

Transcript for Imagined Economies, Episode 1: The Souvenir

CITY NOISES. HORSES. CARRIAGES. MURMURING VOICES. CHURCH BELLS.

TOURIST: (VOICEOVER) Hey mum. This letter should reach you before I return-

PEN SCRATCHES ON PAPER.

TOURIST: -courtesy of cousin Cal. Did you know he's all grown up now-

A SHOP BELL JINGLES, DOOR OPENING.

TOURIST: -and running the courier business? Crazy.

SHOP BELL JINGLES. DOOR CLOSING. A SHEAF OF PAPER IS SHOVED ASIDE.

SHOPKEEPER: (TO ANOTHER CUSTOMER) Thank you.

SHOPKEEPER: (TO TOURIST) Hello and welcome. Can I help you find anything?

ANOTHER OTHER CUSTOMER LEAVES THE SHOP, BELL JINGLING AS THEY DO.
THE CITY SOUNDS OUTSIDE THE TOWN ARE MUFFLED AS THE DOOR CLOSSES.

TOURIST: Yes, hello. It might be a long shot, but I was hoping you had some of the snow drop charms?

FOOTSTEPS.

SHOPKEEPER: No, sorry, I'd be surprised if there's any left in the city.

TOURIST: (SIGHING) I thought as much. Thank you.

SHOPKEEPER: Well, feel free to look around. Maybe you'll find something else you like.

PEN SCRATCHING ON PAPER.

TOURIST: (VOICEOVER, THE SOUND OF PEN ON PAPER) I went to the gift shop Aunt Bevel told us about.

THE TOURIST TOUCHES SOME LODESTONES WHICH CLACK TOGETHER.

SHOPKEEPER: (LOUDLY, FROM ACROSS THE SHOP) Please don't touch the lode stones!

TOURIST: Sorry! Sorry.

SHOPKEEPER: Touch the necklaces, if you must, but not the loose stones. That's what the trowels and little bottles are for.

TOURIST: Oh, sorry, it's the opposite where I'm from.

SHOPKEEPER: Where are you from?

TOURIST: Uh, Green Valley, near Fox-head Shrine.

SHOPKEEPER: Oh, that's quite a journey. What brings you to Opal-anne?

TOURIST: Oh, my mum and I always wanted to come visit. My aunt has lived here for a while, and we heard good things. We always planned to come together, but ... it just didn't work out for her to join me.

SHOPKEEPER: (NOT ACROSS THE SHOP ANYMORE) Ah. Then that's who the snow drops are for.

TOURIST: Yeah. Yeah, my aunt used to send them our way every few months, and it... helped. But it makes sense that they're gone with Old Farraday dead.

SHOPKEEPER: You know, I've got something else. If you can tell me what symptoms your mother has...?

TOURIST: She has pain every day. Migraines.

PAPER RUSTLES. THEN SOMETHING CERAMIC IS SET ON THE COUNTER.

SHOPKEEPER: This is a stone mushroom that only grows right after wildfire in the mountains. It isn't cheap, but it could help your mom better than snow drops would. The priests at Foxhead Shrine should know how to prepare it into a treatment for her.

TOURIST: Oh, that's um... that's really ... thoughtful of you. But if I

came home with medicine my mum would be so sad. She just wants me to have a good time, since she couldn't join me. The snow drops didn't cost much, and they're pretty-- they're technically a charm from the temple with blessings... So I was hoping to get a good souvenir for her. 'Wish you were here' type of thing.

SHOPKEEPER: Ahh. I see.

THE SOUND OF PEN ON PAPER.

TOURIST: (VOICEOVER) The shop had so many things I wish I could show you.

THE SHOP BELL JINGLES. DOOR OPENING AND CLOSING AS ANOTHER CUSTOMER ENTERS.

SHOPKEEPER: (TO ANOTHER CUSTOMER) Hi, can I help you find anything?

CUSTOMER 1: No, I'll just take a look around.

A METALLIC CLICK. A COLD WIND HOWLING. A MECHANICAL WIND-UP SOUND. A MUSIC BOX PLAYS. ICE CRACKS AND CRUNCHES

NARRATOR: You're listening to Imagined Economies, Episode 1: The Souvenir.

THE MUSIC BOX TUNE CONTINUES WITH ICY CRUNCHES.

TOURIST: (VOICEOVER) There was this winter music box, with an ice dragon rotating inside. It was a little sad, to me, but-

TOURIST: (ACROSS THE SHOP) Do these ... actually sell?

SHOPKEEPER: (LAUGHS GOOD-HUMOREDLY) You'd be surprised. A lot of folks here were fond of Old Farraday. I bet even his critics will miss him, in time. His influence made winter bearable. Cozy. That song was made for him.

TOURIST: It's a kind of ... what.... funeral souvenir?

ICE SPLINTERS. METAL CLINGS. AND THE MUSIC STOPS.

TOURIST: Memorial of the dead? It's a little... macabre...

SETS THE MUSIC BOX DOWN.

TOURIST: ...don't you think?

SHOPKEEPER: (GIGGLING) If you think that's macabre, then it's a good thing you weren't here for the line of people trying to get one of Farraday's scales. I was too late to snag one. But they're good luck! My gran lived to a hundred and twenty because of the scale she got when Old Cameron died.

GRAVEL SKITTERS AS ANOTHER CUSTOMER DIGS LODESTONES.

TOURIST: Huh. I'll take your word for it.

STONES INTO LITTLE GLASS BOTTLES. PEN SCRATCHING ON PAPER.

TOURIST: (VOICEOVER) More than the shop, though, the whole city

was inspiring. Even when my feet felt tired, I visited one more place, since I don't know when I'll be able to visit again. I'm taking your wish, to say hello to all of the sights for you, pretty seriously. I can rest when I'm back home.

SHOPKEEPER: Well..

IN THE BACKGROUND, A SOUND LIKE WOOD BEING FIDDLED WITH, A RATCHET WINDING.

SHOPKEEPER: ... if you're looking for some good souvenirs for mom, I have some other ideas. Those postcards there animate when you tap them twice. Check out the one of the temple. A pilgrimage enters the picture-

PAPER SLIDES PAST OTHER PAPER.

SHOPKEEPER: -and goes up the steps.

TOURIST: Ah, that's ... (STALLS) cute. Uh, but that's not quite what I'm looking for, either.

SHOPKEEPER: You know... Sometimes when I travel and want to get someone a nice souvenir... I get it in my head that the gift I get has to be perfect.

SHOPKEEPER: Because it's not just a souvenir.

THE SHOP DOOR OPENS. BELL JINGLING.

SHOPKEEPER: It's a statement about my care for them. It's a statement

about-

THE SHOP DOOR CLOSES.

SHOPKEEPER: -what they mean to me.

CUSTOMER 2: (FROM ACROSS THE SHOP) Hello.

SHOPKEEPER: (TO NEW CUSTOMER) Hello!

FOOTSTEPS.

SHOPKEEPER: (LOWER, TO TOURIST) And I get so in my head, trying to find the perfect gift to say all that - that I love them, that I'm thinking of them, that I know them and understand them... That getting a good grade in gift-giving is Both Normal To Want And Possible To Achieve... I get so in my head that I stop enjoying my travel. Not permanently. Maybe just for a moment. A half hour. But no matter what I buy, it feels disappointing.

FOOTSTEPS.

TOURIST: (EXHALING, A LITTLE ANNOYED) Okay. Okay, I get it.

CUSTOMER 2: (NEARER NOW BUT STILL A BIT AWAY) Are these from Cheshire Grove?

SHOPKEEPER: (TO CUSTOMER 2) Of course!

SHOPKEEPER: (TO TOURIST) I think it's similar to funerals, actually. Getting in line for a scale from our dead dragon lord's body? It helps us process the change. It diverts the energy, the anxiety of the unknown-

TOURIST: I ...feel like that's different, though.

SHOPKEEPER: Maybe. But when my gran died, those same sort of feelings popped up. What's the exact right thing to say at a funeral?

FOOTSTEPS.

SHOPKEEPER: How do I mark the moment perfectly? It *matters*. And because it matters-

GLASS CLINKS TOGETHER.

SHOPKEEPER: -it's so easy for it to feel like it's *all* that matters.

SHOPKEEPER WRAPS THE OTHER CUSTOMER'S BOTTLES IN IN PAPER.

TOURIST: (LAUGHING ANXIOUSLY) Is everyone from Opal-anne this generous with their life advice?

CUSTOMER 1: (SING-SONGY) Pretty much.

SHOPKEEPER: (LAUGHS EARNESTLY) Well, maybe. (TO CUSTOMER 1) Four and a half bits, dearie.

COINS CLINK.

CUSTOMER 1: Thank you.

SHOPKEEPER: (TO CUSTOMER 1) Thanks and come again.

THE SHOP DOOR OPENS AND THE BELL JINGLES AS CUSTOMER 1 LEAVES.
WHILE THE DOOR IS OPEN, THE SOUNDS OF CITY LIFE FLARE AND THEN
QUIET AS THE DOOR SHUTS.

SHOPKEEPER: How many more days will you be in Opal-anne? I might have
just the thing for you.

TOURIST: Uh, just today and tomorrow.

SHOPKEEPER: Well, that should be enough time.

A THIN METAL CHAIN CLINKS AND A GLASS DISC SHIFTS.

SHOPKEEPER: This spyglass has a button, under this panel, and when you
press it, it will record everything you see, smell, hear, feel -
even taste. Only about ten seconds. Only one slot, so
re-recording will erase the previous one. But here.

SHOPKEEPER: This is our sampler, with a recording from the temple
foot-baths. Take a look.

THE CHAIN CLINKS AS TOURIST TAKES IT. A ROCK DROPS IN WATER. A METAL
CHIME BOWL IS STRUCK, THEN A CALM GONG. WATER RIPPLES AND SWISHES.
THE METAL BOWL CHIMES AGAIN AND THE TEMPLE SOUNDS CEASE.

TOURIST: (GASPS, LIKE COMING UP FOR AIR IN A LAKE, THEN LAUGHS WILDLY, GLEEFULLY) I saw it! I... *felt* it. My feet in the baths. The smell of sulphur. Saw the garden wall behind the temple. Oh, that's... that's *incredible*. So I could take my own recording, take the spyglass home, and when my mum looks through it, it (LAUGHS AGAIN, BREATHLESS) it will be... as if she were really here?

SHOPKEEPER: Yes! You can test it out, to make sure it's recorded. The scene is triggered when it detects an eye up at the eyepiece.

TOURIST: (EMPHATICALLY) Yeah, this is... perfect. (HESITANT NOW) And... uh... how much is it?

SHOPKEEPER: Fifteen bits.

TOURIST: (EXHALES) That's... a completely fair price for what it is... but it's also the whole of my budget for this gift. No fees or anything, for wrapping it up, right?

SHOPKEEPER: Nope, no, just fifteen.

TOURIST: (SIGHS, RELIEVED) Great.

COINS CLINK.

SHOPKEEPER: Thank you. What do you think you'll record?

THE SHOPKEEPER WRAPS THE SPYGLASS UP IN PAPER.

TOURIST: Mum would love the foot-baths... The only thing missing from your sampler recording was something to taste.

SHOPKEEPER: Yeah, rotten egg smell doesn't really mix with food very well.

TOURIST: That's a ...good point.

SHOPKEEPER: You could always dip your feet in the river. There's some stones in the water near Calloway Bridge big enough for a little picnic. And sometimes the singing fish hang out nearby.

TOURIST: Oh, I wish I had stopped here first. There's so many places to choose from...

SHOPKEEPER: No spiraling. No perfectionism. Just pick the thing you want to do most, and record that for Mom. She'll love it.

TOURIST: Yeah. Okay. Okay. (INHALE, EXHALE) I think I can do that. Thank you.

SHOPKEEPER: Safe travels.

CUSTOMER 2: Hi.

FOOTSTEPS.

SHOPKEEPER: (TO CUSTOMER 2) Yes, can I help you?

CUSTOMER 2: Do you all do portraits here?

SHOPKEEPER: No, this is just a gift shop. (THEIR CONVERSATION
FADES)

CUSTOMER 2: Right, well the portrait would *be* a gift...

THE SHOP BELL JINGLES AND THE DOOR CLOSES. THE SOUNDS OF
CARRIAGES AND VOICES FROM MERCHANT STALLS COME TO LIFE. THEN CUT
OFF UNDER THE SCRATCHING OF A PEN ON PAPER.

TOURIST: (VOICEOVER) I got you something I think you'll really like.

WATER RIPPLES AND SWISHES. PEN ON PAPER CONTINUES.

TOURIST: (VOICEOVER) Did you know you can visit the foot-baths
here at night? They're seen as a public good so they never
close. And the night was... well,

CALM WATER NOISES FADE INTO CRICKETSONG, PEN ON PAPER CONTINUING.

TOURIST: (VOICEOVER) you'll see for yourself soon enough.

A SCENCE CRACKLES. CRICKETS CHIRP ON. WRITING SOUNDS CONTINUE.

TOURIST: (VOICEOVER) But I was lucky enough to see a shooting
star! What wish would you make, if you saw one? You
should think about it, so you have one ready. Maybe you'll
see one soon. (EXHALES)

BACKGROUND SOUND AND WRITING NOISES FADE OUT.

TOURIST: (VOICEOVER) I love you, Mum.

THE MUSIC BOX TUNE PLAYS.

NARRATOR: Thanks for listening to Imagined Economies. Lea Lawson was the voice of the Tourist. Cassie Fox was the voice of the Shopkeeper. Rocky Breen was the voice of the other customers.

NARRATOR: This episode was written by Rocky Breen, with Dialogue Editing by Lea Lawson and Sound Design by Cassie Fox.

THE MUSIC BOX CONTINUES AND THEN FADES. END OF EPISODE.