# The Wanderer’s Tale

## The Desert of Whispers

### Journal

If there was any doubt that I have come to a desolate world, it is gone now. It is all as the Necromancer described. This place is a living nightmare. Even the dry ground seemingly threatens to swallow me up, to partake of my body and slake its thirst with my blood. There are others here, some I have seen, others are just voices on the wind. They walk aimlessly like lost souls in an ancient purgatory. Even the familiar is alien, the sky is deep red, coloured by the light of three suns. At night the skies glitter with the light of a hundred unknown constellations. Despite the dry ground and still air, this place is not devoid of life. The cooing of unseen birds and the churr of miniature insects fills the air in the day. What they eat I am not confident, the few plants I have seen are mostly parched and dry, whilst the few that are not bristle with thorns to protect their small fruit. The wind carries the braying sounds of unknown animals, and the stench of rot, undeniably from others who have passed this way.

I have found myself plagued by my memories, or rather, the absence of them. When I awoke in the darkness with the Necromancer it was as if I had been born again, like a slate wiped clean. Slowly now it comes back, incoherent fragments flash before my eyes, but nothing of any use. My muscles have memory, and my instincts remain sharp, but nothing else has stayed with me.

I do remember trees- a thick canopy of green where the sunlight streaks down onto the floor below. I remember the feel of warmth on my skin, not the stifling heat I feel here, but a fulfilling warmth. Here though there are no living trees, no protective boughs, only dead roots and withered stumps. The water is tainted, potable only to the skeletal things that live here. There is a curse here, one that threatens to bring me to my knees with every staggered breath. It weighs upon my will, begging me to give in to darkness. I utter a prayer under my breath to ward the voices away, but the Necromancer was right, there are no gods listening here.

I do not think it is coincidence that I find myself in these wild lands. There is something from my past that I do not want to remember. The memory is like a cloud in my mind, growing larger and devouring all it touches. It is a constant burden to me. When I try to ignore it I find myself unable, but if try to recall the memory it shrinks back from me, retreating into my subconscious. I don't know if I am alive. Is this my hell, or is this a reality I do not want to face.

As I write this the cloud in my mind grows still, roiling and crackling with fury as it turns into a storm eager to break. This world truly is maddening. The air is thin somehow, like a fine veil set upon the world. A veil so thin that the living and the dead have become one. The others out there, the dead and the dying, will not listen to me. They will not listen to my offers of help, using their weapons to speak instead of their voices. The malice in their eyes disguises the sadness in their soul. It is as if they want to die, but they cannot do it themselves and they do not know why. If that is the way it must be in this world, then that is the way it shall be. I am not sure if I share the Necromancer's faith, but if this world can be saved then it will be done however it must be.

## The Shattered Peaks

### Journal

The Necromancer was not honest with me, so I cannot trust her. To find the path to one gate was burdensome enough, but now with four more ahead of me, I am not sure if I will be able to go on. I can feel things in the great wilderness ahead, ancient things that rest amongst the dead wastes of civilisation. When I came through the gate I did not expect to come here. Where before the gently rolling hills were littered with the stumps of dead trees, here the ground is sharp and steep- rising high above to mountain peaks and deep below to the abyssal floor.

The storm in my mind grows stronger with every moment of my waking hours. I hear it in the howl of the winds over the mountain passes, and in the hollow thunder of loose rocks tumbling to the valley floor deep below. It threatens its primordial power to release whatever terrible thing I am struggling to forget. In my dreams the storm abates, no less threatening, but somehow smaller. The angel wordlessly promises to keep it at bay, so that I may sleep in as much peace as possible. If only she were with my in my waking hours, for as soon as I wake the storm returns to it's full strength, battering at the walls of my will, desperately trying to bring them down.

The ceaseless winds count down my life, one heartbeat at a time. Everything here seethes at me reaching into me with shadowy claws, desperately pulling at the sanity I struggle to maintain. This is why my quest is so dire, if I am to find life, I must keep my mind in check.

## The Sea of Salt

### Journal

A new land, as different to the last as before. Endless plains of salt, split by massive cracks, some so large one could throw a rock from one wall with all their strength and still it would not reach the other side. Yet the gate is the same, another smooth stone arch like an inverted V. I understand now, at least a little, why the Necromancer has been keeping secrets from me. Surely I would not have believed her if she had told me about the gods and the essence when I first came here, but now that I have seen the horrors of this world with my own eyes I have no doubt.

I cannot imagine the pain she has been through, to have to watch her entire world fade away before her eyes, helpless to do anything but watch. I feel a similar pain deep inside, when I think about it I find my heart rises to my throat and my breathing comes staggered. I see the face of the angel as if she were before me, and the storm in my mind expands greedily. So I breath deep, I look before me and focus on the things that are real, and it draws back. The storm shrinks and my mind grows clear. I feel my breathing return to normal and I find I cannot recall how the angel looks. I do not understand any of this.

## The Ruined City

### Journal

As before I emerge from the gate into a new world. But this one is very different, here there are no remnants of life, no dry branches crackling in the wind, no roots clutching to shallow soil against the fury of the earth. Here there are only ruins. Derelict walls and massive structures from ancient times all turned to dust. How many thousands of years must it have taken for these buildings to fall into such ruin? And all that time she has haunted this world. How has her mind fared through those lonely eons. She speaks of prophecies, fate, and destiny as if she can see the future. I have seen enough in this dark land to know better than to dismiss this thought. There is even magic at work inside me, I can feel it coursing through my veins, in my muscles, even in the beads of sweat that prickle on my skin.

The wars that ravaged this land must truly have been terrible. Even now there remain signs of it- great glass craters, shells from now rusted artillery, the carcasses of ancient war-machines now half buried in the dust. But no bones, no bodies to speak of. Everything that once lived has been swept away leaving a soulless landscape. It is bleak here, amongst the dead. I know that if the Necromancer were to come here she would fall down and weep, and be unable to leave. This must be why she speaks to me from the darkness, to shield herself from reality, and to allow her to believe that everything will return to how it was.

## The Eternal Wasteland

### Journal