

Worlds Beyond Number

The Wizard, the Witch, and the Wild One: Episode 07

Final Version

[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]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Previously on The Wizard the Witch and the Wild One. Our heroes arrived in Port Talon seeking Wavebreaker, a sword capable of ending Ame's curse. They found the sword in the possession of crime boss Will Gallows, who was willing to part with it for a price: namely, the Guild Mage Pain, a man deep in debt to Gallows. Seeking Pain, our heroes arrived at the Chantry of the Scepter's Chorus, a wizard's guild of the Saraz Imperium, where Guild Mage Morrow treated our heroes to a fireworks show. And the glittering words "Welcome Suvi."

[Rushing wind and waves]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Beautiful white sand—which, to any observer that would recognize it, you can see has been transported, at great cost, all the way from the Desert of the Citadel—now lines a beautiful rock garden.

[Ringing crystals and birdsong]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Quartz crystal slabs covered in the sheen of falling water. Fountains, into clear crystal pools. A single tree, rising from the white sand, and flagstone marble pathways, moving in gentle curves that, nonetheless, bear the perfect symmetry of Citadel geometry.

[An Imperial parade motif begins quietly]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see this garden and our three adventurers Suvi, Ame, and Eursulon, wearing his human glamour, correct?

Lou Wilson

Mhm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

At Ame's feet is our friend, the Fox, as yet still unnamed, but that's okay. And before you, are a number of white robed Imperium Wizards, all of whom were obviously trained AT the Citadel but no longer work for that institution, instead working directly for the Crown of the Saraz Imperium.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The Sanctum in front of you, this Chantry of the Scepter's Chorus, has given you a great warm welcome. Guild Mage Morrow in his white robes, his sort of, a little bit sweaty, plump, blushing face, as he clasps to—you can tell his hands are soft just by looking at them.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughs]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Just soft hands. Goes—

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Looks and says

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

Ah! You—you must forgive the theatrics, it's just such a blessing, an honor, a privilege. I, of course, count myself amongst the untold, I'm sure, thousands that, amongst those educated by the Citadel, know of your late mother and father, whose memory is an honor to the Imperium, forever, and ever.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

However, I would say that my recollection, and adulation, of your noble parentage actually goes one step further, and I'm something of a collector of some of their works. There's many, I'm sure, you've—and I'm sure people tell you all the time, although you actually live at the Citadel, so maybe no one—everyone there sort of, you know—but I count myself very fortunate to be able to meet you. And an apprentice, too! The Archmage Silence—I'm Rambling. I'm Rambling. I'm Rambling. I'm so sorry.

Suvi [Aabria]

Oh, it's fine. Go on.

Aabria Iyengar

I just shoot Ame, like the biggest shit-eating grin like "Yeah. This is how—this is what it's supposed to be."

[Brennan and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
After a long time on the lam—

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
—kinda slummin' it, it's nice to be back in the bosom.

Erika Ishii

I have never seen anything of this sort. I am from a village that has about 500 people, so of course, everybody knows each other, but the fact that thousands of people know Suvi?! That's a bit of a lot.

Lou Wilson
Is there food and drink being laid out at all, or is it—

Erika Ishii
We've got tea.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Yes, there are some small, sort of, rose chime glasses, these sort of very beautiful little ceramic things, that have a tea that you're like—there's a SLIGHT green tint to otherwise what looks just like hot water.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughs]

Lou Wilson
Eursulon is not interested. Gonna pass on that.

Erika Ishii
There's also... Espresso.

Aabria Iyengar
Yes.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Espresso? Would anyone like an espresso?

Suvi [Aabria]
Yes, please.

Eursulon [Lou]
Sure, I'll try it.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Absolutely!

Ame [Erika]
I'd like to try one.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You see the Guild Mage Morrow says

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Three espressos for—

Ame [Erika]
Oh fox, you wanna...?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Fox looks up and says

Fox [Brennan]
Doesn't seem like I'm being offered one, soooo...

Ame [Erika]
[Under her breath] You can have some of mine, jeez.

Fox [Brennan]
I'm offended.

Ame [Erika]
Wuh—

Fox [Brennan]
I wasn't offered one.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You see that, looking at the talking familiar, Guild Mage Morrow turns and says

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Ah! I'm so sorry, are you, eh—are you polymorphed? Transmogrified? Transmutated? And the Fox looks up and says

Fox [Brennan]
I don't know what the FUCK you're talkin' about.

Eursulon [Lou]
Fox.

Suvi [Aabria]
Okay. Language.

Ame [Erika]
He's uh... [Frustrated grunt]

Suvi [Aabria]
Hmm?

Ame [Erika]
This is my familiar.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Your—

Ame [Erika]
He's—

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Your familiar?

Ame [Erika]
Yes.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Gifted with the power of speech?

Ame [Erika]
Yes.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Ah! Apprentice Archmage, would you be kind enough to instruct me as to the names of your companions, that they might be welcomed into the arms of the Scepter's Chorus?

Suvi [Aabria]
This is Ame, a Witch of Toma.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
[Soft gasp] A witch!

Ame [Erika]
It's a pleasure to meet you.

Erika Ishii
And I touch my hand to my brow, and I say

Ame [Erika]
Naram.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You see, he looks at you saying Naram, and you see he goes

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Ah! Is that a customary greeting in Toma?

Ame [Erika]
Oh no, it's a customary greeting for here.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Ah! Heh. I'm unaware! Well, hearty Naram to you as well.

[Everyone chuckles]

Suvi [Aabria]
And this is Eursulon, my guardian.

Eursulon [Lou]
You can just call me Bear.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Mm! Well, Bear, it is a pleasure to make your acquaintance. Apprentice Archmage, if there is anything you desire—may I—well, first of all, let's see you fed, and tended to, before any business is dived into!

Eursulon [Lou]
That sounds great!

Lou Wilson
Eursulon's getting up, and kind of just, trying to figure out where we're supposed to be walking to.

Eursulon [Lou]
Is it this way?

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
[Cheekily] Uh-uh-uh! No no no! We mustn't use the hallways! That's—here, we do things a little bit differently at the Scepter's Chorus.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You see that he walks over to one of the shimmering, slightly slanted slabs of quartz crystal, that glows with a kind of pink and yellow warm light, as water, perfectly evenly, cascades down in pure flatness. Just perfect, unrippling water streaming down the crystal. He goes, pushes a hand on it, and simply walks through the quartz.

Aabria Iyengar
I gesture towards it, to allow my friends to pass through before me.

Lou Wilson
I'm going to like, bat at it a couple of times. Does my hand—like, if I put part of my hand through, does it—it just goes away, like it's somewhere else?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Absolutely. Yeah.

Erika Ishii
I surreptitiously poke at it as well. I do not want to seem a yokel, but also I have never seen the like of this before.

Suvi [Aabria]

Let me be very clear. The more you poke at it, the more I'm embarrassed.

Eursulon [Lou]

Sorry. It's just—Suvi, this is unlike [Laughs] I mean, we—I mean even at Grandmother Wren's cottage, something like this, I mean—

Lou Wilson

I'm going to put half, like—

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Lou Wilson

—phasing half my body in, half—

Eursulon [Lou]

This is—I mean I'm two places at once!

Suvi [Aabria]

This has been what my home has been like, since that summer.

Ame [Erika]

Wow.

Aabria Iyengar

I'm gonna actually reach down, and I'm going to get some of that, like, Irulian sand and just sort of like, hold it in my hand.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It has the feel in your hand, of the finest silk.

Aabria Iyengar

I'll let it run through, kind of dust my hands off.

Suvi [Aabria]

We should go.

Eursulon [Lou]

Alright.

Suvi [Aabria]

Yeah.

Lou Wilson

I'll just make the other half—

[Everyone laughs]

Lou Wilson

I complete—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah.

Lou Wilson
—the transition into the new space.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Fox looks at it, and sort of tucks his tail, and flattens his ears. And is like

Fox [Brennan]
Every instinct I have is telling me not to walk into a wall.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughs]

Ame [Erika]
Yeah, that's fair, this is truly terrifying, but, it's okay. I trust Suvi.

Suvi [Aabria]
Yeah, trust me, dude.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
[Beleaguered] Oh, brother.

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
And you see the Fox—

Ame [Erika]
Okay!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
—leaps through the wall.

Fox [Brennan]
Yip!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
And then gets on the other side with Eursulon and, is like—and you see that Morrow is waiting there saying

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Is everything all right?

Eursulon [Lou]
Yes. It's Quite—we're in—we're—I haven't done one of those before. A sort of wall passing.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Ah! Oh, yes! Well, of course, this is just simply a precaution, the wall passing. A TRUE passwall, I have seen on a number of occasions, this is—I can't believe you've never seen this before, this is merely—

Brennan Lee Mulligan
And I think as Suvi steps through, he's like

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Have your friends never seen a simple illusion?

Suvi [Aabria]

Oh, they are from the furthest edges of the Empire.

[Marching snare drum]

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

[Deep sigh] Well, then it is a joy, a privilege, and an honor, to be able to show you the true hospitality of the Imperium!

[A marching bass joins the snare.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

As you're led through what's going on with our heroes here? Do you—are you like, paying close attention? Are you keeping an eye on Morrow?

Lou Wilson

[Chuckles] Absolutely not!

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Lou Wilson

Eursulon's adulthood has not been fun, and in the last weeks since he re-met—met back up with his friends, there is, I think, a wonder and excitement to being in these new spaces, and feeling like he's somewhere that only Suvi can—only Suvi is allowed access to places with wall passings and fireworks. So I think it is—I think I'm just looking for other treasures, and then I am getting a bit hungry, so I'm also looking for food and wine, but no, there's no insight checks! They let me pass through the damn wall, they must love me!

[Aabria, Brennan, and Erika laugh]

Aabria Iyengar

I think it's very obvious that, as long as none of the Guild Mages eyes are on Suvi, she is fidgeting, quite anxiously, with her father's ring, and kind of fussing with something under her coat, that the audience would know, is her mother's necklace, the pendant. At the mention of her parents, she's sort of retreating a bit into herself, but will immediately come back to this incredibly rigid, and proud stance whenever Morrow looks at her or talks to her.

Erika Ishii

I turn to you and I ask

Ame [Erika]

So this is the sort of thing you grew up with, after the cottage?

Suvi [Aabria]

Yeah.

Ame [Erika]

It's really beautiful. It seems like—because to me, obviously, hospitality is expected, and—but everybody seems so excited about you, and, also you grew up around a lot of other people that knew magic. Huh.

Suvi [Aabria]

Yeah, I want to apologize again, I think I was very weird, during the summer, about magic, but, this is why!

Ame [Erika]

Oh!

Aabria Iyengar
I gesture at like, just some weird thing that's lit for no reason.

Erika Ishii
[Giggles]

Suvi [Aabria]
It's kind of—

Eursulon [Lou]
How is that lit, and why is that lit like that?

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Oh! That—this—well, this is—are you asking, for...?

Eursulon [Lou]
Just tell me anything!

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Well, this—

Eursulon [Lou]
I've just never seen something lit in that way.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Well, you know, I—it's—so, I don't actually design the Chantries.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughs]

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
That's actually done back at the primary—at the Prime Chorus, which is in Sarazmir. But, I assume that the, sort of, Evokers, and Arcanists, and Artificers, that do this sort of work had their rea—it LOOKS beautiful.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughs]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You can see Morrow is incre—because, you know that the reason it's lit that way is to be impressive.

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah.

[Aabria and Erika cackle]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
But when someone asks you that point blank, you're not—

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Like walking into a rich person's house, and being like, "Why is that gold?" And you're like, "I need you to know that I'm better."

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughing] Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You can't say the truth, so you see Morrow's just fumbling like

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

I'm sure it serves—

[Aabria and Erika collapsing into laughter]

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

—a very integral, and significant—significant purpose, and to all thing—and the design, of course—and there is a great deal of magic—

Eursulon [Lou]

Mm!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—throughout. Um! Apprentice Archmage!

Suvi [Aabria]

[Clears throat]

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

Fascinatingly your—so your companions, that you have arrived here with, are they—I know of course, that Ame, our guest, is not of the Citadel, naturally. Is there—does—your guardian, is he of the Azure Battalion, or he's of the Citadel, or has the—or have you procured his service—I suppose, well, these are the questions, but—

Aabria Iyengar

I want to do my best, in this moment, to—ah, I gotta summon up—I've spent so much time with the Archmages—I just want a withering glance that will shut him up, and keep me from having to explain myself.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Okay, this is going to be intimidation. 15.

Aabria Iyengar

Okay!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You need a 15 on intimidation, but you are going to roll with advantage because this guy loves your shit.

[Everyone laughs]

Aabria Iyengar

I love that he loves my shit! And we got it with a 16!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Hey! Alright.

Aabria Iyengar
Woo!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
He goes

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
[Scoffs, laughs] My manners! Was I raised in a barn!? You are hungry!

Ame [Erika]
[Under her breath] What's wrong with being raised in a barn?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
And he—you see that the fox looks at you and says

Fox [Brennan]
Barn? That's the height of cultures. That's where all the fanciest animals live!

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughs]

Ame [Erika]
Yeah, it's warm in there.

Fox [Brennan]
Exactly, they got hay. Ya got hay!

Ame [Erika]
Ya got hay, what else do you need?

[Imperial marching horns flare up for emphasis]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You arrive at a beautiful crystalline chamber, that has a long banquet table, made out of that same sort of rose quartz material, lit from the inside. It sort of is an incredibly long rectangle, that then erupts into more natural crystalline shapes that anchor it to the floor on either side. So it's like this massive slab, that has two roots on either the end of this long banquet table. And you see a number of hovering, circular, white cushions. There is a circle floating horizontally and one floating at an angle to it vertically, to create a chair sort of floating in space, of just a seat and back each independently hovering.

Lou Wilson
Eursulon is going to go and push them separately.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughs]

Lou Wilson
Can they go back into place?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You actually see that the seats cannot be moved, but that the back can rotate slightly, in orbit around the seat.

Eursulon [Lou]
Suvi!

Suvi [Aabria]
Mm?

Eursulon [Lou]
It moves!

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughs]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
A sort of like very sage looking, but quite beautiful, wizard with a shaved head, and a little bit of green eyeshadow underneath, comes over, and says,

Sage Wizard [Brennan]
Sir, thank you. Thank you.

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Sage Wizard [Brennan]
Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Eursulon [Lou]
It moves.

Sage Wizard [Brennan]
Thank you.

Eursulon [Lou]
Did you know it moved?

Sage Wizard [Brennan]
[With emphasis.] Thank you.

Eursulon [Lou]
Of course.

Sage Wizard [Brennan]
Thank you.

Eursulon [Lou]
Of course.

Sage Wizard [Brennan]
Thank you.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
And you see—I don't know the Eursulon's ever had someone speak in THIS much politeness tangle?

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah!

Sage Wizard [Brennan]
Of "thank you," meaning "stop doing that."

Eursulon [Lou]
You're welcome. You're welcome.

Lou Wilson
As he keeps pushing it

Eursulon [Lou]
Do you want me to move it more this way?

Sage Wizard [Brennan]
Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Eursulon [Lou]
More the other way?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
And you see that she puts a hand on the thing. And is like

Sage Wizard [Brennan]
[Building exasperation] Thank you! Thank you.

Eursulon [Lou]
Help me, yes!

[Aabria and Erika laughing]

Sage Wizard [Brennan]
Thank you. Thank you.

Eursulon [Lou]
Just tell me exactly where you want it!

Sage Wizard [Brennan]
Sir.

Eursulon [Lou]
A little more left?

Sage Wizard [Brennan]
Thank you!!

Eursulon [Lou]
A little more right?

Sage Wizard [Brennan]
[Frustrated] I don't know how to say thank you—

Brennan Lee Mulligan
And you see—

[Aabria, Brennan, and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
—that Morrow pulls and says

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Um. Eursulon—sorry, Bear. You may be seated on this.

Eursulon [Lou]
Oh!

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
And, obviously, feel free to rotate to your comfort level?

Eursulon [Lou]
Alright.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Within reason.

Eursulon [Lou]
Of course, I don't want to break anything.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
You—Ah, you could not break it.

Eursulon [Lou]
Really?

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Yes.

Eursulon [Lou]
Can I try?

Suvi [Aabria]
[Gasp] Mm.

Lou Wilson
I hear Suvi gasp.

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Eursulon [Lou]
I apologize. I'm going to sit down and kind of stop touching things for a second.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughing] Oh no!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Give me an arcana check, Ame.

Erika Ishii
Ope! That's a natural 20.

Aabria Iyengar
YEAH!!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You are looking at 20 floating chairs. You know that the magic of this world is unlimited—you don't have to be scarce or precious with magic. And, you know, the world of the spirits is endless, and there's bountiful plenty in a world of wonder. But it would never, ever have occurred to Grandmother Wren to teach you how to make a chair out of anything other than some wood.

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Erika Ishii

I have an appreciation for aesthetics and for art and for using magic to do wondrous things simply for the purpose of doing it. But I can tell, even if Eursulon can't, that this is meant to make an impression. As I said, "Who are they trying to impress?" It feels a little... Vulgar, I think. I appreciate hospitality, but in some ways it's expected. This goes above and beyond. There's something here that I don't quite understand. I understand the nature of magic and I understand using magic for hospitality, but I don't understand this extra thing, that's there, that they're trying to do with magic, that's not quite for others benefits.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Mmm.

[Baroque harpsichord music begins to play]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Plates of food are brought out to you by, seemingly, just telekinetic force, the plates just sort of float out from an opening [magical floating sound] and land in front of you. Eursulon, Ame, Suvi, you see that there is a sort of spiced and seasoned chickpea puree, a hummus-like, kind of thick, rich substance on the platter in front of you, that has a couple small pieces of food laid into it. There appears to be like, a very delicate seared piece of fish, a couple of sauteed greens, and a lovely little selection of cured, candied fruits as a garnish, along the edge of the plate.

Lou Wilson

Eursulon's going to watch Suvi, to see how she eats it. Eursulon immediately sees the hummus-like dish and just gets two fingers ready, to just kind of, like—

Erika Ishii

[Laughing] Dip

Lou Wilson

—do a run, and then remembers the gasp and is just watching Suvi, to see how she eats, and the ways in which—he's like, now studying her, to take his cues.

Aabria Iyengar

Suvi's doing her best to try to telegraph, like, looking at the sort of, like, array of cutlery. She's going to give a little point of, like, "this one then this one then this one"

Eursulon [Lou]

Mhm, mhm, mhm.

Aabria Iyengar

And then points at the little finger bowl. Like, "you can go with your fingers into the finger bowl," and is just being—trying to be very discreet in like, "here's how we attack each one of these." So she'll take a bite of everything just to show this is how we eat in the Citadel.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I think, Ame, just with your passive insight, you clock Guild Mage Morrow, who's the only other wizard in the room, who sits—there's a couple attendants by the door—but he sits at the table with you. You notice him just clocking Suvi kind of teaching Eursulon how to eat.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughs]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you see that a tiny little metal bowl, of what just looks like a sort of, chopped up, almost like a chum, or like a seafood slurry just lands in front of the fox, and—

[Aabria and Erika cackling]

Lou Wilson

I was like, Where is that going? Who's going to eat chum??

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah. Lands in front of the fox. And he looks up at you, Ame, and is once again like

Fox [Brennan]

[Surlly] I don't know why I got a different thing, but this is wonderful and exactly what I wanted, thank you.

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And starts to chew on it.

Lou Wilson

I look over at Suvi.

Eursulon [Lou]

[Whispered] Can I get some of that. Do I get some of that?

Suvi [Aabria]

No.

Eursulon [Lou]

No?

Suvi [Aabria]

Absolutely—

Eursulon [Lou]

It looks good.

Suvi [Aabria]

Okay, understood, try the fish.

Eursulon [Lou]

There's not enough fish on it.

Suvi [Aabria]

Okay.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It is like a bite and a half.

Eursulon [Lou]
It's a bite. I'm done.

Aabria Iyengar
Suvi looks absolutely stymied, like, that's a really good fuckin' point.

Lou Wilson
Yeah.

Erika Ishii
[Laughs]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I think you realize, like, you're honestly pretty fucking hungry, too. But also you realize, like, this is about what you ate at the Citadel, because when you're kickin' it on cushions, reading books all day, you don't—

Aabria Iyengar
You don't get that hungry! Yeah. You can see that moment, like, there's like a vertigo pan behind Suvi's eyes of like "Oh no. Ah shit." I'm going to try to look over at the other wizards, and kind of gesture them over.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You see that one of the attendant wizards comes over.

Attendant Wizard [Brennan]
Yes, Apprentice Archmage?

Aabria Iyengar
Can we—we've been traveling quite [clears throat] rough for the last few days, would you—can we... Get more?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You see that she like, arches an eyebrow up. And the Guild Mage Morrow says

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Our guests are famished, please, more more more!

Eursulon [Lou]
And wine. We'll also take wine.

Suvi [Aabria]
Oh, yeah.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Let the vino flow, by all means!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
And you see that, some glasses of wine begin to float out, and sort of—I'm going to say on that Nat 20 Arcana, you see that the wines do like—it's the first not perfect thing you've seen here.

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
That the flutes—it's like—you begin to see like, okay, okay, it's not infinite, because it's one telekinetic stream that the plates come out on, and it's not quite balanced for the wine glasses they have.

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So they do kind of like, tip dangerously. It's more of a half pour, because they bob a lot as they come out of the kitchen.

Erika Ishii

I clock Morrow watching Suvi and Eursulon, and I, too, make a show of digging into my food, in a way that denotes I am uncultured, and I am not familiar with this. And then I make a big show of looking at Suvi and being like

Erika Ishii

[Exaggerated whisper] How do I do this?

Suvi [Aabria]

Why are you—

Suvi [Aabria]

Suvi has not followed your train of logic, and is simply horrified.

Lou Wilson

Also, Eursulon is now losing his mind because he's like, Wait, is that okay? Because that's how I want to eat.

Erika Ishii

I am drinking the finger bowl.

Suvi [Aabria]

AME!

Ame [Erika]

[Slurping]

Aabria Iyengar

I've been interacting with a lot of these plates with just sort of a little bit of prestidigitation to push and pull things around, because, again, we're very sumptuous with our magic. And I'm going to—the moment you reach for it without aiming to tip your fingers in, I'm just going to try to nudge it away from you. Like, don't.

Ame [Erika]

Ope.

Suvi [Aabria]

Stop it. Stop it. Be normal.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Your first plate is clearing very quickly. This is like some point of etiquette that maybe, like, Eursulon does not see, but you see very clearly of like, the first plate being cleared, Morrow feels that the time has come to sort of talk.

Aabria Iyengar

Yes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you see, he says,

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

Well! More food on the way, and please enjoy your wine. It's a very delicate vintage, one of my favorites. I... Will admit to some micromanagement of our cellar, our sommelier is, a well meaning, but somewhat greenhorned

[Chuckles] quartermaster for our vintner. Let me ask, if I might, to what do we owe this honor? Your visit was unpresaged and unannounced. And of course, you are welcome to stay for as long as you wish, but is there anything that the humble Guild Mages of the Scepter's Chorus can do for you?

Aabria Iyengar

There is definitely that half a heartbeat where I look over at my companions like, "Are we just going to tell—"

Suvi [Aabria]

[Clears throat]

Erika Ishii

An almost imperceptible nod.

Aabria Iyengar

A nod!?

Erika Ishii

I mean uh—

Erika Ishii

Reverse nod. Sideways nod.

Erika Ishii

A reverse nod!

Aabria Iyengar

Sideways nod!

Erika Ishii

Yes. An almost imperceptible sideways nod from Ame.

Suvi [Aabria]

Archmage Silence saw fit to give me a bit of time to walk about—to walk about our Empire, and learn more, and experience more of the culture, so that I can better serve it, if and when he steps down. So this is a very informal trip, with companions that I've made recently.

Aabria Iyengar

She's lying badly.

Lou Wilson

[Laughs]

Aabria Iyengar

It's very obvious.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah. So this is a whole hog lie.

Lou Wilson

The whole hog.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You're getting the whole hog. You're getting the—

Lou Wilson
Snout and all, mother fucker!

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughing] It's a bad lie, and we didn't talk about our lie before.

Lou Wilson
No.

Aabria Iyengar
And you can see Suvi floundering, because she's not used to being cunning.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
For sure. Go ahead and give me a deception check.

Aabria Iyengar
Can I have it with disadvantage?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Yeah, if you want it at disadvantage, then take it.

Aabria Iyengar
I do. I want it to be bad. Great. Well, it doesn't matter. I got four on both dice! 6!

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
A walkabout for an apprentice Archmage! Incredible! To journey on something of a pilgrimage. I can only imagine the wonders that you have found. And, were your companions selected for this envoy by the Citadel, or have you seen fit to purchase their services on your travels?

Suvi [Aabria]
Oh, purchase services, I am hoping to forge new connections, in some of the outskirts of the Empire that might prove useful later.

Aabria Iyengar
Ough! Suvi's just looking around, like, help help helphelp help.

Ame [Erika]
That's right! Toma is a very humble little town, and I've been the only magic user in it for many years, I've recently come into my own, and I would also sort of, like to do a walkabout of the world, and learn more about the nature of magic, as other powerful users wield it, as opposed to just simple... Country... Witches.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Give me a deception check.

Erika Ishii
That's a Nat 1.

Aabria Iyengar
[Coughing laughter] We are good at this!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
He looks at you and says

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Not the ONLY witch in Toma.

Ame [Erika]

Well, no. As I said, I recently came into my own.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I see. You were—were you the witch OF the village of Toma, or no?

Erika Ishii

Now I am, yes.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

Oh my.

Ame [Erika]

Yes.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

Has something happened?

Ame [Erika]

Well, we live a long life, but we are not immortal.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

Oh! Um. Well, I don't know if you had a relationship to the woman we now speak of, but I'm very sorry for, or—my condolences—my condolences, or congratulations, if you defeated her, or took her place.

Eursulon [Lou]

No, no they were close.

Ame [Erika]

[Stifled noises]

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

Oh. Oh! Understood.

Eursulon [Lou]

Grandmother Wren was actually Ame's mentor.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

Ah!

Ame [Erika]

You knew Grandmother Wren?

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

By reputation. Not personally, no. But I knew that there —upon taking this station in Akham, there was a brief, of some of the local hedge mages, and other sort and assembly—those who wielded various powers. And mostly from a military angle—Grandmother Wren was not listed as a threat, at all. Not listed as an enemy or, or anything of that nature.

Ame [Erika]

Why would local mages be considered as threats?

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

Well, agen—you know, Agents Saboteur of Gaothmai and Rhuv are ever prowling at the edges of Empire, and Akham, while, of course being the province of the Imperium, is nevertheless, heh, certainly more contested than some... Colonies in the mainland. So, we must be ever watchful. But there was never a consideration that Grandmother Wren was working with any sorcerers, or warlocks, or anything of that nature. It was just part of the briefing. To be aware that Toma was, of course, protected by a witch.

Aabria Iyengar

Can I insight check him on that?

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah, go for it!

Aabria Iyengar

I don't trust that one little bit.

Erika Ishii

Same same same!

Aabria Iyengar

I only got a 8.

Erika Ishii

I got a 16!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Homeboy only got a 6.

Aabria Iyengar

Hoo!

Erika Ishii

[Laughs]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So you actually both see this. He is telling the truth.

Aabria Iyengar

Okay!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

However, you know that he's not telling the truth in that, I think this is maybe one of the first times—I think, talking about Suvi in these rack focus mindblowing things—Suvi you felt protected your whole life, and kind of like compartmentalized and put to the side.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You're seeing that compartmentalization in a very different light right now, as you realize how much you DO know that other people don't know. Steel, who is the Sword of the Tower, she is the protector of the Citadel's secrets, she is one of the lead battle mages of the entire Empire, when Grandmother Wren died, she was like, this is a full stop priority, both for personal reasons—you remember your mother and father as a child. You remember that of all the places they could have gone to keep you safe, they went to Grandmother Wren first. But you realize that this Guild Mage, this guy who's running this Chantry here in Port Talon, that Grandmother Wren was a bullet point, on a list of

just, local people to be aware of, that he sees her as having more in common with a hedge mage, than he does with like, an enemy sorcerer.

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
So something's not adding up, one of you is wrong. And you think it's him.

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah.

Erika Ishii
I do look at Suvi, and I remember, even from our childhood, knowing Grandmother Wren went out on mysterious missions, and there was that one time where Suvi and I had to step in, and there was great magic at work, something that's far greater than illusory wine glass prestidigitation.

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Well, I am so sorry for the loss of your mentor. That is, of course, in many ways when it comes to magic, whether witchcraft or wizardry, those that have imparted those secrets to us are, in a way, the parent of our magical selves. And to think that Grandmother Wren was your teacher, I can only imagine the pain you now bear, and you have my sincere condolences.

Ame [Erika]
[Softly] Thank you.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
So your travels through Akham have seen you, take the Witch of Toma quite far from Toma itself! And, and—Bear is also a local of the Isle of Akham?

Eursulon [Lou]
Yes.

Suvi [Aabria]
Go on.

Eursulon [Lou]
I'm from Akham.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
What part are you? Are you a Port Talon native, or you from elsewhere?

Erika Ishii
[Whispering] From elsewhere!

Aabria Iyengar
Suvi's just trying to give a little like "Come on flex, flex a little bit."

Eursulon [Lou]
[Long pause] I'm from elsewhere.

Erika Ishii
[Cackling]

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Oh, a particular place? From Silbry, or from—?

Aabria Iyengar
Suvi's now just drinking. She's like, well, if someone's worse at lying than I am, we're fucked!

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
From Joras, Old Thriss, or...?

Eursulon [Lou]
[Slowly] Silbry.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Ah! Lovely! Not very far from Toma, so that's—

Eursulon [Lou]
Yes.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
—that makes sense.

Aabria Iyengar
Well, that's kind of where I, sort of started my journey. He's, sort of a, local strongman, of great renown, and I figured, you know, enemies abound. It felt right to have muscle.

Eursulon [Lou]
Yes. I was the strongest man in Silbry. That was my—Look.

Lou Wilson
Is there something I can pick up?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You have, like a plate—everything's like, hovering or like an eight ton slab of quartz.

[Everyone laughs]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
So you gotta—you're gonna have to—

Lou Wilson
I'm going to give it a shot on the table.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Go ahead and give me an athletics check. DC 30.

Erika Ishii
Oh my god!

Lou Wilson
DC 30.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughs] You've got this!

Lou Wilson
All right, I add four. That's going to be a 17.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
17?

Erika Ishii
Yeah!!

Lou Wilson
And I just go

Eursulon [Lou]
Yes. I was the strongest man in Silbry, see? [Grunt of exertion]

[Everyone laughing]

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Oh! Sorry, this table weighs several tons.

Eursulon [Lou]
Well, I'm the strongest in—alright yes.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Yes, I believe you. I believe you. Would you like us to fetch something for you to lift?

Eursulon [Lou]
Do you have anything available?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You see that he sort of puts two fingers to the side of his head, and levitates a small chest of drawers, over from a corner—

[Mystical ringing]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
—that is, again, like this sort of birch bark covered thing, sort of matching the quartz in the room, and just floats it over to you with his mind.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
If you'd like to lift that, with your arms.

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Eursulon [Lou]
Sure, sure, yes.

Lou Wilson
And I would like to pick it up and raise it over my hip.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Great, it's a DC 15 athletic.

Lou Wilson
Great.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughing] Let's go!

Lou Wilson
That'll be an 8.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Okay, well, it's filled with cutlery right now, so we can get that out.

Eursulon [Lou]
Can you get some of that out of there?

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Okay, great. And can I get some help?

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
And you see the other wizards put their fingers on the side of their head, the drawers all open, and a bunch of forks, and knives, and stuff come out.

Eursulon [Lou]
When I did the show, I already had—I already knew what I would be lifting, so—

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I understand, I should have mentioned that there were drawers, I mean, that's why it's in here.

[Aabria and Erika hooting]

Lou Wilson
Alright, here we go.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Okay, great. And this is going to be a DC ten.

Lou Wilson
All right, this one I got. Oh, man. That's a 6.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
So here's the problem. You're so tuckered out from trying to lift the table.

Lou Wilson
Can I just really quietly, and very quickly, rip the drawers out.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
[Laughing] Yeah, go for it!

Eursulon [Lou]
Sorry, this—I don't want these sliding. [Grunting as the drawers clatter on the floor]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Okay, so this is just a 5. This is DC 5.

Lou Wilson
Come the fuck on, dude. 17.

Eursulon [Lou]
[Triumphant grunt]

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
[Politely clapping]

Ame [Erika]
Yay!

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Everyone applaud for Bear, the strongest man in Silbry!

Eursulon [Lou]
Yes. Alright.

[A harpsichord rendition of Mendelssohn's Wedding March begins to play.]

Ame [Erika]
Sir, I hope you'll forgive us. We come from Toma and Silbry, we don't know much of the outside world and we're a little, well, awestruck by the trappings of the Empire, and the magic that we see out here. So if there's any way that you can introduce us, to the—the city, and the sort of magic that you find here, and create here, we'd greatly appreciate it.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Well! If it is magic you are interested in, the Scepter's Chorus has been hard at work on a very special project.

Ame [Erika]
[Gasp] Is It the flashy, blinky thing out in the ocean?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You see his eyes go very wide, and then he smiles.

[Groaning of metal]

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Why, it seems that your companion, Apprentice Archmage Suvi, is extremely observant. The lights out at sea, happen to be the culmination, of more than a decade of study, and observation, research, and feats of magical engineering, on the part of none other... Than yours truly.

Suvi [Aabria]
Oh!

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
The project is something I have been pursuing for quite some time. And about four or five years ago, we received word from the Crown, that construction was finally given leave to begin. And begin it has. If it is of interest to Lou, I would be more than happy, to take you out for a tour of the derrick itself, and to see what we have been working on, for these long years.

Ame [Erika]
Would you really?

Suvi [Aabria]

That would be wonderful, Guild Mage.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

I would be abso-lutely delighted. And it is—[Wry chuckle]—the Citadel holds wonders beyond measure. But! I feel that we have done something here, which has some TRULY great potential—beyond merely its short term utility to the Imperium, but—but magically, I mean. There is something here, that we have found in Port Talon, that I believe... Is of true academic and arcane significance.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

What's Suvi's attitude towards the wizards that get drummed out of the Citadel in their like, third or fourth year of testing?

Aabria Iyengar

I think there's something akin to the, sort of casual dismissal with which he referenced hedge mages, is the way Wizards of the Citadel refer to any wizard not of the Citadel? So she has been just sort of staring down this true dropout, of a human.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see this guy—you know that someone of this guy's station didn't make the cut, on the LAST test. He was one victory away from being a Mage of the Citadel, and instead became a Guild Mage of, one of many wings of the crown's, kind of... Crass military mages, the people that get out there and do the grunt work, right?

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see on his face on a 21, that this man KNOWS deep in his heart that they got it wrong.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughs]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And that he feels like his ship has just come in, and that ship is you. Because, you can see on his face, a look of possibility that, if someone as important as you, who has the ears of the people you have ears of, if you see what he's been able to do here, all that's going to change.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

On a 21 for Ame, you see a man who—you just see someone who has a level of, like, hero worship, and feverish adulation, that is peeking out now. Like, already you saw it with the "Welcome Suvi" and everything, but there's something here that's just a little bit more—you kind of see there's like that fever sweat on his brow a little bit, like he's keeping some composure, but it's taking him a lot of effort.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

For Eursulon, you're not the hungriest person at this table.

Lou Wilson

Mm!

Aabria Iyengar

Ooh!

Erika Ishii

Oagh!

Aabria Iyengar
Shit! That was the coolest description.

[Brennan and Erika laugh]

Lou Wilson
Okay.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
He says

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Absolutely! We—we can go right away if you wish! But, I will say that the voyage, and much of what we have is—it's a little bit—well, haha, I'll put my cards on the table. It's a little bit more impressive at night, so if we could wait a couple of hours, we can get a ship arranged, head out on the evening tide, and you'll be able to see... The wonders we have worked.

Ame [Erika]
I am awfully interested in the showmanship I've seen thus far. I think we can wait a couple of hours for more.

Suvi [Aabria]
Absolutely.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
And until that time, if there are any other—

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You see at this point, the doors open, and a tall, very reedy mage walks in, who is wearing, for the first time, like deep red guild robes, the first sort of like non-cream/white/pink kind of thing you've seen. Deep red, brass rings around the shoulders of the robes, brass lining to his very high collar. And you see he walks in, sort of olive complexion. He has like, a long almost—a face, sort of, that seems carved for sadness, and melancholy. A long face.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
He walks in and says

Reedy Red Mage [Brennan]
Morrow, I'm going to have to bother you in the middle of one of your, ehm, audiences.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You see, he looks around at the three of you, seems fully uninterested, and then goes back to look at Morrow and says

Reedy Red Mage [Brennan]
I'm going to need to resubmit the budget for today.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
And you see, Morrow says,

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
[Rapid laughter] Budgets, budgets, budgets! No, nonononono, not at dinner. I'll speak to you about it in a moment, Pain, is that all right?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
And you see that—

Aabria Iyengar
Oh.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
—that Pain turns around and says,

Guild Mage Pain [Brennan]
[Sighs] Yes, please come find me in the research library after you're finished with your audience.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
And he just turns and whips out of the room to walk away.

Suvi [Aabria]
And who was that delightful gentleman?

Guild Mage Pain [Brennan]
[Laughing] I'm so sorry. He's our, effectively, bursar. That is Guild Mage Pain. He's not involved—he runs our finances. He's not a wizard of any great renown or—

Ame [Erika]
I like his red robes. They seem very, cool and impressive.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Ehh, they denote that his tasks here are administrative, rather than arcane. [Wheezy laugh]

Ame [Erika]
Oh.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
I mean, you know, to have seen the wonders of the Citadel and then to spend one's day with ledgers is ahhhhh—well.

[Polite laughter from Suvi and Ame]

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
I'm so sorry—

Suvi [Aabria]
Rooms?

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Yes! Rooms! Aha ha ha ha!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You see that you—like your second round of dinner, which comes in, which is a little bit more substantial.

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Like, two pieces of fish, and some salad, and some greens, and some other more—there's like, more roughage—comes out. And after that, he shows you to rooms. You see that as you're going, he casts the message cantrip, so his voice just appears in your mind, Suvi, and he says

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

[Echoing with magic] Um. Your companions. Would you wish for them to be stabled a little bit more out of reach? Do you want them in your suite? I don't want to be rude—

Suvi [Aabria]

Adjoining, thank you.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

Adjoining. So we'll put them in suites. We'll put them in full suites.

Suvi [Aabria]

Thank you.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

Alright, and full suites for your guests!

[Imperial Parade March begins again.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And he moves off, and you see a sort of row of these larger bedrooms. It's still a Chantry, this is not like a hotel, but you see that there are sort of small apartments, so there's, like a sleeping quarters, with adjoining studies, that actually have, like, parchment and ink, and there's a small privy off to the side, in a separate room. So it's not like the inns you've been in, where it's like, "Here's a room with a bed!"

[Everyone chuckles]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It's like, "Oh, here's a couple of rooms in a small suite." Everything is very compact, nothing is very palatial. They're not expecting citadel mages to waltz in here, and—they don't have a presidential suite to give, but they are quite well appointed. Clean, crystalline lighting, and small decanters of water that seem to refill when poured. And he says

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

Here you are. And, Apprentice Archmage, if I could speak with you for a moment, as your guests acquaint themselves to their quarters?

Aabria Iyengar

I don't even look at them, and follow the mage, I just kind of give you guys a little bit of a nod, as I keep going—

Ame [Erika]

Mm.

Aabria Iyengar

—down the hallway.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see, he takes you aside and says

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

Um. Apprentice Archmage, your journey—equipped as you are, and—I just want to make sure that you are safe, on this mission. Your companion, your guardian.

Aabria Iyengar

I. Understand, yeah.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

I don't know how many people live in Silbry, but if he's the strongest one...?

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Suvi [Aabria]

They were picked for very specific reasons, and I think you can appreciate if I was not forthcoming with the real reasons for my travels.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

I didn't want to say anything, but I—you are not required through ANY means of either hierarchy, polity, or etiquette, to share with me your secrets. I have questions about what your true purpose is here, but also respect beyond anything, the fact that, for reasons of the Citadel's own, I am not required to know. It is an honor.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So he—

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

He knows somethin's up.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah, for sure! [Laughs]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

He looks and says

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

It is not for me to know, and I do not wish to know. It is merely an honor to be able to show you what we have been working on here in Port Talon.

Suvi [Aabria]

Before I lose you. You mentioned having something—works attached to my parents.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

Yes. Yes! [Gasp] Oh, I'd be delighted—I'd be ever so delighted to show you!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see that he says

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

It's up in the research library. I believe the Guild Mage Pain is waiting for me to have a short conversation with him there, but I can either bring you there, or I can collect them, and bring them to you. It's a very small collection, but I'd be more than happy to bring it to you.

Suvi [Aabria]

I wouldn't be a bother. Your business dealings are your own. I would happily busy myself in the corner.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

Very well! Then, come with me!

[The snare drum march returns, building in intensity]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And he brings you up, to a glorious research library. You walk through crystalline hallways, move through a couple other illusory, sheening, fountains, and walls, and you eventually arrive, at a place that, for all of its crystalline architecture, is suddenly quite dark and musty, because, yes, the rose quartz bookshelves are there, but they're STUFFED with books. Thick, rich leather, and velvet coverings, some tomes with ancient kind of papyrus, like scrolled up inside.

[Fluttering papers and scratching pens]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see that there are even some books here that appear to have, like, a sheen of some metallic covering to them. They appear in various wings, so there'll be an entire shelf of all leather-bound, and then something a little bit more local, and you see that the main sort of, focus of this place are the long tables.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

They have clamps on the edge of them with silvery metal arms, that can crane in and out, with different lenses and magnifying glasses. They are all sort of, at about lower—almost like sternum height, as these wizards stand with these lovely sort of kid gloves on, moving over the parchment, being very careful what they touch. Nothing is being touched with a bare finger. And you can see that they are in the process of restoring ancient books, and also appear to be going over a lot of, sort of captured texts. It looks like there's a lot of things that have been sort of scooped up from Port Talon and nearby places.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Some of the wizards here are bandaged, and seem to have some injuries that they're recovering from. You see, the Guild Mage Pain walks up and says

Guild Mage Pain [Brennan]

Morrow, is this a good time?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see, he says

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

Pain, I would love to introduce you to the Apprentice Archmage of the Citadel, one Suvi, daughter of Soft and Stone.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see that Pain looks over at you and goes

Guild Mage Pain [Brennan]

Ah. Suvi, Apprentice Archmage. It is a pleasure and an honor to meet you. Welcome to the—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see, he says

Guild Mage Pain [Brennan]

Welcome to the Kalabel Chantry of the Scepter's Chorus. It is a pleasure to have you. Morrow, I need to get this submitted—

Aabria Iyengar

Ah!

Guild Mage Pain [Brennan]

—before the end of the day.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Give me an insight check.

Aabria Iyengar
8!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I think that the offense prevents you from—

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
—looking into why this guy's being so rude.

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You see that he just looks and says

Guild Mage Pain [Brennan]
Can I just get you to sign it, or do you want to—

Brennan Lee Mulligan
And you see, Morrow says

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Yes, give it to me, give it to me, give it to me.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
And you see, he comes over with a ledger. Morrow signs it and goes,

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
[Fake gag] Paperwork!

Suvi [Aabria]
I find that paperwork, dreary though it may be, can usually—

[Slow piano music starts]

Aabria Iyengar
And I think Suvi, she sort of bites her lip, and stops talking, and then kind of just turns and starts looking around. She does not know what to do, about Pain, and she hates this man with her whole heart, and has resolved to burn him apart.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You see that Pain waits for Morrow to sign off on some stuff, and then just sees himself out of the research library. Takes a minute.

Suvi [Aabria]
[Suddenly] He's unpleasant.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]
Pain? He's given you offense. I will reprimand him so stern—

Suvi [Aabria]

No.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

No. It's already done. And it's not—you don't even have to ask for it. The way he's behaved is unacceptable. Do you want—I can go speak to him right now if you'd wish?

Suvi [Aabria]

That's not necessary. Mm. No, maybe you should talk to him.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

I'm going to go talk to him. And here—and actually

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you see, he goes and gets a book, that you see is almost like one of those flower pressing books, where it has, like screws that you can tighten to press things into the page. He hands it to you and says

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

The collection is in here. The book is much—I have ambitions for the collection, that far outstrip what I actually have, there's several hundred pages, but it's only about the first ten, that are filled at the moment.

Suvi [Aabria]

Thank you.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And he steps out to go chase down Pain.

Guild Mage Morrow [Brennan]

Guild Mage Pain? A word!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

As he scoots on outta there.

Aabria Iyengar

And instead of staying in the room, I'm going to hustle back and reconvene with the group with a little bit of a shit-eating grin, because I got someone in trouble and that felt right.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Laughs]

Aabria Iyengar

That felt right and good.

[Piano music stops.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You arrived back at your friends suites, at your chambers, Ame and Eursulon.

Aabria Iyengar

Hey, I knock on, I dunno, Eursulon's first.

Lou Wilson

Um.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
[Stifled laugh] What's Eursulon up to?

Eursulon [Lou]
[Muffled through the door] 1 second.

[Aabria and Erika cackle]

Eursulon [Lou]
You see that the door opens, and Eursulon is dressed again, but you can tell is—you see, like, bits of perspiration poking through, and you see that there's a lot of furniture in the room that is clearly out of place.

[Aabria and Erika cackle yet again]

Suvi [Aabria]
Oh hey, buddy.

Eursulon [Lou]
Uh, what's going on?

Suvi [Aabria]
Let's grab Ame. We should talk.

Eursulon [Lou]
Yeah.

Suvi [Aabria]
Do you need a towel? Do you need to dry off?

Eursulon [Lou]
No no no, I'm fine. I was just, uh—I was just checking things out, and it's very, very nice.

Suvi [Aabria]
Oh. Thanks.

Eursulon [Lou]
Yeah.

Aabria Iyengar
And she's just—just gonna kinda swallow the like "We don't have to talk about what's going on here, but we get it."
And I'll run over and go grab Ame.

Ame [Erika]
I'm telling you, baths are GOOD for you.

Fox [Brennan]
Look, I'm gonna be honest with you for a second, if I can. I don't know what a bath is.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laugh]

Ame [Erika]
It's something that's fun and good, okay? Now get in the sink!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You see, the fox looks and says

Fox [Brennan]
Oh, right. Wait. So you just want me to get in water?

Ame [Erika]
Yes.

Fox [Brennan]
And I get in water?

Ame [Erika]
Mhm.

Fox [Brennan]
And then?

Ame [Erika]
I wash you with soap.

Fox [Brennan]
See, here's the problem. I don't know what that is, and I don't like that.

Ame [Erika]
Okay, look, what if what if I do it too? What if—what if I do it too, at the same time, and I show you that it's good and fun?

Fox [Brennan]
Okay? You get in the bath, you let me know when it starts and when the soap part happens.

Ame [Erika]
Okay. Yeah.

Fox [Brennan]
Okay.

Ame [Erika]
Yeah.

[Knocking on the door]

Ame [Erika]
Oh.

[Door creaks open]

Ame [Erika]
Hi.

Suvi [Aabria]
What?

Ame [Erika]
[Grimly] This isn't over.

Suvi [Aabria]

Are you threatening—wh—yeah, that's fair. Can we—can we circle up?

Ame [Erika]

Yeah.

Suvi [Aabria]

Yeah.

Ame [Erika]

How ya doing?

Suvi [Aabria]

[Strained] Good.

Eursulon [Lou]

I like it here.

Suvi [Aabria]

Yeah. Oh, this is bad. This is fine. This is. Provincial.

Eursulon [Lou]

This is fine?

Suvi [Aabria]

Oh, yeah.

Eursulon [Lou]

It gets better?

Suvi [Aabria]

Oh my god. This is where the reject wizards go.

Ame [Erika]

Oh my—

Suvi [Aabria]

They do a rough approximation—it's, um—okay, so the—we were in the woods, and you know how, in your play, there was a painted backdrop that kind of looked like the forest, but was nothing like the forest?

Eursulon [Lou]

Mhm.

Suvi [Aabria]

This-uh.

Eursulon [Lou]

Is?

Suvi [Aabria]

Like that.

Eursulon [Lou]

In that it's?

Suvi [Aabria]

Oh, okay, we're going to do it word by word.

Eursulon [Lou]

Which—it's the painted backdrop?

Suvi [Aabria]

This is the painted background approximation, of the glory of the Citadel.

Eursulon [Lou]

Got it.

Suvi [Aabria]

But I get it. They miss it. That's fine. That's not about this. Um. Hey.

Aabria Iyengar

And I kind of just try to tuck the book that I got away.

Suvi [Aabria]

[Hushed] We need a better cover story.

Eursulon [Lou]

Really? I like the idea that I'm the strongest man in Silbry.

[Aabria and Erika giggle]

Ame [Erika]

And you know what? It's not exactly inaccurate. Except for the man part.

Eursulon [Lou]

Yes. And I'm assuming there is someone stronger.

Ame [Erika]

Yeah, and maybe for the strength part, but we don't know that!

Eursulon [Lou]

But it felt good to say.

[Plucked violins and tense conspiratorial cellos]

Suvi [Aabria]

Right—no, that's good, and—why we're here. What I'm doing, out of the Citadel. He asked a question and then I felt myself begin to sweat!

Eursulon [Lou]

So what is the thing we are telling people we are doing? That is not finding Wavebreaker.

Suvi [Aabria]

Yes.

Eursulon [Lou]

To break a curse.

Suvi [Aabria]
That, thank you.

Eursulon [Lou]
Um.

[Cellos swell and this disappear]

Eursulon [Lou]
I don't have any ideas, at this time.

Suvi [Aabria]
Okay.

Ame [Erika]
I suppose it depends on if you're dressed as a wizard of the Citadel, or in plain clothes. I suppose amongst other wizards, you can cow them into silence, as you did?

Suvi [Aabria]
A little bit for the first time. [Excitedly] You saw that?

Ame [Erika]
I did. That was—

Suvi [Aabria]
Thank you!

Ame [Erika]
—pretty impressive.

Suvi [Aabria]
Oh my god, thank you!

Ame [Erika]
Truly.

Eursulon [Lou]
Why do wizards leave the Citadel?

Suvi [Aabria]
Mostly, the ones that can stay, stay. But if they leave, it's usually for some sort of fact-finding or, intel before a military movement. Always acts of war.

Ame [Erika]
Well, you're on the leadership track, you said, yes?

Suvi [Aabria]
I am.

Ame [Erika]
I don't see anything wrong with the cover story that you told him, the idea of being out and about, learning about the Empire so that you can help to run it.

Suvi [Aabria]

Well, I said that and I thought, in my head, that that was like a very beautiful turn. And then he made a face like "That's bullshit," and then I thought about it more and I was like, yeah, we—that's nothing, for us. So we're not going to do—that's not right. That's—no.

Eursulon [Lou]

Perhaps you are looking for intelligence of some kind.

[Conspiratorial strings pick back up]

Ame [Erika]

Yes! Maybe, like for instance, with this Morrow person. He seemed VERY excited about whatever that derrick out in the harbor is doing.

Suvi [Aabria]

Oh yeah.

Ame [Erika]

Maybe you have heard of his "exciting discoveries" or that there is exciting discoveries out in the edges of the Empire that you've been sent to investigate! Oooh!

Eursulon [Lou]

Yes, things they are going to use, in their incursions against the scourge from, um, the other places.

Suvi [Aabria]

That's good. That's good!

Ame [Erika]

Yeah!

Suvi [Aabria]

Okay.

Ame [Erika]

And I think maybe, when you say it, and we all are on the same page about it, you might not sweat as much.

Eursulon [Lou]

There it is.

Suvi [Aabria]

Thanks.

Eursulon [Lou]

You know that you've got the strongest man in Silbry at your back!

Suvi [Aabria]

[Laughing]

Ame [Erika]

And just a simple common country Witch!

Suvi [Aabria]

No, that was weird. Morrow talking about—

Ame [Erika]

Yeah.

Suvi [Aabria]

—Grandmother Wren was strange, right? We all clocked that?

Ame [Erika]

Yeah. How come you and your parents and the people YOU know, think of her differently than, it seems like, the rest of the Empire does? Because even in Toma, she was just Grandmother Wren to everybody.

Suvi [Aabria]

I don't know, but the way—the way my parents spoke of her, before they sent me, and the way Steel spoke about her, in the years since, I think the people that knew what she was really capable of, were few and far between, and went out of their way to protect that information.

Ame [Erika]

Okay, well. What do we think that derrick out there is? The flashy, blinky lights.

Suvi [Aabria]

Oh, some bullshit project from a like, country wizard trying to find relevance, but we can go see it.

Lou Wilson

But what about Pain? What about Wavebreaker? That was—that was the man who walked in, yes?

Suvi [Aabria]

Yes! And he's a piece of shit. So I'm feeling very good about turning him in.

Eursulon [Lou]

Okay.

Aabria Iyengar

We feel okay with that?

Erika Ishii

[Uncertainly] Yes.

Eursulon [Lou]

Yes!

Ame [Erika]

But, also—and this is not a judgment either way—we do have to understand that if he loses his connection to the Empire, then he will be killed by Gallow.

Suvi [Aabria]

Look. I would never want to see a Wizard of the Empire, no matter how disrespectful they are, hurt unjustly. But, if what they're saying is true, and it kind of felt like it—he steamrolled Morrow into signing some documents. The Empire is pretty clear about how we treat those that would abuse us in any way.

Ame [Erika]

Is there a way that we can ask him why he's doing it?

Eursulon [Lou]

Well Ame, what if we do the same thing we did with Finley, where we create a situation at which he, yes, will LIKELY be killed, but then we tell him that he's going to be killed, and so he can escape?

Erika Ishii
[Laughing]

Eursulon [Lou]
That makes things okay., Right?

Fox [Brennan]
If you give someone a head start, that's about all they can ask for.

Ame [Erika]
[Sigh]

Suvi [Aabria]
Yeah. Feels like three votes.

Eursulon [Lou]
It does feel like [Laughing] this is how we—

Fox [Brennan]
I get a vote?! Aw! Where is it?

Eursulon [Lou]
[Laughing] I wanna walk that back real quick.

Fox [Brennan]
Where's my vote? I want one!

Suvi [Aabria]
Do you know what a vote is?

Fox [Brennan]
Yeah!?

Ame [Erika]
What's a vote?

Fox [Brennan]
It's something that I have, that we just said I get.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughing off mic]

[Tense Piano music joins the strings]

Suvi [Aabria]
Or, if he's ext—if he's taking money from the Empire, then there's got to be some sort of paper trail. There's papers everywhere. All we have to do is present Morrow with proof.

Erika Ishii
[Pained] Does that mean we have to go look through papers?

Suvi [Aabria]
[Hyped] Yes!!

Eursulon [Lou]

Yes, does that mean we have to go and look through papers? I have not done any reading since the summer, where we read.

Suvi [Aabria]

[Squeaking] Ah.

Eursulon [Lou]

That sound. You sound hurt?

Suvi [Aabria]

[Devastated] Mm! No, that's a normal reaction.

Ame [Erika]

Alright, well lets—in the couple of hours that we have, let's go to the library and do some research.

Suvi [Aabria]

You know they don't keep like, paperwork in the library, right?

Ame [Erika]

No, I don't know that!

Eursulon [Lou]

Where do they keep the paperwork?

Fox [Brennan]

They don't keep paperwork in the library.

Ame [Erika]

[Frustrated] Where do they keep it, Fox?

Fox [Brennan]

[Pause for a beat] Not in the library!

Aabria Iyengar

I don't know if the Fox can read, but I'm going to prestidigitate like, just a little, like—the office right in front of his paws. So he, just give him the answer.

Fox [Brennan]

Ahh!! Shapes! Dammit!

[Aabria and Erika cackle]

Fox [Brennan]

Where'd they come from?

Eursulon [Lou]

This is why he doesn't get a vote.

Suvi [Aabria]

[Sigh]

Fox [Brennan]

What happened to my vote?!

Suvi [Aabria]

I want him to have a vote, because he tends to agree with me.

Eursulon [Lou]

Well, that's just because he likes your intonation, because it's very confident. See how he just kept saying—

Ame [Erika]

The important—

Eursulon [Lou]

—the same words that you said—

Suvi [Aabria]

Yeah.

Eursulon [Lou]

—with the same inflection?

Fox [Brennan]

I like it when people say stuff they know.

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Fox [Brennan]

I know a lot of things, and I like to say 'em.

Eursulon [Lou]

We should—let's—I mean, should we all go to the office? Do you want to go to the office, and we'll run some sort of distraction, or...?

Suvi [Aabria]

I think if I go, people will notice and talk to me. So are you sneaky? Be sneaky?

Eursulon [Lou]

I mean, I'm the strongest.

[Aabria and Lou laugh]

Eursulon [Lou]

I uh, I—

Ame [Erika]

Well, Fox and I can go check it out.

Eursulon [Lou]

Yes.

Ame [Erika]

Or perhaps—what?

Fox [Brennan]

Great!

Ame [Erika]

You're giving me a look? Yeah. Oh. Oh! You like it?

Fox [Brennan]
Check it out, I love it!

Eursulon [Lou]
I can also still, uh—

Lou Wilson
And without using it, I have the ability to become invisible. So I think I make just my hands disappear, or my right hand.

Suvi [Aabria]
That.

Eursulon [Lou]
What?

Suvi [Aabria]
Do that.

Eursulon [Lou]
Yes.

Suvi [Aabria]
All over.

Eursulon [Lou]
Okay.

Suvi [Aabria]
And then sneak into the office.

Eursulon [Lou]
Sure.

Suvi [Aabria]
And bring me all of the papers.

Eursulon [Lou]
Okay.

Suvi [Aabria]
This is a perfect plan

Ame [Erika]
Yeah.

Eursulon [Lou]
Great. Should I go now?

Suvi [Aabria]
Oh, okay, he needs a couple of hours, maybe. Should we run a distract—do you want a distraction faction?

Ame [Erika]
[Goblinessque] Ohhhh, yeaah! Hehehe.

Suvi [Aabria]
Perfect. Perfect.

Eursulon [Lou]
Look at that. A plan.

Fox [Brennan]
And while he's distracted, we'll get his vote.

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Aabria Iyengar
Not wrong.

Lou Wilson
Fox, I mean, we can—there are ways to accomplish what you said, but, this is not one of them.

[Ame and Fox cackle mischievously together]

Suvi [Aabria]
This is what I mean!

Eursulon [Lou]
This is—I don't like this.

Fox [Brennan]
Heheheheh! We're laughin'!

Ame [Erika]
Yeah!

[Conspiratorial music swells, and the plucked strings come to the front]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You—you head out into the hall.

Aabria Iyengar
[Whispered] Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I guess give me an investigation check to just find like, the bursar's office.

Aabria Iyengar
I'm gonna assist Ame, because I don't want to roll.

Erika Ishii
[Laughs]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Alright. Ame has help, has advantage on this role.

Erika Ishii
That is a 17-uh, 18.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
An 18!

Aabria Iyengar
Good job!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You wander the halls for a while. As you are wandering them, go ahead and give me a group—I'll say this is like a performance check, to just look like you're not snooping, to look like you're going where you want to be going.

Aabria Iyengar
6

Erika Ishii
10

Lou Wilson
20.

[Aabria and Erika cheer.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Okay, okay! Before you can find this place, you—some mages, some wizards, who go

"Helpful" Guild Mages
Apprentice Archmage, do you require any assistance?

Suvi [Aabria]
Oh, I was just sort of taking a little—a little tour.

"Helpful" Guild Mages
Well, we could provide a tour for you, if you'd like!

Suvi [Aabria]
That would be lovely.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Great. So now you have some people flanking you, and sort of watching you. As you do, they start looking around.

"Helpful" Guild Mages
There are several experimentoriums, various laboratories.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You see as you're walking along, they show you a couple of different places. You see that there's one chamber that kind of opens up, that heads to a big pair of double doors, that you can see is in a different courtyard where, like, wagons and stuff drop people off. You see through the open doors of that area, looking out to like a gravel courtyard, there's mages of the Azure Battalion, like, strong blue clothing that kind of looks similar, honestly Suvi to what you're wearing.

[Hustle and bustle of men working in the courtyard]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
But you see that they have war staves that are mounted into, like, leather straps holstered across their back. So picture, like, bright blue coats with war staves, like holstered over their shoulders, crystalline rings on their hands, large, sort of, sky blue wagons that have a bunch of stuff. And you see that they have a bunch of barrels that are like

quintuple iron-banded, with runes carved into the iron. And you see that there is sort of this big warehouse area. They are packing this, almost like, venomous lime green salt into these barrels to take it out towards the wall.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see that there is in a different chamber, you see some of these white robed wizards. There is a table of what looks like small, slender wands, made of coral, that have like, pink and purple hues, to them in these enormous aquariums of salt water. like, big giant—and like, Olympic swimming pool style tanks. And you see that the mages are performing prestidigitations in the water. Go ahead and give me a—just a luck check, Aabria, as we move through here.

Aabria Iyengar

2!

Erika Ishii

[Shakily] Ohh.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah, you see them just sort of swinging the wands at the water.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Just swingin' 'em.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Swingin em'. You don't see anything too big ahead—they're just sort of like, moving. And you see that as they are doing that, they're prestidigitating with the wands, a little bit of the water will ripple, and they just put the coral wand onto a large pile of wands. But you also see that the pile they're building there's a VERY, very small pile, on a separate table, that has these beautiful, creamy marble cases that are hinged and clasped, that are about the size of the wand, but none of them are putting any in there.

Aabria Iyengar

I definitely want to just sort of

Suvi [Aabria]

I couldn't BEGIN to know what you're doing with these tanks. May I ask?

"Helpful" Guild Mages

Oh, a little bit of playing around with currents.

Suvi [Aabria]

Mm!

"Helpful" Guild Mages

There's a—some small number of these wands, that we are creating, seem to be able to channel a deeper form of magic. So we're testing them out right now, 99 out of 100 don't—fail to properly channel the prestidigitation, but if we were to wait for a little longer, it's possible that we would get lucky today, and one of the wands that has sort of come out from the derrick would be, you know, worth it. And when they work, oh! My goodness. You can see—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And she points these big sort of like glass shields that you realize are like splash zone shields, almost? As like there's a gallery of wizards sort of clocking and looking. So you see that she goes,

"Helpful" Guild Mages

That would be the ideal. Once or twice a day they do find one, and it is extremely dramatic when they do.

Suvi [Aabria]

I cannot wait to understand more of what you're doing, but I don't want to ruin a surprise.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see that they walk away from here, and after a little while, you start walking through a place, and you see that she just—the wizard guiding you points over and says,

"Helpful" Guild Mages

And this is the administrative wing. Obviously, very humdrum.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And then she—

Eursulon [Lou]

I have to use the bathroom.

[Music stops. Everyone wheezes with laughter]

"Helpful" Guild Mages

Ah, well, there is—

Eursulon [Lou]

I need to relieve myself.

"Helpful" Guild Mages

Naturally, and there is a privy, let me actually bring you to—

Eursulon [Lou]

There is no need.

"Helpful" Guild Mages

Very well. There's a privy right down there, at the, corner.

Eursulon [Lou]

I will catch up to the rest of you.

Suvi [Aabria]

Mm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see, the fox goes

Fox [Brennan]

I have to do that too.

Eursulon [Lou]

Come along.

Ame [Erika]

Yes, of course.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Fox—

Ame [Erika]
It's only natural!

Suvi [Aabria]
As long as he doesn't do it on the rug.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
—tucks in behind Eursulon.

[Scampering fox paws.]

Eursulon [Lou]
Hey.

Fox [Brennan]
Hey.

Eursulon [Lou]
Never let 'em make you take a bath.

[Aabria and Erika roar with laughter]

Fox [Brennan]
It's bad, right?

Eursulon [Lou]
It's the fuckin' worst.

Fox [Brennan]
I knew it was bad.

Eursulon [Lou]
You'll never smell the same again.

Fox [Brennan]
Wait... Did you ever take a bath?

Eursulon [Lou]
One time, I've done it a couple of times. But once you have it—once you do it once, you can't take it back. It's a dark road. It's a steep slope.

Fox [Brennan]
Is that why you smell like plants even though—

Eursulon [Lou]
Don't do this to me, man. Don't other me like that.

Aabria Iyengar
[Cackling off mic]

Fox [Brennan]
No, I'm just saying—

Eursulon [Lou]
Yes, it's why I smell like plants.

Fox [Brennan]

Okay. I'll never take a bath. You got it.

Eursulon [Lou]

Never. No matter how hard they try, and they're gonna try hard.

Fox [Brennan]

Besides, it sounds like a bath is just licking yourself, which I can already do.

Eursulon [Lou]

Thank you, thank you! You know, you're alright.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You're alright! I get it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And he sort of snoops along behind you. Go ahead and give me investigation. You're gonna get a help action from the Fox.

Lou Wilson

Great. [Laughing] This is such a bad idea.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughs]

Lou Wilson

I get a plus one on an 18, that's a 19.

Aabria Iyengar

[Gasp] Lets go-uh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You're in one of these sort of marble, quartz hallways. There is a—the doors here are no longer like "Oh, you're walking through—" It's like the administrative wing, so there's just like these sort of lovely red wood—like polished red doors in here, that you see sort of accompany the robes of the administrative Wizards that are in here. And you walk up, and see an office, and see the Guild Mage Pain. In other words, the guy is sitting in a place that belongs to him, clearly.

Lou Wilson

Okay.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

One of those red doors opens into a very small office. We're talking like eight foot by eight foot. It's just like a seat, his desk, scrolls and things up, surrounded by ledgers. And you see the Guild Mage in a sort of high backed chair that is red leather, but it's one of those sort of, rotating, floating chairs. Turns up, and just sees you approaching, so as you approach—

Lou Wilson

Shit.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

As you approach, he's there in his office.

Lou Wilson
Okay, great.

Guild Mage Pain [Brennan]
Hello. Is there something I can do to be of assistance to you?

Lou Wilson
Uh.

[Aabria and Lou laugh]

Lou Wilson
It is at this moment that Eursulon realizes he doesn't know, AT ALL, what the plan was, that—he doesn't know. He's now waiting for the Distraction Faction to take effect. It doesn't. So

Guild Mage Pain [Brennan]
Hello?

Eursulon [Lou]
Yes. I am an—the Protector of Citadel Wizard Suvi.

Guild Mage Pain [Brennan]
Mhm.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughs]

Eursulon [Lou]
She. Wants. To talk to you.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Give me a—

[Aabria and Lou chuckle]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
—deception or persuasion here.

Lou Wilson
Okay. 15.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
He looks up at you and goes

Guild Mage Pain [Brennan]
Very well. I will, go and speak with her.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You see, he gets up to go, presumably follow you out to Suvi, and begins to close the door behind him, as he's going to join you.

Eursulon [Lou]
Wait.

Lou Wilson

I put my hand on his shoulder. I take a step closer.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

He looks immediately like something's about to pop off when you touch him.

Eursulon [Lou]

Oh, sorry. I didn't—I just—I know.

Guild Mage Pain [Brennan]

What do you know?

Eursulon [Lou]

Your situation.

Guild Mage Pain [Brennan]

Excuse me?

Lou Wilson

Where's the fox?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The Fox? Looks—the fox is like—gives you a look like, I can bail you out of here if you want.

Lou Wilson

I want him to go in the room.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You want the fox to go in the room. Yeah. The fox is going to make a stealth check. That's cocked. Okay, a fox slinks into the room.

Eursulon [Lou]

It's going to be alright. Follow me.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Give me persuasion—

[Aabria, Erika, and Lou laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—with disadvantage.

Lou Wilson

Great. 6.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

He turns and he says

Guild Mage Pain [Brennan]

[Menacingly] I'm going to be very clear in this moment with you, Bear. What is it that you are hinting at? I would speak clearly, and honestly, because you are in OUR Chantry and as much power as a Citadel Wizard might wield, I am given provision to do whatever is necessary in order to protect my sanctum.

Eursulon [Lou]

Will Gallows.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Um.

Aabria Iyengar
[Cackles]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
He looks at you and goes

Guild Mage Pain [Brennan]
I don't know that name. What are you speaking of in this moment, and what have you heard?

Eursulon [Lou]
Just the knowledge that a Imperi—a Citadel Wizard wields.

Guild Mage Pain [Brennan]
Did Will Gallows send you here?

Eursulon [Lou]
You might want to go talk to the Wizard Suvi, is all I have been asked to pass along.

Lou Wilson
Fuck!

[Everyone laughs]

Lou Wilson
This was the opposite of why I was sent!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
So here's what's going to happen, and I'm going to do a little bit of an unusual thing, by just fully tipping my hand towards you, my players. This guy's either going to hear the reason in what you're saying, which is that he's just heard something really fucking scary, and if he's smart, he'll go get more information. Or, he might be so rattled that he's just going to try to kill you right here and now.

Aabria Iyengar
Oh my god.

Lou Wilson
Okay.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
So what I want you to do for me, Lou, is just to roll a luck check.

Aabria Iyengar
[Cackling laugh]

Lou Wilson
Don't do this, man, don't make me roll.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I want you to roll a luck check, and you get to call high or low. You call high or low for me.

Lou Wilson

You said it—I don't know if you said it during the session. It is the craziest, level one player shit, of all time that I feel like is happening right now, of like. I felt like we had a plan.

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Lou Wilson

Then the moment to enact the plan happened. Then it didn't—then, you realized we had no plan. Now I'm scared.

Erika Ishii

We—Aabria, Erika, Lou—know what's up.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah!

Erika Ishii

We're smart! Our characters are little dummies!

Aabria Iyengar

Oh my god.

Lou Wilson

When you just had him sitting in the office, I was like, "Well this," and then he saw me, I was like, "Well, okay."

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Why would a guy be in his office?

Lou Wilson

That's the crazy thing. Why would he be there? Okay.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Team Distraction.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

What are you doing during this time?

Lou Wilson

[Laughing]

Erika Ishii

Okay, I was about to say, I didn't wanna, sort of meta game and be like, you know because—I also have telepathy with Fox, right?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah, you do.

Erika Ishii

Within 100 feet.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah.

Erika Ishii

So at some point, I was going to sort of jump in and ask

Ame [Erika]

[Telepathic Echo] Hey. How's it going?

Fox [Brennan]

Heh. I'm in.

Ame [Erika]

Oh, nice.

Fox [Brennan]

I'm in the room. I'm in the room.

Ame [Erika]

Okay.

Fox [Brennan]

This guy's got no idea I'm in this room.

Ame [Erika]

Okay. [No longer telepathy] Suvi! [Strained grunting]

Erika Ishii

Minor illusion. The tree with—the desert tree is on fire.

Suvi [Aabria]

Oh! I—this tour has been lovely. Well, you know what I—

Ame [Erika]

Fire! Fire!!

Suvi [Aabria]

Okay.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So you quickly do a minor illusion of a tree on fire in the hallway?

Ame [Erika]

Fire!!

Suvi [Aabria]

Hi, why don't you go put out that fire?

Ame [Erika]

I'm gonna go put out the fire!

Suvi [Aabria]

Thank you. And I will continue the tour, or should I also help with the fire?

"Helpful" Guild Mages

I'm so sorry.

Ame [Erika]

You should also help with the fire!

"Helpful" Guild Mages

So your friend cast a spell, to create an illusion of a tree on fire.

Suvi [Aabria]

And then said it, yes.

"Helpful" Guild Mages

And now... Do you need help dispelling the illusion?

Ame [Erika]

[Strained] Oh. Yes. Please.

Suvi [Aabria]

Okay. Why don't we—this has been such a lovely tour, we're going to call it here. Thank you so much.

Ame [Erika]

I'm sorry, I was bored!

"Helpful" Guild Mages

Oh—

Suvi [Aabria]

Go. I will follow you in a second, while I wrap this up.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And now we're going to roll this roll over here!

Lou Wilson

[Deep sigh]

[Aabria and Erika giggle]

Lou Wilson

Please.

Aabria Iyengar

High or low, what are you doing?

Lou Wilson

Don't kill my character.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

High or low.

Lou Wilson

I feel like I've never been in a situation—I haven't felt this way playing D&D in a long time. Fuck me.

Aabria Iyengar

Wait before you—okay.

Lou Wilson

Do you want me to say it out loud? Do you need that information?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I do.

Lou Wilson

You can't just look at my crest fallen face and know the reality? It's a 6.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Guild Mage Pain takes a curved steely dagger from his belt, holds a fist out in his offhand, and across the outside of his upper arm—right where his tricep meets the bicep in his arm—he slashes through the fabric, and cuts his arm so that it's bleeding, and the knife clatters to the ground.

[Clatter of metal on stone]

Guild Mage Pain [Brennan]
[Gasping] You struck me!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And he reaches a hand out for your throat—

Aabria Iyengar

Ah!

[Crackling electricity]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—as lightning crackles over his fingers, and you see the pupils recede into electric, blinding whiteness in his eyes, and he smiles, ready to end your life. And that's all for this episode of—

[Aabria and Erika screaming in protestation]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—the Wizard, the Witch and the Wild One!

Aabria Iyengar

Oh my god, it's about to be just the Wizard and the Witch, baby!

Erika Ishii

Oh Noooo!

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

Taylor Moore

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

[Waltz fades out]