

EXT. CITY ALLEY - MORNING

We're in an alley, in a pre-modern city. At the far end of the alley is a busy and crowded space. But this alley is narrow and secluded.

Two sets of footsteps approach, and then falter awkwardly when they meet.

MATRONSON

Oh, excuse me.

YOUNGER MAN

No, please. After you.

MATRONSON

Appreciate that.

They resume walking. Throughout the rest of this scene, the end of the alley gets closer.

After a beat...

YOUNGER MAN

Fitting to be hot today. You can already tell.

MATRONSON

Not as hot as in the mine, I can tell you that.

YOUNGER MAN

*(meek)*

...I'm sorry. I didn't know.

MATRONSON

*(grumpy)*

Yeah, nobody ever seems to know.

They walk a while longer, in awkward silence.

MATRONSON

*(softens)*

I'm sorry. Of course you didn't know. Here you are just trying to be polite, and I've gotta get all ornery about it. Must come with old age.

YOUNGER MAN

Well, no apology needed. They say wisdom comes with old age too.

MATRONSON

Oh, so now you're calling me old?

THEY BOTH **CHUCKLE**.

MATRONSON

You got some carpets there?

YOUNGER MAN

Yes sir. My wife just did the finishing touches last night. Best stitching I've ever seen. You want one? I'll give you a good price.

MATRONSON

I might just, young man. I'll have to see how I do today.

YOUNGER MAN

I hear you. What are you selling? If I can ask.

MATRONSON

I sing.

YOUNGER MAN

Sing? That's good. I like to hear the old timers sing.

By now, they've reached the end of the alley, and the scene has opened up into a bustling market bazaar.

MATRONSON

All right. Good luck out there.

YOUNGER MAN

Yeah, thanks. Same to you.

EXT. MARKET BAZAAR - A LITTLE LATER

Off to our left, we hear the younger man from the prior scene.

YOUNGER MAN

Rugs here! Hand-made. One for a silver, three for two!

But off to our right, we hear someone new. His Dialect suggests the Eastern portion of our established world.

RIVAL MERCHANT

*(caught off guard)*

Rugs here! Quality made, by good, law-abiding folk. One for a silver!

MATRONSON

*Hot feet, cool mud\  
Hot hands, cool mud\  
Hot brow, cool mud\  
Cool mud keep you when the brimstone comes.*

*Hot day in the market square\  
The thunder and the sweat, all in the air\  
Rugs and spices in the market square\  
Cool rain keep you when the thunder comes.*

Someone drops a coin at Matronson's feet.

Thank you, appreciate that.

*Hot feet, cool mud\  
Hot hands, cool mud\  
Hot brow, cool mud\  
Cool mud keep you when the brimstone comes.*

YOUNGER MAN

Hand-made, expert craftsmanship. One for a silver,  
three for two!

A crowd is starting to grow around the Younger  
Man.

MATRONSON

*Kind folk, walking on by\  
Copper if you laugh, silver if you cry\  
Toss a bard a coin if you're walking by\  
Silver keep me when the tax man comes.*

RIVAL MERCHANT

*(growing concerned)*  
One for a silver, three for two!

The crowd dynamics don't change at all.

A few more people drop coins under the next  
verse.

MATRONSON

*Hot feet, cool mud\  
Hot hands, cool mud\ - thank  
you!  
Hot brow, cool mud\  
Cool mud keep you when the  
brimstone comes. - I  
appreciate you!*

RIVAL MERCHANT

Two! Two for a silver!

Still no change in the crowd.

The rival merchant storms up to Matronson.

RIVAL MERCHANT

Will you knock it off?

MATRONSON

I'm just singing, sir. It's not against any law.

RIVAL MERCHANT

You're scaring off my customers with that gods damned cave music.

YOUNGER MAN

Your customers can hear just as well over by me.  
Doesn't seem to stop them buying *my* wares.

RIVAL MERCHANT

*(mutters)*  
Orc bastards...

The rival merchant storms off.

MATRONSON

*(you can hear the impish grin)*  
*Good work for a young man\  
Seamstress wife lends a helping hand\  
Buy your rugs from this young man\  
A good rug keep you when the cold snap comes.*

*Hot feet, cool mud\  
Hot hands, cool mud\  
Hot brow, cool mud\  
Cool mud keep you when the brimstone comes.*

The rival merchant returns. This time, two sets of stirruped boots accompany him.

RIVAL MERCHANT

Yeah, right over there.

The stirruped boots walk over to where the Younger Man is selling. Everyone grows quiet.

ELF GUARD

Writ of Approval, please.

YOUNGER MAN

*(nervous)*  
Oh, yeah, of course. Right here.

ELF GUARD

This is expired.

YOUNGER MAN

Only a few days. Magistrate's office was closed for the last two weeks. I was gonna renew it as soon as--

ELF GUARD

--Be quiet. You understand we have regulations here for a reason.

YOUNGER MAN

Yessir, but--

ELF GUARD

--We can't just have any ill-intended hooligan who wants to selling wares out here.

YOUNGER MAN

No sir, I only--

ELF GUARD

--I said be quiet. Now I can do you a favor this once and let you off with a warning. But we'll have to confiscate your wares.

YOUNGER MAN

My--but this is my stock for the whole season.

ELF GUARD

Well I didn't tell you to sell them without a Writ of Approval.

YOUNGER MAN

No, wait, please.

We hear a thud, and the crowd reacts with alarm.

THE YOUNGER MAN **GROANS**, THE WIND KNOCKED OUT OF HIM BY A PUNCH.

ELF GUARD

Have it your way. Take him.

The younger man stumbles as one of the pair of stirrups drags him away.

YOUNGER MAN

(still winded)  
Firstborn. FIRSTBORN!

MATRONSON

*(has an angry edge on his voice now)*  
*Elf's hand, tyrant's whip\*  
*Elf's bow, tyrant's grip\*  
*Coward man, scar on his lip\*  
*Cool mud keep you when the whip lash comes.*

*The Rival Merchant storms right up to us.*  
*Really gets in our face.*

RIVAL MERCHANT

What'd you fucking say?

MATRONSON

*(still mad)*  
 I'm just singing, sir. It's not against any law.

RIVAL MERCHANT

What was that about the scar on the lip? You calling me a coward?

MATRONSON

Lots of men got a scar on their lip. It's only about you if you think you're a coward.

RIVAL MERCHANT

So maybe we'll call the Peacekeepers back again. What do you think? Is your Writ of Approval current?

There's a long stand-off.

And I mean LONG. But finally...

EXT. CITY ALLEY - LATER

*We hear Matronson returning down the alley.*  
*Slowly. Listlessly.*

INT. MATRONSON'S FLAT - A LITTLE LATER STILL

*A door opens into a small, sparse room. Matronson enters, and closes the door behind him.*

*He sits on a small cot.*

MATRONSON **WEEPS.**

FADE OUT

END OF MINISODE.