# The Necromancer’s Tale

## Prologue:

These lands are diseased. They are the lands of my birth, yet I no longer recognise them. In that we are alike, for you are a stranger here. One thousand years ago the lands were clean, free of disease, and abundant with life. Now they are dead, dry, and soaked in the blood of countless men and women. I know why you are here, even if you do not. You are hear because I called you here, because it is you who can bring these lands into remission. I need you to do this for me, and when you succeed, I promise to return you to your own homeland.

What I ask of you is no trivial thing, but I know you will prevail. You are asleep, this is the only way that I can speak to you, for I lost my physical form many years ago. When you open your eyes, you will behold a dead world- a stagnant place where civilisation and prosperity have long since died, leaving only barbarism and hopelessness in their stead. I come from a time when gods walked upon this earth, but now they are gone- lost in tormented sleep in their hidden tombs. This is your task- you must wake them and bring them back to my world. To do so you will must embark on a journey across these lands, find their tombs, and rid them of the nightmares that bind them to their slumber. When you have done this, when they have returned, your task will be complete.

There will be obstacles in your path- both physical and psychological. The disease that has rocked this world will try to infect you, it will be aggressive, as you are the only uncorrupted soul here. We call this disease essence, and indeed it is the essence of the world come unbound. Once the substance that gave strength to the gods, now undirected it breeds chaos. So potent are it’s effects that it can contort reality so as to be unrecognisable. All you will encounter, be it man, beast, or plant, have fallen to the disease. Some may still resist it, and will be empathetic to your goal, whilst others will see you only as an intruder. They will sense, as I can, that you are foreign, and they will stop at nothing to rid you from the world.

When you wake you will see a gate amid a boundless expanse of sand we call The Whispering Desert. The gate is dormant, for now, but when awakened will allow you to travel to a place that we call 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

“You have done well. You have set Eo’s soul free. Already I can feel her voice on the wind, she has already begun cleansing the essence from the earth, I know it. Our victory is small however- for there are still four more gods to awaken, and these will not be so easy. The gate you passed through was not just an entrance to Eo’s tomb, but also passage to another gate. Each gate is built in a different dominion, in the ashes of the five ancient kingdoms.

This gate has brought you to the kingdom of Hythinea, the warrior. Her domain was built along the backbone of the world, atop the highest peaks, and in the deepest dells. The once grassy slopes are now barren, and tempestuous winds scour the sharp rocks day and night.

This was my home. Before I was known as 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 the sands encroach and the deserts split our kingdoms apart. I remember when the last flowers faded. I remember when the rivers dried up. I remember the day when men lost their voices, and the sounds of animals were replaced with the roars of engines and the screams of the dying. I have waited here a long time, Wanderer, but I knew that you would come.

You will succeed in your quest, it is your destiny. You will survive, and you will triumph. 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 of Hythinea, where the cold winds blow and the sun can barely reach. Find the keys to the gate, and bring this world back to life.

## The Gate of Hythinea and the Dominion of Cruelty

“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, a watchman holding 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.

I don’t think I told you, but it was the gods themselves that did this, albeit not consciously.

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 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.