

Worlds Beyond Number

The Wizard, the Witch, and the Wild One: Episode 27 “The Agenda” 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. Hushed whispers, mysterious pipes and discordant plucked strings]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Expressionless white mask, a crown of midnight black needle sharp spines emerging like a crown from her head, the Witch of the Waning Moon, Mirara, sits in her throne, in the Chamber of the Coven of Elders. A crow stands on her shoulder, preening itself, as she has called the Coven to attention. Indri looks to you, Ame, and says

Indri (Brennan)

My dear, are you feeling calm and ready?

Ame (Erika)

[Stammering] A moment, if you will.

Erika Ishii

And I turn over to my friends.

Aabria Iyengar

Suvi is fully convinced that her heart might simply stop from how fast it is beating, and I think the expression you get back is that full open eyed like “The fuck do you think I can offer in this moment oh my god.”

Lou Wilson

I think Eursulon is desperately looking at you, because it means he doesn't have to look at anything else in the room.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Lou Wilson

And how it might be looking at him.

Erika Ishii

Agh!

Lou Wilson

And it's like, I'm giving you my attention—

Erika Ishii
[Laugh]

Lou Wilson
—but it's because I don't want to give it—I don't wanna put it anywhere else. My mind is not with you, but my—I am looking at you!

Ame (Erika)
[Under breath] Okay.

Erika Ishii
I hold their hands.

Aabria Iyengar
Oh.

Ame (Erika)
Breathe with me. Okay, ready. Count of—four count in. [Breathes in] One, two, three, four, hold it for four, one, two, three, four, out, one—

[Eursulon and Suvi breathe out.]

Ame (Erika)
—two, three, four.

Erika Ishii
And we repeat this three times, and in that I use Calm Emotions.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Aww, beautiful!

Aabria Iyengar
[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
What are the effects of Calm Emotions?

Erika Ishii
Well, we can choose to fail, and on a failure, you can suppress the effects of Charm or Frighten.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
[Gasp]

Erika Ishii
It does say “Once spell ends, effect resumes.”

Aabria Iyengar
[Laugh]

Erika Ishii

“Unless it has expired.”

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Okay, copy that! For a moment, Ame leads you through the breathing that means the smITTenness with the Witch of the Wind and Stars, and the blinding terror of the Witch of the Wild Hunt—you do recover your senses. It’s not a sharp return to control, it’s like a calming thing, but you feel yourself no longer gripped by panic, nor addled by desire in this moment.

Ame (Erika)

[Sighing] Okay. We’re gonna be alright. This is my family.

Suvi (Aabria)

[Strained] Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You watch and see that Gramore is slowly leading Hakea into the Council Chamber. As she does so, you see that the plant life in the room follows, rolling itself up like a carpet behind Hakea as she moves, and Indri is speaking to Kosta and Ara very quickly, as she helps people—the huge horde of animals and other beings that are here now in this space. And watch as Hakea is now being seated in her throne with a hand from Gramore.

Erika Ishii

Does it look like I have time to give a quick rundown of the Witches to my friends?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yes, you do have a moment.

[A bouncing song of strings builds under the monologue]

Ame (Erika)

Alright. So, the one up there in the—don’t—it’s okay, it’s okay, just keep breathing Suvi. The one—the Witch up there with the crow, Mirara, Witch of the Waning Moon, she represents nothing, and entropy, and darkness. Hakea of the Woodland Green, growth, creation, creating something from that nothing. Gramore is the Witch of the Wild Hunt, she represents conflict, and destruction, and death but not in a sort of just nothing way. Indri is Wind and Stars, she’s fine, and she represents the self, and solitude, and... being on your own. I am the Witch of the World’s Heart, and my job is bringing together the things that the world wishes to see separate, and now I’m gonna go do that. Thank you both so much for being here with me.

Aabria Iyengar

Really quickly, can I do an Insight Check on you?

Erika Ishii

Yes.

Aabria Iyengar

Please dice, please, please. No. 9.

Erika Ishii

10.

Aabria Iyengar

All I'm looking for is just a little bit of a sense of like, what are you—if there's any way to check out what you are most worried about in walking and entering into conversation with them.

Erika Ishii

I am not so much worried about the Witches themselves, I do not fear them or their power, I never have. I am not even scared of the prophecy. I just really want to make Grandmother Wren proud.

Aabria Iyengar

I think I can see a little bit, that parallel of struggling with legacy. A look and a vibe that Suvi understands very well. And since I understand that I'm not going to be able to be in the room with you to lend my intellect, the thing that I am valuable for, to you, I will do my best to send it along with you, and I'm going to cast Enhance Ability on you.

Erika Ishii

[Gasp]

Aabria Iyengar

And give you Fox's Cunning, which will be Advantage on Intelligence Checks for the next hour.

Erika Ishii

[Gasp]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I'll remind you too, Ame, you are currently addled by the sweet blossom smell in the room in this moment, and have your first level of Exhaustion, which gives you Disadvantage on Skill Checks while you are in the presence of the Witch of the Woodland Green. But Enhance Ability is still fuckin'—it's cancelling out Disadvantage.

Aabria Iyengar

Sort of returning the physical gesture, Suvi grabbing—or, Ame grabbing Suvi's hand, and then as you are giving the rundown, you released and are explaining—gesticulating—as you do, when you talk, Suvi will find a point to touch your shoulder.

[Soft piano music]

Aabria Iyengar

And I think there is warmth in the casting that feels not like the warmth of a hearth, but that Irulian sand, and now you know what it feels like, that dry sun that asks something, and so codifies—in Suvi's mind it's inextricably linked with what Wizards are, and then what Wizards are is their intellect, their intelligence. And she sends that, and I think there's just maybe a little bit of—the sensory thing that she passes on isn't just wind and sand and heat and the desert, but small foxes paws running quickly across a dune.

Ame (Erika)

[Gasp] Ah!

Suvi (Aabria)
You have this.

Erika Ishii
I square my shoulders, and I open my arms for the Fox.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
The Fox leaps into your arms!

Erika Ishii
Then we walk up into the room with the Conclave.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You walk into the room. The doors close behind you.

[Heavy door ponderously creaks shut]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Out in the Great Hall, what do Eursulon and Suvi do in the moment that Ame walks away?

[Murmuring voices]

Suvi (Aabria)
Do we just have to hang out with...

Eursulon (Lou)
The other retinues?

Suvi (Aabria)
Yeah.

Eursulon (Lou)
You know I was actually going to—one of them was making eyes at me, like we could—we would fight?

Suvi (Aabria)
Ope! Mm—

Eursulon (Lou)
And I'm gonna head that off at the pass, actually. I'm gonna go chat with him.

Suvi (Aabria)
To do it or to not do it?

Eursulon (Lou)
I mean, I think the reason we're squaring up is because we're not communicating?

Suvi (Aabria)
Mhm.

Eursulon (Lou)

So I'm gonna go have a word with him to suggest we're all—we're all here to support the other—our Witches, ya know?

Suvi (Aabria)

If we know that they are here to destroy Ame and her station, that's probably us along with it, so do you think they're gonna be cool?

Eursulon (Lou)

Ah well, in my head they're going to be cool *now*.

Suvi (Aabria)

Okay.

Eursulon (Lou)

Maybe—I mean, it's like when we were at the Citadel. Gossip, ya know?

Suvi (Aabria)

[Facetious laugh] Yeah, yeah this is just like the—[Sarcastic laughter]

Eursulon (Lou)

Ya know? I'm gonna—we're gonna go see if there's some scuttlebutt.

Suvi (Aabria)

Yeah, go get that hot goss, oh my god.

Eursulon (Lou)

Yes. I'll report back.

Suvi (Aabria)

Okay, good luck!

Lou Wilson

I'm gonna go—I'd like to approach the—was it a—it's a man who turned into a wolf?

[Bass clarinet]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yes.

Lou Wilson

Who then made eyes with me?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So, you walk over, and you see that the Wolf Spirit turns around to you. You see that he—this appears to be a Glamour he's wearing, he's another Wild One like you.

Lou Wilson

Okay. I'm gonna try and stand up as tall as I can.

Wolfman (Brennan)
Hello.

Eursulon (Lou)
Hello! I am Eursulon, Guardian of the Witch of the World's Heart, and Protector of the Wizard Sky, of the Citadel!

Aabria Iyengar
Sky's just doing like a neck cut, like "Uh uh."

Wolfman (Brennan)
You guard both?

Eursulon (Lou)
I do, yes. We are True Friends.

Wolfman (Brennan)
And, what if some conflict should split the two, where then would your loyalty lie?

Eursulon (Lou)
Uh. Well you see, between two friends there *can* be conflict, but beneath that there is always camaraderie, and trust.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You see that the Firefly Spirit speaks and says

Firefly Spirit (Brennan)
Trust unbreakable?
Eursulon (Lou)
Uh, yes! In many ways.

Lou Wilson
The Tree Spirit turns to look at her flirtatiously, and says

Oaken Warrior (Brennan)
Strong and deep as roots.

Eursulon (Lou)
I would agree with that! What are your names?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
The Wolf Spirit turns to you and says

Heinrul (Brennan)
I am Heinrul.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
The staff-carrying Firefly Spirit, just looks at you and says

Badze (Brennan)
Badze.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
And then the Tree Spirit goes

Secoro (Brennan)
Secoro.

Lou Wilson
And Badze and Heinrul seem to be kind of in Gramore's retinue?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Only Heinrul is in Gramore's retinue. Most of Gramore's retinue appears to be animals.

Lou Wilson
Got it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Just straight up animals. And Heinrul's one of the only things that was like—he was *with* the pack of wolves, and you kind of almost think the pack of wolves is with Heinrul, and Heinrul's with Gramore, and then all the other singular predators are with Gramore as well, so that like, the lion and the panther and the hawk and the eagle and all these other things are following Gramore, and Heinrul is following as well, and he's some kind of Wolf King Spirit, that is like, a paramour or lover of Gramore's.

Lou Wilson
[Chuckle] Alright!

Eursulon (Lou)
Well, well met all.

Heinrul (Brennan)
How strong are you?

Eursulon (Lou)
Well. Some have said I'm the strongest man in Silbry!

Erika Ishii
[Cheering] Yes!!

Lou Wilson
And I look over my shoulder at the Wizard Sky.

Heinrul (Brennan)
What if we wrestled?

Lou Wilson
I take off my shield, and undo my sword belt.

Eursulon (Lou)

[Excited exhalation, chuckling] Have at me!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Give me an Athletics Check. 23 from Heinrul.

Lou Wilson

Fuck! 21.

Erika Ishii

Noooo!

Aabria Iyengar

Noooo!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Oh no! Heinrul flies into a rage, and pins you to the ground—

[Rapid pounding drums]

Eursulon (Lou)

Gah!

Heinrul (Brennan)

[Snarling predator growl]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And put's his jaws over your neck, and says

Heinrul (Brennan)

[Deep exhalation]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you see—you just feel hot breath on your throat, saliva dropping into your fur, and he snarls, and you can tell is possessed by some wild thing, that he wants to snap your neck and eat you here.

Eursulon (Lou)

[Panicked] I—I yield. I yield! I yield!

Heinrul (Brennan)

[Exhalation]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

He gets off, stands back up again, goes back into his human form.

Heinrul (Brennan)

Hmm. What if we wrestled again, this time for stakes.

Eursulon (Lou)

Well, one: Well done on that first round, you are a man possessed of some power. And what would the stakes be, if we went again.

Heinrul (Brennan)

What, if you win, would you ask?

Eursulon (Lou)

Oh, if I won, what boon would I request?

Heinrul (Brennan)

Yes.

Eursulon (Lou)

That's a good question.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see Badze smiles and says

Badze (Brennan)

Ask him for a boon.

Eursulon (Lou)

Just *a* boon?

Badze (Brennan)

A boon.

Eursulon (Lou)

[Uncertainly] Yes. If we were to wrestle again, I would ask for a boon.

Heinrul (Brennan)

And if I win, I kill you.

[Aabria and Erika laugh]

Eursulon (Lou)

Oh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Secoro says

Secoro (Brennan)

Do the terms strike you as unjust?

Eursulon (Lou)

Um, n—no, but—

Heinrul (Brennan)

Then you agree.

Eursulon (Lou)

Um—I did not say that I agreed, it's just—well, I would not feel comfortable agreeing to said terms without first confirming with the leader of our retinue.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see Badze says

Badze (Brennan)

Is that the only thing you want from him, Heinrul? His life's blood?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see Heinrul stares at you for a second and says

Heinrul (Brennan)

Too steep then. Not a boon, but a favor. And not your life. You will come and drink with me, in my chambers, until *all* of the liquor is gone.

Eursulon (Lou)

That's what you want—

Heinrul (Brennan)

If I win.

Eursulon (Lou)

—if you win.

Heinrul (Brennan)

That's right.

Eursulon (Lou)

Those terms are more agreeable.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

He leaps at you.

Erika Ishii

[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Give me an Athletics Check. He got a 22.

Aabria Iyengar

God damn!

Lou Wilson

Okay, well, I need—

Aabria Iyengar
Bro.

Lou Wilson
To beat that I need an 18. That's a 3. Plus 4. For 7.

[Frantic drums]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Heinrul puts you on your back, drops down, claps your head under one of his arms and turns back into that wolfen form, and once again has your head in his jaws, rolling on the ground with you. And then stops, and goes.

Heinrul (Brennan)
[Snarl]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Turns slowly back into the man.

Heinrul (Brennan)
Not as good a showing as your first time.

Eursulon (Lou)
[Panting] I believe I—I think I burned some of my energy on the first. I wish the first one had been—it's—good match, you win.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You see he looks at you, and goes—and smells.

Heinrul (Brennan)
[Sniff] Sweets. Soft wine. Soft cushions of the World of Mortals. Things will come that will ask *STRENGTH* of you. I will see you in my chambers, and we will drink until we are sick.

Eursulon (Lou)
Uh, yes, you—you've earned it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
He stalks off.

Aabria Iyengar
When he barked, I think the hand around Suvi's normal looking staff, it was beginning to turn back into the glass staff.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Yeah.

Aabria Iyengar
And now I'm like "Oop, calm calm calm."

Erika Ishii
[Giddy laugh]

Lou Wilson
I'm gonna get up and—

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Badze turns, looks at you and smiles, and as she smiles you see that her mouth glows with that firefly bioluminescence, and she says

Badze (Brennan)
He likes you.

Eursulon (Lou)
[Exhausted] He's a very friendly—uh—he's very—

Brennan Lee Mulligan
She looks at you and says

Badze (Brennan)
Eursulon, do you like riddles?

[Ethereal pipes]

Eursulon (Lou)
Do I like riddles? I enjoy a puzzle!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
[Laughing] She—Suvi, you see Badze licks her lips.

Aabria Iyengar
[Cackle]

Erika Ishii
Nooo, god.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
[Laughing] And we're gonna cut—

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughing] Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
—inside the Conclave!

[Spiritual pipe music fades away into deep menacing cello]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
An icy chamber.

[The Romantic song of the Conclave begins to play]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The deep shadows still dull blue with the presence of the icy walls, but the brightness, the pillar of light descending from the Northern Star above, on five black thrones, on the pure white ice. Mirara sits in hers, the crow astride her shoulder. To her left is Indri, Witch of the Wind and Stars, in her regal beautiful attire. She holds the Scepter of Ice in her hand, and her entire throne is encircled by the resting form of Kosta, the polar bear, large enough to give her a mantle of his own body, completely encircling her throne.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

To Mirara's right sits Gramore in her throne, the hawk on the back of her chair. She has pulled her antlers down to reveal the matted, dirt-caked, bloody locks that surround her, Adorned with bones and cord of hide and leather, her claws tapping on the black stone. To her right, the black throne cannot be seen, as the stone cracks and forms moss and vine, and a mound of verdant green and warmth, that begins to erupt in actual spring water that comes out of it, that cascades away from the moss and turns to ice as it pools out of the moss and down the steps of the platform behind her. Hakea sits, blanketed by moss and flowering violets, the serpent resting in the green around her, its head lying over her heart, its tongue flicking, its ancient eyes observing.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

In between Hakea and Indri, sits Ame. Bear and Hawk, Crow and Serpent, and then the little Witch of the World's Heart with her Fox. Ame, how are you sitting in your throne, and what's the Fox doing?

Erika Ishii

I have my feet tucked up under me. I walked in holding the Fox, but of course if he'd like to jump out, I know he gets restless sometimes, he's free to do that. I'm sitting in an armchair. It's comfortable, and it smells like old dust and lilac.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Seated in the chair, Indri speaks.

Indri (Brennan)

Welcome, Sisters all, to the palace here, under the point of the Northern Star, at the very top of our world. It is a particular honor, and an auspicious one, to host our Conclave twice within the same century. I have our newest member to thank for this honor.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And here she smiles. The other Witches remain sort of neutral at this.

Indri (Brennan)

We have been called here, as every time before, to acknowledge and rejoice in person at the coming of a new Sister. Let us then let go, within our hearts, all grudges and debts, all feelings of hurt pride or reproach, for the World's Heart has lost its former shepherd. We say goodbye to Wren, and remember her as she *was*, in truth.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you see that sort of reverberates out through the chamber here, and each Witch takes a moment to themselves to remember Grandma Wren.

Erika Ishii

I think back to the cottage.

[Gentle strumming music]

Erika Ishii

And how Grandma Wren was the first person to really ever *see* me, and to care for me, and to tell me that the things that I was were right. The way she taught me so patiently and gently, with humor and kindness. I remember Grandma Wren as the person, but then I think of her as the Witch of the World's Heart, and in that station, the great power that she wielded. And for just a moment, I fell in that chair—it's not just a humble armchair. It is a seat of power, the power to not need ostentation. It was the power to be who she was, and still garner the respect, and even fear, of these Sisters of hers.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The Witches take a moment, and Indri turns to you and says

Indri (Brennan)

As host of this Conclave, I welcome into our Sisterhood of the Coven of Elders, the Witch of the World's Heart.

[Reverberation]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And there is a feeling in the room, suddenly, of the presence of that station. Each Witch bows their head in deference to that station.

[Gentle piano music, the sounds of a bustling village, children playing]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You hear, in the distance almost, the sound of feet and wheels on roads, the buzz of bees, the hum of turning, of hands on hands, and hands on backs, the embrace of long lost friends, the smells of home and hearth, of crackling fires, the smell of fresh baked bread, the sound of a crowing rooster, the beginning of a day of work in the fields of a cottage, to see a life made whole by the togetherness of those you love. And then you are once again in the icy chamber, here in the frozen North. Indri turns to you and says

Indri (Brennan)

Welcome, Ame. It is an honor to be your Sister. We would ask you, then. What is the state of the World's Heart?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And the four Witches here turn to regard you.

Ame (Erika)

The World's Heart, as ever, needs tending. I remember once, long ago, Grandma—Wren, saying that, almost dismissively, ah yes, dire times. There're always dire times. There are movements, celestial shifts, in past, I am given to understand, that have affected the World, and it's Heart, and the way that Humans and the Spirits connect with one another. Now, there is something amiss as well. I believe that the relations between

the Spirit World and the Human World are not as carefully tended as they can be. And furthermore, there are powers within both worlds that seek to harm the other.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Mirara speaks, and says

Mirara (Brennan)
[Muffled by mask] Forces within each world that seek to harm the other?

Ame (Erika)
I'm certain that some of you may have, at one time or another, encounter the Stranger in Black. The King of Night?

Erika Ishii
I look around.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
The Witches regard each other. You see Hakea says

Hakea (Brennan)
You have been asked, Witch of the World's Heart, to make some statement of that which is *your* responsibility. I think we all wish to hear of the state of that which is *yours* to tend to, and having said precious little, you have already offered some worries about the Witch of the Waning Moon's realm, which is none of *your* concern.

Ame (Erika)
Sister, Mirara. The Stranger in Black is in your realm?

Mirara (Brennan)
Are you asking me a question?

Ame (Erika)
I am merely broaching a topic which—

Gramore (Brennan)
[Snarling] So! You're refusing to make your report, *huh!*? You were asked by the Witch of the Wind and Stars to speak to World's Heart, but you with to broach the topic of the Waning Moon's business. Do you have some insight into the Hunt itself? Your introduction is some thoughts you have on *our* dominions, hmm?

Ame (Erika)
I do not have a dominion. I have a responsibility, to the towns and cities, to the Mortals, to the Spirits, and if the things which enter into those responsibilities are matters of yours, then I wish to collaborate with you.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Indri smiles, and says

Indri (Brennan)
Sister. Witch of the World's Heart. I believe you are *attempting* to do as we have asked, which is to make your report on your knowledge of the status of your responsibility, the nature of the World's Heart as you

understand it, upon this, the first coming of a Conclave to you in your new station. And it sounds as if you are saying that your station is being touched upon by something, and though it may abut another Witches domain, that fundamentally they are connected, do I understand?

Ame (Erika)

That's correct.

Indri (Brennan)

Very well. Tell us then, how the World's Heart has been so changed by these forces.

Ame (Erika)

Mirara, my Sister of the Waning Moon. There is a darkness that spreads over the lands of Mortals. Once upon a time there was ways for them to... Explore, and build, and connect, all through Umora, and now that is no longer the case. They have lost many opportunities. They have lost many place due to this... Lack of light that guides all of them. Hakea, Sister of the Woodland Green, a Great Spirit that I had the honor of encountering, Orima of the Reaching Green, was frustrated, forgotten, by humans who did not know the proper ways to pay her obeisance. Gramore, you know that this warring world, it tears and eats away at it's Heart. And Indri? What is solitude and self, if not the opposite of what I do.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Gramore snorts into her sinuses and spits blood on the center of the dais, and says

Gramore (Brennan)

Do I understand that some supplication is being made to us in this moment? Correct me if I'm wrong, is our newest sister [Yelling] spitting in our eye!? Are you telling us that there is something *we* have misdone in the moment of your arrival!?

Hakea (Brennan)

Loud loud loud loud loud. Chirping bird, chirp no more. You have been asked of *your* responsibilities, *your*, *your*, *your* responsibilities, and have introduced, in the moment of your *own* introduction, the topic which you deem most important, without first conferring with any of your elders as to what *our* realms might be troubled by.

Indri (Brennan)

As is often the case with the World's Heart, togetherness so seldom means *each* dominions concerns are valued equally, but it seems that often in the cause of togetherness, the cause of togetherness will have its demands heard first, my Sister.

Mirara (Brennan)

Do you wish to continue to tell us what we have missed?

Ame (Erika)

I mean no disrespect when I tell you the things which encroach upon the World's Heart. I say these things which trouble me, not because they are an accusation of guilt, but because they are ways in which I know that your realms could benefit by my service, and by the service of those who I represent.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Mirara leans towards Indri, and says

Mirara (Brennan)

I believe our Sister, Witch of the World's Heart, has concluded her report on the status of the World's Heart and is attempting to introduce to us a topic of conversation and debate.

Indri (Brennan)

Is it true, Sister, that you wish to move from statements of information to statements of persuasion?

Hakea (Brennan)

You are already speaking of what need doing, so I assume the report is concluded, and that your... *advices*... are now the topic you wish to put forward.

Ame (Erika)

Not advices, no. In the realm of the Heart, one cannot solve things simply by telling others what to do, or advising them. I *ask*, I *invite*. What is it that you wish to know about the Heart of the World.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The Witches turn to look at each other, and you see Hakea turns and says

Hakea (Brennan)

[Sigh] Those things of your dominion which would be most removed from our focus and attention. We wish to know how goes your stewardship of your responsibilities.

Erika Ishii

Can I do a History Check?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah! Give me a History Check, with Disadvantage, you're sleepy in here.

Erika Ishii

11.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Cool, what's the question you're asking?

Erika Ishii

I try to remember back, in my fifteen years of training with Grandmother Wren, what is it that is most our responsibility? What were her concerns, those nights that she went away to fight battles that I did not know about, or to investigate things of which I wasn't fully aware, under the curse, did I find those out?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Largely her responsibilities were the world of people, the world of thinking beings, of feeling beings, beings of the heart. The World of Mortals and of Spirits, and of those who made common cause and community together, were her concerns. So you see in this moment that, essentially, you are being asked by the Coven here to kind of give a report about the things that they don't dwell on. Also you can give me an Insight Check if you want, you're rolling with Disadvantage but you can give one to me.

Erika Ishii

Okay. I got a Natural 20, and a 1.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Oh my god.

Aabria Iyengar
Agh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Well that's a Nat 1! You have no idea what's going on with your Sisters in this moment, you are so sleepy, they're so mean, you don't know what's happening.

Lou Wilson
[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
What has appeared to draw their ire is essentially that they were in the like, "Okay, recite the minutes, give the report, we're doing the thing," and you used your—their request to you to opine, and I think that that is the thing that has clearly crossed a line here in your drowsiness, was basically like, they were like, "And tell us about your job?" And sort of—

Erika Ishii
"I dunno man, I just—it sucks."

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Yeah.

Erika Ishii
"It sucks and you've made it suck."

[Aabria and Brennan laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
It's sort of like, "How's my job goin'? Well I can't fuckin DO my—" You know like that's sort of the vibe, right?

Erika Ishii
Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
So you see that the Witches turn to look at you.

Ame (Erika)
There is a curiosity, and a hunger, in the World's Heart, that has caused unrest, because the Heart does not know how to interact with the other parts that turn the world. And I am doing my best, just as myself, with my humble retinue, and the tools at my disposal as a young Witch, to heal it.

Indri (Brennan)
Do I understand by your words, Ame, that this injury to the World's Heart comes from it not fitting into place with the other domains?

Ame (Erika)

Yes.

Mirara (Brennan)

It is as I have said.

Indri (Brennan)

Thank you for the report, Ame. You had introduced a topic of discussion. Would you like me to add that to our register, that we may discuss it, in time?

Ame (Erika)

Yes. That's—yes.

Indri (Brennan)

Very well. Having made her report, we will turn now to our first order of discussion. Witch of the Waning Moon?

Mirara (Brennan)

As we have heard in our report, great injury to the World's Heart is done by it's presence in the space of our domains. The passing of her predecessor has left the Witch Ame precious little time to tend to the injuries of the world. Great action is called for. Ame. May I ask a question of you, in the broaching of this topic of my discussion?

Ame (Erika)

Yes. Yes you may. And, actually, any of you may broach a question to me. I might not always have an answer for you, but you may, yes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Indri smiles at a corner of her mouth and says

Indri (Brennan)

You are asking that we not ask permission to ask you questions in the future?

Ame (Erika)

I am saying you need not.

Indri (Brennan)

Very well.

Mirara (Brennan)

Of Grandmother Wren's judgments during the time of her living, and of her tutelage, how well do you feel she acquitted her position as Witch of the World's Heart? Did you find her judgement true, or did she fall short of her station—

Ame (Erika)

Grandmother Wren was the wisest creature of Mortal or Spirit that I have ever met. And I think that all of you recognized that, in *your* wisdom.

Hakea (Brennan)

I didn't.

Mirara (Brennan)

Well. I think of what I knew of Grandmother Wren, she would have not put herself above those Sisters of her Coven in terms of Wisdom, my dear Witch of the World's Heart. But, if she was the truest Witch you knew, then it is exactly as I feared. Wren's predecessor is in her truest mold. The World's Heart falls to one who follows in Wren's footsteps. She is untested and unready. Of her retinue, the Citadel now strides the halls of this place, and she has come here to tell us that the World's Heart can only suffer in our presence. I put forward a motion that the Witch Ame be killed, and that the World's Heart be left beyond the confines of this Coven. I ask that this be considered at once.

Indri (Brennan)

Are there any that oppose a swift and immediate decision?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see Gramore shakes her head no side to side, and you see Hakea turns to look at you, Ame, and goes

Hakea (Brennan)

I oppose a swift decision. [Wheezing] Categorical. Do I disappoint you, Sister of the Waning Moon?

Mirara (Brennan)

I am not so easily disappointed, Sister!

Hakea (Brennan)

How could anybody tell with that mask on your face! I'm tired. [Grunt] We should discuss the killing of the young Witch on the morrow. Sister of the World's Heart. Tomorrow we will begin discussions as to your death, and the destruction of your seat upon this council. Is there any clarity that may be provided such that your remarks might be—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And she yawns, and some moths fly out of her mouth.

Hakea (Brennan)

[Yawning] Such that your remarks might be better prepared tomorrow than they were today?

Ame (Erika)

Sister Indri, as both our host and an observer of the celestial bodies, I would ask to confer with you, perhaps to have some better insight into some of the past records of the Conclave, the better to prepare.

Indri (Brennan)

Of course! I will provide all of the wisdom I can, my Sister.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see she leans over and squeezes your arm and says

Indri (Brennan)

We would only kill you if we genuinely believed it was the right thing to do.

Erika Ishii

That's a 20 and a 2.

[Aabria and Brennan laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

For your Insight Check?

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see that she smiles and says—and turns to Mirara and says

Indri (Brennan)

Perhaps hasty to jump into Conclave on the arrival of our Sisters, hm?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you see Mirara is expressionless and silent in response to this, as Hakea already starts to stand up and goes

Hakea (Brennan)

[Groggily] I will retire.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Gramore stands up and says

Gramore (Brennan)

Hakea, do you need help?

Hakea (Brennan)

No no, a little magic.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And falls forward into the moss, and vanishes as a bed of moss just rests there and the throne remains verdant.

Erika Ishii

As she disappears, I suddenly get a second wind. I look at my sisters around me. Insight Check for a 16.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Okay. Mirara is expressionless and cannot be read, Indri is smiling—Indri does the first somewhat—she has been so poised, but this *huge* bed of moss in this ice chamber—she has to do the first kind of funny thing you've seen, which is walk around moss to get out of the room. She's like "I'm not gonna walk on that!" And you see Gramore is the only one you can read. Gramore is looking at you, seeing that you come out of the effect of Hakea's pollen, the second you look at Gramore, Mirara is already gone. But Gramore is still there with the hawk on the antlers of her headpiece, and she—you beat her Deception Check, what are you trying to glean from her?

Erika Ishii

Where is this coming from, why would she so readily agree to the destruction—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Are you asking this verbally?

Erika Ishii

You know what, I ask. I say

Ame (Erika)

Sister, you've just met me moments ago, and yet you would so readily agree to my death and the elimination of this station which Grandmother Wren has tended to for so many years—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

She gets in your face and says

Gramore (Brennan)

[Snarling] I don't like how much you speak the name of the dead. It's not your station. Grandma Wren is gone. You either run, or fall behind and get eaten. Why do you think I want you gone, cuz I think [Sniffs] I think you're slow. And we don't live in easy times.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And having beaten her deception, you see in her eye, fear. And she leaves the room. Completely isolated in this chamber, as Gramore stalks out, you are left alone in the circle of thrones with you and the Fox.

Ame (Erika)

Fox?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The Fox looks up and says

The Fox (Brennan)

I didn't see a great spot for me to jump in in that *whole*—

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

The Fox (Brennan)

I'm sure you're mad at me right now—

Ame (Erika)

No, no, no.

The Fox (Brennan)

—but I didn't see *any* angle in that whole talk—

Ame (Erika)

It's just so funny, because it's just impossible to get you to shut your mouth sometimes, and yet when our existence is threatened like, nothin'? Nothin'?

The Fox (Brennan)

Well here's—talk can't work right now. Talk is fun. It's not anywhere near as good as run. Run is what we should do, we should run—

Ame (Erika)

Okay, okay, but, okay—

The Fox (Brennan)

We should run! It worked in Port Talon, it worked in the Citadel, it's gonna work again! It works every time!

Ame (Erika)

Okay, well, actually, literally the magical rules for that scary lady that just walked out: if you run in your presence, she has the right to eat you.

The Fox (Brennan)

Okay. I'm not ever worried—almost everything has the—

Ame (Erika)

She will catch you. SHE WILL.

The Fox (Brennan)

Who the hell are you talkin' to? *Nobody* can catch me.

Ame (Erika)

[Laugh]

The Fox (Brennan)

Who are you *talking* to!? Who's caught me so far?

Ame (Erika)

I'm talkin' to a little guy in the presence of a whole wolf pack!

The Fox (Brennan)

The only—[Dismissively] Bah, wolf pack. How many foxes you think these wolves eat? Not a lot!

Ame (Erika)

I bet dozens.

The Fox (Brennan)

I've only been caught one time. And it was by you.

Ame (Erika)

Aww.

The Fox (Brennan)

We're gonna be alright. Don't tell Suvi and Eursulon, they'll blab. We jump out the window, we go into the mountains.

Ame (Erika)

[Laugh]

The Fox (Brennan)

Okay? We go into the mountains, and we *hide* until this whole thing blows over. You can take those things off, right? That thing on your head, and these clothes and stuff, you can take them off?

Ame (Erika)

Um, no—I mean yes—what? Yes?

The Fox (Brennan)

We'll stuff 'em fulla meat! And we'll leave it in the chair!

Ame (Erika)

Ah, uh huh, uh huh.

The Fox (Brennan)

And then we'll jump out the window, and then we'll run away!

Ame (Erika)

Okay well first of all, I tried that as a preteen, and eventually ya get found out. Second of all, sometimes being caught doesn't necessarily mean somebody running after you and catching you by the tail. It means that you *want* to stay for something, and you can't, you can't leave, you can't leave because if you leave there are things that are worse than being caught and eaten. Why won't you just run away and leave me then, hmm? You could go. Just jump out the window. I won't tell Eursulon and Suvi.

The Fox (Brennan)

[Sigh] I don't want to.

Ame (Erika)

Why?

The Fox (Brennan)

Cuz I don't know how to get back without you.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

He smiles here.

The Fox (Brennan)

You wanna know why? Because I think we have a little bit of time left for me to convince you to run away.

Ame (Erika)

[Laugh] Okay. I bet you a whole bowl of fish slurry, that it's not gonna work this time.

The Fox (Brennan)

[Chuckle] You're on.

Erika Ishii

I hold a—shake his little paw.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

He puts his little black paw in your hand, and—little floofy paw.

Ame (Erika)

Alright.

The Fox (Brennan)

Okay.

Ame (Erika)

Let's go.

The Fox (Brennan)

Is there a way that I can help you? Other than not talking during that?

Ame (Erika)

Oh, um.

The Fox (Brennan)

What do you need me to do, if we're trying to keep you from dying?

[Funky heist music]

The Fox (Brennan)

You said you were gonna talk to the tall crown lady.

Ame (Erika)

Ooh, yes. Yeah I have to go meet with Indri. Maybe if you wanna—wanna scamper off, and find out some more about the other Witches, but be careful, okay?

The Fox (Brennan)

You got it. I'll scamper off.

[Clickity fox paws scamper into the distance. Heist music ends.]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Moments before the Conclave exits back out in the Great Hall, Badze is looking at Eursulon, and says

Badze (Brennan)

What always runs but never walks,
often murmurs, never talks,
has a bed, but never sleeps,
an open mouth, but never eats?

Eursulon (Lou)

Is it—I believe I know this one. Is it a river?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Her bioluminescent eyes go wide—

Erika Ishii
Ha!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
—and she applauds!

Aabria Iyengar
Yay!

Eursulon (Lou)
[Chuckle] Well I had to get one.
Aabria Iyengar
Suvi's just like

Suvi (Aabria)
YEAH! [Clears throat sheepishly]

Erika Ishii
[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You see that the doors open, and Gramore stalks out, and the various retinues leave this place. As they do so, it is just the four Wizards and Eursulon who remain, as the Fox scampers down a hallway, quite quickly. Ame, you finish your conversation with the Fox, and emerge from the council chambers.

Ame (Erika)
Okay, let's go somewhere that we can talk.

Eursulon (Lou)
Great. I do have to say, I've made a um—

Suvi (Aabria)
[Chuckle]

Eursulon (Lou)
—an arrangement for this evening Ame, I'm sorry, I'm not sure—

Ame (Erika)
Oh!

Eursulon (Lou)
I hope everything went well, but somebody has—I lost a wrestling match, and am obligated to drink until I'm sick with a member of Gramore's Retinue.

Suvi (Aabria)
Yeah.

Ame (Erika)
Have fun?

Eursulon (Lou)
I mean I'll—I believe I have some time. But, I think after dinner I will be—

Ame (Erika)
[Whispering] Is this like a date?

Eursulon (Lou)
I don't know?

Ame (Erika)
Is this how Wild One's do dates?

Eursulon (Lou)
I'm not—okay, that—I mean—

Suvi (Aabria)
[Yelling] How did the Conclave go?!

Ame (Erika)
Oh. They want to destroy me and my station.

[Dramatic cello music]

Suvi (Aabria)
Great.

Ame (Erika)
You wanna go somewhere and talk?

Suvi (Aabria)
[Sardonically] Yes!

Ame (Erika)
You have time before your—

Eursulon (Lou)
I do, I'll join him after dinner.

Ame (Erika)
Okay.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

We adjourn to the Keep of the World's Heart, where a small fire is stoked, you have some food in front of you. Is the Fox here with you, or is he out scamperin'?

Erika Ishii

I think he's scampering, unless he has come back yet, for—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Give me a little Investigation Check for him.

Erika Ishii

5.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Every once in a while the Fox checks in, and is like

The Fox (Brennan)

[Telepathic echo] I'm onto something. There's a hallway. It's covered in ice.

Ame (Erika)

Okay.

The Fox (Brennan)

Is this anything?

Ame (Erika)

Yeah—oh, uh. Well what's in the hallway?

The Fox (Brennan)

Doors. Torches. Windows.

Ame (Erika)

Nothin'. That's nothin'.

The Fox (Brennan)

Okay, I'll keep goin'.

Ame (Erika)

Okay, thank you.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So he's still off scampering. I've told—we're sitting in one of the—in the assortment of chairs around the fire, and I've told you everything. *Everything*, like beat for beat what happened in the meeting.

Suvi (Aabria) Okay, so the two sitting across from you, Mirara and Gramore, are the ones leading the charge, and the ones that defended you, or remained the most neutral, Hakea and Indri, are on your side, and it sounds like they're alliances fall on those lines, the ones in proximity to them, they seem to be in collaboration with, and the ones across from them seem to be strained, and I know that's not off of a lot of data, but we don't have a lot to go off of.

Ame (Erika)

Hmm.

Erika Ishii

When I think back to the—when there were seven, and then when there were thirteen—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah.

Erika Ishii

—do I know other configurations, or alliances, or has Grandmother Wren said—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Ooh! Give me a History Check. We'll call it DC 20, but you're a Witch, so you can roll with Advantage.

Erika Ishii

Ooh!

Lou Wilson

Aww!

Aabria Iyengar

Let's go!

Erika Ishii

Thank you Brennan!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You got it.

Erika Ishii

FUCK-UH! 12.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Okay. On a 12 you remember Witch of the Watching Fire, Witch of the Wide Sea. Obviously you would have been curious as a little kid about the Coven of Elders, but I think it depends—what would the questions Ame have dwelt on about the Coven of Elders been, with Grandmother Wren at that time.

Erika Ishii

Oh, what do they look like, and are you friends with any of them, and—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah, so like, from childhood she basically would have told you that Uruna was an *incredibly* beautiful, profound, wonderful, wise Witch, and would have said that Uruna was closest with Hakea out of anybody, that Hakea, Uruna, and Gramore, were all sort of like, of a like kind to each other, and would have said that Skalvi, the Witch of the Watching Fire, was actually closest to Grandmother Wren *and* Indri, that they were—and that she was part of a little—it was almost like there were two triads that Mirara was left out of.

Erika Ishii
Mm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
And it sounded like Wren had a personal fondness for Uruna, but her—her station was more involved with the Station of the Watching Fire.

Erika Ishii
Hmm.

Aabria Iyengar
Have you told us about seven coming down to five?

Erika Ishii
When you make the observation about the five and the alliances, I do mention, yes, it was once seven. One died without a successor.

Aabria Iyengar
Mhm.

Erika Ishii
And the other—

Brennan Lee Mulligan
So, one died without a successor, just from age, and like, everyone knew that Uruna had essentially waited for too long, and it was sort of a sorrowful bad sad thing. And then for Skalvi, Skalvi *had* an apprentice who betrayed her. It's unclear what the nature of her fall was, but it sounds like in the betrayal of the apprentice, Skalvi died shortly thereafter, maybe related or maybe unrelated? But then, in the betrayal of the apprentice, the apprentice removed themselves from the succession—and you remember Wren talking to you about not needing to accept the position of the World's Heart, right? She's like I would love you just the same even if you turned this responsibility aside. And it sounds like the apprentice that betrayed Skalvi, in the betrayal, refused the Station of the Watching Fire. So left Skalvi unprepared, essentially. And maybe even like, some hint of well—it's weird to say that someone that *killed* Skalvi *betrayed* them, the headline would be—

Erika Ishii
[Laugh]

—“Murdered them, which was a betrayal.” But you almost wonder if the betrayal had to do with the imminent death of Skalvi, and the apprentice abandoning the station when Skalvi was advanced enough in age that she didn't have time to find and train a new apprentice.

Lou Wilson
Mm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Maybe that was the betrayal.

Erika Ishii

I relay all of this, and then I say that

Ame (Erika)

And originally, it was thirteen.

Suvi (Aabria)

Y'all argue too much. That's—no, that's what it is. That's how we get—I kept trying to figure out why would you have to advocate for the loss of another one. They're not in unison, they always need—if it was just four, if you were gone and dispelled, there would be four, and that's an even split, and—

Ame (Erika)

Who's the tie breaker?

Suvi (Aabria)

Exactly. So it has to be three, because they always require a majority to move towards unanimity.

Ame (Erika)

Mm. Mm.

Eursulon (Lou)

So it's not even someone specific, it's just the very nature of it being impossible for it to be four?

Suvi (Aabria)

Something like that, but also it seems like—okay, you said Watching Fire and something? Ocean. Water and fire. It seems like you can make a case for someone that is the opposite of you having to go with you. Balance. Witches talk about balance all the time, that feels like a thing.

Eursulon (Lou)

[Chuckle]

Ame (Erika)

My direct opposites could be, conceivably, Mirara, because, nothing. She's nothing.

Suvi (Aabria)

Mhm.

Ame (Erika)

Or, Gramore, because she's conflict, and what am I, but resolution.

Suvi (Aabria)

I think you will have a harder time making a case for Mirara, she's the one that leveled charges against you. But I think you have a very strong case that, where cooperation goes, conflict goes, too.

Eursulon (Lou)

Didn't you also say that Indri is self? Is there something there? Something to togetherness vis-à-vis—and then on the other side solitude?

Ame (Erika)

I agree, there really could be a case made for almost any of them.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Give me an Insight Check as you say that, Ame.

Erika Ishii

23.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

As you say “You can almost make a case for any of them,” you remember suddenly the words of Sly, saying—that his words were something along the lines of “They can’t get rid of you without getting rid of another,” and you suddenly realize, oh! It doesn’t fall to you to make a specific case for a specific Witch, it fall—because the point isn’t for *you* to argue, it’s for *them* to argue. If you can make the point that someone else has gotta go, right? As Suvi just said, it’s about tie-breaking, so it’s not incumbent on you to argue for which Witch you think should follow behind you. What’s incumbent on you is to say “A four person council doesn’t work, so kill me and you guys decide amongst yourselves.” You know, it’s that idea—right?

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah.

Ame (Erika)

Well that’s definitely something.

Suvi (Aabria)

Did you say anything in your defense, when they were like “Let’s vote to kill you,” or were you just very chill?

Ame (Erika)

Well, Hakea kind of said “I disagree,” and then disappeared, and that was the end of that moment.

Suvi (Aabria)

Okay.

Ame (Erika)

But, I do have further questions, that I would like to have answered before I make a case, including, um, an audience with Indri, to find out about some of the past dealings of the Coven? [Telepathically] Fox, anything?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Give me another Investigation Check.

Erika Ishii

13.

The Fox (Brennan)

Eugh, okay. I don't know if this is anything. There's a window, I'm looking out at a courtyard, and there's two tall ladies talking next to a fountain, but the fountain doesn't have water, it's got like, snow coming out of it?

Ame (Erika)

I don't think—can you hear what they're saying?

The Fox (Brennan)

Ouh, I'd have to get a little bit closer, but they're not close to the ground, they're both *suuuuper* tall.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Ame (Erika)

Tall to you and me, or tall to like, Suvi?

The Fox (Brennan)

Oh, definitely tall to me, but also tall to you, and even a little tall to Suvi!

Ame (Erika)

Hm! Hang on a second.

Erika Ishii

And I pop into his eyes really quickly.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You pop into his eyes, and see that the Witch of the Wind and Stars has Mirara pushed up against an archway and it putting a finger into her face—

Erika Ishii

[Gasp]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

He goes

The Fox (Brennan)

I dunno, they're talkin' about somethin'.

Aabria Iyengar

[Cackle]

Ame (Erika)

[Frantically] I need you to get down there, I need you to hear it!

The Fox (Brennan)

What?

Ame (Erika)

I need you to get down there and hear it!

The Fox (Brennan)

Hear it?

Ame (Erika)

You need to go hear it, yeah!

The Fox (Brennan)

Okay, you're the boss, boss! I'm goin'!

Ame (Erika)

Wait wait, actually—no wait! Wait wait wait!

Erika Ishii

And I squint through the Fox's eyes, I can read lips.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Gasp] You have the Observant Feat, I can't believe it's become—

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh] Best Feat.

Erika Ishii

[Triumphantly] Relevant!

Lou Wilson

There it is.

Aabria Iyengar

The best Feat.

Lou Wilson

There it is.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Okay, so, right now, because she has Mirara pushed up against the arch, you see Indri is pointing a finger under Mirara's chin. Mirara has no lips for you to read, so you see the Fox *quickly* has to run around a hallway to get to a vantage point to see Indri's lips, and as you go over you can see Indri's lips pointed, and you see that—you haven't—Indri has been so sweet to you the entire time, and Mirara in this moment, is look—they're looking at each other, and it is a testament to how terrifying Mirara is that she is not withered by the cold expression in Indri's face. You haven't seen Indri angry yet, but seeing it through your Fox's eyes, not even directed at you, you don't know how you could withstand it if she turned her cold gaze on you. And you see the last thing she's saying, going

Indri (Brennan)

—give you any pause at all? Obviously she had some idea. It caught her not at all by surprise, you don't think a squawk, a chirp, a squeak would have escaped her lips?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Something you can't hear coming from Mirara, whose face is expressionless, the mask betrays nothing, and then, you know, she speaks for a while, and then Indri responds and says

Indri (Brennan)

Who can say. Perhaps Wren gave her some more warning, or she's come with these Citadel Wizards in tow.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see that Mirara speaks for a second, and Indri says

Indri (Brennan)

Yes, my Sister, of course. A hundred years ago, their tricks were paltry, and fifty years ago, their tricks were paltry, and twenty years ago, their tricks were paltry, but I don't know if you've noticed, every so often, I look behind me and see these paltry tricks getting a little bit closer than they were before. I think your entire point, Sister, is that time is running out. Whether from the Citadel, or the cottage, some knowledge she gleaned, that much is clear, and your—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And you see she balls her beautiful ice blue fingernails into a fist and says

Indri (Brennan)

And your *impatience*, Sister, and your *disdain* for the requirements of our Sister Hakea, saw this opportunity lost. Think more, in the future, not solely of your own domain, but of all of ours.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And she turns and walks away. The Fox in your head goes

The Fox (Brennan)

She's walkin' away, do you want me on spike-head, or do you want me on—well they both have spikes on their heads, kind of in different ways. There's black with white, and there's blue with silver.

Ame (Erika)

Um, um, um, go after, uhhhh—

The Fox (Brennan)

I also *do* smell food nearby.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laugh]

Ame (Erika)

No! No not the food though, I will give you so much fish stew when you get back, if you go after the one in silver and blue.

The Fox (Brennan)

You got it boss.

Ame (Erika)

[Strained] Alright, thank you.

Erika Ishii
I snap back to the tower.

Ame (Erika)
Guh!

Suvi (Aabria)
—I was really proud of river, that was a good—

Eursulon (Lou)
Thank you, also I haven't said anything. I like the new color.

Suvi (Aabria)
Oh my god, thank you—

Eursulon (Lou)
Oh!

Ame (Erika)
[Frantically] It's a conspiracy!

Suvi (Aabria)
Huh?

Eursulon (Lou)
What?

Ame (Erika)
[Whispering] It's conspir—it's a conspiracy, I know—

[Discordant drums and strings]

Erika Ishii
I look around, and I make gesture—I gesture at my ears, and then in circles around my head, and I'm gonna try and see if I can do anything to see if there's any listening, or any way to ward against being heard.

Aabria Iyengar
I'll pop a Detect Magic right now to help.

Erika Ishii
Yeah yeah yeah do that.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Passive Investigation 21. You pop a Detect Magic. Divination magic, something for listening in. Yeah. There is something in the room with you that is listening in on Ame. Your Passive Investigation knows that you are being listened to. Something in this room. But it's a DC 25 to pinpoint it exactly, and I'll let you roll for it.

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah!

Lou Wilson
Can I help with another Detect Magic?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Yes, you can.

Lou Wilson
Great.

Erika Ishii
Guidance, I—I—

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah!

Erika Ishii
I—I—I tap my ears, I gesture around, and I poke Suvi.

[Mystical ringing music, the pipe motif of the Spirit World]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Wizardry, Witchcraft, and the World of Spirits, come together to find safety in this moment of dire consequence, it's a DC 25. What'd you get on your d4?

Erika Ishii
1. [Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Plus 1, and what do you add to—

Aabria Iyengar
I add 6, so right now I'm adding 7 total.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
So, you need an 18 or higher on the die—

Erika Ishii
Oh god.

Lou Wilson
Oh god.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
—to get the roll. Here we go.

Aabria Iyengar
17 on the die.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
17 plus 7 is 24, 1 shy of the difficulty. But you know there's something in this room listening to you, in this moment.

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah. Then I'm immediately going to reach down to my spellbook, and just sort of opening it without pulling it all the way off, and tearing a sheet, and I will write onto the sheet

[Scribbling sounds]

Suvi (Aabria)
There's something listening on you. Divination magic, but I can't find it to dispel it. Do you know who would have done so?

Aabria Iyengar
And then pass the paper, and continue—and like, not trying to fully change the subject, but try to pick up some light patter with Eursulon.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
With that 24 Investigation, I will allow you to glean a little bit more here, too, which is just that—what you are aware of is, the words in this room are being heard, you can—with your spell, you hear echoes of the Lingua Arcana, like as you speak in Imperial, you hear—it's almost like what would be the clack of a stenographer's key?

Aabria Iyengar
Mm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
But just momentary vibration in the soundwaves themselves, that you pick up as them registering on a piece of magic that's listening. Almost like if a bat's ear could hear a sound landing on an eardrum somewhere, and you know how to recognize that sound.

Lou Wilson
Can I write on the piece of paper

Eursulon (Lou)
If it was gone—Suvi, if it was gone, could you tell?

Suvi (Aabria)
Yes.

Lou Wilson
I'm gonna take Suvi's scarf off, and throw it out a window.

[The creak of a metal hinge, wind, flapping cloth]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
The sound goes away.

Erika Ishii
[Scream]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Holy shit, Lou!

Erika Ishii
Oh my god! Holy shit!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Stone cold fucking got me.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Stone. Cold. Got me. Fuck. That's all for this episode of the Wizard, the Witch, and the Wild One!

[Everyone laughs]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
God DAMMIT!

[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 from Michael Ghelfi Studios. For even more like this, join us on our Patreon. We'll see you there.

[Waltz fades out]