

# Worlds Beyond Number

## The Wizard, the Witch, and the Wild One: Episode 05

### Version 2

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

Erika Ishii

This is the sound of Worlds Beyond Number.

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

[Ethereal music flows through the background as Brennan recaps the story so far]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Looking for Wavebreaker to help cut this curse that's affected Ame's ability to understand the things Grandmother Wren had said, the things that Grandmother Wren had wanted to say. Looking for the sword Wavebreaker, that you gave to a man in Port Talon named Finley, you were attacked by Captain Emliss, who had a rune from the Dominion of Rhuv on the back of her neck, some weird possession thing that Suvi didn't recognize because it wasn't wizardry, it was a piece of sorcery.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Upon arriving in Port Talon, you saw the port, it's many buildings, a wizard's spire, a governor's hall, the Azure Battalion. You saw a sort of distant light, off in the sea—some structure off in the sea, as well as a massive spell-wrought wall at the edge of town, past which, there were many witchfires burning—salt fires, specifically. And that's the thing as well, I think witchfire is a more general term for some kind of magical flame.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You got to Port Talon, went up to the neighborhood of Greyhill, up near the wall, farther away from the actual point of the promontory of the Talon itself, and up in Greyhill you found a black door, which was where Finley's shop was to be found.

[Rain patters against the roof of the shop.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And we are coming back to a shop, filled with halberds and armor and tapestries and all sorts of bric-a-brac, and other magical things, with a dead hedge mage on the ground.

[Rain continues to pour. A drum beats, a quiet pulse.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Echoing in the shop room] Damp stone and dim light, as the sound of drizzle from outside echoes in the musty chamber of Finley's illicit shop of broken and stolen magical goods. The sound of the light rain enters the space, through a shattered window much higher than anyone could easily jump through.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The windows are set high in the wall, because the chamber, you'll remember, is sunken slightly into the earth, easily 15 or 16 feet up the wall, to the first and lowest window, with the break in it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Finley, a no-good, shady sort of hedge mage in life, wears a quilted robe and a patchwork hat. Jaundiced yellow eyes bugged out, in a rictus of horror, with a throat slashed many times, and blood pooling around him, soaking into his robes on the ground.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You stand at the bottom step of the short staircase coming from the large black door facing the street. Here in this space, that again, some mixture of moldering museum, illicit workshop, and hedge magic pawn establishment, you find yourself staring at this dead body and up at the shattered window. There are workshop areas, some hidden spaces, and at least three more doors in this chamber as well.

Lou Wilson

I think Eursulon is—

Eursulon [Lou]

[Sniffs]

Lou Wilson

—immediately going to use Divine Sense, to see if there's any sort of magical presence still in the room.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Give me a perception check.

Lou Wilson

A big 19.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

A big 19! Eursulon's Divine Sense is not so much attuned to magic, as it is to the presence of the Spirit World. A lot of wizardly magic, and witchcraft, will kind of sail underneath it. But I can tell you right now that you do not sense the presence of anything here, either Fae, Celestial, Fiendish. There is no Great Spirit lurking in a hidden place in this chamber.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Many of the items in this place have some small residue of that, but the residue itself, I think, is weak enough to let you know that anything of TRUE value long since got sold off to someone, for some filthy lucre.

Lou Wilson

Mm.

Aabria Iyengar

Can we send the fox out the window?

Ame [Erika]

Fox, would you mind chasing someone down?

The Fox [Brennan]

I'd love to.

Ame [Erika]

Okay. Up through the window. Or if you need to go around—

Suvi [Aabria]

You gotta throw him!

Ame [Erika]

What!? No, that's—may I throw you?

The Fox [Brennan]

Where?

Ame [Erika]  
Up through the window, to chase whoever just left it.

The Fox [Brennan]  
No, I don't wanna do that.

Ame [Erika]  
Okay, what do you wanna do?

The Fox [Brennan]  
I'll just, I'll run around?

Ame [Erika]  
Okay!

The Fox [Brennan]  
I'll run around.

Ame [Erika]  
Go do that.

Suvi [Aabria]  
I'm sorry. What?

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
[Sound of paws sprinting away] The fox takes off.

Ame [Erika]  
He didn't—he said he didn't wanna go! He didn't wanna get wanged up there.

Suvi [Aabria]  
[Frankly] And?

[Annoyed sigh]

Lou Wilson  
Eursulon will approach the body.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Mhm.

Lou Wilson  
I think still, as you said—still coming down from what he thought would be, busting this place wide open with his two best friends and getting the fucking sword back, I think there's like—the fantasy was rich. And so as it wanes, I think he is going to walk up to Fernley to make sure this is Fernley.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Finley.

Lou Wilson  
Finley—excuse me, Finley. To make sure this is Finley.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Even the few short years since you were in Port Talon, have not been kind to Finley, but you recognize it as him. The same sort of filthy robe, and—the clear intent of this robe was to, kind of, clumsily mimic some pretense at the occult. Some of these quilts have little hints of a rune, or even just the idea of patchwork as like, a little bird, and an emblem of a rabbit in golden thread, and isn't there something kind of occult about all this?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

But ended up just making him look, sort of like a frightening old man in a children's quilt, was sort of the ultimate effect that he achieved, it's him for sure.

Eursulon [Lou]

This is him.

Erika Ishii

What's the sound?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Go ahead and give me any checks that people want to do in this space. And I'll also ask what you do with the slightly ajar door behind you, if you leave that open or if you close it.

Aabria Iyengar

Suvi immediately shuts the door.

[Door thunks closed]

Aabria Iyengar

Okay. Door gets shut.

Lou Wilson

I'll look for Wavebreaker.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Hell yeah. Go ahead and give me an investigation check.

Aabria Iyengar

Can I look for a back room and ledgers, like this is a chop shop, someone has to be keeping track of buyers, and what was pulled from things.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yes, absolutely.

Erika Ishii

I'm going to do a quick look at the body, and surrounding areas. I think it'll be a medicine check.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Okay. Medicine, and—

Aabria Iyengar

Invest—only an 11 to try to find ledgers, or some sort of book-keeping.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Okay, and what do we get on the investigation here?

Lou Wilson

18, looking for Wavebreaker.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You look for Wavebreaker throughout here. It's a pretty quick scan, because you're looking for a specific sword, there's a couple of places that have, seemingly, all the swords here. As musty and dingy as this big old, kind of, cathedral-ish chamber was, things are sorted and bound together, so you do find where all the swords and weaponry are kept. You do not find Wavebreaker in there.

Lou Wilson

Can I add a secondary thing on that just real quick?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah, for sure.

Lou Wilson

Any sign—the sword would have been wrapped in a piece of cloth that was given to me by Suvi. Any sign of that?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Got a good investigation check.

Lou Wilson

I did, that's why I'm trying to tag this on real quick.

Aabria Iyengar

Smart, smart, smart.

Lou Wilson

If we go again, it ain't gon' be like this.

Aabria Iyengar

We love it!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

We can tack it on, but what I'll ask for here is just one more straight up and down luck check.

Lou Wilson

6.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

6. Looking around for that piece of blue silk, you find a drawer, by one of the workbenches, that as you open, you see a bunch of ruined grease rags.

Erika Ishii

[Gasp]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And thankfully do not find the blue silk in that.

Ame [Erika]

[Gasps, relieved]

Eursulon [Lou]

Mmm.

Aabria Iyengar

Ooh, that was fun.

Lou Wilson

I think Eursulon definitely is making a bit of a mess. Definitely like picking things out, throwing them on the ground, looking for the sword, kind of pushes a few things off the drawers. There's a bit of noise coming from Eursulon's area.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

That clank—you hear like a dead ringer for the metallic clank, as you are near the workshop table, when you push some stuff off and realize that, the thing lying on the table may have been propped up, when you first knocked on the door, and fell over, essentially.

Aabria Iyengar

Copy.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Let's go medicine, what did you roll for your medicine check?

Erika Ishii

16.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

16.

Erika Ishii

And this is a quick sort of like, taking the pulse, seeing how cold the body is. Any—looking at the wound.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Something's weird here, on a 16.

[Rising and falling xylophone scales.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

His body is corpse temperature, and you're in a pool of fresh blood. In other words, like looking at this, you're looking at fresh, fresh—and like the, the gash on his throat, there's no rot. It's like the blood—it's all as fresh as can be. It's effectively like this guy was murdered the moment you got here, and his body is cold as a headstone.

Erika Ishii

So he did bleed out after—can I tell if he bled out after he died or...?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You're trying to do—like blood—at first it pumps out as you're dying, and he's in a big pool of his blood, but I think on a 16 medicine check, you're looking, and his body is very cold, but you're also wondering how—there's a question here. I think on a 16—you know a 16 is not a 25, but you're just looking and there's a question here.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The main thing—you haven't seen that many—you've slaughtered animals before, working in the cottage, but it's just a different thing. You're like, "I don't think his blood, if he just got slashed in the throat a bunch of times, and fell on his back, there's so much blood on the ground—"

Erika Ishii

Right? And I mean, like the blood has pooled on his cloak under him or sort of—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah.

Erika Ishii

A lot of sort of, paradoxes here.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Paradoxes. And the main thing you know is the temperature, which is that a freshly dead body stays warm for a while.

Erika Ishii

Okay, either he was dead a long time before all this blood pulled out, or—there's something funky here. But what is the sound? Where do I find the continued tapping?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Oh, that was me hitting my Coca Cola can.

[A long pause.]

Erika Ishii

[Snort of indignation]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Stifled laughter]

Erika Ishii

That all you're going to give me on my 16? Brennan?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Laughs]

Aabria Iyengar

Incredible.

Lou Wilson

You asked when he was tapping on the Coca Cola can—

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah! Same!

Erika Ishii

Yes.

Lou Wilson

—and I had a moment of being like, "Erika is either doing some unreal role play right now, or is hearing the Coca Cola can."

Aabria Iyengar

I had the same thought!

Lou Wilson

"It's one or the other."

Aabria Iyengar

I just got nervous, was like "Maybe I haven't been paying enough attention."

Erika Ishii

I thought maybe it was like a sound cue you were doing.

Lou Wilson

I mean, that would have been cool as hell!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Always refreshing. So, you see that and then on an 11 investigation, you're looking for ledgers—nothing out here, this appears to be a very public facing space, with the exception of the workshops, which you think is probably due to just this being a larger chamber. It's not great. It's not great having a shop with a big—your working area in it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

All three side doors are locked. And not locked in a way—like you can literally jiggle them. The doors are not vault doors, but you just notice that all three are locked. Give me a perception check as you jiggle the last one. So no ledgers out here in this space.

Aabria Iyengar

Okay, 18.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The door in the back—because you suspect—one of them seems like it's maybe just like a closet door, and then the other one looks like, you are guessing from where it is and the structure of the building, that there might be like a staircase, maybe it's like some private quarters, or it goes off somewhere else in this area. The back door, which you know, just like looking at the slant at the roof, and thinking about where you are—and I think Suvi probably has the mathematical brain to be like, I saw this building from the outside. Suvi feels kind of—

Aabria Iyengar

It keeps going this way, yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah. Suvi is the kind of person that would see a building from the outside and go, "I'm going to have a perfect mental map of that, as I walk into the building."

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

"I will not be disoriented, in terms of easy math geometry."

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughs] Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You know that this door leads to probably what is the larger space. And as you jiggle that, on an 18, you hear...

[Low rumble of stone, soft moan of air moving]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Something on the other side of the door. As you jiggle the door, it's either like maybe something—maybe you jiggling the door shifted something in the room? It was a very slight sound, like either like a piece of parchment moving, or a piece of fabric rustling, or something like that, in the other room as you jiggle the door handle.

Aabria Iyengar

I want to pull out my knife and start trying to pick the lock to get the door open. Not proficient in that, but... I want to be in this door now.

Brennan Lee Mulligan



Give me a thieves tool check. Which is—which you do not have proficiency in.

Aabria Iyengar

No, I do not have proficiency in.

Lou Wilson

Just roll a Nat 20.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And, because you don't have thieves tools, this will be with disadvantage because you're doing it with a knife.

[Dismayed] Yeah, I know.

Lou Wilson

Dude, just knock out, double Nat 20.

Aabria Iyengar

I know you see the Natural 20 i rolled.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I see the Natural 20 you rolled, but it's disadvantaged.

Aabria Iyengar

It's 9. Okay, well, it's still a 16.

Erika Ishii

Oh!

Lou Wilson

Damn!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Oh, okay!

Lou Wilson

Damn!

Erika Ishii

Alright.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So I think what we're going to call that is, you start digging, and as you're messing with the lock you have a moment of—your pragmatism overcomes your pride, in a moment, where you're like, "I don't know how to do this."

[Laughing] Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

But you see that the wood around the door handle mechanism is a little bit rotten, and you're kind of like—it's just very damp in this building, it seems like.

Aabria Iyengar

Oh, yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So you're just like "I can probably just saw through that."

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughing] I love the idea of just like, "Hold on," and then pulls the knife out of the lock and just cuts the lock out of the door.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Laughing] Yeah, there's just like some rot—

[Door rattling and cracking open.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—you think it's like—this whole city is built out of thick stone, because everything here—it's like a stormy coast already, lots of water, so you—especially like, someone that knows about libraries and books—you'd be like, maintaining anything of parchment or wood in this city is a constant battle—

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—against the climate.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

As you start doing that, Eursulon, what did you want to do?

Lou Wilson

Eursulon for a second, thinks about just kicking the body really hard just to see, just to make sure it's not some magician's trick. But then sees Ame next to it, and is like, "No no, no. Ame will know."

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Erika Ishii

I—okay. I think in my head

Ame [Erika]

Fox, are you there?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You just feel a—actually, what is the wording of the familiar speech? Can you speak telepathically or is it just—

Erika Ishii

I can speak telepathically within 100 feet.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

100 feet is certainly through that window up above. And you hear a yelp in your mind, and both of you can hear from outside going,

The Fox [Brennan]

[Muffled, through the wall] Where are you?!

Ame [Erika]

Oh, I'm in your head.

The Fox [Brennan]  
What!?

Ame [Erika]  
I'm talking to you in your mind. It's okay.

The Fox [Brennan]  
You're so small. How'd you get in there?

Ame [Erika]  
Oh, it's just my voice, my brain is in your brain, but not physically just—I'll explain later. Just know that I'm talking you through ~spooky~ magic.

The Fox [Brennan]  
Okay? Thank—just say spooky magic next time.

Ame [Erika]  
Okay. Sorry, I sometimes forget that you have trouble parsing things that I guess you only learned about a week ago. So I would like to be able to see through your eyes, and I mean that literally, and I can do that. Do I have your permission?

The Fox [Brennan]  
You can see through my eyes?

Ame [Erika]  
Yeah.

The Fox [Brennan]  
Will I see through your eyes?

Ame [Erika]  
Actually, I don't know. We could practice that later?

The Fox [Brennan]  
Well, I gotta see through some—if you're seeing through my eyes, I gotta see through someone's eyes, or I'll be blind.

Ame [Erika]  
Oh, well, I don't know if like, I'm going to be just sort of like, riding in there with you, or if you can still see what I'm seeing, do you want to just try it out?

The Fox [Brennan]  
Sure, yeah yeah yeah.

Ame [Erika]  
Oh! Okay, cool!

Erika Ishii  
And my eyes go unfocused.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You are looking through a fence, at a midden heap behind a wrought iron fence, that there appears to be some refuse in. And you are looking out, and see your—for a minute, you're like, "Those are my paws." And then you're like, "Right, these are the fox's paws," attempting to dig under a little fence. You can see it's the exterior of the building on the other side. And he's basically found a trash heap and is trying to get into it.

Ame [Erika]

Are we following the scent of whoever was just in the room?

The Fox [Brennan]

Are you in my eyes?

Ame [Erika]

Yes.

The Fox [Brennan]

Oh, I can still see.

Ame [Erika]

Oh!

The Fox [Brennan]

What are you seeing?

Ame [Erika]

I'm seeing what you're seeing.

The Fox [Brennan]

Ok.

Ame [Erika]

This is pretty cool!

The Fox [Brennan]

Oh, yeah yeah yeah. Well, hey, feel free to—you don't have to ask for permission in the future, you can just do this.

Ame [Erika]

Oh, awesome, thank you.

The Fox [Brennan]

As long as—[laughs] I was worried that I wouldn't be able to see.

Ame [Erika]

I was kind of worried about that too, honestly.

The Fox [Brennan]

Yeah. No, I can see. Okay, great.

Ame [Erika]

Cool.

The Fox [Brennan]

What uh. What am I doing?

Ame [Erika]

We're going to be trying to chase down whoever left through that window.

The Fox [Brennan]

Aha. Okay, there's some interesting trash out here, do you...?

Ame [Erika]

We can circle back to that later.

The Fox [Brennan]

Okay. And we know that there's a person, and that that is, the priority.

Ame [Erika]

Yes.

The Fox [Brennan]

[Disappointed] Okay, great.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you see there's a—you literally watch from the fox's point of view as he turns around, walks back towards a little puddle with some broken glass in it, and does the wistful look back over the shoulder at the trash.

Ame [Erika]

Hey, I said we'd circle back to that, and I mean that.

The Fox [Brennan]

Great, okay great. As long as you promise, and that is a binding promise, great.

Ame [Erika]

it absolutely is.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And he walks out and starts sniffing around and goes.

The Fox [Brennan]

[Sniffing] Water will make this very hard, I think. Glass is broken here, in the water. There's some moss, some mushrooms hidden up under one of the dark places here. Lots of gravel, but it mostly just smells like rain. It just smells like rain, and the dirt—[sniffs]—the dirt has a lot of rock and iron and salt in it, but, that smells like what everything else smelled like coming up through the city here.

Ame [Erika]

Does the glass, and the window, smell like anything that is out of the ordinary?

The Fox [Brennan]

Nothing out of the ordinary. Why—who am I looking for? What am I looking for, and why am I looking for it.

Ame [Erika]

A guy murdered Finley, the man that we were looking for, and they probably, is my guess, took off with the sword.\

The Fox [Brennan]

How did they kill him?

Erika Ishii

[Uncertainly] With a knife?

The Fox [Brennan]

Boss, there's nothing out of the ordinary up here. I don't smell any blood.

Ame [Erika]

[Troubled] Oh my god.

Erika Ishii

I click back.

Ame [Erika]

I think they're still in here, everyone.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Weird broken stage sword is out.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Low, menacing voice] It gets really quiet and strange in here. There's a feeling of tension. You can feel the scamper of the fox trying to run back around the large structure towards the door.

Erika Ishii

I have tortured the door and I slowly open it, just enough to let him in.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Little wet fox slips in, hides under your gown.

Aabria Iyengar

Suvi, did you mention out loud—

Erika Ishii

Yes.

Aabria Iyengar

—anything specific about the temperature differential in the corpse?

Erika Ishii

Uh, yes.

Suvi [Aabria]

Cut his hand.

Aabria Iyengar

And I'm going to back away from the door and gesture for Eursulon to come over.

Lou Wilson

I have a moment of holding my stage sword, and then grab one of the real swords behind me.

[Metal sliding on metal and clattering to the ground]

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Laughs]

Lou Wilson

And i'm just gonna two fist swords for a second, but I quietly—as quietly as I can—I quietly move toward the door, double swording.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So you move towards the back door, double swording. You're still there. You've successfully cut—you can pull the, essentially, the actual latch mechanism out of the door, and probably just swing it open now. But that's done, you're standing there waiting for Eursulon, you move over there. Ame—

Erika Ishii

I quietly move over towards the body, I lean down, I pull out a dagger from one of my packs and I prick the tip of his finger.

[Metal sliding]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I'm going to need everybody here—and actually, in this instance, you may give me either insight or perception, your choice.

Aabria Iyengar

Ooh!

Lou Wilson

Mmm. They are equal in my eyes.

Aabria Iyengar

There we go.

Erika Ishii

15

Aabria Iyengar

21.

Lou Wilson

Ugh! 17!

Aabria Iyengar

Let's go-uh!

Lou Wilson

I'll take insight.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I'm going to roll in front of the board. For our listeners, this means I'm going to be rolling so that the players may immediately see it. And I am going to let you know, that the number I'm going to add to this, I'm not telling you what I'm rolling, but the number I'm going to add to this is 9.

Aabria Iyengar

Oh my god!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

A high number added to—

Erika Ishii

We don't know what you're rolling for though!!

Lou Wilson

100% it's performance. 100% it's performance. It's for this dead man to not—

Erika Ishii  
Yeeaahh.

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laughs]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
20. I rolled an eleven on the die.

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laughs]

Lou Wilson  
Dirty 20.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Dirty 20.

Aabria Iyengar  
Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Suvi, you got a 21.

Aabria Iyengar  
Yep.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Ame, you have you have a very sad moment of, touching the finger with just the point of a knife, and a thick little slab of—a thick sludge of coagulated, dead man's blood, comes out of the finger. Eursulon, you see the same thing. And, Suvi, you're waiting for anything, like a flinch, or some kind of thing, you don't see any movement in the body... But you're also using your ears. And just at a little imperceptible whine you hear

Finley [Brennan]  
[Squeak]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
come from—

Aabria Iyengar  
Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—the corpse.

Aabria Iyengar  
I just wheel around.

Suvi [Aabria]  
[Yelling] He's alive!

Lou Wilson  
Oh, I run up and kick him.



[Thump of feet]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
The corpse leaps to his feet and says

Finley [Brennan]  
Aah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Everyone roll initiative!

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laughing, triumphantly] Yeah! 6!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
6.

Erika Ishii  
Ame has 13

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
13.

Eursulon [Lou]  
20.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
20.

Aabria Iyengar  
Let's gooo!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Eursulon. You see this wizard, who still for all the world, looks dead.

Lou Wilson  
[Laughing] Just fully—neck fully—

Aabria Iyengar  
That's so good!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Slashed, dead, and you see even—it looks like as he's screaming, that there is some agent, or something that is keeping his jaw rictus tight, and he's trying to now—

Finley [Brennan]  
[Gargling with effort]

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laughing]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—push past it to be able to talk.

[Horns blare]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

But leaps up, and goes to shove Ame out of the way, as he's gonna sprint to the door. You are first to act before he can do that.

Erika Ishii

Noo!

Lou Wilson

Eursulon hits all fours.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughs]

Erika Ishii

[Giggles]

Lou Wilson

And is going to run, and tackle, this man with reckless abandonment.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Incredible. This is going to be opposed athletics.

Aabria Iyengar

Let's go!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Finley, not the strongest dude in the world. He has a flat 13.

Lou Wilson

[Excitedly] Oh! Ohh! It's a 12!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Oh, no!

Erika Ishii

Ohh!

Aabria Iyengar

Aaahh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Eursulon, you go to clothesline this dude, and some weird like, nasty street fighter hedge mage instinct—

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughing]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—this is a guy who crawled out of a gutter to wrest magic from scraps of garbage he could find.

[Bare feet slapping against stone]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

As you go to clothesline him, he sees your massive shoulder, and turns away from it, and backward somersaults along your horizontal body as you crash into a pile of armor.

[Clatter of metal]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And he lands on all fours like a frog in the middle of his own fake blood pool. He says

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Manic, frenzied voice] Hi! I didn't think I'd see you again, Eursulon. [Maniacal laughter]

Eursulon [Lou]

[Angrily] Come here!

Aabria Iyengar

[Joyous laughter]

Lou Wilson

I will use whatever movement, in sliding to the other side, to be between him and the door, though.

Aabria Iyengar

Nice.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Incredible.

Lou Wilson

The door we came through.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Oh, you can—yeah, you can use rest of your movement to just get up and block the staircase out.

Aabria Iyengar

Love it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Ame, that's going to be you.

Erika Ishii

I use command.

[Drumroll]

Ame [Erika]

[Echoing with magical energy] Halt!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

All of you watch Finley look up, and as Ame commands him, even in this dimly lit room, Ame's shadow grows long behind her, and you see this man—

Finley [Brennan]

Hrrgk!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—freeze up in panic, as you put the—small and gentle as it might be—as you put your first curse on somebody.

Aabria Iyengar  
[Gasp]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Bam! And lock him in place.

Aabria Iyengar  
Let's go-uh!

Ame [Erika]  
Oh, my god. I did a curse.

Suvi [Aabria]  
That's right.

Ame [Erika]  
I did a curse—

Aabria Iyengar  
Okay!

Ame [Erika]  
—word.

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laughing]

Ame [Erika]  
Oh, god!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
[Laughing, imicking] "Oh, god!" You hear at this point, now that he is paralyzed, you hear from under your gown

The Fox [Brennan]  
Get him!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
From the fox.

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Aabria Iyengar  
Perfect.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Suvi, that's going to be your turn.

Aabria Iyengar  
Suvi, after yelling and turning around, sees Ame's curse go into effect. And, believing things to be well handled, is just going to walk over to some pile of stuff, grab like a heavy candlestick, walk back to the door, and—yeah, I'm just opening the door now and continuing my investigation of this room.

Erika Ishii  
[Bursts out laughing]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You open the door. As you do, you see a pretty amazing sight. First of all, you find your ledgers. You're not worried about the ledgers, with the rest of what you see.

[Aabria and Erika cackle]

Erika Ishii

Ohhh!

Lou Wilson

Oh, great!

Erika Ishii

Uh ohhh!

Aabria Iyengar

Ooh!

[Droning music buzzes]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The ledgers are on a big work table back here. This is a larger workshop, that you can see has heavier duty equipment than the stuff that's out there, the other stuff out there is just for space, essentially, for longer projects that take a longer time. You see that there is a huge, basically—what's the word I'm looking for? There is a huge wardrobe, a tall standing case, with many robes and garments.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It seems that a lot of the softer things, things that—maybe this is more of a VIP room, for more discerning clientele to come into. And the wardrobe is open, with a lot of capes and cloaks and magical things, that are sort of in it. And immediately you can tell the things in this room are in a little bit of a nicer state. You clock a body, curled up. You clock some form, hiding in that wardrobe.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see like a pair of shoes, that you suddenly realize have ankles in them. Someone's like hiding behind the dressers, like scrunched up in a ball, like holding their knees. All you can just see, is their butt, and shoes, and their legs. You can't be sure—it's probably a person—it has to be, right? But it could be a mannequin, because the skin you can see, of the ankles, and the little hint of a hand, is like bone white. Now that's all like the minor stuff. The biggest thing you see is—

Lou Wilson

That's the minor stuff?

Aabria Iyengar

Amazing!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The biggest thing you see is the thing that sees you.

Aabria Iyengar

Ope.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you can't even be sure how it sees you because Suvi, it doesn't have any eyes.

Aabria Iyengar  
Uhhh.

[Fearful cries]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

There is a massive, lichen-covered, stone statue, that is covered on every level surface—meaning its head, its shoulders, sort of jutting hip joints that come out, it's sort of shelves of these kind of knee protectors. The statue, you suddenly realize, does not look like anything sacred or religious.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It is lumpy and misshapen, as you realize it has been carved to be jointed, because its head, covered in lichen, swivels, and every candle on its body that look ancient, like wax is dripping. It looks like a candle that has been burning for like 100 years, because the wax drips everywhere, its entire head, the top of which is almost all covered in wax. The head turns and every candle on it lights.

[Rush of flames starting in unison]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

This ten foot tall construct begins to step towards you.

[Thudding footsteps]

Aabria Iyengar

Do I still have my action?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You still have your action.

[Thudding footsteps]

Aabria Iyengar

I am going to reach out with my hand, cast, prestidigitation, to turn off the candles, and close the door and just walk away and go

Aabria Iyengar

[Hurriedly] Don't go in there.

Lou Wilson

Just fully— [Laughing]

Erika Ishii

Nope!

Aabria Iyengar

No!

Lou Wilson

Eject! Candle's off, door closed. I never opened this!

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughing] Fully not.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
[Laughing] Okay, now—

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laughing]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—now really, this shouldn't work, but we are going to make it an arcana check. The DC is gonna be 20, I just need to see it. You're using a cantrip as a wax covered candle stone monster—

Aabria Iyengar  
Yes. [Laughing] You're gonna hate, but I got it.

Erika Ishii  
[Cackling]

Aabria Iyengar  
23!

Erika Ishii  
Woooooo!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
All of you out in the room with Finley hear

[Thudding, earth shaking steps]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Finley goes

Finley [Brennan]  
Prepare to meet my—

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
[Laughing] And Suvi, what does it look like as you cast your spell?

Aabria Iyengar  
It's like, reaching of a hand and just going

Suvi [Aabria]  
[Exhale, like blowing out a candle]

[Aabria Brennan and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
All the candles—Phew! And the thing fully disanimates, exactly in its spot. And you close the door.

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laughing] Close the door, like—

Suvi [Aabria]  
Bad in there.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
That is Suvi's turn.

[Everyone laughs]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
"It's bad in there!" Incredible! Finley's turn. He skips, command freezes him to the spot. Eursulon, that is you.

Lou Wilson  
As I begin my turn, is he still halted? Halted. Is he still cursed?

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
He is coming out of that—

Lou Wilson  
Okay.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—in this moment.

Lou Wilson  
I look to Ame.

Eursulon [Lou]  
Ame! How long do your curse words last?

Ame [Erika]  
["I don't know" noise] This is my first time doing it, I don't think very long though, so we should do something to incapacitate him, physically.

Eursulon [Lou]  
Alright! That's what I wanted to hear!

Lou Wilson  
I step forward. I'm going to pin him to the ground.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Go ahead, give me another athletics check.

Lou Wilson  
Oh, thank god. 22.

Erika Ishii  
Yyyes-ah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You pin this dude to the ground.

[Thud of a body hitting the floor]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
He yelps. He sneers up at you. You see these sort of like—just the the seams of his teeth near the gums are just a solid milky brown.



Erika Ishii  
Agh!

Aabria Iyengar  
Eww.

Erika Ishii  
Gingivitus.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Yeah. Just the smell of like, onion and cheese comes out of his mouth. He looks up and says

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
[Cackle] Didn't think I'd see you slinkin' back in here after all these years! [Laughs]

Eursulon [Lou]  
Okay.

Ame [Erika]  
[Angrily] Here's the thing is he's not slinking. He's marching back in here with his friends.

Aabria Iyengar  
[Sarcastically] Aw, his friends, huh? Yeah yeah, I'm sure you don't want to get the spirit for your own.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Ame, that's going to be your turn.

Erika Ishii  
Oh. Well.

Aabria Iyengar  
[Guffawing laugh]

Erika Ishii  
He's all pinned?

Lou Wilson  
I have him pinned, which, you know.

Erika Ishii  
Completely pinned?

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
But, you can see that he's gotten his movement back. So your curse is over, so, you've got him pinned. But what he does—pinning him will not prevent him from, like, casting magic necessarily, right?

Erika Ishii  
Well! I am just gonna, go over and try and tie his hands, then.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Ooh, hell yeah. Go over and give me just a slight of hand check!

Erika Ishii  
Cool!

Lou Wilson

Can it be with advantage? I mean I got—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah! You got him pinned, yeah do it with advantage!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I got him pinned as hell!

Erika Ishii

That's a 20 on the die.

Aabria Iyengar

Let's go-uh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Nat 20!?

Ame [Erika]

Mhmmm!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Eursulon. As you just lean in with an elbow—

Erika Ishii

[Giggling]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—in this dude's chest—so effortless for you to flip him over onto his stomach, and you've tied—

Erika Ishii

Oh, this is not my first time at the rodeo, literally!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I know. Little spring festivals, yeah—there's probably like a goat rodeo near Toma

Erika Ishii

Uh, yuh!

Lou Wilson

A goateo?

[Brennan and Erika laugh]

Lou Wilson

I mean, we don't call cows cowdeos, but you guys get it.

[Aabria and Erika giggle]

Lou Wilson

Just stick with me here.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

As you flip him over onto his stomach, you see, he goes

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Menacing growling whisper] You made a big mistake coming back here, Wild One. You don't know the secrets I know. You don't know what I've learned since—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And, as you, Ame, go to tie his hands, you see he goes

Hey no. No stop stop stop!!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you just bind his wrists and his fingers—

[Creaking of a rope tightening]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—and you see that he was flexing to do the somatic components of spell casting. You tie his hands. Grandmother Wren would have talked to you a lot about this kind of thing. The moment you tie his hands, he goes completely limp, and you realize—as I've just checked—he has not a SINGLE spell that does not have somatic component.

Erika Ishii

[Cackling] Hoooo! Hoo hoo hoo!

Aabria Iyengar

Yo, above game I was like, dark detail, but he can use his voice.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Laughs]

Lou Wilson

That would have been next.

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see, he goes—

Ame [Erika]

Shhhh, it's okay, it's okay. You just calm down now, all right? You're going to be just fine.

Erika Ishii

And I sort of cluck at him.

Ame [Erika]

[Quiet clucking noises]

Lou Wilson

I flip him over and slap him hard across the face.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Pow! At this point, the fox darts out from your gown, Ame, goes right into Finley's face and goes

The Fox [Brennan]  
[Menacingly] You're dead. You're dead.

Eursulon [Lou]  
Fox, fox, fox.

Ame [Erika]  
[Giggles, composes herself] No, no you shouldn't—

The Fox [Brennan]  
You better be—you better—you better feel lucky that my friends are here.

[Aabria and Erika laugh in unison]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
[Laughing] And the Fox circles back out.

Aabria Iyengar  
He's a fox on the edge!

Erika Ishii  
He he he!

Lou Wilson  
I turn to him and I say

Eursulon [Lou]  
In fact, you are actually quite unlucky that my friends are here.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
[Laughs]

Eursulon [Lou]  
Where is the sword?

Finley [Brennan]  
[Cautiously] Alright. I see the Spirit's gotten himself some company, since the last time he was in here.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You see, Finley looks over at the closed door, that he knows his giant construct is on the other side of.

Aabria Iyengar  
Suvi's just leaning casually against it, like

Suvi [Aabria]  
This is maybe a problem in a minute or two, but go ahead.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And he goes

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
[Muttering] I can't believe I didn't think about somethin' to protect the candles.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And he leans over to you and says

Finley [Brennan]  
[Quietly, rising in volume] Alright, muscled your way in here, I don't know, what your GAME is, but, did your friend tell you that I didn't take the sword from him? That I bought it from him fair and square, and that when he wandered in here, he was such a drunk and a lout, that he was glad for the help?

Aabria Iyengar  
Here's the thing. You're going to put some respect in your tone, or I'm going to burn EVERYTHING in this filthy little heap and I'm going to start summoning a firebolt.

Finley [Brennan]  
[Low] Yeah, yeah, you Citadel wizards like to push people around. Well, I'll tell you this, the sword's not here anymore. I already sold it.

To who?

[Horns blare]

Finley [Brennan]  
I'm as good as dead if I tell ya.

Aabria Iyengar  
It is wild of you to think that you're not as good as dead if you don't. They are the merciful ones.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You think Will Gallows is merciful?

Eursulon [Lou]  
You're a little—

Aabria Iyengar  
Perfect! Who is that? Aaah!

Erika Ishii  
Yeah I don't—you said that in a tone of voice, which leads me to believe you think it means a thing to us.

I'll let anyone here roll—

Lou Wilson  
Yeah, I'll make a history check.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Yeah, I think actually, just Eursulon give, me a history check and you can do so with advantage.

Lou Wilson  
Oh! Thank you, Brennan!

Aabria Iyengar  
[Giggles]

Lou Wilson  
Ohh, I'm so nervous! Double 15s—

Aabria Iyengar  
Ooh!

Lou Wilson  
—plus one equals 16.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Will Gallows is a name you heard a lot, the last time you were in town. You never met them, but the legend they liked to say about Will Gallows was that he was the most dangerous man in Port Talon.

[Moody jazz piano begins to play softly]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And that he—people like Finley owed their ability to do what they did through Will Gallows—that essentially like, if Finley is the fence, then the protection racket was Will Gallows, the person who got to go to everybody in town and say, do you want to keep doing this kind of business?

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And the legend you'd always heard about Will Gallows is that he moved to Port Talon from the Empire, after he was hanged for treason.

Aabria Iyengar  
Oh hohoho! Sorry, that was cool.

Erika Ishii  
[Unsettled] After...?

Lou Wilson  
I think Eursulon's face goes dark, I think, as he remembers. And he looks up at his friends.

Eursulon [Lou]  
[Shaken] I believe we have the information we need. I. Uh. I am done with him.

Lou Wilson  
And I'm gonna stand up.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And he looks around and says

[Ropes creak]

Finley [Brennan]  
Sword's not worth it. The sword's not worth it.

Suvi [Aabria]  
Then why'd you give it to him?

Finley [Brennan]  
It was worth the money he paid me for it, but I don't think it's worth losing your lives going after him for it.

Aabria Iyengar  
One more question. Who's in the room?

Suvi [Aabria]  
And I gesture back.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You see, he says

Finley [Brennan]  
Who, Flicker?

Suvi [Aabria]  
[Incredulously] Is that what you named the construct?

Finley [Brennan]  
Yeah.

Ame [Erika]  
Flicker means, like, for something to sort of gutter, like, you shouldn't have—you should have known, by virtue of naming him, that you would have some issues with the candles.

Finley [Brennan]  
[Defensively] Don't tell me about magic, names aren't that important in magic, okay?

Ame [Erika]  
Well, I guess you know best. [Laughing]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You see—

Aabria Iyengar  
Suvi is just, doing her best to swallow emotion, like "uhh, yeah."

Aabria Iyengar  
But you see that—either of you can give me an insight check, if you want to.

Aabria Iyengar  
No! 6.

Erika Ishii  
That's a Nat 20!

Aabria Iyengar  
Let's go!!

Lou Wilson  
Ah, number 2.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
He changed the subject when he mentioned Flicker, he was thinking of something else.

Ame [Erika]  
Is there anyone else in that room?

Finley [Brennan]

I have an employee in that room. [Long pause] She's hiding back there because you busted down the door, yelling my name.

Ame [Erika]

Well, that's fair enough. Shall we... Go check it out?

Eursulon [Lou]

Would Flicker come back?

Suvi [Aabria]

[Laughs] Probably.

Eursulon [Lou]

Is Flicker door activated?

Aabria Iyengar

Kind of. I don't really wanna open the door, if I'm being super honest.

Lou Wilson

I look down at, uh—

Eursulon [Lou]

Where can we find Will?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see, he looks out and says

Finley [Brennan]

[Sardonic chuckle] Where can you find the most dangerous man in Port Talon? Will Gallows finds you when he wants to.

Eursulon [Lou]

See, that's what I thought you would say, something like that.

Finley [Brennan]

No, yeah, well, you can find him at City Hall during office hours, no, I don't know where you can find Will Gallows! Will Gallows is a shadow! He's a dead man, come back to life to inflict retribution on all of us for still drawin' breath!

Ame [Erika]

And yet he still pays good coin for items.

Finley [Brennan]

Hell, I don't know if he's really dead or not. He just seems kinda dead.

[Stifled laugh]

Finley [Brennan]

But we can all seem kinda dead, time to time.

Ame [Erika]

It's the human condition.

Finley [Brennan]

Let me get my hands, so I can get all this stuff off me.



Eursulon [Lou]

I think we should leave it. Let's leave him with the stuff on him.

Ame [Erika]

Um. Sorry about this.

Erika Ishii

And I put one of the edged weapons—

[Rasp of metal on stone]

Erika Ishii

—from his shop, a good, respectable distance away from him, on the floor, so that he can sort of inchworm his way over, and untie himself.

Eursulon [Lou]

Ame! A little further. A little further.

[More scraping metal.]

Ame [Erika]

Here?

Eursulon [Lou]

One more.

Ame [Erika]

Scotch it a little further?

Eursulon [Lou]

Yeah, there it is.

Ame [Erika]

There?

Eursulon [Lou]

That feels good.

Ame [Erika]

Okay.

Aabria Iyengar

During this, I wanna go back towards the little hole that I've sawed in the door, and just whisper in

Suvi [Aabria]

Do you need help?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You hear a shuffle from inside the room, of like, things moving in a wardrobe, or a closet.

[Wardrobe rattling]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You hear a noise of footsteps, accompanied by a noise of something wooden, striking stone. And the door opens—

[Door creaks open]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—and a young girl answers the door. She's very striking to behold, and immediately you can tell that—I think, Eursulon, your divine sense, which I'll say is still active in this moment, you immediately clock a small, Fae presence from her.

Mhm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Though she is not truly a Spirit or a Wild One. She looks incredibly striking. Very mousey, flat, kind of wet-looking, bone white hair. Her eyes are pure white—no iris, no pupil, just white. She wears, sort of—slender, sort of like, gray and off white clothing. She has little black shoes that kind of look like the shoes they would give you in—like that an orphanage would give as standard issue, you know what I mean?

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah yeah yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

These are shoes for good little girls, you know that kind of vibe.

[Laughs] Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

She's walked over here with a set of crutches, like forearm crutches, and her skin is also bone white, just sort of a very mousey shy face, but it actually has the coloring of a calico cat. So it's like a white—largely white, but with caramel and black splotches, almost like a painted horse, or a calico cat. She looks out and says

The Calico Urchin [Brennan]

I'm fine.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You hear behind her, as the door kind of opens [Stone grinding on stone] and she goes

The Calico Urchin [Brennan]

Flicker, it's okay.

Aabria Iyengar

Aww!

[Thunderous stone footsteps]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And this sort of ten foot candle statue sort of stops and moves back over to the corner where it was standing.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see, she looks and says—

Aabria Iyengar

I take knee, by the way, so this—I want to make eye contact at like, eye level.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You take a knee. She is very short, but you can see—the vibe you get from her is like... That she is a teenager, but an incredibly small, slender one.

Aabria Iyengar  
Mhm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Little bit sort of sickly looking. But you see, around her belt, she has—actually small leather belt, with small pouches for tools and stuff like that. You recognize these as like, third string artisan tools.

Aabria Iyengar  
Okay!

Aabria Iyengar  
Hi, my name's Suvi.

The Calico Urchin [Brennan]  
Hi.

Ame [Erika]  
I'm Ame.

The Calico Urchin [Brennan]  
Hi.

Eursulon [Lou]  
Sister. I am Eursulon.

The Calico Urchin [Brennan]  
Oh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You see as you say sister, she looks very taken by that, but she curtsies to that kind of greeting.

Lou Wilson  
I bow as well.

The Calico Urchin [Brennan]  
Hi. Sorry. I'm Ghost, I work here.

Ghost [Brennan]  
Do you, um—the uh—oh! Your question. I'm fine! I'm—I'm okay. Are you—

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And you see, Finley from the ground says

Finley [Brennan]  
[Desperately] Run! Get the authorities! Get Will Gallows!

[Everyone sputters and then laughs]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You see that she looks and says, like

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Um. Yes, Master Finley, I'll go get Mr. Gallows.

Ame [Erika]  
Oh!

Suvi [Aabria]  
Please don't.

Eursulon [Lou]  
No, we will—I think—

Ame [Erika]  
Actually maaaaaybe yeah?

Eursulon [Lou]  
We'll find a nearby inn, and maybe she can send him our way.

Suvi [Aabria]  
Okay!

Eursulon [Lou]  
I mean, we need to—

Ame [Erika]  
Yeah, we need to find him.

Suvi [Aabria]  
Right, but if he's as terrifying, as Finley would suggest, I don't want to put Ghost in harm's way.

Ame [Erika]  
Oh, that's true. Could we go with you?

Suvi [Aabria]  
Messengers, they do things to messengers.

Ame [Erika]  
Oh, I didn't think of that.

Eursulon [Lou]  
Fair. Fair.

Ame [Erika]  
Could we go with you to Mr. Gallows?

Ghost [Brennan]  
Oh, I um. Well, when I go to "get him," I won't be going to him, but there's a space where I can—where Master Finley sends me to go to leave messages for him. So I would go leave a message, and then one of his people, probably Arley, or the Cudgel, would come by and get it.

Ame [Erika]  
Oh, perfect. We'll just go with you there then.

Suvi [Aabria]  
Thank you so much.

Ghost [Brennan]

Oh, have you—have you defeated my—have you defeated Master Finley in combat? Am I in danger?

Ame [Erika]

Oh, no, no no, not at all.

Eursulon [Lou]

No, no, no.

Suvi [Aabria]

Yes to the first, no to the second.

Finley [Brennan]

Yep.

Uhh. Okay?

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughs]

Ghost [Brennan]

Master Fin—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see Finley says

Finley [Brennan]

Ghost! Get them—get—get—

Suvi [Aabria]

Finley! I do need to just—mm—you are aware, as another—mm—mage, that verbal components require the ability to speak, and I will make sure you don't again, if you continue.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You just see the just HEAT of rage emanating from this hedge mage on the ground, being so FULLY humiliated in this moment. Ghost nods, and says

Ghost [Brennan]

Master Finley, if you want me to go get Mr. Gallows, I can go try to do that right now. I can't stop these three people from doing whatever they wanna do, so they might follow me, and I can't make that not happen.

Aabria Iyengar

[Chuckles]

Ghost [Brennan]

Finley says,

Finley [Brennan]

[Sarcastically] Well, well. Another thing you can't do, fine fine fine fine fine.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you see, she says

Ghost [Brennan]

Okay! I'll go get Mr. Gallows to come stop—to come stop them, they don't seem worried about it.

Suvi [Aabria]

Wait, can you just—hold on. Tight five, and then you can go wherever you're going.

Ame [Erika]

Yeah. Let's circle up for a second here.

Suvi [Aabria]

What do you do here?

Ghost [Brennan]

Oh I um. I work on the machines.

Suvi [Aabria]

Machines?

Ghost [Brennan]

I work on the spell engines, and when things come in, I um—um [Trails off]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Give me an insight check.

Aabria Iyengar

I don't trust her. Ope!

Erika Ishii

18.

Aabria Iyengar

Natural 1!!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Oh, no!

Erika Ishii

Ohh.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see, she looks up and gets a little bit sad. She goes

Ghost [Brennan]

I've been working for Master Finley for a while because, I like—I like the uh—the engines of the machines that come in sometimes and Master Finley knows some about magic, and about these old things that I don't know that well.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

But when new machinery comes in, I sort of have a knack for it. And the things I touch, sometimes, stop being magical—

Ame [Erika]

[Gasps]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—which means I can take them apart, a little more safely. And I can see that you're a wizard, I would just say, don't touch me, or don't—I don't always know—I can't do it on purpose, if that makes sense?

Aabria Iyengar

That's kind of—that's kind of an interesting gift.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah. It's very, um—I guess everyone wishes, when they're little, that they'd be magic. It's sort of a backwards way to find out that you're magic, I guess

Ame [Erika]

[Softly] Any gifts that you are given at your birth, are yours to do with what you want. It's—I'm sorry that this one, was a gift that has inhibited you from doing the things that you seem to want to do.

Ghost [Brennan]

Well, no! I don't know, um. [Nervously] I'm a little scared right now, I don't know who the three of you are, and I'm trying to be polite, but I don't really know who you are, and—I can help you if you need or if there's anything you're looking for. I—I know—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you see that she says

Ghost [Brennan]

I should—I should go, but we we can talk on the way.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you see that she gets a very thick gray cloak off the wall, and a little sort of satchel, that she can put over her shoulder, and heads towards the door with you to go,= like, give a message to Mr. Gallows.

Suvi [Aabria]

Okay! We just doing this?

Eursulon [Lou]

I believe we are doing this.

Ame [Erika]

Oh, one last thing. Our friend, when he sold the sword to your master, it was wrapped in a blue cloth. Do you happen to know where that is?

Ghost [Brennan]

Oh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The wardrobe full of nice things in the back.

Erika Ishii

[Gasp]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

She goes and retrieves the blue cloak lining from the wardrobe.

[Cloth unfurls]

Erika Ishii

We can compensate you for this.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

She says

Ghost [Brennan]

Oh, thank you. Master Finley, how much for the blue cloak lining?

Suvi [Aabria]

Oh, no, we're not paying for that. That's not for that.

Well—

Aabria Iyengar

That's not for that.

Erika Ishii

—he bought it.

Suvi [Aabria]

No, no he didn't. No he didn't. No he didn't.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Everyone here, give me an insight check.

Erika Ishii

15.

Aabria Iyengar

12.

Lou Wilson

7.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Ame, I think that as you are offering to pay for it, and your very proud companions, begin to say that that is not what will occur here, I think on a 15 insight, it's not a deep and powerful insight here. You saw Ghost ask Master Finley how much to charge for it. And I think you have your first adventurer's brush, with what it means to mete out justice, in a place that you're probably not intending to stay forever.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You guys will be gone from here, perhaps one day, and Ghost may still be here working. And so when she asks Master Finley how much to charge for it, I think you see a look in her face. The look in her face on a 15 insight is, if these people don't pay for it, it will come out of my wages.

Suvi [Aabria]

How much?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Finley looks up and says

Finley [Brennan]

Five gold.



Suvi [Aabria]  
Why are you looking at me?

Ame [Erika]  
Because you have all the gold.

Suvi [Aabria]  
Incredible. I super do. [Exaggeratedly] I'm leaving the gold in the room!

Aabria Iyengar  
And I go and, like, tap my gold back, on the table to put it back in, I'm not paying for this.

Lou Wilson  
I look to Suvi—

Eursulon [Lou]  
Suvi.

Suvi [Aabria]  
It's mine! I mean, it's yours!

Lou Wilson  
I look to Suvi. I say

Eursulon [Lou]  
Will you front me five gold pieces?

Suvi [Aabria]  
[Scoffs]

Eursulon [Lou]  
It's not—I owe you five.

Suvi [Aabria]  
[Sighs] Why are we giving Finley money?

Eursulon [Lou]  
Suvi. Will you give me five gold pieces?

Suvi [Aabria]  
Of course I will.

Aabria Iyengar  
And I hand him the gold.

Lou Wilson  
I take the five gold pieces, I walk up to Ghost, and I place them in her hand.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
She nods

Ghost [Brennan]  
Thank you, very much.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And hands you the blue lining of the cloak.

Eursulon [Lou]  
It's a mistake I made, and I need pay for it.

Suvi [Aabria]  
Come on, show us where to drop off the messages.

Erika Ishii  
As we walk out, I say to Eursulon

Ame [Erika]  
That was very honorable of you.

Lou Wilson  
The chill goes down Eursulon's spine, and the hair underneath his glamour rises slightly.

Ame [Erika]  
[Giggles]

Ame [Erika]  
Mr. Finley, I'm sorry for the misunderstanding, I'm not quite certain why you played dead, instead of opening up for us, but, uh, apologies.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
[Mocking laugh] Thanks for the apologies! [Gags]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And you see, Ghost puts the five gold pieces in a strong box.

Ghost [Brennan]  
I'll be back in a while, Master Finley. I'll go ask Mr. Gallows—do you want me to tell the authorities as well?

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And you see that Finley says

Finley [Brennan]  
Yes—not just any! The ones that we know we can tell!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And you see that Ghost says

Ghost [Brennan]  
Okay. I think the strangers are preparing to leave with me, so—it's sort of, heh, sort of an interesting paradox, because while I stay—

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laughs]

Ghost [Brennan]  
—while I stay, they seem like they're going to stay here, which means I need to go, so they'll go. But the moment I go, to get them out, I think they're gonna leave. So I think—

Aabria Iyengar  
[Chuckles]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And he says,

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
[Yelling] Get outta here!!

Erika Ishii  
[Cackling]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
She says

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Yes, Master Finley.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And heads to the door.

[The door swings open and thuds shut. The rain, no longer muffled by the roof of the pawnshop, smacks against the cobbles.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Ghost begins to move through the rain, towards an area of Greyhill, towards the outer edge of the town, the one that faces the true ocean out towards the wild waves there. As she walks, she looks and says

Ghost [Brennan]  
Um. Yes, sorry. Um. Honestly, Master Finley, does that a lot.

Suvi [Aabria]  
Mm.

Ame [Erika]  
Pretends to be dead?

Ghost [Brennan]  
Well, I think whenever there's loud banging on the door, he does that.

Ame [Erika]  
Oh.

Erika Ishii  
I would like to do an insight check and—to see what her feelings are about Master Finley, and her situation.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Give me insight check.

Erika Ishii  
Ooh hoo hoo! 25.

Aabria Iyengar  
Let's gooo!

Lou Wilson  
Big rolls.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Ame, you're deeply out of your element in this city. You lived under Grandmother Wren's wing for a long time.

[Soft ambient music begins to swell behind the narration]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
On a 25 insight check, which is pretty phenomenal, Ghost definitely holds her body in the shape of an apology. Takes up as little space as possible, this is a dangerous city. But there's more to her than that. You look and see, how well kept her clothes, her shoes—she takes care not to step in any puddles as she's walking—her crutches. Her tool belt is cared for immaculately.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And her clothes aren't torn, she's not wearing rags. They're incredibly humble. You look and see, a complicated, person's story here. You know that Master Finley is not kind to her. You heard how he spoke to her. But you also see that she has tools—you can feel the love radiating off of her tools. And I think that if you try to solve the story here, in a way that is binary, "is Ghost life bad or good?"

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
By your standards, compared to living with Grandma Wren? Living with Master Finley would be a waking nightmare. And that's certainly something you're bringing with you into this interaction with Ghost. My god, who could live with their occult master being this much of a belligerent fool? A cruel, vindictive, spiteful man?

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
There was a note of love in her voice when she spoke to Flicker. And you wonder if that construct is, in some way, some sort of friend or guardian for her. And I think on a 25, which is very high, the last thing you notice, as you're really trying to study this person, who's walking with you to find this place, is she looks up, and you see a tall, slate gray building, with a sort of almost cruel looking, steep, slate scaled roof that the rain trickles down. And you see an old stone sign out in front of it. And you see that it is a home for children.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And you have never seen this type of building before, you've never seen a place that, I suppose, had so many people, or had the sort of hardships that would produce a need for a population of children, without parents or families to look after them. But as she looks at that building—and quickly takes a turn to approach another route, to not have to walk past it—you wonder if she thinks of her life as a waking nightmare, or perhaps if to her, the condition of her life has perhaps improved.

Ame [Erika]  
I'm terribly sorry if we've made any inconvenience for you, Ghost.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Oh! Um. No inconvenience. It was good to make a sale, that—you can imagine the lining of a cloak without a cloak had stayed on the shelf for a couple of years.

Ame [Erika]  
[Laughs softly]

Suvi [Aabria]  
It's crazy that we paid five Imperial marks for that.

Ame [Erika]  
We were certainly upcharged, but I suppose for the inconvenience of being hogtied and having to fake his own death.

Eursulon [Lou]

And as the one who paid for it, I believe it was well worth it.

Suvi [Aabria]

[Stifled scoff] Okay.

Ghost [Brennan]

No, I think I'll be okay. I think Master Finley will likely be upset that you were kind to me, and stern with him.

Ame [Erika]

[Laugh]

Ghost [Brennan]

But he'll yell, and he'll say some mean things, and then he'll get tired, and get bored, and go away, and I can get back to work.

Aabria Iyengar

Ghost, one of my closest friends, where I'm from, is a very powerful artificer, who breaks incredibly complicated spell engines on accident, constantly. Have you ever thought of trying to, I don't know, ply your trade somewhere without a grumpy man, in a quilt yelling at you.

Ghost [Brennan]

Oh.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

She fully stops walking, just sort of stands in the rain a little bit.

Ghost [Brennan]

They don't let you do that, do they?

Suvi [Aabria]

Not always, but... Exceptions are made sometimes.

Ghost [Brennan]

Oh.

Suvi [Aabria]

If you wanna try.

Ghost [Brennan]

I wouldn't know how.

Suvi [Aabria]

I think I can help with that.

Ghost [Brennan]

Oh.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you see just impending ego death—

Aabria Iyengar

Oh god!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—on this young woman's face, where she's just—you know, like you're like "Have you ever thought about talking to The Empire?" And is just being like "Have you ever thought about lifting yourself up into the sky?" You see a look on her face of being like—literally to you, you have the staff, you have the things. And for her, you just see her standing there being like—she may have never even gone downtown.

Erika Ishii

May I—

Suvi [Aabria]

I think I broke her, I think I broke her.

Erika Ishii

—do a quick insight check.

Aabria Iyengar

On me?

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah! Please do!

Erika Ishii

Okay. 11, I guess. Do—you genuinely feel like you would be helping her life if she went to the Citadel, correct?

Aabria Iyengar

1000%.

Erika Ishii

Oh. Right. Well.

Lou Wilson

I think in seeing this, and just wanting to change the subject a little bit, Eursulon steps forward and goes

Eursulon [Lou]

I cannot help but notice, that there is a magic about you. How did you come by it?

Ghost [Brennan]

Um. I don't know! I've always—I've just always been able to do this?

Eursulon [Lou]

Mm.

Ghost [Brennan]

And I know that I—I know that I look curious. I heard magic—and I know that you—you, Madam Suvi, are a wizard—excellency—

Ghost [Brennan]

[Chuckles] It's ok. Suvi is fine.

Ghost [Brennan]

But if you—sir, could you see—you saw magic on me?

Lou Wilson

I did. I have an affinity for the Unseen World, that of Spirits.

Erika Ishii

And I was also born with the ability to converse with them as well. It's a very special thing to be born with gifts.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see Ghost gulps hard, as you guys start talking about spirits. And, clearly a lot of painful memories come up over her face. And you see her hit a wall, for how much of her private horror she is willing to share—

Yes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—in first meeting. And she goes

Ghost [Brennan]

Yeah. Gifts and curses, it's all the same to Master Finley. They both sell.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you see, she heads off, goes to this old, sputtering, lamp post that you see kind of swivels around—the lantern moves with a little rain bucket on another thing. So there's a lamp post, that has a bar of wrought iron. On one, a little lantern stands, and on the other a little bucket catches rain, and the bucket sort of, almost, gyroscopes, and it sort of swivels slowly around in the rain, this little sort of dancing lantern on this post.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

There are some hanging thatch baskets that are filled with dirt, that are theoretically supposed to have like flowers or roses. You see the plants in them are dying from rot, over-watered, and maybe if you look a little bit closer, it looks like maybe some other environmental stuff has killed some of the plants in these baskets.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Ghost takes out a small little bone, something like—from something like maybe poultry, or a fishbone, or something like that—and sticks it into the soil, and whispers a little word into it, and turns around and says

Ghost [Brennan]

I don't claim to know your business. Someone who works for Mr. Gallows will find that, and then they will come and check on Master Finley, but, um—I assume someone will come, physically, to find it, or perhaps it is a work of spellcraft that allows them to know what has been placed there, but um. My business is done, and I should return to the workshop.

Eursulon [Lou]

Nice to have met you, Ghost.

Ghost [Brennan]

An honor to meet you as well.

Suvi [Aabria]

Do you—sorry it's—I feel like it's been a big day for you. Do you have any interest, in going to the Citadel? I would be happy take you to meet my friends now.

Ame [Erika]

It seems like you might be enjoying your work here. I have a little gift for you, you know, as a bit of an apology.

Erika Ishii

And I hand her a needle with some thread attached to it.

Ame [Erika]

Don't touch the tip of it. The tip is enchanted to help with mending. The rest of it is common, and so even if you touch it, it shouldn't lose its magic.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Here she smiles, really glad for a treasure. She says

Ghost [Brennan]

Thank you.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I'll ask everyone here to roll a persuasion check for me, if you'd be so kind.

Aabria Iyengar

13

Erika Ishii

24.

Lou Wilson

A natural 20.

Erika Ishii

Ohhhh!

Aabria Iyengar

Let's gooo-uh!!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

She turns around and looks at all of you. And I think—she looks and says

Ghost [Brennan]

Thank you so much. Ame, right?

Ame [Erika]

Mhm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Looks at this magical piece of thread, looks at it, puts it away, takes a look at you, Eursulon, and for a moment.

[Frustrated] We honor Nat 20s.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughs]

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You look into her eyes, and for a moment, you see a story.

[Music kicks up and begins to swell behind the telling of this tale.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see a door into the World of Spirits. This girl is the daughter of a Spirit and a mortal woman.



Erika Ishii

[Gasps]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you recognize it in that moment, finally, and in speaking to her, you see that some part of her opens up inside, because you look at her without—like both of our mortal friends have been nothing but kind to her, and she does look very peculiar. But to you, you just see that there's not even—here, there is a lack of judgment, and then from you, this is familiarity.

Aabria Iyengar

Ah, yeah.

Erika Ishii

[Gasp of wonder]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And it's complete—like total acceptance is, of course, wonderful. But the idea of like, "No, I see you, like, I'm familiar with you." You can see something in her heart kind of changes. And you also see, I think, an image just like, in a moment, dance across her eyes of like, a very lonely young girl, whose mother told her that she was the daughter of a Spirit, and who the children in her town growing up, told her that was just a lie she was being told.

Aabria Iyengar

Ugh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And then tragedy, and the orphanage, and Port Talon, and all of that dances, in a moment, across your eyes. She turns, looks at you Suvi, takes a couple of steps—and you just see a part of her being like, the expression of someone who's making a kind of rough and gritty peace with the LITTLE bit of joy they've eked out, and that should be good enough. And she takes a couple of steps away on her crutches and then whips her head around to look at you, suvi, and says,

Brennan Lee Mulligan

if I were to go to the Citadel, could Flicker come?

Aabria Iyengar

Yes.

Ghost [Brennan]

Um, okay. Okay!

Suvi [Aabria]

Ghost Finley was wrong. There is great power in a name. Use mine if you want to find your way there.

Ghost [Brennan]

Okay. If I—I'm going to go back, I'm going to talk to Flicker. Is there a place I should meet you? I'm not going to—I wouldn't know who to go talk to, or say anything or...

Aabria Iyengar

The—if you make your way to any of the outposts of the Azure Battalion, I will make a way for you.

Ghost [Brennan]

Okay. Thank you. Thank you.

Suvi [Aabria]  
Yeah!

Ghost [Brennan]  
Thank you.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
She smiles.

Ghost [Brennan]  
[Barely a whisper] Okay.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And heads back towards Finley's. And all of you are left here, at a sort of three-point alleyway cobblestone intersection. Couple of—the rain continues to fall, and a couple of gutters and rivulets pour just, true, powerful funnels of rainwater, that collects on the kind of cattywampus multiple corners of different roofs, intersecting to just sort of run down to a single gutter.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
So probably within sight, there are three or four huge rivulets of water that surge right down, with enough reliability that people have, like, put storm drains in underneath them. So [water rushing water noise] these big sort of rusted iron storm drains, [water rushing noise] as the rainwater pours down. The rain has picked up a little bit. What do you guys do, looking at this sort of plant soil, with some sort of withered plants in it, that the bone was placed into.

Lou Wilson  
It's not Eursulon's specialty, but can I make an arcana check on the bone?

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Yeah, give me an arcana check.

Aabria Iyengar  
Can I help?

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Yeah!

Lou Wilson  
Oh, this was foolish.

Aabria Iyengar  
No, you got it!

Erika Ishii  
[Laughing]

Aabria Iyengar  
You got this!

Lou Wilson  
I think Eursulon goes to do this, and then looks at Suvi over his—

Aabria Iyengar  
Nah, you got this.

Lou Wilson  
—over his shoulder, and really starts to sweat.

Aabria Iyengar  
[Laughs]

Lou Wilson  
17.

Aabria Iyengar  
Except you crushed it!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Looks like Ghost just jammed a bone into that soil. You're looking and you're like, "What kind of strange magic is at work here?" And then you sort of go like, "I'm not really pickin' up on—"

Erika Ishii  
[Choking laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
"—pickin' up on anything."

Lou Wilson  
Yeah, I think Eursulon gets real low, gets like, eye level, is really gettin' in there, and then turns to his friend.

Eursulon [Lou]  
I think that, she just jams a bone in this pot, and I think that's the end of the signal.

Suvi [Aabria]  
Oh.

Ame [Erika]  
Oh, there's nothing magic about it?

Eursulon [Lou]  
No, I—no.

Ame [Erika]  
They just have to come and check if a bone's buried here occasionally?

Eursulon [Lou]  
Yeah, I think they just jam a bone in here, so...

Ame [Erika]  
Well, alright.

Suvi [Aabria]  
What was your plan, when you wanted us to let her signal Gallows?

Eursulon [Lou]  
Oh, um. That we would confront him, and—

Suvi [Aabria]  
He's not going to walk up here with Wavebreaker.

Ame [Erika]

Well then, we go with one of his underlings, to go get Wavebreaker from him. Um. Can I have a moment with Suvi, Eursulon, please?

Eursulon [Lou]

Sure. Do you want—who's gonna walk away, or—do you want me to stay?

Suvi [Aabria]

I'll walk away.

Ame [Erika]

Oh, alright.

Eursulon [Lou]

Okay, great.

Ame [Erika]

We'll walk away.

Eursulon [Lou]

I'll stand here next to the bone, in case anyone comes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The fox asks

The Fox [Brennan]

Do you want me to stay with Eursulon, or...?

Ame [Erika]

Yeah, you two should catch up, and watch. The bone.

Eursulon [Lou]

Yeah, we'll catch up.

[A long pause, broken by a single burst of a laugh from Brennan]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Fox looks up, and goes

Eursulon [Lou]

It's not a threat.

The Fox [Brennan]

Anything happen, I guess—yeah, I guess, how ya been since I ran outside, back in that building?

Eursulon [Lou]

I've been okay.

[Aabria, Brennan, and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Suvi and Ame, you step away for a moment.

Aabria Iyengar

I move under an alcove so I don't have to be actively rained on.

Erika Ishii

I'm halfway in, halfway out. I like hearing the rain hit my little hat.

Ame [Erika]

Suvi, didn't you say, that any children sent to the citadel get sent off to war?

Suvi [Aabria]

Is that what I said?

Ame [Erika]

Well—

Suvi [Aabria]

Do I look like I'm at war right now?

Ame [Erika]

No, but you said you wanted to be, and you could be, and that most of them do.

Suvi [Aabria]

Do you think the Empire sends a bunch of artificers to the front line?

Ame [Erika]

I truly don't know.

Suvi [Aabria]

So what's your point?

Ame [Erika]

Well, I think it's—I'm just worried that Ghost will be seen as a tool, as opposed to a person, hoping to learn, and study, and flourish.

Suvi [Aabria]

Interesting.

Ame [Erika]

I—

Suvi [Aabria]

No no no. So you believe ANYONE passing through the citadel is made into a tool?

Ame [Erika]

Well—

Suvi [Aabria]

Yes or no.

Ame [Erika]

It's just my concern.

Suvi [Aabria]

Mhm.

Ame [Erika]

You're exceptional, and—and you had people helping you. If Ghost goes to the Citadel, she'll have no one.

Suvi [Aabria]

[Scoffing laugh] You think I did this because I was helped through. Okay.

Ame [Erika]

No, I think that you had a bit more direction than Ghost will have. I'm not saying you didn't earn all of this on your own. But... Ghost might be more lost there, than she is here.

Suvi [Aabria]

Right now it looks like the only people Ghost have in this world is Finley, an angry little fake mage, and a giant construct covered in candle wax. How could she POSSIBLY be worse off? Why are you allowed to give her gifts, but I am not?

Ame [Erika]

My gifts are little, tiny things that might help with her everyday life, not a whole change of—

Suvi [Aabria]

A chance to build a better one?

Ame [Erika]

Well, it does look like you've done very well for yourself there, so... You're right, I apologize.

Suvi [Aabria]

[Darkly] Ame... The thing we're trying to break, this curse, is about who you were told—who you know to trust. So I'm not gonna take this personally.

Aabria Iyengar

And then I wait under the alcove.

Erika Ishii

I walk back towards Eursulon, and—

Eursulon [Lou]

I thought I was gonna be more mad.

[Aabria and Erika immediately burst into laughter]

Eursulon [Lou]

I thought I was gonna beat the shit out of him.

The Fox [Brennan]

I got really mad.

Eursulon [Lou]

I mean yeah, I remember, I saw that.

The Fox [Brennan]

I got really mad.

Eursulon [Lou]

Yeah, you got all in his face.

The Fox [Brennan]

I got really mad because Ame tied his hands, and then I wasn't in danger anymore, and I was like, well, if I'm not in danger, I'm gonna get really mad.

[Aabria and Erika cackle]

Eursulon [Lou]

I mean, how do you think I felt when I encountered him the first time, I was alone, but this time, I was with my friends. And so, you know, when you've got your people there, you feel, in many ways, untouchable.

The Fox [Brennan]

I know that if I found other foxes, I wouldn't be able to explain it, but, [scoffs] alone's bad!

Eursulon [Lou]

Alone, is definitely not as good, as a life with company.

The Fox [Brennan]

No, because—every piece of food I ever got, I had to get, and now I don't even have to GET most of my food.

Eursulon [Lou]

Well, you work very hard. I wouldn't take that away from you.

The Fox [Brennan]

Doesn't even feel like it, though! I mean, I don't even have to worry about where I'm going to sleep. I'm just going to sleep wherever Ame sleeps. I don't have to worry about where I'm going to sleep! It's amazing. I don't like how wet it is here, and I didn't like what happened on the boat. But that's the only two bad things that have happened since I learned how to talk.

Ame [Erika]

Isn't it nice to have somebody who's there for you?

Erika Ishii

And give him a little squish, right in the shoulder blades, where it's a little darker colored patch of fur.

The Fox [Brennan]

Aw, it is nice. You know I have you, right?

Ame [Erika]

Oh, yeah! Of course. And I have you, right?

The Fox [Brennan]

Boss, you got me.

Ame [Erika]

[Giggles]

Lou Wilson

Can I make an insight check on Suvi?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah, give me an insight check.

Lou Wilson

6?

Aabria Iyengar

I rolled a 5, I gave myself disadvantage—

Erika Ishii  
[Joyous guffaw]

Aabria Iyengar  
—on deception, I look pissed.

Lou Wilson  
Earthquacon just clocks it. But is—can I make a perception check to see if anyone—any of the windows nearby—has clocked the bone?

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Give me a perception check.

Lou Wilson  
13.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
The only little piece of light that you can see in this neighborhood—the rain is coming down hard.

[The moody dark jazz piano starts back up]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
There's just a little bit of sputtering light, from a window off in the corner—most of the windows are dark because this spot you're in is very residential, and the day has like, well and truly started, so most people are not at home. Just sort of—they're out working or doing whatever they're doing—so there's a little bit of sputtering candlelight and you see a couple of points of light that you're guessing, because you can see it through a window from the street, is probably like a chandelier or something up in a ceiling?

Mhm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And it's coming through amber glass, so it's a sort of, couple little twinkling points of light through like thick red-orange glass. On a 13, you don't see anyone watching you, but you do look at that and... Just sort of clock it as like, "Oh, there's lights on in that building." And that window—you can see that window from where you are here, by the lamppost.

Lou Wilson  
I turn to Ame.

Eursulon [Lou]  
Do you see that window up there?

Ame [Erika]  
Yes.

Eursulon [Lou]  
The lights are on in the house.

Ame [Erika]  
Mm. Shall we go take a look?

Eursulon [Lou]  
Why not? Suvi! We're gonna go look in that building over there!



Suvi [Aabria]  
[Calling back] Why?

Eursulon [Lou]  
We think there—

[Lou breaks, and Aabria and Erika chuckle along with him]

Eursulon [Lou]  
We think there might be—it has a good vantage point on the—

Ame [Erika]  
It might be the lookout from which—

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
It might be the lookout!

Ame [Erika]  
—they check the bone!

Eursulon [Lou]  
Yes, for the bone.

Suvi [Aabria]  
Okay, well, if it is, then they know—sure. Okay, let's go. [Beleaguered sigh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You see the fox says

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Oh, we're all going! I thought you were going to leave me and Suvi here to catch up.

Aabria Iyengar  
Oh!

Aabria Iyengar  
[Gasping laugh]

Erika Ishii  
If there's something that you need to—

The Fox [Brennan]  
We can do it while we walk.

Suvi [Aabria]  
We can walk and talk, yeah!

The Fox [Brennan]  
We can walk and talk.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Fox looks over and says

The Fox [Brennan]  
How ya been since, uh, you and Ame walked over there?

Suvi [Aabria]  
Honestly, not good.

The Fox [Brennan]  
Really?

Suvi [Aabria]  
Yeah.

The Fox [Brennan]  
Hungry?

Erika Ishii  
[Sudden raucous cackling]

Aabria Iyengar  
Suvi does stop, and has that like "Dang it. Maybe I am hungry! Maybe I'm just pissed because I'm hungry.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Fox is like

The Fox [Brennan]  
I'm hungry.

Suvi [Aabria]  
Yeah.

The Fox [Brennan]  
I'll tell you what. I'm being patient. I don't feel like we're going back to that trash.

Suvi [Aabria]  
Oh, buddy, we're not. What trash? No, we're not.

The Fox [Brennan]  
I've tricked a lot of people. And I got trucked. I'll tell you that right now.

Suvi [Aabria]  
[Commiserating] Ya hate to see it.

The Fox [Brennan]  
You know, you shouldn't be able to con a con. I got conned. I should have known. I thought, there's part of me [whispering] "I can't believe Ame lied to me, we're not going to get the trash."

Suvi [Aabria]  
[Scandalized] Did she say that to you?

The Fox [Brennan]  
She said we would go back and get the trash.

Suvi [Aabria]  
Hey, fun fact. She's a little bit of a liar.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You see the fox looks up to you and says

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
[Sucks in air] How 'bout that?

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And trots along behind Ame.

Erika Ishii  
[Laughing, out of breath] Oh my god.

Aabria Iyengar  
[Deviously] Poison your familiar against you!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Sad part is if you'd remembered to tell me, I would have remembered it!

[Everyone laughs]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
No, no, the fox is projecting. The fox.

Aabria Iyengar  
Yeah! Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You forgot, and the fox is like, "You lied to me."

Aabria Iyengar  
You liar!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You guys move around, going up to the upper level, and you find, actually, a five point intersection that actually terminates in a true plaza. You see a fountain in the center of the stone plaza. The water in the fountain, that is not active, doesn't seem like it works anymore. But the water that rests in it, sort of a green-brown under the rainy sky, that seems maybe—

Erika Ishii  
[Sigh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—it has algae or stuff growing in it, is dancing with the raindrops on it. And you see a statue of a beautiful pair of Spirits. They look like Great Spirits. There is a man with long hair, swept back, that curls into waves, and a long robe, who holds in—who holds his dance partner with one hand, and in the other hand has a long fishing spear.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
And the woman that he dances with, has an incredible gown, made of this growing vine. And her hair is filled with leaves, you see she sort of has, the Image of a forest spirit where the edges of her face are framed in leaves, that keep her face bare. And you see that they are dancing together here in the fountain.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You see that the woman's face is eternally, like, beaming with joy, looking over the shoulder of her partner, so their faces are actually—they do not see each other because their embrace is so close. The man's face has been vandalized.

Erika Ishii

Aww.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The stone has been cracked, and is long since gone. It's been long enough, that some sort of lichen, or something, has grown out. But you see a corner of an eye, sort of like looked like a young man, and the sort of wavy hair.

Erika Ishii

Oh, that's so sad. I immediately go up to it, and I smooth the pad of my finger over the eye to mend it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Looking at the fountain, that wish immediately is born to you, and in this big stony plaza—again, five point intersection, so there's five rows—

[A ragtime tune is playing, distantly]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—but the five points of the intersection, because the square is so large, actually leave a kind of pentagon of like row houses, and stone buildings, that actually face the little plaza you are in. You also clock the building that you are approaching, that you see has all that same, of like, reddish amber glass, and you can now hear music coming out from within it, and you realize, it is not a private residence.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It doesn't look—there's music coming from within, and you don't see any warm welcome, or sign. It looks like the sort of stoop, of a private dwelling, but you see that there's a little golden plaque up above, that has small script on it, as though people could approach the door to read what the building is.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You looking at the fountain and the statue, you—the fountain is about, maybe like, I dunno, 40 feet wide, and the statues are up on like, an eight foot dais and then, the statues themselves are about like 12 feet tall. So getting up to the face to touch it would take some acrobat—it would take like a pretty big effort to move through the fountain, get up the statue.

Erika Ishii

Oh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

But you see the sadness of this vandalized—this ruined statue. But—so the impulse is there. Do you think Ame would make a, sort of, pretty herculean—like climbing a twelve foot statue, during the rain, is a hard thing to do.

Ame [Erika]

Hey Fox? How easy would it be for you to get up there?

The Fox [Brennan]

Get up there? Easy.

Ame [Erika]

Would you mind, going up and licking the broken statue's face?

Suvi [Aabria]

[Incredulous whisper] Why?

Ame [Erika]

I'm going to give you this—because, it's just—

Suvi [Aabria]  
Aren't we looking out—

Ame [Erika]  
Well yes, but—

Suvi [Aabria]  
—for a local criminal?

Ame [Erika]  
Yes, but—

Suvi [Aabria]  
Why are you doing indiscrete things?

Erika Ishii  
Honoring the spirits, and their statues, is part of my duties. Doesn't matter where I am.

Aabria Iyengar  
[Dryly] Sure.

Erika Ishii  
I tap the Fox on the head, I pat him.

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
I'm going to make a little acrobatics check for him.

Aabria Iyengar  
Yay, let's gooo!

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
You see that he goes up on the edge of the fountain, looks around, jumps into the water—

[Water splashes and the Fox pants as he swims]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
—swims across.

The Fox [Brennan]  
[Muttering to himself]

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
Looks around. And you see, sees the sort of column. He looks around, sees all you all looking him. Walks on the base of the dais, and walks around the other side, and then pops his head up, as he walks around the base of this dais, and is on top of the statue. And he says

Brennan Lee Mulligan  
It wasn't easy, it was hard.

Aabria Iyengar  
[Chuckles]

Ame [Erika]  
Oh!

The Fox [Brennan]

I was wrong about it being easy, it was really hard.

Ame [Erika]

Oh, well, you know I love your confidence!

The Fox [Brennan]

[Half-heartedly] Yeah. You gotta believe in yourself.

[Aabria and Erika burst with laughter]

The Fox [Brennan]

Okay. I'm up here, what do you want me to do?

Ame [Erika]

Lick his face.

The Fox [Brennan]

His face is gone.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughs]

Erika Ishii

Yes. Lick the place where his face should be.

The Fox [Brennan]

Okay. [Licking noises]

Erika Ishii

And he transfers the mending to it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Ohhhh ho ho ho! Amazing.

[Spiritual music begins to swell]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Lichen fades. And you feel, because you have a connection with your fox, you feel salt? Salt water coming out of the statue? Give me a wisdom saving throw.

Aabria Iyengar

Let's go!

Erika Ishii

[Hooting laughter]

Aabria Iyengar

Let's gooo!

[Music fades away.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

16.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

16. Ame, you are standing there as your fox licks it.

[Spiritual music begins again]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Eursulon and Suvi, what you see is the Fox licking it, and as he licks it, wherever his tongue moves, there's just a little bit more stone than there was before.

Erika Ishii

Oughhhh!

Aabria Iyengar

Incredible.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And both of you are watching a true piece of Witchcraft unfold. As this handsome face, of this sea spirit, this—and within the world of Umora, the delineations between Fae and Fiends, celestials and undead, all of this is a part of the unseen world. This is a world where Gods and Monsters are kin, and all of a broad spectrum and space of the World of Spirits.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The term god does not imply the role, necessarily, of a being of worship, although if some people choose to do so, they can, it simply means a Great Spirit. And this god of the sea has his face restored. And as both of you watch this unfold, what you don't see, is Ame fall to the ground with lancing pain, shooting through your body.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

As you hit the stone, your mind reels with screams, and horror, the smell of burning salt. You see endless vines, looking to strangle, choke, and ruin. You hear screams. You see people up on the watchtower, and walls of stone summoned forth from the earth, and you see a lance, thundering down from the sky, beating with a rhythm, of pain, and intensity, and torture. You hear the rhythm of instruments, that sing with sharp, and sinister venom.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you see the face of the statue, blood streaming from the eyes and mouth. You hear endless waves, and deep song, from the bottom of the ocean, cut short, and a scream choked with ash, fire, and smoke.

[Deep, low, echoing reverberation, as though a massive horn was sounded]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And Eursulon, you turn to see, Ame succeed on her saving throw.

Ame [Erika]

[Gasping in pain]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Come back, as your stomach survives. You are a Witch. Witches of this world have ever been a bridge between the world of spirits, and the world of mortal beings. You wretch seawater.

[Gagging and sputtering as water splashes onto the ground] Agh! [Coughs]

Lou Wilson

I rush to her side, and instinctually, I think, cast lay on hands with the hope of curing disease or poison.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You cast lay on hands, and erupting from the place where your hand touches Ame—

[A whispering womans voice begins to chant]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—vines and green leaves, that surge forward, and in the moment of their birth, fall dead.

[Sinister music swells behind the chanting, and fades away, followed shortly after by the voice.]

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]

Lou Wilson

God, I wish I'd get—wished I'd kicked him.

Aabria Iyengar

God, the moment you said that I was like "Ah, he knows, he knows."

Lou Wilson

Well, you were describing it, and I was just like, aw this feels like—I mean, I don't think Eursulon would have the wherewithal to kick him, but I was like, oh, this has gotta be a show. Was it performance?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It was performance.

Aabria Iyengar

Ah that's so good!

Erika Ishii

Aaahh! That's really good!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Absolutely good. Oooh, you guys knew my little dude was—

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughing] Yeah, that was very good!

Lou Wilson

That was good.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

My little dude was faking!

Erika Ishii

I was hoping we'd find out when I did the funeral rites and burned the body. [Laughing]

Aabria Iyengar

Ha haaaa! That would have been AMAZING!