

Ixquichca Miquiztli

“Itech naci in Tlaltecuhтли.” The last words to be released from the lips of the brave Tenochtitlan warrior. He handed himself over to me, and although we were still being inhabited by unwanted guests: the white man from another world: he wanted his soul to join the Mexica Gods. He whispered in my ear, “I would be a traitor to my people to die under the name of their God.” Ichtaca, was this young man’s name; he held me close and begged for my scream before he could be finished from the highly uncivilized weapons of the other world. He was so beautiful, eyes eternally dark to resemble the heart of the cacao bean; his tears only sculpted his beauty more, I pity the Europeans for not being able to witness this visage. Furthermore, I would allow his request, I closed his eyes and allowed my scream to be heard through the woods, battlefield, and the magnificent city of Tenochtitlan. A minute had yet to complete, and rapidly he appeared.

“My beautiful creature, I am pleased to see you again,” were the only words that emerged from his skeletal lips. Mictlantecuhtli, my creator, appeared to witness the departure of Ichtaca. “I did not call for compliments, I called for your assistance in aiding this warrior.” The God of death turned his gaze towards the wounded warrior, he was quickly losing blood; the gory sight birthed a sinister smile upon my master. “And now? What do you expect me to do? I am Mictlantecuhtli, God of Death & the Underworld, I have no pity.” “My lord, With all res-” Before I could even finish speaking, Mictlantecuhtli struck my face with a hit so powerful, it felt that as if one of my brethren had fallen from the eerie night to land right on my face. “Fool! Have you forgotten? You are a creature that collects souls for my underworld, you are a tzitzimime, you do my will demon!” He knew I hated that term, my visage is one to plague nightmares, but my work has been deemed as demonic, a thought he and the white men share together.

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But, he continued, “Any mortal that calls upon you earns a trip directly to my underworld, you are a beacon of death, if you wanted events to be different, perhaps you should pray to Quetzalcoatl to adopt you.” He once more turned to the fallen warrior, “Are you ready, child? Ready to join your tormented brothers and sister under my command?” Ichtaca just longed for death at this point, it did not matter whether he would ascend to the heavens or to the underworld with Mictlantecuhtli. “Xinechecana axan Mictlantecuhtli,” were the last words to escape from the warrior’s mortal body, asking my lord to “show him the way” to the underworld. Unsurprisingly, he did not hesitate one second, and sucked Ichtaca’s soul out of his mortal body. Now fully feasted with a new soul to torment, he made his way to retreat once more to his underworld palace, but before he could do so, he turned to me and said, “Know your place tzitzimime, if I wanted, you would be back in the sky only able to see the mortal world upon an eclipse, I do not carry empathy like my brothers and sisters.” Unable to say anything for the fear of my own existence, I simply vowed, and said, “Yes, my lord.” And with the final praise Mictlantecuhtli ascended down below to his underworld, and left me vowing in a puddle filled with the scarlet-red blood of Ichtaca.

I stayed there for what mortals would call an eternity, on my knees, that were now stained with spilled blood; processing what had been told to me. ‘Demon,’ he calls me, how I wish I could resort to serving my other lords instead of him. However, I am his creation, therefore my life belongs to him. I consume my rage, and finally stand from that gory scene, am I really just a ‘demon?’ that just can’t be. As I gaze up into the world, the crescent moon of my eye captures the visage of Tezcatlipoca’s temple, he is my second lord; aiding Mictlantecuhtli in my creation. “Lord of Wisdom, you must have an answer for me,” is the thought that lures through my mind,

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and without hesitation, I find myself descending to the entrance of the smoking mirror. As I walk inside, my eyes meet his radiant statue perfectly depicting his beauty. His skin: eternally ebony, his eyes: filled with wonder and magic, and a heart: filled with empathy towards the misunderstood creatures of the night.

I get on my knees, I'm invisible to the Mexica people that reside here as well, as long as they don't call for me to turn them over to Death, I shall be able to pray to my lord in solidarity. I asked for his presence, and with the descent from my eyes, my lord stood before me. "Lord Tezcatlipoca, you bless me with your presence," are the words that I say highly to the smoking mirror, as I kiss his trickster feet. "Speak my child, why have you summoned me?" is the phrase that echoes through the temple, as he uses his God voice. With hope, I face the beautiful God and say, "My lord, am I merely a demon? If so, why do mortals still call to me to show them the path towards Death, why do they so highly request my scream? I merely ask because Lord Mictlantecuhtli said such things about me. Why must I serve him, and not you or Lord Xipe Totec?" Lord Tezcatlipoca put his hand under my face, and with his other, wiped my tears away. With a smile, he proceeded to say, "My dearest creation, Mictlantecuhtli hasn't always been fond of tzitzimime, especially powerful ones like you." My eyes stutter in disbelief, "Powerful my Lord? I am merely just a collector of souls." Tezcatlipoca rose and began to walk toward his statue in admiration, "Oh child, clearly he hasn't told you what you are, Mictlantecuhtli fears that the chosen tzitzimime will rise to power and defeat him, and that just happens to be you." Still in disbelief, I ask, "The chosen tzitzimime my lord? What does that mean?"

My lord turned to face me once more, "With every rebirth that Xipe Totec has, he acquires the help of me and Mictlantecuhtli to pick out the most powerful tzitzimime, the one

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that would aid the mortals in sending souls to the heavens and the underworld, the one that would aid the mortals in the March festival of Tlacaxipehualiztli; you my child are the chosen one.” I arose to stand next to Tezcatlipoca, “Then why does he torment me? Simply calling me ‘demon,’ not allowing me to send souls to the heavens?” By surprise, he hugs me and says, “That is merely part of the process, it’s a ritual that the most powerful tzitzimime must endure, You are by far the quickest to come see me, aiding you in finalizing the second part of the ritual.” Seeing my shocked face, Tezcatlipoca chuckles and says, “Mictlantecuhtli has fed the white men lies about your kind, they invented that word ‘demon,’ hence why he uses it to torment your kind, little shall be known to that world about what you truly are, it is more safe that they view you as such, and that your descendants, the Mexica survivors understand the true power that you possess.”

Still shaking, I am unsure how to process all that’s been told of me, “Then my lord, what is to come next?” Tezcatlipoca grabs my hand in a paternal motion, almost like he’s proud of me, “A mortal will call for you again, this time don’t call for the Lord of Death, you are to decide whether they will ascend to the heavens, or join Mictlantecuhtli in the underworld.” I vowed and kissed the smoking mirror’s feet once more, “Thank you my Lord.” Tezcatlipoca vowed and before he could disappear, he turned to me and asked, “My child, do you know your name?” A name? A tzitzimime like me has a name? “No my Lord, I am unaware of such.” Tezcatlipoca sighed and proceeded to state, “Yet another thing that Mictlantecuhtli has hid from you: You are Yolotli, the last tzitzimime of death, your scream is made to be feared and venerated by mortals.” And with those last words, the smoking mirror was gone. Yolotli, who are you?

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“Itechpa mitoa: in aquin al quinemilia, in quenin uel quitemuz, in quenin uel monextliliz in itech monequi: anoce uel quitta in tlein ohui in zazanilli.” This Nahuatl phrase roars through my mind, when I was still merely a star in the heavens with my brothers, this was the phrase that would be drilled into our minds: That we are the polished eye, meaning that we strive to find and discover to see what is necessary. We are the present outcasts in this society, now I understand, we are deemed as evil to the white men and outsiders to protect the power that we hold, by Tezcatlipoca’s name, I swear to never allow my power to fall into the wrong hands.

Then, almost as if Quetzalcoatl had sent a rage of wind storms my way, my thoughts were interrupted by the calling of a mortal, begging to acquire my presence. Having remembered the ritual that Tezcatlipoca had laid for me, I remembered what is to be expected of me.

She was beautiful, this time it wasn’t a warrior that called to me, but merely a young woman who had given birth, and was suffering the consequences of not praying to Ometecuhtli for a successful delivery. She wanted to taste the bittersweet essence of Death rather than allow herself to continue feeling the stinging rage of Ometecuhtli. “Yolotli, Yolotli, Tzitzimime Yolotli,” were the only words that could escape her weakened mortal flesh. I was surprised, for it was the first time I’ve heard my name be called out, clearly the ritual was real & it was working right in my favor. I waited until her family was not in sight from her fractured body, then I made my presence known to the fallen mother. “Don’t speak brave warrior, you are clearly in pain, what is it you seek?” And with a shaky voice, the fractured mother said, “miquiztli.”

She sought death, she sought my scream of death. She is a tricky subject, for the Gods have ordered that any mother who dies in childbirth is destined to become Cihuateteo, malevolents spirits of the night. I place my hand on her head, making sure to be careful to

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prevent my claws from piercing her soft mortal flesh. Then a vision came into my visage, her whole life story was playing through my mind; her destiny now depended on my judgment. Her memories showed her to be a happy child, seeking the wisdom of powerful women around her, she was a rare kind. However, an image appeared that I wish I could forget eternally, the young mother was taken against her will by a white man and raped brutally to satisfy that mortal's pleasure. Now here she lies, having birthed a mestizo, she explains to me that she cannot stand to look at the child, for the miscreant father appears in her mind & prevents her from ever being able to fully love this child. I'd be a liar if I said I didn't shed a tear seeing the trauma of this mother, if it is my will, she will not become Cihuateteo, but she'll join the heavens to heal that part of her soul that was lost to that man. Having made my decision, I close her eyes, and fully let my scream penetrate the city around us; my scream echoes like the sound of ten thousand tormented souls screaming at once. As my cry of agony finishes, her soul emerges from her mortal flesh and flies high to the sky to heal within the heavens.

I now understand, I am Yolotli, the only tzitzimime able to send souls to the heavens and the underworld; I am the deity that shall save Mexica, even if the white men see me as a malevolent demon.

Invisible once more, I can tell that my scream has alerted nearby mortals of the young maiden's death. I am venerated & feared, my prophecy is becoming a reality. Upon my departure, my Lord of the Flayed Skin appears, Xipec Totec appears before me; he too is invisible to the mortal's eyes. "Xipec Totec, you bless me with your presence, how may I serve you my Lord?" He instructs me to get up and proceeds to say, "Yolotli, you will not be the tzitzimime of Tlacaxipehualiztli in this era." Stunned and sure that it has to do with my recent

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action of showing pity to the young maiden, I say, “Forgive me my Lord, I will not show mercy to mortals, but please don’t rid me of serving you within your own festival.” Xipe Totec holds my hand, “It is not because of that my child, you have been chosen as the savior of Mexica.” My eyes look shocked, almost as if they’re keen to begin to cry, “My Lord, I am merely a tztzimime, how on Tlaltecuhтли’s earth am I going to do such?” Squeezing my hand tighter, he says, “My dearest creation, the teotl of Mexica have had a vision, Mexica will be colonized by the white men, and merely we cannot stop it. However, we cannot save our mortals because many have become fearful and restrictive of us.” My breath shaking, he continues, “The only deity that they seem to be keen on is you; You hold such a powerful weapon with your death scream, you could protect us all.” Tears are now fully drenching from my pitch black eyes, “How will I accomplish such a task my lord? I am not even a God-” Before I could finish, he cut me off and said, “We know, which is why the Teotl of Mexica are willing to give their power to you, to make you the deadliest weapon in protecting our people.” I could not find the right words to say, how have I been rebirthed from being the demonic death slave of Mictlantecuhтли to the new protector of Mexica upon the upcoming era? “My Lord, but you said the land will be colonized, how will I possibly protect our people if chaos is sure to emerge here.” Xipe Totec’s face now appears more gloomy than nightfall. “The souls of the Mexica people shall live within your mortal body, so will the souls of the Gods to aid you with wisdom and knowledge, the ones that shall be left for the white men are those that were to be sacrificed to the Gods, it will be your will as to when you shall want to summon an army to your aid, we are in your debt now.” I couldn’t believe what I was hearing, but I knew there would be no way around it, therefore I continued to listen, “The Gods will grace you with the appearance of a mortal man, you will not

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resemble their skin tone, but you will survive; you will be the most powerful creature to walk through Tlaltecuhli's earth."

I stood there vowing for what mortals would refer to as minutes, acknowledging what is to come of me, putting myself as the protector and savior of the Mexica people to further allow them to be able to walk through the evolving world. I stood up, and faced the God with the flayed skin and said, "Quema, nictlacaqui;" yes, I understand. And with that statement, my Lord held my face and said, "Very well, be ready and appear here in the center of Tenochtitlan by sundown."

I spent time waiting for those destined hours by visiting the spot where I had fallen from the eclipse night. My claws scribed the marking of the earth in remembrance; look at my destiny, the feared 'demon' of Mexica shall now become it's deadly protector. And with that, Tlaloc blessed me with enchanted turquoise rain, the water felt as if it was birthing a new soul within me, I now have something to fight for; Mexica, I swear to protect you, the world shall never harm you again.

The sky reached nightfall, and I was roaming the streets of Tenochtitlan, upon the sight of Tezcatlipoca, I quickly made my way towards him. "Are you ready Yolotli?" "Yes, my Lord." And with that statement the Gods made their physical presence be known, their God form struck over the city. "Mortals of Mexica, we have come to save you!" Said the piercing voice of Quetzalcoatl. "We understand that many of us have become malevolent, but your savior shall not be one of us," said Huitzilopochtli, the God of the sun and war. The Aztec citizens looked terrified, but intrigued at the same time. "Your savior shall be a tzitzimime that has granted you the opportunity to go to the heavens instead of the underworld," said Tezcatlipoca. I could feel

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Mictlantecuhtli's gaze on me, bickering that now he had to live in my flesh across eternity, distraught at the thought that the student had become the master. With Tezcatlipoca's statement, I could hear the mortals start to whisper my name, "Yolotli, Yolotli," was all that could be heard within the streets of Tenochtitlan. Xipe Totec finally spoke, "Yolotli the Death Tzitzimime shall be your savior," he took a pause then said, "Show yourself my child." I did as I was told and all I could feel was the admiring eyes upon my unsettling looks; I made my way to stand at Xipe Totec's side. He continued, "Tezcatlipoca shall do the ritual, we need your assistance, but those that are to be sacrificed shall stay to fool the white men that we still live, while Yolotli takes us to safety to a different world." With a quick blink of an eye, the Aztec empire vowed to me, chanting "Teotl Yolotli," God Yolotli.

The Gods got in place to begin the ritual, and Mexica followed; I was instructed to be in the middle of the inscription that Tezcatlipoca had carved onto Tlaltecuhli's earth. "Let us begin!" yelled the smoking mirror in his God voice. Nahuatl spells began to escape from Tezcatlipoca's lips, they were so quick I could not catch entirely what they were saying. But once it ended, the Gods slit their hands and allowed their blood to flow into the inscription. It was now glowing, and slowly each one of the Gods began merging their body and soul with mine. It was happening slowly, then emerged so quickly as Quetzalcoatl's slither, they were all merging with me now. Now, it was Tezcatlipoca and me, the other Gods were now a part of me; and as he was about to merge with my flesh, he grabbed my face and laid an enchanted kiss onto my lips. As he merged his soul and body with mine I could feel my demonic features disappearing, I could feel them changing to resemble the mortal gaze. It was beginning to get painful, then the Aztec civilians joined the inscription and in unison joined me through soul and

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body, it was the pain of a thousand warriors being slaughtered at the same time. As the spell was about to finish, I let out a tzitzimime scream that fractures some of the city's pyramids.

The spell was complete, and I was now being descended to the floor. I could feel the power flowing within me; I could feel the sun's fire running through my veins, the sky's rain inhabiting my now mortal eyes, and the power of Aztec sorcery running through every crevice of this mortal flesh. I am now a God, I am the protector and the vessel for the survivors of Mexica. I am Teotl Yolotli, the last tzitzimime of Death, and the eternal God of Mexica.

It is time to flee to take my people to safety; I'm unsure where we'll end, but with the smoking mirror's sorcery, I am the deadliest weapon upon this earth. Preparing to flee, I realized that I could not just abandon the remaining Aztecs who are sacrifices, I have to give them something at least; this is why they chose me, because I am a protector. I extracted my scream and carved it with the help of Ehecatl, the wind God, into a whistle. I left one at each doorstep to aid them against the white men; one blow of air into that whistle and my death scream shall make its presence known to the colonizers. While it isn't much, it's all I can do; I have to be strong, I can't shed tears leaving the land I for so long called home. This way our survival is guaranteed, my mortal visage will help us remain till the end of time. Furthermore, I take one last look at the city of Tenochtitlan, knowing that it will soon result in a realm of chaos. I wipe my tears and say, "Ma Xipahtinemi Mexica." Be well, Mexica.

I am Yolotli, the last tzitzimime of Death; I am the eternal protector of Mexica. The world has modernized, and the mortals now pray to machines, but nonetheless we have survived. I traveled across nations; firstly, ending up in ancient Asia serving multiple khans and emperors as their magician. Merely they fell like Mexica, and then I proceeded to inhabit the homeland of

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the white men, the skin tone that Tezcatlipoca gave me, did not sit well with them. Yet once more, we survived. And then, I came across the neighboring lands of Mexica, a place that they deemed the “United States of America.” This land is insanely tumultuous, the white men claimed it as theirs and proceeded to create something called “race.” They deem others as being inferior merely because of their skin tone. Clearly, they are by far the most behind in reaching ascension. But yet I remain here with my people? Why? Because I have seen mortals from so many different parts of Tlaltecuhli’s earth, this place is a melting pot filled with so much potential. And I strive to remain here, being an ‘immigrant’ to detail and show the world the story of my people. We will keep surviving, and with every new era, I will make it my life’s mission to ensure that we’re never forgotten.

I am Yolotli, the Last Tzitzimime of Death From Ancient Mexica; I am the eternal God of Mexica, the vessel of the ancient Nahua Gods. And through the mortal time system, on July 22, 2020: I declare my nation eternal, never again shall we be colonized. Therefore, when I hear you say, “*Itech naci in Yolotli, miquiztil tzitzimime;*” I join Yalotli, the Death tzitzimime in Death, I shall respond by saying, “come let us continue to survive.”