



ΘΡΗΝΟΣ ΤΩΝ
ΑΘΑΝΑΤΩΝ

AN ELEGY TO
THE IMMORTALS

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Prologue

Day One



Upon the cliff's edge lay Eldergrove, a village shrouded in hunger and death. The bodies of the starving littered the streets, emaciated husks whose bones were draped in parchment skin. Their hollow eyes turned skyward, accusing indifferent heavens. The peaks loomed: cold, merciless, watching the slow decay, silent as sentinels. Hope had withered in the hearts of the people.

Then, beneath darkening clouds, a hooded figure appeared at the gate, his steps heavy with purpose. Weakened villagers stumbled toward him, drawn by the spark of desperate curiosity.

"Life is currency," spoke the figure, voice rich with ancient authority. "I offer you a simple trade: a soul for your desire."

The crowd shifted uneasily, suspicion battling against hunger in their gaunt faces.

"Are you hungry?" he whispered, his voice like honeyed poison.

Their silence was answer enough. Two harvests lost to drought, grain gone. No rats nor insects, not even bark on the trees.

"Your hunger can cease," the stranger declared, "for but one soul nearing life's end."

An old man named Jossanus stepped forward, his voice dry as autumn leaves. "If my life can end this suffering, let it be done."

The hooded figure raised his left hand. Upon it gleamed an ornate ring etched with runes of lost tongues. With gentle precision, he pressed it to Jossanus's brow, and life vanished from the old man's eyes like flame snuffed by wind.

Within the gemstone, a soul ignited—a swirling tempest of brilliant azure, radiant with stolen life. The mage murmured an incantation, ancient and terrible, and his eyes flared with power.

In moments, Eldergrove stirred. Orchards bowed with apples. Golden wheat rose. Sweetness filled the air. Joy and disbelief broke from grateful throats.

Yet soon, cries rose again: "Food for winter!" "Grain to sow!" "Meat! Wine! More!"

And so, they offered up the dying. By evening, the tables groaned with bounty. *They feasted, they drank, and forgot.*

Day Two



At dawn, the mage returned, cloaked in shadow beneath the pale morning sun.

"Life is currency," he declared, his voice thick with dark promise. "Look upon your homes of mud and straw: fragile shells scorched by flame and crumbled by storm. Offer me but five souls for each dwelling, and stone shall shelter you."

A murmur of doubt rippled through the villagers. Flame had already consumed much of Eldergrove, leaving behind charred ruins and the memory of fear. Stone might shield them from winter and fire, but no dying remained. Their souls had already fed the mage's ring.

Then, from among the desperate, a bitter voice arose: "What use are the infirm? The old and the weak eat our stores and give us nothing!"

Agreement stirred in troubled hearts. Had the elderly not eaten the grain meant for sowing? Would they not perish soon anyway, useless burdens on fading strength?

Thus began the grim harvest. Cries rose: "No, spare him! Spare her!" But fists swiftly silenced the pleas. The frail and the old, trembling with bewilderment, were brought before the mage. With each sacrifice, stone rose from dust, walls strong and roofs sturdy, unyielding to storm or flame.

By twilight, Eldergrove stood transformed, its homes of stone firm and high, yet their shadows long with unspoken guilt. By nightfall, they drowned their doubt in wine. Laughter masked the price of comfort.

They feasted, they drank, and forgot yet again.

Day Three



As dawn broke, the mage appeared once more, his shadow lengthening ominously beneath the sun's cold glare.

"Life is currency," he declared, his voice grave. "Your bellies are filled, your homes strong, yet you stand defenseless.

What will you do when warriors descend upon you, thirsting for blood, lusting for your loved ones, eager to pillage all you've gained?

One soul for each spear, a hundred for walls to repel your foes. This is my price."

Murmurs rippled through the villagers. Fear prickled beneath their skin. The memory of Eastern raiders, merciless, wild, returned like smoke to the throat. The frail and the dying were already gone. Who remained?

Anger flared. A villager shoved another. "Thief! You stole my cow last harvest. Perhaps you'll serve us better as a spear."

The other snarled, his eyes burning. "And you defiled my wife! May the gods strike you down!"

The mage raised his hand and the fury fell silent. "My friends," he said, his voice calm and commanding, "justice shall decide, not chaos. Let the people's judgment choose who will guard your lives."

So began the grim trials, swift and without mercy. Thieves, adulterers, murderers... each crime carried the same judgment, souls delivered into the mage's waiting ring. When criminals ran scarce, grudges and dislikes became sufficient evidence for condemnation.

"For the good of the people," intoned the mage, darkly satisfied.

"For the good of the people!" cried the villagers, their voices loud, their hearts unclean.

By evening, spears gleamed in every hand. A sturdy palisade rose high around Eldergrove.

They feasted, they drank, and forgot once more.

Day Four



As the sun rose once more, the mage returned, his eyes sharp with subtle malice beneath the deep shadows of his hood. Eldergrove was now strong and armed. The thought of conquest stirred among its people.

"My friends," he murmured, his voice laced with sweet venom, "beyond your walls lie the Limnites, a tribe whose cruelty has long brought you grief. But now they suffer, weakened by the same famine you survived. Why not subjugate them? Bind their souls, and secure your safety forever."

Agreement spread like wildfire, kindled by vengeance and ambition. Shouts rose in a single roar, united in thirst for blood.

So they marched, bearing spears crafted from neighbors' souls, forged by vengeance and greed. The Limnites, weakened and starving, stood no chance against Eldergrove's ruthless fury. The battle was swift, brutal, merciless. It ended in a clamor of violence, pain, grief, and triumph.

As the sun sank, a captive woman was thrust before the mage, trembling, her eyes wide with helpless terror. The Soul-Eater smiled, cold and unmoved, and refused the offering.

"Females of bearing age shall not feed my ring," he declared.
"Let the fertile live. A body can serve in more ways than a soul. Their sons shall die at your command. Their daughters shall follow the fate of those who bore them. Use them as you please."

That night, Eldergrove feasted and drank deep, reveling in newfound power. Cruelty and dominion, born of blood and chains.

This day, they did not forget.