

# CIVILIZATION'S END

by Nicole Sallak Anderson

## EXCERPT

The crowd cheered. Their screams were like the howls of furious wildcats. Their nationalism was at its peak, and all he needed to do was stoke it to earn their fealty. He turned to the high priest, who held the crown over his head. The white columns of the temple soared above them, and Ankhwenefer gazed at the hieroglyph-covered walls. In spite of the war, the temple was in pristine condition. All around him were golden statues of gods and goddesses. Animals and other brightly painted forms graced the walls. His flag bearing the phoenix flew high in the wind. Everyone in the room dropped to their knees as their king approached Setep.

“By the power invested in me,” the priest called out, “on this day, the fourth month of Perit, the eleventh day, in the third year of your holy reign, I re-crown you Lord and Pharaoh Ankhwenefer, the Good Being of Isis, Golden Eagle King, protector of our lands and Horus himself. May Amon-Re protect you and our people as we rebuild our nation. Egypt shall reign in glory until the end of time.”

Setep placed the heavy crown on Ankhwenefer’s head. A second priest handed him the hook and flail. He gripped them tightly as he crossed his chest with his arms and, turning to the crowd once more, gazed down upon them.

“My people,” he called, “I pledge myself to you.”

The sun poured in from the windows and shone upon Pharaoh’s face, and the people rose from the floor and clapped. To those in the room, their new king looked like the statues of Horus himself. Ankhwenefer was master of his domain—young, strong, intelligent, and wise. He’d fought hard for many years and won. The priestesses sang as he walked past and out to the courtyard where the commoners flooded the area, crying and tossing palm branches and lotus flowers at his feet. His entourage followed behind him, leading a procession of dancing, music, and singing, toward the palace where a feast awaited them. Tomorrow, the next phase of his reign would begin—creating peace with the Lower Kingdom, rebuilding the cities destroyed by the war, and most importantly, establishing a court in Thebes, with his sons, and Natasa, at his side.