



OF ER THE AND  
AXEN

A Listening Guide

***\*Open the Gates, O Forest Keeper\* --***

A reddish glow illuminates the glassy waters of the Axon ocean as a ship approaches the treacherous labyrinth of obstacles known as the Krikos Kranion. A man in a coal-dusted uniform stands at the bow of the vessel as it slowly emerges from the dense fog.

He is slender and stands tall amid his crewmen, his black hair is kept tidy and slick in a tail that reaches halfway down his back. His eyes shine the same crimson glow as his ship's gaping jaw, and he gazes unwavering towards the approaching shore. -- the Captain steering the ship calls out to him:

Captain (looking both fearful of his surroundings, and his commander): "Admiral, we cannot maintain this speed while traversing the Krikos Kranion, no ship like this has ever made it to the shore."

Admiral (approaching the crewmen): "Captain, there has never been a ship like this... now move aside!"

To the engineer: Engines at full capacity! ... (to himself) "I'll show you what my ship is capable of..."

--With its master at its helm, the ship is undaunted by its menacing surroundings; it glides swiftly and uncaring through the tempestuous waters as if it were born of this place. Its mouth glows a crimson red that calms the seas in front of it, tempering the water to a polished glass over which it slides. And from its stern rises a haze which dwarfs the ship itself; a black and whirling plume of smoke that propels the vessel forward.--

--Meanwhile, miles away in Axen, townspeople have gathered at a rocky shoreline to hold a memorial for someone:--

Elder: "Renatus came to this village in its greatest time of need... when Axen was young and hope was frail, he brought strength and wisdom that was nearly lost from the world. In time, he became our most respected chieftan, as well as a beloved husband... (The Elder pauses and looks at a young man among the mourners) ... and a father" (the young man and the elder lock eyes) "Thanos, it is time..."

Thanos reluctantly steps forward, leaving the embrace of the woman who stood beside him. He unsheathes a ceremonial sword and steps onto a platform atop a cliff overlooking the ocean.

-- This is an Axon funeral. The casket is a woven basket shaped like a teardrop and filled with flowers, plants, and possessions along with the deceased. The basket is raised like a pinata overhanging the rocky shores below. It is lit on fire, and then released to the sea by cutting the rope. --

The Elder begins a recitation:

“Through oak and ash, and fiery hail  
Through blood and sweat, and mountains of shale  
At last, to the sea, where giants sleeping lie  
We join them in slumber, and gently dreaming, die  
(another Elder approaches the platform with torch in hand)

Axonborne, axonbled,  
Unto the sea, your graven bed.  
Ours is ashes, ours is fire  
Go now, upon your peaceful pyre”

The second Elder lights the basket aflame, and Thanos heaves the massive sword over his head. The weight of the sword alone cleaves it through the thick rope, and releases the flaming pyre to the rock-strewn sea below. It seems to float through the air as it falls, and hits the water with an unheard splash. Its flames still flickering as it is consumed by the sea.

Thanos rejoins his wife Vera, and returns home in grief and mourning.

--Back upon the ocean, the Admiral and his crew exit the gauntlet of the Krikos Kranion unscathed--

Admiral (clearly pleased with himself and his ship): “What was that you were saying, Captain? No ship has ever... what was it?”

Captain (embarrassed): “Indeed sir, there is no other ship like yours, and none equal to your skill... forgive my lack of faith.”

Admiral: “No harm done, good Captain, (he looks at the approaching shore as he abandons the helm, and we see a twinge of memory in his eye) can you take it from here?”

Captain: “Aye, sir”

--The Admiral reassumes his position at the bow of the ship and watches the glorious scene unfold in front of him. The sun sets behind the quaint port town that seems to be lost in time. Much of the world had changed in the time of his travels, but not this place; it is just as he remembered it...

The sight of the vessel nearing the docks of the town was a mysterious and intriguing scene for all the locals, and onlookers stared curiously as the sea-weary travelers shuffled off their ship. The banner men marched down the steps that were lowered from the ship, behind them the dark-haired officer stepped casually down the staircase, the villagers' eyes fixed on him. He stopped half way down and addressed his audience boldly:

“We have come to pay our respects to the great chieftan Renatus; can someone tell us, where is the funeral?”

Townsman (suspicious): “I regret to inform you, you just missed it, sir...”

Admiral: “I’m sorry to hear that... (the admiral walks toward the townsman, staring him straight in the eye as the man peddles backward) might you be able to tell me, then, where I can find his son, Thanos?”

-- The townsman and the admiral lock eyes, fearfully, the townsman points toward a road reaching beyond the horizon --

***\*To Lost And Ancient Gardens\* --***



*Years earlier.* A much younger Thanos tends a neglected garden which borders a forested swamp. Having just lost his mother to illness, the young man is distraught and is trying to keep her memory alive through her beloved garden; Thanos has always had a supernatural ability to heal and grow plants and connect with living things.

**My love is petals and dew  
The Erthe, the wilderness too  
For a fonder man, there is none  
Who admires her like the Sun  
Shining down so she may glow...**

Amidst his ode to the rose, a girl appears at the edge of the forest; a sight he is actively trying to ignore, despite her obvious interest in him. In fact, Thanos knows this girl well. She is Vera, a daughter of the swamp-dwelling tribe known as the Fendwellers. Vera has long been the object of Thanos' older brother Sindr's desire, and although she has never given in, Sindr is very much infatuated with her. Thanos is reluctant to interact with the girl he knows his brother loves.

**But a maid stood alone**

In the trees, overgrown  
And she pondered the plight  
Of the rose

She drank the dew from the rose  
*I drank the dew from the rose*  
I envy the one that she chose  
*His stare and longing did grow*

Then she offered me a sip,  
But I dare not touch my lip  
Where the serpent's tongue hath coiled

For a man she desires,  
And indeed one she would have  
If I should but meet  
Her gaze

*A man like you I've never known*  
Her words a womanly moan  
*So lonely he must remain alone*  
Her dress so perfectly sewn

*If you'd come away with me,*  
*We shall never lonely be*

What a travesty it would be,  
*Have you never felt the touch*  
If our eyes should fondly meet  
*Of a maid politely struck*  
*By a man so handsome as you?*

*Come away, silly man*  
No, no  
*'Tis a green and pleasant land*  
This cannot be  
*That awaits us through the trees*  
She has led me through the trees

The Erthe, she whimpers neath my feet  
Her tears, they beg me not to leave

Although sadder tales have been told,  
None so truthful

**Or so old  
As the man  
And his maid  
Gladly joined**

In the wake of their mother's death, Sindr announced to Renatus and Thanos that he would be leaving Axen to join the military forces of Ealdormere in Erthe. Sindr believed his talents as a warrior, tactician, and engineer went largely unappreciated by the Axons, and especially by his father; who always seemed to favor his younger brother. Sindr blamed his mother's death on the primitive means of the Axons, proclaiming that there are medicines and technologies in Erthe that could have saved her life. He sets out on his journey much to the dismay of his younger brother, who has always looked up to his big brother.

Thanos ultimately gives in to Vera's allure and follows her into the woods. Sindr is none the wiser, and sets off to Erthe in hopes of one day returning as an accomplished soldier. He hopes he will finally prove himself as a son to Renatus, and as a man to Vera.

*Back to present:* The Admiral and his men marched swiftly through the twilight; the banner men carrying peculiar lanterns which shone an unearthly green light upon their path. To travel by night was an unfamiliar practice to the local Axons, and rumor quickly spread that a sorcerer had come with an army to find the son of Renatus. The unit of men marched on through the night without stopping.

***\*To Higher Climes Where Few Might Stand\* --***



Thanos sits alone in a sort of greenhouse surrounded by plants, the pale morning light barely illuminates the room. Vera enters...

Vera: Thanos! You never came to bed... have you slept at all?

Thanos: I think I've finally done it! Look, Vera! (holding up a plant) It was dead last night and I revived it!

Vera: Thanos... I...

Thanos: Dear, it's just a plant, don't be frightened!

Vera: Thanos, LOOK! (points behind him)

Thanos turns around to see figures emerging through the fog, they look threatening, carrying weapons and supplies walking toward Thanos' house. "Wait here..." he says to Vera as he steps outside the greenhouse and stands helplessly as the horde approaches... Thanos thinks:

**Beyond the feeble reaches  
Of conscious memory  
A voice long forgotten  
Echoes through the chamber of my thoughts**

**I cannot recall  
The speaker or what was spoken**

**Just a whisper now  
Still, it's crying, screaming, wanting to be known**

The leader of the horde comes to a halt and stares face to face at Thanos.

“... hello brother...”

Thanos: ... Sindr? How could it be??

Sindr: It's been many years, Thanos. Surely the seasons have changed me, but indeed it is I.

Thanos: Seven years to be precise... I was still a child. Father and I, we tried to...

Sindr: Ha! Speak not of that old man, you know he has forsaken me. Let us speak instead of well-spent youth and brighter days. Brother, my men are weary... we have not properly rested since we left Erthe, I've come here in hopes of setting up camp, with your kind permission of course.

Thanos: Never would I deny such kindness to my own brother! How I have secretly yearned for your return only the gods can tell. Come, brother, come! You shall have the finest Axon breakfast and a proper bed, let us rekindle the flame of our youth!

**As dawn greets dew-wet grass  
A brother returns at last  
Seven years in patience passed  
Long since have I laid my dreams to ash**

**Oh rekindled Flame  
Dare not speak His name  
Oh unfettered son  
What gifts you were given  
Why, then, did you run?**

**As night drapes silted shores  
No laughter is heard anymore  
Tales of terror and of war  
Hang heavy in the dampened midnight air**

**Oh, recall the dream  
Hunger's rising scream  
Rays of glinting light  
Glancing off dew-wet blades this night**

Sindr tells Thanos of his travels and all the strange and dazzling splendors of Erthe; of his accomplishments, and his longing to return home and see his family.

**I was there  
Where once our fathers rode  
Beyond this mortal coil  
Toward that precipice of stone  
Which stands unchanged, uncaring, and old**

Thanos is enchanted by his brother's tales, and ecstatic to see him after so many years; he welcomes him with open arms, but Vera is not so welcoming. She is suspicious of Sindr's motives, and when the two lock eyes across the table, she recalls their uneasy past.

*Sindr had long been fascinated by the power of the forested swamp that the Fendwellers call home, and would often wander into their territory alone to observe their peculiar and secretive way of life. He saw them do things he thought were impossible; magical energies seemed to emanate from their bodies, water flowed at their command, and they moved through the wood like the wind. Knowing they were not fond of visitors, Sindr hid himself behind shrubs and rocks and watched from afar, studying their strange ways.*

**Countless wonders I have seen  
Endless skies of emerald green  
Minds can never idle be  
When magic stirs beyond the trees**

*It was not long before Vera saw Sindr on one of his little missions and followed him home. She watched him mimicking the motions of her people; he was trying to harness the same energy the Fendwellers use in the forest. Sindr's awkward attempts made Vera laugh suddenly, alerting Sindr to her presence as he searched the treeline for the source of the sound.*

Sindr: Who's there? Who are you!

Vera (still obscured behind the trees): You'll never be able to do it like that... especially not all the way out here.

Sindr: Do what? Who am I talking to, come out!

Vera (walking slowly toward Sindr): You can't do what we do

Sindr: Oh? And why not?

Vera: (haha) You're just an Erthwile farm boy from Axen... only Relics know the old ways

Sindr (taunting): And I suppose you're a Relic then? And all your people?

Vera (defensive): I'm not a Relic! But my people still practice the old ways, not like you people... you've forgotten...

Sindr (playful): Well perhaps you could teach me...

**You know things of which I speak  
Secrets buried deep beneath  
Still eclipsed in jaded truth  
By the nameless wonders of my youth**

*\*back to present\**

Despite the awkward reunion between Sindr and Vera, the day carries on with bombast and celebration.

**Oh, recall the dream  
(In dreams we cannot die)  
Hunger's rising scream  
(It calls us to its side)  
Rays of glinting light  
Glancing off dew-wet blades this night**

No one has slept, and they start to drift off one by one as night falls. The two brothers stay up into the night and recollect their past, and Sindr convinces Thanos to come with him to an old familiar place in the forest.

**Come with me to better days  
To higher climes where few might stand  
And never shall we tread again  
On silted shores, on blackened sand**

*\*To Souls Distant and Dreaming\* --*



Through the pantheon of oak and pine, a wide and misty clearing appears, and the brothers stand in awe of this unchanged place.

Sindr: Do you come here still, brother?

Thanos (ashamed): Never since that day, Sindr, I can't bear it.

Sindr: Haha! Thanos, you can't be serious! You're still brooding away on that day? We were children!

Thanos: Children are capable of wrongdoing just as men...

Sindr: Come now, brother... all was not lost on that day. Remember the splendor, the world we created. No one knew the wonders and visions we saw, the dreams we dreamt. You and I birthed a new age of creation in the world, you and I brought magic to Erthwile man! Thanks to your abilities and my inventions, I have shown the world that there is more than hunger, death, and suffering in this life; there are wonders yet to be known. How many can say their dreams became reality? How many can even remember the visions of their youth?

**There are few of us who know  
What wonders we were shown  
In the stories and fables  
And visions of our youth  
For children, as we were,**

**Think only half formed thoughts  
And now, as men, we recollect  
A dull and shattered dream**

Sindr speaks, and the forest echoes his poetry:

*“To trace the remote in the immediate;  
the eternal in the ephemeral;  
the past in the present;  
the infinite in the finite;  
these are the springs of delight and beauty”*

Both sing:

**But some of us awake  
With phantasms so strange;  
Enchanted hills and golden plains  
And cities made of stone  
Where ancient heroes rode  
Caparisoned with gold  
We come alive and then we know  
We’ve looked back through the gates,  
The gates the Forest Keeper made**

*Years earlier:*

A much younger Sindr stands in the same forest clearing where we just were. Thanos looks on from behind a bush in fascinated confusion as his brother makes strange movements, odd gestures with his hands, and foreign grunts and shouts. The spectacle is too much and Thanos lets a muted laugh slip. Sindr whips around and immediately spots Thanos amidst the trees, walks swiftly over to him and drags him into the clearing.

Sindr: Alright, little brother; since you seem to think it looks so easy, why don't you give it a try...

Thanos (mockingly): try what? Dancing around in the forest like a fairy?!

Sindr (angrily flicks his brother's ear): I'm not dancing you idiot! This is ancient Relic magic, I've seen the Fendwellers do it. They can control the wind, the rocks and trees and vines, they can shift the flow of the stream, or tame the wildest beast with just a touch... Do you want to try it or not?!

Thanos: ... how do I do it?

Sindr performs his well-practiced moves slowly, and Thanos mimics them one after the other.

Sindr: Good work, Thanos, now the trick is to do it all as one motion. I have been practicing for weeks now, so don't expect to...

Thanos performs the move with swift precision, and a surge of energy bursts from the palms of his hands up through the tall forest canopy, ripping through the leaves and knocking branches aside as it climbs skyward.

Sindr stands in silent amazement: ... how did you do that?

Thanos: I don't know... I just did what you said! I don't know what that was!

Sindr: That was magic, little brother. The magic of the immortals who have long since gone from this world; their energies flow freely in this place. Few can sense them, and fewer still can do what you just did. Come with me, Thanos. We have much to learn.

As the brothers strode deeper into the woods, they passed by a tree which had dropped a large branch when Thanos cast that magical burst. As he walked closer, he saw a deer sifting the soil where the branch had fallen, the deer quickly ran off and Thanos ran towards the branch. To his horror, a faun lay helplessly crushed beneath the branch. Retching and gasping for breath, the tiny animal clearly had very little time left. Thanos stepped backward slowly, and hung his head in shame.

Sindr, undaunted by the gruesome scene, walks casually toward the fragile creature and turns toward Thanos:

Sindr: What are you crying about? It's just a deer...

\*Thanos gives Sindr a scathing, tearful look\*

Sindr: All right, all right, here; try this. I've seen the fendwellers do this before.

\*Sindr places both his hands on the faun's rib cage and begins to chant some foreign spell\*

Sindr (to Thanos): Here, do it with me, since you seem to have the magic touch...

Thanos: Do what? Mumble some Fen gibberish? I don't even know what you're saying!

Sindr: Just try it; breathe deeply, put your hands here, and make the sounds I make.

Thanos places both his hands on the tiny animal, and speaks the incantation as best he can. A powerful, crimson glowing energy emanates from his palms, and Sindr once again stares wide-eyed at his little brother, hiding his jealousy behind his amazement.

Sindr: That's it, Thanos! Keep going, louder! Faster!

Thanos chants faster, speaking the words as if they were his mother tongue, and he can hardly stand the force of the energy flowing through him. The faun's chest begins heaving and he perks up his head. Sindr lifts the felled branch as much as he can, but before the faun can attempt to move he vomits and writhes in his final death spasm. Horrified, Thanos runs back home, ignoring the scornful laughter of his brother.

*\*Back to present\**

Sindr looks sincerely to Thanos,

Sindr: I am sorry for that, brother, I was young and cruel and eager! I was toying with forces I knew nothing of and you were my instrument. For that I can only beg your forgiveness... please, Thanos I have come to acknowledge my wrongs.

Thanos: It was long ago, my resentment is well outweighed by the joy your return has brought me.

Sindr: Good! Excellent brother! Besides, that old magic was a mere trifle compared to what I've come to learn, and I don't need you for an instrument anymore, I've fashioned many of my own design, I'll show you tomorrow... Come now, let's rest, I am aching!

Thanos and Sindr walk back home in the afterglow of their reconciliation, the morning light seeps through the trees as they finally lay down to sleep.

***\*In Deep and Wooded Forests of my Youth\* --***

Thanos awakes to a nervous Vera pacing about their room.

Vera: Where have you been? I waited well into the night for you.

Thanos: Sindr and I were up all night reminiscing... he told me the most wondrous things; of the Great Stone City, the wonders of ancient Erthe, he's seen it all Vera! We even spoke of that day... *Thanos holding back tears...* He told me he is sorry, Vera.

Vera: I'm glad to hear it Thanos, but that will not be enough for my father and my people, they've been watching Sindr ever since he returned, they don't trust him Thanos...

Thanos: Well, they will! They must! He means to bring light unto the world, and we could help him! There are so many in the world who could use the healing powers of the Fen... It's our responsibility to help them!

Vera: Listen, Thanos... come with me into the deep, we must speak with my father... Thanos follows Vera as she moves swiftly through the trees in typical Fen fashion. She sings:

**I know the place  
Where Memory sleeps  
And secrets hide**

**It is not far  
Or hard to find  
Or too ancient to recall**

They arrive at the Fen encampment, where Vera's father Ask greets her warmly. He then leads Thanos through the Fen village, and attempts to impress the importance of the woods upon Thanos. He sings:

**A sighing stream  
This endless forest's dream  
Are you still too blind to see it?**

**The force that feeds  
Our endless need  
This deep and wooded dream that is my heart**

**But night will fall  
And trees once tall  
Will bend to his will**

**That scorching Raven's smile  
Writhing, putrid, vile  
His sharpened tongue  
A spear to kill**

Thanos: "Surely you don't think my brother intends to destroy the Fen and the forest? He only wants to share the magic of these woods with the rest of the world!"

Ask: "Thanos, it is an honorable thing to love one's brother, I know you trust that Sindr is only doing what's best for the world. But my people have been watching these men of his; there have been whispers around the world of their exploits, and of Sindr's methods. They come with fire, with hungry machines that devour the Erthe, leaving nothing but destruction behind them. He and Vera sing:

**A song of soil  
The vine's exquisite coil  
All but faded footprints of my past**

**But night will fall  
And while the midnight  
Forest breathes  
I will not leave my home**

**My deep and wooded home**

*\*The Sound of Hunger Rises\*--*



Conflicted, Thanos returns from the Fen to meet his brother the next day, hopeful that he will be willing to cooperate with the Fendwellers and Vera to find a balance between their worlds.

Before he arrives to find his brother, Thanos hears the bellowing chants of Sindr's men as they carry through the trees, and he rushes to find them

**Ne aveas Mortem  
Non dat is pacem  
In enim morte**

**sciemus morsus  
quos reliquimus**

***\*Do not welcome Death  
He offers no Peace  
For even in Death  
We will know the pains  
We have left behind\****

**Just as he came  
So he shall go  
In woe, in pain, in poverty**

Sindr: Brother! Come, come! You are about to see what we can really do!

Thanos: (rushing to meet Sindr aboard his newly assembled vehicle) Sindr wait, I need to...

Sindr's vehicle takes off as soon as Thanos climbs aboard, followed by the rest of Sindr's company. The vehicle swallows the forest in front of it, collecting the foliage in a massive chamber. Vein-like tubes carry the glowing emerald energy to a bank of cylindrical capsules that capture the magical ooze. Thanos becomes mesmerized by the spectacle...

Sindr sings:

**Have you ever felt this way before?  
Can you feel the power surging through your soul?  
And once it's over, you'll want more  
Can't you see it's what the earth is for-**

**Can you hear the sound of hunger rise?  
We could bring an end to all those mournful, helpless cries...**

Indeed, it was intoxicating, Thanos had never felt so powerful, but he saw the trail of devastation left by his brother's machines and knew that he must try to stop him.

*Sindr's men sing on as they continue to work*

**Take then good heed  
Heed To your end  
For as I say  
So it shall be**

Thanos approaches Sindr, imploring him to look back at the destruction he is causing, but Sindr is drunk with power and won't listen, he states:

**We, the paragons of creation  
We, the arbiters of change  
Was this not the dream we shared  
When we were young and unafraid?**

**But you saw her there,  
Gentle eyes, tempting stare;  
And still you're bound by her**

Thanos is angered and confused by Sindr's accusation; that he is under a spell by Vera, he sings:

**No, no, not bound but held  
And you needn't think this way**

He reminds Sindr:

**We, were but children you and I  
We, thought, as only children think,  
This world was ours to conquer,  
And its blood was ours to drink**

**How far you have wandered,  
How deep lie your pains.  
Bask in this eternal summer  
Revel in Morning's glow  
Join me on silted shores *once more***

Sindr scoffs at Thanos' plea, but as he and his men finish their first day, Sindr sneaks off into the woods to visit a beloved place before it is destroyed forever. Thanos' words haunt him as he goes, and he ponders:

**How long have I labored  
How deep lie the crusted jewels of my innocence**

***\*The Sound of a Glinting Blade\*--***



Sindr arrives at a familiar forest clearing, the same clearing where he and Thanos first experienced the magic of the Relics. He reminisces:

**I heard the Forest sing  
Songs of my youth  
I'd never felt such pain before**

**You held my hand that day  
You were my Sun before the dawn  
The darkened morning I have loved so long**

Vera, having watched Sindr and his men from the treeline the whole time, emerges to confront him, concealing the pain he caused her when he left:

**I don't recall that day  
And I never thought of you when I cried  
*You know the place*  
And I never wondered why**

***Where memory sleeps and secrets hide*  
You left so suddenly**

Vera's anger is piercing, but Sindr recognizes she is still holding onto their past in some way, just as he is. The two stand on opposite ends of the clearing. The calm of the woods surrounds them:

**Silence fills this place  
Naught but a memory of your embrace  
You, servile and sweet  
Soft as the sediment beneath our feet  
Far beyond the trees  
We roamed  
Yet, now, I plead:**

Sindr sings:

**Recall the plans we made  
Dreams once so bold  
The jealous Sun stood still and cold**

**What now has time revealed?  
A tepid pool of youth misspent  
A faded tapestry of dreams undreamt**

Vera sings:

**Strange, how you recount  
Wanton days, blissful nights  
Strange, as it seems,  
There was suffering  
And pain you never knew  
How could you?**

Despite her bitter response, Sindr moves closer to Vera. Frightened, she slips one hand subtly behind her waist, a warning voice wisps through the trees, echoes of Sindr's mens' credo:

**Do not welcome Death  
He offers no peace  
For even in death  
We will know the pains  
We have left behind**

Sindr, moving ever closer, proclaims:

**Far beyond the trees  
*I long to be*  
A deeper stream  
*Free from*  
Flows endlessly**

***Your incessant dream***

**Toward my dream**

Sindr grabs her tightly despite her protests, as if to take her for his own. A sharp pain rips through his gut and he screams. As he releases her, he sees a small dagger covered in blood. Shocked, Sindr falls to the ground as blood pours out from his wound. Vera, at once horrified and relieved, leaves him for dead and runs back to join her people as they prepare to ambush Sindr's men.

*\*The Sound Which Has No Name\*--*



Ever-weakening, Sindr drifts further and further into the throes of Death. He feels the Wings of the Watcher enveloping him as he moves closer to his end... He remembers the legends of the immortal Relics, how they fell when Death entered the world as the Winged Watcher.

**No ancient script  
Was ever writ  
No jewel-decked throne  
On which to sit**

**Soaring high,  
The Watcher waits  
To slake his thirst  
To clean his plate**

**His jaws agape  
His claws unfurled  
The Winged-Watcher  
Swallows the world**

**The oceans rise and fall  
With his heaving chest  
And in the wind  
We feel his breath**

He comes face to face with the devourer, though he resists his imminent doom, the ease of acceptance tempts him evermore.

**No cries are heard  
No tears are wept  
For wise ones know  
The bond once kept**

**The price he asked;  
The cost of death:**

**A single drop,  
Still glistening wet,  
Of crystal'd pain  
To pay a debt**

The Watcher hunts ferociously, he hunts for the last Relic. The last of a race who betrayed his trust and defied his supreme authority. Knowing this, Sindr attempts to strike a bargain to spare his own life.

Sindr: I can give you what you want! I can bring you the last Relic...

Watcher: I know the tongues of men... they are rife with lies, you have nothing I want.

Sindr: I am Sindr, son of the great Xanthos, the Relic who lived his final years as the Axon chieftan Renatus. As you see, I am Erthwile born... a pitiful soul for your collection, but I can offer you a far greater treasure; the last Relic of Axen, my brother, Thanos...

Watcher: Wisdom warns me against your promise, but I will entertain your offer... You may live, so long as the Relic is delivered to me...

Released from his wings, Sindr watches in amazement as the Watcher ascends instantly to the sky. Still reeling in pain, Sindr's captain comes to his aid:

Captain: Admiral, there you are! What happened?

Sindr: Nothing that I can't fix... where are the men? We have important work to do.

Captain: That is why I am here... the Fendwellers are attacking! The men are holding them off, but there are so many, we won't last long... Sir, are you sure you can-

Sindr: There's no time, captain, quickly, come!

While camping amongst Sindr's men, Thanos awoke to the ferocious battle cry of the Fendwellers as they emerged through the mangled treelines. Vera appeared quickly by his side and the two absconded from the battle into the trees.

Thanos: Vera! What is happening?! This is not the way! This will bring only death and pain!

Vera: Your brother is lost, Thanos... My people will do what they must to survive.

Thanos: Lost? Where is Sindr? Vera, what have you done?!

Vera: There is no time, come Thanos, they will see us, we must meet my father.

The two run swiftly through the trees to meet the Fendwellers, Vera joins ferociously in the battle while Thanos does all he can to protect her.

Meanwhile, Sindr emerges from the forest, much to the delight of his men, he rallies them to the mournful tale of the Watcher:

**As time went on  
The debt accrued  
And we foolish Men  
The price refused**

**Now all is lost  
And we, Erthwile  
Peer at the stars  
Through his crooked smile**

Vera's father Ask calls out to the possessed Sindr:

**Your soul is crumbling, rotting  
Beneath the chains of hate**

The Fendwellers join him in his decree:

**Can you hear those mournful, helpless cries?  
The sound which has no name  
Open your eyes  
The blackened fog has blinded you  
And with this darkness you have shrouded  
Our deep and wooded home**

Sindr focuses his energy toward the defiant old man, he lifts his weapon and fires a powerful surge of magic at him. The greenish orb turns to red, as it hurtles toward Ask, gathering broken rocks and tattered roots on its way. Crying out to her father, Vera throws herself in front of the approaching mass and it consumes her.

Thanos: VERA NO!!!

In horror, Ask, and Thanos rush to Vera's lifeless corpse. Before they can reach her, the earth begins to shake violently, and the armies are knocked to the ground.

Vines rip through the ground around Vera, wrapping themselves around her as they carry her beyond the trees. The forest comes alive, the earth cracks beneath the feet of Sindr's men. They are swallowed by the gaping crevices, and torn apart by the serpentine vines. Chaos ensues as every man runs for his life. The Watcher has come to collect his debt:

**He is our fatal end  
Our recompense  
He is the fear  
We all can sense**

**The creeping serpent  
The reeking breath  
The fangs of Erebus  
The certainty of Death**

**The fangs of Erebus  
The certainty of Death**

The Fendwellers retreat to the woods while Thanos searches for Vera among the carnage, Sindr lets out a scream as he is dragged into the forest. A dark figure emerges quickly from the treeline and drapes Thanos under his cloak, carrying him away from the destruction as he cries out in anguish.