

# Worlds Beyond Number

Fireside Chat: Episode 011 - Episode 11 "Promises Promises"

Final Version

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

Erika Ishii

Ooh!

Lou Wilson

Not bad!

Erika Ishii

I feel like that was really good!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Molto bene! [Italian: "very good"]

Erika Ishii

Molto bene! Actually, I'm gonna keep track of the time right now, because we want like an hour, maybe a little more.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Mhm mhm mhm.

Erika Ishii

Cool. Cool cool cool.

Aabria Iyengar

I wanna learn Italian so I can talk to Lou all the time.

Lou Wilson

Please, parlo Italo. [Italian: ≈ "I speak Italian"] Parlo Italo with me. It's called Italo.

Erika Ishii

Italo?

Lou Wilson

Us, in the know.

Erika Ishii

Che cosa?! [Italian: "What?!"]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Tengo una conversación grande con mi amiga hoy de su madre y todo el tiempo hable en español.

[Spanish: ≈ "I had a big conversation with my friend's mom and I spoke Spanish the entire time."]

Aabria Iyengar

[Gasp]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Sí. [Spanish: "Yes"]

Aabria Iyengar

That's really cute!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Something Spanish] estoy orgulloso de mi Duolingo, y Aabria... [Spanish: "[Something] I'm proud of my Duolingo, and Aabria..."]

Aabria Iyengar

Hi, yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Tiene un ganó de dos días? Tres días? [Spanish: ≈ "Has a two day streak? Three days?"]

Aabria Iyengar

I'm sorry, I'm—I think I'm five days deep, sir.

Erika Ishii

What are you learning!

Aabria Iyengar

You put some respect on my name.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Aabria sent me a thing that was like—Aabria sent me a text being like, "Comin' for the throne, motherfucker," with a two day streak, and I'm in the top 1% of Global Duolingo users. I have like a 778 day streak.

[Everyone laughs]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Aabria was like, "Watch your neck, you bitch."

Aabria Iyengar

I'm coming for you.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
"I'm gonna kill your ass."

Erika Ishii  
Have you ever frozen a streak, Brennan? Have you ever had to freeze a streak? Or has it been all genuine.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Yes, yes yes yes.

Erika Ishii  
Okay.

Aabria Iyengar  
He's got like four months of streak freeze saved up.

Erika Ishii  
[Gasp] Wow.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
I've gone thousands of dollars into debt to Duolingo, to freeze my streak.

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Erika Ishii  
"That owl—"

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
I started my 700—

Erika Ishii  
"I owe that owl so much money!"

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
[Sadly] I know.

Aabria Iyengar  
Brennan, I will say, I've now started—whenever I feel like I need to say something on social media, I just go do Duolingo till it passes.

[Music from a phone]

Aabria Iyengar  
I've racked up almost 1000 XP today.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
[Gasp] Let's fucking go!

Aabria Iyengar  
It was wild!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Let's fucking go.

Erika Ishii  
So—okay, so—but that's the thing is, you rack up a ton of XP all at once for the first couple of like—for, first week or so, and then, it just sort of devolves into a trudge.

Aabria Iyengar  
I mean there's a bunch of—

Erika Ishii  
A trudge!

Aabria Iyengar  
I've got Super Duolingo, so it's got a bunch of stupid shit, and bells and whistles—

Erika Ishii  
Oh that's nice.

Aabria Iyengar  
—that make me continue to want to do it. But, yeah, today was just like, huh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Yeah, use the casino rules—use all the things they use to design hurtful social media algorithms, to make me learn Spanish, that's awesome.

Aabria Iyengar  
Yeah!

Erika Ishii  
I know! That's the thing—

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
I want to be in the learning casino!

Erika Ishii

It's so true! I just like—I had no measurable signs of success, or merit, when I was learning Japanese on my own, but now I have a little owl that gets happy for me, and a little me that looks like—you know, that will talk to me in Japanese. And, it's great. It's great, and I'm addicted.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Aabria, you completed the July challenge! Congratulations!

Aabria Iyengar

[Cackle]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you did more than ten lessons in a day!

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Erika Ishii

Hello everyone, and welcome to this episode of the Fireside, Episode 11, "Promises Promises." Sponsored by Duolingo. It's not.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Erika Ishii

We're not. We're not. But Duo the Owl, if you're listening: call us! I'm Erika Ishii!

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughing] I'm Aabria Iyengar

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Me llamo Brennan Lee Mulligan.

Aabria Iyengar

Aw, shit!

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

And I'm Adonis Gunz.

[Everyone laughs]

Aabria Iyengar

Is it Gunz with a Z?

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Yes, it is.

Aabria Iyengar

Fuck. New favorite. Above reproach. Whatever you want I'm in.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

There's a palpable energy—

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Aw, thank you.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

There's a palpable energy in the studio today, with Adonis here, I'm not gonna lie.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Yeah, I'm not wearing a shirt, but I'm excited to do the podcast. And to talk about the episode.

Erika Ishii

He's not wearing a shirt, and we're ALL excited for him to do the podcast and talk about the episode! In this episode, it opened up with the dialogue with Orima and our three heroes. Negotiations were made, and Eursulon volunteered to wield Wavebreaker, and move closer to his regaining honor. It was really lovely.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Hey, it was that, or get torn apart when we attempted to exit the building. So, you know. We chose honor.

Erika Ishii

I think—it went really well, I think. And I think Suvi had no good, very bad day! Just the whole entirety of that episode, and it was a beautiful thing to watch.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

[Chuckle]

Aabria Iyengar

Bold of you to think that that was the beginning of my bad day.

Erika Ishii

[Laugh]

Aabria Iyengar

And it didn't begin with 15 foot Other Mother dragging me to hell, and then me immediately going out to make things worse. But yes, I've never been SOOO betrayed by dice.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)  
[Phew]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
[Laugh]

Aabria Iyengar  
That was very cool. Did you guys have a nice episode? Because I don't remember it.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)  
[Chuckle]

Erika Ishii  
It was great!

Aabria Iyengar  
I've rage, blacked-out, forgotten it.

Erika Ishii  
I cleaned a little temple, and I became—Ame became NOT an Apprentice any longer!

Aabria Iyengar  
Yeah!

Erika Ishii  
Also, we saw a little bit of Grandma Wren's magic, and we wonder, we wonder—the question was posed, if she's dead, then why is her magic still holding strong?

Aabria Iyengar  
I wish I could have answered that for you, but that was something that I had to try to figure out with my dice rolls!

[Aabria, Adonis, and Erika laugh]

Aabria Iyengar  
So there's no way to know!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Oh my god, it's so—as a DM, it's so brutal when a player is just comin' up—but, I think, at a certain point it did prompt a moment of being like, the dice are contributing, and what they want is ass.

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

They want you to feel bad. So it's like, there's always something fun—even this many years of playing, you always learn new things about how to play games with your friends. And being in that losing streak, and being like, "Okay, this is raw as hell, because there's cognitive dissonance, Suvi is brilliant, why aren't things working?" And so you go like, "Well stop. Instead of just railing against this, what does this moment actually represent?" And going into Suvi's, like, deeper knowledge about, "Why am I not getting a grip on this wall? Why am I not grabbing onto something?" I think it was really interesting, and I think it was, much to your credit, Aabria, to like. Make the failure part of Suvi's emotional state, in a way that goes like, "Yeah, she cannot—not only are the failures compounding, but also here's why this makes sense? Here's what makes sense about this."

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It was really lovely. I thought you did an excellent job. You failed beautifully!

Aabria Iyengar

[Crying] Thank you.

Erika Ishii

I was actually talking with somebody just yesterday about how in Dungeons & Dragons, it feels bad to roll badly, a lot of times, or that's—the instinct, especially new player instinct, is to feel bad, or feel like a DM is saying no to them and their story if they roll poorly. But, in contrast we saw Aabria just absolutely—like, we learned so much about Suvi, and everything had so much weight to it, and it just really made it—I mean, you just made all of those terrible roles count! Yeah!

Aabria Iyengar

Thanks!

Erika Ishii

It's so great. It's such a great—

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

[Chuckle]

Erika Ishii

—sorry, it's so good! I just—I'm obsessed with you!! I was screaming!!!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It is just so funny, just using the word terrible is just so—because, you're saying these things, and you're like "And what was so brilliant, about when you fucking ate shit. What was so—"



Erika Ishii

Yeah!

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

"When you fuckin' couldn't make it happen, what was so artful, and—"

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Erika Ishii

Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

There's just something in this episode that is so funny to talk about. It's true!

Erika Ishii

But, like, I'm obsessed—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

But listen, it's easy to succeed—

Erika Ishii

There's—and the things that you would say, and the full arc of the meltdown over the entire episode, just had me in stitches, like that one point, you said, [Mock crying] "They don't know who I am, and I don't have any authority other than what I've been given!"

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh] Sometimes you just say it.

Erika Ishii

[Laughing]

Aabria Iyengar

You just say the thing that's happening.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Hey. When you're at that point.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah! But I do want to give some shine to Eursulon last episode, for also doing that, like when we were doing the death march to the shrine, some of your rolls were kind of janky and was very like—you, very

effortlessly, put it to like, "Yeah, he's hungover, he doesn't want this. This isn't going well, I should be very good at physical things, but I'm not right now, because of all of these great reasons within the game." So I think it's just sort of more of that. And my dice really leaned into the bit in a way where I was like, "Fine. If I can't do anything, let's just have a full ass meltdown." And at the moment where she is presented with an undeniable lose condition, that's it, she's done. And I just got to be a bad little mess.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

It's the beautiful thing about playing—I think it's the exciting thing about this medium and using dice, right?

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Is, dice push us to a place that we wouldn't naturally go to as the player. I'm not—my character doesn't eat ass! Why would my character start just fucking tripping over themselves? That's not WHO they are, that's not the character I created. And so I think it gives you this really natural way to find failure in your character, and then play it out naturally. And I think you just crushed it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I need—

Aabria Iyengar

Damn. Compliments from a shirtless man, let's go.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Take it.

Aabria Iyengar

I'm sorry, what were you going to say Brennan?

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Take the compliment.

Aabria Iyengar

Don't— [Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Speaking of a shirtless man, I need to double back to something Adonis said—

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Yes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—which I disagree with.

Erika Ishii  
[Gasp]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
No matter how shirtless you are.

Aabria Iyengar  
Strong words.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Strong words. Which, you said earlier when Erika was kind enough to point out, that Eursulon chose to pick up Wavebreaker, and said, I will free Naram. And then you made a very funny joke, which was, "Yeah, because the alternative was getting strangled by plant monsters, so I'm still a coward!" That, my dear friend Adonis, was not the alternative. The alternative was to let Orima out. And she had said, "I will give you safe passage into the rest of Akham. This is not your problem. Not your circus, not your monkeys. Let me out, and you don't have to fuckin' worry about what happens next."

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Now, that is an offer that is WAY more appealing than "do it or I'll kill you." That offer is, "No one even has to know that the bad thing that happened, you had some say in, right? You're just totally excused. You are excused." So THAT was the alternative that Eursulon was presented with. And I think it's very meaningful, that Eursulon denied THAT alternative. So there were three options on the table: I kill you all, you let me out, third thing. And I think there's something—there's a very—in Celtic storytelling, there's some beautiful—in that sort of like pagan storytelling, there's some really beautiful stuff about, the hero finds the third way, right? What is before us, what is behind us, and then the hero finds the third way. Those are my thoughts about that, so that's what I wanted to say.

Aabria Iyengar  
Those were good thoughts.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)  
Great thoughts. Beautiful thoughts.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Thank you.

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Everyone, let's just have a moment of silence. [Laughing]

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Please.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Everyone, just for Adonis's shirt, and what happened to it—

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Hey, thank you.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—when we were recording.

Erika Ishii

Moment of silence.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I'll fill the silence with flexing, if that's alright.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Great, lets do it.

Erika Ishii

Yes please!

[Someone clapping]

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

How about that? You like that?

Erika Ishii

Mhm!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Ooh!

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

I guess if I talk during the moment of silence, is it a moment of silence?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Do you want us to respond, because you asked a question, but we're having a moment of silence?

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Yeah, well, I mean well, I think I don't—I'm so used to flexing, and then immediately asking, "Do you like that?" That I—

[Aabria and Erika cackle]

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

—sorry, it came naturally to me. I've never flexed in silence.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah, it sort of undercuts the natural machismo of the moment, for you to ask, "Do you like that?"

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Well you know—

Erika Ishii

Wrong.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

—I'm trying to fight against toxic masculinity—

Erika Ishii

Incorrect. Brennan, that's incorrect.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

—in my own way? So people are allowed to tell me they don't like my flexing, and that's okay. That's alright!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Erika, I hear the point you're making, maybe if he asked it in a more sensual way?

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

But asking, "Do you like it?" Like a Google survey, is not, to me, sexual.

[Aabria and Erika breaking down laughing]

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

I mean, I'll take a number if you want to give me, on how much you like it.

Aabria Iyengar

What's the scale?

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

1 to 7.

Aabria Iyengar

Oh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

1 to 7!? That's the craziest thing that's ever been said on the Fireside!!

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

I like a nice middle ground, right there so you can say—10 doesn't have a middle. 7—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

5!!

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

—now 7's got a middle.

[Aabria and Erika dying]

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

No.

Erika Ishii

[Cackling]

Aabria Iyengar

I just felt infinity in the moment, where we all went "5, right?" But then didn't want to say it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

7 does too, 3.5! They've all got middles!

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

But you can't put a circle, you can't—then you have to do 0.5s all the way up.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Shaking incredulity] What!?

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

You can hit 3.5, then you can also hit 6.5. You can also hit 7.5. Ya know, and that just gets to be too much.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

7.5 is the middle of 15!

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Well, no, but we're on a 1 to 7 metric.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Confused stammering]

Erika Ishii

There's a direct proportion—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

That's a circle, that's a circle logic!

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

What?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

What!?

Erika Ishii

[Laughing] Brennan's voice is rising in direct proportion to his incredulity.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[High pitched] I—I—I can't believe what I'm hearing!!

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Hey, man, I'll tell ya! I don't do metrics, alright? I do flexing. Now, do you like this?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

THAT'S METRICS!!

Aabria Iyengar

But also in a 1 to 7 scale, 4 is like the middle. It's really not 3.5, because you have three numbers on either side that you can pick from.

Erika Ishii

But that's what Brennan's saying—no, but that's what Adonis is saying, is that you have to—then it's like, 0.5s.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah, but I feel like the one to seven system actually sidesteps that in a very clean way.

Erika Ishii

Hmm.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Wow!

Aabria Iyengar

I'm pro it.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Thanks, guys.

Erika Ishii

7!

Aabria Iyengar

[Cheerfully] 7!!

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

I'll take all these notes, work on them, and figure out how I can create a better system, to tell me if you like me flexing my muscles!

Aabria Iyengar

This is so wholesome!

Erika Ishii

[Laugh]

Aabria Iyengar

I'm afraid to say I want to keep Adonis, because that's how you get a dead body like last week.

Erika Ishii

Aww.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Somebody—what? Wait, what are you talking about?

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Aabria Iyengar

Nothing! Don't worry about that, Taylor, cut that out!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Taylor cutting it out will remove it from Adonis's memory. Adonis won't be able to remember it.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

I only live in the Fireside.



Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

I was explained the rules before I came here.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah. This episode. So—

Aabria Iyengar

[Burst of laughter]

Erika Ishii

No, you can't— [Laughing] No you're the one who took us off—okay, go ahead, you go.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I took us off by suggesting a 1 to 7 rating system? Even just thinking about it is making—

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

No, you suggested the moment of silence. Which I filled with flexing.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah, well, there you go. There you go. That's a fair point. That's fair.

Erika Ishii

Mhm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The inside of my nose is hot, as I think about a 1 to 7 rating system.

Erika Ishii

[Cackle]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Heavy sniffing] Something's making me mad, I don't know what it is!

[Everyone laughs]

Erika Ishii

So this episode.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Thank you.

Erika Ishii

Yes. We also get a little bit of witch magic, and what that means, and the idea of care, and to mend, and to clean, which is, cleanliness is next to godliness, and in Shinto, you have to cleanse yourself before—even symbolically, before going into the temple. And the idea that, caring for this neglected temple, was a bit of magic, a very special magic, that was the RIGHT thing to do, was really cool. Because I'm going to say it, I'm biased, but I feel like, Ame got to do some cool shit here! And it's not on the metrics that normal D&D characters get to do cool shit. It's like, I cleaned the temple!

Aabria Iyengar

Hell, yeah. I don't think that's a bias, I think that's an accurate depiction of how fuckin' badass Ame is.

Erika Ishii

Naww.

Aabria Iyengar

What a beautiful introduction to what witches are, and what they can be, and what they mean to people, that aren't just sort of like, "I'm the oldest bitch in this town, and I know how to make sure you have a baby safely." Like, if that's all we've seen before, what does that mean on a bigger scale? How do we begin to justify all the things that have been said about witches thus far?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Mhm.

Aabria Iyengar

So I think it was just a really nice moment of showing you, this is actually what it means!

Erika Ishii

Oooh!

Aabria Iyengar

And here's the ways in which our other two friends, cannot even begin to hold a candle, to the things that Ame knows, in a way that she doesn't even feel like she knows it, it's just simply true about the world. And I thought that was really lovely and beautiful.

Erika Ishii

Thank you. Oh! Oh! Also speaking of just knowing things, the idea of Undre seeming mystical, and like a magical word to Suvi and Ame, but then to Eursulon, it's just—

Aabria Iyengar

Yes!

Erika Ishii

—oh! Stranglers.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah! Oh god.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Little less mystical. Yeah, they grab your throat and they make it so you're dead! I think that there's—

Aabria Iyengar

I don't think Orima's good, you guys, I think she's—when we say bad bitch, maybe too bad.

Erika Ishii

Aww!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Hey, who knows what she was like before, you know, there's—

[Aabria and Brennan laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

There's a—

Aabria Iyengar

Her dick's been locked down, and she is MAD!!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

MAD! "These guys don't have to exist, they get here when you guys fuckin' locked my husband up at the bottom of the Bay." I think that there's an element, especially—to circle back to the thing about Ame, too—I tried to underline in that moment, the like—with the wind picking up, and the idea that you're not an apprentice anymore. There's a—we talked a lot about like, different—one of my things I'm most excited for in this campaign. There HAS been violence in this campaign. There WILL be violence in this campaign. I am not in a rush to get to it. And I'm never in a position where I'm like, "[Scoff] We need a certain amount of fights!" That's not what this campaign is.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Fights will happen, when, in the story, it makes sense for them to happen. We're going like, this is a novel or a movie or anything else, it's not like a minimum number of combats to make this viable. So, for me, combat happens based on your guys choices, and the world behaving rationally. And I think that there's something to this encounter in terms of Ame's badass-ness, which is like—which I hope people get, because this was a HUGE victory for Ame, and I think people undervalue diplomacy, kindness, and care, in real life? And they certainly undervalue it in stories?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The idea of, "There is a Spirit that wants to destroy this city. I was dragged here by her servants. The only reason I wasn't killed, is that I gave the proper salute, and said the name of her husband with respect. I

was dragged here. I woke up, she said, 'I'm going to KILL you fucking people!' And we walked out of there with our lives. Having gotten her to agree to not—you know, like, walked out of there, with our lives, and a plan to do the right thing, and save the people of Port Talon, and her husband." That is a fuckin' W to end all Ws! That is a huge fuckin' win. And I think because it looks like understanding, negotiation, and compromise, and—because it looks in this unusual way, it's not like—it would be easy to overlook that. So, to me, that was like, "Oh, Ame literally made something out of nothing." That was an impossible situation to be in, and you guys walked out of there with your lives, and a magic sword, and a plan! That's pretty fucking cool!

Erika Ishii

Yeah!

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

I mean, I'd give that a 7 for sure.

Erika Ishii

Yeah!

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Big 7.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Adonis.

Aabria Iyengar

The system works!

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Big 7. Big 7 for Ame.

Aabria Iyengar

Brennan!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[High-strung] Yes?

Aabria Iyengar

She got a 7!

Erika Ishii

A 7!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I guess 7 out of 7 is 100%, which is nice and even, so.

Erika Ishii

Yes.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I don't know what I'll do if I get a 2 or a 6, but ya know, we're good for now. Now, we're good.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Erika Ishii

Yeah! Oh, man! That's so nice. But, yeah—

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

With regard to the—oh, go ahead, sorry.

Erika Ishii

No, you go first, you go first.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

No no no no no.

Erika Ishii

No no no, Mr. Gunz, I insist.

Aabria Iyengar

[Cackle]

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

No, I was just—I was interested—IN kind of what Brennan is speaking to, in terms of when you were thinking about Ame, AND like—because I'm assuming you believe that, violence and conflict would be inevitable, and we saw Ame throw some chili pepper in—

Erika Ishii

[Cackle]

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

—Emliss's face. Is that like—coming into a D&D campaign, and playing this character, how—is that kind of what you were planning as the core of Ame's potency in situations like this?

Erika Ishii

I mean—

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Yeah, kind of just—at the start of this, how did you think Ame would go into situations?

Erika Ishii

Aw, thank you for asking! I would say that Ame is not a pacifist in the way that we think of pacifism as inaction. I wanted the heart of Ame's character, and her actions, to be about building community, and finding the ways that we can communicate, and better build tomorrow. I think it's something that traditionally Dungeons & Dragons has not been used for, because it's just so easy, because of the mechanics, to default to being a murder-hobo, but the world that Brennan created, and the situations we find ourselves in, and Ame's whole kit, down to the witch class itself, is geared towards consequences.

Erika Ishii

I have written in front of my notebook from the first time we were brainstorming, Witches are about crafting and consequences, right? Because it's—I think, both in real life, and in a lot of storytelling—improvised—there aren't as many consequences, and so it is easy to kind of just roll around as a murderball, but—yeah, I wanted it to be like this, and it's so incredible to get a whole outlet, to negotiate, and see what you can build, you know. I don't know if that answers your question.

Aabria Iyengar

It's a good answer. I also would love just, like, three fewer consequences, just for Suvi.

[Everyone laughs]

Aabria Iyengar

I think the Witch asked for consequences, the Wizard did not.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The wizard did not ask for consequences. I wanted to say, just off of Erika's point, I remember we had a conversation specifically, where you were talking about this in the context of D&D, and the preponderance of its rules that are concerned with combat, and I remember talking about that a little bit, and talking about Mononoke, right? Talking about Princess Mononoke. And I was like, "For Ame's choice, to try to refrain from, and avoid violence, and pain, and horror. For that choice to be as meaningful as we see it is in, like, Ashitaka's journey in Mononoke, the allure of violence needs to be represented."

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And I think some people would be like, "Well, if you want to tell a story about avoiding—if you want to tell a story that has those themes in it, why would you play in a system that emphasizes combat?" And it's like, to me, the world of Empire, and the world of violence and conflict that's being depicted in Umora, IS a world that emphasizes violence, and the choice to try to FIND a nonviolent answer and how hard that can be—in other words, there's something about the mechanical allure of violence in D&D that makes the choice to resist it feel emblematic of the themes we're trying to evoke. Right?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So like, "Do you want to avoid this? Do you want to find a better answer, even though you know you have a spell that could fuck this guy up?" And it's like, that's actually one of the themes that's present in a lot of these stories is like, "Yeah, the allure and ease of violence as a quick and horrible answer to complicated problems," and saying "The road away from that IS murky and unclear, what does that look like?" So that's my two cents about that.

Erika Ishii

Oh my god.

[Someone claps]

Erika Ishii

I just, really have never—

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Erika Ishii

I just—it's so crazy to me because I've played so much D&D in my whole life, right? And I've never had—been with a whole group, that is geared towards like, oh, there is a central sort of theme that we want—some themes that we want to address in our stories, and things that interest us, and abiding by that, and gearing all of their things towards that, even the failures! Which actually brings me to one of the questions!

Aabria Iyengar

I think I'm being gestured at—

Erika Ishii

[Cackle]

Aabria Iyengar

—by Erika in the Zoom

Erika Ishii

That's where you are in my window.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah. It's bad.

Erika Ishii

Kyle—

Aabria Iyengar  
It's bad here. [Laugh]

Erika Ishii  
Kyle asks, "Aabria, specifically, how do you role play weakness and failure so well? Suvi fell apart in a major way in episode 11. How can you bring yourself to do it? How do you pull it off?"

Aabria Iyengar  
Thanks.

Erika Ishii  
How do you fail so spectacularly Aabria!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
It's so good that we record these way later.

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Imagine coming off of that session—

Erika Ishii  
So mad!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—and fuckin' getting that question, hachi machi! Great question.

Aabria Iyengar  
I literally would slam a door.

Erika Ishii  
[Cackle]

Aabria Iyengar  
No, really, I got to thank the Lord and my dice for so much of that motivation. No no no. Real talk. Knowing who Suvi is, and who she's been for the first 11 episodes—21 if you count the Children's Adventure—you see that there's a lot of things—like, she's just a little pressure valve, that's been building up, and every time she has to bend a rule—like, I go back a lot to, how did I get myself into a place of being able to break down, and it's remembering the things that you've said are true about your character before. And I actually wrote down—I have, like, a weird little journal that helps me, in real time, stay in a character's feelings that feel distant from my own while I'm playing them.

Erika Ishii  
[Gasp] Oh!



Aabria Iyengar

But remembering that Suvi didn't—refused to break Grandmother Wren's rule to go out at night, to try to help Eursulon and Ame find the way home. So, knowing who she is about rules and rule breaking, and seeing who she is now, having bent so many things, in order to try to do what she thinks is the right thing, like—yeah, I think there's just a lot of cognitive dissonance, and what do you do at the heart of that, when you're 20 years old, and nothing seems to be working, I think you just kind of melt down in a really spectacular way. And then trying to make it cute and funny by threatening to kill guards or whatever.

Erika Ishii

[Laugh]

Aabria Iyengar

Because those aren't real people. And playing with the D&D of that—

Erika Ishii

Yeah!

Aabria Iyengar

—and being like, "I'm the hero! Why isn't this working?"

Erika Ishii

[Laugh]

Aabria Iyengar

"Dungeon Master, play it differently!" But like, having that as a character, where you're like, "Yeah, I've been told that the world will move a certain way for you." And getting that sort of like, gut-check in real time was very fun to lean into, and just continue to double down, and you can hear how much, I think, I was getting on Brennan's nerves, by asking and wheedling and trying to whinge my way. And it was just Suvi pleading with the universe for some sort of salvaging of her status, when there was none to be found. And it was just fun. I don't know.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

There's like a—first of you, nothing you've ever done has gotten on my nerves for a SINGLE—

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—solitary second! Let's get that fuckin' clear.

Erika Ishii

Brennan Lee Mulligan—

Aabria Iyengar  
Really? Is that true?

Erika Ishii  
—in this episode—in this episode saying, "Look, I'm anti-fascist... BUT!"

Aabria Iyengar  
"BUT!"

Erika Ishii  
Is where we ended up.

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
In True Facts About Grant Anthony O'Brien, Nick Kocher wrote one of my favorite jokes of all time, where he accused Grant O'Brien of having "so much debt that even Bernie Sanders would say, 'Come on, man, at a certain point, this is your responsibility.'"

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Fuckin' great joke! No but I think—honestly, even relistening to it, even as an anti-fascist, you're like, "At this point, these fuckin' cops would come over and fuckin', they'd manacle you." We have to play the reality of how these Imperial systems move. However, to Aabria's point, we've played a lot of D&D together, and the rules of consequence are new for every single world. Right? Sometimes you are in fucking Looney Tunes Land, right? The rules for a season of Dimension 20, given its genre, can be radically different from one to the other. And in this long form setting, this is me and Aabria's first time playing a like, long form campaign together

Erika Ishii  
[Gasp]

Aabria Iyengar  
Yeah!

Erika Ishii  
Yeah! I forgot about that.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
There are certain things that absolutely would—like, didn't I just play a chicken that pulled a bazooka out of her cloaca?

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laugh]

Erika Ishii  
Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Like, you know!

Erika Ishii  
Yeah ya did.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
I think I did! Check out A County Affair!

Erika Ishii  
[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Wait, that's a Patreon exclusive, you already did! Did you? You should check it out, it's hilarious.

Erika Ishii  
Buh-glock!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Buh-glock! But the point being that it's not—it will take 20-, 30-whatever episodes to actually key in, I feel like, to where we're all riding on the consequence wavelength. Because if you HAVE played a chicken that pulls a fucking Stinger missile out of your snooch, ya know, you can have a moment where you go—where Aabria's like, "I'm pregnant! I tell the guards—" and suddenly I'm looking, and I'm like, "The world is gonna be real here." And you go like, "What? Weren't we doing a bit?" And it's like, "We can't do that bit, not here, not in this way. I'm gonna have this Empire do a lot of stuff, for a long time, so we need these guys to be, kind of more real than that!" And it's an interesting navigation for sure.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)  
Can I circle back to the um, the notebook that you write in—the journal that you write in?

Aabria Iyengar  
Yeah!

Adonis Gunz (Lou)  
So do you—what is that? Are you writing like bullets, or are you writing out like an emotional monologue in—of the thoughts in the character's head? Or—how do you do that, and can I steal it?

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh] Yes to the latter. So mostly when I'm like, stuck—when I'm deep in game, I actually am a very poor notetaker, so if you ever see me looking down, I'm doing something that's actually connected to Suvi's mental state versus like—when we're all kind of playing, I think there's that mixture of, like, I am an actor playing my character, but also sort of like, looking back as a writer and going like, "Oh, what's good for the world and like—"

Erika Ishii

Yep.

Aabria Iyengar

"—what needs to happen?" But I can—because—I don't know, I guess I'll blame DMing often, for getting a little, like—it's easy for me to lose the emotional tenor, especially of like, big, weird emotions and Suvi is—Suvi like, lives and dies by her "How can she justify a leftward worldview?" So actually, yeah, I write little rants to myself of like, "This is how Suvi sees what's happening right now." And there was a little bullet list of like, "Here's been the last 24 hours for Suvi. She got yelled at on main, then came back, then got the note from the Fox—don't forget, Suvi thinks that the Fox is just Ame—"

Erika Ishii

[Laugh]

Aabria Iyengar

"—so it doesn't really matter if she says she's chasing—" and that can be a fallacy, and it's fine, that's where Suvi is and that's what she thinks is happening right now, and does not have enough evidence to the contrary to think anything else differently about it. She had to do a death march for a day and a half, through the world's worst conditions, and had to push Eursulon to do it. Eursulon has a conversation that she doesn't understand, he almost gets choked to death and he says, "Stay out of it." So now she's locked out from like, the life and death stakes of what's happening here. And the [Clapping every word for emphasis] Worst Part Was: when we finally made it to the Shrine, Suvi didn't have to be there. She did not contribute one bit, so all she did was burn the three days, NOT do what her mentor told her to do, and it didn't matter if she was there or not.

Aabria Iyengar

So that's the energy she was coming back with. So the moment you got that last like and the guard spotted you, so this is no—there's no win condition here. So it felt very like Looney Tunes almost, all bets are off like, well, fuck it. I guess I can do whatever because this is going to go as badly as it goes. So maybe threatening a guard will SOMEHOW work, it doesn't fucking matter anymore. So I had all of that written out, just to remind myself of where she was, especially—like I kept a little tally mark of every time I FULLY failed a role on something Suvi would feel like, "Oh, this is the universe actively fucking me in this moment. Why am I too groggy to understand what's going on? Why do I feel like I'm missing something? I don't feel right, and so now I'm physically and mentally uncomfortable, so that means I'm going to unload on the next person I can. Welcome to Lieutenant Briggs."

Erika Ishii  
Agh.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)  
That's solid, dude.

Erika Ishii  
That's SO GOOD!

Adonis Gunz (Lou)  
That's a 7. That's a 7 straight up.

Aabria Iyengar  
I got a 7!! This is a perfect system, Brennan, you cannot—please don't make him change it. I love it.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)  
How good does it feel to get a 7, I'll tell ya.

Aabria Iyengar  
It feels PERFECT!

Adonis Gunz (Lou)  
When I say, "How do you like that?" And they say 7, I say, ah!

Erika Ishii  
[Laughing]

Adonis Gunz (Lou)  
Better than ice cream.

Aabria Iyengar  
It IS better than ice cream!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Damn.

Erika Ishii  
[Cackle]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Yes—

Erika Ishii  
Actu—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—I think, oh sorry.

Erika Ishii

No, you go ahead, you go ahead.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I was going to say, it felt very—I think Suvi IS at a breaking point, and I think too, there's like a certain—the easiest feeling of dread, I feel as a Dungeon Master, is in a difficult combat, when players start changing their mind, turn to turn, about what the overall strategy is.

Aabria Iyengar

Mm.

Erika Ishii

Ooh.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

That has presaged every TPK I've ever seen. The only times that all the players get wiped out, is when someone's like, "We gotta run!" And they spend their turn running. And the next person's like, "I'm gonna follow them," and the third person says, "Shit, the artifact. I'm going to run—I'm gonna swing twice, and try to get the artifact."

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh] Yep.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And then person number four goes, "Are we staying, or are we running?"

Erika Ishii

[Shudder]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And then they say, "I think he's trying to get the artifact." And they say, "Alright, I'm going to cast a spell to try to pull the artifact. Agh, okay, they saved, shit. I'm going to move into this hedge for better cover for next round." "Next round? Well, I'm going to run back." And now you're blowing your action economy, and the damage is piling up, and that's when people die. And I think there's an element to you talking about Suvi, Aabria, where—I don't think Suvi's cognizant of this, I don't think she knows it, but she's serving multiple masters. There's not a concrete strategy going on. Like, she got the message of "Keep it on ice" and then was like, "Ame's in danger."

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Erika Ishii

Ooooh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And another master is being served, it's her friend. She has to go. There was no—there was not REALLY—like I guess you could make an argument that like, "Oh, a Witch is going to see a Spirit and there's some Imperial concern there," but I don't think that was what was on Suvi's mind. I think what was on Suvi's mind is, "My fuckin' friend is in danger." And so it's interesting to see that the pain and anguish is coming from, "I went to be a hero to my friend, and I couldn't be, and I didn't serve this other—" It's almost—

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—I don't know, I'm just seeing an analogy—

Erika Ishii

Oh. My. God.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—to those weird feelings of TPK, of—I don't even think Suvi's cognizant of it, but the stress, and heartache, and destruction, when YOU are trying to be a single individual person, but you're running two programs at the same time, and you're maybe not even aware that you're doing that.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Erika Ishii

[Gasp] Ahhh!

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah yeah yeah.

Erika Ishii

Ahhh, it's just like, with her first response to seeing Naram was like, "What have you done?" And then sort of—then the other part of her brain takes over, and then she just feels angry!

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah!

Erika Ishii

Ough!

Aabria Iyengar

It's hard to try to be the best version of yourself, which is, follow orders, and do as you're told, and trust the people that you have to trust your whole life. Like, Steel is Grandmother Wren to Suvi—

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Aabria Iyengar

—so it feels bad to say "What you've told me, I believe with my whole heart, and I will not do it." And I think there's just that, like—yeah, it comes out as lashing out, because Suvi doesn't have the like—yeah, the self awareness and the language to say, like, "I am being put in a very bad place. Please, when I beg you to listen to me, what I'm actually saying is we have to talk about this, because I haven't reached a point where I can justify it yet, and I feel torn up." So no, a 20 year old just goes, "Fucking listen to me!! Fine, we'll go do the thing, but I'm going to bitch the entire way there—"

Erika Ishii

[Laugh]

Aabria Iyengar

"—AND the entire way back."

[Aabria and Adonis laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah. There's some other great questions here that we should read. This one's from Dawil. Thanks, Dawil. "If all three PCs would be super competitive in a sport, which sport would each of the characters be playing professionally?"

Aabria Iyengar

Oh, that's fun.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Can we say the thing that we did too? Can we—or, can we mention it, or should we keep it a secret?

Aabria Iyengar

I think we should say it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Speaking of sports—

Aabria Iyengar

[Gasp]



Erika Ishii

[High pitched noise]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—you guys can get ready for the first—Aabria wait, this—sorry. Aabria.

Aabria Iyengar

No no no, you do it.

Erika Ishii

Yeahyeahyahyahyahyahyahyahyahyahyah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

No no no.

Aabria Iyengar

You do it. You do it. You're the eponymous—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The eponymous, the titular—

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The first... Installment—

[Aabria and Erika gasp]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—of Space Cram, featuring—

Aabria Iyengar

[Hissed] Yes!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—Cram Daniel, Slam Jamiels—

Aabria Iyengar

Slam Jamiels, yes.

Erika Ishii

Uh huh.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And—can we say?

Erika Ishii  
Yeah

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
A brand new addition to the mythos—

Erika Ishii  
The brand new character, to round out the trio, Clam Blamiels.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
I heard it pronounced as—

Aabria Iyengar  
Wasn't it Clam Blamielle?

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
It's Clam Blamielle.

Erika Ishii  
[Struggling] Clam Blanielle—Clam Blanielle.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Is it Blanielle? Or Blamielle?

Erika Ishii  
Blamielle. Clam Blamielle.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
B-L-A-M-I-E-L-L-E.

Aabria Iyengar  
[In unison] I-E-L-L-E.

Erika Ishii  
[In unison] L-L-E. Yes. Clam Blamielle.

Aabria Iyengar  
It's coming, you guys.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
It's coming, we recorded it.

Erika Ishii  
[Giggling]

Aabria Iyengar  
I've NEVER scream-laughed so hard.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
We had the most fun—it was the most fun week of my life, Taylor came out to Los Angeles, and we went to a beautiful little studio, and we recorded all day every day, for a bunch of days in a row—

Erika Ishii  
Agh, so good.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—and it was a bunch of Wizard, the Witch, and the Wild One, and it was a bunch of, uh, other fun. We did one of the firesides there, it was great.

Aabria Iyengar  
Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
It was really really fun.

Aabria Iyengar  
It was so good.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
So that's about sports, which is what this question is about.

Aabria Iyengar  
We did it! Basketball.

Erika Ishii  
Yeah, we did it. Yeah. Basketball.

Aabria Iyengar  
All wizards play basketball, that could be Suvi's answer!

Erika Ishii  
[Muffled] Nooo!

Aabria Iyengar  
All wizards have hoop dreams!

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Yes. And they are reasonable.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Erika Ishii

[Laughing] Reasonable.

Aabria Iyengar

I'd like to think that Suvi, if she was walking around the real world, would be WNBA draftable.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Mhm.

Erika Ishii

Mhm, mhm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I love that.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Respect.

Aabria Iyengar

A shooting guard.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Respect.

Aabria Iyengar

A little short.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

What's Eursulon playing?

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

I mean, football, without a doubt.

Aabria Iyengar

YEAH-HA-HA!

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

But it's a crazy thing where I feel like, well, he's just one of those, I think, like, Deebo Samuel-style running backs that's like, "Try and tackle me."

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

"Give it your best shot."

Aabria Iyengar

[Whispered] Let's go.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

I mean, the length on this guy!

Aabria Iyengar

[Clapping] You can't coach size!

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Exactly. There it is. So, yeah, I think it's gotta be football, because I don't think he would do anything that was actually like, "I'm punching you, I'm punching you," but, football's pretty close.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Erika Ishii

Ame plays badminton.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Gasp]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Why?

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Ah!

Erika Ishii

I just—it's got—the ball thing is called a birdie! It's just so whimsical and cute, and gentle!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Well that's—you know the real name of the birdie, right?

Aabria Iyengar  
Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You know the real name, right?

Erika Ishii  
Shuttlecock?

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
[Triumphantly] SHUTTLECOCK!

Erika Ishii  
Yeah!!

Aabria Iyengar  
I 100% thought that was why you were choosing that.

Erika Ishii  
I mean, ya know—it's not NOT—

Aabria Iyengar  
Ame's out here swattin' 'cocks!

Erika Ishii  
—it's just so gentle, and I always think of—in the Robin Hood movie, when Maid Marion and Lady Cluck, are playing badminton, and it's just—

Aabria Iyengar  
You know that's not what actual pro-level badminton looks like, right? That shit's scary.

Erika Ishii  
Mm. I did not know that, no.

Aabria Iyengar  
When you're really good at it. It's weirdly like—it's a lot of very fast movement, and lateral movement, but because the—birdie, shuttlecock, whatever you want to call it—moves at such like, a weird slow—ah! It's such a little mind trip to actually watch high level.

Erika Ishii  
Woah! I'll have to look it up then!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
I played a lot of badminton growing up—don't ask—

Aabria Iyengar

Did you?

Erika Ishii

WHAT?! No!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I actually played a fair amount of badminton.

Erika Ishii

[Muffled] No no no!

Aabria Iyengar

Wait, Brennan, may I ask?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

What's that?

Erika Ishii

[Muffled] New lore! New lore!!

Aabria Iyengar

Can I ask?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah.

Aabria Iyengar

Can I ask?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Ask it!

Aabria Iyengar

Whyyy?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Laughing] Why?

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

We had the stuff for it. Like we just had—I think we got—

Aabria Iyengar

Alright!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—we somehow lucked into, or got some rackets and a net, and a couple of little shuttlecocks, and then it was like—I think it was—I forget! It was just one of those things where it's like, you don't need that much space to play it, and you can play it with a smaller number of people, and let me tell you, when you're home-schooled, and then later you go to a community college that doesn't have a sports team, uh, you know!

Aabria Iyengar

Wait, did you not have any sports at your—?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

We—the year—no, there were no sports at the community college, I don't think.

Aabria Iyengar

Huh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Let me see, did SUNY Ulster have a team? No, I don't think so. It was an itty-bitty little community college that joined the state school the year I went there. [Googling] "SUNY Ulster Sports?"

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

"SUNY Ulster Athletics, the official—"

Erika Ishii

Huh.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Oh!

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Okay. Athletics. Let's see here.



Aabria Iyengar  
[Laugh]

Erika Ishii  
Huh!

Erika Ishii  
Huh!

Aabria Iyengar  
This is great!

Adonis Gunz (Lou)  
Maybe it's new.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
"Men's basketball dominates in season opener." Well, look at that!

[Everyone laughs]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
My alma mater!

Erika Ishii  
[Muffled laughter]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Okay!

Aabria Iyengar  
That's very funny.

Erika Ishii  
Okay!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Okay! The Ulster Senators! That's the name of the team! [Laugh]

Aabria Iyengar  
Best name for a ram ever, maybe.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Best name for a ram ever!

Erika Ishii

I feel like the fox would do fox hunting. But like—

Aabria Iyengar

Damn.

Erika Ishii

Just like, decoy fox hunting.

Aabria Iyengar

Could he have a gun?

Erika Ishii

[Laughing] Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Only if he could be one of the guys with a gun.

Erika Ishii

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

He would say, "Give me the gun and I'll be on a horse."

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

He's riding a horse with a gun.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Riding horse with a gun.

Aabria Iyengar

He borrows Ruthie's, like, piece.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The fox's aspiration, more than anything, is to be the—have you guys seen the picture of the fox, in the midst of those hounds? Do you guys know the picture I'm talking about?

Aabria Iyengar

Yes. Yes yes yes.

Erika Ishii

Yes! Yes!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

There's a bunch of hunting hounds, that are all looking off in the distance, and standing in the midst of them, looking alongside them is a fox being like, "Heh. Just one of the gang!"

Erika Ishii

[Cackle]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

"That's me!"

Erika Ishii

[Cackle]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

"Hey. We all want to catch the guy who did this." You know like—

Erika Ishii

[Hooting laughter] Oh, that's so good. Yes, that's exactly what I imagine the fox would do.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah, he'd be one of the dogs.

Erika Ishii

Aw, he'd be like, "Hey, what are we looking for?"

Brennan Lee Mulligan

"What are you guys looking for?"

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh] The fox is a Looney Tune.

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Aabria Iyengar

He is a little Bugs Bunny.

Erika Ishii

Yeah!! Yeah yeah yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I was re-listening to it again, and it was very—Ame's comforting of the fox was very sweet, when he was like, "Is this world only for people—or, only for humans?"

Aabria Iyengar  
Oh that's—oh god.

Erika Ishii  
Oh god! Oh my god!

Aabria Iyengar  
Can we talk about that line?

Erika Ishii  
Oh my god! "They come to OUR world—"

Aabria Iyengar  
I need you to know there are very few times—

Erika Ishii  
"—and they get what they—" [Squeal]

Aabria Iyengar  
—there are very few times, where even I'M like, "I don't think I should say this."

Erika Ishii  
[Cackling]

Aabria Iyengar  
Oh, no. I wrote it down in my little, like, "Things To Not Say" notebook, and I went "No I—"

Adonis Gunz (Lou)  
Yes, yes, yes!

Aabria Iyengar  
"I think we gotta do it." It was such a fun moment that like—there was a pause at the table. Looks were exchanged. And then I watched Brennan go, like, "We can't move past this. Okay, hold on. Hey Eursulon," and I was like, "Hey, don't make him roll about it! [Frantically] Sometimes you can just say something which is—you just—it's fine! It's fine!"

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Say something that is fucking—

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—especially—even listening back, I was, like—listening to myself, I was like, "Brennan you could have twisted that knife a little harder."

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah, you could have!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I should have made YOU roll an insight check—

Aabria Iyengar

Nooo.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—and go, "As the little girl, who bathed this Spirit and trapped him in this world—"

Erika Ishii

[Wailing]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

"—do you feel any sudden feeling about what you have just said?"

Erika Ishii

[Uncomfortable moan]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

But I didn't have the presence of mind in the moment to—

Aabria Iyengar

[Cackle] There's still time! We have hundreds of episodes left!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

We have hundreds of episodes! No, "If you come to this world, you get what you get." It's a—

Erika Ishii

[Phew]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

There's something in that, that's like—yeah, it was very palpable at the table, and it's obviously a perspective that I feel like, probably EVERYONE can look at some point in their life, when they have, like, very quickly, or staunchly agreed that some terrible fate, on someone else's part, is deserved?

Erika Ishii

Mmm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

But in that moment—Erika, Erika, you feel that you have never experienced schadenfreude in your life?

Erika Ishii

[Laugh] No no no!

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah. Yeah, go ahead! Go ahead Ame!

Erika Ishii

I'm just—I'm just cringing inward, thinking about it!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Oh, that was an inward thinking—I took "Mmm" to be like—

Erika Ishii

"Mm, mm!"

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—as I was like,"We've all—"

Erika Ishii

"I have never once taken pleasure in another's suffering, ever."

Brennan Lee Mulligan

"Ever ever."

Erika Ishii

"I only want nice things to happen to people, forever!"

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

No, but that moment was a powerful—it was a powerful, powerful moment.

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It was an intense—an intense thing. And I thought a beautiful and bold choice by Aabria.

Erika Ishii

Fuck!

Aabria Iyengar

It always feels weird to do one of those things where you're like, oh, you know when you say something in a fight that you're like, "It's not that I don't—I'm not saying something I don't mean—"

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Aabria Iyengar

Ugh! You're like, "I mean this, but I wouldn't say it, but I don't really mean it," like, it's that weird thing of, like—agh god—when you go for a low blow, and you don't even realize that it's something you actually believe and not just the meanest thing you can think of.

Erika Ishii

[Long] Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah.

Erika Ishii

[Long] Agh.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I feel like—do you guys ever feel like, that—a thing I find myself every once in a while saying to like, Izzy, or to other people in my life is, when you're sharing those kinds of feelings, and you're like, "This is not an enlightened impulse. Like, the thing I'm sharing right now."

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And for me I feel like—maybe other people don't feel this way, but I feel like there are multiple radio stations—when people talk about—one of the reasons that I get weird when talking about things like hypocrisy, or things like duh duh duh, is that I fundamentally don't believe that the mind is unified in that way, and that there are multiple kind of radio channels. Which is why a lot of times, I remember being in not great relationships as a younger person, where I would get upset, and I would say, like, "Hey, I need some time, I'm going to excuse myself because I'm not—I'm feeling too angry to say anything productive right now, so let me bow out."

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And sometimes you would have partners that would push back on that and be like, "You need to just be honest! And you need to duh duh duh duh duh!" And the thing I remember saying at that time, and that I still believe is like, "Well me at my angriest is not me at my most honest."

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

"This is like, information I need to process, there's something—my emotions are telling me something here. But I'd like to have a moment to compose, and figure out what these different frequencies are like, communicating. There's a couple different—"

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So to me, it's like—Suvi saying that is like, you—it's like you do mean it, but only a part of you means it.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Like—you know—it's the part that believes in conflict, and fear, and scarcity, and violence, that part believes it, and that's a part that I think all of us have? And it's just about the degree to which it is—whether that is speaking on behalf of the whole. I don't know, that's my—

Erika Ishii

Mmm.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

That's how I feel.

Erika Ishii

I agree.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Mm.

Aabria Iyengar

I like that analogy a lot. It's very good.



Erika Ishii

Okay, one more question, though, because Aabria has talked about her feelings notebook.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Erika Ishii

But Sabrina asks, "When creating characters, or to get INTO character," which is what we're going to focus on, "do any of you use any mediums other than writing, such as playlists, pinterest boards, et cetera?" And we have said, you know, I think, we all have playlists now, but I think on Day Of, what do you find most helpful in your ritual for getting into character? Adonis?

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

I think music is my main one. I think I try and find something—I try and find a song that feels like the character in that moment, that we're about to reenter to, and just kind of listen to it by myself, to kind of set—set the tone in my body, so that my intuition can kind of try and, in those first moments of batting the ball back and forth, start to kind of catch the vibe again, of our current moment that we're starting in

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Erika Ishii

Aabria?

Aabria Iyengar

I mean, I do do—I've actually struggled, my answer is normally, "Yeah, a little playlist," especially like on my way to or from—during the commute. I haven't been able to listen to the Suvi playlist in a while for reasons I have not quite figured out yet.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Mm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Ooh.

Erika Ishii

Ohhh.

Aabria Iyengar

So I very much do not use music with Suvi anymore, and it's very locked in the notebook.

Erika Ishii

When was the last time you updated the playlist?

Aabria Iyengar

Right before camp!

Erika Ishii

Ohh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Has everyone shared their character playlists with me, because I want them.

Erika Ishii

Maybe?

Aabria Iyengar

I know I haven't.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Please see that you do.

Aabria Iyengar

Okay!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Maybe it will—because that feels like—that feels very germane! I would be able to use that to make toys and surprises and puzzles! That sounds great!

Erika Ishii

[Gasp, screaming, gasp] Okay! Brennan?

Erika Ishii

Erika—ope! Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Oh—the—uh—what do I use for character—yeah, music, pinterest, reading, I watch a lot of movies, like—

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—in periods where I'm writing, because it'll get late at night and it'll be time to relax, but I'll still want to be, like, working in th—I want to feed the machine.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

If you have output, you need input, right?

Erika Ishii

Mhm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

All of it, give me it all. Oh, I was reading Ella Young, where is it? The Celtic Wonder-Tales, which my dad used to read to me.

Erika Ishii

Ohh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And there's a great—there's a great one about the Tuatha Dé Danann, and it's very beautiful—just the poetry is very beautiful.

Aabria Iyengar

Mm.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Mm.

Erika Ishii

Mm!

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Cillian Murphy talks about that in my sleep story, on the Calm App.

Aabria Iyengar

Oh!

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

What does he talk about?

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

The Tuatha Dé Danann.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Oh, beautiful! I love that. The great tribe of the goddess Danu. Love it.

Erika Ishii  
Huh, yeah.

Aabria Iyengar  
Erika?

Erika Ishii  
Oh. Oh! Yeah, I think it's—yeah playlists especially, for sure. But the thing is, I have multiple playlists, right? So it's like, I have an Ame playlist, ya know, and one that was—has been updated a little bit, but was formulated back in the sort of childhood campaign days.

Aabria Iyengar  
Mm.

Erika Ishii  
And then I have like emotionally turbulent Ame one, and then I have sort of a tricky Ame one. And so, yeah, multiple playlists, and so I'll put on whichever one is the mood of the moment. But yeah, I also really enjoy, sort of sitting down with a movie, that helps me get into a character, or gets the atmosphere of a world, before I have some sort of recording session, or when we play. Yeah, it's—I think it really is very important to consume stories and media outside of the chosen one that you are creating? In order to get a sort of diversity of—a breadth of knowledge, right? I think a mistake that happens a lot of voice acting is a lot of people—or acting in general, is that people will just watch things, they're like, "I wanna be in action movies, so I'm only going to watch action movies."

Aabria Iyengar  
Mm.

Erika Ishii  
"I only want to watch—I only want to be in anime, so I'm only going to watch anime." And in that way you don't—you're unable to innovate, or fold in things that will make your performances truly unique. So, yeah. Anything that I can consume around that.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)  
Tell 'em. Just tell 'em.

Erika Ishii  
Yeah. You like that?

Aabria Iyengar  
That was good.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)  
Ya know?

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Erika Ishii

Yeah! Good.

Aabria Iyengar

[Whispered] What's the number?

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

It's a 7!

Aabria Iyengar

[Everyone cheers]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Aww!

Erika Ishii

Well, and on that note—Aw, even Brennan's getting into it! Yay!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yay, I love it!

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

Look at that, he's come around.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I've come around on 7s now.

Aabria Iyengar

Are you telling him the truth?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

No.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

But—

Erika Ishii  
Part of him is!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Part of me is—

Aabria Iyengar  
Ooh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—there's a frequency in the mind that is!

Adonis Gunz (Lou)  
Ooh, look at that! Look at that!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
I just wanted to say too, that—this episode, the—all of the sound design from Orima, the wind—

[Everyone moans]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—and the strings as the forest recognizes Ame as a witch. Taylor, fuckin', brilliant.

Aabria Iyengar  
Crushed it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
But—and that Empire theme at the end when Steel shows up, I just wanted to shout that out as well.

Aabria Iyengar  
Ugh!

Erika Ishii  
[Gasp]

Adonis Gunz (Lou)  
Mm. Mm!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
What a change from the forest at the beginning, to the arrival of the Empire, and a very—a hugely different energy to go from these bumbling guards, to the Steel, in this giant mirror on the deck of a flying ship.

Erika Ishii

I do love that one guard, though, the rough and tumble guy who's like, "You can cry."

Brennan Lee Mulligan

"You can cry."

Aabria Iyengar

Oh, yeah! He's my favorite!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

"You can cry."

Aabria Iyengar

I do feel like—the full Jennifer Lawrence on Hot Ones, like "What do you mean?" When you described that Galani looked like she had been crying, like "What do you mean? What do you mean? What do you mean?"

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Laugh] Yeah. Your coworker talked to your mom, and you see your coworker walk out of the office and THEY'RE crying? You're like, "Oh, my mom made a fucking stranger cry. Oops! Oopsie! Oh, no!"

Erika Ishii

God.

Aabria Iyengar

[Sigh] I love Steel.

Erika Ishii

Wonderful work all around. Thank you so much to everybody for joining us here on the Fireside. I'm Erika Ishii. Brennan?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I'm Brennan Lee Mulligan. Ah hoo hoo! Crackle crackle!

Erika Ishii

Aabria!

Aabria Iyengar

Hi, I'm Aabria Iyengar! Crackle crackle! Ah hoo hoo!

Erika Ishii

Ah hoo hoo! And Mr. Adonis Gunz.

Adonis Gunz (Lou)

I'm Adonis Gunz. Well, it's fun, this feels like a beginning and an end, and in many ways? It is. Crackle crackle, ah hoo hoo, cluck cluck.

Aabria Iyengar

Oh!

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

Erika Ishii

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Buh-glock!

Erika Ishii

Go listen to *A County Affair*. Goodbye!

[Aabria and Adonis laugh as the music swells and eventually fades.]