# The Necromancer’s Tale

## Prologue:

We are alike, you and I, each of us look out upon this world and we do not recognise what we see. Yet I was born here, and you, you are merely a traveller to these lands. A welcome one indeed, but a stranger still- a wanderer. Your destiny is to pass through this world, whilst I must persist. I remember when these lands were green, free of disease, and so bountiful that none would go wanting. Now they are dead. Scored by the sun, dry, and soaked in the blood of war. I know why it is that you are here, wanderer. You are here because you have lost yourself, you have stared too long into the darkness, and now the darkness has become you. I will help you recover, I will give you back your mind, and your soul, and I will fill the aching hole within you. But you will help me.

What you behold is a dead world- a stagnant place where civilisation and prosperity have wasted with the passing of the ages, leaving only barbarism and hopelessness in their stead. I come from a time when gods walked upon this earth, but they too are gone- lost in eternal sleep in their hidden tombs, in the places that sit at the edge of our sight. This I tell you, is your task- you must wake the gods, and return them to my world. This is the only way to reverse what has been done, and turn sickness to remission. To do so you will must embark on a journey across these lands, to find the hidden tombs, and break the chains that bind the gods to their slumber. When you have done this, when they have returned and the world cured, then your task will be complete, and you will be whole again.

Your path is not an easy one, there will be dangers, both physical and psychological. The disease that has rocked this world will try to claim you. It will prick your skin and beat at your mind. It will be aggressive, and it will know you, for you are foreign and uncorrupted- a beacon for the darkness. We call this disease essence, and indeed it is the essence of the world, unfettered and unchained. Once it gave strength to the gods, now unbound it breeds only chaos. Feeding on our desires, our fears, all that we desire but do not give voice. All you will encounter, be it man, beast, or plant, have fallen to the disease. Some may still resist, and they may even offer to aid you. Others, however, will sense that you do not belong here, and they will stop at nothing to rid you from the world.

When you wake you will see a gate amid the boundless sandy expanse of The Whispering Desert. The gate is dormant, for now, but when awakened will allow you to travel into The Veil, and in that place you will find the tomb of the goddess Eo, whose mind you must unburden from pain. There is a temple deep in the desert. It is a cursed place, but if you can find away to cleanse it, it will open the gate for you. I do not know what events will transpire when you pass through the veil, but I will be waiting for you on the other side, no matter what happens.

## The Gate of Eo and the Dominion of Despair

So it is done, you have passed through the gate and the realm between the shadows. You have done what none have managed before. Already I hear a voice on the wind, the voice of Eo- beautiful yet haunting, calling for her lost siblings. How must it feel, to awaken after so many years, to see your beautiful world in ruins. But I saw it happen, I saw life of the land fade and turn to ash. I watched as the strength of the earth was drained away, and the spirit of the earth enfeebled before my eyes. I was cursed to remain, to be here to watch everything I loved fade away, to see my friends and my family die, doomed to solitude by my permanence. I do not feel pity for the dead, wanderer, for it is the living alone who are left who grieve.

We stand now in the kingdom of Hythinea, the warrior goddess, queen of motherhood. This was once the the backbone of the world. Atop the highest mountains were built her fortresses, and in deepest dells her cities. Gone are the grassy slopes with their grazing flock. Gone are the roads where merchants once ran their goods. Gone are the flowered pastures and gentle rivers. Now there is only dirt and rock amongst the shattered peaks. Dark shadows cast by black crags, and the eyes of evil looking out from their caves.

This was my home. Before I became The Necromancer, when the sun rose high and the sky was still blue. I have kept my faith all these years, believing that someone like you would come to save us. I was there when the gates were built. I watched as the sands encroach upon our kingdoms, and with them our ties to our brothers and sisters disappear on the desert winds. I remember when the last flowers faded. I remember when the rivers dried up. I remember the day when the brave lost their voice, and the braying of animals replaced by screams of the dying. I have waited here a long time, Wanderer, but I knew that you would come.

It is your destiny to succeed. I have seen it repeated again and again in my dreams. You will save me, Wanderer. I have carved your fate into the ruins of our cities. I see in the gods in your eyes, I see passion, and I see survival. So go now, go into the mountains, where the cold winds blow and the sun cannot survive. Activate the gate, and bring this world back to life.

## The Gate of Hythinea and the Dominion of Cruelty

Do you see it when you sleep? Can you hear it in silent places? Do you catch glimpses of it when you blink, as if engraved on the lids of your eyes? It is there, everywhere, in all places, and in all times. Do you not know of what I speak? It is the cold in the pit of your stomach at night, the black thoughts when you are alone. It is the dread, the terrible thought that things will not always be. It is the fear that gives life brilliance. I feel it always, with every waking moment and every darkened sleep. I know you feel it too, we all do.

It is always darkest before the dawn, or so they say. There can be no triumph without sacrifice. Even as the sickness that pervades this world tightens its grip, there is still a chance for redemption. My people have known for a long time that our sacrifice must be paid in blood. There were many of us in the beginning. So many who gave their lives to halt the spread of evil. Scholars, teachers, students, clerics- all those who could dedicate their minds to our cause, these were my people. They called us the Mystics, a name we came to embrace as time went on. It was they who made me what I am today, incapable of death, but unable to do anything but pass through my lands like a ghost.

I am all that remains of our order, my burden to hold the last vigil of the Mystics. I have watched the spread of the corruption, written what I saw down so that future generations will know what came after our great war. I documented it all. I wrote as the sun swelled and turned red, as the cities crumbled and their foundations turned to sand. The world is tearing itself apart, atom by atom. The very essence of the earth is corrupted, giving flesh to the nightmares of men, perverting all that is right. The gods maintained this essence, and in their absence there was nothing but chaos to direct it. Now you know why there are things in the wastes that you cannot believe to exist. It is the essence that gives unnatural life to those who wander freely in the world. With every passing moment I see the essence entering into you, giving you strength. You must not let it take a hold of you. You must maintain your resolve.

## The Gate of Rhallos and the Dominion of Hate

I remember the first years of my watch. There was so much sadness then, for the changing of the seasons could still be seen, and the wounds of war were still fresh in the earth. Yet I had much hope, I believed things would change, that the gods would return and put things right. Now I laugh at my naivety. But I envy that young woman, she had something to live for, her skin still radiant with life, before bitterness turned everything to grey.

In those days my people still walked freely, not yet confined to the edges of the world. At that time I roamed the earth, keeping my distance, documenting what I could. I wanted to preserve a record of how things were. But I could not see it all before it was too late, the great seas were already dry, and the great wasteland spread across the earth. I could not say for how long I searched for living things, looking for lost forests, lakes, and plains. It could have been an eternity, I would not know, nothing changed in those long years, not on the face of the earth, nor in me.

You are nearing the end of your journey. I can feel the air changing, quivering, as you advance. The air is lighter, as if a weight were lifting. Even the sun seems brighter to my eyes. Soon I will be able to show you the wonders of this world. When the gods return we will walk the ground together. I will give you the life you desire, and you will take my hand as we watch an ancient dawn become new once more. We are so close to the end, Wanderer. The next gate will take you to the ruins of our greatest city, where the lingering ghosts of the died cry out for life. Do not let them drag you down.. Good luck Wanderer.

## The Gate of Ahna and the Dominion of Apathy

Surely you can feel it as I do. The winds are changing, Wanderer. I can hear the gods whispering in my ear, telling me we will succeed. We will find a new life when the gods return, a peaceful one, amongst the mountains, or the lakes- wherever you desire. I will be with you forever I promise. I will be the life I promised you, after all you have done it is the least I can offer you. My eternal vigil will finally be over, and my duty fulfilled. The gods will return my people to me, and we will be content forever.

## The Gate of Coropthynos and the Dominion of Madness

I have come to realise the truth of this world, and of my life. There is no hidden truth, no saving breath that will bring us back from the beyond. The Necromancer would not accept it, and therein lies the root of her madness. I pity her, and know her struggle. I do not know where she will go, or what she will do. I do not think she will ever become who she lost all those years ago. In some ways it is better that she be mad, that her mind falter and reason desert her, for there is no recourse for action in this world. The suns will fade and shrink, and the land will freeze beneath the starless skies, and all the beasts upon the earth will cower together for warmth as they breath the final breaths of this world.

The gods are dead, or have abandoned their post. The vaults of their tombs are empty, their souls dispersed into the air, and the ingenuity of man has failed. It is a sad truth, a truth impossible to bear and yet it is the only truth. It is a truth that resonates me and fills my lungs with relief as it bears down on my body. The angel of my dreams, my angel, is gone. She died long ago, before I came here. I cannot say I remember, but I know. I know I was there with her at the end, and like all things that must go to dust, I know she was not ready to say goodbye. She believed we would meet again beyond the veil, she believed it because she had to believe it. Because it was the only thing that would ease the truth of her passing, we knew that nothing could be done for either of us. I am not sure if I believed that we would meet again, but the lie was so sweet. We used the lie to spend our last times in peace and not fear. To pretend to each other as if we were going on a long journey was far easier than to emit a final farewell.

The Necromancer did the same, but her plight was different, it is one that has destroyed her. Where I have suffered loss, she has suffered the destruction of her home, her world, and her people. She forfeited her life for the belief that one day she could cleanse the world of corruption because she wanted to believe it could return and in doing so, that she could return. It is the same with all that lives, to believe that dark days precede the light. It is that belief that gives us life. And we all choose to believe.