

## Encounter: General Store



While the Lodge remains your source of comfort, you can't help but to feel the need to be more prepared. Or perhaps simply to get out of the overcrowded accommodations. The loss of a dozen people sets you on edge, and there is a desire perhaps to reach out and contact those who are far more used to these happenings than you. Glean what knowledge you can about your surroundings. And maybe... pry some actually useful information out of them. No one more comes to mind than the trio of shopkeepers some of you met on the way to the lodge.

Your group bundles up and starts preparing to settle in for the 15 minute drive to the general store. The world around you is shades of monochrome - mud coating nearly everything in your sight. The normally vibrant forest has been drenched to its core, branches drooping from the force of the ever-present rain. There's a slight break in the storm that you decide to take advantage of. If you need to put anything in order before you embark on your journey from the lodge, now would be the time.

### **Sleepy:**

Bea got the food truck ready for the drive now that there was a bit of a break from the storm. There wasn't much to prepare for, but she was clearing up the front of the truck since that's where her and Dave always sat "Okay soooo, only one of you guys can sit in the front with me. The rest of yall gonna have to get in the back." She said as she looked back at the others that were there "So who wants Shotgun?"

### **Tumbs:**

With a narrow-eyed squint, Grimes stared ahead. The onslaught of rain felt like mud to his face, no matter where he looked. Nothing but grey clouds, grey days, and even greyer thoughts " ...That even a question?" Grimes shouldered his way into the front, Slapping the dashboard of the truck with a hearty 'thunk'. His Bike had taken enough dirt to the muffler over the past few days to stall over twice. He trusted Bessie Moo to take the onslaught of weather... for now.

**Sleepy:**

The glove compartment popped open. Revealing sunglasses, candy wrappers, a folded map, an object a little too gun shaped, and other miscellaneous things. Bea walked over immediately and closed it "Ok easy on the slamming. Truck's older than you y'know." Bessie Moo was old but hardy. If she can survive as long as she did, a little rain wont stop her. But this truck was known to be....temperamental at time. Needed some fixing up a couple of times since getting here. A little trip to the store wouldn't hurt it though.

**Tumbs:**

Grimes looked to Bea with an expertly raised brow, forehead lining with the arch. Not that he didn't expect Bea and Dave to be anything but strapped and ready... He helped himself to the shades before Bea shut the compartment. Wearing them on the tip of his nose like readers " If she's that Fuckin' delicate, I hate to see how the rest of this expedition is gonna land. " Grimes was already fidgeting with the window... It's been a while since he was Shotgun in a big truck. There's a sort of boyish excitement, okay.

**Sleepy:**

"I said she's old not delicate. She survived a storm so far and getting hit- she's tough!" Bea defended, "A little trip ain't gonna hurt her." Looking over at Grimes with the sunglasses, Bea can't help but smile some "...Yknow its still mucky and rainy out right? Just tryina look cool for an old man?"

**Tumbs:**

Grimes scoffed, flicking the shades down to greet Bea above the frame " Fuck off, 30 ain't old,--I just happen to contain enough natural wisdom for 90." Leaning back, he settled down into the seat, drumming fingers against his forearm as he watched rain lightly mist the window shield "... .... and I am cool."

**Wolf:**

Birdie arrives at the truck- and what a sight it is -with a skip in her step and an air of a sort of aggressive exuberance. The forced optimism of someone brimming with anxious anger just below the surface "Hiya, everyone!" She smiles, a little too wide. No qualms with sitting in the back, she joins the two in the vehicle. "Conspicuous ride, huh?"

**Sleepy:**

Chuckling as she shook her head "You did agree to come with so I guess you're sorta cool, i'll give you that." She and the others probably wouldn't have been able to go other wise. Bea looked back through the small window that let her talk and see others in the back of the truck, she heard Birdie "Yeaaah, its the only ride we got, sorry. If it were up to me this truck would look so much less like a sore thumb,"

**Tumbs:**

Grimes spared a nod to Birdie, taking in the double-row smile with a grimace. She fluttered in with enough optimism to part the gloomy sky with a knife. At Bea, he snorted, "Dave worries too much. You run the show just fine. " Though, considering their circumstances...maybe he worried just enough.

**Octo:**

Grimes isn't the only one wearing shades. Cyrus arrives, hands stuffed in the pockets of his leather jacket, oversized sunglasses in place upon his nose, and a jingle to his step from the jewelry he wears. Markedly less than normal, but still enough to clink together as he moves "Aww, you can't call Betsy a sore thumb!" His head peeks into the back of the truck, leaning into the doorway. "She's got a rustic charm! Be kind to the ol' girl."

**Sleepy:**

"Clearly yall aint ever drove a truck with a bulbous head." She loved the truck. But in her opinion, it was time for a remodeling. A long over do one in fact "By the way, there's not seat belts in the back- obviously- so if yah need to hold onto something, I'd hold onto the counters. I'll be sure to make sure yall don't get jostled around too much back there."

**Rock:**

TB shuffles out the lodge, stuffing a map or two into his pockets. Might need one for the road, marking things and all. Once he makes it to the truck, he waves to Bea "Okay but, if you're putting me in the back, please try not to run over every speed bump ya see, aheh heh."

**Wolf:**

Birdie blinks down at the counter and slowly lifts her arms and just. Grips. How fun a way this would be to die. And what a sight! She was writing the headlines in her mind already. She glances over at TB and offers a wave. "Don't worry, if you get thrown outta your seat, I can catch you," she jokes.

**Tumbs:**

Grimes peeked past the small window into the back- Just in time to see Cyrus and Tb enter the trunk. Grunting, he smoothed his hair back in an exasperated sigh. "Not like this thing can barter over 50 mph----..... no offense, But try not to eat shit on a sharp edge."

**Kat:**

Lucy shows up right behind Cyrus, jean jacket buttoned all the way up and bag in hand. They don't feel nearly prepared enough for this, but even they're starting to feel a little cabin fever. "We're taking the food truck...?" She looks vaguely nauseous. This better not be like the joyride again. 🦴



With dubious seatbelt safety in place (nonexistent), the Bessie Moo truck grinds its way out of the gravel-covered lot and onto the long road to Antioch. It's a wet and dreary drive, but not a particularly long or difficult one. At least in comparison to the several hours one would normally spend getting back to town proper. Mist falls instead of rain, giving the hilly Devil's River valley a haunting air to it.

Everything seems quiet. . .

**Sleepy:**

Bea got the truck rolling and made her way on the road. Doing her best at every turn to not have the back shake around too much.

**Tumbs:**

Grimes leaned back into his seat, arms folded against his chest. He had half a mind to put his boot on the dash-Remembering manors only because he was certain Bea would chew his ass out otherwise. The truck felt cozy, in a way. A weird sensation against the silent haunt of the drive. He scanned the woods, blue eyes flickering at the dewy mist. There were people out there, somewhere... He tsked lightly, tilting his head back to check the rear. "How's everyone holding up--...?"

**Rock:**

"With your big strong arms? My hero!" TB laughs. He crawls into the back of the truck, marveling at the inside details of the truck. Something catches his eye and he stops momentarily to stare into the space...His thoughts are interrupted as the truck jolts to life and he tumbles around in the back. "Oh- oh shit! Fuck! Ow! Oh c'mon Bea! We haven't been on the road for, what, FIVE minutes and you're already tossing me like Caesar salad back here!" [DEX: 5]

**Wolf:**

Birdie is having 0 issues [dex: 19], and just raises an eyebrow at TB.

**Sleepy:**

"Told you to hang on!" Bea shouted towards the back. Continuing to drive casually on the road

**Octo:**

Cyrus is rocking the boat- or well- the truck is rocking him. He clings to one of the counters as he tries to squint out at the roadside, looking for any sign if the lost group that might have been left behind. Hes secretly hoping to see at least some of them trying to flag down a car. Come on- he'll take a discarded doritos bag or a muddy footprint. [Dex 12]

**Kat:**

...Okay, the ride's pretty smooth, actually. Good job Bea. Lucy stands to the side with their arms crossed, swaying with the movements of the truck. It does look like other people are having more trouble, though. Lucy scoots back to avoid a face full of TB. [Nat 20 🏴‍☠️]

Riding in a car without a seat belt isn't a big deal for most of you. Growing up in the 80s, possibly even the 70s, you were likely very used to lax safety procedures when it came to strapping in while driving. However, this drive is less of a car with no seatbelts and more like standing in a bus without seats or hand rails. This, made worse by the fact that the road up to the lodge itself is primarily packed dirt until it suddenly hits a road, which you turn on to drive towards the general store.

You grip whatever counters, appliances, or other sticky-outy-bits you can find. Cyrus is wrenched back and forth by some of the turns no matter how tame, until he gains his balance. There's very little in the way of trash or personages to be seen. Though sometimes when they come around a bend the many trees look, for a fleeting second, like a person. And further along the roads are the tents and abandoned camping sites of other festers. However, before he can scrutinize them too closely they've passed.

Birdie and Lucy, meanwhile, simply sway back and forth with the motion of the truck with no problem. Like a pair of elegant businessmen who've long since become used to taking rowdy public transit. Truly, they've already mastered their... road legs. TB, however, does not have such a peaceful time. Not realizing that he needed to brace, he is thrown onto his ass, colliding with the corner of one of the cabinets and earning a bruise to one of his shoulder blades. It's not big but owwww...

TB takes 1 dmg

Eventually though everyone learns to hang on or, if nothing else, the bumpy ride finally comes to the stop. The general store comes into view. Just one vehicle is parked outside. It seems you've arrived.

**Sleepy:**

Putting the truck into park as she pulled up. Bea looked back at everyone through the small window, "Alright Y'all we're here." She said to them before closing the window and hopping out of the truck. Quickly throwing her hood up and making her way around the back to meet with the others.

**Octo:**

🙄 No discarded doritos bags for him. Alas. Maybe he'll see something on the way back. For now he tries to help TB up, dusting his buddy off.

**Tumbs:**

Grimes landed in the mud with a heavy splat, Slush coating his combat boots as he slammed the door with little finesse. He followed after Bea, frayed Leather jacket repelling the sprinkle of rain to the best of its ability "... Really?" He said, with the tone of a disenchanted father. Looking at Tb flat on their ass.

**Rock:**

"Th-thanksss..." With Cyrus' assistance, TB hoists himself off the floor of the truck. He seems a little dazed, though it's difficult to determine if the fall caused that or not. A hardy man like TB should've been able to handle a few bruises. His eyes meet Bea and Grimes staring at him, giving them a weak smirk "Guess that's why they invented seatbelts...!"

**Tumbs:**

"If only they invented balance."

**Kat:**

Lucy hops out of the truck, ducking their head so they don't get the rain in their eyes. They glance back at TB and Cyrus briefly. Ehh, he looks fine... a tiny snicker escapes her at Grimes' comment. Oop.

**Sleepy:**

Bea snickered. Heh. That was a good one

**Rock:**

"Oh you know. Sir Isaac Newton's ghost looked away for a bit and laws of gravity all went to shit back there. Same old, same old." TB amusingly shakes his head and hops out the truck, "Don't worry about me guys. That fall was nothing!"

**Tumbs:**

".. Issac Sir Newton clearly never heard of committing to core work. "Grimes for his part, did a once-over glance at Tb, scrutinizing that he wasn't too banged up before he turned towards the store with a narrow gaze " ...Never been here before. " He muttered, pocketing the shades to Get the full picture.



The general store is, by all accounts, a fairly large wooden building. The general store stands suspended over a lower floor, both a ramp and stairs poised around its wrap-around porch to allow travelers to get upstairs. The lights inside are warm and inviting. Attached is another building with a large stained glass depiction of what one might presume to be a magpie, potentially the "information center" part of the information center? Or perhaps a general meeting place for the tiny community.

**Sleepy:**

"Lucky you didn't crack your head open like an egg. But if you say your fine then," Bea shrugged, "You're fine I guess." Looking at the store it reminded her of home. Sorta. It was way more woodsy than the ones back home "Lets hope they still got stuff and that they're friendly enough to give us all something to go off of," There was more at stake than just needing some supplies. They needed any info they could get. And off Bea went. Taking the first steps towards the general store.

**Octo:**

"You all go ahead-" Cyrus has ducked out of the truck, looking the store over in the rain as he ruffles about in his pockets. "I'm gonna take a quick smoke. I'll catch up in a minute."

**Rock:**

"You think if my head cracked like an egg, there'd be a chick incubating in there? Or a tiny clone of me? I think I'd keep him. And raise him." TB had stopped by the general store when he first came down to Magpie Landing to pick up some maps. That felt like forever ago now...these previous few days had felt almost like eternity to him honestly.

He follows after Bea, walking up the wooden stairs where each step creaked and groaned as he advanced "I saw a pamphlet in the lodge the other day about the information center. Looked like they tell folks about the towns history. If you're looking for answers, that should be your best bet, yeah?"



**Tumbs:**

"... One of you is plenty." Grimes hovered in the dreary grey, Taking in the store for the warm front it seemed to be. His attention snagged on the windows, eyeing the proud bird in the center "Lots of stained glass. Is this a Cathedral too?" The sarcasm fell fat, and he followed after Bea and Tb like a looming guard dog. Speaking of Cigars...he felt for his empty pockets. There were a few things on his list besides information "Yeah. Some glorious history. I'm personally curious about the missing person per-year quota." Stairs creaking beneath him, Grimes took in the view from above, Opening the door for Tb and Bea like the off-brand gentleman he was.

**Sleepy:**

Bea nodded her head at what TB told her. Entering into the building when Grimes held the door open for them "Good as any anyways. Hopefully we'll find something that can help give us more of a lead." That was the idea anyways. So far no one had anything. Besides an Ouija board. That wasn't much though.

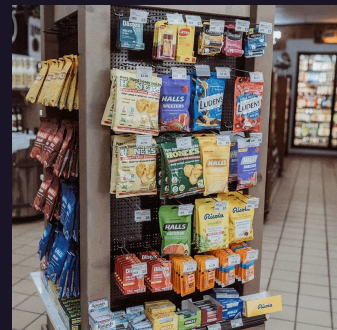
**Octo:**

Cyrus follows up to the porch, cig packet & lighter in hand. He'll wait till everyone's inside to light up... And wander off like hed planned. Just a quick look around wouldn't hurt right?

**Kat:**

Ahahahahaha, that's a funny plan you've got there, Cyrus. Lucy's staying on the porch with him.

As you step through the doors of the General Store, you feel a sense of nostalgia - like stopping in at a Mop & Pop gas station as a child after a long road trip. The walls are lined with various brightly colored treats, a few sparse camping supplies, and refrigerators full of more standard grocery items alongside drinks. These, interrupted periodically by shelves full of toiletries and home items, racks of post cards and pamphlets, as well as sunglasses and baseball caps.



As your gaze fixates on the store keepers, those of you there at the time can't help but remember the rather dramatic scene that took place back in the lodge involving Erin and her daughter Amber. It seems that Erin is here, as well as her son Rodney. Erin is up and about stocking things near the back of the store, though she calls a "Hello." when you enter. Rodney meanwhile sits behind the counter reading. It seems peaceful. Probably not a lot of people coming in here right now.

Erin rejoins Rodney at the front of the store "Did Matthew send you to bring supplies back for the lodge?" she asks.



**Tumbs:**

Grimes looked over his shoulder toward Lucy and Cyrus with a squint... "... Keep out of the woods. We don't need more assholes on the loose." Before he entered the store.

**Rock:**

Like a fair maiden, TB dramatically gasps in reaction to Grimes propping the door. "Aw shucks, ya shouldn't have!" He pulls out his crinkled map as he steps in the building, the map's corners already torn from repeated use. "Ya know, I'd be curious as to what 'church' there is here. That's what puzzles me the most. If that...thing was anything to go by." TB switches his gaze back and forth between the shelves stocked with supplies, all the bright colors catching his interest. Perhaps he can look for postcards to send home later "Howdy!" he gives the storeowners a little wave.

**Sleepy:**

Bea smiled at Erin, giving a polite little wave along with TB "Nah, Matt's doin alright on supply so far. We just thought we'd pick up a few things for ourselves though since the storm let up." Bea said sweetly to her. Didn't want to come right out the gate with questions or anything and scare her away.

**Kat:**

"You don't have to worry about us," Lucy says with a reassuring smile. They hook their arm through Cyrus'. Right Cyrus? Right? :))))

**Octo:**

"Yeah, yeah. We aren't looking to join the wanted posters. Touched that you care so much though big guy~" Cyrus shoots Grimes a smile, maybe a wink though its hard to tell under the sunglasses. With the rest of the group inside minus a certain thorn in his side, Cyrus lights up his cig. He takes a moment on the porch, breathing in a loong inhale of smoke as his eyes scan the tree line.

"...No chance I'm gonna convince you to join the others am I?" He offers Lucy the cig without looking at him. His eyes remain on the tree line. Looking for any signs of people having come to or from the forest, anything out of the ordinary. Stupid McDumbass wearing shades in a storm got a 6

**Kat:**

"You wish." Lucy plucks the cigarette from his hand and takes a drag. Her gaze follows Cyrus' to the trees. [13]

Cyrus can make out very little in the misting treeline. He doesn't see any people, no party milling about chattering about how silly they were for having wandered off. The mud betrays few signs of traffic that he can see. Certainly people haven't been driving up here much. But it's a little too dim, indistinct, and far away to make out much else about the quivering tree line.

Cyrus and Lucy received private information. . .

**Archie:**

Erin gives Bea and TB a welcoming smile, followed by a hum "Well they're waiting whenever he wants to pick them up." she says pleasantly. It seems she thought you were the pickup crew for something already here, but alas you are not. You're here on a mission.

**Nakota:**

Rodney's eyes lift from his book, peeking over his lenses at the group with an apparent distaste. Passive eyes move to Erin with her replies before dipping back down again.

**Sleepy:**

"Oh well- if he has things he needs picked up we can pick them up for him too. Least we can do since he's been letting us all stay at the lodge during all this fiasco." Maybe not we, but Bea was willing to pick up some stuff for the guy. Helping him out more by picking up the stuff he needed wouldn't hurt.

**Tumbs:**

Grimes followed behind Tb, leaning over to get a quick view of the map before he panned his attention through the rest of the room. Pretty un-fuckin-convenient for a convenient store, with it all the way out here. Or maybe it really was just an information deck.

"...Maybe that kid knows. " Grimes motioned at Rodney, eyes narrowed. " Brats like that always get up to mischief in the woods. If there's an abandoned ruin or creepy-ass legend-- The younger generation would probably know." It was jolly fuckin' bright-and he had some doubt about which essentials they had in tow. 🧠 Whiskey, in particular.

**Nakota:**

Rodney's eyes once again raise, catching the vague gesture and frowning deeply as a brow tilts upwards inquisitively. His ears were burning, but that was none of his business.

**Sleepy:**

Hearing Grimes mention Rodney, Bea looked over at the boy and gave a friendly smile and wave. Reminded her of her teenage years helping in her mom's grocery store.

**Rock:**

"Oh yeah, no, we're just here for some info! Since we'll be stuck here for a few days and whatnot...Good to know the land, yeah?" TB taps his chin, leaning over the counter. He grins at Erin as he unfolds his map on the counter and points to some paths, "I hiked around the trails here and there before the festival. Scenery is beautiful out here." TB then adds to Erin and Rodney, "How long y'all been in Magpie Landing? Know any cool places around this town?"

**Tumbs:**

Grimes tried to send a welcoming smile, but it looked more sinister than anything.

**Nakota:**

Rodney catches the motion from the corner of his eye, finishing the sentence he was reading with not all that much haste to reply. He lifts his book with a huff and a smile, using it to salute Bea back. She seemed nice enough, if the conversation with his mom was anything to go off of. The smile on his face dies instantly as his gaze moves from Bea to Grimes "Can I...help you?"

**Archie:**

Erin seems pleased enough by your helpfulness "That would be very kind of you." her stern weathered eyes pass over your motley crew as you mill about "We have plenty of stock still for you to peruse. I know Matthew keeps some hygiene products, but if you need any feminine care it's on that shelf near the front corner." she gestures towards the other end of the store where some of the more housecare type items are.

She does, however, look over as TB speaks up, looking down at his crumpled map "I'm glad you've been enjoying. There are a lot of things to appreciate about Magpie Landing if you take the time. Not as exciting as Antioch for most younger folk, but we do have a rich history here. I'd like to think of our family as the keeper of that. We've been here for a very long time" she gives a side-eye to Rodney as he speaks.

**Nakota:**

Rodney can feel the side-eye, sitting up in his seat at the counter and removing his braced leg from the counter to look more...welcoming. He clears his throat, dodging his mothers gaze before repeating, in a far more sunny disposition. "Is there anything I can help you find today, sir?"

**Tumbs:**

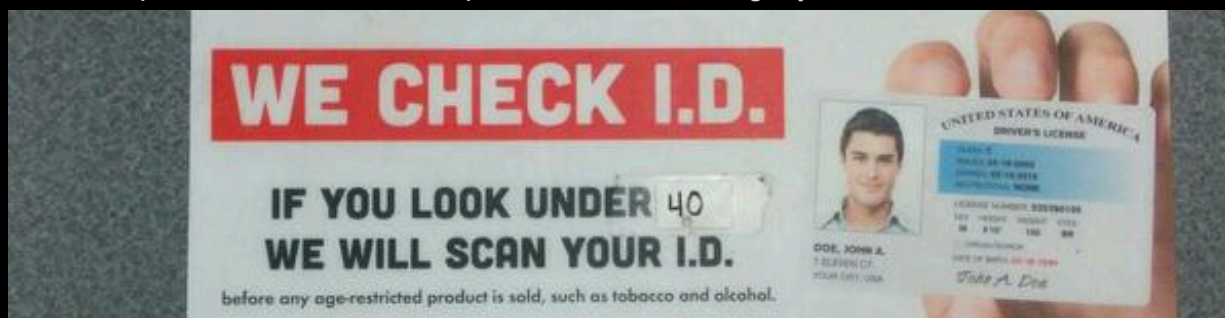
While Tb set their sights on Erin, Grimes took on the perilous endeavor of talking to Rodney. Sweeping a hand through his bangs, Grimes approached the counter, forearm in front of him in a casual lean " ...You got any whiskey? Cigs?"

**Rock:**

Rich history... Hm. TB tilts his head. "Heyyyy, that's pretty cool! My folks are kinda like that in my tiny ol' desert town too. 'Cept here's sure got a lot of trees instead of rock type things, yeah? Oh! Name's TB by the way. Nice to meet ya!" he chuckles, "So, how rich is that history of yours? Your family founders of Magpie Landing or something? I'd love to know more!"

**Nakota:**

Rodney stares at Grimes, gently setting his book on local wildlife to the side, before folding his hands politely in front of him "We sure do! Not the biggest stock, but should hold you over. If you're willing to buy." Behind the coloured lenses of his glasses, he sloooooowly goes to look at the sticker present on the counter top "...uhm...what can I get you, sir?"



**Octo:**

"Hm. Suit yourself." He pauses, letting Lucy take a drag before pushing off the banister. Arms still locked together, Cyrus starts leading her down the gangway, to under the porch. Simply looking around for... well he didn't know what. Anything [Int 15]

**Kat:**

Lucy grimaces as Cyrus starts shuffling around again. It feels like she's trying to babysit. Augh, whatever. Better for him to get all his antsiness out now. "What, you wanna go digging for worms or something?" 🤨

Cyrus moves under the porch. There's little of interest below aside from a door. The chime next to it tinkles pleasantly. Cyrus and Lucy received private information. . .

**Octo:**

"Sure. Worm digging. Mud stomping. Whatever. Anything to get out of the lodge." He shrugs, running his free hand along the stones of the general store. "...I'm gonna be honest with you Lucy. After spending the better part of the weekend with friends lost in a dangerous storm. Watching a woman get turned into a pretzel. Feds shrugging off our concerns and keeping us under house arrest-" Cyrus huffs, a bitter laugh slipping from his lips. "I could give less of a shit about swapping pleasantries with the locals. Crazy. I know."

Cyrus catches something of interest sparkling in the mud beneath the deck.

**Octo:**

:squint: he's gonna scoop it up. No hesitation. Getting grit between his man rings and under his nails.

**Kat:**

For once, they're on the same page. Other than the fact that Cyrus keeps hunting for- clues, or whatever. This wasn't a Nancy Drew book, Jesus. They'd kind of prefer it if he just wanted to collect worms, actually. That was way easier to deal with than him pointlessly trying to help. She stomps a little mud at him... "Are you actually scooping worms...?"

Between the rest of his investigation, his hand wraps around something hard and sharp, nestled within the mud. It's a shard of glass - but there doesn't appear to be any broken windows nearby. Curious.

**Octo:**

"Yeah. Worms." The slices across his hand are quickly filled with mud. With how cold his fingers are from the rain they're nearly numb. His focus is only on the glass, turning it around in his hands, looking for anything that stands out "You should try it Luc. Reeeeeeal therapeutic. Let their wiggles soothe your nerves."

The piece of glass is unremarkable.

**Sleepy:**

"Thank you, ma'am." Bea nodded. Appreciate her looking out for her possible needs. Women support women here "Once some of us get some things we need, we can take those supplies for Matt and bring them over for him." Not wanting to interrupt TB's somewhat investigation into the history of this place or jump into it to make it suspicious, Bea kept it casual. Then she saw Grimes interacting with Rodney. God that smile. He might need some back up. So walking over to the counter where Grimes and Rodney was, she looked between Rodney and Grimes as she caught up to their convo. Then looked at the sticker. Bea couldn't help but snort.

**Archie:**

Bea gets a nod of acknowledgement as she moves off. It's a slow smile, but a seemingly genuine one "Well met, TB. I'm sure your parents keep a lot of stories much like those in Magpie Landing. Many small towns share similar beginnings and endings. I would love to hear some of them as well, given you don't have to rush off. We don't go quite that far back. It was a part of the lands of the Abenaki people for generations before its colonization by anyone who might call it what it is today."

"While most of those living here today are in relatively modern housing, it once held one of the earliest colonial townships in Vermont, though that is somewhat contested. It also served as the cradle for several industries in the area. It was vital land during the fur trade, it had its heyday of producing lumber, copper, coal." she speaks with the tone of an experienced teacher. One who has likely said these words many times.

**Nakota:**

Rodney's brows raise as Bea approaches, seemingly turning away from Grimes to give the man some time to process. "You need anything either? I can't get the alcohol since it's locked up, but anything else behind his counter, I'm your man."

**Archie:**

"Yes, for some reason it seems to go missing when no one's around, so extra security is warranted, I think." :flowers:

**Tumbs:**

Grime's pleasant smile faded in the dim light. His eyebrows twitched slightly as his gaze followed Rodney To Bea... This little snot. "...Cigars. If you can reach those on your tippy toes."

**Nakota:**

:whoopsies: Rodney is looking away from his mother. Rodney's brow lifts, before hefting his cast-covered leg back up onto the counter top before giving Grimes a smile "Sorry, I'm fresh out of working tippy toes right now." Without hesitation, he drops his leg back down, reaching into the display case of the counter to retrieve some cheap cigars.

**Tumbs:**

His mouth slanted to a flat line as he leaned back a bit, attention drifting towards Erin and the term ' colonial...' "You pilfer drinks but not cigarettes? what kind of delinquent are you." He muttered, eyeing the cheap bars with a lowered grimace.

**Sleepy:**

Bea elbowed Grimes "Don't get your panties in a twist just cause he owned you." Bea chuckled as she elbowed Grimes. A little smug look on her face. Looking at the counter, Bea hummed. "Mmm not sure. Haven't been in her before so not too sure where everything is...." Then a thought entered her head. A long shot for something personal "Your phone's working up here by chance?" She asked. Wondering if it was all the phones were down or just at the lodge. Maybe she could give her family a call. Indulge herself a little. And maybe get a read on how bad communication was out here in the storm.

**Wolf:**

Birdie, having lingered back in the van for a moment, enters the building and offers a smile to the first employee she sees. It seems the uncanny, high-strung energy has been smoothed out to something more palatable. Eyes scanning, she heads off to join TB's conversation. She stays out of it until it seems appropriate to sidle up beside the spiky haired man "That's a lotta different industries. What happened to all of it? Resources run out in the area? Did it just become less profitable..?" She tilts her head at Erin.

**Rock:**

TB just keeps a stiff lipped grin, "I'm...sure my folks do...!" he pauses to clear his throat, switching his gaze back and forth around the store before picking up the conversation again, "Hah. I'm sure we got time but, wow! So, very long, huh? Hey, that's pretty neat! We were mostly copper, silver, all that mining industry stuff."

He nods, intaking all the information Erin tells him, then scoots over to leave room for Birdie at the counter. "Oh yeah, heard about an abandoned mine or two here. I'm surprised the town's still bustling. When that happened to my hometown, everyone had just gone and left."

**Nakota:**

"Gotta have good lungs to make it around here. The hiking around here can be brutal, as I'm sure you're aware. It's a lot more dangerous than people give it credit for and you wind up with tragedy." He lets out a genuinely remorseful sigh.

His expression twitches with barely contained glee as Bea validates his jabs to the large, blue man. "Well, I invite you to look around then! We've got most of the essentials and any of the local info you could want." Rodney taps his chin. "Working is pushing it. We can call the lodge and some of the local houses, but outside of that, our comms are mostly down and out, sorry."

**Archie:**

She returns his smile, though it isn't nearly as tense as his "Magpie Landing suffered something similar. Though it wasn't due to the mines drying up, like with many small towns." Erin's gaze turns to Birdie "The copper refinery is still quite active. However, in the 1920s there was a tragic landslide which destroyed much of the infrastructure in the area including the rail lines. It effectively eliminated the industry in the area, though plenty of people still come for the nature. The benefit of having so many trees, I suppose." her last comment is directed at TB

**Tumbs:**

Grimes grunted, forcing the retort on his tongue down to an even swallow. He passed Bea a glance, one that looked sour and slightly put out. "Tragic, huh." He mused instead, Drumming his fingers against the counter. His voice lowered just a tad, "I take it you know all the good spots around here, then. Places to avoid, and places to explore."



**Sleepy:**

She let a disappointed sigh out. Nodding to his answer. But smiled at Rodney nonetheless "You're good hun, had a feeling that was a case. Worth a shot at least." Bea hated she couldn't call her family. They were probably worried sick by now. Unfortunately there wasn't much she could do. At least she knew they could contact each other.

Looking around, Bea took a quick look around as Rodney talked. Walking away still listening to Grimes and Rodney as she grab one of the maps of the area. Looking around to see if there could be anything else that may be useful aside from a map. Perhaps a compass or a pocket knife? Maybe a multi-tool knife??

**Nakota:**

"You could say that," Rodney comments idly, shoving the cigar package around the glass countertop and waiting to see the money from Grimes for his vice of choice. Don't particularly want outsiders invading them though. "It's for the best if you leave them to the pros, anyways."

"Like I said. It's dangerous. Between the wildlife here, the weather conditions and the harsh terrain? I wouldn't wanna tell any of you without knowing you know what to do." ... "If the phone sitch changes, I'm sure you'll know, but I'd be happy to call Matt anyways for you."

As Bea scouts the store, she makes note of several pieces of what people would consider to be essential survival gear. Detailed forest maps, an empty box for compasses, snacks and drinks and pocket knives galore line the various shelves. Please note: mechanical items purchased will be deducted from your ooc account should you choose to buy them.

**Rock:**

"Trees are good for that. I'd think great history interpreters, such as yourself, are another reason!" TB chuckles as he clicks his pen and scribbles some notes on his map, jotting down Erin's words "So you'd say landslides are common here, yeah? Like, since the 20's, that big one, have there been more of these historic landslide things in the area? Any...notable buildings they took out? I heard about the most recent one - that thing's gonna take forever to clear up."

**Tumbs:**

.... Grimes sighed, reaching into his pocket to pull out a frayed leather wallet. The edges were tattered, something blue and plastic peeking out at the end. He was trying to read Rodney, taking in his demeanor like he would a distant math equation. Seeing if there was anything to be gleaned "Not like I wanna prance around in the woods, believe me, that." He placed a few crumpled dollars on the counter, pushing them forward.

**Archie:**

TB's flattery is noted :simsyes: Erin sighs "This would have to be the second or third largest, I'd say. At least that I'm aware of. Generally, we only have to worry about rockfalls along the road. Given that many of the phone lines are out." she seems to indicate the conversation happening with Rodney "We're not sure exactly how extensive the damage may be. But for the most part in the past it was only the rail lines and homes that were buried. Though some cave systems in the area had to be excavated as well."

**Sleepy:**

"Oh thanks, but I was hopin tah call my family. Probably gettin worried yknow." Looking at all the items. Bea grabs a forest map, she would've grabbed a compass but it looked like they were out, and pocket knife, a pack of Dave's favorite snack she can spot.....and some of those feminine products while she's at it.

They're here, she's here might as well. Hopefully the snack will cool Dave down though and they can use the map. Walking back over to the counter, Bea put all of her things she's like to purchase down. Patiently waiting her turn as Rodney rang Grimes up "Definitely not in this storm that's for sure," He's a kid and a local. And he seems smart and knows the area well.

**Octo:**

Figures. He slides it into his pocket. Looking to Lucy. "Well? You gonna join in? Or should we go look at that chapel?" Hands still in his pocket Cyrus juts his chin towards the part of the store with the stained glass. There is a door he can plainly see at the side... and Cyrus had broken into his fair share of places discreetly.

**Kat:**

...Cyrus wouldn't pocket a worm. Lucy narrows their eyes, and drops the cigarette in the mud to put it out. She looks over at the door. Breaking and entering isn't her style, but she has a feeling Cyrus is gonna check it out anyways, so... "Let's go in. It's cold out here," Lucy says, coming up next to him. She also tries to shove her hand into his pocket while she's at it.

**Octo:**

Cyrus can't help but cringe at the loss of the cigarette. It was so young, he barely knew him 😞 As Lucy darts for his pocket, Cyrus twirls around her. "Get your own worms. Damn a man can't have shit out here." He's already walking towards the 'cathedral' "Now come on- let's go." His eyes linger on the door with the eye... that can be the back up plan. Cy & Lucy will approach the building with all the stained glass

The building is merely an extension of the general store. It's weathered, but well maintained. There is indeed a door on the outside facing towards the road from whence you came. You would probably make the owners... very unhappy if you did anything to damage it. But the stained glass at least is a spectacle to behold.

There doesn't appear to be any sort of exterior chains or locks keeping the double doors shut. By all accounts it's probably a standard house lock with or without a deadbolt included. You could probably break it if you really wanted to. And hope you do so discreetly enough that no one inside can hear.

There are a number of windows on the "upper" floor of the general store, though you would have to clamber to the second story to get inside. Other than that there is the lower floor door, the double doors you're currently investigating, and the main door into the general store. There don't seem to be any other convenient entrances.

**Octo:**

Cyrus looks back at Lucy, the lock in his hand as he weighs it. "Would you kill me if I broke this...? I could make it look like it got fucked up in the storm maybe..."

**Kat:**

Lucy grimaces. "You can't use- I dunno, you got bobby pins in your hair. You can't use those?"

If you want to proceed with this very Criminal course of action, you may roll 1d20+INT to lockpick, or 1d20+STR to break the door lock and potentially shoulder check it to get it open.

**Octo:** [14]

Cyrus takes a bobby pin and attempts to finesse the handle lock of the door. He fiddles with it for... not a long time. But long enough. It can't take that long to buy snacks, so the careful maneuvering required brings up the sweat-inducing possibility that someone will walk out and see what you're doing. After enough trial and error, however, you hear a gentle click.

**Octo:**

:oh: Cyrus opens the door, and gestures gentlemanly for Lucy to take a step in.

The lock is a part of the door handle. When he pulls on it, however, he finds that it's deadbolted. Seems he may need to make that Strength check anyway.

**Kat:**

"... Let's go worm-collecting-"

**Octo:**

UUUUUUUGH. Cyrus feels anger flare up, he scuffs the door with his shoe. The dead bolt meant to would make some stupid fucking noise which means people inside would hear it unless TB was in there yelling. So instead he leans down and interlaces his fingers, looking at Lucy to hop up. "Sure. But first take a peek inside for me. Real quick. Promise." [Str 14]

**Kat:**

Okay, compromise. They can appreciate the fact that he didn't start kicking at the door. Lucy places their muddy boot in his hand and holds onto his shoulder before putting their full weight on him.

**Octo:**

Cyrus doesn't hesitate to heft her up, he doesn't care about the mud. Or the rain. Or the stupid fucking cuts on his stupid shakey hands

With Cyrus' beanpole matched to Lucy's short king, they're hoisted just high enough to barely peek over the lower stained glass windows on the wall. They may roll 1d20+INT to see inside.

Lucy was given private information...

**Kat:**

Once Lucy's up there, she carefully leans forward and peers inside. [19] "It just looks like some kind of museum," Lucy tells Cyrus, pushing off the wall and grabbing his shoulder again. "It's connected to the general store, I think, so we can ask about it inside if you want."

**Octo:**

Damn. Not a church them. Cyrus can feel the faint hope in his chest crumbling and he lets out a frustrating sigh. "Huh. Weird. Maybe we can ask for a peek or... something." Depsite his best efforts he sounds deflated. Turing, he replaces the lock. Cleaning it with his jacket so it's all nice and clean. With the rain it should be free of any grime, looking just how he found it "Let's check out that door first. The one with the eye. I can heft you up to look in there too yeah? Really quick. Last thing I promise."

**Tumbs:**

[SOC 9] Grimes is staring at RODNEY REALLLLLLLYYYY HARD.

**Wolf:**

"Oh, really? Abandoned mines?" Birdie wondered if anyone bothered to check those for their lost friends. She cast her eyes down, watching TB scribble. Hm. Her hand slid into her pocket, wrapping around the recorder she always kept on her person. Perhaps she should have been recording this.

"Good thing you guys stay so well-stocked here. Sure is helpful when something this bad does happen, as much as you hope it doesn't." She looks back up with a soft smile. "Are there really that many caves systems around here? Do people ever wander into them? Honestly, with how unstable the land around here seems, I'd be pretty worried about sinkholes and stuff."

**Archie:**

"And worried about your friends," Erin seems to guess "There are a number of caves, some of them accessed through sinkholes. Sometimes lost people do take shelter in them, so if they're out there, they could easily take shelter in one." it's unclear whether her optimism is true or if she's simply making things sound better for your sake.

**Nakota:**

[9]: Grimes notices that Rodney seems quite lax, with maybe a blip of irritation in the way he speaks about letting others in. It seems he cares a great deal about the natural world and keeping it safe and preserved from rowdy Festival goers.

"Well, maybe you should tell your buddies that, huh?" Rodney reaches out and slaps his hand over the dollars, dragging them back over to his side of the counter before pushing the cigars in Grimes' direction "Ah yeah, I meant letting you know if the lines were back up-- so you could call family." Rodney shrugs his shoulders, allowing her to take her time and return to him with her selection of items. It was good to see someone attempting to be mindful of the surroundings, especially considering the circumstances... :Simsyess~1:

Rodney begins ringing up the items: "Your total comes out tooooo...\$50. That alright?"

+ Forest Map [\$25]

+ Pocket Knife [\$25]

- Dave's Favourite Snack [n/a]

- Feminine Hygiene Products [n/a]

**Tumbs:**

" ... You referring to the friends currently missing? Or the people in this room. Look, we're not here to make a mess. You have a bone to pick with the festival goers?"

**Sleepy:**

"Right right, yeah, duh, sorry. With everything going on I've been a little frazzled." Bea said as she rubbed the back of neck sheepishly. Of course that's what he meant. She is not at her A game it seemed. And then she heard the price. "Yeah, no problem at all," Bea said as she handed him the cash. But as she handed the cash off she glanced up at Grimes. Uh oh. This didn't seem to be going well "Sorry," She said, giving an apologetic smile towards Rodney, putting her hand out in front of Grimes "We've all been kinda on edge with what's been happening. Worried bout all them folks, y'know?"

**Rock:**

Behind his tinted glasses, TB's eyes widen, "Oh jeez! Find a new engineer for your town, ma'am! I don't think what they're doing right now is working, what with all these landslides and sinkholes around. Next thing you know, there's a volcano erupting here!" He jests, then nods at Erin's comment regarding the phone lines. "Oh yeah, I was at the festival afterparty the other night. They held it near a grotto - a small cave. It was pretty neat! It'd make sense that there were more of those things out here."

"Are these caverns easily accessible? Like, for the public. Touristy type of caverns and all that. I've been in one of them non-tourist caves before and...let me tell ya, it was...sure an experience." He turns to Birdie to give her a look that seemed to say "it was not a great experience, then jots down more notes. TB taps his map with the pen, "You mind showing me where these caves here are located if that ain't too much trouble for ya?"

**Nakota:**

"Could go either way." Rodney shrugs at Grimes, going to open his mouth to retort before hearing a very soft thud below them. His brows furrow, looking down between his legs at the floorboards below. Weird... "How many people came with you?"

"You're fine, I get it." The shopkeep lets out a soft sigh as he takes the money. "I get it-- you just see this happen so many times despite the warnings and you start to get a little jaded. No amount of warning stops people sometimes." Apollo was about to beam him in the head with a prophecy.

**Archie:**

He doesn't get a laugh, but his tomfoolery does freshen the woman's smile somewhat "Some of them are blocked off by gates, for safety reasons. A few of our locals do have tours into caves on their property." Erin leans slightly over the counter, pointing to different spots on the map and allowing TB to mark them as he does so "Sullivan's is the most well traveled. The public section is fairly shallow and wide, though you also have Devil's Mouth here." she pointed to another portion of the map "One of the creeks runs into it and forms a pool at the bottom. It's a popular spot for divers, though it can be quite dangerous."

**Tumbs:**

Grimes exhaled, putting both hands up in a placating gesture. Despite the tone, he was as chill as usual--which, to be fair, normally bordered heightened blood pressure. "Look, that's fair. I was a firefighter back in the day. Nothing stops an idiot, especially a determined one. Trouble loves company.... " ... His ears twitched at the thud. Expression folding into an uncomfortable cringe ".... Speaking of trouble. I'm the worst. Do you know of any churches close by? I could use some....." fuck him. " Time to confess."

**Sleepy:**

A thud? There's been way too many thuds lately "Uh like six of us, the other two are back at my truck smoking though," They better be at least. They wouldn't be doing something crazy would they? Wait. Warnings? Now there was something "Wait, wait, whaddya mean by the warnings and so many times? This sorta thing has happened before?" Bea asked.

She couldn't think of any warnings she was told beside's no open fires. Even small safely made ones. And obviously dont go running around in the woods is just. Common sense. Same with going off hiking trails Finally they seemed to be getting somewhere. Time to confess!? Bea couldn't help but look surprised and just turn her head to look at Grimes in utter confusion. What the fuck. THAT'S NOT EASING IN!? AND WHAT CONFESSION THIS IS A KID WHO CARES ABOUT HIS HOME.

**Wolf:**

Birdie simply stares at the women a little too intensely, for a little too long. She didn't like the idea of this woman trying to psychoanalyze her, or pity her. Both felt like bad options. Especially not when she just wanted answers. Trying not to come off as too frustrated, she taps TB on the shoulder. "I'll be back in a second. Gonna grab a snack or something." Birdie wanders off into the aisles, just sort of perusing to calm herself down. Simultaneously, she is going to look for anything out of the ordinary. Loose doors, loose flooring or things in the rafters- anything that might be of interest. No investigate she angry. [int: 6]

**Kat:**

"Or something," Lucy repeats, hopping back down to the ground. She ducks back under the porch to get out of the rain "Uh-huh, until you see something else you wanna do," Lucy snorts, but she nods. "Hurry up."

**Octo:**

[13 str] "Hmm. You know me too well Lulu." Up she goes. Let's try this one more time!

**Kat:**

"We can never just have a quiet night," she sighs dramatically. Lucy hops right up again. They've practiced this shit; it's easy [Nat 1 int...]

**Octo:**

"That wouldn't be any fun-" his voice is muffled as he lifts her, trying to keep his grip with all the rain. I'm guessing Cy is tall enough to look in the window above the door as he lifts Lucy. [Int 10]

Cyrus & Lucy received private information...

**Nakota:**

"Oh?" Rodney's eyebrow pricks up in response. "You were a firefighter huh? That's cool...good to see people helping out when and where it matters." :Simsyess~1: For once, he holds back his reserves about Grimes' general behavior...until he does that. :Simsnoo~1: HUH.

"Right now? What did you do? I mean like-- we got plenty of churches around here, new and old. Byproduct of the colonists and such so...you wouldn't have to look to far, I guess." He shakes his head in partial disbelief, unsure of where the hell the subject of sudden churches came from. Grimes was certainly a subject to behold. He narrows his eyes. "Did you steal something?"

"I mean not to this scale, but it's dangerous out there and people get lost quite often. It's why I don't give out the good locations 'cause I know when people hear about it, they'll wander out there alone. You'd think people would have common sense but they just...don't. That and the animals. People don't respect their space." He's still utterly befuddled by Grimes.

**Rock:**

The hell was that thud...? More rats? "Right, right," TB gives Birdie a nod as she slinks away and turns back his attention to the counter, "Devil's Mouth...quite the name there! Any legends about a cave system with such a name? I feel like things called 'devil' always got some sorta strange tales tied to them."

**Archie:**

Despite her anger, Birdie notices that there are in fact several doors. One is behind the counter labeled "staff only", and another across from the front door which looked to lead to a single unisex bathroom. Some of the boards squeak as she makes a round through the shelves, but it's unclear whether there are any treasure troves underneath. Near the back partially hidden was a third, with a sign indicating that it was the "information center". All three doors are closed. She does, however, spot a ridiculously cheap rack of Fun Dip! A dollar for a 24 pack? What the hell?



**Wolf:**

As alluring as the Fun Dip is, Birdie is drawn to the "staff only" door. Information center felt like it was too easy. All that would be in there would be maps and guides to local natural wonders or some shit. Nah, if they were hiding something, it'd be for family eyes only. She takes a look around first to make sure no one is paying attention as she inches closer. Maybe those thuds would be distraction enough.

The staff door is behind the counter where the staff, Rodney and Erin, are currently sitting. Birdie gets the sense that no matter how stealthy she is, they'll notice her. She can try to sneak into the information center, however.

**Archie:**

"Oh, the same as every cave called devil's mouth." there's a twinkle in her eye "It was named that because no matter how much water enters, it never seems to fill. It's an endless sheer drop that has unfortunately killed a number of rock climbers and divers over the years. Though there are some stories of settlers being drawn to it and simply falling in. There are even tales that in the 1600s there were real witches who sacrificed animals to it, because they thought the devil himself lived there, but those are unverified."

**Tumbs:**

Grimes was absolutely avoiding Bea's stare, sweat beading his upper brow. He was floating between the hazy agony of embarrassment and partial relief, Mouth twisted until the corners of his mouth twitched into the fakest smile imaginable "Stealing? No. no... .. I just love god. So fuckin' much." I fucking told them not to fuck around! "...You're pretty protective of this place, huh? How long has your family lived here?"

**Sleepy:**

Okay so it wasn't something crazy. And he seemed to know the "good locations" so maybe they could still get that from him...if Grimes wasn't ...so Grimes. Bea let an exasperated sigh out, "Im sorry about him. He's not...socializing isn't his best uh qualities...as you can clearly see. But I get what yah mean. Sorta like that back home. Some people really look tah poke the bear instead of just letting them be and then causes all us trouble we didn't ask for and coulda avoided if they just listened," Bea looked at Rodney, some more pleading in her eyes.

"Anyways, we get it if yah don't wanna tell us, we're just some outsiders. But we've been trying to come up with possible places them folks may be. Give them Rangers something to try and help them, yknow. We thought maybe there could be some spots they went to to wait out this storm." She explained to Rodney, giving him a little something to maybe get a little something back. Hopefully she could convince him to help them.

**Wolf:**

Birdie thinks she's being sooo sneaky until she, in an attempt to remain inconspicuous, sifts through the nearby snacks. As she turns to attempt to slip through the door, she knocks several things to the ground with a hissed "shit" [dex: 5]

**Kat:**

"...It's too dark," Lucy says after a while. "I can't see." She's not going to mention the flickering light. She's pretty sure that's just a reflection. "Kay, let me down."

**Octo:**

"Same." Cyrus sighs, putting Lucy down. One one hand they could break in... on the other... it could get everyone else in trouble. It's not a long drive. Cyrus could come back alone "Aw well. Deals a deal." With that Cyrus crumbles to the floor. Flopping into the mud face first. After a second. He stands back up wiping at his face with muddy hands. "Kay. We can go in now. I fell off the porch when I tried to catch my cig pack. That's what the thud was. Got it?"

**Kat:**

"Let's head back insi-" There's a squelch as Cyrus immediately drops to the ground. Lucy stares for a second, before bursting into laughter "You look like the- you look like the Mud-thing, oh my god-" She tries to offer him a hand, but she's laughing too hard. Sorry Cy.

**Octo:**

Despite his foul mood, Cyrus can't help a smile at Lucy's laughter. "Oh yeah? Well- you wanna be thing 2?? Huh?" He's reaching out to smear a grimy hand on the side of her face as he gives her a pat pat pat. The smile is clear through the grim. "Now come on- they're probably wondering if we've gone missing too..."

**Kat:**

Lucy does a half-hearted attempt at ducking away, but lets him smudge a little mud on their face anyways. Ugh, they're going to have to wash his clothes when they get back... Well, it'll be something to do "Mm, come on." Lucy makes to link arms with him again, then thinks better of it and just takes his hand instead.

**Nakota:**

"Turn out your pockets." Rodney says flatly. He doesn't trust this sudden piousness from this guy, especially the previously blunt and closely antagonistic conversation. His eyes are narrowed. "I'll answer your questions once you do that." :pistolr: This extends to Bea's questions as well, but it's clear he's not hostile towards her at all. "Glad my eyes are working right, then."

**Archie:**

Erin looks over as several pairs of sunglasses and hats go skittering to the ground. Combined with the sudden serious tone from Rodney she suddenly seems on high alert. **Inside Detection Meter: 100/100** "Oh dear, the museum isn't open right now." she says to Birdie, side-eyeing Grimes and Bea as she leaves the counter to pick up the fallen merchandise. It doesn't seem like anything is broken.

**Sleepy:**

Bea chuckled lightly, smiling just a little, though very apologetic "Very glad," she said. Then she looked up at Grimes, still smiling but looking more strained and irritated "I swear to god Grimes, you better empty your damn pockets before I do." :hello:

**Tumbs:**

" ... Are you fucking serious?" Grimes for his part, pulled out the jacket pockets in his coat, shaking them both as if to say-- SEE? SEE? ASSHOLE?

**Rock:**

"It probably drains out somewhere, a spring or river or something. Nothing supernatural about that, but I AM quite curious about what draws these so-called er- 'witches' to th-" WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON OVER THERE. TB looks to Rodney and his sudden hostility, and then stares at Grimes and Bea at the other end of the counter, raising an eyebrow to give them a what the HELL did y'all do kind of look.

**Wolf:**

Birdie immediately crouches down to help put the items back in their places. She coughs out a laugh. "Sorry about that. This, I mean. The stuff. Didn't mean to break anything. Just-" She looks back at the door. Like a dog that wants in a place it's not allowed, it's obvious she's still keen on what's on the other side. "Is there a reason it's not open?"

**Nakota:**

Well, there's certainly enough noise happening to obscure any future bumps and thuds from the underdwelling crew, as Rodney jumps and knocks over his crutches that leaned against the counter. He presses a hand against his chest with a deep, deep frown. But the scene of Grimes emptying his pockets does illicit a small smile.

"Alright, alright, my bad. You've confessed and been found sin-free." Rodney settles back down into his seat, leaning out to awkwardly collect his crutches and put them back into their idle place. "Anyways-- my family and...sorry, what were the other questions?" Luckily for them both, he understands that Bea is trying to be a peacekeeper. He's just...perplexed by the man that is Grimes.

**Archie:**

Sorry TB she'll be right with you after she's done picking things up with Birdie "We had a break in recently." she doesn't sound upset necessarily, her tone even and difficult to read "Someone stole several of the items inside, and so until we can track down how someone got in and where they went, I've decided to close the information center."

**Tumbs:**

Grimes noted the crutches with a slight frown, head tilting slightly-- like a dog, distracted by the previous mayhem due to a shiny bone in their line of sight "That from a hiking accident?"

**Sleepy:**

This kid liked pulling people's legs. Ah he reminded her of her brother at that age. Smiling more when he said he found Grimes sin-free. She instinctively reached out, but put her hands back seeing as she wasn't going to just JUMP over the counter to help him. That would be way worst if she did.

**Wolf:**

"What kind of things did they steal?" Birdie is genuinely confused. "Did you really have anything that valuable in there? It's not just, like... maps and shit?" She placed another pair of sunglasses back. "When'd this happen?"

**Rock:**

TB perks up at the mention of a museum in the information center. "Ohh man! Y'all got a museum back here? What's usually on display?"

**Archie:**

Erin addresses both Birdie and TB "Nothing anyone but old historians like me would care about. The only things in there are old, from the mining industry all the way back to the settlers. Not worth anything, unless someone thought they could sell them as antiques, I suppose. A few cases were broken into after the... event at the lodge started." she sounds like she's being diplomatic, but it's pretty obvious exactly what numbers she's putting together "Thankfully they at least left the photographs alone."

**Nakota:**

"Mhm! Failed to see an overhang and took a tumble off of it. Lots of those around here that connect into caves...I was super lucky. Even the pros struggle to navigate around here sometimes. Anyways uhh-- family, right? We've been here for generations, never really been a fan of leaving too far from the nest. It's nice here...despite what non-local's might think." Rodney squints and scratches at the back of his neck, trying to recall anything that would help with Bea's lines of questioning from before the Grimes Incident.

Unfortunately for Bea, her pleading eyes were gone from his mind the moment he thought Grimes was a dirty little thief. "I mean, the Rangers are also local, not like I don't give them information either :pensivefloosh: They know all of my spots and I'm sure they're trying to take care of it the best they can. Don't wanna tell your group and have you end up like me but with no way to get back up, you know?"

He drums his fingers on the counter. "There's quite a few cave systems so they could've hunkered down there if anything...maybe old sections of the town that got wiped out for a bit of a shelter. But nothing the Rangers wouldn't know of. Sorry..." Rodney seems remorseful at not being a better help.

**Octo:**

It takes only a few moments for them to get back to the door. There is a knock knock knock Before the door creeeaks open to reveal Cyrus' head, dripping in mud. "Excuse me... you wouldn't happen to have a few paper towels... or a napkin? I fell off your porch." He gives them a smile through the grime.

**Rock:**

TB tilts his head, curious as to why Erin wasn't too upset about the break-in. If those were old, irreplaceable antiques, centerpieces for the town's history, he would've expected to hear more frustration. Does she know something that she doesn't want to show? Are the photographs the most important pieces? "What day did the break-in occur, exactly?"

**Wolf:**

"Well, you say that but if it happened during the fest, I'm pretty interested." she nods towards TB. "And that dude's a straight nerd who'd love to see all your history stuff. And-" She bites her lip, hesitates. She didn't think lying was going to get her far.

"I know it's stupid. I know it's a long shot. But if there's even a chance that it could help us find our friends, I'd like to take a look." She was practically begging at this point. "You can even watch us! Stand right behind us and shit. We won't touch anything without asking just... please may we see?"

**Rock:**

TB squints behind his glasses, but says nothing.

**Archie:**

"The exact date is in a report somewhere in Antioch, but it was while things were being set up." Her perpetually composed demeanor breaks into the faintest pursing of lips. Like a mother pushed slightly too far by their child's begging "I'm sorry about your friends, but I can't see how anything in there would help. It's local history, but Mr. TB already has a map, and you're welcome to take pamphlets about some of the caves and landmarks on your way out."

Cyrus and Lucy make their grand entrance, which seems to take her attention away. And she doesn't seem enthused to say the least "Let me open the bathroom for you." Erin takes a set of keys out of her apron to open the bathroom for Cyrus to wash up in.

**Sleepy:**

"Oh god no. Ain't none of us going out tah go look for ourselves tempting as it may be." But with the information received she could help but sigh a bit. Though gave Rodney a smile, trying to anyways. Clearly she was disappointed by the information. "Don't be sorry, gave us more than enough. Don't suppose you could still mark some them spots down? Anything's better than nothin at this point. Hell, even take a spooky town legend if you got it at this point. Maybe it might help them pin point where they are." Bea said holding out her newly bought map.

Joking about a town legend. Maybe it was connected to all the missing people. Hah. Yeah right. She'll still take what he gave them. Looking up, Bea's face dropped at the sight seeing Cyrus and Lucy. Oh good god. Immediately she turned her head back to Rodney. Looking even more tired "Nope. I don't even wanna know." She said shaking her head. Not going to ask nothing about all that.

**Nakota:**

There's something in Rodney's expressions as Cyrus makes his entrance that reads as utter distaste. Great. He was going to have to watch his mom mop the floor...again. He opens his mouth, only hushed by Erin's reply. He's decided he likes none of these people. Except Bea.

**Tumbs:**

"... Right, The rangers. " His tone sounded less than approving. Grimes glanced at Bea, catching brief glimpses into the hustle and bustle behind them. His eyes flared a bit as Cyrus stuck a muddy paw through the door-- attention falling on Lucy and him like a needlepoint target before he forced his set jaw back to the conversation at hand. Well, fuck. Who's to say colonialism didn't equal church ruins? It seemed the area was steeped in history. And pitfalls "... talkin' like he knows shit but broke his leg on rock... " -- muttered, under his breath.

**Wolf:**

Birdie stands there with a frown and furrowed brow, looking completely defeated. For now, she quietly moves to stand beside TB again. "Sorry I called you a nerd. I mean it in, like, a cool way." She continued to look towards the information center's door. If asking nicely hadn't worked, there were other ways. After all, if someone had broken in before, how hard would it be to break in again?

**Octo:**

"No need ma'am." Cyrus calls after her as he slooowly pushes the much less grimy Lucy into the room. "Wouldn't want to dirty up your nice place. If someone could grab me some napkins, I can wait outside... and maybe some cigs. I dropped my last pack in the mud." He gives a mournful sigh as he stands in the doorway, rubbing at the back of his neck. "Got a little desperate and lunged to try and catch 'em. Went right over the railing haha- made an awful sound. Hope I didn't scare anyone..."

**Rock:**

"You seemed pretty relieved that they left your photographs alone. I'm sure they are very...important to you, yeah? Antiques may be irreplaceable, but photos, they sure capture those special moments a lot better. Takes you back in time when you glance at them..." TB's voice trails off. During his pause, he taps his pen against his chin before speaking again, "So, family keepsakes? What's on them?" TB leans towards Birdie, giving her a smirk, "It's...fine. In that case, you're a nerd too. Also in the cool way."

**Kat:**

Lucy ducks inside, heading over to the counter for napkins. She wants another pack of cigarettes too "It's 'cause you're so tall," she says. "Too top heavy."

**Nakota:**

"Seen it before and I'm sure we'll see it again before all of this comes to an end...look, I'm not unsympathetic to you all looking for your friends but...the rangers have a handle on it. They're good people and I know they're working their hardest on tracking them down, I swear by it."

Rodney shakes his head. If they weren't going to go look for themselves and were ordered to keep their distance, what would marking down places serve to do besides be another missing person's case. "Not sure what's spooky...everything I hear about this place is just a case of people scary themselves silly and having their heads in the clouds." The shopkeeper's brow raises for a moment. "You have an issue with the Rangers or something?"

**Sleepy:**

"He's just sour cause of the scare they had given him couple days ago," Bea whispered to Rodney. Just giving up getting it marked down. Kid had a point that she did agree with. Even if it sucked to come back empty handed on her part. It just was too bad Bea couldn't convince some the others to put a little trust in the rangers. Could make things just a little easier at least.

**Archie:**

Erin stares at Cyrus for a moment, but ultimately tucks the keys away since Cyrus insists he doesn't need to use the bathroom "They're historical photos of the miners and old town. Quite irreplaceable as well, though I would like to know where our other historical artifacts went. They're all dear to our family." She returns to the counter, addressing Lucy "We have some shirts in the back if your friend needs them."

**Tumbs:**

Grimes grunted, clearing his throat as he glanced to the side. All this sidestepping...he was built for blunt force trauma, not scalpel work "I think for people that supposedly know the area so well--Having one of their own missing speaks volumes."

**Octo:**

"Thank yooooooooou!" Cyrus calls from the door. "Is that a no on the cigs then? I'm taking that as a soft no...?" He's glancing at the other merch he can see as he leans on the doorway.

There are cigarettes behind the counter, thankfully. And on the shelves there are any number of snacks, drinks, groceries, camping supplies, hats, sunglasses, postcards, shirts, toilet paper, hygiene products, and so on.

**Kat:**

"That would be great, thanks," Lucy says, smiling at Erin. "...could I also get two packs of cigarettes?"

**Sleepy:**

Someone end her (NOT LITERALLY) Bea had to lean on the counter on put her head in her hands. Why her? Why her?!

**Nakota:**

"Really? Not used to them playing pranks. Guess the festgoers got them into the spirit huh--" Rodney seems to start to laugh, stilling trying to think of anything spooky to give Bea...but it seems to slip out in a fit of frustration to Grimes.

"Look man-- I'm sorry you've got some ego that I'm not stroking, but this isn't the first time people have died because of the mudslides here. One of the towns that used to be here? The original ones? Hundreds wiped out by a mudslide, all locals, all who knew the area. You can't stop forces of nature with a snarky mouth and some muscle." Rodney clicks his tongue, sitting back in his seat with a huff. "You go out there, risk your life for people that didn't take a warning, get entombed and then come back to me." How desperately he wants to comment on understanding why Grimes was no longer a firefighter. :evil:

**Octo:**

"Oh! Grab some band aids if they got any? Hands got all cut up. You're the best Lucy." Yikes. The hell is Grimes doing over there? Cyrus is sure glad he's not Bea.



**Rock:**

"Right. Well, I sure hope you find them! Or, ya know, get any leads on where they could be." He takes more notes, "Hey Miss, if ya really suspect festival goers took your artifacts, well, I'll be honest. Everyone's stuck at the lodge right now. The artifacts probably couldn't have gotten very far. I can keep my eyes peeled for them if they're hanging out somewhere in the area, but of course, I'll need to know exactly what each of these missing historical artifacts are to do so. I'll let the guys know too."

**Kat:**

"What-" Lucy twists to look back at Cyrus, obviously alarmed. She hadn't stepped on his hands that hard, had she??? "Your hands are all muddy- go wash your hands!" Lucy's already rummaging through their bag for band aids and Neosporin. Which they brought, of course, because they're ✨prepared.✨

**Octo:**

"It's fiiiiiiiine Lucy! I just cut them up on the wood. Besides, dirt is supposed to be good for wounds or something." He shrugs at her with an easy smile. " 'Sides. I'd have mess up this nice lady's floor! What kind of guest would I be then huh?"

**Wolf:**

Birdie is acting so normal about this, staring at TB with a fervent glimmer of appreciation and that same, incurable curiosity. "Yeah. We can ask around. Snoop." If it wasn't already obvious enough to Erin that she was the nosy sort.

**Tumbs:**

Grimes set his jaw, eyes flashing at the verbal thrashing "Cigarettes." Is all he said, reaching for the pack as he slammed down an extra dollar. "Take a tip for the trouble." He pulled away, teeth gritting in a quiet exhale "I'm not saying that-- " patience beaded in a vein at his brow "Jesus. It doesn't matter. Bea-" he waved his pack, shouldering towards the door. " I got what I came for. I'll be in the truck. "

**Archie:**

Erin looks to him, and she maybe? Seems to soften a little bit "I can make up a short list with descriptions. And if you do find them," the next part seems to be said at least partially in confidence, though Birdie is likely close enough to hear "Then I will personally give you a guided tour of the information center." though that seems to be all she has to say about that.

**Kat:**

"The floor can be cleaned. Go wash your hands before it gets infected," Lucy insists, forehead creasing. "I'm the EMT here, not you." She glances at Grimes briefly, raising an eyebrow. Huh. Sounds like they had a fun time while she and Cyrus were outside.

**Sleepy:**

Phew, thank god. He wasn't wild enough to beef with a teenager. Bea nodded her head, handing him the keys so he could sit in the passenger seat and smoke "Make sure you keep the door open, i don't want it smelling like cigarettes in there. I'll be a minute." She said to Grimes. Turning back to Rodney, "Thanks and sorry about him...again."

**Octo:**

"Luc. I'm good. Really. I'll just go stand in the rain or something." His smile to her is sincere as he gestures for her to go exploring. "Go get your stuff. Ill be okay." Ooooooh :gasp: Someone's annnnnngry! Cyrus gives Grimes a nod as he passes... waits for him to get out of earshot, then gives Rodney the biiiiggest grin. "What did you do to piss off Evel Knievel off? I haven't seen him that mad in a hot minute." Hes hiding a snicker behind his hand.

**Kat:**

Lucy purses her lips, obviously not done with this conversation. She quickly pays for the cigarettes and grabs the napkins, then walks back over to Cyrus. The napkins get stuffed into his hand; the cigarettes go into her bag. They're patching him up the second they get back to the lodge.

**Nakota:**

Rodney wanted to feel good about that, seeing the guy so dejected, but frankly he just felt bad. These people were scared and unprepared and lashing out in any way they could to make themselves feel better...like a cornered animal out of options. He just wished they weren't so goddamn untrusting of those trying to help "It's alright..." The shopkeeper rubs at his face tiredly, looking at the dollar before sliding it back to Bea. "Give that back to him."

"Everyone's tense, I get it...actually-- that reminds me. That bit about the town? All true. One of the worse natural disasters in the area for decades. Of course with lots of death comes the fear of things being haunted but..." He lets out a puff of air. "That's on you if you think it's spooky or something. Wild stuff like that tends to mess with peoples minds, so don't think of it too much. Animals can make some funny "ghost" sounds if that's where you frame of mind is at." Rodney shrugs.

Rodney immediately makes another dissatisfied expression. Oh great, another weirdo with brightly coloured hair and a joy in people's suffering 🧑🏻 "Can't say what exactly, but the feeling is mutual."

**Octo:**

Cyrus laughs and puts his hands up defensively. Its obvious the kid didn't wanna talk. The mom was busy and didn't like his mud, Lucy was angry [as always]. Cyrus could take a hint "Damn. Well let me get out of your hair before the feeling spreads. Thanks for the cigs! You guys are a lifesaver!"

Cyrus gives a little salute, before looking to Bea. "Take your time. We'll be having a smoke and listening to the radio :sparkles:" After a wave he and Lucy close the door and disappear back into the rain. Out near the car, Cyrus leans onto Grimes open window. Getting absolutely soaked at this point. "So... that seems like it went... well?" He offers the man a smoke before pulling the door open for Lucy

**Sleepy:**

"Still ain't an excuse to act like jackasses." She understood how everyone else felt, she felt the same way. But some of these people were grinding her gears with the extreme intense distrust. Taking the dollar back, Bea huffed along with Rodney at the mentions of being haunted. "Not even in the slightest. If you ask me, some people watch way too many scary movies," She said, whispering the last bit to Rodney. Sure he was not the biggest fan of the believers from Freakfest. She couldn't blame him. Waving the suspicious mud boys off Bea looked back at Rodney and Erin "I can take them supplies yall got for Matt if you like."

**Rock:**

TB leans back and winks at Birdie upon hearing the news. Beautiful woman AND a personal museum tour? Score! "Great, great! That would be very helpful. Please, let me know as much as possible about these missing items. Ya know, I used to intern at a museum in my undergrad. Had to deal with some artifact thieves as well, so I get it. Crazy that folks would go as far as to steal priceless stuff, huh?"

**Kat:**

Lucy ducks into the truck, doing her best to knock some of the mud off her boots before completely going inside. "What did the guy at the counter say?" She asks Grimes, poking her head through the door to the front seats.

**Nakota:**

Rodney's brows arch curiously, mouth twitching into a smile. "Oh yeah? Not one of the believers that came for the Festival's purpose huh...? Talk about a breath of fresh air." :Simsyess~1: The smile breaks into a grin with the whisper, giving Bea a definitive nod "Appreciate it, from both of us. Also-- I saw you eyeing the compass box right? I'll see if I can get those back in stock, or at least scrounge up one or two and let you know. I don't like people going where they shouldn't, but I admire taking the steps to take care of yourself either way."

**Archie:**

Erin watches over everyone checking things out, leaving, or enjoying the warmth the general store has to offer. Before he leaves TB will acquire +1 item search quest list which Archie will get to your DMs by this weekend. If they don't, bonk them "Did you? That wasn't in your hometown, however?"

She looks as Bea speaks to her "Yes, let me help you get those loaded. Did you get everything you needed?" While Erin helps Bea load, she will attempt to pawn off either +1 snack, a bag of toiletries, or a small clothing item on her. Dealer's choice.

**Octo:**

He looks back at Lucy, then shrugs "Right. Good talk. Enjoy the smoke." Cyrus needs to step away. He's going to wander around the back of the shop for a minute and let the rain wash away the mud [INT 4] giving the place one last look over- Annnnd there he goes. Slipping on some loose gravel. The puddle he attempts to jump in he instead falls into. Yeah. This is fine. He's gonna lay there and look up at the sky for a while. Listen to the rain.

**Tumbs:**

Grimes finally acknowledged the smoke with a steady inhale, Pinching it between two fingers while he watched Cyrus eat the mud... :limmypoint:

**Octo:**

Grimes gets a very muddy middle finger raised up in the air and little else.

**Sleepy:**

Her smile reappeared, soft and cool, as she chuckled "Hun, I came here to sell burgers. Im not even a fest-goer." And far from a believer. She'll give the place this- she can not explain what happened in the attic- but she's also just not gonna look into all that anyways. Nope her eyes are shut to it for the time being.

"Would you? That'd be great. I just wanna be prepared yknow, eventually we're gonna have tah help look when this storm passes." Lets be real, three rangers weren't gonna find over a dozen people by themselves. Turning to Erin, Bea smiled. Ah yes, a fell pawner "I did thanks. Your boy's a real help." But she'll take one of those snacks if she's offering. She knows the hustle. "Others didn't chat you up too much I hope,"

**Tumbs:**

Finally shifting a wolfish smirk away from Cyrus, Grimes expression flattened a bit " Nothing that wasn't perfectly fucking potent. "

**Rock:**

"Well, noooo. I suppose that's where our similarities end. It was a geological museum at my old campus." TB sheepishly shrugs. He finishes up his conversation like an excited dog, "Anyways, it's been a good talk. Good, good talk. Thank you, so much for all your information. I really enjoyed hearing all that!"

As TB folds up his map, satisfied with the information of the land he's been given, he gives the store another lookover. "By the way...I'm sure everyone here will be stuck at the lodge for a while. You got any recommendations for stuff we could do to pass the time? Games or something in your wares? With all this rain, and the missing people, they're not gonna let us stray out in the woods. Such a bummer, I'll tell ya that!"

**Kat:**

"Potent...? Like what?" Lucy asks. She scoots further up so she can peek out the window at Cyrus. Okay. He's just committing to the swamp monster bit now, huh.

**Archie:**

"It was good to talk to you, TB." Erin smiles "I believe we have some cards and puzzle books over there, but no board games I'm sorry." she points you towards the snack aisles, where TB will find an extremely limited selection of sudoku and other short paperback books. He could also take some of the pamphlets purely for reading material, but most of them don't seem terribly interesting. But at least you can visit the store again if you ever get bored. Erin waves Bea over to show her where the boxes of provisions are "Oh they were fine. I know you all are very antsy back at the lodge..."

As purchases are made and thanks given, Erin begins preparing to assist Bea in getting supplies out to the food truck. There is one final (small) segment to this encounter. Please indicate if you are:



**Ready to move on!** [5]



**One last post please!** [0]

With contact made to the general store and as much information and supplies as you can hold, your group piles back into your vehicle to make the drive back to your temporary home. But as with all good things, they cannot last: the storm keeping you all anchored for the last several days has whipped itself into frenzy again, a torrential downpour beginning to obscure your vision of the way back home.



You realize you can't see much, but the road seems mostly clear besides a few mud banks here or there left over from the last severe bout of rain. You made it to the general store and the way back should be exactly the same...however there is the looming knowledge that another mudslide could happen, but with you in it.

What would you like to do?

[TAKE IT SLOW - standard rolls]

[MAKE IT FAST - quick time events]

**Sleepy:**

Like hell Bea's going fast. As anxious as she was, speeding through a storm like this could end up with her crashing. She'll keep her focus and eye out on the road for any possible signs and take it slow.

**Tumbs:**

"Jesus," Grime grumbled— shifting out of his slack jawed stupor. He leaned forward in his seat, attention honed on the road ahead. The rain was beating the shit out of them. "I'd Take it easy... we might hydroplane in this."

**Octo:**

Cyrus glances out the window as he's crammed himself around some boxes. "Now... I'm not an expert. You know I've never raced cars in the rain or anything ahahah-" he coughs but then smiles, " but with rain like this?? You know how easy we could hydroplane..." Hes with Bea. Better to be cut off from the lodge then dead in a car crash

**Kat:**

Lucy doesn't look happy at the thought of them being stuck out here much longer, but... they aren't the one driving. Slow and steady it is.

**Rock:**

TB looks out the window, noticing the downpour getting heavier and heavier. It's gonna be difficult to maneuver this. Maybe a vehicle built for off-road conditions would work, but a lumbering old food truck might not be the best idea to step on the gas. He hopes the driver will choose to take it slow "Hey Bea! Turn on your high beams!"

**Tumbs:**

Grimes keeps his eyes on the road ahead, searching for anything of note, eyes drifting between the front window— and the side, where the tree line resides. intel: 2 (grimes needs glasses)

**Sleepy:**

Bea flips those puppies on. Boop! Thanks TB! I'm assuming Bea's windshield wipers are already on hyper drive right now to help with seeing.

**Octo:**

Cyrus is also looking for anything of note. Helping to scan the road for any obstacles or signs of danger. Hes driven in enough shitty weather, hes hoping his experience will help [INT 19]

**Rock:**

TB peeks out the window as well, squinting to check for uneven or unstable land. Anything that may indicate a mass wasting risk [INT: 12]

**Kat:**

Lucy's glancing out the window, but it's hard to see and they're not driving, so... [int 8]

Your group has decided that taking things slow is ultimately for the best - with the downpouring rain, it's hard to be sure you're going in the right direction on a one-way road, let alone what's in front of you. Surely the rain can't be that bad to cause another mudslide, right? That doesn't mean you're out of the woods yet though. You all keep your eyes diligently on the road.

Cyrus: Even with the shifting sources of light and near chiaroscuro of the landscape, you're able to make out the existence of several dips in the road in front of you. As long as you take it slow and have some sense of depth perception, you can probably tell Bea what you see ahead of you to prepare.

Grimes, Lucy, TB: Even though the rain has mostly let up, the mud covered terrain is doing you no favours in terms of vision. The shadows dip and move under your headlights - a trick of a vision - you're not too sure how far off they are.

**Octo:**

Cyrus will be giving as clear directions as he can, while trying not to backseat drive. Likely making some jokes to try and keep the mood light. :Fingerbangemoji: [Nat 20+3 Soc]

Cyrus is able to smoothly describe every location of the potholes that he managed to spot to Bea with pinpoint precision - and there was a few nasty ones that would've sent you careening into a ditch! Say thank you Cyrus! With this boon of knowledge, Bea is able to add +5 to her next roll. But knowing and doing are two different things. Bea, roll a 1d20+DEX plus your new bonus.

**Sleepy:**

[17] Team works the dream work as they say. Thank you Cyrus for the guidance without backseat driving.

**Rock:**

Alright well this shit's gonna get crazy. We die like men. TB can't see a thing so he walks away from the window and searches around in his pocket. He pulls out his bing, presenting it to his fellow truck passengers "Anyone want a hit" TB will be buffing +3 to his party members!

**Octo:**

Thank you Bea for not running them into a ditch- Cyrus stares at Tb with a slowly growing grin. "My guy- you always know just what to say."

**Sleepy:**

"Are you smoking in my truck???" She can't look back! Thank you for the buff TB but damn. Yall trying to get her arrested?

**Kat:**

Lucy doesn't want to hotbox with these chucklefucks, get them out of here-

With the combined effort of your Bessie Moo Pilot & Copilot, your group is able to dodge most of the potholes! But that does require veering off slightly to the edge of the road where it isn't as smooth as before... OH GREAT HEAVENS THAT IS ROUGH! Everyone roll a 1d20+STR to hold on for dear fucking life (remember to hit a rip off of TB's bing for that sweet +3)

**Tumbs:**

GRIMES WANTS THE 3 SO HE STEALS THE FUCKIJ BJNG.

**Kat:**

Lucy's gripping, but she's distracted by the fucking bing TB's just whipped out of nowhere. He's jumped right back onto her kill with fire list, actually [9]



**Octo:**

[18+3=21] Cyrus is using his big beefy arms to try and hold down his besties in the back of this truck. Lucy and Tb, he got you [if mods allow]

**Tumbs:**

Grimes is too busy inhaling the bung. 🦴 [2+7=9]

**Rock:**

Being in the truck and seeing something he felt like he should not have seen is fucking with his head. Not even Mary Jane's great power could help TB in this situation [STR: 3]

**Sleepy:**

[STR: 15] "I swear to god, ima make yall stay out in the damn storm to air out the truck-" Bea couldn't complete her threat as the road got too bumpy. Bea had to put all her focus into driving to make sure they didn't get off road.

Lucy, Grimes: Two eggs in a basket with similar levels of strength...somehow. Unfortunately for the both of you, eggs are fragile and easily breakable. You both slam into each other with a particularly low bump, bouncing away just as quickly as you came. Not enough to do damage but certainly...awkward.

Bea, Cyrus: You're both experts at this. It's clear you either have vehicle legs of steel or arms made of the same mettle that this hardly phases you at all. You're a little jostled, but nothing more. Congrats! Only feats of heroics for you!

TB...: You're lucky Cyrus saved his Chlorophyll Haired Brethren, reaching out a spare arm to lock you into place while that bing bubbles quietly in the chaos of the foodtruck. It seemed your head was going right for one of the corners of the friers...maybe don't think about what could've been.

**Sleepy:**

Good lord that shook us around "Y'all alright back there?"

**Rock:**

"Ah, shit." He looks up at Cyrus with his big wet eyes. TB's glasses lay crooked on his face from the fall. "Thanks man...!"

**Tumbs:**

Grimes jaw smarted to the side with a sharp " Fuck!" he hit something hard and round.

**Kat:**

Lucy's head smacks straight into something sharp and heavy. "Ow-!" She stumbles back a few steps, before regaining her balance. Jesus Christ. She looks up to see what she bumped into- or, who. Ugh. "...you okay?" She doesn't sound very happy about asking, but she's being polite at least. 😞

**Octo:**

Cyrus stares wide eyed down at his fellow chlorophyll haired bro. Holy shit. Holy shit that could have been so bad "Y-yeah. Don't mention it. What are bros for right?" He's holding his lil bro soooo tight. And fixing his glasses. Just gonna put those big wet eyes away. "You good?"

**Sleepy:**

"Sorry about that y'all!" Bea called back to everyone. She had hoped the bumpy edge of the road did jostle them too much. But from the sounds of it they did "Hang on just a bit longer, we'll be there soon,"

**Tumbs:**

Grimes had one hand against the truck wall, while the other rubbed his sore jaw. He blinked, tasting blood in his mouth. 💀 "... Knew you were hard headed."

**Rock:**

"Hm. Yeah. I appreciate it man." TB pulls himself closer to Cyrus once his glasses are repositioned on his face and mutters something under his breath (THAT ROCK WILL DM YOU).

**Kat:**

Okay, cool! :) She'll take that as a 'he's fine.' Lucy leans against the counter and tries to ignore the throbbing. That's definitely going to leave a bruise.

<https://youtu.be/sOu8affnGx0?t=19832>

Despite the bumps, bruises and heroic saves, the food truck has made over half its journey (mostly) intact. The dirt path leading to the lodge is within sight, but the storm seems to be getting worse. However...Thunder rings out above you enough for you to feel it in the center of your chest. Even with the thick coverage of trees, the sky lights up with an arcing bolt of lightning, sending shadows in every direction - only to be plunged back into darkness again.

Each bump and tire skid on the road makes the headlights jump in place, worsening the visibility of what's in front of you. There seems to be something in the road? A figure, you all think, maybe. No one should be out in this weather, let alone you. Perhaps it's just a trick of the lights refracting the rain and your newfound high.



**Tumbs:**

[Intel:13+3=16] Grimes gripped the window ledge, eyes wide and focused on the shadow ahead. Whether the knock to his jaw jostled his brain—The sight was enough warrant a shout “BEA—

**Kat:**

[23 int] What is that, a deer??? Lucy's eyes are wide as they try to parse what they're seeing "Watch out—"

**Octo:**

Cyrus is still a little shocked, blinking down in surprise as TB pulls in closer. There is a pause—Cyrus' eyes going wide, mouth running dry, pulse jumping. Any relief he'd felt at saving TB had quickly turned into an ice chill. "I- you—" What can he even say? What can he do?

His hold on TB gets tighter, more protective, there is no way he's letting go. "O-okay. Okay well—I've got you now. You're- were fine. Were gonna be fine. Were gonna get back to the lodge and figure it out and—" Cyrus is nervous rambling. An old tick that's been showing up far more often than Cyrus would like. But his mind is reeling and like hell is he letting TB go into the light.

Cyrus is too shaken to notice much of anything at all [Int 4+3+1= 8]

**Sleepy:**

Grime's and Lucy's shout caused Bea to stop immediately. A little harshly too but she was startled by his shout as well as what looked to be a person in front of them. Not wanting to hit it. Why would someone be out here? "One of the missing people?" She asked a little hopefully. Slowly Bea approached, using the truck lights to get a better look at who or what was in the road [INT: 18]

**Rock:**

"I'm...fine. Right." In the midst of Cyrus' rambling, something outside the window catches TB's eyes. He cranes his neck over Cyrus' shoulder to see what it was [INT: 17]

GRIMES, TB, BEA: As the lighting crackles again above you, it's clear as day that the figure that stands before you all is a person. A large, seemingly burly man. There's something about his face that seems distorted and unnatural, but between the rain and the distance...you can't quite make it out. Was he holding something...?

LUCY: [Result has been DM'd]

CYRUS: You had the exact same thoughts as Lucy! That certainly was a deer! Must've been scared by the thunder and the lighting, poor thing. Besides, you've got other things to worry about besides deer, right?

Just as quickly as the figure appeared in your headlights, with the strike of another thunderclap...the figure is gone from the middle of the road.

**Sleepy:**

Bea stopped again. No. No no no. That was a person and people don't just disappear in thin air. It had to be the lightning and the rain. Maybe even their minds playing tricks from stress "Who was that?" Was all she could muster up as she gripped the steering wheel looking for him.

**Kat:**

"What the fuck-" Lucy stumbles back and hits her head against the wall. Fuck. Jesus Christ. Her heart is pounding against her chest, and she has to force herself to take a deep breath. This was because of TB's stupid fucking weed, wasn't it?? Was she secondhand high????

**Sleepy:**

"What did you get a good look at them? What did you see?" Bea asked. Still looking out onto the road for the figure.

**Octo:**

Cyrus looks up from TB, though still keeps the other man close in his arms. "Who- I thought it was a deer- Fuck I- I didn't see-" He is immediately standing to help Lucy, with a grip still on TB. "Whoa! Luc! Breathe- talk to us-" oh my God this was supposed to be a dumb little run to a stupid little STORE WHY IS THIS HAPPENING

**Rock:**

Shit. WHAT THE FUCK WAS THAT? TB gasps and then grips onto Cyrus even harder, almost pinching him, this time out of fear rather than anguish. There is no way the weed already hit. Or has it?

**Tumbs:**

"...Someone could go out and check—"

**Sleepy:**

"You may be white but Im not- fuck that!"

**Kat:**

"I'm fine, it's just TB's stupid fucking weed or something-" Lucy whips around to look at Grimes. What is wrong with this man. "No. That guy had an axe. A fire axe. And he was wearing a- a burlap sack over his head, and... Just. No one get out."

**Octo:**

"No they sure fucking shouldn't. In this storm- with the mudslides?? You could get swept up in the road-" Cyrus has one arm around TB, holding him close to his side, despite the pinching. He's never seen TB like this, Cyrus' concern is skyrocketing. His heart is beating so fast. The other hand is reaching for Lucy, trying to get her to turn her head to him. "Hey- hey it-" Oh. Oh fuck. :blink: "...what?"

**Sleepy:**

:oh: "Point proven why we are not gonna white person this!" Bea's checking the locks on the doors to make sure they're all locked again.

What would you like to do?

 - Park and check it out [0]

 - **Keep driving while the road still exists** [5]

**Rock:**

TB looks at Cyrus dead in the eyes, shakingly breathing out his words. "...We saw the Hat Man."

**Tumbs:**

Grimes looked at Lucy— brows pinched. "Fuck- I was thinking out loud, alright? You ever heard of a hit and run? that was clearly a fucking— "

**Kat:**

Lucy lets out a frustrated noise, dragging a hand down her face. "I'm probably just seeing shit. It's dark." But on the off chance she wasn't tripping, she'd rather keep the doors locked. Thank you Bea. They finally look at Cyrus, so tense they're shaking a little. "...I'm fine. Yeah, well think silently," she snaps. A pause. "...sorry."

**Octo:**

Cyrus freezes, he looks down at TB looking pale in the crack of lightning. "I swear to christ-" hes starting to giggle now- slightly hysterical. "-I am going to snap if that was the honest to God hat man." His head turns back to Lucy as she speaks, eyes darting between her and Grimes. "... im sure you are but-" he is tugging Lucy towards him. To tuck her under his other arm. "Stay close? Just in case?"

**Sleepy:**

"It's all good-we're just all spooked right now." Bea said to them all, equally as freaked out, as she slowly started moving again. Still going slow and keeping an eye out.

Despite the storm, the dirt road back to the lodge is mostly uneventful. The torrential downpour does wonders to smooth out any pesky potholes that could send you veering off. With Bea's reliable and slow driving, you all pull back into the Lodge's parking lot safe and sound with supplies, knowledge, and horror in hand.

|                |            |  |      |
|----------------|------------|--|------|
| <b>Archie:</b> | 3066 Words |  | \$22 |
| <b>Kat:</b>    | 1281 Words |  | \$9  |
| <b>Nakota:</b> | 3113 Words |  | \$22 |
| <b>Octo:</b>   | 2384 Words |  | \$17 |
| <b>Rock:</b>   | 1835 Words |  | \$13 |
| <b>Sleepy:</b> | 2806 Words |  | \$20 |
| <b>Tumbs:</b>  | 1788 Words |  | \$13 |
| <b>Wolf:</b>   | 900 Words  |  | \$6  |