

true

Prologue

Scorching wind

Goals:

- start of Malimosts rule, he attacks a school of levanter
- Rand, a very powerful levanter, faces him and loses
- Malimost burns down the tower
- everyone (even viewpoint) dies
- establish that the magic is cool
- establish that Malimost is evil, but with a reason: wants control, lacked power as child, family slaughtered

The world was on fire.

It was not the lightly warm fire of the fire Levant that Rand routinely drew from; it was a bloated, scorchingly hot fire that consumed everything in sight. It was likely due to some young Levanter attacking the tower to gain some Levant amplifier or other item that they believed would give them the ability to dominate some region. Rand sighed at the malice of the creature desolating the outside world. How could people become so selfish after seeing the glorious power of the Levant? How could one ever think that power over creatures could compare to the joy of wielding the Levant for good, helping the world, bringing beauty to pass? Rand guessed that it came down to pride: some creatures simply could not stand the thought of collaboration with equals, and thus felt the need to be the sole creature able to channel the Levant. Such creatures always came to the tower.

Given the history of unsuccessful attempts to seize power Rand was really not sure why people continued to do so. Maybe the misguided power-hungry fools felt that they needed a powerful item to begin their rule, or wanted to eliminate early the people of the tower who would shut down any ruler that had control by virtue of their power with the Levant. Maybe they just wanted to prove that they were different by succeeding where past would-be tyrants had failed.

Many assumed that because of Rand's insistence on peaceful use of the Levant he would pose no challenge to their plot. Rather, they assumed that the tower

must possess some protection granted by a powerful item that had thwarted countless power-grabs. They assumed wrong.

Rand pulled from the Levant, channeling storm, to generate a thick mist, essentially clouds drooping with water, that spread from his body and suppressed the flames in his vicinity. The tower did not need any protection wards. Rand was the most powerful Levanter to be born in thousands of years.

Rand channeled wind Levant and glided out of the tower on a powerful gust of wind. He would confront whatever creature had decided to attack the tower and give them the same choice that he always gave: relinquish their tie to the Levant, or die. Of course, this wasn't really much of a choice: how could one live without Levancy after knowing its power? No one ever had chosen this peaceful route. Rand was not afraid to fight these challengers though, his command over Levancy was incredibly precise, and his power was incredibly vast.

As Rand grimly approached the evident origin of the fire—his mist had dispelled all the fire but that in a small circle around whatever Levanter had caused it—he noticed that the fire appeared to have a slight black tinge. What could that mean? Did the offending creature have some item that altered the impact of Fire Levancy? Unnerved Rand felt himself involuntarily shiver. The tower was a tall building encircled by a courtyard that was surrounded by a small gate. Rand was approaching the gate now. He looked back at the tower and his mist, and then, shocked, double-took. Although his mist was clearly suppressing the fire, a pillar of fire had exploded from within the mist. As Rand watched it diminished and finally dissipated. But what could have caused this?

The sooner Rand could confront whatever beast was causing this and put an end to these strange events the better. Rand reduced his hold on the Wind Levant, and eased out of his flight right on the outskirts of the persisting bubble of fire. Rand channeled Wind Levant again and had the wind carry his voice.

"You who aspires to destroy all that is good of the Levant, show yourself!" Rand shouted

An sad laugh sounded from within the flaming circle, and Rand felt the wind Levant be invoked. A small pitch black dragon arose from within the flames, levitating with the use of Wind Levant rather than using its wings.

"I don't know why you have chosen to attack the tower today", Rand shouted up to it, "But you have proven that you do not deserve to be able to wield the Levant!" "I believe in redemption, so I will give you a second chance: relinquish your hold on the Levant to me and you can walk away in peace. If you will not however, I will end you. You pose to great a threat to the peaceful inhabitants of this land. What say you?"

"I am Malimost", the dragon said quietly, dexteriously using the Wind Levant to place his whispers directly in Rand's ear. Rand was impressed at the dragon's level of skill with the Wind Levant.

“When I was barely able to fly members of the Cult of the Blessed came and slaughtered my community. Although we were peaceful dragons they claimed that all dragons are evil, and decided that we had to be exterminated. I was small enough that I could hide, but no one else survived the attack. We had no chance against them, they were well trained in use of the Storm Levant, from this very tower as they bragged. They took everything from me. On that day I realized that the world is not safe with rogue Levanters in it. I will regulate who has access to the Levant, only trusted creatures should be able to touch its great power.”

“How could depriving the world of Levancy be for it’s good? You’ve been wronged, everyone knows that the Cult of the Blessed are extremists who sometimes misuse the Levant. Their actions should not incite you to deprive the world of the beauty of the Levant. Do you remember the first time you flew with the Levant? Without the Levant who would grow food? We need the Levant. The Levant is in integral part of the world. The Levant connects us to the world. You can’t possibly think that we would be better off without it.” Rand pleaded

“Ah,” Malimost said, “it is certainly true that the Levant is gives great power. I don’t intend to deprive people of this power. I merely intend to make sure that the people who have it are under control, specifically under my control.”

“So you want my title as head of the tower of Levant learning? I’ll never give—”

“Oh no. You can issue documents about best practices of Levant use all day but no one has to listen to you. I have a far more reliable method in mind. I knew that such control as I desired would be difficult to attain. I searched far and wide for a method to be able to control so absolutely and reliably. I heard whispers of legends of a powerful item, an item that could force creatures to obey you. I pursued the legend deep into the shadow realm and was able to procure a bondstone at last.”

“A bondstone? But that is an invention dark Levancy. Dark Levancy has been extinct for thousands of years.”

“Not extinct. Merely hiding. Banished to dark places. Biding it’s time until a worthy Levanter came along.”

“No. No no no. You must know the consequences of using dark levancy! It eats away at your soul!”

“What need have I for a soul? I have a purpose. That is enough.”

“Malimost, you are a danger to the world and even more so to yourself. I command you! Relinquish your Levantic abilities to me!”

“Ah, you still don’t understand do you? I did not come here because I lack power. I came here to demonstrate my power. Once you are dead creatures will flock to me, begging to swear upon my bond stone. You have been around for much too long you old Levanter. You give people a sense of security. One that will prove to be false.”

“There is a reason Dark Levancy was banished! Even if you defeat me it will be banished again!”

“I shall see. You shall not.” And with that, the ground erupted in an earthquake.

Darn! Rand cursed as he reflexively channeled Wind Levant to escape Malimost’s Earth Levant. Rand then directed his wind Levancy to blow him up towards Malimost and hurled Storm Levancy at him. Malimost grinned maliciously, and rebuffed Rand’s attack nonchallantly. Malimost shot a beam of Fire concentrated into a laser sharp fireball directly at Rand, which Rand extinguished with a quick mist cloud. Except he realized, to his horror, that it wasn’t actually extinguished. The fire, like the fire that had been burning down the tower was tinted black. As realization struck Rand he looked back to the tower, and saw what he knew he was going to see: it was completely destroyed. Countless items and Levancy texts destroyed! Malimost had been distracting him as the black fire burned despite his storm Levancy.

Rand had heard many stories about Dark Levancy, and could vaguely recollect that the Levantic creations of dark levancy could do very unintuitive things.

He’s too powerful, Rand thought, I’d better get help, fight another day. The destruction of the tower of course didn’t mean that the Levanters of the tower were destroyed, their training was too good. They knew the procedure: if someone attacked the tower they were supposed to get as far away as possible flying away with Wind Levancy. Rand would be powerful enough on his own to best any attacker. Or at least he had been in the past. Before Rand could escape, he would need to temporarily restrain Malimost. He had a very powerful item that he saved for emergencies: blinding mud. Rand flew in close to Malimost, so close that a fireball nearly got him before he was able to repel it with wind Levancy, and then shot the blinding mud at Malimost with a gust of wind. Malimost roared in surprise, and began spewing fireballs in random directions.

Rand flew up above Malimost, gathered his strength, and pummeled Malimost with Wind Levancy, forcing him down into the burning ground. Rand followed close behind, and once close enough to the ground bound Malimost in place with Earth Levancy. Malimost kept spewing fireballs, but they were trivial to block.

Now is my opening he thought. But just as he was about to fly off, a thought entered his head: what if he just killed Malimost now? He was very dangerous, but incapacitated. Rand floated silently down towards the ground, and prepared a deadly beam of flame. He shot it. And Malimost suddenly disappeared.

Malimost reappeared directly next to Rand, and laughed.

He could teleport? That was powerful dark levancy only spoken of in a few legends.

That was it, Rand needed to get out now. Rand used his speed boost item, and shot into the air. Malimost lazily soared after him.

Rand was deeply unsettled by this pursuit.

Rand suddenly came upon an invisible barrier in the air.

Malimost caught up to him from behind.

“Ah, now you realize. There is no escape!” Malimost gloated at his victory. “None of your young creatures learning at the tower even had a chance. That barrier will immolate any who enter it.”

“No! But they did nothing!” Rand sobbed.

“Ah yes, now you understand.” Malimost said sadly.

“You won’t succeed. Creatures will resist you!” Rand shouted in defiance.

“Maybe some,” Malimost admitted. “But most won’t. They will see the benefit of restricting access to this dangerous power. I will make them see.”

Resigned to his fate, Rand resumed his attack on Malimost. He threw every item he had at Malimost. He used all his centuries of magical experience to assail the dragon. But it was not enough. The dark tinted magic seemed to have unlimited patience. It would hide in a subdued form, as the fire had, until Rand’s attention was elsewhere, and then creep back up. Fireballs Rand had extinguished and blown away crept back and hit him. Not hard, they were weak after being blocked once. But it was too much nonetheless. The incessant attacks wore Rand down. Eventually, when all his items were spent and he had expended all his energy a gust of wind drove him to the ground. As he fell, incapacitated, he felt flames engulf his body. The black tinged flames of dark levancy.

Darn, Rand thought.

And his body exploded into a pillar of flame.

Malimost looked down upon his work at the tower.

The world was on fire.

Chapter 1

Goals:

- Bob and Bucky are going back to their village (they are humble Llama herders)
- Minions of Malimost (unicorns) decided to destroy their village
- Bob doesn’t know why yet, but later it will become evident that it was because Malimost knew that a powerful Levanter would arise from his village
- Bob and Bucky realize that they are in danger, so they seek shelter at a rumuroed rogue Levanter town

“Get up!” Bucky’s deep voice pierced through Bob’s dream of llamas grazing on a field.

Brushing his black shoulderlength hair from his eyes, Bob groggily began to comply. Although the morning was somewhat chilly, Bob could tell that the day was shaping up to be a pleasant summer day, slightly hot but with a refreshing breeze. Bob loved the summer in llama land, in the winter no matter how many cloaks he bundled up in he always felt the chill in his bones. Bucky always joked about this: Bucky said that Bob was a young child unacquainted to the world; in some far parts of the world their summers were colder than llama land’s winter, and where it got so cold that white powder called snow fell from the sky instead of rain, he often joked good heartedly. Bucky only had experience with such places because he had been with his dad, the village merchant, on a few journeys as a very young child. Bob was hardly a young child, a few months younger than Bucky at most, if not older than Bucky, but you couldn’t tell from his stature. Bucky was a very large man, towering over Bob despite the fact that Bob was above average height in their home village. Bucky wasn’t lanky though like Bob, he had an abundance of muscle to augment his height making his stature quite imposing. This intimidating effect was ruined however by his affable smile and twinkling brown eyes filled with mirth. Bob had been friends with Bucky since early childhood. They had naturally decided to graze llamas together a few years back, and over the years had experienced their share of adventures: dealing with runaway llamas comprising the large part of these adventures. They could hide in lots of places in the hilly expanses of Llama land and catching them when they had the mind to run off was quite difficult.

Bob carefully rolled up his light summer travel cloak and tied it to his backpack. He walked towards the smell of oats, which reminded him of the oats his mom always used to make. Bucky had already started making breakfast on a cheery campfire in the center of their campsite for the week. Today it was time to move on from this campsite, they couldn’t let the llamas graze for more than a week in one location or the grass would be hard pressed to recover. Bob sat down on a rock next to Bucky.

“Sometimes I think you’d sleep past noon if I didn’t wake you” Bucky joked.

It wasn’t true, Bucky woke extraordinarily early whereas Bob had a regular sleep cycle.

“Where are we taking the Llamas next?” Bob queried.

Bucky took out his map, which was intricately drawn in deep black lines on a piece of parchment.

“Normally we would go to The Burrow next, but we actually are quite close to the village. If we press hard I think we could make it by tonight. It would be fun to see some familiar faces, and we could restock on supplies. The only breakfast I have left is oats!”

“Wow, I didn’t realize we were that close!” Bob replied. “Yes that’d be super coppola! What are we waiting for?”

“Well I didn’t want to interrupt your sleep”, Bucky said smirking.

They scarfed down the remnants of their oats and quickly washed their dishes, put out the fire, and packed their bags.

The Llamas were milling about, but moved to follow Bob and Bucky as they started walking. The occasional Llama needed a little more than the pull of the group of llamas moving to direct it; for that Bob and Bucky had long wooden staffs, hooked at the end, for gently directing a llama back to the right path. Bucky navigated with his compass and map, which left Bob free to think.

It had been months since he had seen the village, and his family. Bob was an only child but had never felt cheated because of this: his bond with Bucky was stronger than many brother-brother relationships that he had observed. However, Bob deeply loved, and hence missed, his parents.

Bob’s mom, Grace was sturdily built with Black hair that ran down her back.

; anecdote

Bob’s dad was XXX; anecdote

Bob and Bucky walked on at a leisurely pace, occasionally trading comments.

Chapter 2

Goals:

- on the way to the refuge Bob instinctively channels the Levant against something
- at the refuge Bob and Bucky discover that
- Bob can use the levant
- unicorns attacked their village because of rumors of a powerful levanter (Bob) that would come about
- Bob resolves to learn about the Levant and get revenge

Chapter 3

Goals:

- Bob gets a mentor
- Bob trains in using the Levant as they seek out the unicorns
- they face down the unicorns; bob wins; bucky dies
- Now Bob’s really angry at Malimost
- Bob realizes that he is really powerful
- Bob resolves to confront Malimost

Chapter 4

Goals:

- quest to figure out how to get Malimost
- finally figure out that there are some keys to get in order to get to malimost

Chapter 5

Goals:

- exit llama land

Word bank for terminology Levantic metal: Diamas metal Paramas Paragon Parakinetic metal

Aesthetic sounding words/terms: alleviated anneal fleuret turquoise luculia ombre troupe palette aureate chelsea endlessly heart-racing endearing petrified unfathomably/fathomless dizzy electric manifest tempest unbanked power dazzling fervently wish incessant valencia pandemonium blasphemous gentry heretic corvette upchucked exhilarating lapidary halcyon

YOU'RE a div

sees bug That's a bug! No that's a feature! Wat Chapter 2 Bob followed Azalea through the tunnels, arriving at a dark grotto. "DEITY..." Bob was left speechless. The grotto was illuminated by chasms and deposits of glowing minerals, eliminating the need for torchlights. "Boss won't be happy with the peasant you brought back", a man with winged sandals nodded in greeting as he sipped from a canteen of DEITY-knows-what. Azalea scowled. "The peasant, as you call him, might be our only hope at salvation. Look at his eyes." The man peered at Bob's face. "Forest green flecked with silver..." "he murmured in disbelief. "It's him. The Chosen One." "Holdup" Bob raised a hand. "First of all, who" he gestured at the man, "The hell is he, and what is this 'chosen one' rubbish?" "As you so elegantly inquired," Azalea rolled her eyes, "This is Mercury. He's our main supplier, in addition to being a full-time annoyance. Give him your shepherd's crook." "The standard build then?" Mercury grimaced while Bob warily handed him the wooden crook. "Man this thing is absolutely horrendous. I'm going to make a few minor adjustments. I hope you don't mind." Bob stared in horror as Mercury chopped the curved portion off. "You defaced my crook!" he protested. "It was a family heirloom!" "The balance and design were simply horrible really, completely impractical in terms of combat. This is so much better", Mercury explained, as he started applying some sort of adhesive. Then he pulled out some metallic strips and began lining the formerly-crook-now-staff with it. Azalea sat down and began cleaning her sword. "The Prophecy states that one day,

Mercury handed the staff back to Bob. "Here," he said. "It's lined with diamas

metal now. The material serves as... a conduit for levancy, if I may. When ingested, it grants levanters enhanced healing and levantic abilities. You can also redirect or amplify your powers through physical weapons with diamas embedded in them. Alchemists have been debating about the existence of the Philosopher's Stone for centuries, and it turns out that diamas comes pretty damned close to being the levancer's equivalent of it." Azalea admired the shining gleam of her polished blade. "Mercury capped the ends with diamas as well. It should be able to handle anything you come across for now until you get Vee to fix you something better. She's the one who forged my blade. Out of diamas as well, obviously." "Victoria, or Vee, is our blacksmith." Mercury clarified. "Now, that'll be a hundred seg." Bob raised an eyebrow. "I thought you were the supplier." "Mercury, he's a new recruit", Azalea chided. "Fine. He's going to have to do me a favor though." Mercury turned towards Bob. "I need the unicorns on the Turquoise grasslands out of the way."

Cant use the levant, which is why he needs wings, used to be brilliant at fighting, ?dies later on in the story?

"'Shopkeeper' would be the more adequate term. Azalea gets things for free because I owe her

c'mon give it a try! What's the worst that could happen? do NOT ASK THAT QUESTION every time, i swear why do you always have to jinx it this is like deja vu of that time with the rabid llam- okay, okay calm down i get it

"I owe you three hundred seg."

Plot Idea:

Bob is angry and devastated because of the destruction of his village, yet he does not believe that he has the power to oppose Malimost, and is very scared to do so. Buchanan is committed to opposing Malimost, specifically with the goal of making the world a better place for other people, and is not scared to make personal sacrifices. Buchanan believes in the prophecy foretelling that Bob will save people from Malimost; he has been told this prophecy and many hopeful heroic stories since being a youth. Bob is highly skeptical of the prophecy, and skeptical in general too. Over the course of their journeys Bob will come to respect Buchanan and develop hope and a sense of purpose in concurring Malimost that makes personal sacrifices endurable.

TL;DR - Bob arc: reluctant, scared, selfish, skeptic -> gains trust, becomes selfless, optimistic, willing to sacrifice, brave - Buchanan: has most of the good traits already, has some flaws too, e.g. too ready to charge into battle

- llama land
 - get unicorn horn
 - start on quest
- storm
 - Leviathan (skull makes you fireproof, able to enter fire area after this)

- get key
- plants
 - get key
 - Buchanan dies

Start Story

Bob could hardly believe what had happened to his life. Just a single week earlier his only concern in life was the well being of his herd of llama's, and when he would get back to the village to see his family, and his friend Sarah. Now, a single week later, everyone he had ever known, with the sole exception of Buchanan, was dead. Burned to a crisp by Malimost's dark fire levancy. Or more likely some of his bound servants, Bob doubted that Malimost would deem his small village important enough to personally destroy for whatever unexplained offense had led to its destruction.

He still felt numb every time he thought about the destruction of his village. *How could this happen?* This village was all that he knew! Bob was completely shook and at a loss for how to move on with his life. On the one hand he clearly could not go back to his peaceful existence as a llama herder; a blissfully uneventful existence that was not boring for lack of events but rather pleasant. No Bob could never return to this idyllic way of living. The obvious reason for this was that he and Buchanan had been forced to abandon their llamas in their flight from the minions of Malimost that they found ravaging the village. Furthermore, it simply wasn't safe. However Bob desperately wanted to return to this existence. He did not feel, as Buchanan foolishly seemed to that the destruction of his village meant that they had to fight against Malimost. What a ludicrous idea! Bob internally chided his overly hopeful friend. Bob had about as much chance of decreasing how terrible Malimost's rule was as he had of winning the annual village swimming contest, and Bob couldn't swim.

Eventually, Bob supposed, I will have to seek out some other location, and somehow acquire more animals to shepherd or something. Maybe I could be a farmer? However, at the moment Bob was very far from anywhere where he could do this. And Bob wasn't going to abandon Buchanan, he'd convince him to come to. Buchanan was sane, he'd listen to reason, Bob hoped.

This plan relied on Bob and Buchanan not dying in the immediate future however, and death recently had become a prospect which was dreadfully high probability. Memories of Bob's fight against the unicorn haunted him. And yet there was also a surpsiging spark of excitement during the battle: when Bob had realized that he could really naturally channel the Levant. The feel of his magical cane turned staff in his hand had been reassuring, a firm pillar amidst the chaos of battle. He would like to experience it again, although of course not in a dangerous situation.

Buchanan walked over. "Hey Bob! You just get up?" Buchanan amicably said, standing over Bob as Bob, groaning, finally got up at the sound of Buchanan's

foot steps.

“It’s impossible to tell when it’s day and when it’s night in these blasted caverns” Bob complained, “and I’m exhausted from my battles”.

“Well you are the chosen one! Better get used to battles and exhaustion and the like.” Buchanan said, in an air much too casual for Bob’s liking.

Oh, not this prophecy nonsense again Bob internally groaned. Buchnaa was obsessed with this prophecy that he had apparently heard many times when he was young: that a green eyed llama herder, the first levancer among his people, would suffer a great tragedy and go on to exact retribution on Malimost. Or something. In truth the prophecy was incredibly vague, and muddled through constant retelling via the oral tradition. Somehow, Buchanan believed that Bob’s victory over the unicorn in addition to the other events that have transpired proved that Bob was somehow special and destined to save people from Malimost’s oppressive rule.

This of course was utter nonsense. His newfound levantic powers were of course very surprising. However it was very unlikely that Bob would become a strong levancer, and completely laughable to speak of him opposing Malimost, who was a more powerful levancer than even the legendary Rand! No one better than Malimost had challenged him in a thousand years, not that Malimost gave levancers much chance: Malimost made sure that levancers were bound to him as early as possible, or killed if they would not consent to be bound with his oathstone. There were always rogue levancers who were able to hide, but these were insignificant flies compared to Malimost.

No, Bob was not destined for great power. Usually when Levancy first started showing up in the children in a new region the levancers were incredibly weak. No one really knew how new aspects of the Levant were created. The Levant was clearly tied in an intricate way to the geography of a region: the strength of each type of Levancy that levancers could channel depended greatly on where they were. Only the most powerful levancers could even channel levancy of a different type than the source that occupied their region. When a source of Levant came to a new region some children – it wasn’t clear how they were determined, although some hypothesized that the children had to have been somehow “exposed” directly to the new source of Levancy – would develop Levantic abilities.

Maybe in some time long gone Bob’s powers might have been a blessing that gave him great joy. Now however they were a mark over his head. It would be exceedingly difficult to find a way to live the quiet life that he desired, as if any of Malimost’s minions found out about him he would be hunted down.

Now that Bob had defeated the unicorn the caverners had promised that they would help him and Buchanan. It was time to go see what plan they had in mind.

“Let’s go talk to Azeala and Mercury now that we’ve killed their dang unicorns.” Bob said, pointedly ignoring Buchannan’s comment about his supposed destiny.

“You’re not even going to wait for breakfast?” Buchannan laughed.

“No, I want to get this over with as soon as possible”, Bob said seriously “we can eat once we’re on the road to safety, and once they’ve explained why we had to risk our necks to kill those unicorns.”

“Bob, you know that those unicorns were probably somewhat responsible for the desolation of our village...” Buchanan, said, sounding surprised at Bob’s anger.

“I don’t freaking care!” Bob screamed. “The majority of the world is an accomplice of Malimost! Any other minion could have destroyed the village for a reason as arbitrary as whatever the unicorns had. The destroyed village is a sunk cost. There’s no fixing it. Nothing we can do will bring them back. It’ll just make us join them in the ranks of the dead. And don’t you start about that corroded prophecy and hope for a better life for the rest of the inhabitants of this earth and about how I’m being selfish. I’m simply sensible and you know it!”

Buchannan looked somewhat put out by this. But it of course wasn’t in his nature to verbally argue with Bob about this. Nor was it his nature to be swayed from his foolish beliefs in prophecies. Most of the time Bob thought that these traits were fairly admirable in Buchannan. But an optimist only survived when times were good. In bad times optimism was often fatal.

Bob quickly rolled up his gear into his pack and he and Buchanan walked down the cavern paths in silence: Bob in agry silence, Buchanan in contemplative silence.

They reached the glowing central cavern and Bob was again shocked by its magnificence. In contrast to the rest of the caverns this cavern was intensely brightly lit, by torches covering the walls and large fire pits with roaring bonfires. The seeming waste of this light would have bothered him if he didn’t know that this wood did not release flames that burned hot, the flames emitted electromagnetic radiation in a remarkably specific subset of the visible spectrum: namely the emitted almost soley visible light. Furthermore the wood had remarkably high energy density. The combined effect was that this wood could glow a vibrarnt bright white for a very long time. The flames served a dual purpose: to provide light, and to provide a reminder that the people in this cavern resisted Malimost, and had powerful Levanter, for example a master of plant levancy who was willing to set up this light supply for them.

Stalagmites glistened above, the light reflecting off of their many surfaces. On close inspection this room was similarly wet to the other caverns, but this place felt much less dreary because of the light.

Buchannan spotted Mercury and Azeala waiting at the booth where they had advertised that they would be waiting. They looked incredibly anxious, and

clearly had not yet spotted Bob and Buchanan.

Right as he was about to start walking towards them however, he had a very rational thought. "Wait Bucky" he whispered, "can we talk about this first?"

"What? Is something wrong Bob?" Buchanan said, showing his characteristic look of concern.

"It's just, well, we didn't really understand how dangerous it was going to be to face that unicorn. Honestly we could have died."

"Well, yeah" Buchannan admitted reluctantly. "But doesn't it feel good to defeat them? We made the world a safer place..." Buchannan trailed off when he saw Bob's expression of disgust. "ok, but that was a one time thing, and I'm sure this unicorn horn is of vital importance to them", he said gesturing to his pack which contained their hard won unicorn horn. "They'll help us now". "We can go somewhere safe, and you will have time to learn about your new Levantic abilities. Then when you're ready the prophecy implies that you will be presented some opportunity to overthrow Malimost and make the world a better place!" Buchanan said enthusiastically.

"Imporant opportunities never present themselves, they only come after intense personal effort", Bob derisively said, although the affect was diminished by it being said in a whisper.

"Listen Buchannan though, this prophecy buisness is exactly what I'm worried about. They, like you, seem to believe I probably have an important part in their so-called battle against Malimost. Even if they aren't deluded by this prophecy they know that I'm a Levancer. I don't think they are going to let me go off into some quiet place. I think they're going to push me to go on a quest to defeat Malimost."

Buchannan sighed. "I doubt it. But if it's true I'll stand by you: you shouldn't be forced to go on a quest before you're ready."

"No one is ever ready for something that they cannot do yet" Bob thought. But he decided not to point this out verbally. "Thanks Bucky! I knew I could count on you." he said instead.

Bob and Buchanan walked across the large carervn to the booth where Mercury and Azeala were waiting. Their faces lit up in what Bob thought looked suspiciously like surprise at seeing him and Buchanan alive.

"Did you get me the unicorn horn I needed" Mercury asked, sounding pleased.

"Yes I've got it right here!" Buchanan said happily, moving to pull it out.

"Not right here..." Azeala said. "Let's have this conversation somewhere a bit more private. I think that a lot of things about this shouldn't become common knowledge. These people are good people but the only true way to contain a secret is to never spread it in the first place."

Rather than placate Bob as Azeala might have guessed this would, the attempts at greater secrecy worried Bob. It reeked of further plotting to Bob, and he did not like the sound of that. Furthermore the idea that secrets were not safe even in this stronghold was greatly disturbing, not in the least because Bob had kind of naively taken for granted that he was not being spied on. Bob wasn't very used to this whole being rogue thing.

Bob reluctantly followed after Azeala, Mercury and Buchanan into a tunnel offshooting from the main cavern. After walking for a very short while they came to a small enclosed room. They walked in and Mercury bolted closed the door. "We are totally secure now" said Azeala. "This room has been Levantically soundproofed, no-one, even with levancy could possibly hear our discussion now".

Bob snorted derisively. He sincerely doubted that the security placed on this room was truly unbreakable to a levantic measure.

"Don't believe me, do you?" Azeala smirked at his chagrined expression when he realized that she had heard him. The existence of one-way functions with backdoors is not so implausible, it is in fact the basis for this really cool algorithm in theoretical computer science called RSA.

"Yeah", Mercury chimed in, "or for an even simpler example just think about the problem of factoring a semiprime in the cases where you have no information and the case where you are given a prime divisor of the semiprime!"

"Um ok" Bob said. "It just seems hard to do that with like sound waves." Like sure you could encrypt a digital signal, but we have an analog time series here.

"just because you cannot understand it right now doesn't mean that it's false." Azeala reprimanded. "If you were thinkign less skeptically you would realize that you actually understand very little about Levancy so it is entirely plausible that you would not know the mechanism by which it works"

"Although truth be told neither of us have any idea how it works either" Mercury admitted after a pause.

"ok, to business. You can get out the unicorn horn now Buchanan" Azeala said in a business manner.

Buchanan pulled out the unicorn horn and handed it to Azeala.

"It's really true." Azeala whispered in wonder, clearly speaking only to herself. "The prophecy, everything that we believed in".

"Enough!" Bob shouted. "You can find another poor fellow to trick into fulfilling your dang prophecy. I won't be fooled though. The whole endeavor is hopeless".

Heedless of Bob, Azeala chanted

"The chosen one shall come forth from the llama lands, and have eyes as green as the grass that the llama is grazed on a humble llama shepherd by birth, and yet destined to shake the earth the one will

be known by their green eyes and the fact that if they beat a unicorn in battle and take its horn then the horn will turn black the one will face great tribulations e.g. getting their village burned down, and will take a path either to eradicate evil or become it”

Bob was shook by the power of her voice, but shook it off, there was no such thing as prophecy. Azeala had just practiced theatrical skills. It was easy to impress a poor llama herder. Before Bob could object further Mercury pulled another horn, this one a pure white. Not the beautiful pearly white of a typical unicorn horn, but rather a blinding white light that almost hurt to look at, in the same way that the unicorn horn that Bob had collected from the unicorn had turned darker than the darkest night.

"This is the fabled horn created by the legendary levanter Rand shortly before his death. If you'll remember Rand was actually the oracle that initially issued the very prophecy that you are destined to fulfil. Rand had no idea why he was making this horn at the time that he made it, but made it because of an impression that it would be important in the future.

And lucky that he did, he died shortly after making it. It has long been conjectured that this horn had some relation to the prophecy, it is too much of a coincidence that a black horn appears in the prophecy, an obvious dual to the white horn supposedly created by Rand. I say supposedly because the horn was lost after Rand died, many people assumed that it burned with the rest of Rand's famed tower of Levancy and the artifacts that Malimost burned there. If not, it seemed almost certain that the horn had come into possession of Malimost, he collected nearly all the magical artifacts.

However, we found this horn lying on the ground somewhere recently. And then we ran into you. We had to know if the prophecy was true. We know it was super dangerous to send you, a barely awakened levancer, to face a unicorn. But we had to. Had to know. And now? It appears that we were correct.

Most people seem to believe that when the chosen one wields both horns and shouts copolla then something magical will happen, which will be critical towards bringing about the downfall of Malimost.

So how about you try it?

Bob was totally blown away. "No way" he tried to object, but it sounded half-hearted even to himself.

"You've got nothing to lose if this is all a prophecy dreamed up by a 17 year old at 2:13 AM with a messed up sleep schedule." Azeala noted rationally.

"OK, I'll do it" Bob whispered.

Azeala and Mercury reverently bestowed the horns to Bob, the deep black horn to the left hand and the pure white horn to the right hand.

Bob held them apprehensively. Then, after looking to Buchanan who vigorously

affirmed that he thought this was a great idea with a nod of his head, Bob touched the horns together and whispered “Coppolla”.

At first it seemed like nothing was going to happen. However, after a few seconds, fireflies swarmed out of unseen pores in the caverns. The fireflies congregated into a massive blob in front of Bob.

“Fireflies are particularly connected to the Levant” Azeala noted quietly. “This is super cool”.

“Hello friend!” The sound emanated from the mass of fireflies. “I have no idea what a situation you are in, but I know that it will surely be very dire, hence I was instructed to make these precautions. It seems that if must record this something bad is going to happen to me. However the time frame for this is not clear, so I fear not for myself. I believe that I will likely die a peaceful death one day, when I am ready. More, I fear for you and your fellow citizens in whatever trying time that you live. Because of how hard your time will likely be, I have made this provision to help you.”

“I have keyed this recording to your hand: in order to be seeing this recording you must fit the description giving in the prophecy. The white unicorn horn is keyed to your humble upbringing as a lammaa herder, while the black unicorn horn is keyed to your great potential levantic power. United together the white horn that I created, and the black horn that you must have created by defeating a unicorn with your levantic powers, will, by the levancy that I have worked on my white horn, create this recording for you.”

“You might wonder how I am protecting this information from getting into the wrong hands, for a powerful malicious levancer could equally well defeat a unicorn.”

“The protection is in the white unicorn horn. I won’t get into any details, but it would basically incinerate you if you were seeking the secret that I have hidden out of desire for personal power or gain.”

“Bob, as the chosen one, you are marked. You are blessed with incredibly strong levantic abilities, but also cursed with the fact that a sufficiently powerful dark levancer with the right artifacts can easily detect you. You lived a peaceful existence before your fate became clear. However, now it is evident that there is only one way forward for you: you must rid the world of whatever great evil has come upon it.”

“My general advice for how to go about this would be to train with Levancy until you are sufficiently good to defeat whatever adversary it is that you face.”

“If you believe that will be sufficient, that is certainly the safest way”

“However, I feel taht it is likely that you are new and unexperienced compared to your foe. Thus, I will tell you something that I sincerely hope no one else knows. The seret I am about to tell you is very dangerous. You must make sure it does not get into the wrong hands. I have trust in you however.”

“Once, when I was a much younger levancer, less acquainted with the art of levancy, I discovered an extremely powerful artifact. It is called *Amplification*. Amplification has the ability to modify levantic strenght, in particular by multiplying it by a scalar in $(0,2)$ of the wielders choice in a bubble around the wielder. I heard lore of this artifact, went searching for it and eventually found it. The power of this artifact is unlike any other artifact that I know of. It has the ability to increase ones levantic power such as to be sufficient to crush any with even vaguely similar levels of levantic power beforehand. It could be used to mask levantic presence while sneaking. It could be used to mitigate the levantic powers of a powerful levancer. A levancer holding this artifact would have an unbeatable edge in any battle!”

“In my naivety I took it. I used it. It felt amazing. But I realized that I was growing addicted to it so I stopped”

“I tell you this story to make sure that you do not treat the swrot of amplification lightly as I did.”

“To secure the sword of amplification I used it to seal it with the levancy. Only if you get 3 enchantments to say, which I will denote as the keys, can you pull the sword of amplification from the fabric of the levant. These keys will not be easy to obtain, but there can be no security with shortcuts: by achieving the keys you will have proved yourself.”

“The first key is guarded by Lincoln the Leviathan, in the depths of the sea of storms. Once you acquire that key I will give you the information about how to get the rest of the keys.”

“Best of luck to you! And hurry! Presumably the fate of the world rests on your shoulders. If that’s not enough, also the weight of the future. At the very least your own fate is in jeopardy. Cyaaaaaaaaaaa.”

After the cloud of fireflies echoed the last word of Rand’s message the cloud dispersed into individual fireflies that in turn receded into the pores of the cavern.

Azeala wasted no time, “Bob, do you understand how important this is now? Will you seek the sword of amplification? And will you use it to defeat Malimost?”

Bob thought about protesting on the grounds that they didn’t know that Rand had spoken truly in the message, or even that the message was from the legendary levancer Rand, or even that such a person ever existed. He decided not to however. He tried to make a habit of not lying to himself. Instead he stalled effectively.

“Yes I understand how important this is. Sorry this is such a huge shock. Please give me a moment to think about the implications of this statement” Bob said in a weak voice. Bob wasn’t opposed to lying to others, yet the weak voice was not completely a lie intended to garner pity and give him some time. The words of Rand were genuinely very disturbing. *I’m marked?* Bob thought. *Malimost will never leave me alone as long as he can detect my levancy? Should I go on this quest? Am I seriously considering this? It’s ridiculously dangerous. And*

yet at the same time, probably much safer than waiting for Malimost to come and destroy me. I guess I have to either learn how to use levancy well enough to protect myself, or figure out how to hide myself. Bob suddenly remembered that Bob had said that the sword of Amplification not only possessed the ability to Amplify power, but also to dampen it, hiding the wielding levancer.

“I will pursue this quest.” Bob finally said, just as people were getting uncomfortable with his silence. “I will travel to the sea of storms, claim the first key from the Leviathan. Then I will keep travelling to find the rest of the keys, and acquire the sword of Amplification. And finally, once I have acquired this unmatched artifact, I will use it to free myself from the continual pursuit of Malimost.”

Azeala and Mercury were taken aback from his sudden seeming willingness to embark on a quest to defeat Malimost.

“I knew you’d decide to do the right thing!” Bucky praised, “The world will forever remember you as the one who freed the world from Malimost’s tyranny. If you will accept me as your companion on the quest I will gladly accompany you!”

Real tears filled Bob’s eyes. By design of Bob’s cryptic commit message Bucky completely misunderstood him. Yes Bob would pursue the Sword of Amplification. But he would not use the artifact to confront Malimost. He would use it to mask his levantic scent, freeing him from the pursuit of Malimost. He, and Bucky too of course, could find some new pasture, a new flock of llamas to tend. Bob was not so presumptuous as to adopt the world as his flock to protect. Bucky would understand one day. The keys were likely not very heavily guarded. In essence he had to fight three more “bosses” similar in power to the unicorn that he had fought the previous day. With the aid of powerful rogue levancers, that Mercury and Azeala were certain to make help them now that his position as “the chosen one” was confirmed, these battles should be fairly straightforward. In the process of his travels he would also be able to learn levancy from some masters. This would probably prove useful in his future. Bob estimated that he had maybe a 90% shot at getting each key, and that the events “Bob gets key i ” for $i=1,2,3$ were likely independent. Thus he had approximately a 72% chance of success overall. This was compared to the alternative of facing Malimost, a more powerful levancer than any alive in 1000 years, more powerful than this Rand fellow who was giving him this quest. Bob estimated his chance of success against Malimost to be about 0.01%. Of course this had to be weighted by the fact that it was a more desirable outcome: Rand wouldn’t have to hide all his life. However, his objective function was clearly maximized by the first strategy. Of course Bob’s tear filled eyes would be misinterpreted as gratitude. Bob almost couldn’t stand it.

“Of course I want you to come Bucky!” Bob gladly cried. “What of the people who resist Malimost? Am I correct in assuming that we now get an army of levancers to help us in this crucial quest?”

“Well” Azeala said looking ashamed, glancing at Mercury who also looked

ashamed, “not exactly”. “You see, not everyone here can be trusted. There are some who don’t believe so strongly in the prophecy. There are many who would see you as a weak levancer, and believe that they deserve this powerful artifact more than you. For honorable reasons, or even selfish reasons. No, it’s”

some other stuff if you gather some keys you can get a really powerful thing that even I didnt use for some reason (worried that it corrutps? could this thing be jumpydude???) so get the keys

ok so somehow we have to motivate getting keys to get some artifact thing that is useful for defeating malimost

Buchanan: ok bob sorry but looks like we got to Bob: no

something happens that basically forces him, or i guess he could chose. probably not ready for this yet in his arc tho. Bob: rip