

His life was a dull one. Pushed by his parents to take over their animal farm, Ricardo gave in and became a herder. Days gave way to weeks, and weeks gave way to months and years. Bored with his plain life Ricardo always felt like something was amiss. Frustrated, he found himself gazing off and thinking about how his life could have gone. Through time he grew cynical and moody, abusing his animals and the emotions of female villagers. He expected to be hated for his actions, but instead his villainous charisma seemed to attract the people around him. Soon, Ricardo made a resolution for himself. He wanted to leave the village behind, start a new life and see what the world held out for him. It was at this time that the dreams began. Dark, foggy dreams of fire and misery, yet also of pleasure and riches. Sometimes, Ricardo remembered a mumbling voice infiltrating his sleep. This went on for quite a while, until one fateful night that should change him forever. Ricardo was sleeping, when he again heard the muffled voice reaching out for him. He concentrated and started to hear the voice more clearly: "Go to the barn", it said. "Watch it happen. Go to the barn... Watch it happen" Suddenly, he was surrounded by flames that started to burn him alive. With a scream, Ricardo woke up in his sweaty sheets.

The next evening, Ricardo went to the barn as it was dark. He didn't quite know why he went there, but something about the dream last night made him curious. As he closed in on the village's crop barn, Ricardo saw light flickering within it. He approached the barn slowly and climbed a tree that was standing next to it. From within, he heard a yell: "You jerk!" Curious as to who was in the barn Ricardo tried to climb closer to the open window, when a little squirrel jumped away from him in anguish and landed within the barn. "You stupid elf! It is just a squirrel!", Ricardo heard. This time he could identify the voice as the voice of Ambrose and concluded that the one Ambrose was talking to was Magellan, as the two of them were rarely seen without each other. Ricardo was snickering maliciously at the thought that they were startled by a squirrel, when he saw two shadows run out of the barn. The he smelled it. Fire! The fools had lit the crop barn on fire and made a run for it. Hastily, Ricardo climbed down the tree and ran to the nearest hill. When he arrived there, he found himself smiling. "How easy man can be influenced", he thought to himself. He took pleasure in just sitting there and seeing the villagers trying to save the unsavable. Still grinning, he finally fell asleep right on the hill. This time the voice in his dreams only said two words: "Well done."

On the morrow, Ricardo returned to his farm and then went into the village to see the people's reaction to what happened last night. He was delighted to see the anguish and the hate on the faces of his former friends. This day he decided to test if he could get the two fire raisers to cave in. He started by dropping insinuations around them. But when this wasn't enough, he started rumors about innocent people being the culprits to see if the guilt would break Ambrose or Magellan. When the innocents he blamed were killed by angry villagers, Ricardo could see that Magellan was about to crack.

After a while, the village called in a council and Ricardo thought one of the two fire raisers had finally confessed their crime. But to his surprise, the village elders sought champions for a quest to save the village by plundering the old, trap ridden catacombs. Everybody that wanted to help should come before the council on the morrow. Ricardo didn't even bother to think about risking his life in order to save the village people. He wanted to just leave the village and make a living there. But as he was dreaming, Ricardo again heard the strange, demanding voice: "Join them!"

Compelled, he joined the group of champions. He could take some of the treasure for himself when nobody was looking, couldn't he? The catacombs proved to be a challenging task and when the group arrived at something that looked like a big arch with blue, shining runes on it, the strangest thing happened to Ricardo. For just a second he lost his consciousness and the voice started talking to him. It was as loud as it was never before: "When you arrive in the city, my Champion, seek my temple. Seek Cadixtat! Your journey will start then!" When Ricardo snapped out of it, he found his comrades fighting each other. Enjoying the Chaos, he joined in.

To be continued.