

THE CONQUISTADOR'S WIFE

CHORUS 4: SURRENDER OF THE TLAXCALINS

As the Conquistadors climbed into the mountains that rose up from the coast, they moved into the territories of native tribes such as the Totonacs and Tlaxcalins. These peoples were sworn enemies of the Mexica, suffering under the heartless rule of their empire for over 150 years. The best among them were routinely taken captive by the Mexica as blood tribute, sacrificed at Hummingbird Temple to bring the sun out each day and ensure rainfall for survival.

A large portion of tribal wealth—gold, textiles, animals, and food—was taken in taxes by the Mexica each season, leaving the tribes often desperate and poor. Still, the “naturales” did not welcome the arrival of Cortés and his troops. But, instead, resisted them in fierce battles to the death.

It was Malinali who first saw that the two sides had something powerful in common—a desire to destroy the Mexica empire. With her ability to speak their language and her belief that Cortés truly was Quetzacoatl returned, the job of convincing the Totonacs and Tlaxcalins fell to her. It was only a matter of time before Malinali won over the “naturales.” And as the tribes united against the Mexica, Moctezuma could see the terrible prophesy coming true. For him, the end of the world was near.