

Dwarfing all but the tallest of mountains the Necromancer's Tower rose into the air as straight as a pole. It stood tall and proud, brooding over the surrounding countryside, the dreadful smell of death about it. The very top was dominated by a six-pronged formation of spires made of black obsidian, reaching upward as if to pluck the very stars from the night sky above like a dragon's claw.

Its lonely occupant stared out the window at the starry sky, unsatisfied at the void in their heart they thought building it would fill. While the tower held many hundreds of undead companions, the occupant desired something more... "A wife." the necromancer thought as he twirled his manly beard. But, why? He had never felt the need for another human before... Well, he had, but that was a long time ago. Literary cliches would dictate that he had outlived her, but such (perhaps unfortunately) was not the case - the relationship didn't really work out and now all he remembered of her was from the divorce.

And so he was left with his empty heart, his empty tower filled with empty halls filled with empty hordes, his study full of empty, idle pursuits.

There was something, however, that could fill him. He had conquered this world but his research suggested that there may be more, more worlds to conquer, more food for his undead hordes. There was only one catch to this land of unknown, he would have to give the thing dearest to him over to be locked into the dark void of limbo. He runs to his library to find a book that might contain a loophole in the ritual. Alas, the book is not to be found this day... It resides in the bookcase of his ex-lover, taken from him along with some of his more important relics by the divorce agreement. Perhaps it was time to call her again. It had been a few centuries since last they spoke, and maybe she would have cooled off from the... last time they spoke.

He'd just need to dig up that SkullPages book to find the address to his old lair, taken over by his wife during the divorce. He ran into the lonely halls of his abode, searching for the address to his old lair. It was time he spoke to his partner. On finding the heavy tome he flicked through the crusty yellow pages looking for his old address. There! There it was, he drew a small piece of parchment from his robes and quickly wrote down the address 22 Bones Hill.

A small mouth appeared in the corner of the tome, grinning wide and toothy. "Ey boss! We goin out somewhere? Man it's been so long since we've been out... My pages are WAY too dusty." The necromancer shook his head, a little annoyed that he had forgotten about this. His tome, The All Knowing Almanac, had been a steal for the price, but only because the last owner had sealed his assistant into the book and locked away half the pages. He DID, however, burn quite nicely when he couldn't undo the spell. So now the Necromancer was stuck with a smartass book that was prone to whistle at passing women and get HIM into trouble.

He quickly started to go down his tower's stairs. While going down, the tome asked him "Why won't you tell me where we'a going?" upon hearing this, he tripped over a few skeleton bones,

left over from his last summoning, and started to tumble down the stair case, dropping the parchment and the tome.

Meanwhile, on a hillside of parched grass, a sorceress stood on her stone porch carved into the hillside, watching the statues water the flowers. As a bird flew past one of the flowers, the petals reached out and ensnared it. She squinted: it looked like someone was coming up the road at the bottom of the hill... holding something to their head? She couldn't be sure, and went to go get her spyglass from the study. She retrieved her spyglass - it was an exquisite creation, made from a single piece of Dwarven mithril, it could see for leagues - and returned to her porch. She looked through the glass and saw a tall, dark man with an extremely manly beard. She groaned, it was her pain of an ex-husband.

Seeing his ex-wife, the man started walking in a fast, business-like matter towards her. He promptly tripped over a stone and landed on his face.

"Oi boss! Watch yer step there buddy! Har har har!" The necromancer picked himself up more bedraggled than he was before and made a note to look into ways of making a tome feel pain. he sighed. "Better go bring him up," she said to one of the statues watering the garden. It set down its can and marched down the hill, scooping up the fallen man and carrying him somewhat indignantly back up.

As the statue reached the veranda, carrying him, she folded her arms. "After two hundred years... wait, why were you holding that ice to your head?"

"...stairs... ouch..." he groaned.

The Golem Artificer continued to stare indignantly at her ex-husband. In his old wrinkly form, he could see whispers of the young man she used to love and remembered those exalted nights along the Andolesian shoreline. They were good memories.

"Always the clumsy one," she said, and snapped her fingers for one of the silver figurines on the shelf behind her to go put on a pot of tea. "So, why have you come here?"

The statue sets him down over the railing, putting him on the porch before her. Through the throbbing in his bruised head, he watched one of her flowers devour a bird. He never did like those, but she was always so fond of them...

"Ah, well... You know, I was doing important research... about absolute world domination, you know my hobby. And more I progressed more I found myself thinking other things... Things of past... until I just couldn't focus any more. So I left on walk to clear my head and..." Old necromancer says, his voice trailing off. Those acting lessons he took long time ago were finally paying off.

The Necromancer trails off at the sight of his ex-wife's glare. He shuddered for a moment, nobody could glare like her. All was silent for a moment as the Necromancer wilted under her gaze and then, "I told you not to get those acting classes." the Sorceress said.

It was fortunate that at that very moment, a deafening roar shook the countryside and broke the trance between the two characters as they quickly turned east to find where the sound had come from. Each character had their own theory.

The necromancer thought it had come from FireJewel, a menacing volcano in the distance. The Sorceress was certain it came from DeathGate, the dwarven mountainhome. Perhaps a fearsome beast was rampaging

The tome said out loud "Oi, boss, give me a warning before yer let on of them loose again, phew."

But to two such powerful people, such events were an everyday annoyance. "Well, you'd better come in before the fallout starts raining down." They enter the lair from the porchside door and sit down at the obsidian table. "Why are you really here?" she asks, as a piece of something blackened falls out of the sky and clatters on the porch outside.

He replied as simply as he could.

"my dear, you know it as much as I do, we have to stop the goblin hoard from overrunning the world. Lest Armok get bored with this world and destroy it along with everything in, including us." She replied, with growing impatience.

"You know I can never betray that demon commanding the hoard. For he alone knows my weakness and will destroy me if I do.

The necromancer contemplated the little game they were playing. Wait. Hadn't they have solved the issue with the hoard already? He couldn't remember if he had actually conquered the hoard or not. The old man frowned, having felt like he had this conversation before. Years ago. His old age was beginning to get to him. Though he could extend his life through necromancy, he was on occasion to moments of fancy. Today he was here for different reason. He was here for the book on the different planes. Yes! That's right.

As he gripped the ice evermore tighter to his rock hard skull, he contemplated. His undying hoards of undead had a great hungering for flesh that this world could no longer satisfy. They have stripped the pastures of his local mountain ranges clean of dwarfs ages ago and now humans and elves were becoming too costly of prey. To put it simply, he raised too many undead things and needed to find new lands for them to feast where they wouldn't just keep dying repeatedly. But he couldn't explain that to her. Ohoho. No. The necromancer knew just how much his ex-wife loved to rant about the "proposed" superiority of golem-craft over

necromancy and he refused to give her any ammunition to make her silly case. The undead are clearly found to be superior than golems after weighing all of the pros and cons. They were cheap, expendable, and altogether better company than her petty and creepy machinations. Heavens forbid she ever admit that though. She worked hard on getting the knowledge necessary.

She could tell he was lost on a train of thought again, as usual, and cleared her throat to get his attention. At that moment, the silver figurine returned, bearing a fresh pot of tea and two cups. She Said, "So Watch yall been up to?"

The Necromancer hid his sigh by taking a small sip from his cup of tea. His ex-wife's changing personalities could be a bother, but that was what one got for dabbling in the arts of Sorcery. "What I have been up too, my dearest, sweetest Mavin," he said, carefully bridging into the reason for his visit, "is researching extra-dimensional planes of existence in hopes of finding one suitably ripe for the conquering, so to speak." He tactfully left out that his undead army was running out of prey to swell their numbers. Every year a dozen or so rotted away, dwindling his once-impressive army to a mere handful of bones over the past few centuries.

They were still superior to golems, of course. Much lower start-up cost, and a construct can't compare to the blood thirsty flesh-hunger of a freshly reanimated elf. Mavin would no doubt love to argue that point for hours, of course, but he wasn't in the mood to bicker. His head was throbbing horridly. The sooner he got his book, the better - he still couldn't believe he'd lost such a valuable artifact in the divorce in the first place. He should have known better than to hire a gnome as a lawyer for the divorce proceedings, the lousy little urchin.

Mavin gave him the evil eye. Oh dear.

"They're starving again, aren't they?" The Necromancer flinched inadvertently. Now he had done it. He took a sip of tea and prepared himself for the incoming argument cascade. "It's like I keep telling you. Golems are the new wave of the future. You've got to give up on those raggedy little things and get into the 9th century. Why, one can craft a golem so cheaply these days with the prerequisite runes and common soapstone, that I really must wonder why you absolutely persist on those dirty pestilent creatures. It's all rather senseless really."

"As you've said a thousand, thousand times... but let us not rehash that old fight again."

Mavin rolled her eyes, "Why, because you know I'm right?" The Necromancer felt his face heating up and he stammered out the next few words in a hurry, "Yes, well... Anyway, I'm here because I need a book." He paused to see if she knew the one he was talking about. When she gave no sign that she knew what he was talking about he continued, "You know, The... Necromonicon."

As soon as The Necromancer finished uttering out the last word, the Tome yelled out, " That'ol book won't do ya no good. It an't got watcha need... Why don'tcha looket what I got within these herr pages." Mavin instinctively jumped up quickly at the unfamiliar voice, and just as quick, The Necromancer pulls out the Tome, "Why don't you keep your pages shut before I glue them together!" His thoughts going from one event to the next and trying to recall why he brought it along.

"And anyway." The Necromancer continued, "Last time I asked you about separate worlds you said you knew nothing!"

"Yea, boss but then ya were askin' about worlds. Now ya wanna know abou' loopholes, an' I know all abou' them."