

# Worlds Beyond Number

## The Wizard, the Witch, and the Wild One: Episode 23 “On Your Way” Final Version

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

Aabria Iyengar

This is the sound of Worlds Beyond Number.

[The other instruments fade into a lone flute, somber choral music overtakes the usual intro.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Writhing in inferno, trees and leaves and branches made of rippling, iridescent fire. Purple, green, silver. This forest of flames stands in the penumbra of the world of Umora, itself a reflection of, but not truly, the world of Spirits. This reflection exists through magic artifice. In some way, you are still within the burning sand created by those Wizards of the Citadel. And yet that magic leads to so much more. Their conjurations, their movements through space, take their shortcuts through the Spirit, through these reflections, channels, byways created, through what Suvi's mother called the greater binding. Her theory that all magic came from the interplay of Spirit and the Real.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Standing here, in this fiery reflection of the great forests of your birth, you feel the familiarity of home, while knowing that you look simply at an echo of it. Ahead of you, you can smell, or hear, honey, goat pens, and a chicken's roost.

[Rustling of leaves in a gentle breeze.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You hear the babbling of a brook, the swaying of familiar trees that you knew in childhood. You hear them as though played on the instrument of fire. Burning reflections of other places within Umora.

[Soft strings join the music]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You reach out, feeling with certainty, Eursulon, that Ame is already safely home. That all of the other mortal wizards that were flung in here, you have safely cut from the spellwork of their own hands that would trap them, and returned them to the Citadel. Behind you you hear footsteps—

[All music is swallowed up, engulfed as though submerged into a lake of thick tar. Deep tremulous reverberations, nearly subsonic, as though some gargantuan beast moves through it with ease.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—that make a sound like shadow touching fire. It is silent, and yet still you can hear it.

[Shaky breaths, pounding heart. A discordant high pitched keening]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

With the approach of the Man in Black. The King of Night. That Pilgrim Under Stars, who walks his way towards you. And then, there it is, off the path to your side. A burrow. It exists in almost comic contradiction to the wreathing, fiery spell world that surrounds you.

[A soothing clarinet and low choral tones battle with the menacing ambiance.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

This forest of flames—still moist and humid and hot, as it was the first time you went through a smaller version of it. But that burrow in the flame goes dark, and yet you can smell cool earth. Moist ground. And looking at it, it looks so real, like a hole, that a little woodland creature would dig at the base of a tree to make a home for itself. And yet, to look so real and humble, in a forest of iridescent fire, is almost to tell a joke. But then, some Spirits are very funny.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

That burrow to you, with these exceptional rolls of insight, your wisdom saving throw, this enormous exertion of attunement to your Breath—you've cast the fire back with your shield to give yourself space to breathe, and the sword of Naram now rests in your right hand. The burrow is a spell, within this spell. Some great art has concealed a piece of magic within this greater working of magic, perhaps where no one would ever think to look for it. I asked you, what do you want to do? And in this moment does Eursulon know?

[Distant rumbling of thunder]

Lou Wilson

Yes. Eursulon breathes deeply, and feels his Breath replace the sound of his heart beating, as he feels it extend from his chest to his fingertips, and feels his size, and his mass again. I think, having spent so much time in the Citadel, most, if not all of his time was in his Glamour. And I think feels himself take up space again.

[Gentle clarinet]

Lou Wilson

And I think with eyes toward the hole, just kind of making sense of it, but remembering the words of the man behind him, he's going to say

Eursulon (Lou)

[Echoing] Brother, I know you have many names. Which would you have me address you by?

The Man in Black (Brennan)

Brother, it is good to hear you. What would you call me, of the appellations which I have. Behold me. What do I seem like to you?

Lou Wilson

Still facing forward.

Eursulon (Lou)

The Man in Black was my favorite.

The Man in Black (Brennan)

That is me, brother. You are a child of the Great Bear. Long wayshadowed here, in Umora.

Eursulon (Lou)

Yes.

The Man in Black (Brennan)

A tragic fate. The hands of humans can be ever cruel.

Eursulon (Lou)

You are not wrong. But many of them are kind.

The Man in Black (Brennan)

Kind and cruel alike. So goes the world of Spirits, and the world of Mortals.

Eursulon (Lou)

Yes.

The Man in Black (Brennan)

Something tells me though, brother, that you have become aware in time, of where the hands of the cruel and kind most often alight. In tall towers, do the wicked do their work.

Eursulon (Lou)

Their desire for control over that which they don't understand seems to have no end.

The Man in Black (Brennan)

Would you walk with me for a spell?

Eursulon (Lou)

Brother, mayhaps another time we will walk together, for I feel my time here is short.

The Man in Black (Brennan)

I am almost by your side.

Eursulon (Lou)

I've heard. In one year's time, since the day of Grandmother Wren's passing you will return to the cottage.

The Man in Black (Brennan)

Do you know and walk within the trust of that young Witch of the World's Heart?

Eursulon (Lou)

I do. She is under my protection.

The Man in Black (Brennan)

Then well protected she is. My fear, that I share with you here at the edge of Spirit and Real, is that the time will soon be upon her where her kindness is used to cut her throat. When I arrived at her home, a Wizard already stood within. That tower is the handle of a knife plunged deep into the heart of this world. A heart that Witch is responsible for. Kind faces and friendly names obscure a truth, of murder to the world of Spirits. They are coming. They are coming for you, and me, and for us all.

[Discordant piercing tones]

Eursulon (Lou)

I will do my best to heed your warning, brother.

The Man in Black (Brennan)

In this moment of choosing, remember always this. Though I wished for you to walk beside me, your choice is your own. Go where you will, but if you wait a second longer, I will be by your side.

Lou Wilson

Eursulon is going to look to Grandmother Wren's cottage, and think to himself

Eursulon (Lou)

I just have to be at the North Pole in two days.

Lou Wilson

And I'm gonna get in the hole.

[Tense string music]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You dive off the path, and swear you come within an inch of feeling the brush of a long traveler's cloak, as boots step right behind you.

[Sound of scattering dirt and rocks]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

But the hole is wider than it first appears, and descends more shallowly, and with more space and comfort than it first seemed.

[Bouncy woodwind music in a minor key]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You dig and pull and scratch till the wild feeling of play and strength comes back to you, and you are running through the tunnel. The heat of fire is behind you, Eursulon. You can smell a forest. There is hope. And suddenly the burrow opens, and you fall.

[Collapsing soil, rushing wind, the choral tones return.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Flame, iridescent, purple, green.

[Magical noise of the intake of breath, a resounding boom.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Ame. For the first time, you watch the sun rising over the cottage, and do not hear the crowing of a rooster.

[Birds chirp in the forest]

Erika Ishii  
I look down, feel myself, is this real? Is it real this time?

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You are standing in a little patch of the yard, a little less grass-ful than the rest. You've seen some teleporters appear in this spot before, it seems like sort of a place in the yard that, almost like the groove of a seat. One person teleported here, and the next person that teleported to the cottage just kind of naturally appeared in this spot because the last person had appeared right here, and it kind of wore a groove in the magical space of the cottage. A little bit less grass. Your Fox in your arms, leaps down to the ground—

The Fox (Brennan)  
Yip!

[Thump of the Fox hitting the ground]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—steaming a bit, the moisture kind of wicking off [mouth sound] so there's a little sort of a singed smell. The Fox goes

The Fox (Brennan)  
Yip!

Ame (Erika)  
How you feeling, Fox?

[Sound of an animal shaking off water]

The Fox (Brennan)  
Hohohohoho, woo! Wow.

Ame (Erika)  
Yeah yeah. Thank you. You did it. Oh, God.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
It is... Eerie strip of orange in the eastern sky. It was broad daylight in the Citadel, but that's partway across the globe. Here in Akham, the sun is just rising.

[Low violin music]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see the image of the cottage, there's cool dew everywhere, hanging on the grass. Bees are not buzzing yet. Chickens and goats are still asleep. It is the quietest time of day. The Fox pads round, sniffing at the ground.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Snuffling, rustling leaves]

The Fox (Brennan)

You okay, boss?

Ame (Erika)

Physically, yeah it seems so.

Erika Ishii

I take stock of myself and of my surroundings.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Your equipment is here. You have the ceramic platform given to you by the Wizard Sly. In your pocket, a little [cricket noise] a little jewel hopper. Seconds tick by.

Ame (Erika)

[Deep breath]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The Fox sniffs at your leg, looking up.

[Snuffling]

Ame (Erika)

I seem okay to you?

The Fox (Brennan)

Yeah, I think so. Where's the rest? Where's Eursulon?

Ame (Erika)

[Sorrowfully] I don't know.

The Fox (Brennan)

Are you okay? I don't think those wizards died. I think they're fine.

Ame (Erika)

[Laughing] I love your optimism, Fox.

The Fox (Brennan)

No, I feel like I look—I looked back and it feels like they're fine, they jumped.

Ame (Erika)

[Laugh]

Erika Ishii

[Close to crying] I just sit on the ground for a second, I collapse.

Ame (Erika)

[Close to crying] Fox, I don't—I don't know where Eursulon is. I don't know where Suvi is, I think—I think I—do you know the expression "burned a bridge?"

The Fox (Brennan)

[Thinking] Burned a bridge...

Ame (Erika)

It means you can't go back.

The Fox (Brennan)

Yeah—oh yeah, yeah.

Ame (Erika)

[Sigh]

The Fox (Brennan)

You think you burned a bridge with Eursulon and Suvi?

Ame (Erika)

At least with the Citadel.

The Fox (Brennan)

Oh.

Ame (Erika)

And if I burned a bridge with the Citadel, then that means that I—I—[Choking sigh] Okay, let's—let's go inside.

[Footsteps on wood, creaking door]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You open the door, and you see the Fox walks into the cottage.

[Claws click clack on wood]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It's dark in here. Smells so familiar. It's your home. There's the carpet where Eursulon slept indoors for the very first time. Where Suvi cast her very first spell, to protect him on the night that he was trapped forever in the mortal world. There's the door that Grandmother Wren walked through, that she'll never walk through again.

Erika Ishii

In my mind, I keep calling it Grandma Wren's cottage [Crying] but it's not. It's mine. I don't like it.

Ame (Erika)

[Crying] Mr. Soup?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You hear a little knock at the door. Tap, tap, tap.

Erika Ishii

I open them.

[Door creaks open]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

A very, very old man, with a round pot belly, a little tweed coat, and a little tweed flat cap and an undershirt, with a big big beard that has a little bit of a stain of some soup in it.

Erika Ishii

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And an old wooden cane. You see, he's got a little bag of onions and a big pot and some ladles and other things like that around him. You see Daomei, the shrine Spirit, wearing his human Glamour.

Ame (Erika)

Daomei.

Mr. Soup (Brennan)

[Softly, kindly] Ame. Welcome home, young one.

Ame (Erika)

Oh!

[Ame runs to hug him]

Mr. Soup (Brennan)

Why don't I get some things ready for a soup? And I've been sitting out here on your front step every day since you left, letting people know you'll be back soon.



Ame (Erika)

Oh, thank you so much. [Sniffle] I'd like to help you with the soup, if I may.

Mr. Soup (Brennan)

Yes, but—

Ame (Erika)

I think it'll help.

Mr. Soup (Brennan)

Alright.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You sit on the front step and help him cut and peel onion, which is very helpful because you're weeping.

Erika Ishii

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see, the Fox goes

The Fox (Brennan)

Pee-ew!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And goes off into the house and starts sniffing around. You see, he comes out to you as you sit on the stoop and says

The Fox (Brennan)

Boss, there's a room that smells a lot like you, is that your room?

Ame (Erika)

Mhm, if it has a little bed nest in there, yeah.

The Fox (Brennan)

Okay. I'm gonna go snooze in there.

Ame (Erika)

Okay yeah, you go take a nap. You've had a big day.

The Fox (Brennan)

I've been working hard.

Ame (Erika)

Yeah, you have.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And he walks off into the room to go to sleep. You and Mr. Soup sit on the stoop.

[Various sounds of making soup]

Erika Ishii

And as we peel, I tell him about my adventures away from the cottage. And it's a little bit scattered and piecemeal, I'm still processing it myself. In some ways, it sort of jumps around a lot. Sort of starting with how I got here and the portal, the fire, the Citadel, I mention that—and then I mentioned the Coven I have to get to and that they had, apparently, sent messages by the cottage that I hadn't been there to receive.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Mr. Soup opens his coat and takes out a number of missives.

[Shuffling papers]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Scrolls, important har—some of them like, written on thick, insect covered scraps of bark, others in beautiful sealed silver envelopes.

Mr. Soup (Brennan)

Eh. Yes. The Coven of Elders has reached out. I told them the nature of your absence. And, you should know, Ame, this is far from the messiest transition. I mean, it's up there.

Ame (Erika)

Mm.

Mr. Soup (Brennan)

But it's not the messiest.

Ame (Erika)

[Sigh] That is a small comfort, yes. Thank you.

Mr. Soup (Brennan)

I can do my best to help you ready yourself, and, you know, for these Covenant meetings, when it's a full conclave, all of the Coven will be there, you know you're allowed to bring a retinue, if you want.

Ame (Erika)

Oh. I mean, I'd really hoped that it would be Suvi and Eursulon. In fact, there seems to be—one of Grandma Wren's true friends told me that if I didn't bring them, I—I—I would... Be destroyed. Or that perhaps—well—

Erika Ishii

And I run down for him my interaction with Sly.

Mr. Soup (Brennan)

Huuh...

Ame (Erika)

Why would they want to get rid of the station of the Witch of the World's Heart?

Mr. Soup (Brennan)

I don't know all of Wren's business, but I know that she was at odds with the Coven for many, many years. There was a plan that she didn't want to go along with, and that she had been searching for a long time to find a way to convince her sisters to do something else, and that she had not been able to.

Ame (Erika)

I have to find out what the plan was, what her plan is, and what she was trying to show to them. And I have less than two days to do it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Give me an insight check.

Erika Ishii

FUCK! That's a Nat 1 on the die.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see that Mr. Soup lowers his face.

Mr. Soup (Brennan)

[Sigh]

Ame (Erika)

What?

Mr. Soup (Brennan)

Well... I'm not really allowed to call you a kid anymore, you're the Witch of the World's Heart.

Ame (Erika)

[Faux machismo] Yeah show some respect.

Mr. Soup (Brennan)

[Chuckle]

Ame (Erika)

Sir.

Mr. Soup (Brennan)

If Grandma Wren had a plan, she would have shared it with you.

Ame (Erika)

[Sigh]

Mr. Soup (Brennan)

She wouldn't have kept her plan hidden, I think—I don't like to speak ill of Grandma Wren, but I think she was coming up with nothing but straws.

Ame (Erika)

Yeah. Okay. Well then, uh, okay, new list. I have to... Figure out what their plan is, and figure out how to oppose them, and find a thing that I don't know what is, or if grandma wren knew what was, to convince them. Oh. The carrots are ready.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see, Mr. Soup gets the soup up and ready.

[More soup noises]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

As you guys get the day's chores started, you see the sun rises over the cottage, you hear birdsong. It's early summer. Crickets. Songbirds. Babbling brook. As you think about how you can get ready in the short time that you have. Probably have a day and a half now?

Erika Ishii

[Sucks breath past teeth.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see walking up into the courtyard is Lohan the Baker. Older now.

Lohan the Baker (Brennan)

Oh! Hey there, friend. Is the Witch of Toma home?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see, Mr. Soup looks over to you.

[Goats bleat in the background.]

Ame (Erika)

Hi, Lohan.

Lohan the Baker (Brennan)

Oh, Ame, you're back! Oh, the village will be so happy to hear it! I thought I'd come by and try you again this week. Bessie has a problem with her hand, it seems like some sort of arthritis or something like that.

Ame (Erika)

Ohh gosh. Yeah, around that age, that happens. I can um—yeah I just—I actually have something for that, a little bit but, you might want to tell folks that I have to be gone again for a bit.

Lohan the Baker (Brennan)

Really?

Ame (Erika)

Yeah.

Lohan the Baker (Brennan)

Oh. Long journey, longer than any Wren took, I think.

Ame (Erika)

Yeah, well, I don't know. I'm getting used to having to do all the kinds of things that she did, and it's taken a little bit of adjustment.

Lohan the Baker (Brennan)

Alright. Well, I don't mean to trouble you, Ame

Ame (Erika)

No, no trouble.

Erika Ishii

I think I go over to the medicine cabinet and I slide it open. There's tinctures and ointments and ground up salves and powders. There should be something that's at least—even just a basic arnica to help with joint pain.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You gather some remedies together, hand them to Lohan. As you hear Lohan walk away, Daomei looks at you and says

Mr. Soup (Brennan)

Well, I've been up out of the shrine for a long time, and if you're going to need me watching the house again, I'd better get some rest.

Ame (Erika)

Yes, please. Thank you so much.

Mr. Soup (Brennan)

Soups on the stove. Take your time and just wake me up again at the shrine—

Ame (Erika)

Mhm.

Mr. Soup (Brennan)

—when you're ready to go.

Ame (Erika)

Yes, thank you. Oh!

Erika Ishii

And I reach in and I get some little rice cakes. I know that he likes.

Mr. Soup (Brennan)

Ooh! Heheheheh hoo hoo hoo!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see, he drops his Glamour, his little sort of porcine Spirit face, he sort of wobbles and dances a little bit with the rice cakes.

Mr. Soup (Brennan)

Heh heh! Thank you.

Ame (Erika)

Thank you.

[Stone grinding on stone]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Vanishes back up in the direction of the shrine. Soft bubbling of soup. House settling. Wind and crickets and songbirds and the little snoozes of a fox. And you are in this house.

Erika Ishii

It's mine. It's mine now. But now I look at it with the eyes of someone who remembers. I remember everything that Grandma Wren told me in this house. All of the secrets that she kept weren't secrets at all. They were things that she brought me up with. And now I remember why she kept the cabinets unlabeled, and where the things that are precious are kept, and what kind of books she would find it necessary to keep, and where. I'd like to look around the cottage, busy myself with finding things. Books about Spirits. A flawless sapphire. The places where Grandma Wren would hold things that were precious and important.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

With a day and a half to prepare, knowing that if Suvi and Eursulon do not join you, according to the Wizard Sly you are doomed. You will take this time to search for answers in this home, and leave Suvi and Eursulon's business to them?

Erika Ishii

I want so badly to reach out to them, but do I know how? Without the secrets of my sanctum, what can I do? How can I find them?

[Soft plucked music]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Realizing that reaching out to your friends is beyond your gifts, you go upstairs, open the cabinets, the drawers, and armoire shelves, and wardrobes that have long been off limits to you, to find what armaments of secret knowledge and hidden lore might help the newly stationed Witch of the World's Heart.

Erika Ishii

There is one more place too, that I especially think of.

Ame (Erika)

Rug. Up.

[Ruffling cloth]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Fast flowing water. As the rug folds at your command, and the trap door opens. Light, dappled like running water, touches your face.

[Soft plucked music transitions into the sound of gallothopter wings and an engine winding down.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Suvi.

Aabria Iyengar

[Nervous groan]

[Erika and Lou chuckle]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

We know where you are!

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah...

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You are standing at the gallothopter pier, having ordered soldiers to bring them to you.

[Buzzing wings, distantly people scream in confusion, reacting to the pillar of flame that erupted last episode.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Five gallothopters, more. And Steel, with the retinue behind her, you see the Brass Wizard Slate behind her, more soldiers, about ten golden armored Wizards of the Sword of the Citadel leap forward. Steel looks at you standing here. What is the expression on your face as she emerges from the gallothopter?

[Imperious droning horns.]

Aabria Iyengar

It is blank. There's not emotion, it is the absolute lack of.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Steel leaps from the ship. Sees you, has a moment of rage and tension, and a moment of "I don't fucking need this," in her face. And she looks at you standing here, completely vacant. She is brilliant. She knows that the order she gave you was to stay. And she sees you staying. And she sees that Eursulon and Ame are not here, looks at the troops behind her, and says

Steel (Brennan)

Fan out. Find the witch. Find the protector.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And she turns and sighs, and looks so tired. And she embraces you and brings your face into the crook of her neck.

Aabria Iyengar

She's sobbing softly, and it's just a litany of

Suvi (Aabria)

[Crying] She believes what the diviner said. She knows that if I don't go, she'll die, but she just left. They left, they didn't care, and there was a fire, they—her rush was due to being in a coma because she couldn't wait, they never wait they don't care.

Steel (Brennan)

It's okay.

Suvi (Aabria)

If I don't go, she'll die.

Steel (Brennan)

What?

Suvi (Aabria)

If what the diviner said is true, if I don't go, she will die.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see that she casts a deeper form of detect magic, something actually quite potent that you don't even fully recognize. She looks at you and goes

Steel (Brennan)

Did you grab her?

Suvi (Aabria)

I tried, I just wanted her to wait for a second. I wanted—

Steel (Brennan)

[Laughing]



Brennan Lee Mulligan  
She sighs into your arm.

Steel (Brennan)  
You're so fuckin' crazy, kid.

Suvi (Aabria)  
What!? Why? What?

Steel (Brennan)  
You're so crazy. I should have been more specific in my orders.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You see that she just touches your head and gives you a kiss on the cheek, and says

Steel (Brennan)  
I gave you the order to stay.

[Gentle piano music]

Steel (Brennan)  
Thanks for following orders, kid. You're a good wizard. Okay. Hey, hey. You did everything you thought was right. I want you to know, I'm not EVEN that angry at Ame right now.

Suvi (Aabria)  
You're going to be madder. There was a big inferno, for a second.

Steel (Brennan)  
Hey, I saw it.

Suvi (Aabria)  
Yeah.

Steel (Brennan)  
The whole Citadel saw it.

Suvi (Aabria)  
Yeah.

Steel (Brennan)  
Timing, bad. Lots of Imperial people here, timing bad. Would have loved the fiasco to wait, I don't know, 36 hours?

Suvi (Aabria)  
Right?

Steel (Brennan)

But. Bottom line. Ame got bad intel. I just have come from Cabani. Ame is acting in a way that makes sense if you're really scared. Ame just woke up from a month long coma, and is really scared. And if I was not totally preoccupied with a million other things, I would have had the time and space to try to calm her down. This is not on you. This is on me, I had a witch in the Citadel, and we couldn't make her comfortable because everything's fuckin' sliding off the deck of the ship.

Suvi (Aabria)

I don't necessarily agree, but it feels better that it's not my fault. So I'm going to let you take this one, thank you very much.

[Aabria and Brennan laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

She looks at you and goes

Steel (Brennan)

Okay, fires put out. No sign of Eursulon. And in fact—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see that she stops. She's getting sendings from other—elsewhere in Xiao.

Steel (Brennan)

No casualties. Eursulon was seen, going into—and he's made. That's alright. Um. Well. Now I've gotta figure out how to tell the truth and lie at the same time, to everybody about why your protector was a Spirit and he was not doing what Spirits do for a while, okay.

Suvi (Aabria)

Uh-huh.

Steel (Brennan)

This is all alright. Ya know? That's—that's the whole joy of wizardry, is as soon as you get good at solving a problem, they give you a new one, so this is what we asked for, and life's not bad actually, life's good.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh] This is what I sound like?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Laugh]

Steel (Brennan)

Let's get in the gallothopter and head home, come on.

Suvi (Aabria)

Hold on, hold on. You said the intel was bad, who did you talk to?

Steel (Brennan)

I talked to Scholar. I talked to the Wizard Scholar, she's been—she was very clear. Look, let's just—let's go—uh. How are you physically right now? Did you get hurt?

Suvi (Aabria)

No.

Steel (Brennan)

Okay. Do you want to go back to your tower, or do you want to go to mine?

Suvi (Aabria)

Yours, please.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

She—

[Magical ringing, clanking armor.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—creates a dimension door, walks through it, takes you with her and goes

Steel (Brennan)

[Calling out] Uh, Sonder? We'd like some—

Suvi (Aabria)

[Crying] Some frozen yogurt.

Steel (Brennan)

We're gonna get some frozen yogurt, and put booze in it.

Suvi (Aabria)

Yeah. [Sobs]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

She walks you up to the balcony.

Steel (Brennan)

[Sigh] Okay. I talked to Scholar, who was able to tell me that Witches have been casting magic into the Citadel. I don't know how we didn't notice it, but we didn't notice it.

Suvi (Aabria)

What do you mean?

Steel (Brennan)

Well, there's—on the night of—

Suvi (Aabria)

Oh! No, I do know what you mean.

Steel (Brennan)

What?

Suvi (Aabria)

The night of my—the namecloak. We were on Gavril, and two ice fairies from Indri, the Witch of... Something with Ws that I'm very sorry I don't remember.

Aabria Iyengar

That's Suvi, not Aabria.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Oh okay, gotcha.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah yeah.

Suvi (Aabria)

That I do not remember, because they all had Ws, sent Ame missives about having to pick a time and a place for this conclave. So that did happen. I forgot. And I forgot it was a bigger deal.

Steel (Brennan)

Okay. Becoming a little bit mad again.

Suvi (Aabria)

No, I understand. I understand.

Steel (Brennan)

Mmkay.

Suvi (Aabria)

It was a big, bad day.

Steel (Brennan)

We just always have to—we just all have to always be saying what we know.

Suvi (Aabria)

Now, in all fairness, I would not have had time because shortly thereafter—

Steel (Brennan)

That's true, no no you're right, you're right.

Suvi (Aabria)

—you were deployed.

Steel (Brennan)

I was deployed. That's correct! That's correct. I need to give you a way to always be in touch with me, so I'm going to figure out how to do that.

Suvi (Aabria)

Yeah.

Steel (Brennan)

Um.

Suvi (Aabria)

Less shatterable, thank you.

Steel (Brennan)

Ha ha ha ha! Okay!

Suvi (Aabria)

That's—

Steel (Brennan)

No, note taken.

Suvi (Aabria)

Spirits are wild, and apparently, we just rock up on 'em all the time.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

She looks at you and says

Steel (Brennan)

Speak to me of this conclave. What is the nature of Ame's Coven?

Suvi (Aabria)

Ame is the Witch of the World's Heart, and makes her the fifth member of the Coven of Elders.

[Tense bowed bass]

Suvi (Aabria)

She is the one tasked with the connection between people, though the rest of their domains speak to nature and the self. Her station could be lost, as well as her life.

Steel (Brennan)

[Sigh] The diviner that you spoke to, in Cabani. Who tried to warn her that she was dead in days.

Suvi (Aabria)

What happens to them if I tell you their name? I trust you with my life. Please tell me the truth.

Steel (Brennan)

[Sigh]

[Piano and flute join]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Steel looks out at the Citadel.

Steel (Brennan)

Wizards are known by their secrets.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

She bites her cheek hard enough that you can tell she's got blood in her mouth, and a tear falls down her cheek.

Steel (Brennan)

I don't know how this place works. I don't know how any of us can trust each other. It feels like every inch I move within this Citadel, someone has a great reason to protect people from accountability, from knowledge, and from clarity. Everybody's got a vested interest in putting up walls and fog in a place whose sole purpose is to bring light to the world.

[Clanking armor]

Steel (Brennan)

What do you think I'm going to do, Suvi? You think I'm going to go find the diviner who was probably ensorcelled or enchanted by a powerful witch of this Coven of Elders, and I'm going to have them beheaded in the square?

Suvi (Aabria)

No.

Steel (Brennan)

And by the way, what if this diviner that you spoke to is nefarious? Is that impossible to conceive of?

Suvi (Aabria)

No.

Aabria Iyengar

Can I make an insight check?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah.

Aabria Iyengar

16.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

She's looking at you, and she is angry. She doesn't know whether the prophecy is true or not true. She has information secondhand from you, and firsthand from this other diviner. And it's possible to trick seers and soothsayers. Some Abjurors wards don't stop the sword, or the fire. Some diviners see things that don't end up being true. There are all these edge cases and marginalia, and you just see that what Steel is furious about, is that she's got an impossible task, and all these moving pieces. Deep in her heart, she's reaching out trying to grab somebody's arm. But she's trying to do it to the whole world.

Steel (Brennan)

Someone in this Citadel wanted a series of things to happen and made it happen. What I'm reacting to isn't even whether that thing was actually wrong, it was why nobody else knew about it. If we had the Witch of the World's Heart in our Citadel, and a member of the Citadel knew that she was going to come to some utter doom, there are a million tools at our disposal to make sure that doesn't happen. To be honest with you, even if I was certain that this prophecy was correct, my suggestion would be to keep Ame here, and have these witches fuckin'—

[Steel and Suvi both chuckle]

Steel (Brennan)

You know.

Suvi (Aabria)

Yeah.

Steel (Brennan)

You see what I'm saying?

Suvi (Aabria)

No, yes, yes.

Steel (Brennan)

The impossible—witches—look, I've always told you to respect witches, and I mean it. I mean it. Because they are subtle, and they move in strange ways, and they pop up where you least expect them, and I always knew that Grandmother Wren was a way bigger deal than she seemed—

Suvi (Aabria)

Yeah.

Steel (Brennan)

—fixing horse hooves in Toma, and now I discover that my suspicions were very correct! What I will say to you here is this. Everybody underestimates Wizards. And they do it in a way that'll drive you crazy if you think about it.

Aabria Iyengar

Suvi's just going to reach out and grab Steel's hand as she gestures. Suvi was resolved to this a minute ago into this rant, that at the end of the day, laying all the pieces on the board, Steel has been there her entire life. In every moment of true crisis that she has experienced with Eursulon and Ame, they have cast her harshly aside. So why, suddenly, would she put away all of the empirical evidence about who to trust and what to do? And she just says

Suvi (Aabria)

The Wizard Sly.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

She narrows her eyes.

Steel (Brennan)

Office of Preemptory Catastrophic Deviation?

Suvi (Aabria)

[In unison] Catastrophic Deviation, yeah. Yeah.

Steel (Brennan)

Why—how did he even get in touch with you?

Suvi (Aabria)

He's the friend of Grandmother Wren's.

Steel (Brennan)

[Confused] He's a—why didn't. I'm a friend of Grandmother Wren's. I'm that. I'm a friend of Grandmother Wren's.

Suvi (Aabria)

Yeah.

Steel (Brennan)

Oh, god. So, what, you were in Cabani getting doners, and you said, hey, do you want to stop an apocalypse that's not going to happen for 400 years?

Suvi (Aabria)

Yeah, something like that.

Steel (Brennan)

Okay. Well, great, I'm glad you met Sly. Okay. Did Sly come here, to Malacanth?



Suvi (Aabria)

No. Once Ame awoke, she remembered everything that was lost to that curse, except for who put it on her. Which, again, I know, is the thing that you—I agree that waiting and doing things right yields better results, I'm—I don't have to get mad because you're mad. You can hold that emotion, and I can just be sad.

Steel (Brennan)

I'm actually—the vibrations of anger have become so furious that now I'm sort of at rage enlightenment.

Suvi (Aabria)

Oh!

Steel (Brennan)

I'm in a new plane.

Suvi (Aabria)

That's good. That's so nice for you!

Steel (Brennan)

I'm in a new plane of being, so I'm good, give it—just pile it on now—

Suvi (Aabria)

Great, yeah.

Steel (Brennan)

—because it's going to all get metabolized.

Suvi (Aabria)

Perfect. So let me feed this fire real quick. Ame woke up with all of her memories intact. She knows who Grandmother Wren's allies are in the Citadel, and we made the rounds to visit them. Well, she made the rounds to visit them, and I got to go to this one.

Aabria Iyengar

Suvi has decided in this moment to lie a little bit.

Suvi (Aabria)

Made the rounds to visit them, and while meeting with Sly, we were made aware of her stakes, and her timeline, and what could happen if Eursulon and I were not with her.

Steel (Brennan)

Okay, that makes sense. So, waking up out of the coma was sort of a brand new Ame, one that had a lifetime of memories.

Suvi (Aabria)

Yes.

Steel (Brennan)

She arrived, and on one of—I'm imagining the day that I was out at Fort Kieran—went around. You went to Sly first?

Suvi (Aabria)

No. The Kasov Collection.

Steel (Brennan)

The Kasov Collection?

Suvi (Aabria)

Yeah.

Steel (Brennan)

Grandma Wren has a friend at the Kasov collection?

Suvi (Aabria)

Yes.

Steel (Brennan)

Who's even—what, in one of the paintings?

Suvi (Aabria)

Pomeroy.

Steel (Brennan)

Ya don't say. Well. That little freak. Yeah, "friend" would be generous, I don't think Wren would call Pomeroy a friend.

Suvi (Aabria)

He's so gross and scary.

Steel (Brennan)

Yeah.

Suvi (Aabria)

He like, wants to be here. He's into this.

Steel (Brennan)

Yeah, I know, we don't—we allow—

Suvi (Aabria)

Why did you—he seems like a liability.

Steel (Brennan)

That wasn't my call.

Suvi (Aabria)

Yeah.

Steel (Brennan)

The conjurers take care of themselves.

Suvi (Aabria)

Buh.

Steel (Brennan)

He's bad. But good to know—now, wait, did Pomeroy's an actual friend of Grandmother Wren?

Suvi (Aabria)

I don't know if friend's the word, but someone Ame needed to know in the Citadel. Existed in the Citadel.

Steel (Brennan)

Wonder why there was a connection between Pomeroy and Grandma Wren. She's a Witch, Spirit, but why would there be a connection there? That's so strange, alright. Well. Good to know.

Suvi (Aabria)

Yep.

Steel (Brennan)

After Pomeroy, where next?

Suvi (Aabria)

Sly.

Steel (Brennan)

How did you get to Cabani from Xiao. The fire!

Suvi (Aabria)

Yeah.

Steel (Brennan)

Okay. I didn't—because there's no—never mind.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Give me an insight check.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah. What the fuck was that? 12.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah, you see a weird. It's like a weird skip in what she's talking about.

Suvi (Aabria)

Hold on. What's that?

Steel (Brennan)

What's what?

Suvi (Aabria)

You did that—you moved past a thing. What happened? What's going on with the fire? Fires?

Steel (Brennan)

Fire—no, I just—because, while that was—we were already beginning to lock down the Citadel, even as Fort Kieran was happening.

Suvi (Aabria)

Oh!

Steel (Brennan)

In a subtler way, so I was just wondering why—but, there's a lot of gallopters and fires and dimension doors and traveling doors and yadda yadda, and there's a lot to keep track of.

Suvi (Aabria)

Sure sure.

Steel (Brennan)

Sly. You talk to him. He, as a pal of Grandmother Wren's gi—what were all the things he said were going to happen to...

Suvi (Aabria)

The big one was, conclave's going to happen with or without Ame in three days time, if she's not there to defend herself her office will be destroyed and her along with it, if I'm not there, she won't survive it and "they won't let me go." Don't know what that means. And in a year, if Eursulon didn't have a shield, both Ame and I would die. So then we went next to my friend Hana, to try to find a shield. And that's the end of that very bad day.

Steel (Brennan)

And that—this was all—this was yesterday?

Suvi (Aabria)

Yep.

Steel (Brennan)

Okay. Alright.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see that she says

Steel (Brennan)

Sly says, "If you're not there, they destroy your station?"

Suvi (Aabria)

Yeah.

Steel (Brennan)

Does that mean they destroy Ame as well?

Suvi (Aabria)

Yes.

Steel (Brennan)

Okay. And where is this conclave happening?

Suvi (Aabria)

The North Pole. Witches are so fucking whimsical.

Steel (Brennan)

I don't think there's anything whimsical about freezing to death, how the hell is Ame going to get there?

Suvi (Aabria)

Okay, calm down, we're in the middle of a fuckin' desert we made.

Steel (Brennan)

Yeah, but we're great at everything, I don't know how these, like—

Suvi (Aabria)

Yeah.

Steel (Brennan)

Did Ame talk about getting, you know, cold weather gear?

Suvi (Aabria)

That's probably why she wanted to go home!

Steel (Brennan)

Alright.

Suvi (Aabria)

I don't know, witches do crazy witch shit, and now she's a full ass witch.

Steel (Brennan)

Does she—but do you know if she has a means of actually getting to this? So was her intention to go back to Toma and then go to this conclave at the North Pole?

Suvi (Aabria)

That's why she was desperate to get to Toma.

Steel (Brennan)

She needed time, okay, that makes sense. She needed time prior to when the conclave was happening, so if she went to Silbury, then she—

Suvi (Aabria)

Can you get me to Silbry? Sorry, I know this is not the question you wanted at the end of this conversation.

Steel (Brennan)

I don't think I can get you to Silbry. Truthfully. I wasn't bullshitting. It's incredibly dangerous to do that kind of teleportation right now. But it's what, we got like two days, a day and a half.

Suvi (Aabria)

Right, but what if she has to go, leave early to get—I don't know how she's going to get there.

Steel (Brennan)

The exact wording of this prophecy. So if you're not there to advise her, what happens?

Suvi (Aabria)

She dies.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You just see Steel running numbers in her head.

Steel (Brennan)

Okay. When you have all the information, that's when you can make the right decision. I can't get you to Silbury, but I think I can do you one better. You want a skyship?

[Pounding drums, which fade out to the echoing sounds of a grotto and gentle strings.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Old stone steps, carved into the bedrock of the hillside itself. Dappled light from water below. One of the earliest memories Ame has of coming to Grandmother Wren's house, was of waking up in her little nest in the middle of the night, looking under the door and seeing the ripple of watery light across the ceiling, the first time Grandmother Wren told the rug to fold itself up, open the trap door, and walk within, down to the river flowing under the house. Deep well of magic.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Ame. You descend the steps. Wooden beams, humble, nailed together, the same style as the rafters and beams of the house above, holding up the stone and earth. And at the final stone step, you see the little lapping of the stream. To duck your head down, you can see just a little of the water [Woosh noise] and here, the light of some bioluminescent moss underneath the water, casting light on the small cavern, so small, this underground river. There is no massive cavern waiting for you here. It is a private space, a small nestled

nook of the welcoming earth, and the water rushing underneath. Ame, you behold it here, in your first visit to the basement of your home, Witch of the World's Heart.

Erika Ishii

I rub my hands as I walk across the smooth stone walls. They're so cool and comforting. It's funny that this whole world existed, right underneath my feet, my whole life—practically my whole life. This is my first time here. I call out.

Ame (Erika)

Hello?

[Rushing wind, bubbling water]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Water rises up, lapse at your feet. Cool, but it does not send a chill through your body as it soaks into and around your feet. You hear voices. They don't speak to you in words.

[Whispering voices]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The whispers simply tell you what they feel, which is recognition, acceptance, sorrow, and comfort. Knowledge of what you have lost. Soft readiness to act with the knowledge you would give them.

Erika Ishii

I hold in my mind the events of the last three months, in that way that's not recounting it word by word, or even seeing it image by image, it's the cloud almost, the amorphous feeling of this monumental time in my life. What I've lost, what I gained. What I threw away. I ask for guidance, and I ask for permission, to take up what Grandmother Wren had left for me.

Ame (Erika)

Please.

[Think of dense heavy wood]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Up above, you hear the rattle of the house as the water rises to your shins. Light.

[Rattling drawers]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You hear drawers unlocking, cabinets opening, trap doors and cupboards shaking. Gifts of the house that had long been secreted away from you. You sense magic at your disposal. No great point of vision, but tools to use. And then the light shows you.

[Shrill piercing noises]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
A mask. Bone white.

Masked Vision (Brennan)

[Dull whisper] Wren. The world has burned before. They cannot be allowed to do this thing. If we do not act now, we will miss our chance.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You hear Grandmother Wren's voice.

Grandmother Wren (Brennan)

There has got to be a way, Marara. There has got to be a way. We cannot be forced to choose between one slaughter or another, forever. I believe that these sides may see a way to live together in harmony.

Marara (Brennan)

Then you are a fool, Wren. I would sooner wager to see mountains bow, and oceans bend their knee, than see the will of wizards debase themselves.

Grandmother Wren (Brennan)

You are wrong, Marara.

[Tense string music]

Grandmother Wren (Brennan)

The times have grown dark, the hour late. But there is nothing I have seen in the world of mortals, or of Spirits, that shows me that there is a path that is wrong to tread. Merely those who tread paths hurtfully, with cruel intention. There is nothing innate to the search for wizardry—there is nothing with—what can it even mean to say that there is an abomination against the natural order of the world? If it exists, then within nature's order, it must—

Marara (Brennan)

[Spitefully] I've heard enough, Wren. Walk in the halls I have walked, see the things I have seen, and tell me that the poison of wizards does not spread so quickly as to choke the life from this world. The hour grows late. What salvation are you hoping to find?

Grandmother Wren (Brennan)

I am hoping to find two hands turned away from weapons of war, of conquest and control, reaching to hold, in and of themselves, the other.

Marara (Brennan)

Hands cannot hold forever, Wren. And choices must be made.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The light fades—

[Magical thump of energy]



Brennan Lee Mulligan

—and you see Wren in the water, her reflection of the time she came here. Her brow wrinkled with fear. What was she afraid of? You hear the ticking of a clock. A tower surrounded by endless white sand. Snow falling gently. A rift. Shattered glass. An ending from beyond which there can be no return.

[A clock ticks, growing in volume until it is the pounding of a great drum.]

Erika Ishii

I know the stakes now. For all of my youth and inexperience, the things I don't know and my mistakes thus far, I have a clarity of purpose, at least, and I have the powers of one of the greatest stations in this world.

[Soft warm plucked strings]

Erika Ishii

I will find these tools that I need. I will find my friends. They'll come with me. I have so little time, and so much to do, but I will get it done. That's what a witch does. There is nothing that cannot be fixed by hard work and care. And I am filled with the aptitude, the experience, and the knowledge, and heart, for both. I run upstairs.

[Steps on stairs, a door opens]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Tools at your disposal. You refresh your supplies, your herbalism kit, those things you need to cast what spells you can.

[The sound of someone taking something out of a backpack.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Gathering what you can to your aid. You feel the house filling you with power. You level up!

Erika Ishii

Guh?

Aabria Iyengar

Oh!

Erika Ishii

[Heavy breathing]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Third level.

[Aabria and Erika shriek.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Night falls. The Fox awakens, comes to help you, even just providing comfort on your lap. Eursulon never arrives. And neither does Suvi. You find, resting on a desk of Grandmother Wren's, is correspondence with the Wizard Stone.

[Cello music starts up. Soft piano joins.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

A flawless sapphire. In the correspondence, you see beloved words of kindness between a Wizard and a Witch. Great workings of magic, when things that the world has conspired to keep apart instead come together. You see talk of a flawless sapphire from a young man named Gult. And you see an enchantment, as the two of them correspond and speak of Stone's acknowledgement that her life was entering a place of such great danger, that she felt that she could not continue unless she could guarantee safety for her child. You see the schematics drawn by a Wizard, with thoughts and critiques offered from a different discipline.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You don't see the messages that Grandmother Wren sent because those would have been in the care of Stone, but you do see Stone's replies that acknowledge the thoughts and feelings of Grandmother Wren. A pendant, capable of hiding her child from the greatest of Spirits, and in fact, only Great Spirits, that small Spirits might be able to be befriended by her child and see her, but that Great Spirits would never be able to see her. And you remember the shrine of Orima.

Erika Ishii

She put herself on mute.

[Aabria and Brennan laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

That would also protect her from the scrying of the Citadel.

Erika Ishii

Oh.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see various and sundry talismans and tokens, and also laid out on your bed, describe for me the clothes that you will wear going to the far north of this world.

Erika Ishii

Laid out on Grandmother Wren's—on my bed, under the watchful gaze of that creepy green man, that always unsettled me so deeply as a child but now offers comfort with his vigilance, I find a gown.

[Orchestral strings]

Erika Ishii

Similar in structure to my normal little red and white Witch's uniform, with the long sleeves and the tunic robe. A longer skirt, and longer stockings to go under it. So light, like silk, but somehow warm. It's all pure

white, like snow. I'll disappear in a snowy background in these. Just in the way that ermine turn white when the season changes. I fold it over me. The panels of my cloak, left over right. I put on the underskirt, the stockings. I tie the white belt around my waist, with all my pouches, now which have faded, devoid of color. It's almost a little too warm for this summer day here.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You have the ermine on. The day is fading. The Fox comes up to you, you hear a knock at the door.

Ame (Erika)

Hello?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Muffled] Sorry, Ame. It's just me. I came down from the shrine early.

Ame (Erika)

Oh, no, nonono, I was going to go up to see you.

Erika Ishii

I go down and I open the door.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Wearing his Glamour again, you see Daomei.

Ame (Erika)

Daomei is there anyone else that you can help enlist the aid of? Any friends? Other Spirits? People from the village?

Mr. Soup (Brennan)

Ehh. Folks from the village got problems enough on their own with—well, without having a witch around. I'll be alright looking after the house. Maybe you'll get a chance to come back and wake up some of the other Spirits around. I mean, Wren just didn't need that much help. She had you.

Ame (Erika)

Oh, yes, that's true. I can do that, can't I?

Mr. Soup (Brennan)

Well, Ms. Ame, I think you can do pretty much anything you set your mind to, just with enough care and hard work.

Ame (Erika)

[Laugh]

Erika Ishii

Do I know, off the top of my head, how long and how much effort it would take to awaken some local Spirits?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I don't know. Give me a nature roll.

Erika Ishii

17.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I think—the wilder Spirits farther afield, I don't know if you would know how to go wake them up, but you feel like, well, you're the Witch of the World's Heart. You hear bees buzzing in the hives nearby, and there are some goats out in the pen.

Erika Ishii

I close my eyes and I think... They don't have to be great Spirits, they don't have to be guardians. But everything here, and as I saw in the Citadel, even things not of nature have a Spirit. And I ask them if they could help. I don't know if I'm going to be coming back, or if there will be another Witch of Toma, or of the council. I want to leave this place, in the event that I don't return, to the people of Toma and to all those who need its aid. Can I ask the house that? Can I ask the bees and the goats, and the trees nearby, the wind in the village?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The bees buzz. You hear the goats [clip clop mouth noises] come out of their little wooden plank into the pen. Out in the garden, little scarecrow swings in the wind, up above that rooster weather vein with the long forked tail. Daomei looks around, and he looks out to the garden. You see, he goes

Mr. Soup (Brennan)

Elbeth?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And coming out from the beehive, you see a farm woman. A dress of yellow and black checkers, a white apron. One of her canine teeth, as she licks her lips, is a little longer and sharper than the other one. Thick black eyebrows, olive skin, black hair tied under a black and yellow checkered bandana. She goes

Elbeth (Brennan)

Daomei, you old so and so! It's been too long! That Wren was tired near the end.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And, you see, he says

Mr. Soup (Brennan)

[Grumpily] I won't have any words spoken against Grandmother Wren, not here, not now!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And she comes up and says

Elbeth (Brennan)

I'm awake, I'm awake. What's your name. Woah, sorry! Don't tell me your name! What might I call you?

Ame (Erika)

Oh, thank you. Ame. Witch of Toma.

Elbeth (Brennan)

Witch of Toma. But maybe not.

Ame (Erika)

But maybe not.

Elbeth (Brennan)

Well, we'll see about that.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you see, she says

Elbeth (Brennan)

[Sniff] I can smell it here. Kitchen smells like a mess.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you see that she walks in and says

Elbeth (Brennan)

Alright. The village needs its food.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you suddenly hear

[Fluttering of cloth, creaking wood]

Scarecrow (Brennan)

I'd appreciate mightily a hand gettin' down!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you see the scarecrow flopping in the wind.

Ame (Erika)

Henohenomohe!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

What'd you say?

Erika Ishii

Henohenomohe.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Henohenomohe?

Erika Ishii  
It's like they do a little—it's the Japanese hiragana, and it looks like a little face?

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Yes.

Erika Ishii  
Little eyebrows and eyes and a nose and a mouth. It's often drawn on scarecrows, or little doodle faces.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You see that the scarecrow, Henohenomohe, is sort of waving up there, sort of got the pole on his back, he's got—his sleeves are buttoned up, and he's got buttoned up pant legs and, describe what else? That's his face. What are the clothes that comprise Henohenomohe?

Erika Ishii  
He's wearing oversized overalls. They're orange. And he's wearing big old wader boots that stick out at odd angles. His shirt is, at this point, just stripy rags, but he always gets a little fresh stuffing of hay, you know, every month or so. And it's summer, so he's at his plumpest.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Daomei says

Mr. Soup (Brennan)  
Mohe!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And goes over, and gets him down. You see, he pulls the little pole that he's on off the ground and shoulders it. And you see, he looks around and says

Henohenomohe (Brennan)  
Ah! A pleasure and an honor. Aww, I can't believe it. I've been looking after you since you were little—[Choking cough]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And coughs up some, like what looks like a rock or something that's in his head

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Agh, some hay. It's a pleasure.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
He does this big floppy bow.

Erika Ishii

Aw, I used to talk to you a lot. I didn't know that you'd be able to talk back—[Interrogating] Did you hear everything? What did you hear?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

He says

Henohenomohe (Brennan)

Aww, nothing I repeated to nobody seein' as I can't talk unless you wake me up!

Erika Ishii

Okay, well, see that it stays that way.

Henohenomohe (Brennan)

I've appreciated the c-company. C-c-crows aren't always so k-kind.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see that Elbeth says

Elbeth (Brennan)

Well, Mohe why don't you do what you do best and go make sure that no demons come in?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you see, he says

Henohenomohe (Brennan)

You g-g-got it!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And walks off. You see this sort of ancient—a goat goes, and knocks the pen door open, and as the goat steps out, it stands up and is a burly old man, who you see—he's got a little button nose, two big eyes that are made even bigger with the spectacles on his nose. He's got two horns on his head and a wisp of a beard with no mustache. And you see, he's carrying a little doctor's bag. Walks out with this little blue blazer.

Erika Ishii

[Extremely muffled] AGH!!! Where did he get a goat blazer!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see, he walks out and says

Doctor Yagi (Brennan)

Baaa, pleasure to meet you, I'm Doctor Yagi.

Ame (Erika)

Oh, it's an absolute honor, Doctor.

Doctor Yagi (Brennan)

Pleasure, pleasure. My understanding is you attend to the people of Toma as a physician.

Ame (Erika)

Usually.

Doctor Yagi (Brennan)

Well, seeing as your absence may be marked for some time, I don't see any reason that I shouldn't help out.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see Henohenomohe, Elbeth, Daomei, and now Doctor Yagi all sort of appear as you've woken up the Spirits of the yard.

Ame (Erika)

Ough! Thank you so much!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The Fox looks up at you and says

The Fox (Brennan)

You know all these people?

Ame (Erika)

Well, I just met them today. Did you know these people?

The Fox (Brennan)

Haaaahaha! I'm an animal!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see Doctor Yagi looks and says

Doctor Yagi (Brennan)

Well, I know you have your work cut out for you. We'll see after Toma while you're gone, and try to keep the house in one piece until you get back, baaa.

Ame (Erika)

Ohh, thank you so much!

Erika Ishii

And I send a little message out—I have a little scroll, just through the usual ways, telling the people of Toma, you know, about our new friends, and to treat them as honored guests, and trust in them as they would trust in me.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Mhm. You see, Elbeth gets to work in the kitchen. Henohenomohe is sort of like looking out around the garden. You see, he's helping Doctor Yagi carry a little picnic table out of a shed. Daomei sort of laughs,



cutting potatoes on the stoop of the house. And you hear the buzzing of bees, chirping of crickets as you and the Fox go back inside.

Erika Ishii

I'm ready. And I do leave a note for Suvi and Eursulon, just in case they do make it back to Toma. And I tell them I'm sorry, and that I have to go do my duty, and that I love them so much.

Ame (Erika)

Hey, Fox.

The Fox (Brennan)

Yeah, boss?

Ame (Erika)

[Sigh] You ready?

The Fox (Brennan)

No.

Ame (Erika)

You gonna come anyway?

The Fox (Brennan)

Oh yeah.

Ame (Erika)

Okay. Me too.

The Fox (Brennan)

Hey, boss.

Ame (Erika)

Yeah, Fox?

The Fox (Brennan)

I think you're the best Witch ever. And I'm gonna say that to every witch we meet, right to their face.

Ame (Erika)

You are the best Fox who ever lived.

The Fox (Brennan)

I know it! Yip!

Ame (Erika)

I put down the ceramic dish.

[Mystical ringing]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Hits the floor of the cottage. You see a Billy Goat Spirit, a Stream Spirit, a Scarecrow Spirit, and a Bee Spirit, all in your kitchen, looking out and nodding, as light pours out from under the rug.

Ame (Erika)

Thank you.

Erika Ishii

I step on it and I say

Ame (Erika)

[Echoing with power] I am Ame, the Witch of the World's Heart. And I seek conclave with my sisters.

[Deep magical boom]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Frost. Light. Mist. Energy. [Intake of breath] Runes appear. The spellwork of the Wizard Sly. [Snaps fingers, pew noise] Light covers you and the Fox, and there's a flash of cold and white.

[Reverberating metallic tone]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

All things occurring as they have been seen. With perhaps one or two tricks, just to keep the story interesting. Eursulon.

[Rushing wind in dense foliage. Strange animal noises.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You fall and land.

[Heavy thump]

Eursulon (Lou)

Ugh.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Strange smells, unfamiliar, deep forest, wet earth, boots in hand, your Glamour dropped. Give me perception.

Lou Wilson

16.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Swamp, marsh, jungle. Some mixture of the three. Smell of rotting vegetation, water logged, thick vines, trees around you, unfamiliar, unlike Akham. You are still within Umora. Things are moving. Do you stay, one hand on the ground, or do you stand?

Lou Wilson

I'm going to stay, and use divine sense to kind of open, connect with my Breath, and sense if there are other Spirits in this place.

[Slowly building, trembling, wailing pipes]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You spent a lot of time in Akham. Forests, towns, hints of the Spirit, there and back again. Eursulon has met Spirits, and he's met mortals. But what happens when one melds with the other? What happens when the Spirit is trapped within the Real, and left to fester? Eursulon's never met monsters before. Now things are moving towards you quickly in the darkness. You hear them moving through the forest.

Lou Wilson

I'm going to stand, and hoist my shield and draw Wavebreaker.

[Clear ring of steel]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

They smell like they were Spirits once, or maybe... Maybe something else. The realm of Spirits is full of mountains and of streams, of forests and stones, it has its horses and its birds that sing. It has its beasts, too. Not like you. Not like the children of the Great Bear that are named and speak and talk and think. Sometimes, when Spirits become wayshadowed like you, they are able to hide under human Glamour, but not all beings of the Spirit world are so fortunate. What happens when a beast, truly a beast, of the Spirit world, becomes wayshadowed like you? Sometimes they survive. And sometimes their descendants live on. [Thrumming inhalation, sudden yell] Three beasts close into the circle with you. Give me an insight check, difficulty 20.

Lou Wilson

Fuckin' 19.

Aabria Iyengar

No-uh!

Lou Wilson

Straight up 19.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Roll initiative.

Lou Wilson

18 Initiative.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Three shapes, beasts, charge out of here. Your divine sense—oh no, you had your divine sense on, so you can sense only their shapes, but not the environment around you. As you stand, they [Wailing yell] scream out, leaping towards you with long clawed hands.

Lou Wilson

I'm going to bonus action wrathful smite, and square up

Eursulon (Lou)

[Snarl] Back!

Lou Wilson

And swing.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Go for it.

Lou Wilson

19 on the die for a 26.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

That is a hit.

[Ring of steel]

Lou Wilson

24 points of damage.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

What you see before you is a simian feline monstrosity. Something like a baboon and a panther, if the skin was pulled back from the face to expose skull and blood and muscle, with wild eyes, bloodshot with sleeplessness, from a creature that cannot rest. You see green scales, with mottled, sickening splotches of gray fur, like a thing that is made rank, as though its own scaly hide is itself a series of lesions or diseases that crushes it. You see it leap forward with elongated arms, extra jointed, as though given some uneven number of elbows on an arm stretching towards you. Describe how Eursulon destroys this thing.

Lou Wilson

Coming from below, swing up. I think as the blade makes contact, there is that familiar smell of honey, that ethereal honey scent, that then gives way to just that rank musk of a predator approaching prey, that fills both Eursulon's—like, takes over Eursulon's senses, and is communicated to this beast as he essentially, I think, guts it from stomach through, up through the head.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The lead beast is immediately eviscerated, the following two leap upon you. That is a hit and a crit. From the first, you take 3 points of damage, and the other one strikes you with a Natural 20 on the die, dealing 8 points of damage.

Lou Wilson

At 11 hit points.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Raking across [Ape scream] you see that one of them goes and sinks deep claws into your chest and rips a chunk of your flesh out of your torso from—

Eursulon (Lou)

Agh! Ah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

As it does so, you see it pulls something off, and attempts to crush it into the ground, smashing it over and over, destroying its own fist out of a sense of berserk fury, it is your turn to act

Lou Wilson

The smashing thing, that's—do I perceive that to be just its own unnaturalness? Or is that somehow—does that somehow affect—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It grabbed something off of you.

Lou Wilson

Okay, can I perception check for what it was?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You will be taking your action to do it.

Lou Wilson

Well, then, no, I'm gonna kill that one. I want whatever it is back, so I'll swing on it. 23 to hit.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

That is a hit.

Lou Wilson

11 points of damage on the second strike.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You reach forward, and the one that is smashing to the ground has dropped its guard and you behead it.

[Swinging blade, thump]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Wavebreaker comes down. There is one left that is going to attack you. With only one opponent left, this thing leaps and you put your shield in between you and it, and throw it off of you back to the ground.

[Clanging steel, thump]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It is your turn.

Lou Wilson

That does not hit. It's a Natural 1.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You swing, this beast leaps back. [Snarl] You have a moment as it leaps back to look down at the ground, at the open, bloody fist of this creature. You see it holding the badge of the Citadel, ripped off your chest. Do you hesitate in this moment? It is your turn, once again.

Lou Wilson

I do.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

This thing leaps at you. It misses again, you step to the side and bat it off with your shield. Not surrounded, not being able to be flanked anymore, these things are horrifying, but you look at them and go, oh, this thing probably weighs 120 pounds. I'm bigger than this.

Lou Wilson

I'm going to keep my shield in between us.

Eursulon (Lou)

I am not of the Citadel.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Snarl] Give me either intimidation or persuasion.

Lou Wilson

Give you intimidation. 24.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Phew! This thing [Primate yell] you don't think it can speak, you think this is a beast. This is not like you meeting other people out in the world. This is like you've come across a yard with like, attack dogs in it.

Lou Wilson

Mhm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

There's like, a feeling of this thing sensing you're a bigger, stronger animal and [Snarl] backing down. And it looks at the pin, it looks at the badge of the Citadel in the hand of its sort of like, packmate.

Lou Wilson

I'm going to sheath Wavebreaker and put my hand up.

[Ring of steel]

Eursulon (Lou)

I am not of the Citadel.

[Thunder cracks]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

In the distance, maybe like, less than half a mile away, your whole world spins into insanity, as a wall of fire spreads across the horizon.

[Low choral voices, the roar of distant flame]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see a shape in clouds above that for a second, you swear to god you see wings wider than the sky, as a thing disappears in storm clouds, lightning crackles and the edge of forest is just alight in fire. [WOOSH]

The wall fades, but you see the dim haze of fire in the distance, now, seemingly farther away, but just hell in that direction.

Lou Wilson

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The beast cowers, looking in surprise as well. [Ape noise]

Eursulon (Lou)

Do you know Kalaya?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It comes back to you. The speech of beast and leaf.

Lou Wilson

Oh! [Chuckle] That's right.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You say, Kalaya, and the thing goes [Primate gasp] It bolts off into the woods.

Lou Wilson

I chase after it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

This thing moves through the woods for so long. It gets up to a sudden—it stops looking surprised? Eursulon, you look out over ash and ruin. An expanse. [Whoosh] You see skies filled with clouds, and then you realize it's not clouds, it's smoke. You look from a cliff high above.

[Distant booms and thunder]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

This jungle is perched somewhere high, high, high in the air. Looking down, you see lights, towns and cities.

[Booming noise of skyships]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Skyships descending. Fire. With your keen eyes, you look down. In an eruption of flame, one of the flags of Gaothmai erupts in fire. The beast [Yawp] looks up, and scuttles back into the forest, seeming to know another way to where it was going.

Lou Wilson

I follow it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You move.

[Rustling leaves]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

After perhaps an hour's journey, you cross a river, find a way deep into some canyons. The sound of bombardment, of smoke and fire, fades away. You're at the base of some kind of ravine, crisscrossed by ancient tree roots. Smells like clean water down here, deep earth, minerals have filtered the rain and a clear brook moves, and you arrive as the ravine opens up. In the deep earth, you see roots of ancient trees. And here, seemingly impossibly, in this deep ravine with almost no sunlight, you see a massive tree.

[Gently flowing water, a soft clarinet plays]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Red leaves. Blue fruit. There are windows set into the tree, a beautiful door. The beast goes, and [Pew] An abjuration. The beast cannot approach. But you see it snarls at you and headbutts you in the butt, like to push you towards the tree.

Eursulon (Lou)

Oh! Stop.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Ape call] The thing sprints back up out of the ravine, loping on all fours.



Lou Wilson

I turn to face the house, and look at my shield.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It looks the same.

Lou Wilson

I go to knock on the door.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Stepping towards the tree—as you step past this threshold, you suddenly see grass on the ground. This ravine, small stream, this place is abjured powerfully. Illusion, the ravine, something keeps this place hidden. You look up to try to see the canyon walls that revealed this place, but you actually see this tree just, in a small glade of the jungle, kept safe somehow. Other trees around it bearing fruit. Bananas, mango. You see soft grass, this little cottage built into this tree. You hear some laughter, and from up above there's like a small tree house in like the upper branches with like a little string of pieces of paper, like of a kite's tail?

[Sound of children playing]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you hear some scuffling up there, and a ball falls out, bounces across the yard. And you hear some scuttling and some kids jump down. You see there are two younger children who run out across the yard. They look, for all the world, kind of like they're related to Suverin Kedberiket. You see these two kids run out, except that they—in their black hair, there are stripes of white going back, and you see they run out and each look up and suddenly see you and go

Children (Brennan)

[Gasp]

Eursulon (Lou)

Um.

Children (Brennan)

[Calling] Uh, mom?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And they both run to the door as fast as they can.

Lou Wilson

I chase after them.

Eursulon (Lou)

Wait, wait!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

They get in the door and they say

Children (Brennan)

Put the illusions up! Put the illusions up!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you see that as they rush in, you see there's a woman who steps out. You see, it's sort of like a mid-30s black woman, she's got like a gown on. You see, she comes out and has a frying pan in her hand.

Erika Ishii

[Gasping yell]

Pan-Wielding Woman (Brennan)

Get in, kids. It's alright.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

She steps out, sees you and says

Pan-Wielding Woman (Brennan)

Sir, I don't know how you found this place, but please—

Eursulon (Lou)

My name is Eursulon. I'm looking for my sister.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

She looks at you—you're not wearing your Glamour, right?

Lou Wilson

No.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

She looks at you with no Glamour, and you see she doesn't drop her Glamour. She does look like this, like a human with some features. But you see that she actually changes, almost like a lycanthrope or like a werebeing.

[Clicking sounds, soft clarinet]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

She changes into a more badger like form. Tall, broad, furry, looking at you and says

Pan-Wielding Woman (Brennan)

Come inside quickly. Please. Come come come.

Eursulon (Lou)

Oh, okay yes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

She takes your hand, brings you in the door. The family's looking around and talking. You hear them saying, [mimicking many whispers] "Eursulon? Eursulon?"

[Baby laughing, crowd murmuring. Soft gentle ambient music.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And they bring you in as you walk into this tree, enormous, like a baobab, massive massive tree. Brings you back. In an ancient round bed, with a quilt of patchwork, there is an ancient woman. Hair of her head gone white.

Pan-Wielding Woman (Brennan)

Grandma?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you see a woman looks up at you. A little bit of rheumatism in her eyes.

Kalaya (Brennan)

Eursulon. Eursulon.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Her Glamour fades. A very old badger lying in a bed looks up.

Kalaya (Brennan)

[Gasp] Is it really you?

Eursulon (Lou)

[Stunned silence] Yes! Yes, Kalaya.

Lou Wilson

I'm going to drop my shield. Approach the bed.

Eursulon (Lou)

You're...

Kalaya (Brennan)

Ohhh... Ohhhh, it's the happiest day.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see that she holds a very feeble paw out to you.

Kalaya (Brennan)

[Heavy breathing]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And takes your paw in hers, takes your hand. She goes,

Kalaya (Brennan)

You... You're so tall. Weren't you a little roly poly cub?

Eursulon (Lou)

Well, I've—I've grown. I can't believe I—I was at the Citadel.

Kalaya (Brennan)

Did you find it? Did you find the little burrow I left in the side of all their comings and goings?

Eursulon (Lou)

I did.

Kalaya (Brennan)

I spent a lifetime of mortals looking for you. Did I—did I get it wrong?

Eursulon (Lou)

No... I—I—whatever space exists between where we're from, and where we are, I believe I may have spent more time there than you did. I came AFTER you.

Kalaya (Brennan)

Ohh...

Eursulon (Lou)

I've only been here—

Kalaya (Brennan)

Ohh..!

Eursulon (Lou)

—for 20 some odd years.

Kalaya (Brennan)

[Crying] I'm so happy.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see as she hugs you, she says

Kalaya (Brennan)

I thought—it was so much worse if it was the other way. I thought there was a world where you died at Starling Ford. I thought there was a world where I was too late, it's all okay if I was too early.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see, she just starts sobbing, and embraces you.

Lou Wilson

I think I just lay there and hold her.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see she smiles and says

Kalaya (Brennan)

I learned so much magic just to try and find you. And you weren't hidden away. You were just a little late. You were on your way this whole time. I'm so happy you found me.

Lou Wilson

And I think Eursulon holds—kind of even more, kind of envelops Kalaya.

Eursulon (Lou)

I don't—feels—only two days ago I found out you'd ever crossed over. It's—I can't believe you went through all that you did. I'm sorry, I didn't—

Kalaya (Brennan)

[Softly] You don't have to be sorry. You don't have to be sorry. We're Spirits. We're Wild Ones.

Eursulon (Lou)

[Sad chuckle]

Kalaya (Brennan)

You chose to run, and so did I! And I've lived a wild life, my brother. My little brother, no matter how big you get. I missed you so much.

Eursulon (Lou)

I mean, I—I cannot stay for long.

Kalaya (Brennan)

No. No you cannot. And there's a lot to tell you about this strange world.

Eursulon (Lou)

But I would stay here a moment, and meet all of these people.

Kalaya (Brennan)

I—I had kids with humans.

Eursulon (Lou)

[Laughing] What?

Kalaya (Brennan)

I had kids with humans. You're not supposed to do it, but it's hard. You fall in love.

Eursulon (Lou)  
Multiple humans?

Kalaya (Brennan)  
Well, I have an ex husband.

Eursulon (Lou)  
Oh ho ho ho ho ho!

Kalaya (Brennan)  
There's so much to tell you. Wait! Wait. I'm getting up!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And you turn to see a weeping family of half Spirits behind you go "Grandma, no!"

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And she's like

Lou Wilson  
She can do it. She can do it!

Kalaya (Brennan)  
Where—I've stolen so much magic stuff, and I'm going to give all of it to you.

Eursulon (Lou)  
[Laugh]

Kalaya (Brennan)  
[Cheering] This is my little brother!

Lou Wilson  
I'm gonna pick her up.

[Triumphant swell of soft horn music]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
She clasps you.

Kalaya (Brennan)  
My little brother! He was on his way! I lived a life of mortals, and you were always on your way. You are on the right, track.

[Music fades out and is replaced with roaring tempestuous winds. Brash adventurous music bellows just under the wind]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Blinding snow, whistling wind. Harsh night illuminated from wild lamps.

[Whooshing]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

No ground, no sky, no mountains or plains to either side, just endless snow, rushing past, faster than the wind [Whoosh] as we see the deck of The Meridian. Its frost white blimp, and endless riggings, and ropes. You see crew members hacking away at the ice forming on the ropes, a alchemical artificer's lamp, blasting out in the blinding snow, the light barely helps as the snow blasts forth, as this skyship races through the arctic winds, and we see a figure tied to a mast so as not to go over in the sudden movements of the harsh winds move back to the helm, crying out the crew member of this, The Meridian, calls back.

Meridian Crewman (Brennan)

[Calling out over roaring wind] Mistress! We've just crossed the Boreatic Parallel! We should be there in less than an hour's time. Wizard Sky will be putting down at once.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And we see at the helm the Wizard Sky. Aabria, please describe your character, as she is aboard HER skyship, hurtling towards the North Pole.

Aabria Iyengar

Suverin Kedberiket, the Wizard Sky, stands in a massive black coat, lined on the inside with jet black fur. It is like midnight, because the sky is not dark blue, it is black here. And, at that note from her crew member, she stamps her staff, glowing in the lights and hectic world around her, once on the deck of her ship, and I cast mage armor.

[Magical chime]

Aabria Iyengar

And the light that reflects and refracts off of her, over her, if you knew, if you watched the interplay of Aurora Borealis lights dancing across the invisible glass, you would know that that is Steel's armor. This is a wizard of the Citadel, and she is coming, with all the strength of her home behind her, and she looks out and forward, and any bit of snow that touches her clothing, or her face, or her hair melts away immediately, I will not be touched by this world, or any other, without my permission again.

[Blaring horns.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Ship of the Empire approaches the top of the world, at the coming hour, that has been foretold, where Witches meet, the Empire stretches, and far away, the World of Spirits waits and watches, for what will come next.

[Horns fade out to a descending series of piano chords. 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 from Michael Ghelfi Studios. For even more like this, join us on our Patreon. We'll see you there.

[Waltz fades out]