Pakal.

## **690 July 21 (9.12.18.5.17) Kinich Kan Balam II dedicates temples of the Triad Gods**

After the death of Kinich Janaab Pakal and Ix Tzakbu Ajaw, Kinich Kan Balam II commissioned three temples to be built in a new plaza in the highland behind the palace, to house each of the three Triad Gods and describe the godly heritage of Kinich Janaab Pakal.

Facing northeast, the temple of Hun Ajaw, the Jupiter god, and lord of the heaven, was the greatest and built on a pyramid of seven tiers. Inside the temple, a shrine in the form of a little house was built in the internal chamber. On the left of the entrance to the shrine stood the image of Kinich Kan Balam II and on the right stood Hun Ajaw in humanoid form, smoking a pipe of tobacco. Inside the shrine and on its back wall, images of young and old Kinich Kan Balam II attended to the tree of life that grew from the flames of the brazier of Ix Muwaan Mat to form the resplendent milky way.

Facing west, the temple of Kinich Ajaw, the Mars god, lord of the underworld, stood on the smallest platform. Inside the inner chamber, a shrine depicted images of Kinich Kan Balam II on either side of the entrance. Inside the shrine, young and old versions of Kinich Kan Balam II presented figures of underworld gods to the Kinich Ajaw who took the form of a war

shield. Below, defeated underworld gods supported a great tobacco pipe.

Facing east, the temple of Unen Kawiil, the Saturn god, lord of the earth, housed the third shrine that depicted Unen Kawiil in the form of a maize stock, growing from the brazier of Ix Muwaan Mat, and crowned by a quetzal bird that identified his divine right.

The priests identified the night of dedication of the new temples. Thousands of worshipers gathered in the forum before the palace for the procession. Kinich Kan Balam II, dressed in full regalia, began the march, followed by musicians and dancers, then priests who carried idols of Hun Ajaw, Kinich Ajaw, and Unen Kawiil on litters, and finally citizens with flowers and offerings in their hands. The procession went up the mountain behind the palace to the new plaza of the Triad Gods. In the middle of the plaza, Kinich Kan Balam II stood on a dais, surrounded by the people of Baakal, and looked up to the heaven. As was predicted, that evening on 690 July 20 (9.12.18.5.16) 2 Kib 14 Mol they observed the reunion of Ix Muwaan Mat, Hun Ajaw, Kinich Ajaw, and Unen Kawiil as the conjunction of Moon with Jupiter, Mars, and Saturn. Kinich Ajaw Kan Balam II sang praises to the moon and her children planets, and the people joined him.

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When we were in trouble when we were in need  
Ix Muwaan Mat as the motherly moon  
came down to earth in the form of Sak Kuk  
She saved our city and gave us our king

Unen Kawiil then came down from the stars  
to rule as a king and continue the line  
Kinich Janaab Pakal lived as a king  
He restored fortune and saved us from shame

Ix Muwaan Mat and then Unen Kawiil  
died as mere mortals and rose up again  
the motherly moon is happy tonight  
with her three children, a beautiful sight

They sang and feasted until dawn. And as the  
jaguar sun touched the earth, Kinich Kan Balam II  
placed the idols of Hun Ajaw, Kinich Ajaw, and his  
father Unen Kawiil in their temples, and dedicated  
rituals of blood and offerings.

And the writings on the temples told the stories of  
Ix Muwaan Mat and her children, and Kinich Janaab  
Pakal was then forever the greatest of all kings and  
gods.

