

# Worlds Beyond Number

## The Wizard, the Witch, and the Wild One: Episode 12 “Prisoner’s Dilemma” Final Version

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

Erika Ishii

This is the sound of world beyond number

[The other instruments fade into a lone flute and violin pluck]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Courtyard. Stones flecked with small veins of mica decorate the courtyard of the barracks of the Azure Battalion. A squat, rectangular building, nevertheless painted using arcane illusory magic, with a deep lapis lazuli exterior, its windows gilded with gold. And assembled in the courtyard is a massive, gilded standing mirror, positioned about 20ft or so from an ornate carriage. Behind the mirror stands the Abjurer Galani, of the Citadel.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And around you, sort of near the wagon that had just come here from the Witchfire wasteland outside of Port Talon, are about 40 armed members of the Azure Battalion, including Sergeant Laplau with their Imperial war staves shouldered, standing at attention as Steel, Sword of the Citadel, on the deck of a ship. But as you look at the deck of the ship, you can see that the gunnels curve inwards. There’s a deep, almost midnight, like, pitch black ebony wood on the surface of the deck. The polish or varnish of the wood, very reflective and glossy.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The gunnels of that ship curve inward and you see it project a sort of scintillating purple haze above the gunnel, almost like the base of a stove fire. And you can tell that there is a projected field of arcane force covering the deck of a ship flashing through the sky. Some wind still sort of seeps through. You can see that Steel’s hair moves around, but at the speed the ship is moving, anyone standing on the deck would be flung out of the sky. In a ship, it’d be like standing on the wing of an airplane.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see Steel, the white streaks across her face, her auburn hair tied up in a bun, white cloak over golden armor, spell book and sword at her side, who’s towering over you. She’s only about like five foot seven, but she is close to this projected mirror, so she’s towering over the courtyard.

Steel [Brennan]

We’re doing this right here, right now. Abjurer Galani, are you present?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see, Galani catches; you can tell that she has, like, fear dry mouth and goes

Abjurer Galani [Brennan]

yes, yes, please produce the telemet and place it in front of the prisoners.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you see Galani rushes to the carriage, comes out with a small purple cushioned podium. It’s almost like a lectern, but it just has a little circular velvet cushion on top. And she opens a small cubed treasure chest, like very angular, but still with, like, brass rivets and leather, opens it up and produces a perfectly mirrored orb, a completely reflective orb. Places it on the cushion. Anyone who would like to can make an arcana check?

Aabria Iyengar

Yes, please! [quickly] Oh, no.

Lou Wilson  
The telemet? No.

Erika Ishii  
[Flatly] Nat one.

Lou Wilson  
Not the telemet!

Aabria Iyengar  
19.

Lou Wilson  
I got a 15.

Aabria Iyengar  
Okay!

Lou Wilson  
Oh, the telemet. Oh, I know the telemet.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You know a magic thing when you see it, and you can see that it's reflecting things in all directions. And I think on a 15, Eursulon has just an instinctive sense of that's for her to do magic here.

Lou Wilson  
Eursulon is going to take a half step, kind of not, he's obviously not trying to put Ame in the way of danger, but is going to kind of move his massive frame behind her.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You know a telemet, it's not something that you've ever used before, but basically these speaking mirrors, of which this is like you had a small one. This is like a massive one. The telemet allows casting through the mirror, but she has one, and then there's one over here. You see that a similar cushion with a telemet sphere is set up. Basically, one of Steel's like, citadel soldiers comes and places one, like sort of, war mages comes and places one in front of her. She places a hand on it.

[A gong cuts Brennan off]

Suvi [Aabria]  
Hold on. [Heavy breathing] Okay, uh, hey, I want to say one thing before whatever happens, happens. And I want to be very clear, with all due respect, you are the Sword of the Citadel and wise and just, but two of the prisoners here were arrested because they were believed to be spirits fleeing into the city. That is absolutely and provably untrue. So whatever comes, it is only right and just that you let them go.

Steel [Brennan]  
Do you imagine I'm about to do something unjust, Apprentice Archmage?

Suvi [Aabria]  
I do not presume to know your mind in this moment.

Steel [Brennan]  
Do you imagine there is any world where I would do something unjust?

Suvi [Aabria]  
No.

Steel [Brennan]

So it seems a pretty foolish warning to give then, doesn't it?

Suvi [Aabria]

I would say it again.

Steel [Brennan]

Everyone put your hands on the telemet sphere in front of you.

Eursulon [Lou]

Us? You mean us?

Steel [Brennan]

The assembled prisoners, yes.

Aabria Iyengar

Suvi does it.

[Gong]

Lou Wilson

Eursulon does it

[Gong]

Ame [Erika]

What are you going to do?

Steel [Brennan]

Witch of Toma. I am going to ask you to submit to a spell that will allow me to read your thoughts. There has been a great deal of chicanery, insubordination, and if we are being honest, treason. Now, you don't have to submit to this if you don't want to. The alternative is, we will place you in prison. You broke curfew and were found traveling across the Witchfire Wastes, having ventured into the extremely dangerous plant infested lands outside of Port Talon. When guards told you that that was not allowed, I believe you, Witch of Toma, snuck into a military wagon to stow away and gain passage through the wall breaking curfew, that's correct?

Ame [Erika]

You don't want to know why we did that.

Steel [Brennan]

Oh, I do want to know why, which is what the psychic magic is for.

Ame [Erika]

You don't trust Suvi, your ward, enough—

Steel [Brennan]

[Shouting] I don't trust people who lie to me. I think that's pretty reasonable.

Erika Ishii

I look at Eursulon.

Lou Wilson

My hands already on the telemet.

Steel [Brennan]

You don't have to submit. If you choose not to, you will be in prison. That's all. If you tell me the truth, then the idea is that all of you are free in minutes.

Ame [Erika]

I trust you

Erika Ishii

And I put my hands on the orb.

[Gong sound]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see she whispers some words to herself in the Lingua Arcana, off hand flicks a little bit. You can see the tendons are like very developed in her left hand because she always has her sword in her right. So her left hand is her spell casting hand. And all of you simultaneously hear a voice in your mind. The following conversations are occurring simultaneously as Steel effectively wants to hear each of you tell the story independently.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Though you can still see the courtyard around you, you can see the mirror, you can see Steel. There is almost as if sound were so intimate and so interior to your mind that it was able to construct shapes that you were able to see, as creatures do, that only use sound to see. And an image of her face swims into focus in your mind's eye, outlined in pale blue light.

Steel [Brennan]

Witch of Toma

Ame [Erika]

Ame.

Steel [Brennan]

Hello Ame. I use your title of address as a means of respect. I understand that you have seen me quite furious. I am doing my best to calm myself. My fury is not directed at you.

Ame [Erika]

I know you are worried about Suvi, and I'm sure a lot of anger is due to your fear for our well being.

Steel [Brennan]

You are correct. And your insight is a credit to you and your mentor, a woman who I knew and honored and respected as deeply as it is possible to respect any in this world.

Erika Ishii

Thank you.

Steel [Brennan]

I will first and foremost offer my condolences. I am deeply sorry to have heard of her passing. To get leave for Suvi, to be able to come and see her was the most I could do. And in a more ideal world, I would have come to pay my respects as well before she had passed.

Ame [Erika]

I deeply appreciate that, both your consideration and what you were able to do for Suvi. I also know that condolences and Suvi's and my short glimpse into the things that she did are belied by the humble daily life we led. I have so many questions, and I know I won't have the answers to them until we do this important work that Suvi was helping with.

Steel [Brennan]

I understand there is much important work to do and you fill shoes more enormous than I think many can fully understand. If there is any aid I can be in the tasks that lay before you, please do let me know.

Ame [Erika]

Thank you.

Steel [Brennan]

I need to understand the situation on the ground in Akham. It is at the very edge of the Empire's reach. Our ability to safeguard our denizens and keep them safe is stretched very thin in that land. You spoke of a task set before you. Suvi had let me know that you and perhaps Grandma Wren, as she passed, were beset by a curse of some kind, and that the cottage was also visited by a spirit, a stranger in black upon the road.

Ame [Erika]

Yes, I don't know how those two are related.

Steel [Brennan]

Were you aware of the existence of the curse prior to the arrival of that great honored?

Ame [Erika]

Yes. Yes. As Grandma Wren passed, she and then her familiar realized and then informed me that she and I were under a curse wherein we could not remember the important things that I was supposed to know. The knowledge she was supposed to pass down to me.

Steel [Brennan]

That is grievously important. And the restoration of those memories is of the utmost priority.

Ame [Erika]

Which is why Suvi violated curfew and did her best to get us out of this imprisonment and defied your orders and put her own safety in jeopardy.

Steel [Brennan]

Respectfully, Ame. No, that's not true. If you're asking me to believe that the reason Suvi broke curfew, defied my orders, wandered into the bleak wilderness, was because she needed to break a non-lethal curse rather than waiting three days for the entire might of the Citadel to arrive? Have you put any thought at all into the origin of that curse? I understand you've been trying to break it, but if it appeared prior to Grandma Wren's passing, and the King of Night arrived after that, then it seems that the King of Night's arrival was contingent not upon the curse, but instead upon Grandma Wren's passing.

Ame [Erika]

Yes.

Steel [Brennan]

My point is this. The reason Suvi broke curfew and ventured out into the woods was to prove something. There are many ways to break a curse. Tell me I'm wrong. You know her.

Ame [Erika]

I think she also has very big shoes to fill. Shoes that not even most people would understand the enormity of.

Steel [Brennan]

You're a very good friend. I don't expect you to speak ill of Suvi. But what I do expect you is to understand the reality that me and my position must contend with. There were other ways to solve this problem, Ame. The one that was chosen was not the one most likely to work. It was the one most likely to paint Suvi in a heroic light.

Ame [Erika]  
She's a child.

Steel [Brennan]  
No. Not anymore. And neither are you. I need to understand the story of what happened. You were tending to Grandmother Wren, Suvi arrived. The moments that have been laid out for me by Suvi, I understand. Is there anything that you can do to fill in the gaps of that story? Was there anything else of any significance that happened on that night?

Ame [Erika]  
We were told—

Erika Ishii  
I'd like to make an insight check.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Yeah, go for it.

Aabria Iyengar  
Ooh, let's go!

Erika Ishii  
19.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Okay. What are you looking for in particular?

Erika Ishii  
Is Steel asking me to fill in the blanks so that she can help? Or in order to enact judgment on Suvi? Can I ascertain her motives?

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
The motives you are getting from Steel in this moment are that she's been lied to, or at the very least, like she said, keep it locked down, and then Suvi bolted to go on a magical woodland adventure. And she, so where she's at is like, "oh, a thing I thought was reliable is not reliable." That's her whole deal. Her whole deal is what I thought was solid ground is snow under my feet, right? And I'm slipping on it. And so everything has to do with, you called it fear. It's a lack of security.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Everything to her is like, "this was supposed to be reliable. I was supposed to be able to count on Suvi, that's not true." And so what she's doing is, it's not like she thinks Suvi lied to her, or you guys are part of, like, a vast criminal conspiracy. What you're getting is she's like, people are being real fucking glib around here. People are making stuff up when it benefits them. People aren't giving me the full truth. People are kind of freewheeling. And she is trying to catch you guys in lies. But it's not from a punitive place. It's from a place of a woman who is in charge of a lot being like, I need to start understanding what's really going on.

Erika Ishii  
Would Suvi have told me how much she told? Like, everything that she told Steel?

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
I think that's a no from Aabria.

Lou Wilson  
It's a silent no from Aabria.

Ame [Erika]

Suvi trusts you. You raised her and clearly care for her very deeply. And what's more, it seems that Grandmother Wren trusted you as well with whatever dealings that she had outside of the cottage. I will take you into confidence with this, but understand that I have loyalties not just to you and the rulers of this human realm, but also to the Spirits. And I know you respect that as you respected Grandmother Wren.

Steel [Brennan]

I do.

Ame [Erika]

Our honored friend who travels with us, our childhood friend, he has a quest. He has a quest and he must help the spirit world. Only he can do it. If he's able to fulfill his mission, he'll be able to help break the curse on me.

Steel [Brennan]

The one who is with you is an honored friend.

Ame [Erika]

Yes.

Steel [Brennan]

I understand.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

We're going to move over to the simultaneous conversation happening over in Eursulon's head.

Steel [Brennan]

Please identify yourself.

Eursulon [Lou]

You may call me Bear of Toma.

Steel [Brennan]

Bear of Toma, how did you come to travel with the wizard Suvi?

Eursulon [Lou]

[Haltingly] Well, Um. As Suvi and Ame... were leaving Toma, [Suddenly with more courage] they passed through Silbry and I just so happened to be the strongest man in Silbry. And in looking for protection, they thought, why not hire the strongest? Why not if we're looking for protection, a defender, why not hire the strongest man in town?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Mhm. Give me a deception check.

[Erika and Aabria laugh loudly]

Lou Wilson

Twelve.

Steel [Brennan]

[Sighs deeply] You are a Spirit.

[Heartbeat thumps pick up and grow louder]

Eursulon [Lou]

Uhh, I uh, where would you get an awful idea like that?

Steel [Brennan]

Your companions know it. How long have they known you are a spirit?

Eursulon [Lou]

My entire time in this world.

Steel [Brennan]

You're trapped here?

Eursulon [Lou]

I am. We have met.

Steel [Brennan]

We have?

Eursulon [Lou]

You came to collect Suvi.

Steel [Brennan]

Yes, that's right.

Eursulon [Lou]

I was the young boy in the yard.

Steel [Brennan]

Your glamour has grown with you.

Eursulon [Lou]

It has.

Steel [Brennan]

I'm not going to reveal you.

Eursulon [Lou]

Thank you.

Steel [Brennan]

This is very troubling. You have come to this world. By what means? Were you brought here by Grandmother Wren?

Eursulon [Lou]

No. I found a door when I was very young. A door outside the woods of Grandmother Wren's cottage.

Steel [Brennan]

Did you ever try to reenter the spirit world?

Eursulon [Lou]

Many times.

Steel [Brennan]

What prevented you from doing so?

Eursulon [Lou]

I still do not know. But I believe it may be tied to things I did when I first crossed through. And choices I made, and the care I accepted from Suvi, Ame, and Grandmother Wren.



Steel [Brennan]  
You prefer to be called Bear?

Eursulon [Lou]  
My name is Eursulon. Most people in Akham do not say it right, so I would not have them say it at all.

Steel [Brennan]  
Eursulon

Eursulon [Lou]  
Right. You can.

Steel [Brennan]  
It's important. It's a matter of respect. Have you been living with Ame the entire time at Grandmother Wren's cottage?

Eursulon [Lou]  
No. I've been mostly on my own. In search of things, but struggling to find them. But surviving.

Steel [Brennan]  
You have been wayshadowed, the way back to Faerie barred from you.

Eursulon [Lou]  
Yes.

Steel [Brennan]  
I'm very sorry to hear that. I know that there are many folk within Akham that keep the old ways of spirits. But I also know that there are many who would seek to take advantage of finding a lost spirit. And I cannot imagine that your life has been an easy one.

Eursulon [Lou]  
[Thoughtfully] Hm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You see that we're going to move over to Suvi.

[Aabria laughs]

Suvi [Aabria]  
This is a violation.

Steel [Brennan]  
A violation? How do you feel?

Suvi [Aabria]  
You use magic to know my mind.

Steel [Brennan]  
You don't have to submit. If you want to go be in the prison cell, you can go be in the prison cell. We'll end the spell right now.

Suvi [Aabria]  
No. We're here. You want to know my mind? Then know it. I returned from our conversation to find Ame the Witch already gone on the other side of the wall.

Steel [Brennan]

And then you informed your fellow soldiers of the Citadel, servants of the Imperium, to coordinate a rescue, yes?

Suvi [Aabria]

[Slowly] You told me to keep it on ice.

Steel [Brennan]

Keep it on ice means going into the woods with all of the monsters and creatures out there ready to tear you limb from limb. That's keeping it on ice.

Suvi [Aabria]

Involving other people in what could have been a subtle—

Steel [Brennan]

it's one thing to lie to me, I just hope you're—

Suvi [Aabria]

I'm not lying to you.

Steel [Brennan]

Yes, you are!

Suvi [Aabria]

No, I'm not. If, through my inaction harm came to my oldest friends in this world, I wouldn't be able to live with myself. I did what I thought was best. If I was wrong or foolish, I accept that. But I have not lied to you.

Steel [Brennan]

You tried to have your cake and eat it, too.

Suvi [Aabria]

I tried to protect my friends and leave—

Steel [Brennan]

No!

Suvi [Aabria]

Yes!

Steel [Brennan]

If you wanted to protect your friends, you could have put away your pride and told someone you'd made a mistake.

Suvi [Aabria]

What mistake did I make?

Steel [Brennan]

You let her get away. You could have gone to the citadel. You could have told Galani—

Suvi [Aabria]

I was busy being yelled at by you

Steel [Brennan]

No, you were not. You discovered Ame had left after we finished speaking. You could have gone to Galani. You could have asked for help. But you wanted to solve it yourself, yes or no? That's it. I'm not mad that you're brave. I'm not mad that you make mistakes. I'm mad that when you make them, you lie.

Suvi [Aabria]  
So what now?

Steel [Brennan]

I don't know what now, Suvi? You broke curfew. You ran away. You disobeyed my orders. Fine. That's insubordination. That's in house. Then you come back and threaten to kill soldiers of the Imperium. That's not in the house, Suvi. Those aren't citadel soldiers. That's treason. That's treason. So now I have to work to make this go away. You're not in the Citadel. You feel so confident wielding power. But it's not mine or yours. It's the citadel's.

Suvi [Aabria]

I am who the Citadel trained me to be.

Steel [Brennan]

I'm not seeing that right now. The Citadel trained you to not rely on others? The Citadel trained you to not see the benefit of what the empire brings us? No, that's not so. That's not what we taught you. That's you. What happened past the wall? And who is this guardian.

Suvi [Aabria]

Guardian?

Steel [Brennan]

Yes. The Witch of Toma. And this Strong Man from Silbry you've picked up.

Suvi [Aabria]

Oh, god. He is an honored friend.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You feel a tremendous sigh. Give me an insight check.

Aabria Iyengar

Forgot my dice could go that high. 21.

Erika Ishii

Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You didn't know that it was a test, but you hear a sigh that Steel said, like you just passed a test.

Steel [Brennan]

Steel. If duty to Ame, to Grandmother Wren drove me from Toma to help deal with the curse, guilt is what sent me to Eursulon.

Suvi [Aabria]

[Whispering, crying] He's trapped here because of me. Because as a child, I didn't know better. I'm so sorry. His was not a secret I felt comfortable sharing.

Steel [Brennan]

You've kept that secret for more than a decade. Suvi.

Suvi [Aabria]

I had to protect him somehow. I know what we do to honored friends.

Steel [Brennan]

What do you mean?

Suvi [Aabria]

Naram. We have him trapped at the bottom of the ocean.

Steel [Brennan]

Guild mage Moro has him trapped at the bottom of the ocean, Suvi. I'm going to deal with him as soon as I get there.

Suvi [Aabria]

He wouldn't have thought to do this if he didn't think he would have the full backing of the Empire behind him.

Steel [Brennan]

I find that sometimes enterprising wizards take matters into their own hands. Do you know anything about that, suvi?

Suvi [Aabria]

You are more enlightened than most. I have learned more about respect for you, for witches, for Honored Friends from you, than I have from any of my time in the Citadel. You do not represent the Empire in this regard. So I fear for him.

Steel [Brennan]

[Deep sigh] You're right. The right hand doesn't always know what the left hand is doing. And the empire has a thousand hands. You're right to try to keep your friends safe. I understand.

Suvi [Aabria]

Sorry for keeping it from you.

Steel [Brennan]

[Softening] No. No. Truth be told, I'm honestly a little bit glad right now to be able to meet Ame. I remember you talking about her all the time when you got back from Grandmother Wren's. But there were always these little stutter stops. You pause in the middle of a story about something wonderful. And now I know that all those pauses were Eursulon.

Suvi [Aabria]

It was very hard spending a decade in training and keeping them as a secret. It felt very good to see them. And in my giddiness, I was reckless. And I'm sorry.

Steel [Brennan]

Thank you for the apology. We're in a real pickle. This is very hard. And you've given me a big knot to untie. The Azure Battalion going out after Curfew, and I do need to know what happened beyond the wall, Suvi

Suvi [Aabria]

We moved into the kudzu. Eursulon an honored friend, spoke with some aspect of Orima. Ame was taken further in. We made our way to a shrine in Lamri. And she is furious. She asked Ame to allow her passage into the world to save her partner. The artifact, the thing that can cut curses, belongs to Naram.

Steel [Brennan]

Do you know the name of the Artifact? And you have it,

Suvi [Aabria]

Wavebreaker.

Steel [Brennan]

You have it in your possession?

Suvi [Aabria]

Yes. Well, in yours. The Azure Battalion's now

Steel [Brennan]

I see. So this artifact that you've come into the possession of is at service of two purposes right now. Freeing Ame of her curse and also.

Suvi [Aabria]

Yes, freeing Naram, which we may have promised to do for Orima.

Steel [Brennan]

You're doing your voice like you think you're in trouble.

Suvi [Aabria]

No. Yes. Not from you. From the angriest spirit I have ever—holy. They're scary. And she's so mad.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You finally feel a kind of energy that you haven't gotten from Steel in a while come across and you see she says,

Steel [Brennan]

Big spirit scary?

Suvi [Aabria]

[Indignantly] Okay. Also, I think she couldn't hear me because I was threatening. No, I'm not going to say that part.

Steel [Brennan]

No, you haven't finished that.

Suvi [Aabria]

Nah, it's great.

Steel [Brennan]

What were you doing?

Suvi [Aabria]

So, there's three of us, so we were like, "Everyone takes a different tack." And Eursulon was like, [In deeper Eursulon voice] "Sister." And Ame was like, [higher pitched] "I am a bridge between worlds." And I was like, "I'll fucking kill you." It was nice that I was not heard in that moment. And maybe I yelled more because I kind of knew I wasn't, and it was very stressful, and I just wanted to get back before you got here so I could keep it on ice.

Steel [Brennan]

So how are you not dead?

Suvi [Aabria]

The promise. That somehow we're going to free a great spirit.

Steel [Brennan]

No, I mean, you mouthed off to a spirit. How are you not dead?

Suvi [Aabria]

I'm a badass.

Steel [Brennan]

That's not true.

Suvi [Aabria]

I know. I have no idea. I don't know.

Steel [Brennan]

You have to understand, Suvi. One day, you will be the big dog. Right now, you are the smaller dog barking behind the big dog. And you need to be very aware when you're not behind the big dog anymore. A good example of not being behind the big dog would be leaving the wall.

Suvi [Aabria]

[Exasperated] I didn't want to go! I didn't want to go.

Steel [Brennan]

No, listen, I understand, I have been in danger before. I understand leaving. I don't understand leaving secretly. We need to drill down on why I'm mad. Secretly. Secretly. Secretly.

Suvi [Aabria]

Got it got it got it.

Steel [Brennan]

No one knows. No one knows. No one knows.

Suvi [Aabria]

Yeah.

Suvi [Aabria]

I know. We're both very aware that my answer to that is only going to make you mad again. So just yeah,

Steel [Brennan]

What's your answer?

Suvi [Aabria]

Because it was like, this is a solvable situation. You go out in the bad grass and you grab a friend and you bring them back. And it was going to be an hour, and then it wasn't. But! No one's dead, and

Steel [Brennan]

And you have the sword.

Suvi [Aabria]

And we have the sword!

Steel [Brennan]

Alright

Suvi [Aabria]

And so, honestly,

Steel [Brennan]

Have you—

Suvi [Aabria]

I feel—okay, no, I'm getting ahead of myself. I'm doing the barking thing again.

Steel [Brennan]

No.

Suvi [Aabria]

Little, little dog, dog, little dog.

Steel [Brennan]

Little dog, little dog, little dog. For now. Maybe when you, I don't know, join an arcane school, imagine that. Maybe then in that case—

Suvi [Aabria]

Okay, okay okay.

Steel [Brennan]

Maybe then you can start to threaten great spirits.

Suvi [Aabria]

Wait, she couldn't hear me.

Steel [Brennan]

Couldn't hear you?

Suvi [Aabria]

Yeah, I was saying stuff, and then she was just kind of talking like I wasn't there. I have no idea why.

Steel [Brennan]

This is a free lesson in wizardry. Ready?

Suvi [Aabria]

Sure.

Steel [Brennan]

Don't try to get the attention of great spirits.

Suvi [Aabria]

I get that now. I get it.

Steel [Brennan]

Wizards are best when we move at a diagonal. You understand?

Suvi [Aabria]

I hear you. We were kind of at a point, emotionally, in the argument where she was like, I'll kill you all and leave your bodies to—maybe I'm embellishing—no, she said she was going to kill us and then go get her husband herself. And I was like, well, being nice wasn't working, so maybe like a little threat, like a "Slap your lion fish of a husband in the face." It didn't work. It didn't do anything! So net neutral, wasn't a bad—I've learned my lesson. I got it. I can feel, why can I feel your... This is bad. I don't like you in my head.

Steel [Brennan]

There's a great way to get me out of your head, and it's to just not do whatever this whole escapade has been the last several weeks.

Suvi [Aabria]

Sure. Sure you're right. You're right. Hey, but let's look at it. This, uh now we know what's going on in Port Talon, and we didn't know that before.

Steel [Brennan]

Don't spin this into a win.

Suvi [Aabria]

No, but here's the thing. It's a little bit of a win. So now we know what Mara's doing. Oh, and there was, like, a guy fully embezzling from the Empire? andled. And...

Steel [Brennan]

What do you mean handled?

Suvi [Aabria]

Like, now everyone, we know and he's kind of—so he's going to go get arrested.

Steel [Brennan]

What's the name?

Suvi [Aabria]

Guildmage Pane. He's just ugh. The worst. Honestly. Real piece of shit. Don't feel bad about kind of snitching on him.

Steel [Brennan]

What about your friend that had the artifact in Port Talon? How are they doing? Who are they.

Suvi [Aabria]

Uhh. I, eursulon handled that, so I'm not super sure. I think it's fine because he came back with the sword again. A lot happened when we were in the mansion. I came back and things were solved and people were gone.

Steel [Brennan]

Eursulon handled it? Eursulon knew your friend?

Suvi [Aabria]

Yes. Look, Eursulon's lived a very hard, bad life since I went away. And every time I ask for a new detail? Darker and sadder. So sometimes I just kind of like, let him go do whatever. And then he comes back and he's like, I got Wavebreaker. And you know you know that feeling where you're like, I got to ask more questions, but then you're like, don't?

Steel [Brennan]

No.

Suvi [Aabria]

Well, you don't know that, you're in my head right now? Okay. Okay.

Steel [Brennan]

All right. You got Wavebreaker in Port Talon, hit the walls, found Orima brought Wavebreaker to her,

Suvi [Aabria]

And she was like, "can only be wielded by a spirit." Bing, bang, boom, we got one. So another tiny win, for lil Suvi.

Steel [Brennan]

Well, the good news here—and then has he removed the curse from Ame?

Suvi [Aabria]

No, we. Okay. Remember the part where you're like "Three days on ice," I kind of hustled everyone the fuck back so I wouldn't get in trouble, and that didn't really work.

Steel [Brennan]

Okay. Probably for the best. But also I'm sure that the sword being able to do something doesn't mean that someone wielding the sword knows how to do it. So I'm going to offer something to your friends.



Brennan Lee Mulligan

We're going to go back to Ame. Steel asks for Ame's story of the trip beyond the walls. Does Ame more or less divulge? Does she add any details or keep any away?

Erika Ishii

I tell the story as best I can, and as factually as I can. Suvi does come off looking very good in it.

Aabria Iyengar

Thanks, buddy.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

What are some details you add in to make Suvi look really good in it.

Aabria Iyengar

[Yelling from off-mic The truth, Brennan!

Erika Ishii

How she blasted her way uh, towards the shrine when she knew that I was in danger. And against her better judgment, she treated with this great spirit who she showed uh, the proper amount of deference to.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see, Steel pauses and says,

Steel [Brennan]

Oh, and she gave the honorific of the great Orima of the Reaching Green.

Ame [Erika]

[Hesitating] Yeah, more or less, yes.

Steel [Brennan]

Ame, I really enjoy you. Don't ever lie to me again.

Ame [Erika]

Oh, it was just a little fib.

Steel [Brennan]

No.

Ame [Erika]

She told you that she yelled at her, didn't she?

Steel [Brennan]

Yes. Best thing to do with me is tell the truth.

Erika Ishii

I tell the story as it is.

Ame [Erika]

I still don't know how we are going to accomplish all of this. I assume that now you are here, you've been briefed on the situation, that you can help prevent any deep misunderstanding between the Spirits and the Azure battalion. Yes?

Steel [Brennan]

My intention on arriving to Port Talon is to arrest the Guildmage Morrow, see that whatever systems failed to allow this experiment to occur are dismantled. And rather than having to give, you know, and fundamentally that I will see

that the derrick is dismantled and that the honored friend that is trapped there is not only set free, but more than that, healed and deeply honored and given proper apology for this horror that has occurred.

Erika Ishii

I can feel a weight lifted off my shoulders. I don't know the Empire very well. Only what I've heard of from Suvi and what I've seen in these people. And...

Ame [Erika]

Thank you.

Steel [Brennan]

The Empire has done many perilous and terrible workings of magic to protect itself from those that would see our lands and people destroyed. I don't claim that we are a peaceful people.

Ame [Erika]

No, I'm sure you know better than that.

Steel [Brennan]

However, this abomination does nothing to keep the people of the Empire safe. And even if it did, even if I were without a heart Ame, what you witnessed at that derrick is madness.

Ame [Erika]

We've seen the people of the city and how they are suffering because of what Morrow is doing.

Steel [Brennan]

Morrow will be handled. You have a powerful curse on you. You have an artifact with you capable of dispelling the curse. I am of the opinion that that curse is of the highest priority to dispel. And I want to make an offer that you must consider carefully. Once the curse is broken, it will dissipate. Magic, once broken, fades, reenters the spirit. Becomes the stuff of magic itself. It is only given form by the will of spirits, of witches, of wizards.

Steel [Brennan]

Once the spell dissipates, you will be free. And this is what you must consider carefully. Because I am a general and I am the Sword of the Citadel and this is where my mind must go. Once the spell is broken, we will not be able to learn anything about it. We will not be able to learn when it was put on you. We will not be able to learn who put it there. I would offer you an invitation to accompany Suvi to the Citadel—

Ame [Erika]

I cannot. I'm sorry. My duty is... Well, you know. It is not a witch's place, the Citadel. I must continue Grandmother Wren's work.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You feel Steel smiling in your mind, says,

Steel [Brennan]

Not a witch's place. You would have to tell the late Grandmother Wren, then, to apologize, because she was there often.

Ame [Erika]

Often?

Steel [Brennan]

Yes. Many times.

Ame [Erika]

Often, though.

Steel [Brennan]

I mean, well, as often as—she's very busy.

Ame [Erika]

She has an awful lot of chores every day in the cottage.

Steel [Brennan]

I ultimately respect your wishes. You do not need to come to the Citadel if you do not wish to. But I just put to you that.

Ame [Erika]

Well, not to stay, I mean.

Steel [Brennan]

No, no no. Not to—well to stay, but for only as long as you wish to come as a guest. And I know that the cottage is lonely and that most witches work alone or with an apprentice. And there is an opportunity to see the home of your friend Suvi. And if you felt inclined to accept our aid, to learn and, here, you must forgive me. I do not mean to condescend, but you are very young, so let me just remind a humble country witch of dangers that you may not have known in your upbringing. Whoever put that curse on you is still out there.

Ame [Erika]

Yes, that's true. We'll cross that bridge when we come to it. I would be grateful for any help and insight that you have into how to break this curse.

Steel [Brennan]

I defer to the wisdom of Grandmother Wren. If the sword can break it, then the sword is the safest route to use. We, of course, can help by some means, instruct your companion Eursulon in terms of how to wield it to effectively manage to break the curse. It may not be intuitive after all, but I would not disagree with Grandmother Wren's counsel, nor in fact... The goal of coming to the Citadel is for us to be able to break the curse in such a way that we know who is responsible and we are able to gather... Sometimes people stab you with a knife and it sticks in your body. And if you're clever enough, sometimes you have a new knife.

Erika Ishii

At this, I feel an unease in the back of my mind. Because I know that while her offer of help is genuine, I know that there is a motive. Motive to discover more and control this magic. But I nod and smile lightly and I say,

Ame [Erika]

Thank you very much for your kind offer. I shall have to think on it. How's Suvi doing?

Steel [Brennan]

[Another deep sigh] She's charmed me again.

Ame [Erika]

She has a way of doing that.

Steel [Brennan]

It's terrible. I have no one to blame but myself. The citadel is a great college of peers, but somehow we've got one princess, and I don't know how it happens.

Erika Ishii

[Laughing] Oh ho ho, a princess?!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Eursulon, she comes back to you, and same thing. Asks about the story beyond the wall.

Lou Wilson

I think Eursulon's telling of the story beyond the wall is 100% factual. In fact, perhaps too factual. I think there's a lot of details about how he felt in it.

Eursulon [Lou]

Like, I was drunk [Aabria loudly laughs] for most of the journey, and I don't know when the last time you hiked while being just absolutely shit faced was. I must have stopped to vomit 10, 15 times. And we got to a point where I was like, I'm not sure if there's anything else in there.

Steel [Brennan]

All right. We don't need to, we don't need to—

Eursulon [Lou]

I could barely keep water down,

Steel [Brennan]

We're actually... Eursulon—

Eursulon [Lou]

anyway, and I had been crying because of the whole kind of "sister" thing that was going. It was a lot, man

Steel [Brennan]

You brought the sword, then, to Orima.

Eursulon [Lou]

Yes.

Steel [Brennan]

And then made the promise to free Naram.

Eursulon [Lou]

Yes.

Steel [Brennan]

I understand. Let me say very clearly that you will be able to keep that promise. Naram will be freed.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

In the telling of the story, does Eursulon mention anything about the pendant? He still has not mentioned to Suvi.

Lou Wilson

Unless it comes up. Unless she asks about why. Unless she asks about Suvi's inability to be heard by Orima, I don't think Eursulon would offer it up.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

She doesn't.

Aabria Iyengar

Ooh! A secret!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Ooh, you kept one.

Aabria Iyengar

Oh, yay.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
She nods and says,

Steel [Brennan]  
None of this battalion, and none other than myself will know of what you are.

Eursulon [Lou]  
It is very kind of you.

Steel [Brennan]  
You hold a great sword of the spirits, one capable of breaking the curse on your friend, but I do not know if you know how to wield it.

Eursulon [Lou]  
Uh, I've had some instruction in the ways of swordcraft.

Steel [Brennan]  
I saw you, I believe, when you were a child, fencing with a broomstick with the village baker.

Erika Ishii  
[Laughing] Oh, ooh!

Eursulon [Lou]  
That's where I started, yes. I'm much older now.

Steel [Brennan]  
And then I imagine some stage combat?

Lou Wilson  
Wow. Eursulon hasn't caught this much shade in a long time.

Erika Ishii  
Fucking brutal.

Eursulon [Lou]  
Just a bit. A bit, yes. One of the other members of the company had had some military service and showed me a thing or two.

Steel [Brennan]  
The witch Ame has a curse on her. If the curse is broken without being studied, we will never know who placed it upon her. We will never know if they are still abroad. We will not know what kind of magic it was. We will not know when it was placed on her or where or by what means. Her life in Toma will forever be in jeopardy.

Steel [Brennan]  
I have made the offer for Ame to come to the Citadel, that we may study the curse and understand what threats await her in the world. I offer you now the same invitation. Your glamour will be held. It will be a chance for you to see the home of your long lost friend Suvi. And, if you play your cards right, I might teach you how to sword fight.

Aabria Iyengar  
[Squeals with emotions]

Eursulon [Lou]  
I'll um, I'll consider my options, but I, I must say I'm leaning yes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Um, she smiles, and—

Suvi [Aabria]

One more thing. You want truth, I will give you all of it. I've met three Great Spirits while I've been walking the world. Two cruel, one caught. And it would be a lie if I didn't admit that I feel a little pride that the ones that would walk our world with such impunity feel, even for a moment, a mote of the dread I have felt in their presence. I don't think I hate them, but I'm closer than I thought I would be.

Steel [Brennan]

Raging at the spirits is screaming curses at the storm. They are of a fundamental nature. I've interacted with many that I can say have stirred great feelings in me, for good or ill. But my hatred I reserve for people. People should know better. People get to choose what they do. And many of the spirits, though great, are... [Sigh] For all of that vastness, they have to be something.. Maybe you don't get to be eternal without being singular. Does that make sense?

Suvi [Aabria]

I think so.

Steel [Brennan]

I don't think you need to waste your rage or your loathing on beings that have watched a thousand generations of humans come and go. They are the legs of the massive beasts above us that we must carefully dodge and build our world around. And if we are clever, we can find ways to hold them at bay. They, after all, have a realm of infinite splendor and wonder to occupy their time with and occasionally come in here and knock a bunch of things down.

Suvi [Aabria]

Okay. But it does feel like a little shitty that they do that, right? Like a little bit?

Steel [Brennan]

I'm not going to follow you down this hating spirits route.

Suvi [Aabria]

I know. I know, it's, okay just—

Steel [Brennan]

It's just not efficient. It's just they're not going to care that you hate them.

Suvi [Aabria]

Yeah. I mean, we could make them care, I'ma, I'll make Orima care. I'm going to eat more vegetables—

Steel [Brennan]

The dominion, the protectorate. Keep your eyes on the ball

Suvi [Aabria]

Yeah. Got it, got it.

Steel [Brennan]

Keep your eyes on the ball.

Suvi [Aabria]

Eyes on the prize, okay.

Steel [Brennan]

You have to keep your eyes on the prize.

Suvi [Aabria]  
Okay.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You see, the conversations end. You are back in the courtyard. Steel looks out, says,

Steel [Brennan]  
Abjurer Galani, please return the staff of the citadel to the Archmage Apprentice. Archmage Apprentice Suvi, there will be an official court martial on your return to the citadel to make sure that justice is served in the actions you have taken in your role as Archmage Apprentice in the city of Port Talon and the surrounding lands. You understand?

Suvi [Aabria]  
Yeah.

Steel [Brennan]  
Alright. To the Witch of Toma and to the protector of the Archmage Apprentice, I offer the thanks of the Citadel that you have kept the Archmage Apprentice safe. Thank you for your service, and you may consider yourself in the esteem and gratitude of the Imperium in the land we serve.

Ame [Erika]  
It was an honor to help protect her ladyship.

Eursulon [Lou]  
Anytime. Yes.

Aabria Iyengar  
I just kick Ame in the ankle.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
The fox goes,

The Fox [Brennan]  
I couldn't reach the ball.

Suvi [Aabria]  
Shut up.

[They all pause to laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You are given your belongings, everything else like that. And you see Galani. Steel says,

Steel [Brennan]  
Galani, I wish to speak with you for a moment.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And rest of you were sort of brought away. I mean, you stand there and you see Steel has a short conversation with Galani where she's basically just like,

Steel [Brennan]  
See to it that they are healed, that we try to detect if there are any harmful poisons or effects from the kudzu or any of the Witchfire or anything of that nature. And please see that they get time for rest and relaxation. I will be there on the morrow, and we will handle business that day and hopefully take off by nightfall for the citadel

Ame [Erika]  
Safe travels.

Steel [Brennan]  
Oh, thank you very much, Ame.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
The mirror swirls and spirals as the image of Steel on the deck of the ship disappears, fading into the reflection of the courtyard, and the three of you.

Aabria Iyengar  
I make awkward eye contact with any of the members of the Azure Battalion.

Erika Ishii  
I give a big old hug to Suvi.

Suvi [Aabria]  
Okay, hold on, one second one second. [To the Battalion] My deepest apologies for threatening to kill you. [Sounding forced] I didn't mean it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
The battalion does not make eye contact with you. They just continue to move. You know, you've just had a court martial announced and you're like, [Sarcastically] "Sorry!"

Ame [Erika]  
It's okay, I'm sure you'll get back up on that pedestal.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Galani motions to the carriage to take you all back to the Kalabel Shantry. The Chantry of the Sceptre's chorus where like, all your stuff is.

Eursulon [Lou]  
Not bad. In terms of how things could have gone.

Ame [Erika]  
Yeah, I think, well, I got off pretty easy.

Eursulon [Lou]  
Same.

Suvi [Aabria]  
That's good. Hey, Galani, did she make you cry?

Abjurer Galani [Brennan]  
No. Must be nice.

Lou Wilson  
I'm going to clock that and then get in this plush ass carriage.

Eursulon [Lou]  
This is gorgeous. Do you ride around in these sorts of things often?

Lou Wilson  
As I just kind of get comfortable.



Ame [Erika]

I follow Eursulon into the carriage, but I give Suvi's hand a little squeeze.

Aabria Iyengar

Suvi will squeeze subtly back, but she's actually quite used to Galani's response to her and it has always triggered fighting when she came up. So she is swallowing a lot of the building of bile and trying to be chill about it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You know how when you're trying to swallow something, you're looking for a reason to not pop off?

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So you're like, I gotta give myself a reason not to give this fucking woman the business who just shot a stink eye my way. And in looking for a reason, you hit one that's a little bit too good.

Aabria Iyengar

Oh, no.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Which is just, her life would be ruined if she'd done the things you did.

Aabria Iyengar

Ooh yeah. I think the last thing Suvi does outwardly is squeeze Ame's hand back, and then she absolutely folds in on herself.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Arriving back at the Kalabel Chantry, it's about like three or four in the afternoon. Steel's ship is arriving on the morrow. Do you all go back to your rooms in the Chantry?

Lou Wilson

I mean, if no one's hanging out, I'll go back to my...

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You go back and you see that little coral ring sitting on the bedside table.

Lou Wilson

Now I'm mad. I think Eursulon sees that and I think has like, a brief pause. I think there's a moment where the excitement of the potential of going to the Citadel and getting trained more in the sword, and the fact that Steel said that he was going to finish, he was going to be able to complete his quest. I think there's a moment where all of that kind of sours and there's the memory of Naram in the space.

Lou Wilson

And I think there's even something to the idea that we're supposed to wait a whole day before we do something about it. In seeing Naram trapped, I think Eursulon did have thoughts that he's pushed out of his mind for a long time with regard to his own situation and the feeling of being trapped here. And I think even he has not fully internalized this idea that he is on some kind of quest or that he's reconnecting with his breath.

Lou Wilson

He more like every situation that he has been in since he left Grandmother Wren's cottage, said the things he needed to say to get—to continue surviving. And I think this moment, seeing this ring again after accepting this quest, is an acknowledgement of anger and touching that feeling. I think Eursulon just kind of stands in the doorway of his room for a second, angry, and is going to draw Wavebreaker, and swing on the ring with confidence. This ring feels like one of the many links in the chain that traps Naram here. And I wish to sunder it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Then sunder it you shall. [A harsh horn sounds] You take Wavebreaker from sheath. Hold it. Seven fingered fist at the pommel. Pattern of waves in the cross guard. Bright steel blade.

Lou Wilson

I think the sword, for most of Eursulon's life, has been a gift from Suvi. That's what it was. It wasn't so much like a blade, that it was like, this is you know, it wasn't so much like his weapon or he chose it. It's like this thing that he found with his friends that then one of his friends said should be his. And I think in this moment, as he looks at the waves and the cross guard, there's the feeling that this is his sword, that it belongs to him.

[Dissonant horns underscore them speaking]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

As you bring the sword down to the coral ring I'm going to need a dexterity saving throw,

Aabria Iyengar

Buddy!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

With disadvantage.

Lou Wilson

That's going to be a 21. Oh, excuse me. The higher roll was 21, the lower roll was 18.

[Erika yells]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Hell, yeah. The sword hits the ring. The ring is sundered. Shards fly in all directions. You see as they scatter across the room that they change. The coral hits the walls. It rests on the blade of the sword and the sword shimmers and ripples as there is now... Blood. Gleaming white, translucent, rippling blood on the blade, as though the coral ring has reverted back. But you feel the sword, it's like clanging.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The table is destroyed. It has that thing where it's like shaking the bone of your forearm with the reverberation of the blade. It feels sort of uncomfortable, almost. And you see it's not really stopping. And there's something where, like, the sword has known this blood on it before? Perhaps by accident? As though in some great injury, the blood of this creature has touched this blade before. But you see the blood trickling down and it begins to pulse, [A heartbeat thumps] as though there was some life force in it.

Lou Wilson

Can I make some kind of check about it?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah. What skill do you think you would rely on? Are you just like perception or like

Lou Wilson

So, I guess, yeah, just a perception check. What the hell am I looking at? Big 16.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It ripples with light in the pattern of Naram's eyes, if that is indeed what they are. And you feel like you can almost hear a voice, but it is faint.[Whispering, echoey] Little cub, little cub (cub). I am glad to see you have grown (grown, grown).

Lou Wilson

Do I recognize the voice?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Somehow you can't put a name to it, but somehow you recognize the voice. But there's some magic here, you don't, I mean, it's magic of the spirit, but everything Orima screamed at you like "you're off the path, do you remember what it is to be a spirit?" Even as a cub, you didn't know how to do great magic of the great ones. But there's something here like this blood is calling out to you. There's something.

Lou Wilson

Can I find more little, can I like—Eursulon's going to get on the ground, start trying to scoop the little bits that he can

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah! Honestly, give me like, give me—

Lou Wilson

If I can get enough of it, like finding another surface in the room that he's like, yeah, I could smash this.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Give me like a nature check or nature or religion, whichever one you want.

Lou Wilson

Eleven nature.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

There's something—you feel your own heartbeat. Eleven is not high enough. You're not a wizard, not a witch. You weren't trained for this. But you have a sense that you have to go to your instinct. Like Ame has her like, her mentor, like Suvi has her Citadel. You didn't have that. It was a parade of beasts under the limbs of the Great Bear. And you haven't tapped into that in so long. It's been lost to you forever, but you just feel your heartbeat. You've got blood in your body and your heart is pounding. If you forgot all the shame, and self recrimination, and wonder and all of these things that the human world has piled upon you and just did what was instinct for you to do, what might you do?

Lou Wilson

Break more shit.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Laughing] You just start breaking more shit as you start wrecking stuff in your room and you gather up more pieces of the blood, right? Go ahead and give me—and this is fun, go ahead and give me a constitution saving throw and give me as many as you want for as many things in the room as you want to break. So the first thing you see that has its own emotional connections with you is the bed. The bed you cannot sleep in.

Lou Wilson

Yes that, we'll take down the bed. That's a natural one. [Someone gasps] As I smash the bed.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You lift up your arms, you bring them down to break the bed and, assuming that the supports are wood, you find them to be iron and "BAM" and raw cuts in your arms open up as you shatter the bed in front of you. As they do, your hands filled with all of the gleaming white blood that you attempted to scoop up off the ground, not knowing what, run in rivulets. You can hear singing voices. The blood enters your wounds and you on a nat one constitution save begin to go fully into a seizure on the floor.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You leave this space and moment you remember where you heard the voice. [The sound of a guttural roar and water] You are barely a cub. You are a babe, an infant and your father in the land of spirits stands at the top of a mighty waterfall, falling from a great pearly mountain. Salmon yards long, leap up the waterfall as your father awaits to grab them and devour them in his mighty jaws.

[Lilting pipe flute flutters above drum beats and choral tones as the song of the Spirit Realm starts]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And in your play, you went too deep into the strong current and fell down the waterfall, were swept away from your brothers and sisters into the sea. You see a beautiful man. A blue robe hanging from a golden clasp on one shoulder, a tall spear, long blue green hair falling behind his long, pointed ears, many rings and a band of gold around his upper arm. You see, he swims towards you, wearing a very friendly glamour, seeing you a little perfectly round bear baby, sort of—[Erika and Aabria wail and make noise about how cute it sounds]—in the tide, you see him swim up and this is you're, like, maybe just verbal, like some words, like the equivalent of like a two or three year old. Honestly, honestly, three is too old. It's like a two year old.

Lou Wilson

Two year old?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you see, he moves and you see that his robes go all the way to the ocean floor as just like tide and water. And you see, he swims up with his spear. You see that he has a spear, but he doesn't have his sword at his side right now. Just the spear behind him. And he goes,

Naram [Brennan]

Oh, dear! Lost little cub, hold on.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And lightly grabs you, breathes in and you see gills open along his neck [Aabria wails more] and he goes [Brennan sucks air inward] breathing in through his gills and goes [Brennan exhales loudly] and pure mist, which is itself air and breathable, surrounds you in a little ball as he holds you.

Naram [Brennan]

Well, it seems you've had a little adventure, haven't you, young one? Did you come from the river?

Lou Wilson

Want me to make a bunch of two year old noises?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah, I have to make fox noises. You make two year old noises.

Eursulon [Lou]

Ah!

Naram [Brennan]

That's all right. Let's get you home.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And Naram rises from the waves and he stands some 30, and now 40 and now 50ft tall. And he is holding you in the palm of his hand.

Naram [Brennan]

Oh, that's all right, little one. You're safe. You're safe. Hello, Great Bear. I see you feast upon the salmon. I hope that they find you well.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see your father. [Brennan makes a snarling noise]

Great Bear [Brennan]

Wave Lord, what do you hold in your hand? If it is a salmon's egg, I wish to feed upon it.

Naram [Brennan]

I—I think it is your child, Great Bear. Uh, he's taken a little spill over the waterfall. I was driving the salmon towards you as a kindness, but I seem to have caught one of your children.

Great Bear [Brennan]

Oh, do you intend to eat him?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you see, he says,

Naram [Brennan]

not in the slightest. No, I eat only the sunlight and the kelp and the fresh foam of the cresting wave. So I'm good, I've had plenty today.

Great Bear [Brennan]

Should he have died had you not been there to save him?

Naram [Brennan]

He seems pretty wily to me. [Lou starts to make little "aouuu" noises] If anything, I'd probably saved some of my fish from, from his predation. He might have become some sort of aquatic—[Lou makes crunching noises] Ooh, ah! You got me.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see, he smiles and says

Naram [Brennan]

No. Great Bear. Yes, the seas can be stormy, but they are also sweet. And he found himself swimming in a great reef, and I am happy to see him returned to his family.

Great Bear [Brennan]

Mmm. These salmon are good.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Naram smiles. Spirits are vastly different from one another. He sees that the Great Bear hungers and wishes to eat salmon. And Naram's kindness and gentleness is not something that he feels a need to impose on the other spirits of this place. He looks down at you in his hand.

Naram [Brennan]

Are you ready to go back, little one? [Lou makes more noises] Good luck catching salmon. I hope I see you again one day.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And all of these visions swim as his massive hand places you on the top of the waterfall to rejoin Kalia and Anarian and all of your other siblings here under the limbs of the Great Bear. And you see him walk, and slowly the bottom of his robe turns to foam amongst the cresting waves, and he vanishes on the sea.

Ame [Erika]

Eursulon. Eursulon, are you okay?

Eursulon [Lou]  
[Roars]

Ame [Erika]  
Are you okay? You're bleeding. I think.

Eursulon [Lou]  
I'm fine.

Ame [Erika]  
What are you doing?

Eursulon [Lou]  
I had a vision of a time when I met Naram. I have known his kindness. I'm going to free him. Where do they—where was that room? The armory.

Lou Wilson  
I'm going to leave the room and head for the armory.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You leave the room,

Erika Ishii  
I go with him.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Ame goes with him. You get to the armory. I'm going to roll a straight up luck check. 19. You see that there are people of the Azure Battalion. No, 19 is good for you guys. Sorry. Yeah. There's no one in the armory!

Erika Ishii  
Yeah! There's nobody there!

Eursulon [Lou]  
I'm grabbing a few of those coral. I'm going to grab a coral, another coral?

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Yes. Yes, yes, yes.

Lou Wilson  
What?

Aabria Iyengar  
There's wands in there.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
There's wands in there as well.

Lou Wilson  
I don't want a wand. I got a sword.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You grab a coral ring, you put it on. Give me a Constitution saving throw with advantage

Lou Wilson  
Nine.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Nine. Okay. You begin to, begin to reject the ring. You can feel yourself like, it's not working. Like there's something about the ring that's like it's imperial magic. There needs to be a certain thing here. And you realize the ring, it's the same shape you hated before. It's control. It's something you didn't want. You're beginning to feel the same anger towards it that you felt towards the first one.

Lou Wilson  
Flick that shit off.

Eursulon [Lou]  
Ame, we're going now. We are not waiting. Naram needs to be freed.

Lou Wilson  
I am going to leave. I'm going to head outside.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Hell, yeah.

Lou Wilson  
I'm going to find a boat.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
[Laughing] Eursulon fucking, just books it! Okay. Eursulon is possessed. As you begin to go, I will say this. Both of you can give me perception checks. Ame and Eursulon,

Erika Ishii  
21.

Lou Wilson  
Only an eight.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Only an eight. Ame as Eursulon tosses the ring and decides that he doesn't. He's like, fuck it, I don't need it. His fur is becoming... It's almost imperceptible. It's hard to notice, but it has a familiar luster. Like there's that protective oil on it again.

Ame [Erika]  
Eursulon, we have to wait for Su—

Lou Wilson  
Gone.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You can smell it on him, the way his fur changed when he first put the coral ring on, that's back. That's there. And he's not wearing a ring, but that's there. Eursulon begins to sprint. As you sprint, you just hear... You hear the cry of a falcon and banners waving in the wind. You just hear the thumping of horses hooves. And you're just sprinting as fast as you can.

Lou Wilson  
Just to water.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Just to water. Yeah. Just going to water.

Erika Ishii  
I—I sprint after him, and I whistle for the fox.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You whistle for the fox. Now Eursulon's gone. Eursulon's got quest fever. Eursulon's gone.

Lou Wilson  
Got quest fever. It has a name. And I got it, baby.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
He's got quest fever, and he's got it bad.

Erika Ishii  
I'm caught up in the moment.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Correct me if I'm wrong, I think Eursulon's pupils are all the way dilated.

Lou Wilson  
Just fucking comes up from whatever vision I'm having of the spirit world. Just completely dilated. Quest fever.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Ame, you have enough presence of mind as you begin to sprint, whistle for the fox, to think of Suvi. Suvi is in the tower. But I have to ask, so I just want to give you the hardness of that choice, because every part... You see, the fox begins to sprint after Eursulon. Just like, [Brennan makes a hrum noise] what do you do?

Erika Ishii  
I go after them. I take off after them.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You begin to run. [Brennan pants] Upstairs. Suvi, you are in your room, and you hear a knock at the door. Knock knock knock.

Suvi [Aabria]  
Yes. Hi. Yes.

Morrow [Brennan]  
[In a foppish voice] Apprentice Archmage, I am so glad that you have returned. You gave us all quite a scare, let me tell you. Where did you go?

Suvi [Aabria]  
It's been such a long day. Can we talk about this any other time?

Morrow [Brennan]  
I would be so delighted to afford you any amenities of espressos and salads.

Suvi [Aabria]  
I'm so good right now. Please, your kindness is so appreciated.

Morrow [Brennan]  
I would love some questions because someone did mention to me that the Archmage Steel may well be on her way here.



Suvi [Aabria]

She is. She will be here on the morrow.

Morrow [Brennan]

[Excitedly, goofily] Ah! Well. Morrow's, my name!

[The cast guffaws, and a door slams]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

We cut back to Eursulon just sprinting for the water.

Erika Ishii

As we hit the outside, and you know and I can see the tower. I scream

Ame [Erika]

Suuuuuuuuuu! Suvi!

Aabria Iyengar

I want to go out to the window. I see Eursulon sprinting, and I think in that moment, Suvi goes, "you can't keep doing the same shit and thinking there will be a different result." And I'm going to go try to—I'm going to go down to their rooms and figure out what's going on.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Okay.

Aabria Iyengar

But I will not pursue them.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Give me an investigation check.

Suvi [Aabria]

15.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Okay. Broken bed, coral blood everywhere.

Aabria Iyengar

I think there's just a moment where Suvi tells herself that she's only human and is exhausted. And I will spend my time mending the bed and cleaning the blood, and I will let them have their adventure. I can't fail steel again.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Magic begins to wind off of Suvi's fingers. Movements of your hands, the meaning of the words, the Lingua Arcana. A simple, endlessly repeatable act of restoring order to something disordered. It will be a long time mending the broken things in this room. Eursulon...

Lou Wilson

Shirt's being unbuttoned.

Aabria Iyengar

Let's go, let's go!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Sprinting towards the harbor. Give me a—you're just going towards water as fast as you can.

Lou Wilson

As fast as I possibly can.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You just find you're near, like, civic part of this. So there's like, warships and people around it Azure Battalion, you're down near the Governor's mansion and the chantry and shit. Your shirt's unbuttoned. You've got Wavebreaker.

What do you do as you get to the harbor?

Lou Wilson

I want to do whatever's going to be the least distance between me and the derrick.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Okay, so you're going to sprint down one of the main piers. Now there's a pier with sort of like, quartermaster checking people in that looks officious. There's a shorter dock that has some smaller ships that there's no one in.

Lou Wilson

I'll take the latter.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Okay. You, rush to that dock, dive in. I'm going to make a perception,

Lou Wilson

I think, shirt comes off. I'm going to adjust it so I can keep the pauldron on. So it's just pants, pauldron, and then I belt the sword on as tight as I can. I think, honestly, the minute I jump into the water, glamour comes off before I dive in.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I'm also just going to need a constitution check from Ame to see if you can actually keep up with Eursulon.

Erika Ishii

Ooohkay

Lou Wilson

Try, Ame! Try! Keep up.

Erika Ishii

Oh no... That's a 19 on the die.

Lou Wilson

Wow. I mean, you do have that—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Stewards ring!

Erika Ishii

Fucking yeah, I am...

[Mimics thunderous footsteps]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Incredible. So you begin to sprint as fast as possible. Ame's right behind you, the fox is right behind you. Eursulon hits the edge of the dock and dives into the water.

Erika Ishii

Is there a little boat? Are there any sort of little rowboats?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

There are some little rowboats, but you see with the big splash, a bunch of the imperial soldiers over on the other deck just kind of look out, notice you. People are just sort of looking.

Erika Ishii

Get in one of the little rowboats.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Okay

Erika Ishii

I untied the rowboat.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You start untying the rowboat and you cast off.

Erika Ishii

I'm going to use gust, to try and to see how far that'll get me.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Okay, great. [Splashing sound] As you go underwater and you can see your fur doesn't soak. You actually remain neutrally buoyant, like it captures just enough air in the right places that you can kind of go down and go up. You don't sink. Do you try to come up for air?

Lou Wilson

I just want to hit the water and swim like a Michael Phelps style, like hard, almost dolphin like.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Are you staying on the surface or are you going deep.

Lou Wilson

I would stay below for as long as I could.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You head down and begin going as deep as you can. When you get to a certain point of depth you have to make the decision. [Heartbeat thumps] You either have to come up for air which will slow you down or you can try to push your breath past the point of pain and keep going.

Lou Wilson

Push the breath.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Give me constitution savings throw.

Lou Wilson

14

Brennan Lee Mulligan

there is a moment where your body just reflexively [Brennan mouths a gasping noise] sucks in some water. And it fills you like sweet air.

Lou Wilson

I suck in more water. [A gasp of air]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The relief of breathing in, even though you are breathing, you can feel your mouth filling like you are drinking, but suddenly [Gasping noise] fills your lungs and, the pain of your muscles. The buildup of tension and burn from pushing yourself past the limit relieves as you breathe in this salty water. You can taste the salt in your mouth. Whatever that ring had, it was bound and formed by wizards, but the magic of it was Naram's. For at least a time his blood flows in you, and his gift is yours

Eursulon [Lou]

[Gruffly] Brother. I am coming. You will be free. [Makes sounds of hard swimming]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Ame, you begin to cast off of a rowboat. A massive Imperial schooner just whips around.

Sailor [Brennan]

Excuse me, miss, where are you headed?

Ame [Erika]

[Yelling] The Mage Morrow said I could go.

Sailor [Brennan]

What?

Ame [Erika]

[Yelling louder] The Mage Morrow said I could go.

Sailor [Brennan]

Uh, to... Where?

Ame [Erika]

The derrick!

Sailor [Brennan]

Oh, that's fully off limits.

Erika Ishii

Even if Mage Morrow said I could—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Lady, I don't know who the fuck you are, I don't know who the fuck you are

Ame [Erika]

Oh, I'm Ame! Hello!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Nice to meet you. You and your fox, uh frankly stole that boat. We know whose boats they are. I've never seen you on this dock before.

Ame [Erika]

We'll, give it back though. I'm just borrowing it.

Sailor [Brennan]

Yeah, not how it works.

Ame [Erika]

Well, you know where I'm going! Here, you can come.

Sailor [Brennan]

To the off-limits derrick?

Ame [Erika]

But again, I'm allowed to go there. I was just there the other night.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see, you see this—

Erika Ishii

the whole time there's like this [Whoosh, whoosh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Little wind kicking up.

Sailor [Brennan]

Ma'am, you are not granted passage there outside of the Council of the Guildmage Morrow or any of those of the Imperium. You bear no crest of the Citadel.

Ame [Erika]

Oh well, I got one of the, see I—

Erika Ishii

and I pull out the jacket and I put it on.

Ame [Erika]

See, I'm... I'm with them.

Sailor [Brennan]

You let me know how you want to play it because I'll tell you this right now,

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see that—

Lou Wilson

[Laughing, incredulous] You tell me how you want to play it?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The soldier on the deck of the ship says,

Sailor [Brennan]

The jacket you were not wearing a moment ago hidden in your pack is not, generally speaking, how this works. Moreover, the Azure Battalion neither is granted access to the derrick outside of the Council of the Guildmage Morrow or the Scepter's chorus.

Ame [Erika]

[Whispering] Fox.

The Fox [Brennan]

Yeah?

Ame [Erika]

We want to do something, and he's not going to let us do what we want to do.

The Fox [Brennan]

I don't know.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

you see the, uh. Ame give me an insight check,

Erika Ishii

Nat 20.

Aabria Iyengar

Whoo.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The soldiers aboard this ship will blow your rowboat out of the sea. And, Eursulon has quest fever. He's leapt into the water and has vanished from sight. You desperately want to help free Naram and in your enthusiasm you have jumped into a rowboat to row in broad daylight out to the derrick guarded by wizards in the middle of the sea.

Erika Ishii

I also got quest fever. It was contagious.

Ame [Erika]

Sorry, my mistake. I'll uh, just go back to the dock, then.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Eursulon. Swim through the dark water. [Mouths swimming noises] You begin to swim further and further down into the darkness. You hear [A deep tone gets louder and louder]. You begin to see light. The light casting off of Naram's body. You see images of magic. The base of the derrick and see a small fish swim going between the legs of the derrick. And as it goes, two very small, incandescent—less solid lines and more like a stream of connected motes sort of slowly and then quickly traveling along a line, intersect and slice the fish in half.

[Erika and Aabria together] Oh, shit.

Lou Wilson

Okay. I'd like to start to swim closer to the surface, trying to get as—or as close as I need to to get a sense of what is projecting those lights. Or if I remember from when we were on the derrick.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You don't, I mean, what you saw, you were way up at the fucking top. But you suddenly just go like "wizards, man. Fucking wizards." It's like, of course you can't just fucking swim—like, they thought of it! They thought of it all. Use any ability you want to use as you search for something here.

Lou Wilson

I mean, yeah, let me give you perception. 16.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

A little piece of kelp floods through the water. You're using the light of Naram, who's still somewhat far away, but you can see his form. You can see the blood oozing from him. Two little motes of light. They're so beautiful. Really beautiful magic. The wizardry is incredible to behold. But you, notice the thing that it originates from. It's a small gemstone. It looks like an eye. A small green glass eye embedded in a sort of surrounding steel joint covered in runes. And as you look at it, you don't think it's able to—it can't be movement. It cannot be movement, because the sea is moving. The current is down here. You can see the water because the movement is like pushing the kelp in and out through the water. You think they're seeing. You think the eyes that are generating the beams are seeing.

Lou Wilson

"Seeing" as in like, it notices something move through the space.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Right. It's not the movement itself. It's not the force.

Lou Wilson

Yes. It is the visual.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It is the ability to the eyes look and see something crossing the barrier. And the barrier very much is the plane created by the legs of the derrick. That's the threshold.

Lou Wilson

Do I get the sense that there would be a way for me to block the eye? Without interacting, like without putting—could I in some way get on either side of the eye to block it without putting my hand through it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Potentially if you could find them all, but you don't know exactly where they all are.

Lou Wilson

I think there's a quiet... There's a part of me that just is sitting there in the water floating, being like [laughing] can I get on other side of all the eyes? And just kind of, could I block all of them off? I think it actually comes to Eursulon that this is of Suvi's world and what would Suvi do? And how would Suvi approach it? That she would slow down, she would ask questions.

Lou Wilson

And that quietly in the back of his mind. Eursulon realizes that being invisible might make a difference, and is going to wish—or in the same way that his glamour works—desire to be unseen and desire and want to be un-perceptible. And watches that as starting at his fingertips where his hands once were, is now seawater. And as that feeling grows, the glamour moves up his arms, and he slowly disappears.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You vanish unseen. A fae creature moving here in the wide sea, the natural world. As many derricks as they might want to build on top of it. Putting an index finger through, nothing happens.

Lou Wilson

I'm gonna reach my hand out and kind of wave, move it around a little bit.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You are safe.

Lou Wilson

I'll cross through.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You swim through and feel the presence of the binding magic. You may now well be bound. You are here in this. You have walked into a trap. You've walked into a trap.

Lou Wilson

I'd like to swim down to Naram.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Eursulon. You swim past the threshold, headed down towards Naram. Not only his scintillating form filling the bottom of the sea, the interior of the four legs of the derrick with light, but his blood. Pooling underneath him, flowing to its own current against the tide of the sea itself. As you swim closer, white pearlescent magic surrounds, touches you as you approach. You have come here to the bottom of the sea to the center of a trap made for Wild Ones. You have walked directly into the heart of that which you have spent your many years always seeking to avoid. Why on earth has Eursulon done this?

Lou Wilson

He has been carried by the feeling that something must be done and that someone must do it. Even though the promise that Steel made, that she would be here and free him, meant pressing pause on doing the right thing. He has the sword. He made the promise. He will make this right.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Blood surrounds you. You hear a voice.

Naram [Brennan]

Ah, little cub. That's not your name anymore. You have grown, spent many years in this world. You've come here to join me in this trap. I hope you don't live to regret it.

Eursulon [Lou]

No, Naram. I've come to free you. To reunite you with your love.

Naram [Brennan]

[Sighs] I see [Brennan gasps]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see more blood kind of oozes out of him. And you can see that under, it's underneath his vast body that there's some kind of injury or something sort of pinning him to the ocean floor. You see, he says,

Naram [Brennan]

What can I call you?

Eursulon [Lou]

My name is Eursulon.

Naram [Brennan]

Eursulon. Very brave. I see my blood found you.

Eursulon [Lou]

Yes. They use it. They use its power for their own.

Naram [Brennan]

They think they do. But after all, did not my blood go out into the world to protect me? And though they tried to shape and form it, look what all their trickery brought them. It made the ring which found the sword, which shattered and then gave my gift to the one who would save me. So maybe they don't know everything about magic after all.

Eursulon [Lou]

How can I free you, brother?

Naram [Brennan]

If you free me, brother, then I fear Port talon may die.



Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You see, the blood echoes out.

Naram [Brennan]

My spear lies underneath me. Eursulon, this feeble trap could not hold me. But the power I would need to call to break free would raise the waves, call down the storms and drown the city. I fear what will happen. If you can strike true, then perhaps we can avert that fate. Underneath me you will find it. I wish that I could wield the sword myself, but I am too weak. It is too much to ask. I feel the weight of the hardships you have carried. Can you find it? Can you find it within you? To see your breath, to feel it and to strike true?

Lou Wilson

Ah, I think Eursulon pauses for a moment, thinking back on how far he has moved away from his breath, from the desires, the things that brought him into this world. And he reaches down, and unsheaths Wavebreaker.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The sword gleams in the sea. You feel yourself, hear breathing of the seawater. [Lou takes a deep breath] Sword, powerful, it's reverberating in your arm. It's so powerful. And there is some part of you that is eternal. You are a spirit. Are you fast enough to hold the part of yourself which is eternal? I cannot answer that question.

Lou Wilson

Eursulon swims down to the bottom of the sea, and plants his feet in the ground, gripping the sword with two hands as he grapples with the thought that he has put out of his mind for most of the time since he left Grandma Wren's cottage many years ago. That it was unfair that returning to this world, and the fact that it is not the one that he was promised or assumed that he would inevitably end up in, meant that he had no obligation to live up to the ideals that brought him here.

Lou Wilson

He grips the sword tightly, and realizes that it doesn't matter. That he is here in this time. That he will walk the path of danger. That he will stand for the brighter tomorrow. And he brings the sword high above his head and he accepts that this is a world where that is not upheld. But that doesn't mean that you fear, that you step aside. In fact, to have honor means that you meet it head on. And he's going to swing down hard.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

In a long story, governed by dice rolls, I can say that this roll will change the fate of this campaign. Whether this succeeds or fails can completely alter all of the events to come. In this moment, you are making an attack roll. You are doing so straight. However, should you choose, I would allow you to make this attack roll with advantage. But by planting your feet here on the ground so firmly, you know that you may be able to free Naram. You may well be trapped here instead. Do you accept that?

Lou Wilson

I accept it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Please give me your attack roll.

Lou Wilson

Oh, God. I can't believe I'm rolling this dice. It feels like there should be some kind of like... I'm rolling these dice in a sunglasses box that I found in the back of my car, and I'm sorry, these dice rolls determine the fate of the world? I add a plus five.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Wavebreaker is a plus three sword.

Lou Wilson

So this is a plus eight. First one's a 16. 2nd one's a 23.

Erika Ishii  
[Gasps loudly]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Sword comes up. You've made your peace. Knights left this world long ago. But a knight is someone who chooses danger for themselves over the thought of danger for another. If you do that, are knights truly gone?

[The music crescendos with a chorus, winding up with strings and ending in a lone tolling of bells and rolling timpanis]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
The sword comes down.

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

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

[Waltz fades out]