

# Worlds Beyond Number

Fireside Chat: Episode 007 - Episode 7 "Kahuna"

Final Version

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

Erika Ishii

Hello, and welcome to the Fireside Chat for Episode Seven of The Wizard, the Witch, and the Wild One, Kahuna. I'm your host, Erika Ishii, and I'm here with Brennan Lee Mulligan.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Hello. Oh, it's so toasty warm by the fire. I love—I love when my feet get all toasty warm, but there's a chill wind on my back.

Erika Ishii

It's true!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

That's a fun part of the fire.

Erika Ishii

Yeah, you gotta like, get real close, and then you're like, ah! Too hot, too hot!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Too hot, too hot!

Erika Ishii

And then you go a little further away, and then you come back again. I am also here with...?

Lou Wilson

Unkie D is here!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Laughing]

Unkie D (Lou)

And I hope you guys don't mind that I took my shoes AND socks off! Had cold feet, cold feet from the outside! But warm here, by the fire.

Erika Ishii

Yes! Yes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Unkie D, I know—

Unkie D (Lou)  
Yeah?

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Unkie D, I know presumably you've had your name your entire life.

Unkie D (Lou)  
Of course!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Why wouldn't you?

Unkie D (Lou)  
From birth!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
From birth, you came out of the womb and they said that's Unkie D, alright!

Unkie D (Lou)  
My lovely mother—

Erika Ishii  
Sure. I mean, did you already have a sibling, with a child? And so they preempted that? Because I'm assuming Unkie is—

Unkie D (Lou)  
No, no, absolutely not.

Erika Ishii  
Oh!

Unkie D (Lou)  
Oh, well, I'm not going to lie, assuming makes an A-word out of you and me, is what they say. I'm a single child. What's that called? What's it called when you're the—an only child, yes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Mhm. Mhm.

Erika Ishii  
[Laughing]

Unkie D (Lou)  
No, I'm a single child.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
So you're a single child, you're a child who's not, you know, otherwise spoken for. We love to see that, yeah, absolutely.

Unkie D (Lou)  
[Laughing]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And you happen to be, as you've said, named Unkie D. Unkie—

Unkie D (Lou)  
Yes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—just a name, a noise that means a person, unrelated to the word uncle.

Unkie D (Lou)  
Yes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And now D, is that an initial or is that a word, pronounced "Dee?"

Unkie D (Lou)  
No, it's a word. It's spelled out.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
It's spelled out. How do you spell D?

Erika Ishii  
Is it D—

Unkie D (Lou)  
D-E-A-U-K.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Doke?

Erika Ishii  
Dook?

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

No.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Ope!

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Deauk. Uncle Deauk.

Erika Ishii

Duke?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Uncle Deauk.

Erika Ishii

Uncle Duke.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

It's Latvian, alright? It's Latvian.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It's Latvian!

Erika Ishii

Oh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Unkie Deauk!

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

If you go to Latvia, they see my name, they say, oh, it is Unkie Deauk!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I guess my question—I guess the question I have for you Unkie Deauk is—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Oh yes, of course, no, of course of course.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I guess the question I have first and foremost—and we are going to talk about Episode Seven of The Wizard, the Witch, and the Wild One.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

No, of course!

Erika Ishii

Aw, we—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

We have to get into the Kahuna!

Erika Ishii

We don't have to!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

By the way, incredible performance. So many talented actors have taken on the role of Eursulon, and I thought—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Also real quick—just real quick, we have to clarify—the third person is not—we have not skipped over an intro.

Erika Ishii

Who?

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

We're running a tight three tonight.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yes, unfortunately, neither Lou nor Aabria could be here today.

Erika Ishii

Never heard of them.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Just me, Erika, and Unkie Deauk!

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Unkie Deauk out here, socks off, by the fire!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Big question, Unkie Deauk, because we've had a lot of actors—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Yeah, of course.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—with, I would say, amazing names on the show thus far.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Uh-huh. Yes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

We've been really fortunate in that capacity.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Of course, you've had your name since birth. But let's say—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Birth.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—let's say that your name was, like, invented, by somebody.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Mm! Okay, made up. Just made up?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Just made up.

Erika Ishii

I mean—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Would you say—

Erika Ishii

—all names are made up. That's how language works!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

For sure! For sure, absolutely. But—but some names are REALLY made up, and—

Erika Ishii

Mm, mhm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—and if this name was one of those, would you say that Unkie Deauk got made up, like, in the spur of the moment, like, minutes before?

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Mm. Mmm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Or would you say the person making up Unkie Deauk has like, a list, on their phone, perhaps, of names that they might use?

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

I would—so, you know, of course you're asking about, how my mother and father—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Laughs]

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

—would go about naming a child, that they birthed into this world, after a gestation period of around nine months, where I, Unkie Deauk, rested calmly in the womb. I would say, it is—it's done—it's done with—it's very intuitive, ya know? My mother, there, legs up, ankles out—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Wheezing laugh]

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

—watched me emerge, and said, that's an Unkie Deauk.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Wow.

Erika Ishii

So it was—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Spur of the moment.

Erika Ishii

—spur of the moment.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

It's light.

Erika Ishii

Despite the fact that you enumerated how many months, they spent with you gestating in utero.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Yes. Calmly.

Erika Ishii

A little bit of a misdirect there.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Calmly. I never kicked. I never kicked, while I was in the womb.

Erika Ishii

Woah.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

And I can prove that.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You can PROVE that you NEVER kicked?

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Yes. My mother—

Erika Ishii

Go on. Show receipts.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Yes, well I can show you, my mother kept a seismograph taped to her bosom for nine months, while I gesticulated the womb, and not a kick. Should we talk about the Kahuna? Or do people wanna hear more about—

Erika Ishii

[Laughing]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I can feel—I can feel everyone losing steam on this—yeah.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Going, like, "How long is this seismograph thing going to go on?" It's 100% true, but! The people deserve to know—



Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Yes.

Erika Ishii  
It's true.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)  
—what we were thinking when we made this ep.

Erika Ishii  
That's right.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Well! Yeah, a ton of stuff—a ton of stuff happened, ay ay ay. We really got into some wizard shit!

Unkie Deauk (Lou)  
Yes-uh! Citadel livin'!

Erika Ishii  
Some real wizard shit.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Some real wizard shit.

Erika Ishii  
Yes!

Unkie Deauk (Lou)  
And I'll tell ya, I like it a lot!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Ha HA!

Erika Ishii  
So if you'll remember—

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Do you, Unkie Deauk, like it a lot, or do you think Eursulon likes it a lot?

Unkie Deauk (Lou)  
I think they both love it. I mean me, Unkie Deauk, from the outside, I'm like, this looks like good livin', I—that—what was the beautiful word you had for what they kept feeding the Fox?

Erika Ishii

Slurry.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Chum? Slurry!

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Slurry! That was it. God, that slurry sounded delicious!

Erika Ishii

Fish slurry. I love a fish—I love a fish paste—a fish goo.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

A nice fish goo. We have those for Digit, we have these little things that are like Churu, they're little—

Erika Ishii

Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

They're meat gogurts for kitties!

Erika Ishii

They're like gogurts—yeah, gogurts, but they got tuna in 'em. I love giving them to her. She loves me when I do that.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

When I—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Slurry—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Now that I say tuna gogurt, they—I don't know if this is too gross—I would absolutely slam some tuna gogurt—if it was like a nice tuna salad, in a little gogurt? That sounds great!

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Be real.

Erika Ishii

Okay, so here—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Brennan, be real. Have you ever tasted—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Mhm.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

—Digits food, in any capacity?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Unfortunately, no. Well, not unfortunately, no

Erika Ishii

Because you ate Metallico's.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

No, unfortunately, unfortunately.

Erika Ishii

Okay. Did you ever—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Did you eat Metallico's?

Erika Ishii

—eat Metallico's food, in any capacity?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I have eaten—I have eaten dog treats by mistake, but they are not [Laughing] Metallico's.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Real quick.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

We're gonna talk about the episode. Just a real quick tangent.

Erika Ishii

I promise, I promise

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

What—by mistake?

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
[Laughing] By mistake!

Erika Ishii  
Okay, are we talking jerky, kibble? Something goopier?

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
No, they were biscuits! No, they were biscuits.

Erika Ishii  
Biscuits.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
They WERE shaped—

Erika Ishii  
Like were they bone shaped?

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Yeah Erika, they were bone shaped, but I thought they were regular human cookies.

Erika Ishii  
[Laughing] Regular, bone shaped, human cookies.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
I was at a friend's house, that always had nasty snacks! They always—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)  
Uh-huh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
It was one of those houses where they're like, "You should have this!" And you're like, "Oh my god, that looks like little chocolate chips!" And you have it and you're like, "This tastes like you burned garbage." And they're like "It's carob, It's just like chocolate!"

Unkie Deauk (Lou)  
[Laughing]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And you're like, "Well, you're just like a fucking demon, because this tastes nasty as hell, and I'm never coming back here, and we're going to ostracize your child, you bad, bad parent!" And—so it was one of those homes. And, I was looking at these bad snacks on a table, and in the kitchen, like, they had the snacks on a counter. And then, yeah, it was a little bit away, down the counter, but it was on a counter

with snacks, there were—and they were loose! They were out! So I don't know why they weren't in a dog branded snack receptacle.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Well, because they assumed that most people seeing a bunch of dog shaped treats—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

They're not dog shaped!

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

—wouldn't need the boundaries.

Erika Ishii

And perhaps—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

They're not dog shaped treats! They're bone shaped!

[Long pause. Someone snorts a laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And! And! Let me say this. If you are—let me tell this, for all of our listeners who—and I presume that some BIG percentage of you, have dog treat companies and are callin' shots every day.

Lou Wilson

[Raucous laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Are callin' shots every day!

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

We've done the demographics.

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

We've done the demographics. I have to assume, you know, at least some percentage of our patrons—by the way. Thank you to our patrons. If you're listening to this—

Erika Ishii

Yes, thank you so much for being here by the Fireside.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—it means you subscribed to our Patreon. We appreciate you, thank you so much. There's a bunch of exciting stuff coming, by the way. For those listening on the Patreon, we're going to have, coming up, I think sooner rather than later, our first exclusive mini campaign, a County Affair, GM'd by none other than Erika Ishii!

Erika Ishii

Aah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Woo!

Erika Ishii

Yeah! Yuh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

A little yelp from Erika—Erika killed it. It's so—we had such—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

It really is delightful.

Erika Ishii

We had—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

If you—

Erika Ishii

Such a good time though! I've never seen—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The word—

Erika Ishii

—Lou—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Keywords are: Hijinks.

Erika Ishii

—laugh so hard.

Erika Ishii

Hijinks. Shenanigans.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Shenanigans.

Erika Ishii  
Absolutely. Absolutely, that was so good.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)  
There's a lot of beautiful stuff.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)  
Yes.

Erika Ishii  
Y'all are incredible.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)  
Also Brennan, great way to segue away from you eating dog food.

Erika Ishii  
Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
I just want the patrons to know, that I am so grateful and appreciative, and if they—sometimes, if I say things that, maybe, are less relatable, like, I ate dog treats—

Erika Ishii  
No no no, that's the thing—

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—then you should remember the things that are relatable like, that—that you—we're all—I appreciate you!  
That's relatable, right?!

Erika Ishii  
Let me be very clear, Brennan, let me be very clear. It's not the fact that you ate them, it's the fact that you ate them by accident. I think. Because that denotes, like, a certain lack of consciousness in the things that you put in your mouth.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Can I say something?

Erika Ishii  
Yeah.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

[Chuckling]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

If you make dog bone cookie treats, okay? And you decide, "Hey, we're going to corner the market, by making them even cuter and more chibi-esque, we're going to make them a little chibi—er, right? And we're going to corner the market that way." And you shorten the length of the classic dog bone shape, to a hungry child, it could look like a butterfly—

Erika Ishii

[Wheezing]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—because the sort of knobs of the bone become more rounded.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

How old were you? How old were you?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I was, like, 13.

Erika Ishii

[Cackling]

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Okay. Okay.

Erika Ishii

How big was the dog?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So, too young—

Erika Ishii

How big was the dog?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I didn't see the dog, I just saw the cookies! I don't remember the fuckin' dog. The dog is immaterial, the cookies—I can't eat the dog, the cookies—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

The dog is immaterial



Brennan Lee Mulligan

The dog's immaterial! The dog's not germane, it's not relevant. God, look, they looked like little—when I think back—

[Erika and Unkie Deauk laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

When I think back—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Brennan is—a spotlight has appeared out of nowhere, on Brennan.

Erika Ishii

Yeah. Sorry, man.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

When I think back—

Erika Ishii

Low hanging fruit.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

When I think back, they really—it's not that I thought they looked like butterflies, it's that I was so hungry, and so wanted a good snack, that I saw dog bones. And I think my brain went, "No, man, those are butterflies. It's all green lights." Because, there are butterfly shaped cookies out there. That's sort of a classic shape for, for, you know. Not classic but—

Erika Ishii

Yeah. Everybody grew up with those butterfly cookies.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Damn, when you're getting roasted by Erika, you know you're in trouble. You know, you—when Erika's comin' for you.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I know. It's one thing when Unkie Deauk does it, but when Erika does it—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

When Unkie Deauk—ey, you know, much like my feet right now—

Erika Ishii

About food!

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

—I like to roast!

Erika Ishii

I've eaten things that you wouldn't believe, Brennan! But the fact that you accidentally ate dog biscuits, and are FERVENTLY trying to pull up from this nose dive.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Laughing] I don't actually even remember getting roasted by Erika this hard. Erika is so wonderfully supportive—

Erika Ishii

I am!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—and such a champion of the people that I do agree, getting on the side of Erika, where Erika is like, "I can't come with you here," is—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Exactly.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—is pretty meaningful.

Erika Ishii

Own it!

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Butterfly cookies? Butterfly cookies, Brennan?

Erika Ishii

That being said, most cat food does taste like, just, you know, human canned food.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I will say, the dog treats were—they were like—I think they were, like, made—it was like a crunchy, granola-y, hippie kinda house. And so the dog treats were, I could tell they weren't sweet—you ever had like, English cookies, or biscuits I guess, that are, like, really oaty and mealy, and—

Erika Ishii

Like hobnobs, yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—there's almost a little bit of salt in them, where it's like—

Erika Ishii  
Or digestives.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—if you took the—if you took the chocolate off a —don't give chocolate to dogs, folks—and you—so it was like a sort of lovely, little salty, oaty biscuit. And I had a couple. And—before I—before I was alerted, before I was informed.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

We gotta move on because this is getting too—this will be the episode. You ate a couple?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It didn't taste bad enough—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Oh my—we gotta—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Sorry, it's on me?! It's on me, that my friends' weird parents, had snacks worse than dog food? The biscuits were the best thing in the house, and it wasn't close, folks. It was not close. It wasn't close.

Erika Ishii

[Softly moaning in the background]

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Brennan, I have a question for you about the episode.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah yeah yeah.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

[Laughing]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Erika is softly moaning in the background, oh no.

Erika Ishii

[Hooting laughter]

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Yes. That's why we gotta get out of here. Pull up. how much—Brennan, how much had you thought about—I mean, not that you—I know you didn't do it on the fly, but like, in terms of creating the Chantry, how much of that like, aesthetic, that vibe, was kind of pre-planned and thought out? And how many of

the light fixture descriptions—or did you just know because this is the Citadel, it's going to have this kind of energy?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So, the vibe, I had locked in pretty early. So it wasn't that every inch of the Chant—it wasn't like I had maps in the back, that had every floor of the Chantry planned out, but I knew the main points of interest in the Chantry, and I knew the factions associated with it. The Azure Battalion. The Scepter's Chorus. This was also our first time—we've met hedge mages a couple of times, so we've seen kind of like, you know, you see Suvi, who's like, leadership track, and raised by the Sword of the Citadel, and apprentice to one of the Archmages of the Citadel!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So you've seen as high as it gets, and then you've seen hedge mages, which are sort of universally like, you know, they're like peddlers, and tinkers, and people that are like, grabbing whatever scraps of magic, at the edge of influence that they can, and trying to create a methodology, or a system, or some kind of, like praxis for spell casting.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Mhm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

This was, I think, our big entry into the vast middle of the Empire. You see Guild Mages, and you get the impression that these are very powerful wizards, but somehow not graced with the favor of the Citadel, right? They have a relationship to the Crown, where they work for the Crown itself. And I think that there's something—there's an interesting insight into the relationship between the Citadel, and the Imperium itself. The fact that they are completely—they run parallel, they're alliant, it's how—it's the Empire, but that there is—they are different institutions, and that there is something in the wizards who work for the crown that separates them, in some kind of way, from true Citadel Wizards, right?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So the thing about the Sceptor's Chorus, to me, was making something that would seem absolutely otherworldly to, like, a village witch, and like, a Spirit—a sort of Spirit lost in the mortal world, but would read to Suvi, like—my favorite things were like, the walls, the quartz—the glowing quartz perfect crystal waterfall that you walk through, which again, if you saw that in real life, you'd be like "MAGIC!" You don't get wet because it's an illusion, right? It's not a real passwall.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Mhm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you get into the thing, and the plates float out, and it's like, "Oh my god, dinner is just floating out." But like—we didn't get to it in the episode, but like, that dinner is being cooked by cooks somewhere, right?

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Mmm.

Erika Ishii

Mmm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And then they just have a telepathic—a telekinetic stream that brings it out, which is sort of like why, when you order more, they just have to put more of the food that they—and when they send the wine glasses out, it's like, ooh, a top heavy, stemmed wine glass, on this little telekinetic stream. It bobbles a little bit, so they can only pour kind of like a quarter pour into the gl—so just, there were—It's very interesting, because it's like, Eursulon and Unkie Deauk, both have the experience of being like, "This is magic like we've never seen!" But I wanted to thread it so that Aabria, as Suvi, could still be like, "No, man, this is not even—"

Erika Ishii

Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

"You haven't even seen the real shit yet."

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Not even close! Not even CLOSE!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Not even close, right?

Erika Ishii

How was it—she was saying that, like, the difference between these guys and—these guys and the Citadel, is like the fake forest in the circus, is to the real forest. Which is... Harsh. Harsh.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I love that line from Aabria, god, that was so beautiful.

Erika Ishii

It's so cutting.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

She's really good.

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

She's good!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

She's really good.

Erika Ishii

Cutting.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

There's a moment, I think, where Ame makes, either an insight check about, kind of, all of the presentational aspects, of this space, and the use of magic in this way, that I thought was just a really fun, grounding of everything that's going on—of the kind of, like, exciting imagery—of what you're saying, of like, "Well, we did all this so that you'd look at it and you'd go wow!" And that being a way in which magic is used, contrasted against all of the utility that Ame brings to casting.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

There was a really important moment to thread there, because this world—like whimsy is a huge ingredient in this world, it's based on Miyazaki, it's based on faery—Like, our pinterest when we first were coming up with the setting, you know, we put all our childhood fables, and books, and things like that in there. And, so it's interesting to show the Empire, because I did not want to make magic a, like, resource that there is scarcity for.

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Because that's not Miyazaki, that's not—it's like, "No, the magic of the heart is unending, the spirit world is infinite and this—"

Erika Ishii

I don't need physics—like, ya know, laws of physics in my magic, personally.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah. And listen, I reserve the right, many times in the future, to tell stories where magic is fuckin', an analogy for oil, or money—

Erika Ishii

Sure, sure.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—or whatever, and it's like "ugh, the heart of the world—"

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Guys, get excited, get excited for what's comin' down the pipeline. Magic as oil!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah. Oh, the spice must flow, is that it, Mr. Herbert?

Erika Ishii

Do you like allegories?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Do you like allegories, motherfucker? Magic is oil, and fuckin' wizards are capitalists, and fuckin', warlocks are labor unions, BLAM!! Like, whatever thing you want to do, right?

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

It feels like the kind of thing that somebody quote—like you run a campaign about twelve years from now, and they're like, "Remember this?"

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Remember this? Remember this?

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Brennan! Brennan in 2023!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

If I do—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Warlocks are a labor union!

Erika Ishii

Spice is cocaine!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I mean they do—it's all about contracts, right? It's all about negotiating a better contract—

Erika Ishii

Oh my god.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—and in the middle of the WGA strike, which is, again—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

It's fitting, it's fitting.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—solidarity, any of our fans or friends. I was on the picket line over at Disney with friend of the pod, Luis Carazo.

Erika Ishii

Yeah!!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The actual sweetest, and nicest man. What a fuckin' gem. But—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Did you guys know that I'm in the union?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

WGA! We got a WGA member right here.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Unkie Deauk, official WGA—

Erika Ishii

Ohh! I thought you just got fired.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Unkie Deauk.

Erika Ishii

I thought you just got fired, and that's why you could do this at a normal reasonable hour?

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Who, me, Unkie Deauk?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Laugh]

Erika Ishii

Yeah!

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Unkie Deauk? Yeah, I did just get fired, but I'm still in the WGA.

Erika Ishii

Oh! I guess I just don't know how unions work.



Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Getting fired from the show I was on, because I take my shoes off all the time, and it upsets everyone—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

—and me being in the WGA are two separate things.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Unkie Deauk was the host of the Today Show, and he kept putting his bare feet up on the counter, and they said America—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

And Robin—Michael Strahan and Robin were NOT having it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

NOT.

Erika Ishii

Yeah. Brennan, can I sidebar with you for a second here?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Are you guys sidebarring? Do you want me to stand over here?

Erika Ishii

Yeah. We'll be right back to the fire—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Yeah of course.

Erika Ishii

—in a minute.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah.

Erika Ishii

Yeah, I'm not crazy about the whole socks thing. I think, like, that he's getting so close to the fire, that he's getting singed, and that's what I'm smelling?

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

(Singing "Break My Stride" by Matthew Wilder to himself, quietly] Ain't nobody gonna break-a my stride.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Wheezing laugh]

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Nobody gonna hold me down, oh no, I got to keep it movin'!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah he's—

Erika Ishii

I don't know is it just me being—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I think that the socks thing is one thing, but I think softly singing copyrightable songs also was a big part of why they sort of broomed him out of the Today Show, you know what I mean?

Erika Ishii

Okay, alright, okay.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I think it was a big part. Well, listen, Erika, I totally agree with you, but also, I'm still very hurt that you came for me so hard about the dog biscuits thing, so.

Erika Ishii

I—yeah, no no no, that's fair, that's fair that's fair. So I cannot count on your vote for going in a different direction.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You can't count on my vote, sadly. And also—

Erika Ishii

That's fine. I'll just wait for Aabria to get back.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Alright, let's go back. We'll wait for Aabria to get back.

Erika Ishii

Okay.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah. WGA solidarity to all of our—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Hey, yes.

Erika Ishii

Yes, yes yes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—WGA patrons and everybody engaging—

Erika Ishii

Mhm. Mhm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—in labor actions everywhere. This is a pro-union podcast, motherfuckers, let's go!

Erika Ishii

Union strong, baby!

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Warlocks unite!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Warlocks unite.

Erika Ishii

So, speaking of whimsy actually, and the Miyazaki of it all that inspired this—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Gasps]

Erika Ishii

—we have a question—I'm sorry, go ahead.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I was going to say wait, Erika—I was just about to compliment you, which was the thing of the whole thing of whimsy and everything like that, that Ame's—I didn't want it to be that wizards do lots of fun magic, and it's wasteful, and this is about sustainability—

Erika Ishii

Yeah, no no.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—and witches are like you mustn't use too much magic. The word you used that I thought was perfect, that immediately made it click for me, even in designing the world around it—

Erika Ishii

Aww!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—was vulgar. You said, this is vulgar.

Erika Ishii

[Laughs]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It's perfect, because it's just the idea of, if like Grandmother Wren, if like Ame, you see the beauty, and indeed the magic, in the everyday, then the idea of a small and humble thing, made with love, has the greatest magic of all, resting within it. And that there was just an idea of, the flashiness, the idea of the vulgarity of like, yeah, there's enough magic to do this, you can do this, I could do this as well. But why would you? Right? I love that word, vulgarity—

Erika Ishii

Yeah and—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—and that it was about—yeah.

Erika Ishii

Yeah. Yeah. Thank you! And also, Eursulon asking about, like, "Well, why is it lit up? Why is it lit up?" And you can't explain that it's like, to impress you. to like, make me feel big, like a big man. It's just like, that really got me. That really, really got me. And this whole scene, just everything in the Citadel, reminds me of that crazy Christmas party, that you catered, years ago?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yes! Yes!

Erika Ishii

Right, where you're like—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

What?

Erika Ishii

—do—okay, so Brennan catered this—you were catering—you're one of the caterers at this insane—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I wrote a little short story about it, yeah.

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

What?

Erika Ishii

Insane, wealthy person Christmas party. And just the absolute decadence of it, and how everybody just seemed so over it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I was—it was at the brokest period of my life, and I was working as a caterer, and we were catering this party in a person's—you can't call it an apartment—it was like three stories of a skyscraper, on Central Park East, right? And you're walking around, and like, the party had multiple fortune tellers, and magicians—

Erika Ishii

You said there was a—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—there was a band stand with a live band—

Erika Ishii

—pop-up Pinkberry?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Oh, a Pinkberry, and a Wafels & Dinges opened up, in the apartment during the party, and it was catered. There was already catering. And they just had two restaurants open. And there was an area—so there was a bandstand at the giant glass wall overlooking Central Park, where Broadway stars were singing, to a private event. Like, people that are on Broadway are like—get an email being like, do you want to go sing at a party? A thing that cannot—it cannot be like an artistic—it's like, you know, there's not going to be talent scouts here. No one's going to know that you did this, other than the people at this party.

Erika Ishii

They just got paid a shit ton.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It's just that's how good the money had to be.

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

That's just how good the money had to be. There was another bandstand with singers, in a staff only area. So like, entertainment was being provided in a like, off limits—the apartment—the place had, these dimly-lit, gray hallways, that were like, in a hospital. And it was a network of staff—it was a staff warren. It was like a burrow for staff, to have spaces that they moved throughout to occupy different spaces, from the family. And it was like—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

So they would like appear and be like, here's your Diet Coke, and then you don't have to walk around the corner and see them waiting for you. They're like, "No, you go hide in the gray hallway."

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Go hide in the—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

"—and wait for me to call for you."

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Go hide in the gray hallway. Gray, like your face, and your soul, as you starve slowly day by day.

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And, I remember getting really mad at one point, because I realized I couldn't see a light bulb, anywhere. Like, everything was beautifully lit, and I was like, I don't see any fucking lightbulbs.

Erika Ishii

No direct lighting.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And then it was like every lighting thing was like, oh this bookshelf is glowing. And I was like, is this fuckin'—I just felt so—it started making you go insane, where you're like, is this why I'm poor? I get too much direct light from bulbs? Like, is this what it is? What are you doing? What is this?

Erika Ishii

Right?

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Yes, Brennan, yes!

Erika Ishii

Yeah!

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

It's the bulbs!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Do you know that for a fact!?

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Oh, without a doubt. I mean, it's just like, Eliza—or Victorian England where they counted the windows, to assess the taxes. We count the light bulbs, direct light bulbs—

Erika Ishii

[Cackle]

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

—to assess the poverty, ya know?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yes. Yes yes yes. Yes yes yes yes.

Erika Ishii

I—I—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

You get tax cuts based on the number of light bulbs in your house.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It was a real—the thing that really shook me, the last thing I'll say about that party, really, that really fucked me up, was—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

[Laughs]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—I always sort of, like, believed—I was at a period of my life in New York where I was like, "Yeah, I'm really hungry, and scared, all the time. But then I'm living this Bohemian dream, baby!"

Erika Ishii

[Laughs]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

"I'm a struggling artist, and like, when I go out on the weekend and I'm dancing with my friends, you know, no one will ever feel the depth of joy I feel, strugglin' and grindin' out here with my friends." I saw

those, like, rich heirs and heiresses dance. They were having a better time than me, and it wasn't close. It was not. They were—

Erika Ishii  
Hah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

There was no Bohemian Dream. I was like—I watched these rich people dance with the most reckless abandon, and their faces were like, we're having a great time, uncomplicatedly! We're not examining this! It's so fun! And I heard my stomach gurgle and was like, well, this is fucking rough, gang. This is pretty rough.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Did you get any Wafels & Dinges?

Erika Ishii

Yeah, well, I thought about that, a lot during this whole, sequence. Also about, how when I was in catering, at my sort of low point, and was getting paid \$12 an hour, how we had to go to the Dean of the Law School's private home in Bel Air, above the school. And this—mind you, we were the school catering company, so like, this was being paid for by my tuition. And we had to use the servant's entrance.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Laughs] You were like, Earning your tuition back?

Erika Ishii

Yeah. Yeah, also, we had to pay for our own parking, so if you didn't find a spot in Westwood, after like, 20 minutes, which was around the time where it's like, okay, well that's—you might as well. It was \$12 for parking for the day. So. You know. It's like. Ugh. And it's those things where, yeah, magic's not a scarce resource in this world, but it's like, who are they trying to impress? Why? Why so much into all of this, for—who is it for? Why are they—yes. Anyway, those stories all came pouring back to me, while we were in that episode.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I think that there's a huge amount of that, like—what is it, I don't know if this is the right way to use conspicuous consumption, but there's that idea about the way in which you use resources to communicate. What are the Scepter's Chorus trying to communicate? They're trying to communicate "We are masters of magic. All of these things are trivial for us," right? "And you should feel impressed."

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And it's interesting because there's a part of that where I agree with Ame, and I'm like, "Yeah, that's really vulgar, and foolish, and juvenile, and like—you know, trying to make people—architecturally, stylistically, try to make people feel small and make yourself seem above or past or beyond." But then I also think about the idea of, like—I remember biologists talking about intimidation—



Erika Ishii  
Mmmmm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—as one of the most successful survival strategies in the world, because every fight is a bad idea, every conflict is a bad idea. Even if you're the bigger animal, in the wilderness, you get a bite on your leg, it gets infected, you die, right? And so the idea of being able to cow people, in terms of like, if you're moving from a place of fear, intimidation is the strategy to—to stop conflict, and stop challenge before it happens. So there's a, you know. I'm trying to, like, do the argument that Aabria would do defending—

Erika Ishii  
Right, yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—her wizardly culture, here on the Pod.

Erika Ishii

Well, there is such a thing—and you see this in sort of Japanese architecture a lot, like, this is definitely like—having everything be artistic, in a way? Like, everything from, sort of, food arrangement, to architecture, to the way that you rake leaves is—aesthetic is definitely, a very human desire, right? You know, art, and aesthetic, and going above and beyond our basic survival needs. But, yeah, the intent behind it, is always interesting—interesting to examine, because if you look at art in our world, it's all kind of a speculation game? For laundering money in terms of fine art? But that doesn't discount ALL art.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

No, but I think you're right, too—and again, like, there's very rarely a single motive—I don't subscribe, in general, to singular motivations, especially for complex—

Erika Ishii  
Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—group actions, right? Like the rock garden you were in was beautiful! I love a little thing of espresso. The empire is not wrong to have little cups of espresso, that's fucking delightful.

Erika Ishii  
Yes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You should do that. But, you know, it's the idea of, you know, maybe the supply chain, or what's happening along the workflow, of how that gets made, that's probably worth investigating. And again, like that rock garden, beautiful! And like the tree, perfectly ordered and symmetrical. There's a philosophy of impression, of intimidation, of why cathedrals are shaped like that, and why castles are shaped like that, and why certain architectural choices are made.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

But also, I think there is something genuine in the wizard's philosophy of "Look at both the order we can impose on chaos, look at the order we can discover within the natural world, look at the way our magic creates patterns, or discovers patterns, or makes use of patterns, that I think is genuinely beautiful. So I think there's parts of the Kalabel Chantry that I, as Brennan, would be like, that rules. But, yeah, there's a bunch of stuff stitched into it, that's baked in the cake, that is a little bit more sinister and nastier as well.

Erika Ishii

Yes. But—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Indeed.

Erika Ishii

Speaking of that whimsy, and the inspiration for the Chantry, Do Not Season the Captain, aka David, asks about our reading list. "What books or other media, like films, plays, et cetera, have inspired, challenged, comforted, or shaped each of you as a storyteller and as a person?"

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Damn. Where to begin?

Erika Ishii

Lou—I'm sorry, Mr. Deauk?

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Yeah. Sorry, is it just the books or was it everything? It's just books.

Erika Ishii

Everything. Everything. What kind of media.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

It's ALL media??

Erika Ishii

What kind of media has informed you as a storyteller? Or it could even be experiences.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Uh. Specifically a storyteller, that's interesting.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah, that's pretty specific. That's a good question. It's like, yeah, what's the story you read that you're like, oh, I'm going to tell stories differently now?

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Yes. That the—like it's—I feel like that's—on the surface, the question hits you and you're like, you—I feel like I abstracted it to just be like, what books do you like? Which I'm sure they would be interested in, but it feels like they're drilling down to like, in terms of communicating narrative—

Erika Ishii

Yep.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

—what things, kind of grabbed me. I mean, oddly, I feel like the first one that jumps out, truly TRULY, is like Lord of the Rings, the Peter Jackson films? I feel like it's one of the things—the first things I ever watched, that characters—it's one of the first things I interacted with, where characters were changing from movie to movie. Frodo was going from bumbling, fun, bigfooted hobbit, in the first one to smacking Sam around in the Ret—so it was, I think there was this understanding of, like, okay, cool. These characters are growing and changing and things are happening, but there's action and there's plot and things. We're seeing a story over here, and then we're watching the impact of the story over here.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

And I don't know, I think a lot of my storytelling in this space, I feel like, honestly relates a lot back to, watching the Return of the King at the ArcLight on opening day, and being like, this is—this is—this is important. Like, this experience of me, being 13 some odd years, I was—how old—I was like—yeah, I was 13 or 14, just sitting there in the dark, watching Aragorn be crowned king, and being like, wow.

Erika Ishii

[Shuddering gasp]

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

The journey is over. And how meaningful and important that is.

Erika Ishii

Aww. I love that.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

God, I really have to agree. I just think that yeah, those movies—those movies were my whole fucking life, you know, like, it's just—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And—boy howdy, when I watch them again, you know, to this day, it's like—you watch Theodin hitting the spears of the riders in Return of the King with his sword, fuckin'. "Forth Eorlingas!!" You can't beat it.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

There's just so many moments, as well that it just feel like you're like, oh. That's how—that's how you, telling a story, you want people to feel. You want them to hear you say that line, and have it resonate, and for them to realize how important, and how dramatic this moment is.

Erika Ishii

Oh my god.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Chasing that.

Erika Ishii

Is it just Lord of the Rings for all th—is it Lord of the Rings for all three of us?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Aabria is going to be so mad that she missed this episode.

Erika Ishii

[Cackling maniacally]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Aabria is gonna be so mad. Welcome to the fuckin' Lord of the Rings hour, baby!

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

There it is!

Erika Ishii

There it is! Because for me, I mean, I truly made it my whole personality after the movies. I remember being a kid, and reading the books—I was in, like, middle school or something—and I think, I remember reading Two Towers under the covers after I was supposed to be in bed with a flashlight. And it got to the part, where it's like, you think that Frodo is dead. And like it's—I don't know if anybody else remembers what it was like for them? And this was in a pre-Game of Thrones world, too, so I was like, they can't just kill a character!! And it just was devastating. I had a little cry, and then I finished the rest of the couple of pages of the book, and realized that in fact, he was still alive.

Erika Ishii

But then, yeah, the last—the three movies came out in high school for me, and I had an Arwen dress for each, and I was, like, writing Elvish poetry, and I had quotes from it for my high school yearbook.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Go off. Go off.

Erika Ishii

Yeah, it was—I was obsessed with that film, and I realized later that it's not just the aesthetic and fantasy, it was a lot of the themes—for me, it was about the themes, and of something bigger than yourself, and everybody working together to make life better, and to save the world. So the themes and just the world building, that was huge for me. I want to say—I also want to give shoutouts to Rashomon, I saw it when I was pretty young, actually, and being like, oh, people lie. And that always became a cornerstone of my storytelling.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Mhm.

Erika Ishii

And uh. God. Neil Gaiman stuff, of course.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Neil Gaiman, I think as a storyteller, Sandman—

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—Sandman really changed my brain, I think, in a lot of ways. It felt like cracked my head open and poured a lot of, like, "Oh, there's like—it can get—there's so much more space in the lands of imagination than you have thought." I had this spine, of this very rich Celtic mythological tradition, and then I read Sandman and it's like, oh, shit, it's all on the table. Like, there's a lot of space.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

I wanna give—or, go ahead, sorry.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Oh go for it. No no no, you do it, Unkie Deauk.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Oh, thank you. Unkie Deauk will go. And then I'm going to throw it back. No, but I wanted also to give a shout out, because I think—it is fun to go back—because it is that time. I feel like it's my teenage years was the first time I started thinking about the idea of storytelling, and the fact that I am now empowered to be constructing, and communicating narrative. And I also think about the Star Wars Knights of the Old Republic game.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Let's go.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Which was a—I feel like I could spoil it, because it's not—

Erika Ishii

Mhm. Mhm.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Essentially you are playing as like, a Jedi—or you're playing as just a person and then it turns out you're a Jedi—or actually a Sith Lord, who's lost their memory, and now has a chance to become good, and playing the game, I had been doing it—I had been treating it like a video game the entire time, where I'm just like, killing anybody who won't give me more credits, and kind of just, like, very moving through the world, like very aloof. And there's a point in the game where, essentially to become—I was playing Dark Side kind of throughout the game, just being mean and killing people.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

And I got to the end and there's a character named Jolee Bindo who's like this older black man, with like a white goatee, who looked a lot—who, he had real grandpa vibes. And to go full Dark Side to be truly a Sith, to take on your Sith Lordness again, you have to kill him. And I couldn't do it.

Erika Ishii

[Gasp]

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

I could not, in this video game, kill this grandpa character. And I remember being twelve and being like, "Why?" Really having that moment of being like, "Well I won't kill—no. No! He's black like me, he's a grandpa. I'm not going to strike him down!" And it fucked up my whole game, I couldn't use any of the super power ups at the end, because I didn't go full Dark Side, and I think that's another one of those moments that just like, narratively forever sticks out to me. And it was the kind of thing I went back to my friends at school and was like, the ending is crazy! But yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Man.

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

That is—stories are fucking great.

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Kind of stuff like that, just changes the whole arc of your—the thing I was going to say, prior to that is, this is a very, like, like old—it feels like an old fuddy duddy kind of thing to do, to talk about what was happening in the real world when a story came out? But I do think it's worth remarking on—

Erika Ishii

No, it's really important!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I—When *Return of the King* came out, it came out every year around Christmas, and I watched them at midnight, every year, with my dad in theater. And, 2003, I was like—I was, I guess I was like 15 years old. It was two years—2003 was the year the Iraq War started. It was—and I know I know that there's like many, many things that are horrifying about today, but that was also, I feel like, a very bleak time in history, especially for like, a 15 year old, where you feel like, okay, here's the world I'm going to inherit.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Like, two years prior to that, the first time I saw my mom, because I'd been away with my dad during 9/11, I got back from the airport and my mom was —I was like, "Hey, mom, this is crazy, right?" In this—you're 13, so your consciousness is like—you have this like, kind of—you have the intellect that you're going to have, is kind of there already, but you just don't have the context, you don't have the wisdom or the experience. So you're like, "This is kind of crazy, right?" And my mom, who I was expecting to be in kind of a panicky mood with me, went, "Everything is going to be different now." In that tone of voice.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And she's like, "The things that happen now—there's going to be a thing, that you're going to see in your country, that you haven't seen before—and you're going to have the awareness to see it—that is going to happen as a result of these events." And, you know—so all of that is to say, that was a freaky time as a teenager, to be unsure of the world you were about to inherit? And Samwise fucking Gamgee saying, "Because there's some good in this world, Mr. Frodo, and it's worth fighting for," still makes me cry to this day.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Of the many things—that and Gandalf saying, "We don't choose the time that we live in," man, those are those are on my fucking belt at any moment when things get hard. Those two speeches alone. Jesus.

Erika Ishii

I wrote, like a thesis in senior year of high school, we had to do this big sort of, like, multi book report. And mine was built around the quote that only appears in the movie, and not in the books. "Even the smallest person can change the course of the future." And back then, it was like, "Oh yeah, I, as an individual, can enact so much change." But now I'm like, "Oh." Then by the end of the year, I was like, "Oh."

Erika Ishii

Merry and Pippin are described as like two small stones that cause an avalanche. And the idea of everybody working together. You know, it's not Aragorn, leading the army. It's Sam and Frodo like,

toughin' it out, that really kind of get it at the end. Man! Yeah, stories are so good! And I feel like there's different stories, and different narratives, that have changed my brain at different times in my life. Newest one is sleep no more. Now everything I talk about is somehow connected to that.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I love it.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Do you still have your mask?

Erika Ishii

Yeah! I have two of them. I went twice, right in a row. Shout out to all the costume team, who are also D&D players.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Oh, sick.

Erika Ishii

Gave me cool experience. How—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Hell yes.

Erika Ishii

How long have we been going?

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

I'd also like to use this time, in this Fireside, as Unkie Deauk to tell Brennan, I think what you did to Eursulon at the end of the episode was unfair. I think you should have just let him—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Laughing]

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

—I think you shouldn't have had Guild Mage Morrow there. I think that was just rude. That's just rude. Why would he be in his office? I'm never in my office, I got fired from the Today show!

[Brennan and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

My favorite kind of consequences. My favorite kind of consequences—I think as a Dungeon Master, I'll say this. I think a lot of Dungeon Masters provide consequences that stymie bold action. Your players do something risky, they do something that has a big chance of whatever, they do something that's like,



exciting or wild. And if you routinely punish that, over time, you know, your PCs will learn. They'll go, okay. That type of behavior gets punished.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Where I bring the hammer down—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

[Laughing]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—is thoughtfulness. I never want to punish bold moves, I never want to punish awesome ideas, I never want to punish, "Let's fucking hit the gas and go!!" I love those moments. But the idea that no one, for a second, was like, "And what if he's in his office working in the middle of the day, which it is right now?" Oh, baby! I just knew the whole time, I was like, "Well, he's there. He went and had the meeting, with Morrow, where he got the permission to do the thing, and now he's going to go do that, in the office, where he works, which is where his papers are!" And so, to answer your question, Unkie Deauk, what I did was supremely fair.

[Erika and Unkie Deauk laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And, you get what you get, and you don't get upset, baby.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

That was a moment where, I was so deep in character, that there's like, a confidence that Suvi has, in going like, "Use the invisibility. Go get the documents." I was like, "Yes, that is what I will do." And then the moment arose to do that, and I said, "It is time to do the thing we agreed to."

[Brennan and Erika laugh]

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

And then the minute you put that in there, I was like—this is somebody being like, "These are your directions. And you'll get there." And I'm like, sick! And I follow them, and there's a brick wall in the middle. And I'm like, "I don't know, actually, how to go left or right. So I think I'm going to try and climb the wall." And I think that's just, the way—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

In our Ocean's—

Erika Ishii

Yeah—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

You have to just get to the other side. You can't go back and make a left or right.

Erika Ishii

[Laughs]

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

This is the only way forward. It is through the wall.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The Ocean's Eleven of it, would be like, "Guys, I have terrible news. The door to the vault is closed and locked." Like—

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Yes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—that is literally like, "I don't know how we could have foreseen this."

[Erika and Unkie Deauk laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

"We got around the lasers. We stunned the guards. We have the facial recognition software. They closed the door, and the money's on the other side of this closed door!" It's like, the number—the guy's in his office!! And what was so funny to me—in my head, I had no anticipation. What I thought it was going to be, truthfully, right? Is he's in his office, and there's a funny comedic exchange, where you go like, "Beh. Buh beh buh bep!" and he goes like, "Can I help you?" And you're like, "Ah! Nope!" And like, turn and walk away, and he goes, "Weird." And goes back to work! Like, I truly thought that was going to be the interaction, but the fact that you were like, giant brick wall. Time to climb it with my bare hands. [Laughs]

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Exactly! I was like, I'll say just the right thing! And then—

Erika Ishii

Which is to say "I Know."

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

—the most intimidating—"I know!" We were really flying at that moment.

Erika Ishii

It's funny, though, that the Fox—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

If he had been smarter—

Erika Ishii

The Fox and Eursulon, react to Suvi the same way, and like, "Ope! She gave an order! I guess we better do it!"

Brennan Lee Mulligan

There you go. There you go.

Erika Ishii

Animal instinct. It was smart.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

It was intense—it is like a weird—it's just like a strange, in character moment, where I actually—I'm playing from just a very intuitive place, and there is a part of me that doesn't—I'm like I don't actually think I have the social skills to be, like, "Extrapolate. Walk away." Because I think it's even like I just say, I know, and then it's like I could have just walked away. Fully could have walked away!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Here's the thing. Pain—Pain, I think—I think that the reason we rolled for it is I was like, the smart thing to do here would be to investigate. Would be to be like, "Oh, okay, so the person who just showed up with this super 'Welcome Suvi' like this, leadership track, star pupil of the Citadel or whatever, she—" or not pupil, graduated. "But this star apprentice of the Citadel is—okay, so her guys here knows all my secret shit." If he'd been cooler under pressure, I think that something else would have happened.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

But the reason we rolled for it is just the idea of, you—you're living like, what, you work at the CIA, and you're a double agent, and you have fucking money coming to you from a foreign power, you're committing treason, right? You are committing treason. And someone walks up, in Langley, and is like, "I know your Russian crime boss, that you do business with?" And there's a big part of you, that I think would have to resist like, "I shoot and kill him, and I shit, and run, and burn my fingerprints."

[Erika and Unkie Deauk laughing]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

He's made! You made him! At his office!

Erika Ishii

[Cackles]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I don't think he reacted gracefully, but Jesus Christ, what would you do? That's the worst case scenario.

Erika Ishii

I mean, you did have—the dice were really just not with us, I think, is what I'm going to chalk it up to, instead of lack of planning.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Yeah, it was—no the dice—it was really the dice.

Erika Ishii

It was the dice!

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

It was the dice. They wanted—I said high, they wanted low. And—what did he say? "You cut me."

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You struck me.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

You're so calm when you say it. It was so scary.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You struck me.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

You struck me.

Erika Ishii

Eugh.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Nasty. Nasty.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Nasty!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Nasty man. Nasty man.

Erika Ishii

And now we've got to wait another week to find out what happens. Thank you so much for joining us on tonight's Fireside, I'm Erika Ishii. [Long pause] And then—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I'm Brennan Lee Mulligan.

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

And I'm Unkie Deauk! Put me back on the damn Today Show! Robin, I know you're listening, let me back on!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

We want to thank Robin and Michael Strahan for subscribing to the Worlds Beyond Number Patreon, because if they're listening, the only way they can is by being here, by the Fireside, with us.

Erika Ishii

Goodbye. Crackle crackle.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Crackle crackle!

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Oh, crackle crackle, shit, shit, yeah that's right.

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

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Shit, shitass. Crackle crackle.

Erika Ishii

Shitass crackle crackle!

Unkie Deauk (Lou)

Ah hoo hoo! Crackle crackle! Shit, shit!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Shitass, ah hoo hoo, crackle crackle!

[Everyone laughs as the music swells and then fades away.]