

Worlds Beyond Number

Fireside Chat: Episode 014 - Episode 14 "There is an Ocean Vaster than This One" Final Version

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

Erika Ishii

[In a dramatic voice] There is an ocean vaster than this one, upon whose waves the sun is ever shining, that calls you home. And I know one day a great feast will be laid for you in that place, to call him, Eursulon, back to the realm of his birth. [Normal speaking voice] Hi, everyone! I'm Erika Ishii, and welcome to the Fireside Chat for episode 14. There is an ocear—There is an ocean vaster than this one, the end of our first arc. Damn it. I was so close. I almost made it through the whole entire intro.

Aabria Iyengar

My god, Erika Did the buttery voice.

Erika Ishii

I'm here with Brennan Lee Mulligan.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Ooh, that buttery voice. Oh, crackle crackle. Let's get this log on top of that fire.

Erika Ishii

Aabria Iyengar

Aabria Iyengar

Ooh crackle crackle, like the treats that we eat beside the fire.

Erika Ishii

And our special guest.

Ethan Trinidad

Uh, ooh crackle crackle, it's your best friend Ethan Trinidad in the building.

[Aabria laughs SO hard]

Erika Ishii

Welcome, Ethan. And a man who needs no introduction.

Taylor Moore

Brennan's twin. Crackle crackle, and ahoohoo, buttery voice. I'm butter.

Erika Ishii

Excellent.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

We're not even going to say Taylor Moore, we're just going to say Brennan's twin

Ethan Trinidad
Just ride on that.

Taylor Moore
Ha, oh yes! Hi it's me the butterboy, just came back from a county fair where they had me shaped into a big old cow.

Erika Ishii
You're just dairy products.

Taylor Moore
Now I'm just a normal man shape. Just a normal man shape. I sound like Brennan, I know it. You don't have to put it in the comments, ma'am. We know

Aabria Iyengar
Put it in the comments.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I think we sound quite dissimilar and I think—

Aabria Iyengar
Hey Erika, how many people have you been confused for, like other prominent Asian nerds in this fandom?

Erika Ishii
Quite a few, actually. Even Awkwafina, who's not—she doesn't play D&D to my knowledge.

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah, I got called Krystina Arielle while she stood next to me the other day. So y'all can just be fucking twins and you just have to take it. You just gotta take it.

Erika Ishii
Sorry about it.

Taylor Moore
We both got white voice.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I guess so. Well, it's an honor. I personally find Taylor's distinct—the twang, the little lyrical note of the southern drawl to be quite charming. I wish that I had such a signature to my own voice.

Erika Ishii
It is, and it sounds like you're doing a bit.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
No, no bits here.

Erika Ishii
No, I mean his voice sounds like you're doing a bit.

Taylor Moore

I'm not doing a bit. I was born with this thick corn syrup molasses, flowing like the swamps of South Carolina down to the sea.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

This is just Will Ferrell's character from *Eastbound and Down*,

Taylor Moore

Kevin Spacey in *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*. For the kids, for the kids.

Aabria Iyengar

Good. This is good.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So, Ethan Trinidad, it was such a pleasure to work with you here.

Ethan Trinidad

This was great. This was one of my—this episode was truly spectacular.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I love that. And I'm glad that you said this episode is spectacular. Not all of our special guests have listened to all the previous episodes, but it was really a pleasure and we really appreciate you doing the homework.

Ethan Trinidad

Hey, I'm happy to catch up. You know, in uh—where I live. It's a pretty rural, relaxed place, and so I had plenty of time.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And where are you from again, Ethan? We talked about it on set, but.

Ethan Trinidad

Yeah, I'm from Louisville, Kentucky. But the quiet parts.

Aabria Iyengar

Oh, Louisville!

Ethan Trinidad

No, well, I call it Looweyville. I'm actually not from Louisville. I'm from Looweyville. It's a separate part.

Aabria Iyengar

Understood.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah. Louisville again, you said because Louisville is actually a city. But you're from Louisville, which is L-O-O-W-E-Y ville. Right.

Ethan Trinidad

You remember? From our conversation on set? That honestly means a lot to me, man. Thank you.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Of course, you're from one of Kentucky's hollers. It's a little slow, rural kind of place there. I love it.

Ethan Trinidad

There it is.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

There you go. There you go.

Erika Ishii

Well, we're so glad you could join us for this, the end of our first arc, which is guys, I got to say, I mean just, it's so beautiful. It's so beautiful. I cried so hard at so many different moments from each of you. You know the song, and Suvi's "My father", and just Eursulon. Oh, my god. Oh, the penis thing.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It was awesome.

Ethan Trinidad

We all knew it was nice of you not to just come out and say it. You just said Eursulon in a very sensitive way. And then you laughed and we all quietly went, she's talking about the penis thing.

Aabria Iyengar

Good job for a 15, despite penis. That was good.

Ethan Trinidad

In spite of penis. We found a way.

Erika Ishii

Yeah. I do love, though, that it was wrapped into the success, the talking about how honor, it doesn't have to be solemn and then shame is not necessarily a companion of honor. It's also joy and laughter and, you know, your friends joking about your penis.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah.

Taylor Moore

And your dad's penis.

Ethan Trinidad

And my dad's penis. I forgot we talked about both penises. I remember very distinctly us talking about Eursulon's penis. But then I was like, oh, and then Suvi took us down the road to also speaking about my father's penis.

Erika Ishii

Suvi saying the phrase, "you got it honest from your father."

Ethan Trinidad
You got it honest.

Aabria Iyengar
Sometimes the AAVE just creeps in.

Ethan Trinidad
You can't fight it. You can't fight it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I think it's beautiful.

Taylor Moore
That scene captured something we don't get in the show very much, which is: barely controlled rage and disappointment from Brennan Mulligan.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I beg your pardon, sir. What disappointment could there have been? It was a beautiful earned moment of levity after many episodes of dire consequences and epic stakes!

Taylor Moore
Listener, I encourage it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
The return to the Shire moment for our companions was talking about dicks, as it should be.

Taylor Moore
Listener, it's on tape. Go back and listen. When they first start goofing around with the sword to undo the curse, you can hear Brennan be mad. Go back and listen.

Ethan Trinidad
I was listening today and there is a quiet moment where it's the delightful part of relistening, kind of after a decent amount of time since we played, of like, I forgot in my head, we all together were like, "Steel said wait." And we all as a group were like, no, thank you. And it's very specifically Brennan looking at Erika being like, let's check in: that thing I said to you that I guess I didn't say to anyone else, we're going in spite of that? And Erika just remains silent.

Erika Ishii
Yeah.

Ethan Trinidad
We really uh... There is a tension in Brennan's voice as he's like, guys, I just want to check in real quick because we know Steel's almost here.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I loved it. Well, what you hear in my voice, far from the allegations of rage or disappointment that are being spuriously... J'accused all over this talkback. Sometimes you will hear me go quiet, which is, a conversation starts amongst the PCs that I am gearing up for a segue because every once in a while PCs will find like a puddle to splash

in and you go, Great. Now you know, and I know, that you won't know how to get back from this bit. You know what I'm saying?

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughing] That's real as shit.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Where it's like, "Wait a minute, they sell hams in this marketplace? I buy 20 hams, I buy 30 hams. I smear ham on my face. Ha ha ha!" The deadliest silence you've ever heard in your life as everyone looks to the GM and just, it's never said aloud, but the PCs look to the dungeon master and go, "we don't know how to get back from here." So it's not rage, it's literally being like, don't worry, I got towels. We're going to clean the ham grease off your face, I'm going to lift you up in my big, strong arms and we're going to get back on the road. You have so much fun at the ham cart.

Aabria Iyengar

My brain just flashed back to several very real moments, like, yeah, you're right. That is very true.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah, for sure.

Aabria Iyengar

I'm a little bit janitor, like, all right, time to go do normal human being things now. Thank you.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

God. Let that be my title, The Bit Janitor. That's all I am. That's all I am. That's all this job is. Just mopping up bits.

Erika Ishii

It's so good. It's true. There's a moment where I think in some ways, we were just kind of fucking around with the sword. It just really had that vibe. And, yes, it was a deliberate decision on most of our parts to go ahead with it before Steel arrived. But also part of it was us being like, OOH, I'm going to T-pose out and see what happens.

Aabria Iyengar

I'm just grateful that Suvi didn't know that Steel had said something. It was a beautiful opportunity to not have to be a bummer.

Ethan Trinidad

I catch myself honestly meta gaming just a little bit. I can hear myself being like, I'm just waving it around, Brennan. I'm not trying to do it, I swear. And then you're like, "do you want to do this?" And everyone's like, yeah, okay, let's really do it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Here we go. Well, there's a bunch of stuff there that's really interesting. I think that one of the fascinating things, I think, is managing information for how split the party is over the last two episodes. So the fact that a lot of these really big momentous things are perfectly hidden. Nobody in the party other than Ame knows that she advised Naram in that moment of indecision.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Nobody in the party knows until that scene at the end of this episode, what made Eursulon sprint out towards the water, right? And again, even as the Empire comes, I think some people were predicting this huge calamitous hammer coming down from the Citadel. Coming down on what? On Suvi riding to the rescue of the soldiers at the wall and preventing a tremendous amount of death? Like, what's the punishment?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So it's like, in terms of not knowing exactly what happened the first time they discovered that Eursulon is involved is in that room. And the only person who finds out is Steel, who we already know has this perspective that she shared with Suvi about the nature of Spirits and kind of where human responsibility lies in how you deal with Spirits. So across the board, I don't think I've ever had to work harder as a GM on, like, who knows what about what here.

Aabria Iyengar

Good job, guys. We did it. We made it hard for Brennan.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I could not come down.

Erika Ishii

Oh, boy.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah, well, shit. Going from the penis stuff on one side all the way to the other realm of experience, that fucking song, Taylor. Jesus Christ.

Erika Ishii

So we've got countless questions about that, one of which we've pulled.

Aabria Iyengar

Oh, really, Taylor? Oh, really?

Taylor Moore

I didn't look at the question, Doc.

Aabria Iyengar

Oh, really?

Taylor Moore

What kind of question can you have about a song?

[Everyone laughs]

Aabria Iyengar

All of them. Hey, raise your hand in this call if you knew there was going to be a whole ass actual song. Wait, you knew?

Erika Ishii

Wait, a whole—yeah, because I remember I talked with Taylor about this, like, after we had that episode. I was like, Taylor, this song. This song—uh! But I did not hear it until this listen through the other day. And I cried real big, salty tears.

Ethan Trinidad

I feel like I do have, like, half a memory of being on set and Brennan mentioning, like thinking about it or talking about a song going there. As I was listening, I was like, did that happen? And now I'll ask Brennan, did that happen?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Oh like when that idea first—?

Ethan Trinidad

When we were doing this and you described that old woman singing—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah.

Ethan Trinidad

Like, did you then say, maybe Taylor will put a song in there?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Well, that was the idea.

Ethan Trinidad

While we were on set?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah, that was the idea right away. Because I think to me, like, Umora, and this world, I want to pour as much love and heart and spirit into this world as possible. And to me, there are things that great fantasy worlds need, and in-world art is one of them. Right now, you don't got to go go full Tolkien where every three pages there's a new fucking ballad. He could have slowed his roll, just a scotche and probably kept the pace up.

Erika Ishii

Okay, all right. Inventing a language so that you can write poetry, and then inventing a whole world and a story in order to go with that poetry and stuff is a little much. It's true. But I remember on the way to the studio, Brennan saying, like, yeah, I've written poetry for the world. And us being like, what? But Spencer from Cincinnati asks, please tell us everything you can about writing and recording The Rain Road, including who sings and how we can support them and their beautiful voices. So this was a collaboration between Brennan and Taylor and the choir that Taylor found, yes?

Taylor Moore

Yes. Brennan, what was theb—because I was not there. I was not there for episode 13 and 14 being recorded there's the only episodes that were made that were recorded without me being either online and listening or there in the studio. So I didn't know what was happening in these episodes. So you came to me after and you were like, I've got an idea for a song.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah.

Taylor Moore

Or a vibe.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

A vibe, yeah. Well, first of all, I should say that the song itself, the initiative on the song in terms of lifting it up to becoming a thing, was Taylor. Taylor sent the lyrics for the chorus and was like, do you have any idea for a verse or a bridge in here? And while you were already getting started on the composition for the music for it, and had the demo of the melody kind of already locked in. But early, early on, when we recorded the episode, I remember coming to you and being like, we should think about doing an actual choral song here. And we should think about having a, because it's a folk song. I think that moment is really important. It's really important for what Ame's powers represent. It's the mirror to the moment when they are on the way to the Ace of Wands or when they're on the way to Finley's, where Ame realizes that there are people in Port Talon who don't consider the other people in Port Talon to be their neighbors, right? To not be in community with them.

Erika Ishii

There's no communit, yeah. They don't need community to survive.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

They don't need community to survive, right? And that's what it is. It's not that they don't have community. It's that they don't need community to survive. You can survive in Port Talon as a stranger, right. And then we find that there are these people that remember this. They have this folk song there. And to me, it was like, there were some old Celtic songs and folk songs, other things like that. And it was important that in this moment of, you know Naram and Orima having met at the offering, but the ritual be this song that they sing all together. And that was all that I came to Taylor with, was like, I think we need a song here. I think we need something that will, because it's the final episode of the arc, it feels really significant and important. And then Taylor jumped in with the—that was the last I heard about it, was and I think Taylor we've talked about it once or twice a couple of times as the Arc was going along in the summer production.

Taylor Moore

Yeah. The biggest question for us was what language should it be?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yes!

Taylor Moore

Obviously we chose the easiest—the path of least resistance, the language of our Empire. But yeah, the biggest question for us at the beginning was should this be in Gaelic? Should this be in Japanese? Should this be in some other language? What should it be?

Erika Ishii

Whooaaa!

Taylor Moore

But that's just so hard.

Aabria Iyengar

Oh, did you not have time to whip up a little conlang just for this, you fucking coward?

Taylor Moore

It's like, do I then write it in English so that it makes sense in English and then translate it? So then I know I'm going to fuck up idioms. And if we're translating to the language that these people are singing natively in—also, does that mean that everyone in the world speaks Irish Gaelic or Scots Gaelic or Japanese or it's like, Wait a minute. At first we were like, It can't be English. And then the more we thought about it, the more we realized anything we do that's not English is going to be incredibly difficult, really risky, very chaotic, and it's very unlikely that we'll be able to express what we want to. Yeah, it was just like yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I remember that conversation.

Erika Ishii

I can't believe that that was on the table.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah. It was just one of those things where there was a part of me that was like, that was like, oh, there would be something beautiful about the song existing in a non imperial language, but there's also a lot of really beautiful Irish traditional songs that are in English. And like you were saying, the hardest thing would just be the idioms. And how do you make the poetry in a language that neither you nor I speak, right? Like, I speak the tiniest, itty bittiest little bit of Irish from when know need a break from Spanish on Duolingo and jump over there.

Aabria Iyengar

Shout out to Duo.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

shout out to Duolingo. But it's the song that Taylor had, of this love song between Orima and Naram and that the chorus is fundamentally—and I'll share something Taylor said, which is the metaphor of the rain coming from the ocean to the forest, being the connection between Naram and Orima. And it's oh, it's just so beautiful.

Aabria Iyengar

So pretty. I've come home several days—sorry, just to sprinkle this little story because I was telling Taylor earlier, I've come home a couple of times in the last few days and Ryan is playing it. He's just like noodling it on the piano. So I've walked into the door to it enough times and I'm just like, oh God. Okay, I can't start off time in the house in tears, but I guess we're doing that again. Thank you very much.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

We would love by the way, feel free if there's anyone out there that wants to tag the show on any covers of The Rain Road.

Erika Ishii

Oh, my God.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Whether in English or whatever language, we will be so happy to watch them. I think it's just such a beautiful song. Taylor, you fuckin crushed it man.

Aabria Iyengar

Give me the metal cover.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Give me the metal—yeah.

Taylor Moore

Listen, well so by the time this comes out, we will have published the song and even the choral arrangement that we used as sort of the backbone of some parts of the song. All those resources are there for you. I'm even writing a little guitar tab up

Aabria Iyengar

Aah! Oh my god.

Taylor Moore

so you can play it on the old acoustic. Whip out your Martins and get startings.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Wow.

Aabria Iyengar

I don't like that you said that.

Ethan Trinidad

That was great man.

Taylor Moore

They could have had that for a slogan and they didn't do it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Sorry Ethan.

Ethan Trinidad

Yeah?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I thought you were saying something.

Ethan Trinidad

I liked the thing Taylor said. I feel like Martins... you know I have friends at Martins and I'm going to send them an email.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Wow.

Taylor Moore
And that's free.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Is Martins based in Looweyville?

Ethan Trinidad
No, but my neighbor kind of, sources their strings.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
So they have a connection that sends them strings for their Martin guitar.

Ethan Trinidad
Yes, exactly.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Great.

Ethan Trinidad
So I'm going to hit that guy up and I'm going to email this thing to him and we're going to get it cooking because right now it just says find your newest obsession on their website. And that's horseshit. That's just trash.

Erika Ishii
Yeah, fix them up. Fix them up.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I agree.

Taylor Moore
But Brennan, you should know that the Martin Guitar Factory is in Nazareth, Pennsylvania. And that's why in The Wait, the song by The Band they say pulled into Nazareth feel about a half out there. They were going to the Martin Guitar Factory.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I love that.

Erika Ishii
Not to the place of Jesus's birth?

Taylor Moore
No.

Aabria Iyengar
Could be.

Erika Ishii
Or not birth, his uh

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I believe in the Mormon tradition, Jesus was born in Pennsylvania,

Aabria Iyengar

The Garden of Eden was in Missouri, and Jesus was born outside of Pittsburgh.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yep.

Taylor Moore

Did I tell you guys a story about when I went to South Royalton, Vermont, the birthplace of Joseph Smith, and I got locked in a room with a wax figure of Joseph Smith and the tour guide?

Aabria Iyengar

Well now you have to.

Erika Ishii

On purpose?

Taylor Moore

Just me, the tour guide, a statue of Joseph Smith at his desk, and the guide with her laser pointer. And we just talked about Joseph Smith for a while until her coworker came back from lunch and let us out.

Aabria Iyengar

I don't understand white culture.

Taylor Moore

It was about the size of a car. We were essentially in the backseat of a car together for about an hour.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Oh my God.

Ethan Trinidad

Wait, how about how does the locking happen?

Erika Ishii

That's not enough room for the Holy Spirit!

Taylor Moore

There's—so he was born in Vermont and so the place where he was born has now been bought by the Mormon church. And it's now like a little tiny museum and a gift shop. And there's a nature trail with speakers hidden in the trees that play Angelic Choruses as you walk in the forest. And there's a giant obelisk, a giant stone obelisk that marks where he was actually born. And so you go in there and there's a tour of the grounds. It's a very small little house. And then there's one room where you go in and you sit on like a little church pew. And then the curtain pulls back and there's like, I thought it was going to be animatronic, but it didn't move. There's a statue of Joseph Smith writing at his desk and then a recording plays about "how I found these tablets. Look, you're not going to believe these fucking tablets."

Erika Ishii

You know, I read the Book of Mormon and it starts with, "Hey, I know you might have heard some shit about me, but, be that as it may, here's a holy text."

Taylor Moore

Get that out of the way, get the notes app apology done and then get to business. Yeah, get startin'.

Aabria Iyengar

Writing a holy text like people write tweets. You will have to couch it, you will misinterpret it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

This is the funny, speaking of Irish stuff, I was in Ireland with Iz and we got to Donegal, which is where the Mulligan family is from. And the tourism plaque, when we pulled over at the side of the road, literally was like "Donegal called by some 'The Forgotten County' has a little more to offer than some people think." And it was so, like this is your first impression. You don't have to—

Erika Ishii

Starting out on the back foot is always funny. Always funny.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Always funny.

Taylor Moore

Yeah. You could have just said, everyone's favorite.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Everyone's favorite. How would I know? I'm a fucking American. I would have totally bought it. Instead, now I'm on my guard. I'm like, what are you hiding, Donegal? Give me a break.

Taylor Moore

Well, the tape finished playing and then she goes up to open the door to go back out and it's locked. It is locked. And she was just this tiny ancient woman and she just said, oh, goodness. And then we just hung out in there for like an hour.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Wow.

Erika Ishii

Amazing.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Wow.

Ethan Trinidad

Did you talk about Joseph Smith or did you talk about each other's lives?

Taylor Moore

Buddy, did we talk about Joseph Smith.

Ethan Trinidad

Okay, got it. All Joseph Smith all the time.

Erika Ishii

Amazing.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I have a question, and this is a cool thing in terms of the podcast. So much of our work is passed off to our collaborators and our colleagues. Taylor I'd love to hear also about the people who worked on the music as the singing. But there's a question I have from the podcast—because not only did you make the song, but then you had to put it into the podcast. And there's a break where we go to the description, and this is one of those weird things where even in a podcast that I am involved in the production of, I'm like, did you intend this? Because the Rain Road starts purely with vocals, because that's digestic, right?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It is people without musical accompaniment singing at the dock as the sun sets, sort of completing this ritual, right? Then we cut to the description. I have, of Suvi noticing Galani looking at the song. And then my favorite thing musically happens where Galani has this look that Suvi recognizes as her going, "Well, this song is totally out of our control." And there is a low, I don't know music that well, but what feels like an angry minor brass note that sounds kind of like ominous and angry, of the Empire. And then it swells and crashes in and these imperial musical motifs agree with the singing. Did you intend that, sir?

Taylor Moore

Yes, sir. And it was actually tough because a lot of people, a lot of the—so, so once I came up with a piano demo which has now been distributed via Patreon, which is going to establish, that's going to establish how fast—I'm forgetting all the words—the tempo, the chord voicings, the melody, all that stuff, the central structure of the song. And then you try and arrange it for voice, all these different instruments. And a lot of the vocalists—it's very difficult for me to rustle up a choir, so I built one. I found a small choir of people in Argentina and worked with their choir director named Hector Muñoz. Muñoz?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Muñoz.

Taylor Moore

That's the thing. We haven't spoken. We've only spoken in text and of course, lingua musicana.

Aabria Iyengar

The only thing I've ever actually heard, I hate having heard that. I don't like how that went off at all.

Taylor Moore

We're just getting started. Welcome to Martin, we're just getting startin'.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Unbelievable.

Taylor Moore

And we supplemented, and I supplemented with a bunch of other singers sort of collected on Fiverr and they were all really wonderful to work with. Fiverr used to be like kind of a weird dice roll of weird stuff when it first started years and years ago. But I've been using it more and there's some wonderful artists on there that are great. I really like it. Yeah, it's wonderful. Meet a lot of really cool people through it, actually. Anyway, so we supplement all these singers.

Taylor Moore

So I'm in conversation with the choir and Hector, who's also helping me out with arranging it for a standard SATB soprano, alto, tenor, bass choral arrangement, which his choir will use. And then we'll have other singers kind know, fill in the gaps. Because here's the thing, I didn't want it to sound like a practiced choir, right? These are people who all learned the song in their lives some other times, some other ways they're literally walking up and joining the group. So it shouldn't be perfectly clean and mathematically correct. They should overlap with each other and end and begin phrases at different times and be situated in the sound field differently.

Taylor Moore

Just like you're there, just like just a group of people singing Happy Birthday, right? You want that warm and uneven, the humanity to it. But nobody wanted to end on the A and the A minor at the end of the bridge. I was like, no, the bridge has got to end on this really heavy A minor thing because, number one, we're about to soar up back to the high sea for the top of the chorus. But also I knew that that's where the Galani moment was going to fit in. So the key for this song, for me, was actually that line of Galani's, like so many things in life, one of the most informative things about it was the negative space that it created.

Taylor Moore

So Galani's—In Jurassic Park, right, the dinosaurs are fantastic, but what really sells it is when we see their faces see the dinosaurs. So by triangulating against Galani's reaction to it, that tells us what the song really is, right? So Galani's reaction tells us, regardless of what the content of the song is, the emotional resonance it has to have in the episode. If the song had been meek, if the song had been like slight and airy with no bass or guts or craziness to it, then why would Galani have said that? Who gives a shit? I had to make something that would make Galani say, oh, I wasn't expecting this. Hope they never turned this on me, you know?

Taylor Moore

And so we had to have a chorus that really began with, like, this soaring beginning because everyone's coming in and then once all the voices are there and then all the instruments show up. The instruments are there to illustrate the fact that it begins with a sort of uneasy, breathy, single voice and then it becomes a shouting group of everyone at top volume. And that is an emotional journey that they are going on. It is also a political journey, right? They are literally rediscovering what the city has taken away from them and in the realization of that power, that's what Galani is reacting to.

Taylor Moore

So musically, that has to be reflected. So one of the ways we did that is by taking the instruments that are normally given to the Empire and assigning those instruments in a new way, in a key the Empire's never been in, by the way. To the singers, they are now—a lot of the way I talk about the music of the Empire is through instrumentation. Because in the same way that they have taken magic and formed it to their will, we use a lot of brass for them. Metal literally dug out of the earth and through fire and pain and exploitation is shaped into these tools.

Aabria Iyengar

Okay! Calm down!

Taylor Moore

I'm not anti Empire, by the way. They got a lot of good points.

Erika Ishii

Every episode, a little more of Suvi creeps into the conversation.

Aabria Iyengar

I know what's expected of me,

Erika Ishii

But, I just—the leitmotifs and the instrumentations is so, yeah, you do so much of the storytelling through the soundscape and through the music. And to me, one of my favorite things, the thing that will get me every single goddamn time is the politics and social—the messages in music and the role it plays in a story. Every time in Casablanca, when everybody stands up and sings Le Marseillais, I just fucking lose my mind. And so hearing it done in our podcast and with those lyrics and with that much tension to the detail, it was just I feel like I'm fluffing us so much. But truly, this deserves fluffing.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah. I was having this conversation the other day, listening to this, where there's something that's so delightfully analogous to old spirituals from transatlantic slave trade populations, where you're like, there's nothing in the words of this song that is a direct political threat, especially because a lot of them were, like, Christian. And all of this is culture that has been foisted on a group of people. And even despite that, you know that there is something threatening in the existence of it.

Aabria Iyengar

And I think for me, that was the real touchstone, that The Rain Road is not a political song, but the knowing of it and the singing of it is the political part. That's the act. It is a act of solidarity. And it was very fun to hear the final results and be like, oh, yeah, Suvi and Galani are witnessing something. You're like, the reason I can't control this is because there's nothing I can actually be mad at. It's just a bunch of people remembering a song. And because you're not threatening me, I cannot treat you with the tools of subjugation that have been taught to me. So what do I do with it?

Erika Ishii

But you can be like, maybe we can recommend that no more than three people gather to sing at the same time.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

That's the thing. There's actually a justification, like Taylor's saying that the song is justifying Galani's expression that Suvi notices, but it's also justifying the scene that happens immediately after the song's conclusion—

Erika Ishii

Oh my god!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Which is Galani coming to Ame and being like, thanking her—

Erika Ishii

"Thank you for your little ritual"

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah, the thanking, which is an attempt to recontextualize. You know what it reminded me of, Taylor? Because when I heard the Empire's instruments come in at the end of The Rain Road, after that really ominous note, because when I first heard it, I was like, oh, my God, the Empire is mad at the little song. And then you know what it felt like? It felt like a moment of a big upheaval, a public insurrection, and there's a moment of some cunning politician being like, "HA HA HA! That's right! The revolution! Brought to you by John D. Rockefeller!" It had that moment. You know what it really reminds me of? It's one of my favorite—god. I love it. And I'm thinking about the little prince a lot right now. For other, unrelated reasons.

Erika Ishii

No!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

But the chapter ten of The Little Prince where he speaks to the King, and it's an incredible—god, I love the Little Prince—and he talks to the King, and the King is like, I am the absolute monarch of the universe. And the little Prince is like, can you obey the sun to set right now in the middle of the day? And the King goes, "a monarch must, like—if I were to command my general to sip nectar from a flower as a bee does, or to fly under his own power, and he were not able to execute that order, who would be at fault, me or my general? Certainly I. It is incumbent on a king to order only those commands which are reasonable."

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And so it's that moment where you see he's like, I will command the sun to set and I will command it to set at sunset. And you see those moments where it's that idea of, to me, the Empire music joining The Rain Road at the end was that chapter of The King from the Little Prince where he goes, "No no no, the sun sets at sunset due to my command, and I only give my command at sunset." And it's like, oh, is that like, I don't know. There's a very fun thing about the nature of authority in that angry, low brass note and then crashing in behind the song that they kind of can't stop. And I loved it. It was great.

Taylor Moore

Yeah. Definitely meant to show that in this moment, at least, the villagers are the winners.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah.

Taylor Moore

They've had a bad day. They're not Eursulon. They're not a fox, you know. Whoops! Uh oh! All the boats are broken, you know, a lot of our families are dead. But like, in that moment of singing the song together, they had discovered something that makes them the winners. And so they get the winner's instrument.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah.

Erika Ishii

Rope! A new whole new industry. Rope making.

Aabria Iyengar

Free rope.

Erika Ishii
Free rope.

Aabria Iyengar
Free rope fucking sent me.

Erika Ishii
But I would like to also point out talking about how, yeah, the villagers had a bad day and they win in the end. Suvi really shows what she's about in this episode. There are a couple of moments like, I was really struck by Brennan setting up with the line, like, the Empire's hand is going to get broken. And then yeah.

Aabria Iyengar
What in the calamity? What the fuck was that about? Why are you so weird about arms, dude?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
It's going to break somewhere. It's going to break somewhere. I'm here to break—

Aabria Iyengar
Do you feel like the Empire is weaker at the elbow or the shoulder? Fuck you.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I am here to break arms and kill dogs. And I've made no bones about it. Okay?

Ethan Trinidad
This man knows his lane.

Erika Ishii
The people know what they're getting.

Taylor Moore
The episode description for this was almost the fox dies.

Erika Ishii
Oh, my god!

Aabria Iyengar
That's so funny.

Taylor Moore
Very close.

Erika Ishii
Jesus christ.

Aabria Iyengar
I'm glad you didn't, but I'm even glad you told me.

Erika Ishii

But there's one thing that you said, Aabria. Which is, I will sacrifice a finger to save the hand and just take the damage. And you have three HP as you're galloping forward. And then working with Galani, you know, both in that moment of "I'm taking a bad thing to her baby daddy, you gotta move," which is so good. I love Suvi's battle chatter just being her. But yeah, working with Galani and Galani saying, oh, great, okay, these are the things that I can do, to aid in that, you know civilian population. And then even afterwards telling Steel how Galani was really on top of her shit. And Steel also understanding what Suvi has learned through all of this in that moment.

Aabria Iyengar

It's very nice to have learning moments for Suvi who came in real spicy at the beginning. I think we can all agree on that. Shout out to Brennan for being just so kind as I truly refused to communicate properly the stakes of what was happening in that moment. Because I was like, I made a weird choice when the crisis hit that was like, oh, Suvi still doesn't really know how to play well with others and cooperate and give information. She just doesn't have those reps yet. So every time Galani was asking, what's going on? What do you want? Having Suvi like, shut it down weirdly or not explain all the way or sort of just be like, get out of the way, I'm handling it. It felt like the weirdest version of like I'm not trying to "No, but" the scene, but show you that Suvi is figuring out in real time who you trust in moments of crisis and how do you hand off and operate well, as a group. I think she's got the sense of self sacrifice down, which is why she was happy to be like, oh yeah, if it comes down to it, I'm the finger and I will easily—that's Suvi's secret. It's easy for Suvi to kill because it's just as easy for Suvi to die. Like that's it, that's the whole philosophy. That's the whole thing. Like, if it's between you and me, I'm going to try to make it you, but if it's me, it's going to be me. And I will be as easy about that as I will be about anything else.

Taylor Moore

She really sees her own life as cheap as the people she's up against?

Aabria Iyengar

You have to! You can't be raised in a system like that and not go like, my life is valuable and important, but not more so than anyone else that I've been trained up in this with. And I've watched too much sacrifice in my time being trained, and in the immediate moments before at the wall, again, like pointing back to Suvi is going to remember Lieutenant I think it was a Lieutenant Laplow forever. Because she gave him a hard time, and then she watched him go up and immediately die trying to save other people. I mean, we could say so many things about what's wrong with this kind of, the sorrows of Empire and the problems of soldiers and military and indoctrination.

Aabria Iyengar

But like, to see that idea of like, I am simply a person that's here to make sure the whole continues, you abstract away from yourself in moments of crisis in a way that's deeply easy. And I'm really happy. Yes, I rolled like shit for this whole climax, that's fine. But I'm very happy that Suvi's good rolls came from when she dissociated away from herself and fell into her training. She gets a natural 20 when she's like, cool, I'm the finger, I am happily sacrificing. All of this is going to go into training and I have to take all of the personal shit out of it. And I think all of her low roles are when she is in conflict internally. So the moments when she isn't, it's very nice that the dice worked out that, yeah, it's going to go exactly the way she's supposed to. She is good at this.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah, I think that there's some really beautiful moments. Suvi's self sacrifice in this is very clear. But that's also been very consistent with Suvi the whole time. Like Captain Emliss on the ship. It's very, I think that when we see there's elements—in a weird way, I think that in some of the mid-episodes of chapter one of this first chapter of the Wizard, the Witch and the Wild One and I'll say also to all our friends by the Fireside who are listening, number one, thanks for being here by the fireside, thanks for listening to the show. We really appreciate it. We love making this dang

thing and it's awesome to be able to share it with you. But I will say that we've already recorded chapter two and are actually super psyched and gearing up to record chapter three right now, which is super sick! We've been making this show for you guys. We're psyched.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

In several of the middle episodes here, we've seen elements of Suvi's incredible indoctrination into fundamental hierarchies of the world, right? We've talked a lot about how wizards, and specifically Citadel wizards, are about taxonomy and compartmentalization. And that can be us versus them, that can be levels of rank, it can be understandings of the world that are very clinical and sterile. And so we've seen parts of Suvi that come into tension with elements of Ame or Eursulon's worldview. And I think in this last episode, we saw some of the things that we saw prior to Port Talon, which were, hey, thank God Suvi was a fucking soldier or Ame would be dead, right?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Like Suvi, if Suvi had not been there to kill to hit those Irulian bolts at Captain Emliss, then there's no song being sung on a dock anywhere, right? You know what I mean? And I think seeing—and I also think too in elements of Port Talon or the Wall or whatever, there's an element that in planning the three part, the sort of tryptic window of where our PCs would be Suvi on a white horse running like hell from vines breaking through was an important moment of seeing the good of wizards in this world, right? Which is, you're allowed to not let your whole city be killed by vine monsters.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I want to be very clear about, I'll be very clear. As bad as the fucking Derrick and Naram are, it is good to be really clever and use awesome magic and really cunning decisions to not let, because and I think that's the thing too, even whatever. Irish pagan. Whatever. Part of me that loves the Tuatha Dé Danann and loves Orima and how angry she is, I'll take—the part of my mind which is the wizards is okay. Either you are an endless being who should not be judged by human morality because you are a thing as old as time, and I shouldn't put you in that box. So if you are a natural force rather than a person, I am allowed to resist you, because you're just a natural force.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And if you're a person, you're trying to fucking kill me and my people. So fucking watch what happens next. In other words, it's like, I am happy to label you as you see fit, but in either of these worlds, I'm going to try to do right by the city and civilization in this moment. And if you want me to not take it personal, I won't take it personal. But we're going to let these vines kill less people than they otherwise would have. And so that moment of Suvi on the white horse with the staff and the mirrors in the sky showing her the grid of the city was like—

Aabria Iyengar

Ugh it was so cool! I love Galani.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

and, like, wizards working together.

Taylor Moore

I saw some really good fan art of Galani on Tumblr.

Erika Ishii
Yeah!

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah! She's so cute with her little glasses.

Taylor Moore
It was so good.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Yeah. Wait, I have a question. This is totally unrelated. Suvi had glasses as a little kid and then doesn't as an adult. Aabria. Did she get arcano LASIK? What happened?

Aabria Iyengar
Okay, I've made exactly one mistake in my gameplay ever, and it was when you had Galani dispel magic on Suvi. When Galani thought she was under a thing, I wanted, I forgot to mention that she would have dispelled Suvi's like arcane contact lenses, and I just forgot, and I've been trying to work my way back ever since.

Erika Ishii
[Singsong voice] Storytime cleanup.

Aabria Iyengar
[Singing] Story time cleanup. I'm a little bit janitor.

Erika Ishii
Yeah. Also, meanwhile, under the ocean, we have a question from Cleo Bear about the ethics and dilemmas in the storytelling, asking "I'm studying philosophy at Uni is there anything, a philosopher text I should check out," but working into that too, I have a question for Ethan Trinidad. You had to help decide a fate. It's that moment in the big action scene where you have killed countless goons, and now suddenly you're up against the big bad, and you're not quite in the moment of urgency anymore, but you're like, what do we do? Is it fair that we let this guy live when we killed all of his underlings, who arguably did, or inarguably did a lot less than him? What was going through your mind?

Aabria Iyengar
This moment was so fucking good. Both of you talk about it.

Ethan Trinidad
I feel like it's weirdly. I haven't had that moment in D&D in a while. I feel like there hasn't been a space where I've been fighting somebody. And then we get there, we're like, [pants] okay, now what? I don't know. Normally, we just keep flying. It's like, oh, now we have to go like, now we have to go home and get congratulated. There was something to being with, I'm already with the guy. I already kind of saved the day. And this is kind of a cherry on top that's pinning this guy to the bottom of the ocean. And then I did that, and just, and now he's pinned to the bottom of the ocean, and it was very fun, and I think Brennan really supported me nicely as we just kind of worked through that moment, of that kind of like, your heart rate is coming down, and there's just a dude pinned to the ocean in front of you. And it's like, well, what decision do we make about this? And we said, you get to live down here, bro. Which I thought was right on.

Erika Ishii
Poetic.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

To sort of address the question Cleo Bear is asking. And thank you, Cleo Bear, which is, "I love the ethics and dilemmas in your storytelling, and I'm studying philosophy at Uni." Oh, maybe this is a friend from outside the US. Uni is a fun expression. Love that. We'll be—me and Lou Wilson, not present right now, but me and Lou will be in the UK, we'll be—

Taylor Moore
RIP

Erika Ishii
Oh, my God. Wait, what happened?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
No, RIP, ripping. Lou is ripping across—

Taylor Moore
Don't be tripping, stay Rippin'

Ethan Trinidad
Oh, see, I thought you said Rest in Panama, where he currently is walking.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Yes.

Ethan Trinidad
At least that's the text I got.

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Rest in Panama. Yes, exactly. They're asking is there anything, philosopher or text I should check out? Actually, Taylor, I think you and me have similarly, you're a big fan of the American Pragmatists, too, right? Like utilitarian

Taylor Moore
I am. I was also a philosophy undergrad major, and I really got a type.

Aabria Iyengar
You're not beating the allegations that you're just Brennan doing a bit right now.

Taylor Moore
I know. I'm him but worse. I'm the Danny DeVito to his Arnold Schwarzenegger. That's okay. I'm the fun one. I'm the nasty [laughs] I'm the nasty one. I gamble. Yeah. I think I did my senior paper, did my dissertation, or whatever they're called.

Aabria Iyengar
Senior thesis?

Taylor Moore
Yes, on William James

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I'll give a rec. I'll give a rec, Taylor shared a great video lecture series by this guy, Rick Roderick, that I really loved, which is a great, go watch Rick Roderick. Those lectures are really fun.

Aabria Iyengar
Drop the link. I feel like I have to study for this fucking game. I only minored in philo—well, no, I didn't finish my minor. Well—

Taylor Moore
Rick Roderick rules.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Rick Roderick rules.

Taylor Moore
Yeah. Everybody should watch Rick Roderick.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
But that dilemma, that philosophical dilemma, I think is really interesting because seeing Eursulon in that moment, speaking as myself, right? It's like justice is a project, right? In other words, I don't personally believe that justice exists in a natural, fixed state in the universe outside of human beings, right. That there's, like, some moral rule in the black hole at the center of our galaxy that's like we're either getting it right or wrong, but rather that it is like a project that human beings are collaborating on to make a more just world, which is a thing that we have to define, we have to create the definition for it. And that's our biggest moral imperative, right? And in that moment where you're sitting there and you're like having these conflicts where you're like, I have just meted out death to so many people.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
None are more deserving of it than Morrow here. And then you have to realize, did I kill those people because it was justice or did I kill them because I was in danger and I was defending myself? And suddenly you have this moment of, even with Naram, there was some great—he had this moment where he's like, do I do something incredibly self-sacrificial or do I do something a little bit more, a little bit more in some ways, like pagan? Like, no, man. I'm going to rip this derrick up. I'm going to save this kid who just saved me. And that's how this goes down. And I think that there's this, in that moment where you realize that all the urgency is gone.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I was surprised a little bit, even as myself, because I was like, it clarified for me what Naram's actions were about the derrick and the Witchfire plane, right. Which was in that moment, it clarified that that was not—that justice—it was not him meting out, well, let's forget justice. It was not punishment. It was literally, I need to get the derrick off Eursulon, I'm 300ft tall. Blam. There it goes. Derrick is off the kid. And then, ah, powerful, really powerful wizards are coming after me. I'm a god, but I only have three legendary resistances. I'm not omnipotent. I got a certain amount of hit points. I got a certain amount of spell slots.

Erika Ishii

Okay, is that the thing? Gods in your cosmology are aware that they have hit points and spell slots?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah, they wouldn't use—

Aabria Iyengar

The God's Prayer, my action economy! No!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I don't think that they know that it's called that, but they know that they are susceptible to injury. They know that they can to a certain degree, it's like very powerful Spirits can go, I can just choose to stop. I have a certain wellspring of power, that I can just choose to stop things.

Taylor Moore

Right. Very important to note is that we're using god as a term of art.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah.

Taylor Moore

They are not technically gods. They are not omnipotent.

Aabria Iyengar

It's a lower g. We are pronouncing it. You should hear it the right way.

Taylor Moore

Oh, no, I'm not nipping you. I just want the listeners to know very specifically.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And I would say, too, that term does have a very broad definition in our own world, god can mean very, god means really different thing across world cultures, all over our real world. And I think that in this moment for Naram, that with him side by side with Eursulon and the vision I see for that scene as I was relistening to it, it was so clear to me that after Eursulon used wavebreaker to encircle him in literally a bear's claw, like a talon I love that. Of coral.

Aabria. Just put in the zoom chat. Jesus had lair actions.

Aabria Iyengar

A snitch!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Now you got to answer, where was Jesus's lair? What was his lair was it Bethlehem?

Aabria Iyengar

The thing is, no one triggered—when they actually went and rolled the stone away, no one triggered the encounter there, so we never got to see it.

Taylor Moore

It was stalactites that just fall.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

That was his thing, Jesus can summon stalactite. A friend of mine literally was talking about—a friend of mine literally ran a thing, which was like, all my dear wonderful friend Conor Gillespie created this thing. Of all the holidays fighting, and each holiday had numerous champions, and one of Christmas's champions was Christ. And his finishing move was slapping you so hard that it turned all of the water in your body into wine, and you died instantly of alcohol poisoning.

Aabria Iyengar

YES! What a way to go.

Erika Ishii

That's incredible.

Aabria Iyengar

What a way to go.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

But yeah, I think that scene of Morrow pinned and Eursulon kind of looming over him, in my head when Naram joins, it's like Close Encounters of the Third Kind where the entire underwater horizon, all of Naram's eyes light up, and you see Eursulon's silhouette illuminated from behind by this just vast wall of Naram's eyes. I think, I think in that moment, it was like, oh, it was not a punishment. Just he was acting quickly, and even the Witchfire plane, it's like, it's like fucking heat of the moment. You go, how do I stop wizards from killing me? Okay, they're all flying. I can't hit them with a tidal wave. Okay, I'm going to flood the witch plane and give them another problem. And is that a perfectly moral solution? I don't know, man. I'm fighting for my life. They're going to kill me. I got to do something.

Aabria Iyengar

I feel like he could have a conversation.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

With Galani streaking towards him, but the—

Aabria Iyengar

If he had been his hot version of himself, I think we all would have been like, oh, hold on. Let him cook.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Let him cook for a second. But with Morrow screaming at him, being like, "The creaatuuuuure!" But in any case, I know I'm rambling, the last thing was just like it became clear that urgency was a huge part of the moral equation. And being like, now that Morrow is captured, and I think that he did, in some ways, condemn Morrow to death. Morrow can breathe, but he can't eat. He's trapped under the waves. He's like, so to me, there's an element of, like, I'm leaving you in the exact situation you left me, and that mirroring of it where he literally he gives him the gift, saying, now this is a true mirror. This is now what I consider to be justice.

Erika Ishii

You said, I don't think that he's doing the calculations and considering all of the philosophical ramifications of it. He's like, how do I mitigate harm that this man has done in the world and prevent it from happening again? There

was a quote in there that, how does one rid the world of evil without becoming evil? And I think it's just, as you said, a constant discovery and a work in progress of being human. I'd like to close this out with a question.

Taylor Moore
Are we stopping?

Aabria Iyengar
Are we done?

Erika Ishii
Yeah, we got uh, soon, but

Taylor Moore
We did an hour, but I got so many more questions!

Erika Ishii
Okay well ask them! You ask them then! All right, you ask 'em. Go on.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Whoa.

Aabria Iyengar
I don't want to ask. Okay, well one, I want to ask Erika, how are you fucking doing? Ame sort of how's... That ended badly. You're in a coma. What's up.

Erika Ishii
Yeah, we love a coma arc.

Aabria Iyengar
We can't not talk about that!

Erika Ishii
I mean, you know, maybe I'm just really busy with a lot of voiceover projects for the next arc, and you have to have Ame in a coma. I don't know!

Ethan Trinidad
Yeah, that's the, that's why we did it. We we talked beforehand, and it was like, damn, Erika's busy as hell.

Erika Ishii
We elegantly transitioned.

Aabria Iyengar
I heard Ethan Trinidad is a perfect voice match for you.

Ethan Trinidad
Uh-huh, In that next, I'm double duty. I'll be in a lot of these next arc, I'll tell you.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Wait. Sorry, Ethan. Ethan, can you do literally, a perfect Erika ishii impression right now?

Ethan Trinidad

Yeah, of course. Here we go.

Erika Ishii

[Pretending Ethan is speaking] Hi, I'm Erika Ishii.

[Feigned awe from the cast]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Ethan, my god!

Ethan Trinidad

Not bad. Well, I studied I studied, you know! And you've got an incredible voice to replicate, and I'm really—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Frank Caliendo, move over.

Taylor Moore

What were you doing with your hands for that? Were you sort of squeezing?

Ethan Trinidad

Yeah. I have to really compress my—here. I'll talk about the method in Erica's voice. Here we go.

Erika Ishii

[As though Ethan is speaking] Yeah, so I just kind of squeeze my fists and balls up near the throat. It brings up the pitch, and the rest of it is about kind of breath and phrasing.

Taylor Moore

Can you squeeze, like, halfway?

Ethan Trinidad

What, you want halfway between Erika and my own voice?

Taylor Moore

Yeah.

Ethan Trinidad

Here let me see if I can do that.

Erika Ishii

[Lower register] It's still really kind of—this is actually more difficult than the full way, too, but again.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Looks like it hurts

Ethan Trinidad

Ow! Ohh, ow! Sorry, my vocal cords.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Wow, wow. That's incredible.

Ethan Trinidad

I warmed up a lot for multiple hours before we did our sessions for the next arc. But hey, ask of Ethan Trinidad and you shall.

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Taylor Moore

Okay, great segue for me. Thank you, Ethan. Okay, so there's a moment in this episode that I've seen a lot of people talk about, and I want to ask Ethan and Aabria about. So, Brennan and Aabria are, and I don't want to talk about narratively. I want to talk about y'all as improvisers, like the art of making up character and story on the spot. So Suvi is in her quarters. She's reading the journal of her parents. Brennan does this, I mean, really like—is a whole other conversation. You really know that this is not a miniseries show when lore like, this is dropped in the final fucking episode.

Erika Ishii

Yeah. What the hell, you guys? Reflexive Indicative? The null clef?

Taylor Moore

Beautiful world—beautiful expansion of the arcane, lingua arcana of the world. But it's also so personal for Suvi. And then Lou interrupts the scene, setting Aabria up for—listen, we have all seen a lot of improvised narrative. I would say we are among the forefront of people who are engaging in this as a job and an art form. We've all seen a lot of it. That was like watching someone do an amazing dance at half court. And then when you think they're done, someone throws them a basketball, they close their eyes and sink s half court shot. It was, it was just such an amazing little moment. So how did that come about? How are you each thinking of it? I guess one of my biggest questions is, Ethan, did you intentionally interrupt to give an alley oop? What was the thinking?

Ethan Trinidad

I feel like I was prompted a bit by Brennan. I feel like Brennan introduced me as entering the room at that time. And, but I think there was something—it felt right, because I think even in the moments outside of, even in the moments outside, when we were just chatting, when we all reconnected, it was in the crowd, which I think Eursulon really felt. Which was like, whoa, it's like, great to see everyone. And we just went through something so crazy. But there's 40 people here who just all sang a song together. No, they're about to sing a song. They're about to sing a song, right?

Ethan Trinidad

Yes. Who are all fucking getting limbered up and ready to put on a performance. So I think there was this eagerness, I think, to come back into being together again, especially with Suvi in particular, because Suvi had not been a part of Quest Fever or any of those moments. So I think it felt super natural. I feel like I remember that scene with us together because it felt like there was this energy, even in that earlier moment, that wanted to be expressed. And so

there was this natural cohesion between Eursulon and Suvi in them coming together that's like, oh, this is awesome. There's actually a lot I've been wanting to talk about with you.

Taylor Moore

And Aabria ends it with this just, like, pinnacle... Like, how do you follow one of the best improvised lines I've ever seen in a story

Aabria Iyengar

Look, I will—let's do more sports analogies. We love it. The easiest part of an alley oop is the dunk. Just finish. Like, all the lift on that is the court vision of Brennan sending up a moment where Suvi's in an emotional place, and then Ethan coming in with the exact right question to say, like, do you want to share this deeply internal moment of vulnerability? And, like, yay. It's very nice to get the props for the dunk, but it was the easiest thing in the world to react naturally to a moment that was brilliantly crafted by two of the best improvisors I've ever seen. So I'm glad I get credit, but

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I beg to differ. I beg to differ. I have to give credit. I beg to differ.

Taylor Moore

Oh. Brennan thought it sucked.

Aabria Iyengar

He's like, I have notes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It was so beautiful because, again, that moment, because the way that Ethan said it, where it was like, who are you talking to? It's like a moment to be like, oh, an absent minded wizard is like talking out loud. Ha ha. Look at how brainy Suvi is. Ha ha. And instead to answer the question and say "my Dad." Oof! It is., I don't know. There is...the way that we have depicted the brilliance and genius of wizards in this world and the idea that maybe there's a world where there is nothing. These wizards, I think if you have artists or creators or people like that and you go like, "oh, you will know me by this thing I made." So the idea of like, "oh, I'm learning who my father was because of course this mattered to him. He devoted his life to it." And it's so touching and beautiful. The only thing I'll say is I know what Aabria is talking about with the analogy of the ease of the slam dunk. But the only thing I'll say is that the work of that kind of improv takes years and years of doing. The ability to make the eight lane superhighway from your heart to your mouth takes years of doing. So Aabria is brilliant. And even if it felt effortless, the kind of work it takes to make that kind of choice, effortless takes a lifetime. So Aabria is singular. That moment made me tear up.

Erika Ishii

It was unbelievable.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And I love you very much.

Aabria Iyengar

Love you so much!

Erika Ishii

My favorite thing, I was just talking about it yesterday is when, instead of getting an info dump of lore just all kind of dropped on you, it happens in a moment of intimacy and just sort of folds into the story that is being told. And that was just between all three of you. Four of you. If you think about the music going on during it and the sound design cutting out until she is brought back to the present moment and then you hear the creaking of the ship again, it's just god damn it, I love you all so much. I love you all so much. So in one sentence, I want to hear what each of you is looking forward to in the Citadel. Ethan, you go first.

Ethan Trinidad

In playing—I think you guys are going to love what I've done with Ame and the choices that I've made. I can't wait for you guys all to experience them.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Wait, sorry. Erika, are you doing a perfect impression of Ethan?

Erika Ishii

You know, I don't like to toot my horn as a vocal artist, but ya know, let's see some AI do that. Fuckers!

Ethan Trinidad

That was a-mazing. That was simply a-MAZING. Now I get why, I get why I needed to come in and do you, because you got to go do that out there.

Erika Ishii

Yeah, sorry. But Brennan, what are you looking forward to?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The thing I'm really looking forward to in the Citadel arc. And it's very interesting because we've recorded this, so I have to be sneaky and clever. I think the thing I'm most looking forward to in the Citadel is the promise, uh—there are certain things where—I don't know how to put this. You're a baker, right? And you're making all this different stuff, and you're like, yeah, but what people really love, they love a well made loaf of bread. They love a nice croissant with some butter. They love a pancake. They love this other stuff.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you're like, yeah, I can do the mille-feuille, gilded tarte, you know, whatever kind of thing. And the Citadel is like, oh, you want the mille-feuille. You want the little the world building, which is the hyper decadent, ultra rich, extra scoops of all this stuff like that. Like, that was my favorite part of the Citadel arc is like, ooh, you want the extravagant magic place? All right, let's fucking break out the fine china. you know, be our guest. Also, but what I really can't wait for is seeing, because we record it, and then Taylor runs off to his little musical—

Aabria Iyengar

YES!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

yes. So I don't know what it's going to fucking sound like. I can't wait.

Taylor Moore

Ooh baby.

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah.

Erika Ishii
Aabria.

Aabria Iyengar

Gosh. I think, I'm excited for people to see a better like, to have a better look, because there's so much about the Citadel and the Empire writ large that is conjecture from the audience, of assumptions based on what little we've seen and what we know of Empire in the real world. And just getting a better look at here's, actually, what the Citadel means. And in a way that feels very personal. I want to show—I'm excited to show everyone my home. And I did spend a lot of time when Brennan was describing things, just screaming to myself, this is why Suvi's like this, triumphantly. Yeah, yeah. That's why I get mad about sleeping on fucking potatoes.

Erika Ishii
And Taylor, what are you excited about?

Taylor Moore

Well, there is a scene in the second chapter which I think is the funniest thing that's happened on the show. It's almost like the whole half of an episode turns into a slapstick sitcom that, when I think about it, makes me laugh so hard, I think my eyeballs are going to pop out of my head. You all know what I'm talking about.

Erika Ishii
I don't!

Taylor Moore

I'll remind you after the... But in general, I really feel like the next arc truly tells people what they're in for in a way that the first arc could not have, by dint of simply being the first. It takes two points to make a line, and as wonderful as I think arc one was, you can see this being created as a miniseries and perhaps ending without the final journey away. I think that the second arc, as good as the first arc was, it was an acorn compared to the oak tree that the show becomes in the second chapter. And that feeling, there's really not a word for it. I think that the audience is going to be welcomed into this feeling that, oh, this is a much bigger and stranger and more sophisticated thing than perhaps they thought with episodes one through 14. And that vibe is going to be real interesting to see.

Aabria Iyengar
What about you, Erika?

Erika Ishii

Oh, God. I'm just looking forward to getting to—I mean, we already filmed it or we already recorded it, but I'm just looking forward to telling stories with you all to expound upon this world. And, yeah, as Taylor was saying, arc two is completely different in that it is the expansion of the world and it is unexpected and in no way just feels like a—I really have no words for it. You're all incredible and I love you. And thank you so much to everyone for listening to this, the Fireside chat.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Did Ethan give the thing he was excited about? Did I miss it?

Ethan Trinidad

Yeah, Erika did mine in their Ethan voice, which is honestly, it's what I'm most excited about.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I dig that. I dig that, yeah yeah yeah.

Erika Ishii

Thank you, everybody for listening to the Fireside. We have some treats for you in between now and when the first episode of the next arc drops. So look out for that, all of you lovely Fireside patrons. And, yeah! Thank you all.

Brennan, sign off.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Ahoohoo, crackle crackle. If you're listening to this, like, as Erika just said, if you're listening to this right on Tuesday as it comes out, we're going to do a little Instagram Live tomorrow on Wednesday, which will be, I believe, Wednesday the 6th. Yes, Wednesday the 6th, where we'll be announcing all the fun freebies and goodies and other good stuff like that over this next little chunk of weeks as we prepare for Chapter Two of The Wizar, the Witch and the Wild One. Ahoohoo, crackle, crackle. I'm so full of fish!

Erika Ishii

Ethan Trinidad.

Ethan Trinidad

Hey, it's been an honor. I can't wait for you guys to keep it rolling. And I can't wait to be back working with you guys whenever Lou gets finished RIPing in Panama. I guess that's resting in peace. Resting in Panama. In Panama. But anyway, love you guys. Ahoohoo, crackle crackle, something about fish!

Erika Ishii

Aabria.

Aabria Iyengar

Ahoohoo, crackle crackle. I love you guys so much. It's my favorite thing in the world telling stories with you, and I can't believe we get to do it. Thank you all out there for allowing us to be able to do this. Fiiiish!

Erika Ishii

Taylor.

Taylor Moore

[Exaggerated Southern twang] Well well well, it has been a delight, a pleasure and an honor. Just up and down and back and forth fare thee well and bon voyage. And y'all come back now, ya hear.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Brennan, that's not what I sound like.

Aabria Iyengar

Is that you telling yourself—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Brennan, that's not what I sound like! My name is Taylor Moore, and I have a lovely southern drawl that is just a little understated. You can just kind of hear like a little honey, a little soupçon, you know. And I'm Taylor Moore, and that's me, my name

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

Erika Ishii

Crackle crackle, ahoohoo. Thank you so much, everyone.

[The music fades]