

**Many Realms Transcript: Episode 92**  
**The Many Merchants of Malune 03: The Road Never Travelled**

**Melancholy strings**

**Jordan:** Previously on the Many Merchants of Malune we got to hear a bit more about the heroes of our story as we flashed forward to the end of the coastal eclipse. However, their fleeting revelry quickly gave way to disaster as the port of Solay was the site of a violent fire. The town banded together and managed to extinguish the flames and the remaining ships from the fire carried off the visitors of Solay as well as many residents, including Radollo, as they fled the continent of Malune. Then Rotti, the port warden, gathered the town for a meeting. She tells the remaining denizens that she will be departing in a caravan for the capital city of Astra on the road to astra, leaving the next morning. She implored the rest of the town to follow her. With little time, our merchants set to preparing for the long, arduous journey ahead.

**[Music fades out]**

**Jesse:** **[soft and smooth]** Good morning out there to all of you in La La Land. This is Jesse, and I'm playing Sylvie the rogue. And I'm excited to tell you that today, on NPR's *All Things Considered*, it's good to be here.

**Jorie:** **[soft and smooth]** Good morning. It is a sunny Sunday at 11:33am. And I am Jorie. I am playing Zeke, the fighter. And I'm here to tell you it's good to be here.

**Eli:** **[loud and enthusiastic]** Hey, everyone, I'm Eli. I play Jolie the cleric, and it's good to be here, here, here, here! **[singing the radio jingle]** *Chum FM!*

**Jordan:** Nice.

**Jesse:** Can we use that? **[Jorie laughs]**

**Jordan:** And this Sunday, Sunday, Sunday, we're gonna get down to getting out of Solay. Welcome to Many, Many, Many, Many, Many, Many, Many—no one's going to come in with me? [dispirited] Welcome to Many Realms. **[Laughter]**

**[Many Realms theme]**

So last time on the Many Merchants of Malune we ended with the port warden Rotti addressing the town saying that tomorrow, on the morrow, you will all be departing across the road to Astra to—well, you guessed it—Astra.

And you guys have all exactly one day to basically prepare, should you be going—which, spoiler alert, you probably will. And if anyone wants to—does anyone even have the slightest hankering to not go?

**Jesse:** You kind of trashed the town last time? Like, you trashed it really good and hard and made it super shitty, so that we wouldn't want to stay?

**Eli:** And we, in fact, don't want to say.

**Jordan:** I mean, that was a direct challenge to just see if we would defy the narrative. And I'm glad that we're all on board.

**Jesse:** We'll be good.

**Jordan:** Yeah, but we are going to start—once a session—we're gonna call it a Divine Intervention roll. What I'm going to do is roll a dice. I'm gonna guess one number on this d20. If I get it right, something terrible is going to happen to somebody.

And I'm gonna do that every session and hopefully at one point I get it and hopefully at one point I do it at—I'm hoping that we're deep into this campaign and I do this at a really integral moment. And I just totally—like a lightning bolt kills somebody. That's what I'm hoping for.

But today we're going to start off this session with that, so it would be pretty—

**Jorie:** Is it always gonna be lightning?

**Jordan:** No, no, it'll be more interesting than lightning. The number today is going to come from Eli. Eli, what is the unlucky number?

**Eli:** 2!

**Jordan:** All right.

**Jesse:** This is like a whole segment.

**Jorie:** I like it!

**Eli:** I don't.

**Jorie:** Oh.

**Jordan:** 17. Today divine intervention in a negative way has not come to smite you.

**Jesse:** Now you have to roll for divine intervention (positive). **[laughter]**

**Jorie:** Yeah! Divine intervention (Jorie gets that money).

**Jordan:** No, I'm gonna now call it "The Winds of Fate". **[Wind blows, chimes shimmer]** We got a four.

**Jorie:** That's so close to two; we should get something kind of good.

**Jordan:** No, the winds of fate are quite—it's going to happen at some point in the session, the winds of fate are—it's going to be really hype. So just bear with the extended bits that I'm sure will get cut down for the payoff later on.

You guys all have basically one day you know you can have your cups of coffee in the morning and then get to trying to avoid your demise. What I would like to see is, as much as you guys can in character—we're happy to do it through scenes or through a little bit more crunchy stuff—but I just want you guys to think as you're kind of prepping—who your character is, how prepared are they, avenues you're going to have to explore...

**Jorie:** I think Zeke and his family are probably—of the player characters—the most prepared.

**Jesse:** **[offended]** Okay. Wow! **[cross-talk as Eli also protests]**

**Jorie:** That's not true. You're also prepared, because you're from out of town. I'm wrong.

**Jesse:** I guess it's just Jesse that's a piece of shit who doesn't have their act together.

**Jorie:** You did that on purpose!

**Eli:** You did say you're a piece of shit who didn't have their act together.

**Jorie:** Your character description was "piece of shit"--

**Jordan:** Pizza shit.

**Jorie:** So I want to set a scene with somebody.

**Jorie:** Did I talk to you at all last time?

**Eli:** I don't think we said like, "hey, let's leave".

**Jorie:** So the morning of the packing—the Great Packing of Solay, as it will be called in history—you have a knock on your door. **[knocking]**

**[Light, cheerful piano music]**

**Eli:** Diane comes to the door with a big yawn, doing the belly scratching thing, and calls Jolie over.

**Jolie:** Good morning, Zeke.

**Jorie:** Yeah. Zeke is there with his daughter—one of his daughters. I think it's—

**Eli:** Nomi?

**Jorie:** No it's the other one.

**Jesse:** It's definitely Hilda.

**Eli:** Okay.

**Jorie:** Yeah, Nomi's off doing mischief. Zeke and Hilda are there. I think you also know his girls; they're around the town. You might know Nomi better, but you know them both. So they're there, Zeke is straight up like:

**Zeke:** Good morning Are you planning on going today?

**Jolie:** Yes, we had a couple of things to tie up. But we have a wagon around back and it's pretty pretty kitted out. How about you? What's your plan?

**Zeke:** Yeah, I have to figure out a way to bring my equipment with me to do my work. But I was thinking, if we're all heading out tomorrow, who knows? I know things can get rough on this trail. I know lots of people get hurt or stuff happens, get separated. I thought between you and me, I have quite a bit of material I can do. I can do pretty well in a conflict situation if, God forbid, that happens. I know you are resourceful in keeping up with food and shelter. You know, that kind of home stuff.

**Jorie:** Maybe Hilda interrupts him and she says:

**Hilda:** What my dad is trying to say is he wants to stick together. He wants to provide you some protection, in exchange for you maybe helping him support the three of us. It's a...a deal!

**Eli:** Jolie laughs and says:

**Jolie:** Well, Zeke, I think we've always looked out for each other on Merchants' Row. That's the dynamic that I felt, and I think you've felt that too. And so I think it's a great idea.

To be fully transparent with you, Diane and I were going to look through the houses that seem like they're already evacuated and grab some extra supplies, and then head out first thing tomorrow morning with Rotti. How does that sound to you?

**Zeke:** Oh...

**Jorie:** Zeke, I think, balks at that. He's not a 'go through other people's stuff' kind of guy. He thinks the private should stay private. But Hilda says:

**Hilda:** Whatever you need. So many people are already gone, I guess.

**Jolie:** Yeah. We're not, for the record, planning to go through the stuff of people who are still here.

**Jorie:** He grumbles. You're right, but Hilda's kind of pushing him through this.

**Eli:** Jolie and Diane think it's funny. I think the dynamic is like "haha, you're curmudgeonly". Yeah. And that's okay. So they laugh at him, they're like:

**Jolie:** Alright, if you don't want to partake...

**Eli:** And then Jolie winks at Hilda in case she wants to sneak off and help later.

**Jolie:** ...then we'll hitch our wagons together tomorrow morning.

**Zeke:** Sounds like a plan. Good luck with your...errands.

**[Slow, low, strings music]**

**Jesse:** When we last left off, Sylvie I think was in a pretty morose state after the fire at the port. She was a little freaked by all of the suffering and death and how she was just kind of caught up in the middle of it and not very helpful.

But I think that Sylvie is very resilient. I think she's a person who's been through a lot of hardship. She knows she has to move quickly and adapt to whatever the situation is, because that's been her entire life.

So I think the next morning she sort of snapped out of that funk. And I think that early in the morning, Fabio and Paz awakened to Sylvie very early packing up stuff in their little boarding house room. Poorly mismanaged, she's just bundling things up. She's swearing as she drops things or breaks things and it's just sort of with a frantic energy trying to get everything packed.

And I don't know—do you want to do a Sylvie scene with the troupe or we can go somewhere else?

**Jordan:** I forget it, are you playing all of them?

**Jesse:** I don't want to do all of them. I don't think we should do that. I think you should do some of the NPCs.

**Jordan:** I will, I will.

**Jesse:** Maybe Fabio and Paz are awoken by the sound of Sylvie kind of packing up all of their earthly possessions.

**Jordan:** Yeah, what's Fabio's vibe?

**Jesse:** Fabio genuinely likes being a performer. He's way more chill and easygoing than Sylvie and less kind of dominant, so he just sort of follows what she tells him to do. He likes to drink and flirt and just he's a party guy.

**Jordan:** Okay.

**Fabio:** Hey—hey...? Wha—what's this?

**Sylvie:** Hey, I'm glad you're up. Can you start packing up your clothes and stuff?

**Fabio:** They're already packed. I mean...

**Sylvie:** Well then, give me a hand with this, will you?

**Fabio:** What's got you so flustered?

**Sylvie:** Weren't you there last night when Rotti said it was time to go?

**Fabio:** Yeah. I mean, I mean, we got all day.

**Sylvie:** Fabio, how do you think we're going to get out of Solay?

**Fabio:** Oh, I saw a pretty nice looking wagon around the alleyway there. And I saw old man Jeremiah flee on the ship yesterday, so...not like he's gonna need it. So that takes care of that.

**Sylvie:** I don't trust anything until we have it in our hands at this point. The atmosphere in the town is a little high strung.

**Jordan:** He's walked over to the window that is overlooking this alley where the wagon is. And he's like:

**Fabio:** Yeah, high strung is right. **[sheepish]** We should probably go get that now.

**Jesse:** She snatches up her trusty dagger from the countertop and tucks it into her belt. And she says:

**Sylvie:** Let's go shopping.

**Jordan:** He leads you out. And there is a fella that is already basically throwing their stuff onto it.

**Jesse:** Sylvie makes eye contact with Fabio knowingly and then screams and runs forward.

**[Fast paced, panicked piano]**

**Sylvie:** Oh my god, what are you doing to my wagon? I need that! Today is the day we're all evacuating! Get your stuff out of there! That's mine!

**Wagon Guy:** Uhh...

**Sylvie:** Who do you think you are, just running around here, thinking that you can just take what's not yours? That's completely despicable behaviour!

**Jordan:** You're gonna have to—is there—I forget which it is. Because this guy looks at you with eyes that are like: he also knows that this is Jeremiah's. But maybe there's some dealings he didn't hear about, you know, maybe it's promised to you. But what is clear to you—let me see the roll first, actually.

**Jesse:** That is a nine. Bad rolls, bad rolls in the dice.

**Jordan:** Okay. I guess it's fair to say actually, you *don't* really pick up on that. He just kind of looks at you and squints his eyes. And he's like:

**Wagon Guy:** I don't think that this is your wagon.

**Jesse:** I pull my dagger out of my belt and I say:

**Sylvie:** I think it is my wagon!

**Jordan:** He has his shoulders slink down in kind of a rut. He says:

**Wagon Guy:** Okay, just let me get my stuff off and I'll dust off to somewhere else.

**Sylvie:** Tough breaks, pal. Maybe there's another wagon around the corner.

**Jordan:** Okay, he goes around the back. And he starts offloading some of his bags, and he's kind of just throwing them onto the sidewalk, and he's pretty defeated by it. So he throws a couple of these just brown sacks, clearly just the miscellaneous stuff, and then he reaches in over the wagon and he produces a short sword.

**Jesse:** Oh, shit.

**Jordan:** The presence that this man has is like he's also perhaps a bit of a—he gave you a little bit of a performance there. It's a little bit of a charlatan. But in terms of imposing physical demeanour, he's not like, “holy shit!” But he does have a bigger sword.

**Jesse:** I'm going to try to give him a chance to not do something stupid.

**Jordan:** **[scoffs]** Okay, *Dirty Harry* over here!

**Jesse:** This is my dynamic, fun new character. And she says:

**Sylvie:** **[soothing and decisive]** It doesn't have to go like this. There's two of us here. You can't take us both. Take your shit and go.

**Jordan:** Okay. Intimidation. **[dice roll]** Oof.

**Jesse:** That's eight.

**[Music ends]**

**Jordan:** Damn. He's gonna step forward. Yeah, we're gonna choose some violence! This is it, you know? You're basically telling this guy to shove off and



potentially just be fucked if he can't find a different one. So this probably isn't the first instance of this type of violence even transpiring today.

He's gonna roll at you! **[dice roll]** 11. What's your AC?

**Jesse:** Am I wearing my armour?

**Jordan:** I think it's fair to say you were already up. You were already kind of getting ready for the day. Yeah, you didn't bring your sword, but...

**Jesse:** My Armour Class is 13 in that instance.

**[Exciting drumming]**

**Jordan:** He takes a swipe at you. He's done with conversation. He takes a swipe but he doesn't really judge the distance of his sword. He's not a sword fighter. All you have to really do is kind of take a slight step back to avoid that blow.

And then you're kind of both like, you know, no one's been hurt at this point. So it's kind of like returning back to the showdown that you're in. He's not like charging you or anything.

**Jesse:** I'm flicking eyes over to Fabio, like, should we see if we can take this guy? There's a wagon right here. There might not be a wagon anywhere else later.

**Jordan:** Have you killed before?

**Jesse:** If there's been anything, it's been like this: like an alley fight, and it's not sticking around to see what transpires. It's certainly not going with the malice of cutting a throat or anything like that. It's brawls.

**Jordan:** So what is the—for Sylvie, what is this—? Is she in a place because of this, that she'd be willing to do that? Is that a line? Or is it just that hasn't happened before? For you, I mean, obviously, this is a character moment of sorts.

**Jesse:** I think in Sylvie's mind, I'm giving this guy a few licks and then saying, "you were trounced, we're taking this wagon" is the most ideal outcome.

**Jordan:** Yeah. **[snickers]**

**Jesse:** She doesn't want to have to kill anybody. What?

**Jordan:** I just liked the "you were trounced". Sorry.

**Jesse:** I'm going to trounce him!

**Jordan:** Just after the *Dirty Harry* thing, like, "go ahead, I'll trounce you!"

**Jesse:** "Make my trounce." Yeah. And I think it could honestly be a moment to moment, round to round thing. If it comes to: he's not going to surrender, and I have to get him down, then I guess we'll see what happens there.

**Jordan:** Okay, I'm gonna say that he has only taken a swipe at you, obviously, because that would be a little unfair. But now you're trying to draw a scene as well. He's brandishing that weapon. He's now even just shouting "get away from here".

**Jesse:** Are there other people around?

**Jordan:** Not yet. But it's going from this quiet thing that you guys are having, and this this wagon that only you two seem to know about, to now he's starting to really try and get you away.

**Jesse:** Can me and Fabio flank him?

**Jordan:** Okay, so you want-how do you want that to go? Are you trying to distract him, and then Fabio just kind of instinctively knows, because you guys...? Or what's the-

**Jesse:** The advantage we have here is numbers, and I want to press that advantage. So maybe if we're around the side of the wagon, and I'm focusing him, then yeah, Fabio's creeping around the other side and trying to get the drop on him from behind.

**Jordan:** Okay. I'm trying to avoid going into combat, if that's fine with you. Is a Dex saving throw sound fair? Because what I'm thinking is, you have to essentially engage him, basically give him the opportunity to try to attack you, avoid it, or whatever.

**Jesse:** And if I fail this save, I'm gonna get hit?

**Jordan:** Um. Prob...ably. Yeah.

**Jesse:** Okay.

**Jordan:** Basically, in some way, you have to threaten him, draw his attention, so that Fabio has the opportunity to run around. Whether that's putting yourself in danger, throwing fucking sand in his eye, or something.

**Jesse:** Yeah, I'll draw a little closer. And I'll try to engage him such that he thinks he can land a blow on me and that he won't be looking for Fabio.

**Jordan:** Okay, so–yeah, can we do a Dex saving throw?

**Jesse:** 12.

**Jordan:** It's good. DC was 11. Because again, he's not a fighter. So you step up–well, you tell me.

**Jesse:** He's shouting and I drop to this threatening whisper and I go:

**Sylvie:** You don't need to do that. I'm giving you one last chance–

**Jesse:** And I try to get in close. I'm sort of performing like I think he's not going to hit me. And then when he does, I kind of dart back and I go:

**Sylvie:** It's not as easy as that, bud!

**Jordan:** At which point now he's kind of put his back to the wagon, and you guys are on either side of him. So Fabio is not directly behind him. And he's kind of waving his sword back and forth trying to address both of you. And you know, you guys are probably able to get a little bit closer, and then...it's a bit of a dance right now.

Now he quite literally looks like a cornered animal, with all of his possessions splayed out in front of him. But you've definitely pressed the advantage. So how do you wanna handle that?

**Jesse:** If he doesn't look like he's gonna surrender or yield or run? Then I'm gonna go in for a blow. Not trying to get anything lethal or vital or anything. Just be like, "We mean business. We will fuck you up. Get out of here."

**Jordan:** Yeah, he's kind of moreso panic-ridden right now, right? He's not even gonna see that reason. Yeah, he's just trying to, in his mind, also fight for his life. You guys are brandishing. He doesn't know that you're–

**Jesse:** He's brandishing a weapon!

**Jordan:** I know. But I mean, he doesn't know that you're like, "I would like to not have to kill this guy". He probably is like, "these fucking two people are trying to kill me". Okay, so you want to go in, you basically want to do an attack.

**Jesse:** Yeah.

**Jordan:** Okay, so I'm gonna say you're gonna go in for that.

**Jesse:** Do I get advantage from having Fabio?

**Jordan:** Yeah, we'll call it a flank so you can roll with advantage.

**Jesse:** [dice roll] 13!

**Jordan:** That's fine. Because I mean he's not even in armour. His AC's like 9.

**Jesse:** He turns and kind of tries to keep Fabio away from him. And I just go for a light sweep on the arm that's holding the sword. Hopefully that makes him drop it. And then he realizes he's really got nothing and we can get him out of here.

**Jordan:** So you're trying to cut his arm so he kind of–

**Jesse:** Yeah.

**Jordan:** Okay. So he does have his attention on Fabio. You step forward while he's mid-swing at Fabio, and Fabio adeptly manages to also step out. You guys have a good judge of the distance of the short sword and this guy's quite predictable attacks at this point.

And you step forward and kind of slash him along the forearm. And both from the pain, as well as just the surprise–this is also someone who probably has never been cut like that before–he immediately relents, dropping the weapon, and kind of just puts his hands over his head and is now fully backed against the wagon. He has nowhere to go. You guys basically threaten him on all sides now.

But he's now indisposed, is just waiting for–in his mind–you guys to just bring him sweet release, right?

**Jesse:** So dramatic! Sylvie's cheeks are flushed, her hair is starting to come undone after a little bit of battle. And she just snarls at him; she says:

**Sylvie:** [without pause] That was your warning, get out of here now, we won't even take your shit, come back by nightfall, it'll still be here! Go! Now! Gone!

**Jordan:** He, with probably tears starting to well, starts grabbing as many of his things as he possibly can, but they're hanging off, and he drops one of the bags because he's holding it in his now freshly wounded arm. But he runs away as fast as he can down the alleyway.

**Sylvie:** I'm keeping the sword!

**Jordan:** Okay—you get a +5 magic sword—**[cracks up]** Could you imagine?

**Jesse:** Shoots fireballs nine times a day!

**Jordan:** You get **[dramatic]** the Sword of the Ancestors! **[normal]** Plus one kind of okay wagon.

**Jesse:** She turns and she just slumps against the canvas siding of it like the guy just did. And this performance of bandit is also gone too. And she just looks so tired and she rolls her eyes up to Fabio and she just says:

**Sylvie:** Fuck all the gods in the ass! This economy, am I right?

**Fabio:** Oh, it's only gonna go more shit where we're going.

**Sylvie:** Let's get the stuff out here and get out.

**Fabio:** Yeah.

**Jordan:** Great. Wonderful. Let's hop back over to Jolie and Zeke. So you guys are both gonna go start ransacking?

**Eli:** Zeke's not. Are your daughters—?

**Jordan:** Zeke's like, "Miss me with the ransacking"?

**Eli:** Maybe Hilda mentions it to Nomi.

**Jorie:** Yeah, Nomi's in.

**Jordan:** Okay, but that's okay. Because you said Zeke's fairly well prepared.

**Jorie:** The thing that Zeke's worried about is he needs to hook up this forge.

**Jordan:** **[incredulous]** To...to the wagon?

**Jorie:** Yeah! This is my whole wagon. You said the wagons have to have a personality; mine has a forge in it!

**Jordan:** I love that. It's very fantastical. That's fantastic. We'll resolve how that goes later on. All right, so Nomi and Jolie—what about Diane?

**Eli:** Yeah, I think it's honestly Diane's idea. Diane is more like, "let's ransack!" and Jolie's like, "as long as it's homes that aren't occupied!"

**Jordan:** Okay, so we've got a little bit of Diane and Nomi, then. You're just ransacking houses that look abandoned?

**Eli:** No. So the first thing that we want to do is look for shops that are not taken care of, because those will be the easiest to tell. Because they're not locked and no one's in them. If it's unlocked and no one's in them, it's clear they're gone.

**Jordan:** Okay.

**Eli:** I have written in this order: We want to look for medicine and potions, and then food, and then materials and gold.

**Jordan:** Okay, roll me a d6.

**Eli:** Three.

**Jordan:** So you go to the apothecary. You "ker-slam" and open that door and it's already a fair bit has been ransacked, as you might expect. You're a little bit late to rise to the ransacking.

**[Upbeat marimba music]**

There is one woman inside who is not taking anything, but instead is actually attending and watering–

**Jesse:** –and working the shop that is not empty!

**Eli:** I want to go to empty shops!

**Jordan:** –is tending and watering some plants that are on a windowsill. They're long and viney and have basically enveloped, almost like its own curtain, one of the windows of the store.

This is not the apothecary. You would know this to be Chorli.

**Eli:** Okay.

**Jordan:** Chorli is a wiry young woman who is well-known for dealing in herbs and non-traditional medicines and also has a little blue drake on her shoulder named Plume.

**Eli:** **[envious]** I kill her for the drake.

**Jesse:** Whoa.

**Jordan:** Whoa! Okay, you said it.

**Eli:** No!

**Jordan:** So Chorli lies dead in a pool of her own blood, forever—okay, okay. Chorli is there, attending to these vines that have been there for a long time. She doesn't even really acknowledge your presence, and it's clear that people have come and gone since she's been here.

**Eli:** First of all, are there things to take?

**Jordan:** Yeah.

**Eli:** What can I take? What do I get?

**Jordan:** Yes. Roll me a...d3. **[Jesse and Eli scoff]**

**Eli:** I was going to say... Wait, what was this for them?

**Jordan:** Something else.

**Eli:** I don't like that at all.

**Jesse:** How many Chorlis were in the store.

**Jordan:** Yeah, exactly.

**Eli:** I got a three.

**Jordan:** You got three?

**Eli:** Yeah.

**Jordan:** You can look up the exact things in the book, but we'll give you two minor healing potions.

**Eli:** Okay, now I will acknowledge her.

**Jolie:** Hey, Chorli, whatcha doing?

**Chorli:** **[hesitant and stammering]** I'm all packed to go for tomorrow. But all these vines are pothos. They've been here since before I was born.

And everyone just was coming and going. And even the apothecary left yesterday. And now they can't come with me. I just wanted to give them a...fighting chance....today.

**Jolie:** Do you want me to try to pot this with you?

**Chorli:** That's—I mean, if you want to try—I don't know. [laughs nervously] I don't want to brag, but I think if it could be done, I would have done it.

**Jolie:** Okay, I don't have to help, then. Nice seeing you.

**Chorli:** Yeah, yeah, maybe...don't.

**Jolie:** Okay. I hope it survives.

**Chorli:** It...probably...won't. But I just...I just wanted. I just wanted it to have a chance.

Oh, what? **[Plume cries]** Oh, dear, I'm being dreadful. I'm so sorry. I just get really flustered around such wonderful, beautiful creatures. Did you find what you need?

**Jolie:** I did. Are you okay to leave, too?

**Chorli:** I've been packed. I'm okay.

**Jolie:** Okay, I'll see you on the road tomorrow.

**Chorli:** Okay. Bye, everyone.

**Jordan:** Okay, so what was next on your list?

**Eli:** Food?

**Jordan:** Okay, you wanna look for food?

**Eli:** Yes.

**Jordan:** Because you're a cheese monger—are you looking for a butcher? Are you looking for a fruit stand?

**Eli:** I guess dry cured meat and bread.

**Jordan:** Ooh. Cured meat's a good call. All right, roll a d6.



**Eli:** That's a two.

**Jordan:** So you go into the butcher's looking for cured meats, your beef jerky for that journey.

This place is active. There is a man behind the counter. It looked quite desolate, the windows have been smashed and stuff outside. But when you come in, it looks to be business as usual. There is a man behind the counter and a man at the counter who doesn't really acknowledge your presence when you come in—the man that is at the register.

**Eli:** Do I know them? I would know the butcher.

**Jordan:** You would know the butcher, and the man behind the counter is not the butcher.

**Eli:** Do I recognize him?

**Jordan:** This is Ben, who is otherwise someone you haven't really had a lot of interactions with. He's one of the few people that isn't a merchant in Solay. Kind of just meanders about, is a bit of a drunkard.

But here he is behind the counter as he's taking multiple gold pieces from this man for a morsel of a dried rat or something. Not even like the good stuff.

**Eli:** Oh, he's just scamming people.

**Jesse:** Did you say dried rat?

**Jordan:** Yeah.

**Jesse:** We're not doing dried rat.

**Jordan:** Sorry.

**Jesse:** Dried *rat*?

**Jordan:** Dried rat.

**Jesse:** In the town?

**Jordan:** In town.

**Jesse:** Hard times.

**Eli:** Yeah.

**Jordan:** Yeah. You were saying?

**Eli:** Oh, he's fully just scamming people. He's like, "Yeah, I'm a butcher. That's 10 gold pieces."

**Jesse:** [weakly] Who do you think dried the rat?

**Jordan:** You see a man that you know to not be the butcher behind the counter, charging another man what seems like a bit overcharged for some dried rat. That is what you see.

**Jolie:** Whatcha doing, Ben?

**Eli:** And I'm putting dried meat in my bag.

**Jordan:** You're addressing him while stealing?!

**Eli:** I don't think he works here! Fine. I'll talk to him first.

**Jolie:** What are you doing, Ben?

**Ben:** I'm working.

**Jolie:** I don't think you work here!

**Jordan:** He reaches under pulls out the deed to the place signed by the old butcher.

**Eli:** With his name on it?

**Jordan:** Yeah.

**Eli:** Can I check if he's lying?

**Jesse:** What are you, a cop?

**Eli:** Well, if he runs the place, I'm not gonna steal in front of him. If he doesn't run the place, I'm gonna steal and leave. [laughter]

**Jordan:** Okay, so what do you want? You want to just check-what?

**Eli:** I want to see if he's lying! There's a thing for that-insight?

**Jordan:** Yes, but I need to understand what you're looking for. What are you trying to see? Are you trying to see an imperfection? Some kind of—what are you trying to examine?

**Eli:** I want to scrutinize the situation of what I know of the butcher and Ben and their potential relationship. I want to look at the deed, if it looks like it's legitimate. And I want to look at Ben and see if he's lying.

**Jordan:** Okay, you can roll me Insight.

**Eli:** 13.

**Jordan:** You do feel that this situation is peculiar, but after overlooking the documents, it is all standard. There's no signs of a struggle. There's no signs of anything. And the contract itself is airtight. It is, however, dated for yesterday.

**Eli:** I nudge Nomi.

**Jolie:** What's your read?

**Nomi:** I don't care about this. Let's get some food and go.

**Jolie:** Ben, are you coming on the caravan?

**Ben:** [grunts] Well, I was thinking about it.

**Eli:** He's kind of a piece of shit.

**Jordan:** [laughs] No, he's a great guy.

**Eli:** No, for real though. Is he kind of a piece of shit?

**Jordan:** You've known him to be an opportunistic drunkard.

**Eli:** So yes. [Jordan laughs] Alright. We're taking some food and we're leaving.

**Jordan:** Oh!

**Jesse:** I really thought my thing was like, crazy, morally grey, and you're just going sicko mode on the whole town—

**Eli:** Should I—? I don't know. What should I do? Should I look in the back?

**Jesse:** What did this guy do wrong?

**Eli:** He's not the butcher, man...

**Jordan:** So listen: it's going back to—again, that's totally fine—it's a similar situation of, you've stolen before. However this is, albeit in a weird situation, illegal. It's fine if you want to do that. This guy did you say he's coming with you. All that's totally fine and you can, or you can try and do without him noticing—that's totally valid.

**Jorie:** Or we can strike a deal.

**Jesse:** Why don't you just buy some fucking rat?

**Jordan:** Well, he is overcharging.

**Eli:** He's charging so much money.

**Jesse:** That's his crime.

**Jordan:** He's extorting these people. Yes. I mean, that much is clear to you.

**Eli:** Okay, so what I'm reading in this situation is I'm not going to check the back to see if the butcher is dead or something—this seems like it was illegitimate. He was like, "I'm gonna buy the butcher and then I'm gonna like extort people for food."

**Jordan:** If nothing else, it's opportunistic. The rest of that's great for you. You don't know, he could have gone up to him and been like, **[threatening]** "Give me your fucking shop!" But there's nothing that can fully indicate that.

**Eli:** Jolie's read as like, the butcher's was probably alive and fine. It's just sketchy and he was probably shitty. So yeah, let's steal as much food as we can. We can give some to other people on the way who are more deserving. He made money. Let's go.

**Jorie:** In that case, I think Nomi is going to try and distract him.

**Eli:** Okay, sick. I love that. I want to steal as much food as possible. Like, I'll give it to the old people. I'll give it to Zeke's family. I'll give it to Sylvie—but fuck this guy!

**Jordan:** Damn...!

**Jorie:** Nomi is distracting him by asking him very specific questions about his inventory.

**Jesse:** [singing] *[These have got to be the worst pies in Solay...](#)*!

**Jorie:** She's asking, "Can you tell me about this? How long has it been aging? What kind of brine are you using?"

**Jordan:** Nomi is chatting, trying to get some details on the inventory as a distraction and you're trying to just—what? Shove shit off the shelf.?And then just dash out the door? You trying to be quiet, like incognito?

**Eli:** Trying to be quiet. And then the second it seems like he might notice what's happening, run.

**Jordan:** Alright, we're gonna call it Sleight of Hand.

**Eli:** 14.

**Jordan:** Yeah, okay.

**Eli:** Yes, Nomi!

**Jordan:** What would you want the most?

**Eli:** I'm going for volume, but the things I would pick are things with the longest shelf life, I guess.

**Jordan:** Okay, because this is gonna be the first instance of how we're going to kind of do this—it's gonna be a bit loose, so I'll need your guys as well, but essentially it's for your wagon, you're gonna be able to steal one day's worth of food right now. In terms of food, we're gonna break it into days.

**Jesse:** Yeah, a day's worth of rats.

**Jordan:** Yeah, of rats.

**Eli:** Oh no, is it all rats?

**Jordan:** –of rat-tions!

**Jesse:** Okay. Rat-tions. Let's lean in.

**Eli:** I want to be clear, ideally I'm going for beef, or chicken...

**Jesse:** Well, that's great. You're getting rat.

**Jordan:** I asked what you wanted. It's all rat. Rat jerky...

**Jesse:** This was always the rat—I don't know why you came here expecting—

**Eli:** The rat butcher!

**Jesse:** The Rat Cleaver.

**Jordan:** I don't know what you guys thought you've been eating in Solay. It's rat. It's always been—it's just been rat—

**Jesse:** That's fucked up.

**Jordan:** Okay, so you kind of take this stuff you slip out the front door. And Nomi finishes her conversation with Ben and Ben is none the wiser.

As you step out the front door, you almost trip over a young girl. You've never seen her around town, but she just walks into the butcher.

**Eli:** Do I have time—I have the whole day. I have time to putz around a little, right?

**Jordan:** Where do you want to putz around?

**Eli:** I want to listen if he's gonna rip off this little girl or something—and also I want to make sure she didn't pickpocket me just now.

**Jordan:** Okay. So the other man leaves with his dried rat, fully extorted. As you peer through the window, you see this young girl come up to the counter, and Ben reaches over and picks her up and puts her on the countertop.

And he pulls something out of his back pocket, and if you give me a Perception check—

**Eli:** What is going on?! **[dice roll]** 13.

**Jordan:** So you notice he pulls out of his pocket and then kind of tears off this wrapper. It's like a little bonbon. And he gives it to the girl and gives her a pat on the head and she gives him a big hug.

**Eli:** Okay, he's been scamming people. He's gonna be fine. This little girl's gonna be fine. Let's leave. **[Jordan laughs incredulously]** I don't feel bad. Was I supposed to feel bad?

**Jordan:** I guess. I mean—

**Jesse:** Nice try, DM. Do a better moral dilemma next time.

**Eli:** He's like still profiting off of the backs of people–!

**Jordan:** She coughs. Blood comes out of her mouth–[laughs]

**Eli:** Doesn't matter. I'm gone. I'm looking for money. [laughs]

**Jordan:** What a group we've formed here for this campaign!

**Eli:** Hold on–Jolie is very–

**Jordan:** You're fine! Okay, is there anything else that anyone's like, “Oh, I want to do this” or do we want to kind of just do a little bit crunchier: here's what we have, here's what we don't have. Yeah.

**Jesse:** How do I get food?

**Jorie:** You rob a butcher?

**Jordan:** Yeah, you go buy it from the butcher. It's fair price. Fair price! It's a fair price.

**Jesse:** The troupe has general supplies to live their lives. But certainly they didn't–no one was hoarding food in advance of the having to travel for days on end.

**Jordan:** In terms of procuring food–I mean, this is just an option. You don't have to do this at all–because we also can do it just more like, “you guys went and bought food”. Like, there are some people that are still around.

Yeah, you weren't prepared for this long journey in terms of food, but also half the town, or more than half the town, has also just up and left. So it's not like–you know what I mean? That you could still go and get that.

But you have a relationship with Tulip. So I mean, that's always an option. But we can decide what is interesting or not. I'm also content to be like–obviously, you guys are not gonna have no food. We can settle it with more dice rolls if you rather. If we'd rather do it in scenes, we can. I think we got some pretty, pretty nice scenes there. So we don't have to live in it, but it's whatever you guys want.

**Jesse:** I think for Sylvie's case, she had a lot of action already that established all of her character, what she's after. She also is wagon poor but gold rich right now. So she could potentially just pay up some of the inflated prices. She's

maybe not looking for more trouble after how her morning went. Maybe she just buys a reasonable—whatever they're charging, like a week's worth of food.

**Jordan:** Okay, one more time—quick soundoff of how much gold everyone has.

**Jesse:** I got 15.

**Jorie:** 8.

**Eli:** 6 if I didn't get anything while ransacking.

**Jordan:** I was gonna say—tell me if you guys are like, “that's some stupid bullshit” – is in a general sense, and we can go into that—but I was gonna be like if you wanted to just raw trade five gold for a day's worth of food.

**Jesse:** For a day..?

**Eli:** You're getting price gouged, bro.

**Jesse:** That's brutal.

**Jordan:** Yeah.

**Jesse:** But I think terms of being on the road for several days: if primarily we're dealing with the other members of the caravan and we're bartering, what value is gold going to be outside of a civilization versus bartering things?

**Jordan:** That's also up for you to decide. Tulip, for example—this is something that you'll see even more, but even if you as you guys walk around the town, he's got multiple wagons, and he's taking everything. And it's something to consider, much like the Oregon Trail.

Yeah, you guys may arrive at Astra, but what do you arrive with? Are you going to arrive there with no gold—presuming that there's the currency there? And you know, be like, “shit”. Or are you going to arrive there a bit more wealthy, with something to spare?

And so that's up to you guys and your characters. Is it just survival? You guys aren't idiots—you do have a sense of what this journey is like. And I guess it's up to you to prioritize, with the uncertainty of it, what you are kind of going to hedge your bets on.

So to answer your question a little bit less roundabout: gold, especially at the start, I'd say almost no value, right? It's all about just surviving. As you guys would get towards the tail end of this, and the tail end of the campaign. It



might, it probably will, start to have more value, or when there's any civilization in between.

**Jesse:** Yeah, I think that's a good point. Let's say Sylvie and the troupe just spend their 15 gold on three days' worth of trail food.

**Jordan:** Cool. What we're basically going to do right now then is—well, based on how you guys have built your characters, your wagons and what you have, we're going to kind of assign all of your quote unquote assets.

**Jesse:** Oh, okay.

**Jordan:** Let's maybe start with you, Eli, because in terms of food, which obviously is a big commodity, and for the sake of this, um...

**Jorie:** Do you have like, a cow?

**Jesse:** How do you—? Yeah, sorry. How do you make...cheese?

**Eli:** Yeah, so I assume that I'll have like...huh?

**Jordan:** I said rat mik.

**Jesse:** Can you make cheese in a waaagon?

**Eli:** Let's say that the only special thing I need other than casks or things that hold the cheese, is a means to keep it cold.

**Jordan:** Okay.

**Jesse:** Reverse forge.

**Jordan:** So one of the things though, I guess—

**Eli:** Sharkboy and Lava Girl.

**Jordan:** What I want to make sure is that Jesse ends up having something that also is comparable, because what I'm kind of seeing is that if you get this fore—well you will, it's just a matter of how efficient it is. Which means you could make stuff and do stuff on the road. In the case of Eli, it sounds more to me, I don't know if you're gonna be able to make cheese on the road.

But what we can do is that you're starting with a pretty big advantage in terms of raw amount of food and your commodity. And to be able to preserve that. And

that's something that is unique to you and will also who present unique opportunities and challenges as you're on the road.

But I want to make sure that Jesse also has something that is comparable to that.

**Jesse:** Yeah, I very deliberately wanted to get into this space of like, they're doing very merchant-y, mercantile, selling commodity goods. And these are people who don't traditionally do that.

So I think there's questions of does it push Sylvia and the troupe more towards, adventuring, and odd jobs on the caravan? People might tip them a little bit if they do performances, but not every single night like they would in a bar? Do they have to scramble and figure out what else they are good at that could be useful?

**Jordan:** Okay, this is off the dome. So maybe this won't work. But this is my suggestion. Let me know if you know if you like it or not. In terms of character sheets, you only have Sylvie, yes?

**Jesse:** Yeah.

**Jordan:** I'm going to say Fabio and Paz, basically, they can have—if you're presented a situation that they're in, I'm going to say that you can have like an opportunity to basically choose a specialization in a moment. Meaning that if there is, “wow, this giant rock, if only we had someone that really knew how to smash rocks”, you could be like, “Don't worry, Paz is now adept at rock smashing”, or something like that. And in a way that'll function moreso in terms of gameplay would be more like, you know, it's their anime awakening moment type of deal. Do you know what I mean?

What I want you to be conscious of is that they are, from what you're describing, tell me if I'm wrong, that they're also actively looking for that opportunity to fill those holes. So I'm going to keep aware of that. It's less crunchy than that. But I think that's both narratively interesting and mechanically kind of interesting. They're going to basically—they're not a class right now. And then depending on what you do, they'll become that.

**Jesse:** Yeah, in the broadest strokes, for reference, Fabio is definitely the physically strongest member of the troupe. Paz is probably the most educated and worldly. And Sylvia's probably the most nimble and dexterous.

**Jordan:** And Paz I imagine has to some degree a little bit of animal whispering type of stuff going on a little bit.

**Jesse:** We can't forget about Kiki, who bit that guy's throat open and let him bleed out in that alley. No! But she's there and who knows what she's gonna bring. **[cloying]** Yeah, my commodity is potential.

**Jordan:** But kind of actually. Okay, now the actual number-y, cruncher-y stuff. So we're gonna do the old food. I'm gonna say at base everyone's getting two. That's just what you have.

**Jesse:** Food points.

**Jordan:** Two days' worth. Just draw, like, meat on a stick as the icon. And then, Jesse, were you gonna buy?

**Jesse:** You can't eat gold. Let's change gold for food.

**Jordan:** Okay, so do that. So that puts you up to, what? Five?

**Jesse:** Five days.

**Jorie:** Reverse alchemy.

**Jesse:** **[giggles]** Commerce.

**Jordan:** I hate that we're already getting into half days, but that's fine. You so you have that half that was given to you. And then on top of that, were you getting anything?

**Jorie:** How much food—? You said five is one day? Oy vey. So I can get one more food. So I guess, I think...

**Eli:** You can one more food here, because we're being price gouged.

**Jorie:** Yeah.

**Eli:** It might be cheaper down the line.

**Jorie:** Well I need food now.

**Jordan:** And then let's just say like you can dip into your cheese for food, but let's put an actual value on it.

**Eli:** Okay, so we don't really know Sylvie's value as clearly yet, but Zeke's is probably more quantifiable. Like, he will likely over the course of this 10 day trip make X amount of money, which would feed him X amount.

So we could translate it that way. You know?

**Jordan:** No. What do you mean, sorry?

**Eli:** So if Zeke is going to make theoretically one gold piece a week, and that's enough to feed his family for one week, then it would be the same, or similar.

**Jordan:** I see what you mean. I guess for me, I was thinking you have a huge stock of cheese that has been there for a long time. And some of them have not even sold for probably a long—I don't know, how long do you age your cheese sometimes?

**Eli:** It depends. The bad ones are like, half a year. And the good ones are like 10.

**Jordan:** I was literally going to—you guys tell me about how this feels—I was literally gonna be like, you have in your stock 10 to 12 foods' worth of cheese. Like you're loaded at the start of this.

**Eli:** Yeah, I think, sure. And it kind of gives us a reason—like, I know that this is very dangerous for me. So it kind of gives me a reason to talk to Sylvie, who I've known—there's some mutually beneficial stuff going on here. Because I'm like, "Well, I know you're scrappy. And I know you're not a total piece of shit, I think. So you could help me protect this food. And if you're like ever really starving, I'll give you food."

Jordan: Yeah, absolutely. That leads right into kind of what Jesse was talking about. Yeah, I'm actually gonna say 12, the high end. Your store, your life's work, amounts to 12 sticks of meat. **[laughs]**

**Eli:** Damn. Sad.

**Jordan:** And then Jorie, I don't really know how to do the best way to do—you're basically packing up a huge portion of your store. You could be like, "I have metals to work with", but let's just say it's more equipment wise, right?

**Jorie:** Why don't I just have 12 days' worth of things, and then in the moment I can be like, "it's a pickaxe".

**Jesse:** 12 days' worth of things?

**Jorie:** She has 12 days worth of cheese.

**Eli:** Yeah.

**Jesse:** Are you eating one tool a day?

**Jorie:** Okay, not 12 days of things but like, I don't know.

**Eli:** 12 items.

**Jorie:** 12 items.

**Jordan:** Oh, I know what I can do. I can have you roll a dice. That's fantastic. Do a 2d6.

**Jorie:** A four and a two.

**Jordan:** You may pick six.

**Jesse:** "Jorie's Top 6 Anime Things in her Character's Wagon".

**Jorie:** These aren't my personal things..?

**Jordan:** These are your wares that whether you've decided to take them or however it shapes up, it's just like, this is what is coming with you from your shop. And we can probably add like, you got a couple daggers. Things that don't take up a lot of space.

**Jorie:** Can I just have at least one or two metals that I can...?

**Jesse:** Like ingots-? Like raw?

**Jorie:** Yeah, just like raw metal-

**Jordan:** Yes. You may have two of these-5e doesn't have like, "this is a steel sword, this is an iron sword." It's just like a sword? Okay. Then you may have two iron ores. Which yes, you may use to craft really whatever you want. The downside is that you will have to roll for the quality of it, when you go to do it, which will also be influenced by the quality of your forge. So, yes.

And I'll even say in that six, in addition to those two, you could just-I'll say that you can exchange those for just being ore, meaning that you can decide situationally. If you didn't need a pickaxe or something at some point, you didn't take it with you, if you chose to take more ore, you could try to craft.

**Jorie:** Yeah, I would like to have maybe even three ore.

**Jesse:** And I'll trade you two ore for one sheep.

**Jorie:** Okay.

**Jesse:** Because I'm trying to get [longest road](#), baby.

**Eli:** Nice.

**Jorie:** And then I have three more things. Okay, so what am I having? A sickle?

**Jordan:** And a dagger.

**Jorie:** And then my big hammer. And then I have some ore.

**Jordan:** Beautiful. The last of our business, I believe, is to determine the quality of this forge. So you are making, by all things considered, a crude forge. I mean, it has to be, right? You're putting it on the back of a fucking wagon.

So we're certainly not going to be giving you no advantage on it. But we will do...let's do Strength. So you'll get your modifier as well.

Have you done this type—I mean, you haven't done this before, but you're obviously experienced.

**Jorie:** I think I know how to do this. I probably made my own forge.

**Eli:** Hilda's helping.

**Jorie:** Hilda's helping. I'm like, "screwdriver" and she's handing it to me.

**Eli:** "Scalpel."

**Jorie:** "Scalpel."

**Jordan:** You're gonna give me three of those.

**Jorie:** Three d20s?

**Jordan:** Yeah. With your Strength modifier.

**Jesse:** Get strong.

**Jorie:** Get strong. Whatever. **[dice]** All over the board. We got a 15, plus two—sorry, so 17, 14, 20.

**Eli:** Nice!

**Jesse:** Oh, shit!

**Jordan:** No, oh, shit. Okay, so here's what the result is. You made a fantastic wonderful wagon-forge. Everyone doubted you, everyone all day–

**Jesse:** Who..?!

**Jordan:** The townsfolk! The townsfolk are walking by like, “that'll never work!” **[grumbling as townfolk]** “And I've never seen it so it'll never work! What a fool! What an idiot!” And now they're like, **[delighted]** “A walking on a forge!” You basically made the first electric car-wagon, you're the innovator.

**Jesse:** Elon Musk...

**Jordan:** But how this translates more mechanically is you basically influenced how often you can use it without repair–because it is, as we said, crude.

The quality, which is good. And also, kind of an extension of quality–this is more mechanically–I'm going to give you, in the first two rolls that you are using this forage, you're going to have advantage. So you can mark that. So the quality is good, meaning that you're not going to make anything pristine, but it's also not going to affect it in a negative way. It's entirely neutral.

And in terms of uses before you'll have to like–it's going to be repaired, but by all accounts, we're going to basically treat it as we just did. You get six uses of it.

**Jesse:** So draw six forges. [Jorie chuckles]