

**SOUL PROPRIETOR**

**Dialogue Exercise**

Written by

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Based on characters from the *Diablo* franchise by Blizzard

EXT. TRISTRAM - DAY

This squalid, gothic town mopes with laboring PEASANTS. A gray haze clings to the earth like a death shroud.

AWAY FROM THE CROWD

Hunched beneath a dead tree, a shabby boy furtively opens a leather satchel. As WIRT (12) rifles through the sack, we hear the CLINK of coin, and his eyes light up.

WIRT

What do we have here...

MARIUS (42), a weathered vagabond shuffles up behind Wirt. His craggy face has seen hardships untold.

MARIUS

<CLEARS THROAT>

Wirt scampers to his feet - or foot, rather. The boy teeters on his good leg, and we notice his other one is merely a wooden peg. Marius grabs Wirt's collar so he doesn't fall.

WIRT

Me off hands! Er -- hands off me!

The boy hobbles back from Marius.

MARIUS

Easy, lad, easy. I'm not going to harm you.

WIRT

Couldn't if you tried, you old corpse. Whaddya want?

MARIUS

Are you the one called Wirt?

WIRT

Who's askin'?

MARIUS

Marius is the name. I'm just a wanderer, passing through town. Hoping to do some business.

WIRT

What's it to me? Go talk to Griswold, he --

MARIUS

HE doesn't have what I need.

Marius pulls a tapered object from his pocket so that it just pokes out - an OPIUM PIPE. A serious look seizes Wirt's face.

WIRT

You got the **wrong** idea about me, mister.

MARIUS

I'm not so sure.

WIRT

Want I should call the guards?

MARIUS

And show off that bag you stole?

Wirt scrutinizes Marius's tired eyes. The boy's freckled face breaks into an easy smile.

WIRT

(chuckling)

Hey, no problem. Marius, was it? Who told you 'bout me?

MARIUS

Doesn't matter. Do you have what I need, boy?

WIRT

Maybe I do, maybe I don't. But I can't imagine a louse like you's got anything I'm interested in.

MARIUS

I have information.

WIRT

HA! Words ain't gonna keep my belly from howling at night.

MARIUS

A wagon. Abandoned, off the road. Guards all slaughtered. I happened by it on my way into town. I can lead you right to it.

WIRT

Proolly picked over already.

MARIUS

The bodies were fresh, no more than an hour past.

WIRT  
Why didn't YOU loot it then?

MARIUS  
Didn't want to tamper with it, in  
case the authorities came looking.

WIRT  
You must think I'm a real clodpoll!

MARIUS  
Follow me, I'll show you - consider  
it a gesture of good faith.

Wirt considers his offer suspiciously. Looks the man up and  
down. Marius holds his hands out peacefully.

MARIUS (CONT'D)  
I don't have any weapons.

WIRT  
Well, I do. And I yell like a  
banshee, so if I get wind of any --

MARIUS  
(almost pleading)  
I'm just a simple man with...  
simple needs.

Wirt flashes another smile. Pats a bulge in his chest pocket.

WIRT  
Then I believe we can do business,  
Mr. Marius. Lead the way!

Relieved, Marius grins and offers a slight bow. He looks  
around with barely concealed desperation then marches off.

Wirt packs up his stolen satchel, glances at Marius's back --

ON WIRT

We see a shadow cross the boy's features, a dark ripple that  
reveals the malevolent visage of BAAL, Lord of Destruction.

Points of hateful fire flare in the boy's eyes then fade as  
the impression of Baal's face vanishes...

Wirt commences a jolly WHISTLE and follows after Marius.

FADE TO BLACK.

**END OF SCENE**