

# Worlds Beyond Number

Fireside Chat: Episode 22 - Episode 22 "Bring Them to Me"

Final Version

[Crickets chirp, and a campfire crackles. A bright and sweet song is plucked on an acoustic guitar.]

Erika Ishii

Hello everyone, and welcome to the Fireside Chat for Episode 22, "Bring Them to Me." I am your host, Erika Ishii, and I'm here, as always, with my dear friend Aabria Iyengar.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh] I've never heard that phrase so gently put, and I will not stop laughing about it.

Erika Ishii

[Gently] My best friend? Aabriaaaaa?

[Aabria and Brennan cackling]

Erika Ishii

Cackling in the background, you can hear—

Aabria Iyengar

Hey bud!

Erika Ishii

—Brennan Lee Mulligan, hello!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Ahoohoo, crackle crackle. The Fox is to blame! The Fox!

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Aabria Iyengar

Look, never blame that sweet boy.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Mischievously] The sweet little boy!

Erika Ishii

Our dear friend, who didn't ask for any of this smoke on a talkback episode.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Lou Wilson

No, but I'm here for it. My name is Rum Samson.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Wheezing laugh]

Rum Samson (Lou)

Ahoohoo crackle crackle, thrilled to be here.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Ahh man.

Erika Ishii

Thank you, Mr. Samson. We appreciate you being here on—

Aabria Iyengar

So much.

Erika Ishii

—this incredibly charged, and narratively thrilling episode. How are we all doing first of all? How are we—

Aabria Iyengar

[Cackle]

Erika Ishii

—I'm great, though.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughing] I'm doing great!

Rum Samson (Lou)

Yeah. I mean, I won't lie, I feel like I listen to our podcast a lot with it kind of like, "Ah ha ha, yes, those choices." And this is the one where I was like, "Wait, we did what!? Agh, augh, AGH!"

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Rum Samson (Lou)

I do think it's—I can say comfortably. It's my favorite episode of the show so far, and it's definitely the one that I've most enjoyed revisiting.

Erika Ishii

Yeah I got a second—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I would say, that I actually feel that this—not to disagree with you, Erika—this recording, this podcast, I don't think is charged. I think we exist in—

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—incredible harmony about how fuckin' proud of this episode we all are. I'm looking at my three favorite storytellers, who I think smashed it out of the fucking park. And a special shout out to Taylor Moore for the design on this episode.

Erika Ishii

God!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The fucking organ.

Aabria Iyengar

Taylor!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The chanting under the witch power.

Aabria Iyengar

Oh my god.

Erika Ishii

Oh my god, that was scary.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The stings and cues and the music and the ratcheting tension, the sound design of the fucking fire dimension door station, holy shit!

Erika Ishii

Yeah, I suppose you're right! I should say this charged UP episode—

Aabria Iyengar

Ooh!

Erika Ishii

—as opposed to charged. It is positively charged. Yeah.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And also to the point of what we're addressing, which is like, the amazing fan reaction. To all of our amazing friends on the Fireside, we've seen your comments celebrating the episode. We're so super appreciative.

And, I have to say, again, I don't know what's in the water over by the Fireside. In the water by the Fireside I

mean, in one of those big igloo coolers that we would put on a picnic table by the fire. But the conversation around the episode has been awesome.

Aabria Iyengar  
Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Taylor referred to it before going live as like, a book club. Like, seeing the conversation around—

Erika Ishii  
Ahh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—the episode be so nuanced and awesome and people really digging into the story we're telling. It's a fuckin' gift to have cool people get into the nitty gritty about the story we're all telling, and I'm so fuckin' proud of everybody, both for—both, all of us telling this story and Taylor's incredible sound design, and all the fuckin' people celebrating the episode, who I thought, by and large, were, like, incredibly excited for the nuance of this episode. So hooray hooray, for all of that.

Aabria Iyengar  
No, truly, it's been so fun to, like—yeah, along with what Rum said, this was probably the episode I've been the most excited to have come out, and then obviously hearing the final version, you're like, "Ah, this is unreal!" So it's been really fun across the week to watch the fan reaction, and fan the flames. Like, yeah, this is exactly what you hope to do, which is make a character choice interesting enough that like, the people listening have a reaction to it, so it's been very cool and very exciting. And, like—gosh, what a space.

Aabria Iyengar  
There's just not a lot of tables that you know and can feel comfortable going, like, "Let's do something fun here," now that we have that writer understanding of, like, the momentum is leading us out of the Citadel. Great. So it's time to be able to throw up some cool, big moves as we approach what everyone here as a storyteller feels like is the end of the arc. And it was just—Ah! It was so good. It was so good.

Erika Ishii  
Yeah, to me, I always had trouble, sort of like, in my journey as an actor, and performer—and certainly as a writer, which I don't consider myself a writer, but with making big choices and really standing by them. I used to have on my little vision board a little big red piece of paper that said, make big choices, because I think that that is the thing that really just like, puts you all in as a storyteller and as a player, and just— and so listening to this, to second Mr. Samson, like yeah, I was surprised listening back to it and being like, "Oh! Oh my gosh! What did—we did WHAT??"

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laugh]

Erika Ishii  
Because, yeah, I have had plenty of years of D&D, or improv scenes, that just kind of go nowhere because I didn't make a choice, whether it was a wrong choice or a right choice, I was just dithering, and to have it—it

was like we all caught the momentum together. A thing went south, and then we all just sprinted to the end together in a lot of ways and—

Aabria Iyengar  
[Softly] Ah. Yeah.

Erika Ishii  
—I want to kind of go back through the episode—

Aabria Iyengar  
Yeah!

Erika Ishii  
—starting with the beginning of it, but it's so fascinating to see little details, and all of the little lore bits, and sort of themes, both motif-wise and even musically, that pay off in the final decisions of the characters in this episode. So I guess starting out—

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Erika, I consider you an incredible writer, you just—

Erika Ishii  
Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You just do it with your mouth!

Erika Ishii  
[Laughing] I just—I was about to say—

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And honestly, that's most of how I do it, too!

Erika Ishii  
Ohhh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Incredible writer. Absolutely phenomenal writer, and you do make big choices!

Erika Ishii  
Aww!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Every three out of the three people I'm looking at makes huge fucking choices—

Aabria Iyengar  
Hell yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—which is why it's so, again, so gratifying.

Erika Ishii

Thank you!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I wanted to—I wanted to—I'm going to do a lot of throwing flags on the field to pay compliments.

Erika Ishii

Yeah! Ah!

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

People are going to say things to underplay something, I'm going to go "Flag on the field. You are a great writer."

Erika Ishii

[Gasping] I will—

Aabria Iyengar

You're just like a comfort ref like, "Hey. Hey, bud." But it is very funny to consider that this is the episode that began with Mr. Callum and the pool analogy? Like.

Erika Ishii

AHH!

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Erika Ishii

Okay, so let me tell you—I guess, this was the revenge for sniping through the door about Evan Kelmp.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Good grief.

Erika Ishii

And people said about the idea—like I wrote down this whole quote about—yeah, well, first of all, like, Ame, I think she's just like, "Oh, you're a Spirit right? Do you know about these Spirit things?" Like, told me to get information. And then he was just like, "Am I a Spirit? I remember my inception" and just like, having this existential crisis, and it says, "our glib invitation for this tomori to have a panic attack existential crisis, is because there's no part of the universe you don't feel interested in looking at, that suddenly you realize it's

an immense gift. It's a superpower. You're tough and your heart is strong, and there's lots and lots of people who will never want to join you there." And that's when I, Erika went "Ahhhhhh."

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laugh]

Erika Ishii  
Oh, "How was that for a 24?" Is what your question was. Ah. Which is—

Aabria Iyengar  
Pierced the veil on that one. [Laugh]

Erika Ishii  
—horrifying, horrifying. And I think something that all of us can really relate to, as people who enjoy diving into the deep end, sometimes to the chagrin and discomfort of others around us, which is something that, ya know, ya gotta watch out for! You gotta learn to talk about the weather! But I love—

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laugh]

Erika Ishii  
—that it was Suvi who provided the solve for that. She says, "I think all things that live hope mostly for community and worry little about taxonomy, except for us wizards, ya know." And then Mr. Callum'd been like "Oh, yes, yes. That makes sense. Yes. Yes."

Aabria Iyengar  
Look, if you want to say that that was a moment of emotional maturity for Suvi, that's delightful.

Erika Ishii  
Yes.

Aabria Iyengar  
I think what you saw was Suvi doing CPR on her favorite baker.

[Brennan and Erika laugh]

Aabria Iyengar  
She's like, "No, my cantrip!"

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
[Laugh]

Erika Ishii  
Even Eursulon saying, like, "If you have made it impossible for me to get little marshmallow chocolate croissants, I will be very upset."

[Aabria and Lou laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Well, it's also very funny, too, because it's—even responding in that scene where Mr.—you're like, "Well, if you're not a Spirit, what are you?" And he goes, "A baker!" There's this moment of like—

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughing] Yeah, oh my god!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—"I conceive of myself as th—I don't know man!" Like, it's a very—there's something really beautiful all throughout that scene—but I agree, too, that Suvi's thing of, like, "Most things want for community and worried not about taxonomy," but there is—I don't know, there's something very beautiful about Suvi—

Erika Ishii

But that's like, that's—that's so beautiful! And that's such a thing that you would expect like, a witch to say, you know, right? Because we had talked about in the lore of this world that wizards are like, "Oh, this is a Spirit, this is a Demon, this is a thing," and witches are just like, "Everybody's—these are Spirits, right?" There's humans and there's Spirits.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Mhm.

Erika Ishii

And then to have Ame be the one that's sort of like, doing questioning, right?

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Erika Ishii

And then having Suvi be the one that's like, "Doesn't matter. Community." Is—

Aabria Iyengar

That is really funny like—

Erika Ishii

—really fun.

Aabria Iyengar

—what a reversal of, like—

Erika Ishii

Yeah.



Aabria Iyengar

—“Ah, Ame is now the overthinker and I get to be the nice balm. Oh is what it erts to—is this what this feels like? Delightful. Well. I've used all of that juice anyway, back to being a butthole wizard.”

Erika Ishii

Yeah, but that was—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It feels like some—

Aabria Iyengar

I do want to really shout out that pool analogy, because like—[clears throat] yeah, in the same way that I remember making eye contact with Erika while Brennan was saying this, just being like, Jesus Christ. Yeah, this is bypassing a lot of, like, here's the layer of the character and the world we're in, and, uh oh, this is being integrated into my brain and how I process things in the world.

Erika Ishii

Yyyup.

Aabria Iyengar

What a beautiful analogy of like, “You just never realized that she was standing in the deep end and how tall Grandma Wren was the whole time,” is just such a beautiful, concise way to put that mental model. And, Brennan, your ability to do THAT thing specifically on the fly makes me feel. Insane.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Cackle]

Aabria Iyengar

It's so cool. It's so cool.

Erika Ishii

It's a truly dizzying—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Oh, that's very kind.

Erika Ishii

—a dizzying moment, because I know about different depths of conversation. And we say that, we say like, a conversation is shallow, or a conversation is deep, and to actually extend that metaphor as, like, you are in the deep end, you are from the deep end. And it's like there's certain parties, or people, where you know you have to stick to light topics, but then sort of just have it wrapped up in that way. Wahh.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Well, I really appreciate that. I feel like I come from the time I spent, again, as a philosophy major. You meet a lot of people who are extremely dismissive and condescending towards the concept of small talk, in a way that is literally like, “Oh, if we're not having deep conversations, aren't we just wasting our fucking time?”

And I think it is a condescension towards people who, perhaps, don't enjoy going to those spaces? Or, perhaps—and here's the big one—perhaps don't enjoy going to those spaces With You! Perhaps they do have a part of their heart that goes to those profound places, but maybe they don't feel a degree of trust with the person who's speaking to them.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So the idea of like—I love every kind of conversation. I love small talk. I love deep, profound conversation. I love talking about nerdy shit, and I like doing bits, and I think it's all great. And I think that there is something to the ritual of small talk that I love to observe, because there is a degree of, like, I don't fault—I don't know if I even fault someone for—it's like, if going to deep places makes you uncomfortable, why would I want to foist that on you? But even past that, I DEFINITELY understand the idea of—I had someone who wanted to talk to—I was on the way to a friend's funeral—

Erika Ishii

Oh my god this—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—and someone—we stopped at a gas station. Do you remember this, this was a wild thing—

Erika Ishii

Yeah, yeah, I remember you came—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I was on my way to a friends funeral—

Erika Ishii

—back, like, with a haunted look in your eyes. Yeah, you were on the way to your friends funeral.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I was on my way to a friend's funeral that we drove all through the night to get from La to Santa Fe, and at 3 o'clock in the morning we stopped at a Shell, and a guy recognized me who was working at the shell and had a problem—he was like, "I love your work, but why are you a socialist?" And got into—and was like, debating me at 3 o'clock in the morning, at a Shell, while I was on the way to a funeral.

Aabria Iyengar

That's crazy.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And I had said, "I'm on the way to a funeral," he was like, "What are you doing in Arizona?" And I was like, "My friend passed away, I'm on the way to a funeral," and it was one of those things where [Laugh] got nailed in like, "Debate me!!" In a Shell at 3 in the morning with my friends waiting in the—and I was like, "I think that I don't want to just dismiss this person out of hand, but this doesn't feel appropriate. And I think that I don't want to meet you at this level, in this way, given the circumstances." And I think that there's—[Laugh] but I think I did engage for at least a couple of minutes before one of my friends, like wrapped me in a jacket—

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laughing] No!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—and like, escorted—was like, "Alright, Bren-Bren, time to go!"

[Everyone laughs]

Aabria Iyengar  
You got James Brown'd.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
I literally got James Brown'd—

Erika Ishii  
[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—as I'm at 3 a.m., talking to the guy, and I was like—I was like, "Well, it's complicated, man, how—" I was like, "Where are you coming from, what's your ideology that makes you feel like—"

Aabria Iyengar  
[Sad laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
"—what is it about the stories that I've told that makes this like, concerning—you know. I certainly am not the first person with these politics you've interacted with, so what's so upsetting to you about me espousing these beliefs? They feel consistent across the stories." And my friend was like, "Okay!" Like, my friends Nick and Jack—

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—were just like, "Alright, bud. Let's pack it up. Let's get out of here."

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And I did kind of get James Brown'd out of there.

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And I was about as sweaty, which I always am.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughing] Oh no! I don't want to laugh at that!

Erika Ishii

Aw. Yeah, I—I think it's—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Love this—love this scene.

Erika Ishii

And I think just at the end of it, too, it being a realization of Ame's—something that Ame needs to work on, and yet another thing of—of, bedside manner. Bedside manner, and of the different—navigating the different depths of the pool, because now she had dropped on her the deep conversation of like, you are the Witch of the Worlds Heart, you and your station may be eliminated if you do not leave, but then also, you DO have to just be normal, sometimes. SO. Then—speaking of normal, and conversations, the conversation with Steel about—

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah!

Erika Ishii

It starts out with Eioghorain being at Fort Kieran.

Aabria Iyengar

Ugh. Why, Brennan? Why?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Um.

Aabria Iyengar

Why.

Erika Ishii

What's the deal?

Aabria Iyengar

Monstrous. Why?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I guess cuz it's rad? I guess because I thought it would be rad?

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh, groan]

Erika Ishii  
It's sick as hell?

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
I thought it would be rad to do?

Rum Samson (Lou)  
It's pretty rad, dude. It was pretty rad.

Aabria Iyengar  
Okay, Rum, calm down.

Rum Samson (Lou)  
But why? But why, dude?

[Everyone laughs]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
I appreciate it Rum, I think it—

Erika Ishii  
What prompted you to—what elicited this level of sickness, then? Of wicked-cool storytelling?

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
So, in this longform storytelling that we're doing, there's a lot of developing chess pieces? Like, you know. We go months without seeing or hearing from a character, right?

Aabria Iyengar  
Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
We still have this stuff about Ghost and Flicker out there, Eioghorain, there's—theoretically, the stranger is still headed back to the cottage after a year of time—

Aabria Iyengar  
Oh my god.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—which we're not close to that year having elapsed but, this is a long form campaign, so a lot of things where I'll be like, "Eioghorain is at Fort Kieran," in my head, it's like—and I don't want to spoil for you guys whether that's like, a HUGE plot hook coming up or not, but what I will say is—

Aabria Iyengar  
No, you can spoil it!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

What I will say is, across the board—

Erika Ishii

[Whispered] Tell us.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—I'm developing pieces for a long chess game, so—

Aabria Iyengar

Very cool.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—there are things that are acute plot hooks, right? And then there are things that are—you can develop a piece in a game of chess, saying I don't know where this is going to end up, but I know that this is a more advantageous—they're more centered on the board, they're controlling more spaces, right?

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So I'm gonna develop this piece for storytelling reasons, BECAUSE this game is so long and so convoluted, that having pieces be more central and more developed just helps us overall, right?

Aabria Iyengar

I have a follow up question to that.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Mhm?

Aabria Iyengar

Do you ever wonder or worry about if the members of the table will view that piece development with the same acute versus long term, that you probably intended? Because I think there's something interesting in the idea that like, yeah, hey, Eioghorain. A name we haven't talked about in a while, and hasn't been a thought in the game world for years and years, like. Great. That's an idea that we're going to come back to later, versus, like, I don't know. Suvi's heard his name twice across this arc and is like, great. I'm level two. I think it's time for us to all leave the Citadel and go fight Eioghorain immediately.

Erika Ishii

[Laugh]

Aabria Iyengar

Who's with me? No one? Truly no one? Interesting.

[Aabria and Erika giggle]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I fuckin' love it. Well, to extend the chess metaphor, you can develop a piece, and in response, your opponent moves to threaten that piece. And that would be what you guys would do by doing that. So, you—when I pull moves like that, I am prepared for that to be seized as a plot hook, but it's still useful to me if it isn't.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Right?

Aabria Iyengar

Okay.

Erika Ishii

There's a lot of pieces that sometimes just don't do anything on a board, you know, the entire game is being played, you don't touch them. I'm cool with that, too.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah!

Erika Ishii

We can just forget about some of those pieces!

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And also, I was less—but I will say, I was less concerned about that potentiality because I knew there were timers—

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—on certain other things. So in other words, like, you introduce a bunch of plot hooks, and some of them are like, 1 minute to midnight, typically players are going to favor those, and if they don't, that's an interesting story in itself. If you guys all went, "We're gonna steal a skyship and fuck up Eioghorain! And we're going to miss the witch meeting!" It's like, "Whoa! Okay! Sure!"

Erika Ishii

That was an option!?

Aabria Iyengar  
Would you?!

Erika Ishii  
Yes! One hundred and ten percent!

Aabria Iyengar  
No, Brennan. No, Brennan. If we all said like, nah to the Conclave, what would you do?

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
I would fucking cackle and arch my fingers and steeple them so powerfully, as I would go like, "You are going to ignore the prophecy of Sly and allow this Conclave to unfold without being present? YOU GOT IT!"

Erika Ishii  
It's our game, we do what we want!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And then—

Aabria Iyengar  
We do what we want!

Erika Ishii  
We do what we want.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Hey! Straight up! I'll remind you—

Erika Ishii  
I'm gonna live foreverrrr!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—Worlds Beyond Number is an anthology show.

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
If you guys want to steer the car into a TPK—

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laughing] Nooo-ho-hoh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—we just start Aabria's campaign. I'm not sweatin' that!



[Everyone laughs]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I'm not sweatin' that at all! I'm not sweating that at all! Fuckin' kill your PCs, see what happens!

Erika Ishii

[Groaning] Ohhhh god.

Aabria Iyengar

I don't like the way you said that. I believe him.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Menacing growl] Try me.

Aabria Iyengar

Stop it. I'm too inherently defiant!

[Aabria and Brennan laugh]

Erika Ishii

I, uh—

Aabria Iyengar

Speaking of timers, Erika, do we want to talk about the meeting with Steel? Because I think—

Erika Ishii

Yes! Yes.

Aabria Iyengar

—Ame's sort of mental pivot is the like, crux of all of the tension and excitement for this episode, and it feels like something happened internally to Ame during that conversation.

Erika Ishii

In that conversation, yeah.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah! I wanna—ugh!

Erika Ishii

It's SO interesting, because like, you know—

Aabria Iyengar

Yes!

Erika Ishii

—we even get from Steel talking about Fort Kieran, something separate from her problem, is that slow is better, fast is bad, wizards, given enough time, WILL win. After just being told that, Ame was like cool. Cool. Yeah. Let's wait. No, we don't have to wait, let's GO. And to be honest with you, I, Erika, listening back to this episode, forgot that that is what happened. That I said like "Yes."

Aabria Iyengar

[Giggle]

Erika Ishii

"Let's wait to hear about more from the Diviners court," and then booked it. Like I think, it was—

Aabria Iyengar

That's fun, yeah.

Erika Ishii

I think people forget that we are improvising a show, you know, that we don't always know—like, have a hundred percent grasp on things—

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Erika Ishii

—and I think the nice thing is that we're so deep in our characters now that we make truthful choices to them, right? But I, Erika, don't know if I could tell you—like, I could completely rationalize why Ame number 1.) Yeah, agreed to something and then left, and lied to Steel, who they know has been a trusted ally thus far, and just really, truly—yeah, had that pivot.

Erika Ishii

I think, Kyle, I see the question here, asks me, "Erika, how do you roleplay panic and paranoia so well? Ame fell apart in a major way in episode 22, and how do you bring yourself to do it? How do you pull it off?" And I think you're right Aabria. I think it happened in that conversation. I think that it was—and listening back to it, I also had the revelation that, I don't think it's like, fear for personal safety, that's really driving Ame? And that is sort of really clouding the judgment here? But that it was more about like, "Oh, also your station will be eliminated, and your station is as the one representative of humanity in the coven."

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Erika Ishii

So that was something that kind of occurred to me, and talking with—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I—I wanna—

Erika Ishii

And also the Fox conversation too, was definitely listening back to that being like, "Oh, right, with the Fox. Trust your gut." You know, like being trapped—

Aabria Iyengar

I'm gonna kill the Fox.

Erika Ishii

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

There you go.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Well, I wanna say—to that response, the swing on relistening to the episode is fucking awesome—

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—because the conversation moves on to Fort Kieran. It's not that we move to Ame, we actually kind of do a meanwhile. Like, Ame is already—

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—the way it's narrated by you Erika, is—

Erika Ishii

[Gasp] That's right! That's right!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—Suvi turns to ask Ame a question like, "Ame, how are you feeling? Are you good for whatever?" And you're like, "Oh, Ame's in her head already had been telepathically talking to the Fox."

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Erika Ishii

Oh my god.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So there was something that you heard in the conversation, prior to being addressed—like, in other words, Steel was talking and was like, so here's what we're going to do, and said something that made Ame go, "Great. I am talking to my fox right now about what we're going to do."

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah

Erika Ishii

Oh my god.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And so in other words, it's like—it's a big fucking swing. It's a big swing.

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And of course, the Fox—the Fox fucked off, and escaped through the walls of Port Talon.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It's also very funny too, because I've seen some of the—the fan reactions have been so lovely. There are some people that have gone all the way to like, "Ame is a terrorist."

[Everyone laughs]

Erika Ishii

Which is—hey! Hey! Hey It's all about who writes the histories. And they're not wrong! They're not wrong!

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I did a joke when we started this episode. Let me be clear. The Fox didn't check in and go like, here's my plan.

Erika Ishii

Yeah, that's true a thing too.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

He said, I got you covered, boss, and Ame was sprinting through Xiao court. And the Fox kicked over a bunch of barrels. [Laugh]

Erika Ishii

Yeah, and he's like "Yes or no? Yes or no? Yes or no?" And Ame's like, "Yes. Yes, go." And then the Fox did what he done. I guess it's true, like Ame didn't know any of that was gonna happen

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah, the fox could have had like a magic carpet and they could have sailed peace—yeah.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Erika Ishii

I think—

Rum Samson (Lou)

Was that on the table? Magic carpet was on the table?

Aabria Iyengar

Ah! Ame, you have to ask specifically, like, please find a magic carpet.

Erika Ishii

Please find a magic carpet so that we may sail peacefully off, out of this place. I think also—

Aabria Iyengar

And it could have been a musical!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Laugh]

Rum Samson (Lou)

Oh! Can you imagine?

Erika Ishii

Oh my god.

Rum Samson (Lou)

Can you imagine?

Erika Ishii

One of these days we are going to do an all musical episode, I swear to god. And nobody's gonna know—

Aabria Iyengar

Would we ever just break into song and commit to it?

Erika Ishii

We could do that. Brennan would do it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I think—the Rain Road! We busted out into song at the end of Chapter One!

Rum Samson (Lou)

No, but that was the people. I'm talking about the pc's, spotlight, fuckin' get one of those old chairs out.

Erika Ishii

Externalization—yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah. I love it.

Aabria Iyengar

Which of us do you think would be the first to break into song and who do you think would follow suit the fastest?

Rum Samson (Lou)

Mmm.

Aabria Iyengar

I think it's Lou.

Erika Ishii

Oh, yeah.

Aabria Iyengar

Rum, I'm not sure. Like, maybe you would, I don't know? But I do feel—

Rum Samson (Lou)

Oh, I'm not a singer.

Aabria Iyengar

—like Lou could break into song.

Rum Samson (Lou)

But I do think Lou might. Lou could do it.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Rum Samson (Lou)

I think Lou would need prompting, though.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Rum Samson (Lou)

There would have to be some element of musicality in the world for me to grab onto. I don't think Lou would just fucking be like, "Alright, everybody else, shut up."

[Aabria and Erika cackle]

Aabria Iyengar

Okay. We go into the Spirit world. It becomes a musical.

Rum Samson (Lou)

Yes. Exactly.

Aabria Iyengar

Called shot.

Erika Ishii

[Gasp] Oh my god! Is the Spirit world all just in like verse?

Rum Samson (Lou)

Hey dude. Hey, the honey sings. Alright?

Erika Ishii

[Squee]

Aabria Iyengar

You're right!

Rum Samson (Lou)

Everything has a song!

Aabria Iyengar

Ohhh!

Erika Ishii

Oh my god.

Aabria Iyengar

Wait, that would be really funny. Brennan, write that down.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Okay.

Erika Ishii  
Brennan write this down!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
In my head, I was going through, and I was like, "What—if they did launch into song," and I'm going to tell you the three songs that came to my mind first and they are—

Erika Ishii  
Rocky Road to Dublin.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
[Laughing] In this episode? I was like, maybe Ame bursts into, like, Little Town from Beauty and the Beast, you know, like—

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laugh]

Erika Ishii  
Yeeeeeaaahhh. That's—

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—and then I was like—and then maybe Eursulon is like, [Singing "Go the Distance from Disney's Hercules] "I have often dreamed..."

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laugh]

Erika Ishii  
AWWWWWWWW!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And I'm so sorry—i'm so sorry—especially for this episode. I did go to Hellfire—

Aabria Iyengar  
[Screaming] YES! YES!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—[Laughing] from Hunchback of Notre Dame.

Aabria Iyengar  
If you hadn't said it, I was about to.

Erika Ishii  
Listen.



Brennan Lee Mulligan  
[Singing] Beata Maria.

Aabria Iyengar  
[In unison] Maria.

Erika Ishii  
Fuck.

Aabria Iyengar  
Oh, I'm sorry., You gave me the best villain song Disney's ever made? Get out of here.

Erika Ishii  
It's the BEST. Villain Song. Ever. It is the hottest thing, and it is the most, like, TERRIFYING one, my god.

Aabria Iyengar  
Now, I hear you, but I might say that since Suvi wasn't the one that jumped into a hellfire, that maybe that's more appropriate for Ame.

Erika Ishii  
Ooh!

Aabria Iyengar  
Whose Fox called it, and had ominous witch chanting as part of her music cue in the episode.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Oooh so scary!

Erika Ishii  
That was—oh my god, yeah, that ominous—that was—

Aabria Iyengar  
It was so good.

Erika Ishii  
We have to—okay, wait—

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
We gotta get into that—

Erika Ishii  
Real quick. Real real quick, real quick.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
But I do actually want—yeah.

Erika Ishii

Talking about Kalaya. Kalaya. We learned a lot about Kalaya.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yes.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah, the Wizard Stripe!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The Wizard Stripe!

Erika Ishii

And during the fleeing, I thought it was really interesting. Eursulon—we're jumping around, but—the butterflies of the court attacking Eursulon and slowing him down and being like, oh, this is specifically an anti Spirit safety measure.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah.

Erika Ishii

Did Kalaya do this?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Oh!

Erika Ishii

Did she have to run this gamut?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Well, so there's an audience question that we can answer here—I know we are jumping around—this one's from Artemisia. Thank you so much, Artemisia, that says "Thank you and wishing you all well. For Brennan, was Kalaya's burrow always in the flames of transport, or was that from Lou's roll of 31?"

Aabria Iyengar

[Squee]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Folks, I'm telling you, we are playing a long form home game.

Rum Samson (Lou)

[Chuckle]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And at least for me and my style, that means freedom to follow the story. How did I know that—we played straight through, we didn't even take any breaks in this episode!

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Erika Ishii

Nooo.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I didn't know that Ame would ask the Fox to find a way out. I didn't know that they would try to find a way out. Maybe they would stay. Remember, if Suvi had hit a Nat 20, all three of them would be in Toma.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Right? Like Suvi—

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah, whoops.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—if that deception had hit, there is no "Bring them to me." None of that happens. It's just them fuckin' getting the hell out of here, and probably more calmly walking to that transport station as the Fox unveils what his fucking thing is going to be. And for Kalaya's burrow, you're goddamn right that wouldn't have been there if Rum had not rolled that 31 at the table. So, in other words, the—that was my desire to honor the highest dc that the game bothers listing.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So, because Eursulon gets that 30+ roll with the—all that I knew was as he was running, I suddenly made the connection of, like, why are these butterflies here? They're here because of the big, you know, 20 years ago, this jailbreak, right? And then knowing that Kalaya had already left a piece of inspiration in Malacanth for her brother, should he ever find his way there, it made sense to me that she would have left another one, in the court that she escaped from—

Erika Ishii

[Excited groaning.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—when she finally got out of the Kasov Collection, so I was like—

Aabria Iyengar

Ah! So cool.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

But if that roll had come up a little bit—like, if it had been like, a 20 or something, there's probably like, okay, you save the wizards, but on the 30, Eursulon gets all of it. He saves the wizards, he's a hero, he's a knight, he returns them back to the Citadel, and then it's a full—and also, a 31 is not just Kalaya's burrow. A 31 IS the cliffhanger we end on, where as a DM you are honor bound to reward those high rolls—

Aabria Iyengar

Ah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—so it's Ame, it's the Stranger, AND it's Kalaya. And it's—you lay a spread in front of a player. For Rum, what was going through your head? Following—like, when you hit that 31, what's going through your head, I think throughout that whole scene—and I guess, what does it feel like—to me, I think of that smorgasbord of options as the reward, but I could also see that being anxiety inducing of, like, here's every opportunity in front of you, now pick one. Do you experience that more as a reward, or is it more anxiety inducing?

Rum Samson (Lou)

More anxiety inducing, for sure.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Laugh]

Rum Samson (Lou)

Like it's never—

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughing] No!

Rum Samson (Lou)

Just from like, my personal playstyle, I would say, choice—unless the choice feels so clear.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Mhm.

Rum Samson (Lou)

I do remember this—I remember the break between these episodes being like, "Oh my god, what am I gonna do?" There was a lot of like. I mean, it's sick, right? It is your heart pounding in your ears and your fuckin' soul leaving your body, as you're like—as it happens, the experience of it is incredibly rewarding.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Rum Samson (Lou)

But I think the nature of what we do there is that space that, once you get the smorgasbord, you were like, you have to decide what you're going to eat, because you could only eat so much and so—I think, to earn the smorgasbord: a treat. To then have to decide? Ugh.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Hey—

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Rum Samson (Lou)

A lot of perception and insight rolls comin'.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Hey. Hey. I'll tell you right now, my sincere apologies for the added anxiety, but it was sick as hell and Eursulon rescuing those wizards—

Aabria Iyengar

Ah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—is like, such a great moment of him being that version of himself that he wants to be.

Rum Samson (Lou)

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And, I'll say as well, this is a great point to lay down for the idea—the eternal conversation between railroading and sandboxing, what it means to be a railroad-y DM, so I just want to say to all of the fans listening over by the Fireside and all of our supporters over on Patreon that are listening to this chat, this is—railroads diminish anxiety.

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So if you are the kind of DM that runs a module or something like that—in other words, this is me, kind of—

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—for anyone who's talked about my style as a DM, let me roll the magician's sleeves all the way up—

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—and be like, you don't want a railroad? You got it! Make the most consequential fuckin' choices of your life!

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You want to talk to an ancient Spirit? You want to follow your friend? You want to go down the hole your sister dug 20 years ago? Be my fuckin' guest baby, I'm ready!

[Everyone laughs]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
I'm ready for whatever you want to do.

Erika Ishii  
God! That's the thing is, you can call our story bluff anytime. I can say—it's being the bit janitor.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Yeah.

Aabria Iyengar  
Yeah.

Erika Ishii  
You will wipe the ham grease off of our face.

Aabria Iyengar  
Yeah. [Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And the thing that is so engrossing about this episode and so joyful about DMing this campaign, is I have made a landscape out of gasoline, and I'm holding a lit match, and I'm just SO ready to destroy these creations, and just be like, yeah, fuck it! Go kill Eioghorain! Go in a skyship! You want to go down a hole. You want to talk to the Strange—you want to talk to the King of Night? Fuck it! Fuck it all, man! I'll break anything I made.

Erika Ishii  
[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
I'll break anything I made, I'll burn it all down.

Aabria Iyengar  
Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
I don't care. I just want to follow your choices.

Erika Ishii  
Ah!

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And it's a high, baby. It's such a high.

Erika Ishii  
That's incredible!

Rum Samson (Lou)  
It's the reason that Suvi moment, I think, punched me in the chest?

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laugh]

Rum Samson (Lou)  
Like I truly—the moment in which Suvi is like, "I'm not coming." I was like, "That's—you can't do that. You can't do that. Brennan had a plan. We were supposed to leave!"

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laugh]

Erika Ishii  
Well so it's—

Rum Samson (Lou)  
Like it felt—it feels so much like the—it's the moment—it's where all the D&D I've played for years, it's like, "We all know where we're going!"

Aabria Iyengar  
Yeah.

Erika Ishii  
Yeah.

Rum Samson (Lou)  
And then it's like, "Wait. Wait. In this one, we don't have to."

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laugh]

Rum Samson (Lou)  
"At this table we don't have to. We don't have to go there."

Erika Ishii

Yeah. Two things—

Rum Samson (Lou)

It's amazing.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah, there was some—oh, go ahead.

Erika Ishii

No no no, sorry, you go ahead.

Aabria Iyengar

No, I was just gonna point out the very specific phrasing of when Ame says, "You gotta do what you gotta do." There was a little bit of the DM in me that went, "Okay, bet."

Erika Ishii

[Squee]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah.

Aabria Iyengar

"Alright, cool. What an interesting thing to have said. Well, let's see." What were you going to say?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Sorry. I was going to be clear, too, just to address something that Rum said, and I've said it before, and I'll say it a hundred times in these Firesides, I don't have a plan. That's the plan of this campaign.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughing] Stop!

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I don't have a plan.

Aabria Iyengar

Scary.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Fuckin' do it. Do it. Do it.



Aabria Iyengar  
Fuckin' scary.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Do whatever you want to do. I don't have a plan, I just have a world. And it's deeply gratifying. So when I—there's no place you guys can go that I'm not just going to follow you. It's very exciting. Wait, Erika, what were you going to say?

Aabria Iyengar  
Yeah!

Erika Ishii

Yeah, well, first of all, listening on—on second list—on first listen through, now, too, I realized that Suvi agreed to go. She was like, "Okay."

Aabria Iyengar  
Yeah!

Erika Ishii

When Ame says, "I'm gonna go," Suvi wrote a letter to her stepmother, like, saying, "I'm gonna go."

Aabria Iyengar  
It's not step! It's just mother!

Erika Ishii

Well, to her mother, yeah she said to her mother that like—

Aabria Iyengar  
She was looking at her family!

Erika Ishii

Yeah. She was looking at her family and listening, and Brennan playing—yeah, the pitter patter of her little brother's feet, and she chose to go, she was gonna go, and then—yeah, and then it all went south in the 'thopter. In the gallothopter.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Oh, sorry. To rewind too, just to button up a previous conversation—on relisten Erika, do you remember what it was that prompt—because there is an element of a moving check-in, right? Originally, Ame is asked to wait the night to speak to Steel the next day.

Erika Ishii

Yes. Yes, yes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

On that conversation, Steel is like, "Let me go check in with the diviners of the court of Cabani," which is—in other words, it is this thing of Ame feeling how the Citadel and wizards, consults, confers, communicates, lines up a shot.

Erika Ishii

Yes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The things are moving. But it is a delay, after a delay that was asked for, which is, I think, what prompts Suvi, in that moment to actually say, "You did what I asked you to do, it's your call now, and I'll stick by what you say in this moment."

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

But do you remember the moment where you decided—because, like—do you remember on re-listen where you decided you were going to leave?

Erika Ishii

I think it was, yeah, being asked to wait further, and I also made a note in here, too, of Ame still won't divulge that it was Uncle Sly—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Erika Ishii

—even though, yeah, he is a trusted friend of Grandmother Wren, but also, too, is Steel.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Erika Ishii

So I think it was Ame deciding that she can trust Steel, but she can't necessarily trust that bureaucracy will get her where she needs to go, because seeing that right now, the Citadel is in lockdown, and Steel is overworked, and there are no resources available, and she just keeps on being asked to wait, and I think it's that probably, in her mind—I think it was listening back to it and hearing just how stretched the Citadel was, and how everything has a place and there's a place for everything, and like, helping a witch urgently attend a conference is not high on the list of priorities. I think was when Ame was like okay I have to do this myself.

Aabria Iyengar

I'm going to jump in really quick.

Erika Ishii  
Uh-huh.

Aabria Iyengar

I'm going to jump in really quick, and just point out that it's not helping Ame attend the Conclave. Ame has the means to attend the Conclave. Like, she can get to the North Pole whenever she wants.

Erika Ishii  
Sure. Yes.

Aabria Iyengar

The thing we went to Steel for was the ability to get back to Toma first.

Erika Ishii  
Yes. Which also—

Aabria Iyengar

So, when we talk about the way a lot of this shook out—

Erika Ishii  
Mhm, mhm.

Aabria Iyengar

—and Suvi's reaction to it was, Suvi doesn't understand the sudden panic to leave, because getting to the win condition of get to the North Pole was never off the table.

Erika Ishii  
Sure, sure sure.

Aabria Iyengar  
So.

Erika Ishii  
I think it was—

Aabria Iyengar

I think there's something interesting inside of the like, yeah—the like—yeah, I don't know. I think there's something interesting inside of the like, what is the Citadel willing to help me do—

Erika Ishii  
Yes, like ticking the exact—

Aabria Iyengar

—versus what I have to figure out myself.

Erika Ishii

Yeah, letter of the law, ticking the boxes of the win condition is Suvi needs to be there, and needs to be at the Conclave in the North Pole.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Erika Ishii

I think in Ame's mind, there was also returning to the sanctum, because she has not gone back to the cottage since recovering her memories.

Aabria Iyengar

Mhm.

Erika Ishii

And the sanctum is. Witch's sanctums are mechanic—well, above the table, mechanically significant as well.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Erika Ishii

And also, to return to Kyle's unanswered question, she's panicking like, she's—it's all become too much, because I think she feels the guilt of—weighing on her—like, she should have left the Citadel, once she—once the witches contacted her, she should have gone back to Toma. And I think it's just that sort of animal fear of it, like, returning to Toma, returning to the seat of power, getting things accomplished, I think, no matter the cost. And I don't think she knew that the cost would be what it was. And she certainly didn't know about the curse, or I guess, is that—

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Erika Ishii

—was that a retributive curse or what the heck? That was so—

Aabria Iyengar

Brennan, you were dirty for that one, that was great.

Erika Ishii

Brennan-uh. That was so sad.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Well there's—

Erika Ishii

And amazing, it was amazing, but like—I mean—[Strained grunt]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Well, hey. But that's—there are incredible parallels between the Witchbolt and the secret of contingency in the Kasov collection, and the retributive curse from Ame here, right?

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Erika Ishii

Oh?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Which is essentially—I won't even be able to talk about this episode fully, until many chapters of the story from now.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Because I think there's so much that—in what we've already played through, and there's so much about these characters, and the stations that they are growing into, that is all on the horizon. But if you think about—I think the words for me come back to consequences and control, right?

Aabria Iyengar

Mm.

Erika Ishii

Yes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Consequences and control. And, it is not lost on me that the Witchbolt was Schrodinger's harm. If you cross a line, harm will befall you. And the Witch's retributive curse is essentially a part of that, that is suddenly Suvi is suddenly made aware of in Ame. In other words, there's no HARM there, but it is suddenly control. It is suddenly an idea of, I'm holding a weapon now because of what you did.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And, there's this fascinating element too, and specifically the fact that in both of those, there is a interposing of a body in front of Eursulon in the Kasov collection, and there is a grabbing of an arm on the dock, which are NOT harm, they are control. It is "Am I allowed to stop you from doing a thing," right? And I think it's very telling—we can get into this as well—that I think in terms of control and then consequences, we can get into as well, which is fundamentally like, the cascading thing of, Ame tells the Fox to find a way out. Doesn't know

what that way out is going to be. Suvi, in the conversation WITH Ame at the Tower of the Sword, is clearly already hurt, but agrees, right? Goes like, is that what the Fox is doing? You can hear the hurt in her voice.

Aabria Iyengar

That's because it's a lie. Ame lies. And then Suvi catches it and Ame walks it back. Like, that's where the hurt comes from.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yes, absolutely. The—but then writes the note to the family, and is on board. Let's—let's walk through that moment, too now, if we can, of like—

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—So Suvi has just caught her friend lying to her. Ignoring the resources that are about to be collected for her benefit by her extremely busy mother, who's trying to run a war and is making time to go do this.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Writes a note saying, I have to do right by the Witch of the Worlds Heart, by my friend. What's the emotional—and then goes and lies as well, deception check, says, I have business with the diviners—or, I have business with Xiao court, right?

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah. [Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Lies and repeats the same act that was hurt by—do you remember where Suvi was at, emotionally, there. And I think, what would you have done if the roll had been great?

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah, if the roll had been anything better, god, how interesting. Suvi, at that point was—yeah, dually processing like, "Okay. Ame lied to Steel's face and then lied to Suvi, and we walked through it but, okay, I understand, we need to get out of here." But, again, doesn't have the same sense of—Suvi doesn't at any point think we have to escape from the Citadel. So the fact that her friends are suddenly in that headspace when they get to Xiao, that's, like, a huge surprise to her. So I think everything is sort of the like, this feels a little funky but, okay.

Aabria Iyengar

And it's Steel's direct order, is the thing that turns the corner, where she's like, okay, I don't know how to justify this anymore. Now, no one's talking to me—the only person that's talking to me about this, in this moment now, is Steel, who has given me a direct order to hold here. And I explain—and having Suvi explain all of that out loud, getting "You gotta do what you gotta do" back, I think there's just enough of that like,

"Ah, none of us have communicated our needs, and where we're at emotionally, so that the moment we land, everything breaks loose, because a lot of people are in different assumptive spaces, and everyone will suddenly act."

Aabria Iyengar

So it feels very cool for that, but I think Suvi is still on board like, even up to the order given, Suvi doesn't have a "I'm not leaving anymore." I think it's just like, "Hey, hold on. Needs trigger a conversation." Keep in mind Suvi—I think Suvi's the only one with a negative stat, and it's in strength, so when Suvi throws meat in front of one of her friends, a Spirit and a farm girl, she's trying to trigger a conversation, because that's the only way she fights. She uses magic, and mean words. She's never manhandling anyone. She threw a noodle around Ame, like, "Hey, bud, what's going on?" So I think—

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Aabria Iyengar

And I love the fact that she bombed all of those rolls.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah.

Aabria Iyengar

She's not good at lying right now. She's not good at like, commanding control or attention from Ame. It felt so good to be so damned by these dice, up until the moment she makes the biggest swing she can.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Wow, it all could have gone so differently. The dice really do tell a story. Fuck.

Erika Ishii

They sure did.

Aabria Iyengar

I gotta never use those dice again, my god.

Erika Ishii

Somebody was asking about the d4 rolls.

Aabria Iyengar

Oh, yeah.

Erika Ishii

That was a really interesting mechanic.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Oh, yeah!

Erika Ishii

Especially with Eursulon, and the window was narrower and narrower, and he happened to hit the lucky one—

Aabria Iyengar  
Oh my god.

Erika Ishii  
—and that's how we have the end of this episode.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
So for folks asking why I would use luck checks in this way, which are not really a part of the D&D system—they're like, sort of a homebrew—most tables I know use them, but it's not in the books. The reason is theater of the mind is crazy. I don't have maps drawn out for every square inch of Xiao court. I know the important buildings and people that are in Xiao court, but I don't know, necessarily, foot by foot. And also, I shouldn't, because this is a theater of the mind campaign. So if you're like, in this extremely rigid grid where I'm like, "Okay Eursulon, you come to a five point crossroads with a bakery and a this and a—" you'd be like, "What the f—"

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Like, I'm just trying to get to this other—let's montage this shit, right? But the stakes had become so suddenly high, that choices I would have felt deputized, and in fact given to make—like, in a time of peace, deciding whether or not soldiers are present on a given street is something that is a creative decision. All of a sudden, as the stakes become high and we are essentially in initiative, it's no longer a neutral decision for me to decide that there's soldiers in the way or not. AND, because I'm not railroading, and I'm not trying to steer the story in a direction, right? I actually don't care whether you guys get caught or not, but I know that it's momentous to you.

Aabria Iyengar  
Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
I know that you don't want to get caught, and I'm truly easy breezy beautiful cover girl.

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Like, we can go any way we wanna go. So, in that world—in that world, are there soldiers in your way or not? The only thing that feels right to me, given how consequential it is to you, and given how open a question it is to me, is to leave it up to a roll of the dice. So that's what the d4s were about, is, if it's momentous to the players, and I actually think it's a good story either way, let's let the dice get a crack at it, and they'll decide how fucked you guys are. So that was the impetus behind that. And then it was just—

Rum Samson (Lou)



So what would have happened—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

What's that?

Rum Samson (Lou)

What would have happened if I rolled an unlucky?

Aabria Iyengar

Oh, yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

If you had rolled an unlucky, you would have come across a squadron of soldiers, who would have recognized you and—because Steel already knew that you guys were headed to Xiao, so she already had people on the ground there, so it's just getting captured.

Aabria Iyengar

Ah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Unlucky is captured, detained. As Steel is like, "Whoa whoa whoa what are we doing here?"

Rum Samson (Lou)

What if I fight?

Aabria Iyengar

[Gasp] Rum!

Rum Samson (Lou)

It would have been—they would have seen me on site and wanted to detain me?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Peacefully detain you. Yeah.

Rum Samson (Lou)

Got it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So peacefully detained. If you draw steel—

Rum Samson (Lou)

[Chuckle] Okay.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—it goes very very bad.

Erika Ishii  
[Groan]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
But I think what's interesting too, is for people to realize the scale of the Citadel. Like, the fire going off is horrifying. It did not burn the Citadel down. This is a teeming metropolis, of probably more than a million inhabitants living in the Citadel. So, yes there's martial law, and it's incredibly scary right now, but this is like, if in a martial law city, a local bus station was set on fire. Bad, but like—in other words, huge response from Imperial law enforcement right away, but no one's walking into the Pyrian Dome being like, "Sires! A dimension door station in Xiao!"

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
They'd be like, "Why the fuck are you telling me this? The war's starting up again. Go tell a fucking cop, you dumb dumb."

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
"I don't care about some fuckin' bus station." You know what saying? Like, remember the scale of this, right? There's a huge scale to the Citadel—

Erika Ishii  
Yeah. God.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—that is the movement of continents and worlds, and we can forget that because we see Suvi moving between the echelons of power, and then worrying about her friends. Someone would probably say, "Oh, it's about, okay, the Witch of the Worlds Heart," but again, think about the fact that witches might—Steel didn't even really know about the Coven of Elders, right? So she knew Grandmother Wren, and you know—Steel's perspective that Witches matter is like a kind of cool idiosyncrasy about her—

Aabria Iyengar  
Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—right? So it's all—

Aabria Iyengar

We got that from Morrow, too, where like, even Morrow from the Scepter's Chorus was just like, "Oh yeah, I heard a transfer, that happened, and I don't care about it beyond being polite."

Erika Ishii

Yes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And he called her the Witch of Toma.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

He was like, "Oh, I know about her because I'm stationed on Akham—"

Erika Ishii

Yeah yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

"—and she's like a noted witch here, I think." Right?

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So, the scale of the Citadel—

Aabria Iyengar

That tells you a lot.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It tells you a lot about how different people see these thing. But—yeah if you draw—and if you had drawn steel and dropped your glamor, then that—

Erika Ishii

Oh god.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—then I think that we're heading over to Sherman Williams and grabbin' some paint—

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—and we're getting started on that portrait.

Rum Samson (Lou)

Mm. Mm.

[Aabria and Erika cackle, Aabria claps]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So, you know. Bad! Could have gone very bad!

Erika Ishii

Do they have to hand paint every one that they put a Spirit in?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[High pitched] Yes! These are very special! Yes!

Erika Ishii

[Mimicking his tone] Yes!

Aabria Iyengar

That's so funny.

Erika Ishii

There's the question in here—I'm not sure who it's from—but it is a question that I think a lot of us have is, "Eursulon's last words to Suvi before the escape were, "We knew it would be this way." Also very much, yes. In your "Good, the Bad, and the Ugly" era, your "Man with No Name" cool...ness.

Rum Samson (Lou)

Mm.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah. Yeah.

Erika Ishii

But the question was, "Would Ame and Suvi agree, if so was there a tipping point when they knew?" We kind of addressed that but, just to hammer this home, absolutely they did not know this. I think Ame knew she had to go back to Toma at some point, but if the prophecy and the witches hadn't happened, she would have been still, like, trying to go bar hopping. Maybe. I mean maybe not.

Aabria Iyengar

I mean, I—I think in that moment, the idea that Ame runs off, flashes that curse, and doesn't explain anything and takes off and then Eursulon following is like, the context for that line, then it does feel like, for Suvi, like, "Ah. Quest Fever has happened again."

Erika Ishii  
Yeah.

Aabria Iyengar

Which, Quest Fever to Suvi has a very specific thing, because it's happened every time with a, one of them walks away, very quickly, and doesn't talk, and becomes angry if a conversation is attempted. So that's what I mean when Suvi says—like, when we talk about Quest Fever, that "Okay, we knew it would be this way," Suvi is still in the point where she doesn't know that things have turned a corner, to get out by any means necessary, because of all of the things of, like, "Cool, we have the plate. We can go whenever. We're just looking for a way to get to Toma. I don't know why we're walking—what is the Fox doing? Why is no one explaining anything?"

Aabria Iyengar

So I definitely think, that was the moment Suvi went "They are on a page that I don't understand. This feels like Spirit shit all over again, and I am always locked out from that." So, I think that might be the moment where Suvi goes, like, "I gotta do something, because usually this results—" The end of this narrative is usually something really bad that requires me cleaning something up. So. I think that was like, the last card played before Suvi goes like, "Great time to say it. Bring them to me."

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Damn, bring them to me.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Erika Ishii

Also—

Aabria Iyengar

Which was so funny. In my head after the episode—I think I was laying on the ground, in the living room at camp—

Erika Ishii

[Laugh]

Aabria Iyengar

—like, "What have I done? What will I do?" I think I was just, like, slow crying and panicking like, "I don't know what to do next. Oh my god. I've ruined the campaign. Wwwwwhat?" [Laugh] But, yeah. I don't even remember what I was going to say. Ignore me. Keep going.

Rum Samson (Lou)

[Chuckle]

Erika Ishii

I would like to say, too, that the thing that Suvi said before, "Bring them to me," wasn't specifically that it's like, "Oh people are going to get hurt because of this," it was, "They don't care about me."

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Erika Ishii

And, I felt it—

Aabria Iyengar

Make your point!

Erika Ishii

I mean it's just that! That's it! That's all I said! But that being said, when you dropped down—you do this sometimes—you dropped down into your lower register when you said that—

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Erika Ishii

"Bring them to me," and I was like, [Breathy mumbling]

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Erika Ishii

[Gremlin voice] "Okay! She bad!"

Aabria Iyengar

It is one of those things where you're like, "Okay, I guess we're going to do this, you might as well lean in." In my head, I thought I said it much slower and so deliberate, so it's funny hearing it later and you're like, "Oh yeah, I just said that sort of quickly as the end of that sentence."

Erika Ishii

[Gremlin voice] That was very sexy of you.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah, I think that was just like, the difference between going like, "Oh, a bunch of people are going to get hurt," is Suvi's assumption there, and I think this is very telling so giving a little bit of lens behind what Suvi thinks of herself as within this group is, Suvi is the one that cares about people getting hurt, not Ame and not Eursulon. So when, in that narrative where she's like, "They don't care what I want or what I think," it is with a assumption, and I'm not saying it's right or wrong, but in Suvi's mind, she's the one that cares about human casualties. So, that was part of the presumption of like, "They don't care what I think or my perspective. People will get hurt if they do what they want without explanation."

Erika Ishii

Mm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Mm.

Erika Ishii

Mhm, mhm.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

There's—there's so much going on in that gallothopter ride—

Aabria Iyengar

Phew!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—to the dock in Xiao court, because again, you're trying to—the human mind tries to find a straight line, but this place—this story was going wildly in different directions from moment to moment. If the gallothopter makes it to Xiao court without Steel contacting Suvi, these guys all just leave, right? They just leave. And, to me, I read the animal panic in Ame, as Suvi goes dark in the eyes, and goes, "This is over. We need to remain at the dock, and wait for Steel, who's coming—who's just spoken with the diviners and is coming to speak with us. We need to remain."

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And I think that there is an animal panic in there, because prior to that—we have to put in context, the entire—Ame woke up in the Citadel, right? And there's this entire thing this whole time of like, "You are welcome to leave whenever you want." Even the conversations around leaving have always been like, "It's not safe for you to leave right now. We can't guarantee the safety of the traveling doors." So Ame's looking for a way out, is in this weird limbo of, "My magical instinct is telling me that a window of opportunity is closing, while at the same time, I have been told that I am afforded every ability to leave from this place."

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Like, "There's nothing wrong about me leaving, no one's told me I can't go. They've said, it's not safe for you to go," right? And in that moment, where you suddenly see Suvi has received an order to remain at the dock, I almost read Ame's panic as, like, "Okay, I didn't receive an order to remain at the dock. And if I leave the dock right away, maybe I'll never GET an order to stay." And, there's—you know what I'm saying, like that weird thing of—

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—of like, let's not find out whether that applies to me or not. And there's something in Suvi's—again, it's all about control and consequences. And there's a moment where Suvi is like, "We need to remain at the dock," that I think—I'm gonna go on a—let me just paint a phantasmagoria.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Okay? Suvi, looking out the window of the Kalabel Chantry at a fucking kaiju erupt out of the harbor of Port Talon.

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Suvi, in the top room of Grandmother Wren's cottage, looking at the Wild One that she just gave a bath as Ame goes into the forest, because she won't go out, even close to night at the cottage, because that's the fucking command that her parents gave her. Command and direct orders. It's not just Steel. Suvi didn't say "I love you" in her final words the last time she saw her dad. What she did was repeat the rules she was given by rote. And—

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—Suvi, in her internal monologue, says, "They never listen to me," even though Ame—

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—listens to her and says, "Do what you want to do," Because I think that, to Suvi, obedience is love, and a command is an act of love, because if it's not, how do you explain that your mom just told you, "Stay put, that's a direct order." And the relationship between obedience and love, and I don't think it's a lopsided thing, because I think that when Ame says, "I have to go," Suvi's like, "Okay, I'm coming with you, even though I don't want to." Because doing things you don't want to do for people is how you show that you love them.

Aabria Iyengar

1000%.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So there's this—there is a fundamental disconnect between the Witch and the Wild One, who fundamentally are like, "You have freedom. Do what you want to do. If you want to remain on the dock, that's fine. We have not been told we can't leave, and we're leaving." But of course, that misses the heart of the matter, which is that Suvi doesn't have freedom, because her entire conception of love is rooted in doing as you have been



instructed to do. And, so it's all about control. I think it's a—man, it's fuckin' heartbreaking on every level.  
That's a big—

Erika Ishii  
Agh!

Aabria Iyengar  
Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—that's a lot of me, just sort of throwing—

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—dots of paint on the canvas?

Erika Ishii  
Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
But that's how I see it.

Aabria Iyengar  
Yeah, 1000%.

Erika Ishii  
Yeah. Damn.

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laugh]

Erika Ishii  
In that moment, I think—of the curse moment—I think that's like, the worst thing to Ame, because to her, love is about closeness, and connection, and belonging, and I think that's just one more thing. Now she has a literal, magic sort of barrier between her and being close to somebody. You know, Brennan and I, we talked about—something about island nations, man, but like—

[Aabria and Brennan laugh]

Erika Ishii  
—the Japanese and Irish folklore, a lot of which there's some wife, and she's like, don't do this one thing, and the husband does it, even by accident, or just the once, and they're like, great, you have incurred my wrath. And it had very much that feeling of it, too. And I think it wasn't a conscious choice of Ame's, either. It was just something she has inherited. Wow.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah. I think for Suvi, a lot of things can be borne and understood, if they are explained. And that's something that goes back to even the Children's Adventure, where she talks about, like, "Oh I'd rather stand apart and not receive comfort and emotional care, because I want to keep an eye out and understand what's happening."

Erika Ishii

Understand, yeah.

Aabria Iyengar

So I think throughout the ramp up to Suvi's order, it is her realizing that she doesn't understand what's going on, and no one deigns to explain it, so yes, inasmuch as control is a mechanism that Suvi understands love via, yeah, obeying and giving—all of that, but it's also the like, "If you respect me, you will let me understand what's happening." And I think the moment Suvi decides Quest Fever is always wrong is because she never understands why it's happening. Because there's always a sense of a timer somewhere, that Suvi is not privy to, that precludes conversation.

Aabria Iyengar

I think that was true in the Kasov Collection, when—like with the painting, and I think it was true here, storming off. So, yeah, I do think, to sort of put the finest point on it, Suvi giving the "Bring them to me" command is not necessarily Suvi's decision to no longer leave the Citadel, and hold them here for some reason, because that's not the stakes that we're dealing with, but Suvi has crossed a threshold in her head about how she feels about these two.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah.

Aabria Iyengar

And that's why she used her trump card.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It's awesome.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And the—there's so much to—I just love—

Erika Ishii

I know.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It's so fuckin' heartbreaking. I also think about the like, the human casualties element of it, which is so—

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—it's very interesting. Because you go back and there's a lot of things about—I think, you know, if control is the byword for Suvi's world, then consequences is the byword for Ame and Eursulon's world in some way? Which is that, if you move the world, to what degree are you responsible for what comes? Like, Ame made a decision, to—so Eursulon made a decision to free Naram. Eursulon was willing to pay the price for that, he got trapped under the derrick. Naram leaves.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Naram has to now make a decision, does he abandon the little cub under the derrick or does he come back? He comes back, and he is going, do I kill myself to free the little cub, or do I rip the whole derrick off from the order? Ame makes the call to influence him and say, get the derrick out of there, right? And that has human casualties. But, the human casualties of THAT decision of Ame's are not the 150 soldiers that die in the tidal wave. It's the dozen or so Scepter's Chorus, mages who WERE conscious of a creature trapped under the derrick, not to excuse the ending of their life, but again, to put it in context.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Ame goes, should Eursulon die? Should Naram die? Should these twelve mages that were jailing Naram die? And Ame influences. It's still Naram who kills them. Galani comes at Naram, who's now standing in the harbor as a 300 foot tall Spirit, and now she's going to make the choice to attack the Spirit. And he goes, do I kill Galani? Or do—as these people are coming, and he goes, no, I'm going to let my wife into the city, bam, and hits that.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Is Ame responsible for the tidal wave, when what she was responding to was the derrick? Are the mages on the derrick responsible for the Spirit getting away? Is Eursulon responsible for Ame's decision, because it wouldn't have happened if he hadn't gotten Quest Fever, and fundamentally, the weight of all those consequences begins to pile on you, and the response is, maybe don't shake the foundations of the world. And if you do that, and you don't shake the foundations of the world, then Naram's under the derrick, the coral wands get built, Gaothmai attacks Fort Kieran, and the world moves along without you. You're not shaking the foundations of anything. And it's fuckin'—

Erika Ishii

And that's hard! That's hard, because my power fantasy—

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Erika Ishii

—in Dungeons & Dragons is doing things that matter in the world, right? And then—but then you can't just do things that matter in the world without there being butterfly effect consequences, you know?

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah!

Erika Ishii

Or even more direct consequences, right? Because it's like, you know if you—by taking action, it is—taking action always has consequences. It always will.

Aabria Iyengar

Of course!

Erika Ishii

And the question is, what are you willing to sacrifice, and how much of your actions are you thinking through, and how much of it is just like, just a decision in the moment? Hmm.

Aabria Iyengar

1000%. I think the interesting thing of—it's interesting to watch that understanding and realization, and like—that's, for me, the coolest part of Ame's arc, is realizing how much she is capable of as the inheritor of an incredibly powerful station, and what she owes the world, and what her choices have an impact on. Suvi being a clamp down on that, is only interesting because it is a foil to Ame's greater understanding. Suvi is just a character who yelled at several guards and got a court martial for it. Didn't hurt anyone.

Erika Ishii

[Laugh]

Aabria Iyengar

Just was kind of bitchy for three minutes outside a gate, and they're like, we're going to have several meetings about this forever. And Galani would have her career ruined if it happened, so like. That's less of an interesting thing for Suvi, and more of a foil to characters like Ame and Eursulon, for whom the world is endless and open and anything is possible, realizing, and—realizing with the understanding of, you still have to make those big choices because someone has to make them, but reckoning with the cost of choices that change the world is like, the coolest thing.

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Aabria Iyengar

It's very fun to watch, and very exciting to see what will be borne out from that.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I also want to throw down there, too. Two follow ups to that point. Number one, I don't know if you guys look back on this chapter and realize that that court martial, never happened.

Aabria Iyengar

Hey, it's really hard to have a court martial when all the soldiers that would have testified—

Erika Ishii

Yep.

Aabria Iyengar  
—are dead.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Drowned.

Aabria Iyengar  
We really have to talk about that. You sassed four guards, and they're dead.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
They're full dead. They're full dead.

Aabria Iyengar  
So. I think we can maybe let that part go. [Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
But I think to there's an element, just to reflect—

Erika Ishii  
Yeah and, uh, the war is back on!

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Well but I think, too, to reflect—and something that was sort of clear, I think, from Steel right away. Steel—we can see Steel is a true believer in the Citadel, and the good that it does for the world, and wanting the Empire to not be destroyed by Gaothmai and Rhuv. But we can see that for her—there was not—it was—it's Suvi. It's her daughter.

Aabria Iyengar  
Yeah. [Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
In other words, that type of corruption where you're like, "My kid is not going to—we're not going to put her in the hoosegow for the rest of her life for fuckin popping off at some Imperial guards."

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laugh]

Erika Ishii  
Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Even though by any other—had it been anyone else, it would have been very fuckin' different, right? And then the other thing I wanted to say to that, too, that's very interesting is, in terms of—yes, all those guards were immediately drowned and then covered up in kudzu.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

They're dead. Those soldiers are dead.

Erika Ishii

Aww!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

But to point out, in terms of mayhem and consequences, just to add another knot to this tapestry, there is one player character that has taken a human life THEMSELVES, and that is Suvi.

Aabria Iyengar

Right.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

With Captain Emless on the deck of that ship.

Erika Ishii

Yes that's right yes yes yes.

Aabria Iyengar

Yep.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Which is another wrinkle in the tangled fabric of Umora.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh] And she'd do it again!

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

That was—she was really dangerous and scary—

Erika Ishii

Emless was a bitch. She was a fuckin' crazy bitch!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
[Sputtering laugh]

Erika Ishii  
That's what it is!

Aabria Iyengar  
Apparently you can't court martial people when you're on a boat! So you just murder them!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You just murder them!

Erika Ishii  
Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Suvi being choked by shadows. "Where's your manager? Who do I talk to?"

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
"What does due process look like on the boat!"

Erika Ishii  
Maritime law! Maritime law!

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laughing] Maritime—yeah, she keeps screaming maritime law—

Erika Ishii  
[Choking] Maritime law!

Aabria Iyengar  
—and is drowned as a level one character.

Erika Ishii  
Ahhh, god!

Aabria Iyengar  
But, yeah, that is very true.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Mhm.

Erika Ishii  
Okay, I think I have to wrap this up, because I—I like truly, honestly, could talk about this forever.

Aabria Iyengar  
Oh my god, yeah.

Erika Ishii  
I am truly in awe of all of you because I think—[Sigh] As much as we talk about, like, "Oh character justifications," this is, for me at least, talking about characters, why they made those decisions, is sort of me having to kind of backtrack, and sort of—

Aabria Iyengar  
Yeah.

Erika Ishii  
—dissect what I did. Because it was like, why did I do this? Because Brennan said words at me, and I had to say words back.

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laugh] Look, I know that sounded crazy, but I know exactly what you mean—

Erika Ishii  
Yeah.

Aabria Iyengar  
—and that pressure, everytime like—

Erika Ishii  
It's like "Everybody's looking at me, augh."

Aabria Iyengar  
[Strained sigh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
That is actually—and I do hate to break it to you, and I don't want to give anyone an anxiety attack—

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—that is actually also how life works. People talk to you, and you often have to say something back.

Erika Ishii  
I know, and that's why I have to work things out sometimes!

Aabria Iyengar  
[At the same time] And it's hard every time, Brennan!



Erika Ishii

It's hard, it is hard, especially when this group looks at you and you're like, "Agh! It's my turn!"

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The Fox is the bad guy, okay?

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The Fox kicked the barrels over! He blew it up.

Erika Ishii

Fox did no wrong.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I know we have to wrap up, but hearing Suvi say so clearly about communication—

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—I actually think that is what—because the Fox is like, my little animal guy? That's what's wrong with animals. And you heard it here first, folks.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

They don't talk enough.

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Truly, because you're like, where's the communication? And I truly think—

Erika Ishii

Animals and babies.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—of the Fox's perspective—

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—I originally think of the Fox's perspective in the conversation with Steel, where Steel's like, "Now: talk talk talk talk talk talk talk talk talk. Now, in order for us to do something, we have to talk talk talk. And there's more: talk talk talk." And the Fox is like—

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

"I'm gone. I'm fucking going."

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

"I got bored, I checked out, I don't know what you said, but it's time for me to leave," and that is not a great way to move through the world, if you're trying to coordinate, I don't know, a million wizards and their civilization.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh] He's a perfect boy.

Erika Ishii

Yyyuuuuup.

Aabria Iyengar

Above reproach. Thank you for letting me be a part of this. I will miss the campaign, and I'm so excited to see what the Witch and the Wild One do from here on out.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Ahhhh!

Erika Ishii

Witch and Wild one nothin'—

Rum Samson (Lou)

We'll send you a postcard.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah. Thank you, let me know!

Erika Ishii

We're splitting the campaign. Brennan has to DM for all three of us separately now.

Aabria Iyengar  
Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
We're gonna have—Aabria will roll up a new W character for—

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laugh] We're out of words!

Erika Ishii  
The Wbard.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And then we're going to do a spin-off campaign that follows Suvi, so I'm going to need Rum and Erika to also have new W—so it could be like, the Warlock, the Witch, and the Wild One, and then the Wizard, the—the Watch, and the Walrus.

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Aabria Iyengar  
Who has to play a watch?

Rum Samson (Lou)  
I'm playing a personified watch in this next campaign.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
[Laugh]

Aabria Iyengar  
Alright, Miss Minutes, let's go! [Laugh]

Rum Samson (Lou)  
A GIANT one, like a full, like six foot—I'm a grandfather clock, just wandering around.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Hell yeah.

Aabria Iyengar  
We started with a Beauty and the Beast joke, and then we ended with a Beauty and the Beast joke, and it's perfect.

Rum Samson (Lou)  
There it is.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Little bit of housekeeping, too, next week—

Erika Ishii

[Sing song] Story Time Clean Up—oh, no.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Well no, I was going to say next week—

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Erika Ishii

[Gasp]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—is the final episode of this chapter!

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Final episode of Chapter Two, next week.

Erika Ishii

Ohhh, I didn't know if you were going to be able to announce that, but yeah—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah!

Erika Ishii

—this was the penultimate—

Aabria Iyengar

Yup!

Erika Ishii

—episode.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And then there's a bunch of great—so we'll do that, and then when the Fireside for that final one comes out, it'll actually be Worlds Beyond Numbers' first birthday!

Aabria Iyengar

Yay!

Erika Ishii

Yayyyy!

Aabria Iyengar

Look at us!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

We're going to be at—we're gonna be recording stuff at Camp—

Erika Ishii

We can hold up our head with our very own neck.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yes. Stay tuned for announcements, we're going to do like, instagram lives and we're going to have, maybe a little—we might have a little thing that we find a way to somehow stream to the patreon, of like a little birthday party from our recording camp, and we're going to have so much fun stuff coming your way. We'll have, like a month off from the core campaign, but with so much bone cone, and fun other stuff, and one shots, and great cool stuff coming your way.

Erika Ishii

Bone. Cone.

Aabria Iyengar

Whole arc talkbacks, yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Whole arc talkbacks. Get ready for [Wizardly voice] the thrilling finale for Chapter Two of the Wizard, the Witch, and the Wild One!

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh] Ah, amazing!

Erika Ishii

Alright. Thank you, everybody so much, I've been your humble host, Erika Ishii ahoohoo and crackle crackle, thank you Aabria!

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh] Ahoohoo crackle crackle, it's been a pleasure to have been your wizard, good luck with that Conclave!

Erika Ishii

[Nervous laughter] Brennan Lee Mulligan!

Aabria Iyengar

I'm sure it will be fine!

Erika Ishii

Ah, it'll be fine. I'll be fine.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Ahoohoo. Ahoohoo crackle crackle. And again, the Fox stays out here kicking barrels, burning down bus stations, let's do it.

[Aabria and Erika cackle]

Erika Ishii

[Sigh] And Rum Samson, thank you so much for joining us.

Rum Samson (Lou)

[Singing] Ahoohoo... Crackle crackle!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

He burst into song!

Aabria Iyengar

Yes!!

Rum Samson (Lou)

Ahoohoo... Crackle crackle.

[Lilting pipe flute flutters above drum beats and choral tones as the song of the Spirit Realm from the Children's Adventure starts]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It's just like I always dreamed!

Aabria Iyengar

Amazing!