

Worlds Beyond Number

The Wizard, the Witch, and the Wild One: Episode 09 “The King of Cups” Final Version

[World's Beyond Number intro music rises urgently with orchestral strings and flute]

Erika Ishii

This is the sound of Worlds Beyond Number.

[The other instruments fade into a lone flute and a roiling crash of thunder, as the wind and waves smash, and harmonic arcane frequencies drone on.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The lights of Port Talon are but a whisper on the horizon, over dark and windswept seas, as our heroes stand on the uppermost platform, of the Kalabel Nautomantic Apparatus, a derrick of steel and glass, standing over the waves. You are on a lens of pure crystal, that captures the powerful green and purple light of two spinning prisms, and projects them, such that you stand within a solid beam of arcane illumination, which reveals, as though through perfect transparency, a dizzying drop below you to the ocean floor, where air and water become completely unlimiting to your sight and vision.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

At the bottom of the sea, there is a being—which would be the most correct term to use for it, because what its true nature is, it is hard to say—but a being vaster, and more enormous, than the largest sailing ship you have ever seen, writhes and pulses on the ocean floor, as the light hits it, in waves, pushing it further down. The derrick stands over it. A beacon. A trap. An apparatus. A cage. You see Morrow look with horror, and disgust, and ruin, as he is met with the question, “What have you done,” by Suvi.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

In this moment, I'm going to ask everybody here for one skill check, to help you process what you're seeing. It can be a wisdom skill, or an intelligence skill, whatever you think your character would be using to try to process what you're seeing right now.

Lou Wilson

I can say that Eursulon is, he's trying to process "Is this something from the world I was a part of before?" If he is looking at an Honored Friend.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

No roll necessary. You behold the form of a Great Spirit. You look and see that the state that this Honored Friend is in, has had its glamour stripped from it.

Lou Wilson

Mm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The form beneath you, you do not recognize. But I think knowing what you know, it would not seem impossible to you, that this is Naram.

[Peal of thunder as choral voices wail]

Lou Wilson

Taking that in, and processing that, I do think, Eursulon gets very emotional in the feelings of empathy, with regard to trapping, and having your—being seen when you don't want to, and Suvi or Ame, whichever is closer, is just going to stabilize himself on them.

[Deep reverberation]

Aabria Iyengar

For Suvi, everything snaps from wanting to understand how all of this works, to immediately going back and thinking about, I know we know—like, the Citadel knows so little about our Honored Friends, but like, can I think back to, sort of historically, how have wizards interacted with Great Spirits? Is there precedent for trying to trap them, and exploit them? Is what he is doing, kind of part and parcel to our whole, like, interactions with Great Spirits? Or is this an abomination?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Give me a history check.

Lou Wilson

Is this the day to day, or is this the worst thing to ever happen in history?

Erika Ishii

[Laughs]

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah! 19.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Okay. Some of Suvi's reaction, is probably based on the immediate emotional reaction of Eursulon and Ame.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I don't know how Suvi would react if she was here alone, with just one other wizard here. Because you're having an immediate reaction to your friends being hurt. But if you had to justify it, if it was really important that you justify it, Honored Friends are captured all the time. What does it mean to draw a circle of salt and bind a demon in the middle of it? Your question is, is this the worst thing I've ever seen, or is this day to day? Hell no, it's not day to day. This is WAY the fuck out there. And to be clear, YOU'VE never seen a demon being bound either.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

This is like, a very complex thing where, your initial reactions of "This is horrifying," are absolutely true. And then also, I think a very logical part of you has to say "What, in principle, is different than other things I've already accepted."

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Right? Which is a very dangerous road to go down!

Erika Ishii

[Exaggerated gasp]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Laugh]

Aabria Iyengar
And we're just gonna ease on down that road!

Lou Wilson
Ease.

Erika Ishii
Ease on down, ease on down, ease on down, oh no!

Aabria Iyengar
Then I think, very specifically, Suvi wasn't next to Eursulon, and isn't his brace, and she's going to reschool, and recontextualize, her initial reaction to him, with a little bit of a smirk of "Oh, the audacity of you" to try to bring it back to this—his expectation is that a wizard would be impressed, I must now be impressed with this. I can't give the game away.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Okay. Give me deception.

Aabria Iyengar
14.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Before we can get to his response to you, I want Ame, that wisdom or intelligence skill check, to process or contextualize what you are seeing.

Erika Ishii
I remember...

[Discordant string music]

Erika Ishii
Lancing pain shooting through the water into my stomach, and I realize now, it's what this is. He gave me this vision when I repaired his face. But I'm going to try to make an insight check, to see how aware this being is, and if I'm right, that it is Naram. That's an 11.

[Aabria and Brennan laugh]

Lou Wilson
We're emotional, right?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You're emotional.

Erika Ishii
Yeah. I will say that my passive perception is 26.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
On that passive perception of 26, which is really incredible, what you can tell, is that this creature is anchored by more than just the waves of light hitting it. That fluid—on that 26, you actually just go into a medicinal space, of having worked on a farm and been a veterinarian. That glowing liquid that's turning into coral is blood.

Erika Ishii
[Gasp]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And there is something that you can't see because it's on the underside of the creature's mass. That is—that is an injury. There is some kind of injury in the creature, that either, initiated how it was trapped, or you may even be like not aware of what in the trap would have necessarily injured it, it looks like that this thing is... Not so much a cage as it is something else. I think on a 26 passive perception, it's like... Cages can be harmless, but animals hurt themselves in cages all the time. Morrow looks at you, Suvi, and goes

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)

[Shocked fear] I— [Relieved laughter] Yes! Yes. I—I know. It's remarkable, isn't it?

Suvi (Aabria)

This is... Unfathomable.

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)

Yes!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you see that he waves his hands, the chanting stops, and the lights begin to stop spinning, and the light begins to recede from the ocean once more, as sort of this viewing window begins to close. And you go back to just being in the ominous purple and green of the prisms, now floating more slowly overhead. He looks at you and says

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)

It's a remarkable thing. This creature has, of course, been sighted outside of Port Talon for generations, we've heard local folk tales—

Suvi (Aabria)

Mm.

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)

—and various sightings of the beast for quite some time. The creature has an innate ability, to control currents.

Ame (Erika)

[Vomiting noises]

Erika Ishii

I fully vomit.

Ame (Erika)

[More vomiting noises]

Erika Ishii

I—on a, I guess it would be 22 insight check, I know exactly what Suvi is doing. I wipe my mouth on it, and I say

Ame (Erika)

[Pained] I'm so sorry, that was—he was [unconvincingly] disgusting.

Ame (Erika)

Yeah! Well—

Ame (Erika)

Sorry. Gyeah!

Aabria Iyengar

I know how the creatures make you—

Ame (Erika)
[Gagging] Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You see, Morrow kind of—

Ame (Erika)
[Gagging]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
does a mixed little face and says

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)
I actually find the creature quite beautiful.

Ame (Erika)
[Pained] Well, to each their own.

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)
The important thing is—already, the—[Laughs] this is what I've been needing. We've been harvesting the coral, that seems to be growing from the creature. The Sailor's Ring you are wearing is, of course, composed of that coral—

Suvi (Aabria)
Ohh!

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)
—and we've been finding methods of controlling the tides, and the currents. Now, all of this has been kept under extreme lock and key. However, the implications... Would be better shared with you, and you alone, Arch Mage Apprentice.

Suvi (Aabria)
Yes, of course.

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)
But, the findings initially are extremely promising.

Ame (Erika)
[Stifled Gags]

Aabria Iyengar
Gonna walk over and Suvi, like, reaches out and puts her hand on his shoulder, and just gives that squeeze of

Suvi (Aabria)
Incredible.

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)
[Shaky sigh] A wizard could spend their entire life, seeking to do ONE act in service of the Empire, truly. And I know, that wizards greater than myself, will take what we have done here, and—I'll tell you more about it later, I have some ideas of how the magic in this creature might be... Exploited and bent to greater purpose, but—incredible, incredible things are possible.

Suvi (Aabria)
We studied at the Citadel, you and I. Names that were drummed into us, who achieved far less than you have today.

Ame (Erika)

[Barely contained nausea] And a Wizard from the Citadel has witnessed that it was you that led this endeavor.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

He smiles, bows very deeply and says

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)

[Reverently] I am so honored. [Chipper] Well, this went about as well as could be expected!

[Ame and Morrow laugh exaggeratedly]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see he says—

Suvi (Aabria)

I don't want to take away your secrets!

Aabria Iyengar

And I'm just trying to—what does Eursulon look like right now?

Lou Wilson

Holding Ame's shoulder, and just looking down into the darkness of the ocean below.

Ame (Erika)

[Nauseated noise]

Lou Wilson

And I think just has—is in a different space. I think as, the conversation happening, the vomit is all just washing over him.

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Lou Wilson

He's somewhere else.

Aabria Iyengar

Cool. Then to run a little interference on that.

Suvi (Aabria)

Look, I don't want to take anything away from you, your prize secrets, but I do need to know, how did you figure out exactly how many lenses you would need, to focus this light? [On the down low] You don't have to tell me what the prisms are, but like, just—

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)

Yes, well! I'd actually be quite delighted for you to take a look at the schematics.

Suvi (Aabria)

Oh my god.

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)

Well, it's quite chilly out here on the derrick. You've seen—

Suvi (Aabria)

Yes!

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)

—what there is to see, and of course, just thinking for—thinking out loud, this, of course, was where the creature was first sighted. But we have no way of knowing if there's more of these out there. Possibly there'd be ability to recreate derricks like this. Whether this creature is itself—of course, possible, that it is a unique being, but it could also be part of oceanic species, perhaps more.

Eursulon (Lou)

Suvi.

Suvi (Aabria)

Mhm?

Eursulon (Lou)

We should return.

Suvi (Aabria)

Yes, oh, let's go.

Ame (Erika)

I'm... Feeling a little under the weather, yes.

Suvi (Aabria)

Yeah, ok, my companions—

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)

Yes, yes yes, I understand. We actually have—hold on! Mints! Here you go!

Suvi (Aabria)

Oh, I—you know what?

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)

No?

Suvi (Aabria)

I don't know.

Lou Wilson

I'm going to start walking down the stairs.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Suvi (Aabria)

I'll take them

Lou Wilson

Like normal stairs, I don't want the platform anymore.

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)

Oh! Sir! Bear, you—do—?

Suvi (Aabria)

You know what, you're going to let him have this.

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)
Very well.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
So you see that, he begins to lower down, and goes

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)
Yes, I understand. I get—the first couple of years I was out here, I was terribly seasick, so—

Ame (Erika)
[Hurried] Yes. I'm going to go. Thank you.

Suvi (Aabria)
This is that.

[Ethereal horn music swells and then fades]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
So, he sails back with you. He actually asks to sort of pull you aside—

Suvi (Aabria)
Yes, of course!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
—on the back of the ship. You see, he looks and says—he says

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)
[Speaking quietly] So, as you can see, that creature, you know—we... There were certain elements of Port Talon, that has—you know, other nautomancers, and various members of the Imperium had pointed out—Port Talon receives sort of, favorable weather, unlike the rest of the isle of Akham.

Suvi (Aabria)
Mm!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You know, the arable lands near here survive—they haven't had a famine or a drought in this half of the island, in... I don't know how long! We started to wonder, and then we started noticing some irregularities, in the trade streams and the currents nearby. Finding this creature, we saw that it actually has the ability to, shape these streams to some degree.

Suvi (Aabria)
Ok.

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)
The one place that it came the most reliably was here, to Port Talon, there have been sightings historically—not often, but every couple of years, some farmer, or fisherman would have a sighting—and fishermen seemed to often see the beast after record catches, there'd be some fishermen who came with a huge haul of fish, that were fleeing from the creature—

Suvi (Aabria)
Mm.

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)
—and they would scoop it up and they would see it—

Suvi (Aabria)
Delightful.

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)
—and off it would go. Capturing the creature was just the first part of what the apparatus was intended to do. We knew that it came by this way, we scuttled some bait at the bottom of the sea, underneath the derrick, hoping that the creature would come in, it did come in.

Suvi (Aabria)
Incredible.

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)
And upon capturing it, of course, that's just the first half of what the derrick is for. All of the Sailor's Rings, and the coral, these are... Side projects, essentially, that are, you know, of use, but of the kind of use that the Empire is used to.

Suvi (Aabria)
Yeah, of course!

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)
The sort of projects that oh, get you a pat on the back.

Suvi (Aabria)
Yeah.

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)
There is a possibility, with this creature, of turning a tide. No pun intended.

Suvi (Aabria)
Ha. Ha. Okay.

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)
We have reached a lull in the war, but the storm clouds gather. We know that Gaothmai and Rhuv, have only retreated, not in disavowal of this ancient enmity, but instead they have moved back, like a fist being cocked, ready to strike. We could strike them first. Long ago, when I was first at the Citadel, there was a period of time when I was put onto a partial track for meteoromancy—

Suvi (Aabria)
Oh!

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)
—the study of weather magic. And of course, the, you know—Gaothmai and Rhuv have vast resources at their disposal, that—can't just send storms to wrack them.

Suvi (Aabria)
Yes.

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)
They have the ability to stop that. What none of us have dominion over, at least not to my knowledge—none of our intelligence suggests that Gaothmai or Rhuv has this same ability—has been command over the ocean, the ocean has been a free for all, and our navies have been at war for generations.

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)
But. With a control over the currents, if this creature's abilities were able to be amplified, were able to be directed, and controlled, the intersection of these ocean currents, with the weather patterns continentally, over the globe,

you would have the potential to drive a famine, that would bring Gaothmai to its knees, to create floods throughout Rhuv, that would see their economies toppled, and none of their defenses against the sort of weather magic of the Imperium—all of that is based on direct frontal attacks. But none of this would require intersecting with those abjurations at all. By reworking the tides of the oceans, you could, effectively, within a generation, topple—

Suvi (Aabria)
A hundred—oh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
See? You see it!

Suvi (Aabria)
It's brilliant! [Sigh] Phenomenal. I guess my only real question is, have you noticed any deleterious effect, while you've had the beast under your derrick?

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)
Oh, deleterious effect, in what way? To the—no, the derrick is working absolutely—

Suvi (Aabria)
Right!

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)
Right.

Suvi (Aabria)
Well, if this beast was sort of a harbinger, or came along, with good things, and prosperity to Port Talon, has its sort of forced, uh, remaining here, done anything, or yielded any strange results? This thing is clearly strange, and magical, I'm just trying to make sure that there's no, sort of, continued exposure problems.

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)
Oh! Yes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Here you see his eyes kind of go blank. You realize that he doesn't—has not thought about that. However, you see as you are—as YOU'RE approaching, and you start to think about it, you notice that Port Talon—as you're looking at Port Talon, the Imperial docks are full, but sailing back from the derrick, you look at the outer rim of the Talon? It's nighttime, and you don't see any of the docks even halfway full with fishing vessels. This place used to be a fishing town. You see, he says

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)
And of course, the um—you know, there is—and you bringing this up has actually made me double my resolve to—to find if there is—I don't think that there would be a correlation? But, you know, there was an inland issue with one of the shrines inland, and there's been this sort of kudzu infestation.

Suvi (Aabria)
Hm!

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)
That began, sometime after—

Suvi (Aabria)
Ok.

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)
—the creature was captured. I don't know if there's a connection there, I don't see how there would be—

Suvi (Aabria)

It doesn't make any sense, so. Are we effectively—I'm assuming the Governor, or whoever runs this city is taking care of it, but does it seem to be all well in hand?

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)

Yes! No, we've been supplying the salt for the salt fires, and—

Suvi (Aabria)

Mm.

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)

—we've been... Taking care of that. So that—so that's an interesting—but, you know, I can see that the timing might create a connection—

Suvi (Aabria)

Look, I'm less concerned about any sort of—we are brilliant, and we will figure out whatever needs to be known about this, in order to effectively utilize it. I'm more concerned that more signaling—externally, that there is something interesting happening, on this island might, turn eyes of a Rhuvian or Gaothmai nature.

Guild Mage Morrow (Brennan)

Extremely well said. Yes. Operational security has been the utmost priority, and I—so, you know, to my—to the best of my knowledge, nothing—I will look into it.

Suvi (Aabria)

Great!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you see that he smiles, and the ship comes back to the harbor, and the three of you, sort of—you had the—the carriage awaits, to bring you back to the Chantry.

Lou Wilson

Eursulon silently boards the carriage.

Erika Ishii

I am guiding Eursulon, silently squeezing his hand with mine.

[Tense sorrowful piano chords over a high pitched soft drone]

Aabria Iyengar

I think, seeing them as they exit the boat, Suvi realizes at some point in the conversation, especially when it turned towards wartime applications, Suvi stopped pretending to be excited about this, and was excited about it, and didn't realize it until she saw her friends again.

[Horse hooves on cobblestones]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The carriage brings you back to the Chantry. At the Chantry, your rooms await you.

Erika Ishii

As soon as we're all alone together, I say

Ame (Erika)

We have to find Orima.

Suvi (Aabria)

Orima—oh. Oh. Oh. Ohhh. Hmm.

Ame (Erika)

We have to go to her shrine.

Eursulon (Lou)

No. We need to go. We need to recover Wavebreaker, and be on our way.

Ame (Erika)

No, no.

Eursulon (Lou)

[Aggressively.] Yes. Yes! There's nothing we can do! What would you have us—you would have us stand against the Empire!? You would have us... Ask more Honored Friends to put themselves in harm's way!?

Ame (Erika)

[Sadly] The Empire will come for all of them, eventually. If they—

Eursulon (Lou)

[Yelling] Well, that's the Empire's choosing! We came for Wavebreaker, we should go. We have what we need. Let's be on our way. Our business here is concluded.

Ame (Erika)

If you need to go, then you should go. I will not ask another Honored Friend to sacrifice themselves. But Orima is CLEARLY trying to get to her love, and I have to help her. I have to.

Suvi (Aabria)

Why? That's not your fight.

Ame (Erika)

It is! It's my duty, my sworn obligation as a Witch, and—

Suvi (Aabria)

Your obligation is to help your Honored Friends. Eursulon is right in front of us.

Ame (Erika)

But—

Suvi (Aabria)

And he says we should go. [Grimly] What would you have us do, Ame?

Ame (Erika)

You go. I can stay.

Eursulon (Lou)

And do what?!

Suvi (Aabria)

[Angrily] We're here because of you!!

Ame (Erika)

I know. I'm sorry I brought you all the way out here. But if they prove that this works, the Empire will hunt down the Great Spirits—

Suvi (Aabria)
[Yelling] We already are!!

Ame (Erika)
—and Honored Friends—

Suvi (Aabria)
That's already been on the table!

Ame (Erika)
Did you know that?

Aabria Iyengar
[Long pause] Yes. But the Empire's understanding of the nature of our Honored Friends, is—it is laughable. I've done everything in my power to not... Expand on that knowledge, but. We are wizards. We learn, we grab, we exploit, in order to save lives. I am sorry for the state that Naram is in, but—

Ame (Erika)
And how about Port Talon? How about the state that Port Talon is in? Is that saving lives?

Suvi (Aabria)
Thousands die every day in this war. I saw the lack of fishing vessels, but—

Ame (Erika)
The lack of fishing vessels? Arthur's—Arthur's inn, everybody—the witchfires, and the kudzu, and how many more—how many more cities will this happen to?

Suvi (Aabria)
[Yelling] Well what are you doing to end the war? What does your duty compel you to do, because mine is to End. The War. Every wizard's every thought is bent on finishing this fight.

Ame (Erika)
And I would never, ever judge or—or—

Suvi (Aabria)
Oh, that's not true. You judge us every day. You can't help yourself.

Ame (Erika)
[Long pause] I don't judge you. I don't agree with your with the actions of the Empire—

Suvi (Aabria)
But you would wear our rings. You would take from us. You exploit as easily as any wizard, Ame.

Ame (Erika)
Yes. That's true, but, I can see somewhere here, where I can help. And I'm going to just do the best that I can.

Suvi (Aabria)
Why can't we just finish what we started? Look, if the Great Spirits are as powerful as we know they are, then Orima will come. Naram will be free. That derrick will fall before... Anything can come of it. All will be as it was. But what are YOU going to do?

Ame (Erika)
I'm going to go to her shrine.

Suvi (Aabria)
[Sigh]

Ame (Erika)
I'm going to go to her shrine. I'm going to do... Something, about the witchfires.

Suvi (Aabria)
The witchfires are holding her fury back. That fury will be... Turned on the entire city. All of Port Talon will suffer. Would you do that?

Ame (Erika)
It doesn't have to. We should at least talk to her.

Suvi (Aabria)
[Long pause] Eursulon, is there any value, in going to speak to Orima? Do you know her?

Eursulon (Lou)
She's someone that my father spoke of, as being great, and powerful, and, in that, to be avoided.

Suvi (Aabria)
To be avoided-uh.

Ame (Erika)
Well. I've made my mind up.

Suvi (Aabria)
[Sigh]

Ame (Erika)
And we did what Will Gallows asked of us. So you can go find Wavebreaker.

Eursulon (Lou)
We are attached, Ame. The point of recovering Wavebreaker is not, just to have a sword, it's so that we can free whatever it is that is locked. So if you are committed in this course...

Ame (Erika)
You're right. [Sigh] That is a priority. You're right. I just saw him down there, and I—[Starting to cry] seeing him like that, and knowing that they could—I mean, what if they found out, and did that to you Eursulon?

Lou Wilson
I think Eursulon is—that's too much. He leaves. And I'm gonna go to my room.

[Shuffling of cloth, sound of a door closing]

Suvi (Aabria)
[Sadly] Aren't you supposed to be the one that... Walks both worlds?

Ame (Erika)
Walking both worlds really means that, you don't quite understand either one of them perfectly. So I can... Do what I can, but... I don't question you or your... Convictions. And I know that they're, sometimes at odd with mine. But I love you, very, very much. And I want to understand better. I'll go talk to him.

Suvi (Aabria)
Can you tell—nevermind. You should go.

[Knocking on a heavy door]

Ame (Erika)

[Muffled through the door] Eursulon?

Lou Wilson

In the room, Eursulon has taken the sword that he got from Finley, and he's removed the Sailor's Ring and put it on whatever table or surface he can find, and is going to attempt to smash it. That's a 7.

Erika Ishii

[Pained groan]

Aabria Iyengar

Ha!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You bring the sword down, onto the ring, and as it connects with the coral, the coral makes a—

[Mystical reverberation]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—noise, and the steel of the sword ripples and bends, twisting to warp the edge, and the sword becomes useless.

Lou Wilson

I hurl—

Eursulon (Lou)

RAAGH!!

Lou Wilson

I'm going to throw the sword at the door, as Ame knocks on it.

[Whoosh of the sword through the air, thunk and clatter as it hits the door and then the ground]

Ame (Erika)

[Muffled] Ooh! Eursulon, are you alright?

Eursulon (Lou)

[Brusquely] Yes, I'm fine.

Ame (Erika)

May I come in? Or I can talk through the door here.

Lou Wilson

Eursulon opens—unlocks the door, but does not open it. And then just gonna go sit down.

Erika Ishii

I open the door. I stick my head inside. I see him on the other side of the room.

Ame (Erika)

I truly don't know what to say. I'm sorry. My first impulse is to meddle and to get involved with things, and that's a bit presumptuous of me. I didn't ask what you wanted or what he might have wanted.

Eursulon (Lou)

We have not talked much, of the times, since we went our separate ways.

Ame (Erika)

I gather that it was very hard for you.

[Sorrowful string music, with low horns]

Eursulon (Lou)

Yes.

Ame (Erika)

Hard enough that you felt that you had to deceive us, as to how bad it really was. You can always share with me, and with Suvi, but if you're not ready to ever talk about it, or you just simply want to forget about it, that's fine too.

Eursulon (Lou)

I just—these times that we have had—have again—there has been joy. And [Sigh] it is selfish. [Crying] But I do not want to take on the woes of the world, and interrupt that—that bond that we have rekindled, I don't, it doesn't... It hurts me to see Naram that way. But. We are three friends, against all of this, all of the grandeur, and power that we have witnessed over the last day with Suvi.

Ame (Erika)

Well, first of all, I think they were trying a little TOO hard to be grand, and impress us. But! We can have both. We can be three friends together, having some joyful times, and also take on difficult tasks. And I don't purport to always have the tools, to fight something as big and powerful as the Empire, nor do I think it's our place to do so. But, to be able to enable others, who can better help themselves, and the people that they love... That's—that's what we do for each other.

Ame (Erika)

I will not ask it of you, but that feeling inside of you, of you feeling for Naram? We feel that for all each other, too. And I'm sure Orima feels that for him. If it was one of us trapped down, being used like that. You'd want to do something to save us, and you'd value any help you got.

Eursulon (Lou)

[Sigh] I wish to be alone now Ame.

Ame (Erika)

Of course.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Ame as you leave and return to your room, your footsteps walking down the hall, you hear the click clack of the fox's claws.

[Everyone giggles]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The fox looks up at you, as you enter into your room, and just, looks with a kind of neutral face.

The Fox (Brennan)

What would you do if you did what you really wanted to do?

Ame (Erika)

[Sigh] I don't know.

The Fox (Brennan)
Yeah, you do.

Ame (Erika)
Ugh. I'm not used to people asking me that.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughs]

Ame (Erika)
I'd go find Orima, and I'd do something about the witchfires, and plead with her to go save her lover, without harming the town. And then, I'd go get Wavebreaker, and fulfill my promises to Grandma Wren. How about you? What would you do if you did what you wanted? Wait a minute. You always do what you want?

The Fox (Brennan)
Yeah, I'm always doing what I want.

Ame (Erika)
Agh! But you see how it gets you into trouble sometimes, and how sometimes people get upset with you, right? You gotta know. I gotta know that you know, and that it bothers you even just a little bit!

The Fox (Brennan)
What bothers me?

Ame (Erika)
That—what other people think of you!

The Fox (Brennan)
No. If they can't catch me, they can think whatever they want about me.

Ame (Erika)
And if they can catch you?

The Fox (Brennan)
Ho ho ho ho! I'm in trouble!

Ame (Erika)
Yeah. Imagine that, they can always catch you. And then how would you live your life? Would you always be doing what you wanted to do?

The Fox (Brennan)
Yeah. Because if I stop trying to do what I want to do, then they've already caught me.

Ame (Erika)
[Deep sigh] I hate how much sense you make.

The Fox (Brennan)
Can you open the door so I can go get some fish slurry?

Ame (Erika)
Yeah, go get some fish slurry.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Click clack click clack click.

[Everyone laughs]

Aabria Iyengar

Can I make an attempt to find someone within the Chantry, that would help me send a message to the Citadel?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah, absolutely. I think you go down that night—and by the way, it is—you get back at like 10 or 11p.m., like, it's not even midnight by the time you get back so there's—and you also have been like, you already slept in your rooms, it's been—I guess you've only had a short rest, so—but in other words, if you wanted to go be nighthawks and do stuff, you could as well.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Suvi, you go downstairs, and see none other—in the sort of main foyer, the chamber that you're going to go find an attendant—Galani, who is speaking there. She has deep blue robes, that are lined with, kind of this, very rippling yellow orange silk inside of the blue. It's very sort of flashy sort of thing. And you see that she has this enormous steel collar, that swoops down in her robes, like, tying to her belt, that is lined with abjurative. Deep, dark brown skin, gold flecked irises of like, a hazel green. And her hair done up into this long, coiled braid, on the top of her head.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

She's probably, like a couple years older than you, but you would have known her as an upper-classman at the Citadel. She turns around to you, and you know that she is an Abjurer of the Citadel. As you walk down, she turns and goes

Abjurer Galani (Brennan)

[Mildly surprised] Suvi!

Suvi (Aabria)

Oh! Galani!

Aabria Iyengar

Really quick, can I get, like, a relative status check between the two of us? And I want to know how, most respectfully, should I address her?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Laughs] You are an intern at the White House. She is the head of the Des Moines Agricultural Bureau.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So like, she's in charge of things you are not. You're in the thick of it, she is not.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah, okay. Well, then just a

Suvi (Aabria)

Galani! Oh my god. Hi!

Abjurer Galani (Brennan)

Hello. I couldn't believe it. You're, a.) Alive.

Suvi (Aabria)

Alive?

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

Uh, yes. Word went out through the Citadel's private channels to begin searching for you about a week and a half ago.

Suvi (Aabria)

Oh! Oh. God, yes. And I reach into my pocket, and pull out the sending mirror. My sending mirror was disenchanting, bad run in with a mage, and I—

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

Bad run in with a mage who broke your speaking mirror?

Suvi (Aabria)

Uh, yes!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Give me a deception.

Erika Ishii

Ohhh!

Aabria Iyengar

Shit! Nooo! [Laughs] 8!

Lou Wilson

8!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

She looks at you and says

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

Alright. A ma—what do you mean, a mage? A mage of the Citadel?

Suvi (Aabria)

No. No. Mm. It's a long, and incredibly obnoxious story, but I've only now been able to reach civilization, and I was on my way to send word back to the—literally, they all think I'm dead? [Yelling] How little do you all think of me?! I'm fine!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see she says

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

Yes, I understand—respectfully, incredibly veteran Mages of the Citadel are killed by enemy combatants all the time. You being a ghost on the wind, for several weeks, is not us having a—I say us very broadly. Steel is on her way.

Suvi (Aabria)

Uh. Oh no. I have got to talk to Steel now. Did she seem mad? I—

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

She seemed relieved that her surrogate daughter—

Suvi (Aabria)

Yeah.

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

—is alive. And I think that, if I was reading her correctly, through the tears streaking down her face—

Suvi (Aabria)

Oh god.

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

—she might well be mad when she gets here.

Suvi (Aabria)

Ah, shit. Wait, hold on. So you know—how do you—how do you know I'm here?

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

Um, well. The Guild Mage Morrow bragged about it to every single person he could.

Suvi (Aabria)

Yeah. Yeah okay.

Erika Ishii

[Laughing]

Suvi (Aabria)

This is so good. This is going great. Agh.

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

Have you been here for a—the whole—

Suvi (Aabria)

A day!

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

And you didn't think to—

Suvi (Aabria)

I was doing it now! I'm—look I'm—it's me! Looking for a place to—agh, shit. Ugh. Don't tell—okay. Phew. Please don't tell them how stressed I am. I've been handling this, to the best of my ability.

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

So let me just understand here—

Suvi (Aabria)

Yeah!

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

—for a moment. So you've known—when did your speaking mirror break?

Suvi (Aabria)

Okay. I feel like, if I answer this wrong, you are going to—uh. Why—

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

Well, I'm coming here to confirm a rumor.

Suvi (Aabria)

Yes.

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

I see that it's confirmed that you are alive and well—

Suvi (Aabria)

Yes.

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

—for which the entire Citadel is grateful.

Suvi (Aabria)

[Sigh]

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

But now I'm beginning to piece together that you have not been in a particular rush. You're speaking—

Suvi (Aabria)

No, no! We got to the city, like, today—

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

Who's we?

Suvi (Aabria)

Oh, I acquired some companio—It's—okay. A mage—heh—a mage tried to assassinate me, so I hired help when I was leaving from Silbry, to get to here, so I could—because there's no other—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

She cast's a little divination to see if your memory is okay.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

She like, is going to cast—she's like

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

May I quickly—

Suvi (Aabria)

Ow! Stop! Don't. I'm fine.

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

Well. No, I'm going to.

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Give me an insight check.

Aabria Iyengar

Natural 20!

Erika Ishii

YEAH!

Lou Wilson
Woo!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Hell yeah! So a couple of things happen simultaneously.

Lou Wilson
[Relieved sigh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Number one, she thinks that you are possessed or mind controlled.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laugh] Perfect.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Number two, the thing you've been using, that's been like, "Hell yeah! Welcome, Suvi!" You've been throwing the Citadel around.

Aabria Iyengar
I—not me. Ame.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You've been throwing the Citadel around. So, it's been working great with these Guild Mages. This is a mage of the Citadel who is—who, again, you're seeing, in this moment, a sudden reversion of, like, you can't say, "Do you know who my father is," to your dad, right?

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah!

Erika Ishii
[Cackling]

Aabria Iyengar
Right? So—

Erika Ishii
[Cackling]

Lou Wilson
You can try!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You can try!

Lou Wilson
You can try!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Well, you can try! And Galani probably wants to be on your good side, because yeah, your leadership track—

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—and that's a good idea, but she already has the station that she wanted—

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—so there's a lot of, like, what the fuck is going on here? So she's like

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

If you'd be so kind, I'm just going to—

Suvi (Aabria)

To what?

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

I'm going to cast arcane sight to attempt to just see if there's any enchantments on you.

Suvi (Aabria)

I—mm.

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

And I'm going to cast—you don't—do you have any current spells on you?

Suvi (Aabria)

Not that I'm aware—

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

Okay.

Suvi (Aabria)

Oh, hold on. I have a mage armor that I think should just be—

[Mystical noise]

Suvi (Aabria)

Nah, it's off now. We're good.

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

Alright, great. I'm going to cast dispel magic.

Suvi (Aabria)

[Annoyed] Okay.

Aabria Iyengar

I want to check if this sounds like she is casting what she's saying.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Okay, give me an arcana check.

Aabria Iyengar

Natural 1.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You're a fuckin' first level wizard.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughing] Fuck!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
She starts doing some shit, and all of a sudden you realize, it's been a lot of running around Akham like, "What's up, you fuckin' hayseeds!"

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughing]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
"Wizard of the Citadel coming through!"

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You can cast first level spells.

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
So she's doing two third level spells—

Aabria Iyengar
Buh.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
—and you're like, that'd be sick one day!

[Aabria and Brennan laugh]

Aabria Iyengar
Unforch.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Unforch. She casts arcane sight, and then does a dispelling on you that feels sort of very—without a spell on you, there's no part of it that feels unpleasant, It just—

[Mystical reverberating bell sound]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
—little abjurational thing. And you can see, as an abjuror, her arcane sight is fine, but oh, baby, that dispel magic, that's got tons of extra mustard on it—

Aabria Iyengar
[Laugh] Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
—from whatever secret Citadel training she has. She says

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

Alright, yes, Steel will be here very briefly. What have you—so you've been traveling around Akham for a week and a half? Two weeks? For a long time.

Suvi (Aabria)

We fled from the other side of Akham and got to here. I knew that there was going to be enough of a presence of the Empire, that I could... Let everyone know that I was safe. But I did acquire friends, because I was worried that I'm being followed. It was only when I got here that I started telegraphing that I was here, in hopes that someone would hear.

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

I understand. Alright, so—yes. I understand you needed to keep a low profile, especially if you believed you were being hunted. It's good that you're here now. My understanding is that Steel is trying to get here as soon as possible, but is trying to reserve a traveling door to get here, because the one that is the most—there's one that goes to Silbry, but that's—

Suvi (Aabria)

Don't go—yeah.

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

That's on the other side of Akham. Alright, well, I'm very glad you're here. Are you alright staying at this Chantry? Do you want to be moved to the Governor's manor?

Suvi (Aabria)

Honestly...

Aabria Iyengar

Ah, man, as much as Suvi wants to go to the Governor's mansion because that's fancier...

Suvi (Aabria)

Maybe it is safest for everyone involved, if I keep my low profile here.

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

Of course. Listen, Morrow is so enamored with your presence here—

Suvi (Aabria)

Mm.

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

—that I'm sure he spent every one of his resources to feeding and protecting you rather—

Suvi (Aabria)

Truly.

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

—so you're safe as can be here. I'm going to return to the Governor's mansion to let Steel know that we spoke.

Suvi (Aabria)

Okay.

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

Do you—do you want to speak to her? She's on her way, I believe.

Suvi (Aabria)

Is she—is there any way to flag her off? I'm fine. We can—I'll be back soon.

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)
You want me to flag Steel off?

Suvi (Aabria)
No. No. No. Yes, but you can't. Eugh. No, just please let her know that... Things went left a little bit, but I'm okay, and have been investigating things—yeah, just—I don't know. You can just go, it's fine. I want to go too—you know what, no, I'm going to come with you. I'll come back for my companions in the morning. Let's go. We should go.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Galani nods.

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)
Yes. Come with me. We'll head over to the Governor's manor, I'll probably—we can speak to Steel briefly, and then we'll get you a nicer suite, and you can come back for your friends in the morning!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
So late at night, it's now roundabout midnight, you head off with Galani to the Governor's Mansion.

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah. I'll kick a note under Eursulon's door that says I'll be back in the morning.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Okay. Ame and Eursulon, anything from you that night?

Erika Ishii
I'm going to go to the library!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Cool. Ame goes to the library! What do you do there?

Erika Ishii
I would like to research more about the local folklore, and about the geography of the area.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Give me a religion check.

Erika Ishii
Dirty 21.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You find folklore.

[Riffling pages and the thud of a heavy tome]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
It looks like the folklore has kind of been—there are a lot of—the things that the wizards look the most concerned with, are more recent tall tales. Like in the last hundred years, right? "There's a beast out at sea, that we see, that whenever there's a huge shoal of fish we catch, we see this beast crest the waves!" And they describe, like, "A lion fish the size of a sailing ship!" Right?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You look for stuff that—nobody here appears to have made a connection, but you actually do find older folklore, about different witches, and druids, and spiritual leaders, here in Port Talon. And you find some of those books, and

there's, like, collected old folk tales, and faerie legends, legends of the Spirit World, from this place. And you see that there is a drawing of, back when the King of Storms, first gave three gifts to his son, Naram.

Erika Ishii
[Gasp]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
And you see, the man, who you saw in the statue, had the beautiful cloak and everything like that, as like a young prince, illustrated on the page. And you see this massive king of storm clouds, with this huge beard of clouds, and, handing down—you see it says

Brennan Lee Mulligan
[Echoing with mystical power] "And on the young lad's name day was he given three gifts from his father, the King of Storms. First, the king, he gave, a spear named Seacalmer, that the waves might ever be at the young lad's beck and call. And second, was he given, a cloak named Mistcaller, that the shrouding fog of the sea might ever hide his travel from the eyes of foes. And third, he gave him a sword named Wavebreaker."

Aabria Iyengar
[Gasp. Yelling] Shut up!

[Aabria and Erika gasp and wail in excitement]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You look at the illustration of Naram. He has seven fingers on his hand—

[Aabria and Erika continue to gasp shakily]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
—that he might ever strike down the spells and curses of his enemies.

[Ominous spiritual music fades away, replaced with Mission Impossible-esque heist music as an advertisement starts]

Erika Ishii
Hey, kid, it's me, Erika. I'm putting together a crew for a job and, I've already recruited a crack team of specialists. Lou Wilson is former racehorse, It's A Winner, Baby, both our muscle, and potential getaway vehicle. Aabria Iyengar is hacker and demolitions expert, Philip the Goat, who may or may not be the devil? And Brennan Lee Mulligan is finally in my world now. Playing Ruthie the hen, the sweetest grandma by day, and the most brutally efficient pickpocket and grease hen by night. Plus a handful of anxious sounding animals, driven by one incredibly intimidated first time game master: yours truly. The target? The Family Farms Incorporated Heritage Kettle Corn truck. One last big score. Get in, get that corn, get out. And that's where you come in. Join the crew for "A County Affair." A rollicking rambunctious two-parter heist using the Roll for Shoes RPG system. It's all going down Thursday, June 29th, at the Fireside and the World's Beyond Number Patreon. So how about it? You in?

[The tense heist music cuts out instantly as a goat bleats. Plucked violin and a cello come back to herald the return of World's Beyond Number.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
So Ame you—

Erika Ishii
[Gasp. Frantically] I slam the book shut, and I run down the hall, and I knock on Eursulon's door.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Well, we'll see what's going on, because we're going to cut back to, like, an hour and a half earlier before you're doing all that research.

Aabria Iyengar

Ohh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Eursulon, what are you doing?

Lou Wilson

I think Eursulon has, like, a decent amount of time just sitting and drinking, and staring at the ring, and the broken sword, and the ring, and the broken sword. And I think is going to watch Suvi slip the note under the door, see it, read it. And then is going to head out into the night. Destination? The Ace of Wands.

Aabria Iyengar

Ough.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Hell, yeah. So [Laughs] I have a question to ask you. Is there anything that—what do you do with the note Suvi left you?

Lou Wilson

I keep it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Cool. So! Ame. You arrive back banging on Eursulon's—

Erika Ishii

[Mimicks pounding on a door]

Ame (Erika)

[Whispering at various volumes] Eursulon. Eursulon! Eursulon. Eursulon.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Did you lock the door?

Lou Wilson

No. If anything, when you hit it would have just opened.

Ame (Erika)

Oh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The door opens.

Ame (Erika)

Oh, that's sinister!

Erika Ishii

I look in, and he's gone.

Ame (Erika)

Okay. Maybe he's with Suvi.

Erika Ishii

I go sprinting down the corridor again. I bang on Suvi's door.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Did Suvi lock the door or no?

Aabria Iyengar

Super locked. No one goes in my space.

Ame (Erika)

[Frantic whispering] Suvi! Suvi!! Okay, that's fair, that's fair, that's fair. Ok um.

Aabria Iyengar

[Wheezing laugh off mic]

Ame (Erika)

Okay, fox?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The fox went to go get fish slurry.

Aabria Iyengar

[Raucous laugh]

Erika Ishii

I take a little bell, and I put out—wait, can I do that? Okay. I take a little bell, and I use minor illusion—

[Tinny bell clangs]

Erika Ishii

—to make the sound travel with scent, and I go "ding-a-ding-a-ding-a-ling-a-ding!" And it smells like I got treats!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Incredible. We're going to cut from that to Eursulon. So, Eursulon, you head out into the night.

[Heavy footsteps, the sounds of the city.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Walking to the Ace of Wands. It's about—you know, in the hour and a half that Ame is studying, you make it all the way back up to the top of the city, near the witchfires. You can smell the witchfire smoke, and you see lights in the Ace of Wands. Do you go up to—you first of all see the statues of the fountain. You see Orima and Naram, and Naram's healed face.

Lou Wilson

I think Eursulon avoids—doesn't want anything to do with the statue. And I think even as he gets closer to the Ace of—even as he gets closer to the Ace of Wands, I think braces himself, to avoid acknowledging it—that it is there.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah.

Lou Wilson

I think if—the only—like, the witchfires remind him of the kudzu, and even that, he tries to block that scent from his mind.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You arrive at the door of the Ace of Wands. You see the familiar, beautiful, embossed title on the metallic plaque on the door.

[The sleazy Ace of Wands jazz starts. A heavy door thuds open, and the sounds of the crowd inside get louder]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The door opens wide, and you see Lila, the attendant.

Lila (Brennan)

Hello again. Welcome back!

Eursulon (Lou)

Mm. I need to speak to the Cudgel.

Lila (Brennan)

Ah! Would you mind waiting here in the foyer for one moment?

Eursulon (Lou)

Mhm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Are you doing anything to disguise your state of inebriation?

Lou Wilson

No.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You stand in the foyer. There's some seats nearby if you choose to sit.

Lou Wilson

I don't think—I think I just stand. I don't want—there's nothing comfortable about Eursulon being here. I want—this is one of the things we have to take care of before we're allowed to leave, so let's get it done.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

A little bit later, Lila comes back. Says

Lila (Brennan)

Right this way, sir.

Eursulon (Lou)

[Drunk mumble] Okay.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

She leads you up to that same card room, that sees the street corner. Seated in the room is the Cudgel. You see that there's two other kinds of muscle, kinda lookin' people behind him. A seat is pulled out. Lila sort of gestures to the seat.

Eursulon (Lou)

Well. We've—I'm not sure you saw. I'm not sure you heard. We did what you asked.

The Cudgel (Brennan)

Saw that. That's alright. Arleigh is going and getting the main man himself right now.

Eursulon (Lou)
Good. I'm done with this place.

The Cudgel (Brennan)
Making plans to leave Port Talon?

Eursulon (Lou)
Yes, as soon as possible.

The Cudgel (Brennan)
Fair enough. Would you care to wait here in privacy for Mr. Gallows, or do you want to avail yourself to the amenities out in the common room?

Eursulon (Lou)
[Throaty chuckle] Amenities.

The Cudgel (Brennan)
Lila. I'll let you know when Mr. Gallows has arrived. But we could see our friend out to the common room.

Lou Wilson
It's the mustachio'd man still here?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Yeah, for sure.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
And at nighttime, it's a very different vibe, this is not like—the vibe is no longer like a gentleman's club of like, "Aha! We're smoking and playing cards!" There's music, people are dancing. It's nice in here.

Aabria Iyengar
Ooh hoo hoo! Ooh hoo hoo hoo!

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Give me a constitution saving throw.

Lou Wilson
Okay! Oh, dirty 20!

Aabria Iyengar
Let's go!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You walk up to the bar man who turns to you, he's got his big old mustache.

Moustache Man (Brennan)
Back again!

Eursulon (Lou)
My friend!

Moustache Man (Brennan)

Welcome back, well what can I get for you?

Eursulon (Lou)

The same.

Moustache Man (Brennan)

Ha ha ha! Line 'em up!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you see he—he puts a drink in front of you. Tastes really good. What is the attitude you are taking here at the bar, towards—what is your body language communicating, as you sit here and drink at the bar?

Lou Wilson

I think there's a—there's almost like a focus in the—in the drinking. That's what this moment is about. I just—I'd like—there's almost a shift in that moment where Eursulon is like, the man is coming. That's like—that's it, we're doing it, we're getting out of here. So there's a focus in this moment on the drinking, because as I'm drinking, I think I'm starting to actually feel the relief that's—we're gonna get out of here. This is over. We're done. We're done in Port Talon.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So everyone just sees this hulking figure, this like, massive man at the bar who does not look ONE time, at any of the beautiful people, or happy dancers, or anyone involved, and just focuses on his drinking. The bar man lines up a couple of shots for you, and this time, you see, does not even ask for payment, it looks like someone has spoken to him and said that you will drink for free while you are here.

Lou Wilson

Then, I believe Eursulon, I think, eventually stops. I think the first two are, like, shot.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Mhm.

Lou Wilson

And then, I think after that is just, kind of savoring, and maybe occasionally looking at the door for—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Probably, honestly just like, the first time you look at the door, is right when Arleigh Price walks in, the familiar woman who has like, a shock of hair going back, and has the black vest. She looks, you know, sort of dressed in trousers, and a vest, kind of like a gambler.

Aabria Iyengar

Ah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Or like—

Erika Ishii

Mmm!

Aabria Iyengar

I love her!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—she says

Arleigh Price (Brennan)
Sir. We're ready.

Eursulon (Lou)
(Drunkenly) Alright, it's about time. It's about time.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
She leads you back to the room. And—do you still have the copper ring on, by the way?

Lou Wilson
I still have the copper ring, not the coral one.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
So even, fuckin' sauced, you're a big guy. Your—you know, your body is still of another world, so you still have your alertness even as you feel a little bit of swaying on your feet. You walk into a room that you know is filled with gangsters. And as you walk in, you see Will Gallows seated there. there's about six guys behind him, the Cudgel is seated there as well. He smiles, and you see, a sword, in a scabbard, that you carried, for many years.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Seven fingers curled into a fist in the pommel. A pattern of waves, in the grain of the steel along the blade and fuller. Will looks up at you, and says

Will Gallows (Brennan)
I have to say, I thought it would take a lot longer.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
And he holds up a wanted poster for Guild Mage Pane.

Eursulon (Lou)
Well, you asked the right people, to handle the job.

Will Gallows (Brennan)
Have a drink with me, friend. One last one for the road.

Eursulon (Lou)
Yes, and then I—then I will be done with this place, and all the people who live here.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
He nods. You see that the Cudgel goes off to get drinks for you. Arleigh kind of stands, with her hands folded, behind Will. Will says

[Will Gallows dark piano theme starts up.]

Will Gallows (Brennan)
What do I call you, friend?

Eursulon (Lou)
You can call me Bear.

Will Gallows (Brennan)
Bear? It's an apt name, you're about the damn size of one, look atcha.

[Eursulon and Will Gallows laugh]

Eursulon (Lou)

I am.

Will Gallows (Brennan)

Now, I don't see much use in a blade like this. Lots of magical blades come in back and forth, but ultimately, blades on a battlefield, it's an anachronism, this is a... A collection piece. Not something I could actually make any serious profit off of, so I'm happy to part with it. But curiosity's sake, why did you and your friends want it so badly?

Eursulon (Lou)

My friend Ame. It is of value to her. And it was of value to me once.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Value, because you knew a buyer for it or...?

Lou Wilson

No, no, it's a... It was a gift.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Raises his eyebrows.

Will Gallows (Brennan)

A gift? Well then. You felt completely fine burning a Guild Mage of the Imperium, for a sword with nothing but sentimental value?

Eursulon (Lou)

Hoh. He burned himself.

Will Gallows (Brennan)

Heh.

Lou Wilson

At least that's what a fox told me.

Will Gallows (Brennan)

[Deep throaty laughter]

Erika Ishii

[Laughing]

Will Gallows (Brennan)

Look, I can't blame anyone for having a belly full of Port Talon, it's a grimy city. But I'll say this. If you have some attachment to the Witch and Wizard you walked in with, I won't blame you for following them out. But if you want to make serious money, and live well, I can always use men on my team that get things done.

Eursulon (Lou)

Is that a... An offer?

Will Gallows (Brennan)

I asked around a little bit, about Finley, the one you sold the sword to.

Eursulon (Lou)

Yes.

Will Gallows (Brennan)

Last time you were in town, I think you were on the bottom of the deck. You could get shuffled, quite near the top this time.

Eursulon (Lou)

It's a kind offer, from an... Important man. But your city. It makes me sick.

Will Gallows (Brennan)

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see he takes a kind of obscene pride in that. Go ahead and give me persuasion with advantage.

Lou Wilson

Natural 20.

Erika Ishii

YES!

Erika Ishii

YEAH!!!

[Aabria and Erika scream with joy]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

He smiles a wide smile.

Will Gallows (Brennan)

Love an honest man.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

He hands the sword to you, and says

Will Gallows (Brennan)

If you ever reconsider, know that my door is open, and... And I want to ensure that I see you again, because I want to make this offer again, in some time.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

He reaches into the inner pocket of his beautiful, satin-lined coat. In the interior pocket, he pulls out a bit of twine, that looks like the strings of a rope, that has been taken apart.

Lou Wilson

I take it.

Eursulon (Lou)

What is this, friend?

Will Gallows (Brennan)

That's a favor. Call it in when you like.

Lou Wilson

I like, delicately, the best I can, kind of roll it, and tuck it into my pocket and I extend out my hand.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

An ice cold hand—

Erika Ishii
[Gasp]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
—shakes yours. He smiles, and he says

Brennan Lee Mulligan
A pleasure, Bear. Take care of that string. I only have as much as they left around my neck.

Aabria Iyengar
FUCK!!!

Erika Ishii
[Shaky gasps] we're cool, we're cool, we're cool.

Aabria Iyengar
It's cool and we're normal.

Lou Wilson
We're cool, everyone's cool.

Erika Ishii
Everybody be cool.

Aabria Iyengar
Sometimes he just says cool shit, and we get to react. We're allowed to. I'm allowed to.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
[Laughing] Oh, it makes me feel so good—

Aabria Iyengar
FUCK!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
—when we break the narrative just a—

Aabria Iyengar
THIS—

Lou Wilson
We sometimes have to break the narrative, for a good line, you know.

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah!

Erika Ishii
This fucks so this fuck so HARD-UH.

Aabria Iyengar
THIS FUCKS SO HARD!! Also. Hey, ask him if he's single and, like, what he thinks of us.

Lou Wilson
Well, that's the main reason I wanted to come alone—

Aabria Iyengar

Thank you so—[Breaks off laughing]

Lou Wilson

—it was just so that no one—we didn't have to make too many flirtation checks.

Aabria Iyengar

Shoot ya shots!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you walk with Wavebreaker.

Eursulon (Lou)

Ah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And he smiles, and claps you on the back. You have truly—there's no way for a gangster to make sense or work—if you ask people to do crazy, dangerous shit, for a price, and they do it same day, you gotta reward that shit.

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

He didn't want the sword anyway! He hands you the sword, he goes,

Will Gallows (Brennan)

Alright. Take care, Bear. I'll see you around.

Eursulon (Lou)

Yeah. Maybe... One more?

Will Gallows (Brennan)

[Hearty laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

One more. Give me a constitution save!

Aabria Iyengar

Oh buddy!

Erika Ishii

Oh, fuck me!

Lou Wilson

That's 17.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Hell, yeah! You put another one in him, he takes one down, and you stumble out of there, buzzed, and with the sword you sold, in a dark, dark place many years ago, once again in your hands.

Lou Wilson

Mm.

[Door shuts]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

What's going on with Eursulon, as you walk—and where do you head to, as you walk through the city streets?

[Sounds of a city at night. A dog barks in the distance.]

Lou Wilson

I think now, Eursulon is now like, crested, I think, into like a—into like a drunken—he's happy drunk at this point, I think there's—he feels good, and accomplished, and admired. And he knows that—I think the thought of Ame's desire to stay here, is now—has washed away with the drink, and it's now just we have Wavebreaker. I did it. I was useful. I got the sword. I helped get the sword. And now—I think, if anything, he's almost like merrily walking back to the Chantry, knowing that at daybreak, and when Suvi returns, they'll be on their way.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You head back to the Chantry. And we're going to cut over to the Governor's—

Aabria Iyengar

Yay!!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—the Governor's mansion.

[Pounding Imperial drums.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You arrive at the Governor's mansion. Palatial. Galani moves you through guards, quickly. This place, unlike the Chantry, doesn't have a mystical veneer, it is all ostentatious.

Aabria Iyengar

Mm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Beautiful murals of important historical Imperial victories, huge portraits, gilded colonnades, everything here is wealth, glory, Empire. And you arrive in incredibly ostentatious—like, four post canopy bed! Deep red silks! All of—you know, the walls are these murals and frescoes, and like, big white vases filled with blooming flowers! Lots of color and beauty everywhere. And Galani takes you up to a 15 and a half foot tall oval mirror, that is framed in gilded wood, and walks up to the mirror, and says

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)

I can try for her right now if you'd like?

Suvi (Aabria)

Yes, thank you.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

She touches the mirror. You see it ripple.

[Crystal clear ring and reverberating magical noise]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Roll a little luck check for me in front of the board. You will only be saved on a one through four.

Aabria Iyengar

1 through 4?

Lou Wilson
Saved?

Aabria Iyengar
18!

Lou Wilson
Saved?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Saved.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laugh]

Lou Wilson
From what?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You see [thrumming noise] the mirror moves and, appearing on the other side, you see that there is, sort of, shapes swimming into focus, while you can hear a muffled [murmuring nonsense] The shape comes to, you see other armored wizards on the other side, war staves on their back. These are not Matchsticks. And you see Steel, in full armor look and say

Steel (Brennan)
Galani I—Suvi!

Suvi (Aabria)
[Sheepishly] Hi.

Steel (Brennan)
Abjuror Galani, I apologize for the rudeness. Could you see yourself out of the room for a moment.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Galani—

Aabria Iyengar
I turn to her and be like

Suvi (Aabria)
[Whispering] You could stay. You can stay. It's fine.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Galani says

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)
Absolutely, Sword of the Tower.

Suvi (Aabria)
[Frantic whisper] No! You can stay!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Turns and walks.

Erika Ishii
Ooooh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Steel looks at you and says

Steel (Brennan)
[Echoing, yelling] Where in all of the firmament, across the wide world of Umora have you been?

Suvi (Aabria)
[Sigh] It's also good to see you. I have been making my way, as fast as I can, and as safely as I can, to where the Empire's touch could reach, so I could contact you. Things... I, oh god.

Steel (Brennan)
Why did I hear rumors that you had been in Port Talon for over a day, before contacting me? How urgent was your desire to reach me?

Suvi (Aabria)
What do you mean over—?

Steel (Brennan)
And how CLOUDED do you imagine my eyes are, here in the Citadel?

Suvi (Aabria)
Uhhh. It was... A busy day. And I'm here, and everything's fine. And we should not be yelling, because your voice is carrying in this very large room.

Steel (Brennan)
Is there anyone else in the very large room?

Suvi (Aabria)
Yes. No, no, no. There's not. I'm sorry. I. Mm. [Clears throat]

Steel (Brennan)
I am glad you are alive. Now, the last time we spoke, I said "No rush in getting back to me. Take your time." Because I was sending you to see Grandmother Wren, who I had heard was deathly ill. So I said, "Oh, I want to give her a day, or two, to settle in." It's been weeks, Suvi. It's been weeks.

Suvi (Aabria)
Well, um, there's—you've got people in your room, right?

Steel (Brennan)
Oh, yes.

Suvi (Aabria)
Yeah. Okay. Uh, well—

Steel (Brennan)
Do you want me to ask them to leave?

Suvi (Aabria)
[Uncertainly] No. No? Yes!

Steel (Brennan)
Everyone, please exit.

Suvi (Aabria)
Cool.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You see that the soldiers leave. She looks at you and says

Steel (Brennan)
So don't trouble yourself, because I'm on my way.

Suvi (Aabria)
No, it's fine, I—

Steel (Brennan)
[Sternly] I'm on my way.

Suvi (Aabria)
You—

Steel (Brennan)
Suverin! I'm on my way.

Aabria Iyengar
I think with the first—she has not—she very rarely hears her WHOLE first name, ever said, and she immediately freezes.

Steel (Brennan)
Do you think it might have been difficult for me? Sending you back to Silbry? Do you think there might have been anything challenging for me, about wondering what might have happened to you on that island? Do you think that there is any part of me, that might have been worried or concerned?

Suvi (Aabria)
I'm sorry. An Honored Friend appeared, when Grandmother Wren died.

Steel (Brennan)
I am so sorry, Suvi.

Suvi (Aabria)
My mirror was disenchanting. We had one more bit of business. Something's wrong with Ame, I thought I could handle it quickly. It took more time. I've been attacked. I'm okay.

Steel (Brennan)
Oh, heavens! Ahh!

Suvi (Aabria)
I took care of it. It's fine. It's fine.

Steel (Brennan)
Oh, no. Oh, ohh.

Suvi (Aabria)
It's fine.

Steel (Brennan)
This is my worst nightmare.

Suvi (Aabria)

No, it's okay! I took care of it! I just needed to fly a little quietly when I finally got here. I didn't—I needed to make sure it didn't look like I was desperate, when I appeared at the Chantry.

Steel (Brennan)

Why would you have worried about appearing any kind of way? What have I ever communicated about the Imperium to you that would have made you—[Deep sigh] I trust you. I trust you, Suvi. You tell me that you made your way as fast as possible, to someone that you knew could reach me, I'll believe you. I'll believe that that's the truth if you ask me to. But a part of me worries that maybe, you took matters into your own hands, to prove something, that no one has ever doubted. You think we doubt you, and we don't. But there's something that you're trying to demonstrate, and I don't know why.

Suvi (Aabria)

[Crying] Um. Uh. I... Promise. I did what I thought was best. I wanted to handle this quickly. It's all a lot, but I have it under control. And I'm sorry I didn't reach out sooner. It's scary out here and I didn't want to show anyone I was scared. Even you... I love you.

Steel (Brennan)

I'm glad you're safe. [Deep sigh] Alright, I'm still on my way. I should be there—we can't use the traveling door in Silbry right now, so I'm going to fly.

Suvi (Aabria)

Why?

Steel (Brennan)

I'll be there in two or three days.

Suvi (Aabria)

Sorry. Back it up. One, why can't you use the gate? Two, why are you flying? Just—What are you—Why? I'm fine. I'm fine. I can come back soon.

Steel (Brennan)

All is well. And I'm going to ask you, as a favor, to remain in Port Talon, under Galani's care. It is very lucky that one of the Citadel's Abjurors is there to protect you.

Suvi (Aabria)

She's, like, three years older than me—

Steel (Brennan)

And in that three years has accomplished a tremendous amount.

Suvi (Aabria)

Okay, I—Mm. Mm. Mm. You're right.

Steel (Brennan)

So please see yourself under Galani's care. The—you said—let me understand, Grandmother Wren has died. You said an Honored Friend appeared. Where did they appear?

Suvi (Aabria)

At her door.

Steel (Brennan)

Do you have any description of this Honored Friend? Did you let them in?

Suvi (Aabria)

No. Okay. We've all dealt with Honored Friends, we know how to handle them. Ame, the Witch of Toma now, delayed him for a year. He had so many titles, but the one I remember is the Man in Black.

Steel (Brennan)

Hmm. Man in Black. The King of... Hmm. And. Did he attempt to enter?

Suvi (Aabria)

Yes.

Steel (Brennan)

What prevented him from entering.

Suvi (Aabria)

The cottage? Ame.

Steel (Brennan)

You said Ame is now the Witch of Toma?

Suvi (Aabria)

Yes.

Steel (Brennan)

You entered the house. Were you able to give either the book or the scroll to Grandmother Wren before she passed?

Suvi (Aabria)

Yes, technically, but it was—she didn't get to really look at it, before...

Steel (Brennan)

But she—so you came, on the day.

Suvi (Aabria)

Yeah.

Steel (Brennan)

I understand. [Deep sigh] So an Honored Friend was repelled by Ame, so we can assume that Ame did not just STAY in the house, but has truly inherited it.

Suvi (Aabria)

Yes, oh—the house it like, listens to her—the cottage was like, made hers, it was very cool. Oh my gosh. So she was there—and then there's like—there's water under—and then there was, like—UGH it was—agh, it was very cool. Witches. Man.

Steel (Brennan)

[Carefully] They are um. Uh. So... Profound.

Suvi (Aabria)

Yeah.

Steel (Brennan)

And move in ways that cannot be predicted. That is true.

Aabria Iyengar

That is real true.

Erika Ishii
Smash cut.

Ame (Erika)
Pspsp, fox fox fox fox fox fox, pspspspspsp!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Fox fox fox!

Ame (Erika)
Fox fox fox fox fox!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You're just running around looking for the fox wherever you can find it.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughing]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
[Powerfully] The power of witches! "Has anyone seen my fox?" Steel looks at you and says

Steel (Brennan)
Very well. Alright. Did anything else happen of note, around the arrival of that Honored Friend, or around Grandmother Wren's passing?

Suvi (Aabria)
Uh. Uh, there's a big—okay. Alright, full disclosure. [Under her breath] I was going to take care of this and it was going to be fine. [Normal volume] As Grandmother Wren was passing, she and Ame were talking about information, but Ame didn't remember it, and Grandmother Wren was like, "Oh, you've been cursed to not remember. Don't worry. I have an object that will allow you to remember." But I kind of, when I was SIX—so that's not on me—gave away that object, to my friend.

Aabria Iyengar
Have I told Steel about Eursulon?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
That's up to you.

Erika Ishii
[Gasp]

Aabria Iyengar
A wizard is known by their secrets. I don't think I gave him up.

Suvi (Aabria)
I gave it to a friend before I leave—I left, and then we went and found him to go get the item, but the item was gone, and it was here in Port Talon, and so we had to go find the item. And then, we're about to get it back, so—and then we'll finish the curse on Ame, so she can remember what she needs to remember, so she can be a very good witch in Toma, and then I will come home, and I will have done right by my friends and can return with, honestly, too much knowledge of how the Empire works. It's bad here on the Fringes, and I do not enjoy it.

Steel (Brennan)
What do you mean, it's bad on the fringes?

Suvi (Aabria)

What? We were in a boat, and I almost got killed by—

Steel (Brennan)

Yes, yes I understand.

Suvi (Aabria)

—like a very nice captain. But I did kill it, it was actually incredible—actually, that wasn't hard or bad. That was fine for me. But uh—ugh, Guild Mage Morrow is like, doing this thing, and he's like, "This is my chance. I could be—" like he didn't get his ass drummed out of the Citadel because—but he caught an Honored Friend. There's a big thing.

Steel (Brennan)

What!?

Suvi (Aabria)

Yeah!

Steel (Brennan)

What do you mean he caught an Honored Friend? Like a minor spirit?

Suvi (Aabria)

Noooo! Like a big one.

Steel (Brennan)

Suvi.

Suvi (Aabria)

Yeah.

Steel (Brennan)

You've been looking for trust. You've been looking for responsibility.

Suvi (Aabria)

Yeah.

Steel (Brennan)

Keep. It. Locked down. In Port Talon until I arrive. Keep Guild Mage Morrow under your thumb. Do not let anything advance with whatever he is doing, if he has been meddling with any of the Honored Friends. You said that you gave an item to a friend, that had—given it away—what, that you—that it was in Port Talon.

Suvi (Aabria)

Yeah.

Steel (Brennan)

And that it is going to interact with a curse that is currently on Ame?

Suvi (Aabria)

Yes.

Steel (Brennan)

Morrow, the Honored Friend, Ame, the curse, the thing that can break the curse, all of it is on ice until I get there. Do you understand?

[Long pause filled with pounding drums]

Suvi (Aabria)
Yes, I understand.

Steel (Brennan)
Brilliant. I will see you in two to three days. I am trusting you with this.

Suvi (Aabria)
I understand.

Steel (Brennan)
I love you.

Suvi (Aabria)
I love you. I'm sorry.

Steel (Brennan)
When I was your age, I was a nightmare. You have made me furious. And all the best always do.

Suvi (Aabria)
[Sigh, sniffle]

Steel (Brennan)
On ice. Port Talon. Three days. You can do it?

Suvi (Aabria)
Of course.

Steel (Brennan)
Alright. I will see you soon, my love. Be well.

Suvi (Aabria)
Okay.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
The mirror fades.

Suvi (Aabria)
[Sigh, collecting herself. Calling out] Galani!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
[Laugh] You hear a stumble of someone who's been little rascalsing at the door.

[Aabria and Erika cackle]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
"What the fuck is going on in there?" Galani opens and says

Suvi (Aabria)
Yeah?

Abjuror Galani (Brennan)
I think they have flavored ice downstairs, you want a flavored ice?

Suvi (Aabria)
Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
We're going to cut back over to—

Aabria Iyengar
[Cackle]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
—Ame.

Ame (Erika)
Pspspspsp.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
We're going to cut over to Ame. Ame. You do your illusion. You can't find the fox anywhere, in the chantry.

Ame (Erika)
Son of a bitch. Little. Hrng. Gah. Pure id. Gyah.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laugh]

Erika Ishii
I try to reach him through telepathy. I figured the little scent illusion would get him, but I can only do telepathy within a hundred feet.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Yeah.

Erika Ishii
So as I sprint around the corridors.

Ame (Erika)
Fox. Fox.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
He's farther than a hundred feet.

Ame (Erika)
Wh—God. [Frustrated sigh]

Erika Ishii
I go back to my room.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Okay, you go back to your room.

Erika Ishii
Do I see a note from Suvi?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You don't see a note from Suvi's.

Aabria Iyengar
I just left one for Eursulon, I assumed you were staying together!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So you don't see a note. All your friends are gone. Your fox is gone.

[Aabria and Lou laugh]

Ame (Erika)

[Grumbling]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You've just discovered this incredible thing. So you're just speaking to him telepathically at first.

Erika Ishii

Yes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

What do you say to him telepathically?

Ame (Erika)

[Telepathic echo] Hey.

The Fox (Brennan)

Hey!

Ame (Erika)

Hey I got some good treats! Where are you?

The Fox (Brennan)

Ahh. Oh, you know what? I'll get 'em later.

Erika Ishii

[Suspiciously] Wait a minute. You've never delayed gratification.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Ame (Erika)

What are you doing—where are you?

The Fox (Brennan)

Maybe I'm growing.

Ame (Erika)

Where are you?

The Fox (Brennan)

I'm growing as a person.

Ame (Erika)

[Scoffing laugh] No, hah, you're not a person! Where are you?

The Fox (Brennan)

[Defensively] I am a person!

Ame (Erika)
[Annoyed] Agh, where are you??

The Fox (Brennan)
I don't know!

Ame (Erika)
Alright, just—I'm comin' in.

Erika Ishii
I blink into familiar vision.

Lou Wilson
I'm coming in!

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughing]

Erika Ishii
I'm comin' in!

[Magic ringing, and a sudden burst of noise]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
First thing is you hear [murmuring padding footsteps] running little fox paws [the same footstep noises] First you think you got it wrong, because you can't see anything, but then you realize it's just so dark. Suddenly [Fwoosh] enormous green fire.

Erika Ishii
[Gasp]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Smoke. The air is thick with smoke, and obscured. [Running noises]

Ame (Erika)
Oh no no no no!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You see the fox, through his eyes, and through his ears you hear roaring flames. And you hear him

The Fox (Brennan)
[Choking cough]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
as he rushes through choked fields of ash, and soot, and fire. And you see his head turn back around, look at a massive wall.

Erika Ishii
[Gasp]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
It is the other side of the wall of Port Talon.

[Dramatic horn sting]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
As he rushes through the witch fires outside.

The Fox (Brennan)
Ahh, yeah, I'm not delaying gratification, I never do that.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughing]

[Ring of energy as the familiar vision ends]

Ame (Erika)
[Gasping breaths]

Erika Ishii
I snap back out, into my room. I, uh, grab some things. I—okay um—Oh, God. I go over to Suvi's door and look.

Ame (Erika)
Suvi? Suvi? Suvi!?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Nothing.

Erika Ishii
I kick it in.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Boom!

Aabria Iyengar
Oh, you're so strong now!

[Aabria, Brennan, and Erika laugh]

Lou Wilson
Oh, that's right.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
That's right! Give me athletics. Give me athletics.

Lou Wilson
Quads, absolutely—

Aabria Iyengar
Oh my god!

Lou Wilson
—fucking rippling!

Aabria Iyengar
Her entire posterior chain fires.

Lou Wilson
Exactly.

Erika Ishii
Oh, that is a natural 20!

Aabria Iyengar
YES!!

Erika Ishii
The door explodes open in splinters.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
So fucking strong!

Lou Wilson
This is definitely a kink, right?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Yes. [Laughs]

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah, this is for a lot of people.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You see Suvi's room—

Erika Ishii
I'm still wearing that little lolita dress, too?

Lou Wilson
Oh, exactly. That's the kink part.

Ame (Erika)
[Cackling]

Aabria Iyengar
Ame's in her brolita era.

Erika Ishii
[Laughing]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Incredible. Brolita!

Lou Wilson
[In unison] Brolita!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
So you—

Erika Ishii
I—

Brennan Lee Mulligan
—kick the door in.

Erika Ishii

—kick the door in! It explodes in splinters!

[Door exploding noise]

Erika Ishii

I smooth my little ruffled petticoats and I go.

Erika Ishii

[Frantically] Suvi! Wavebreaker is Naram's sword, and I can't find my fox, and Eursulon is gone. [Pause] Suvi?

[Catches breath]

Erika Ishii

Is there anything there, that gives any indication of where she's been?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Did you leave the note in the locked room?

Aabria Iyengar

I kicked the note under Eursulon's door.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Oh right.

Aabria Iyengar

He has it in his pocket. But you would see like a perfectly ordered bed.

Ame (Erika)

Ech.

Aabria Iyengar

And the most important things she keeps on her, like her spell book, are like gone, so.

Ame (Erika)

Right. She's out. Okay.

Erika Ishii

I'm going to um—go around, ask around, if anybody's seen Suvi, same time doing a survival check to try and track. Is there any indication of where she might have gone?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Give me a survival check.

Erika Ishii

It's a Nat 1.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You don't know how to track in a big city like this.

Erika Ishii

Oh, god. It's all—it's the smoke and the—ugh.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Your friends are gone. And your little fox is on the other side of a massive wall, in a landscape choked by witchfires and raging kudzu.

Lou Wilson
And he's got 40 HP, right?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
He has 2 hit points.

Lou Wilson
Oh! Still?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Still.

Lou Wilson
Can we homebrew that?

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
No, we cannot.

Lou Wilson
Come on-uh!

Erika Ishii
I scrawl a note. I grab all of my gear that I can.

[Jangling as she gathers her gear]

Erika Ishii
And I say to the fox, through my mind

Erika Ishii
[Echoing, frustrated] I am coming for you, you little asshole, I'm going to mitigate your ass! UGH!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Hehehehehe! [Sing-song] I'm going to make you do what you wanted to do!

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughing]

Erika Ishii
[Laughing] I love you!

Erika Ishii
And then I start taking off, towards him.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Hell, yeah.

Lou Wilson
Thundering steps!

Erika Ishii
Yeah!

Lou Wilson
Massive quads!

Erika Ishii
[Laughs]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
And that's where we're going to end this episode!

[Everyone cheers. A waltz of strings, bowed and plucked, underscore the credits]

Taylor Moore
That was Lou Wilson as Eursulon, Erika Ishii as Ame, Aabria Iyengar as Suvi, and Brennan Lee Mulligan as Everyone and Everything Else. Worlds Beyond Number is edited, designed, and scored, by Taylor Moore at Fortunate Horse, with additional sound design by Michael Ghelfi Studios. For even more like this, join us on our Patreon. We'll see you there.

[Waltz fades out]