# The Necromancer’s Tale

## Prologue:

"Awaken, Wanderer. I am sorry that you have not gone where you had hoped to go, but your sacrifice has been heard and you are needed here. Tread carefully when you rise, for you are in a dark world now, where the sun hangs low in the sky and the earth will try to claim you for itself. I know it is life that you seek, for I seek it too. I have a quest for you, to do something I cannot, but I promise that should you succeed, you will find life at the end of your journey. Though there is much at stake, I will not force you to stay, I will understand if you wish to continue the journey you had set out before, for what I ask is no small thing.

When you open your eyes you will find yourself in the ruins of a dead world. These tormented lands are the realms of the five ancient ones. Their slumber has led to the decay of their former dominions, and only their awakening will restore the world to its former glory.

This is what I ask of you, to find the five, and to awaken them from their eternal rest. However, their tombs do not lie in the ruined world that awaits you. They can instead be found in the place between here and the beyond, past the veil that separates life and death. A place which we sometimes pass near in our dreams, but can never truly enter. I ask you to complete this task because I cannot, though my mind is determined, my body is weak and unwilling.

When you wake, you will find yourself at a gate that will grant you passage to the beyond. However, this gate will not let you through without an offering. Deep in the wilds there is a temple. It is there you will find a token to prove your worth. Find the temple, take the key, and when you pass through the gate I will find you again."

## The Gate of Eo and the Dominion of Despair

"I am sorry Wanderer, for I have not been wholly truthful. Though you have done all I have asked, there is still more. As I told you, these are the lands of the five gods, and true to that there are five dominions, each with a gate which is a tomb for their sleeping god. You must go through each, though these gates are not so simple to pass through. For these gates require greater and greater offerings, and so your abilities shall be strained and your survival instincts stretched to their limit.

Before the dimming of the sun and the fall of the world, I have been here. I was there when the gates were built, and the deserts split the lands apart. I have kept my faith through uncountable years. As I waited I watched the flowers fade, and the trees crack and die. The trickle of streams and the speech of men gave way to the grinding of the winds and the wailing of twisted creatures. I have waited a long time for you, wanderer, but I knew you would come. My love for the land and sky of my youth have kept me steadfast, and that love has brought you to me. Shall I tell you why you will succeed? It is because you must. You have to succeed because there is no other option. I have written your destiny into the monuments that litter the world. You are the incarnation of the idols themselves. You will save this world, because you know this will save yourself.

So go now, to the next gate, and then to the three beyond that. You are well on your journey, and success has been your friend so far. However the next realm will not be as forgiving as the last, for it is cold, and the sun barely breaks the horizon. You must find shelter amongst the rocks, and keep a fire burning, or the frozen peaks will claim you."

## The Gate of Hythinea and the Dominion of Cruelty

"There can be no blood, without blood. This is the mantra of our tribe. When the world came to ruins and our nightmares became real it was blood that saved us. No blood without blood, no triumph without sacrifice, no life without death. This is the way of the Mystics, and of them, I am all that remains. It is they who sacrificed themselves so that I may live immortal. They left me to watch our cities turn to sand and the sun gorge itself on human blood. It is sacrifice that has brought you here too, wanderer. When you committed the act you called out to me. You invoked the rite of blood, an unforgivable act. But I will redeem you.

It was the gods themselves that caused all of this loss, though I do not believe even they could have forseen what happened to the world. 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. The same is true of the plants and the animals, it has twisted them into strange versions of their ancient selves. 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, for there are still 3 gates remaining, and the essence will not relinquish it's grip on this land readily."

## The Gate of Rhallos and the Dominion of Hate

"I remember the first few decades of my vigil. I walked the earth, kept my distance from everyone, and documented what I could. I wanted to preserve a record of how things were. At that time life had not yet been shunned to the edges of existence, and we could still roam freely between the five kingdoms. But I could not see it all before the end. I don't know for how long I walked the earth, decades, maybe centuries. Time loses importance when you have an eternity to watch everything you love fall apart.

You are nearing the end of your journey. I can feel the air changing, quivering, as you advance. It as if the weight that has hung here for so long is slowly 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 restore our cities to their former glory we will walk together. I will give you the life you desire, and you will take my hand as we watch the dawn of our new world. I know your dreams have been haunting you. The essence can take hold of our dreams, it can amplify our fears, trying to drive us to madness. 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 all those who have died will claw at your soul. Do not let them drag you down, their corruption will spread quickly if they find you at a weak time. 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 eachother 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 preceed the light. It is that belief that gives us life. And we all choose to believe.