

Worlds Beyond Number

Fireside Chat: Episode 002 - The Naming of Things

Final Version

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

Erika Ishii

Hello, and welcome to the Fireside. We are Worlds Beyond Number. I'm Erika Ishii and I am here with Brennan Lee Mulligan, Lou Wilson, and Aabria. Iyengar. How's it going, gang?

Lou Wilson

Can we actually call me Tomahawk today? Is that okay?

Erika Ishii

Sure.

Tomahawk [Lou]

Is that too much to ask?

Erika Ishii

No, not at all. I'm here with—

Tomahawk [Lou]

Is everyone okay with that?

Aabria Iyengar

I like it!

Erika Ishii

I'm here with Brennan Lee Mulligan, Aabria Iyengar, and Tomahawk.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

This is the sound of Worlds Beyond Number.

Aabria Iyengar

They're doing the voice—

Tomahawk [Lou]

HA-CHYEAAH

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I'm just trying to get—I know I'll never get to Erika's voice, but it's my North Star. It's how I guide my ship.

Erika Ishii

I will tell you right now that I had an audition for an eccentric beloved teacher the other day, and I started out with a little ad lib of, "heeeey, gang."

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Hey, now.

Erika Ishii

So if I do book that, I owe you a percentage of that—

Aabria Iyengar

Ooh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I'll get my 3%.

Tomahawk [Lou]

It's essential. You gotta get it.

Erika Ishii

We are talking today about episode two of The Wizard, the Witch and the Wild One, The Naming of Things. This was, can I just say, terrifying.

Aabria Iyengar

Terrifying. Full Stop.

Tomahawk [Lou]

Terrifying, without a doubt.

Erika Ishii

Everybody had the moment where there was a pause before Brennan spoke as the Stranger in Black.

Aabria Iyengar

Oh, my goodness.

Erika Ishii

And then he spoke as the Stranger in Black. And let me tell you, even without audio processing on that, it was scary. It was spooky scary.

Aabria Iyengar

There are so few times in a game that I will actually fall into my character in a way where actual panic that I cannot escape sets in. And there was definitely that moment after The King of Night—so many cool names—introduced himself. And I just was looking over at Erika like, "what do we do? We got to go. Oh no—I don't know what to do." There was no point at which I could get over it and be like, "oh, this is—what a cool, fun, spooky moment." I was just genuinely terrified.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It was—

Tomahawk [Lou]

I was definitely—Oh go ahead.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

No, go for it.

Tomahawk [Lou]

No no no. I'm saying a fun thing. No no no no.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

No, say something fun! I was gonna say something fun.

Tomahawk [Lou]

No no no no.

Erika Ishii

I'm the moderator for this one. Brennan, you say a thing, and then Lou, you'll say a thing.

Aabria Iyengar

I'm sorry, Tomahawk.

Tomahawk [Lou]

It has been decreed!

Erika Ishii

Tomahawk, I'm so sorry—

Tomahawk [Lou]

Yes, please Tomahawk.

Erika Ishii

Tomahawk, you will say a thing.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I actually love The Stranger. I think as Brennan, The Stranger is how I'm going to start referring to him in my own notes for him, because there were so many names, but I think it was Suvi and Ame, unless I'm much mistaken who first were like, "who's that stranger at the door?" Or something like that, right? And I just like—yeah, it was very fun playing something that, kind of titanic? Right at the top of episode two, you know what I mean? Of just being like, "oh, you're in it now. Like, it's goin', it's happening."

Erika Ishii

It was goin'.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Huge shout out—Taylor's sound design—

Aabria Iyengar

Yo!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—for the Stranger's voice. That fucking—because sometimes you just say something, and it's sort of like in that way that authors just—you're like, string some words together, what sounds poetic? "You feel his voice more on your skin than on your ears." And I'm like, I don't know what the fuck that's about. Sounds scary. And Taylor actually just sound designed it to sound like the voice on the skin more than your ears.

Aabria Iyengar
So good.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
So creepy. So good.

Tomahawk [Lou]
I remember I almost had a note for Taylor for the episode, being like, "hey, man, this might be too intense. I'm listening to this and this is unsettling. I am unsettled." And then I was like, wait, that's what we want.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Boom, boom.

Tomahawk [Lou]
Can I now say my fun thing, moderator?

Erika Ishii
Yes. You may speak, Tomahawk.

Tomahawk [Lou]
I feel like this Tomahawk thing is going to come back to bite me somehow.

Aabria Iyengar
Oh, absolutely.

Tomahawk [Lou]
There's definitely that moment with the Man in Black—The Stranger—is definitely a moment where you're like, "ooh, I'm the PC who's not in the room. But if there's a world in which my PC magically appears and does something," it's like, you have that energy that's like, "ooh, if I were there, I would—" I was, like, listening back to it and remember that moment of just being like, "if I were there, I'd draw my sword, and I'd open the door. And I'd be ready to stab." You have all those questions.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Thank God you weren't there!

Tomahawk [Lou]
Well, that's always what ends up being true. But it's just like, you want to know—you're like—everyone—it's because you're outside the scene, that you're allowed to feel the thing of like, "I fucking open the door and stab him just to see what happens!"

Aabria Iyengar
Look, I was just sitting there going, "is that what came because Suvi touched a road? FUCK!!!"

Erika Ishii
It was so interesting and fun, to have different conventions that I recognized from stories, like asking three times and saying, like, come back a year hence. Although in retrospect, like, listening to it, I was like, oh, I shoulda said a year and a day.

Aabria Iyengar
A year and a day? It's fine.

Erika Ishii

A year and a day was the thing. Damn it, okay. Because when they say a year and a day, it's like they show up on that last day after a year, right? That's got to be it, right? It can't be a year and a day and then they show up.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Sing song] It's a fun fact!

Aabria Iyengar

[Sudden shocked laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

A year—the day—

Aabria Iyengar

This better be SO goddamn fun, Brennan.

Erika Ishii

Brennan waggled his finger, and bobbed his head.

Aabria Iyengar

You could feel it. You could hear it.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Singing] It's a fun fact. Hey there! The fun fact, is that the year and a day, at least in the Celtic tradition, the reason you say "a year and a day" is that the day it's referring to is Samhain, which is the Celtic holiday that Halloween is based off of. And that because it was the new year's, it was not included in the calendar. It was considered to be not a part of the year. So that day was kept extra from the year. So I'll see you in a year and a day. That extra day is Samhain.

Aabria Iyengar

Bro. Can we have a bonus day? Can we just make one?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Bonus day. Bonus day where the people from under the hills come out. Now, what's going to happen is I'm going to take this thing that I knew as a child, and I'm going to Google it, because that is what being an Internet creator is all about? Is you're like, "every time I speak some of my knowledge into a microphone, I have to be ready for so many people to tell me—

Aabria Iyengar

That's so real.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—to tell me that that is actually NOT nature's slowest flying bird."

Erika Ishii

But the thing is too, is this is how the oral tradition happened. "Back in our day," before we had the Internet or books, even. Oral tradition would carry on, and they'd say these things, and these sort of tropes, and conventions would come about, and people would say, like, "oh, yeah, well, that's why that is, though." And you could just carry on in your ignorance and good storytelling.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah, if—

Tomahawk [Lou]

Exactly.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—if it turns out I'm wrong, ask yourself how FUN it would be if I was right.

Tomahawk [Lou]

There it is.

Aabria Iyengar

Hey, everyone, if Brennan's wrong, we could just keep it to ourselves this one time, okay?

Tomahawk [Lou]

Yeah!

Aabria Iyengar

Just a little thing for just our hearts to know.

Erika Ishii

Because if you say Brennan's wrong, you're saying that Mama Lee is wrong about something pagan and that's unconscionable.

Aabria Iyengar

Could you imagine?

Tomahawk [Lou]

Damn, bro.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Can you imagine?

Tomahawk [Lou]

Out here comin' for moms like that?

Aabria Iyengar

Comin' for moms like that?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

On Mother's Day? When is this coming out?

Aabria Iyengar
Who can say?

Tomahawk [Lou]
Bro. It's Mother's Day. We're going to release this one—we'll hold this one for Mother's Day.

Tomahawk [Lou]
We'll release it on Mother's day.

Tomahawk [Lou]
We'll do a rerelease on Mother's Day.

Aabria Iyengar
Just drop this episode again on Mother's Day.

Erika Ishii
The Mother's Day episode [Laughing] of World's Beyond Number.

Tomahawk [Lou]
Hey, I gotta ask this thing—this is not campaign related at all. How do you guys—now, this is a meme, and I know it's a meme, but it feels like it relates to everything we're talking about, with regard to how people see birds of paradise. Like the flower, or the plant.

Erika Ishii
The flower?

Aabria Iyengar
Yes. Yeah. Uh huh.

Erika Ishii
The green part is like the bottom of their face.

Tomahawk [Lou]
[Takes a beat] What? The bot—

Aabria Iyengar
I can't believe you said the only wrong one.

Erika Ishii
You asked how I see birds of paradise.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughing giddily]

Tomahawk [Lou]
Yes. And you say the green part is the bottom of their face, so that it's a bird looking like this [gestures] and the green thing—with the plumage up above it.

Erika Ishii
Yes.

Tomahawk [Lou]

So I learned today that a bunch of people don't see it that way, and they think we're silly for looking at it that way.

Erika Ishii

What?! How do they see it? Wait, here, I'm pulling it up right now.

Aabria Iyengar

Lots of people think—

Erika Ishii

The blue part is the eye, right?

Aabria Iyengar

Lots of people think that the whole green part is like, the face and beak, and the flower is just sort of a funny plumage hat.

Erika Ishii

Yeah, that's what I think.

Aabria Iyengar

Oh that's—incorrect.

Tomahawk [Lou]

That's incorrect. It is a bird dipping into the flower—

Aabria Iyengar

Into the thing, yes.

Tomahawk [Lou]

—and the flowers above are its wings—

Erika Ishii

[Disbelieving] What the Fuck...

Aabria Iyengar

Are it's wings.

Tomahawk [Lou]

—fluttering behind it.

Aabria Iyengar

Correct.

Erika Ishii

What the fuck? Nooooo.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah. Yes.

Erika Ishii

It looks like a bird. Like, there are so many flowers that have, like, sticky-outy bits on the top—

Aabria Iyengar

Sticky-outy bits.

Erika Ishii

—but then this one is specifically a flower that looks like—

Aabria Iyengar

[Incredulously] Sticky-outy bits??

Erika Ishii

Yeah. Ya know. Petals, as they are known to the scientific world, I suppose. But this one looks—it is shaped like a bird's head. You put a cockatoo up to that bird of paradise plant, it's a dead ringer.

Tomahawk [Lou]

Hey, I'm right there with you. But I'll tell you, supposedly you say that out loud, you're going to get ripped apart. They're going to come for you, and they're going to tell you that you're looking at the bird of paradise all wrong.

Erika Ishii

That's just nuts.

Aabria Iyengar

Brennan. You're with me on this, right? You saw the bird correctly? Yes?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Sighs] What are we talking about?

[Everyone breaks, full laughter]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Because—

Aabria Iyengar

Interesting.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—you're saying this like there's ONE picture of a bird of paradise that we're all referring to. Is there like, a particular picture?

Erika Ishii

The plant. The plant.

Aabria Iyengar

The plant.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
There's a plant called a bird of paradise?

[Everyone is shocked and appalled]

Tomahawk [Lou]
Woah! Woa-hohohohohoh!!

Aabria Iyengar
Oh interesting! We're walking this back a lot!

Erika Ishii
Ohhhhhh.

Tomahawk [Lou]
WOAH!!

Aabria Iyengar
Hold on—

Brennan Lee Mulligan
[Defensively] I don't know about plants, okay!?! I know about animals!

Aabria Iyengar
Hold on, this bit will not be funnier if we give more information. I think we have to let it ride here.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
God dammit. [Googling] Bird of paradise—everyone's going to tweet at me and they're gonna—

Tomahawk [Lou]
[Frenzied laughter]

Aabria Iyengar
I can't believe—

Erika Ishii
Okay well—

Aabria Iyengar
—Brennan got caught up on a plant fact!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Oh! I know about this. You're talking about *Strelitzia reginae*.

Aabria Iyengar
Stop it.

Tomahawk [Lou]
Stop. Stop.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Okay, it's a different— I thought—

Tomahawk [Lou]
We all know. We all know you didn't know.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
See that's the thing is you guys are using sort of the layman's term for it, I actually—I don't know if you guys know this—

Tomahawk [Lou]
Get this outta here. Get this energy outta here Right Now.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
—I'm a very smart little guy, so—

Tomahawk [Lou]
Nuh uh. Nuh uh.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Wait, so people—what are people confused about? I see the picture now, I know this picture it's, like an optical illusion. It's like Yanny and Laurel and people can't tell where the bird starts?

Erika Ishii
No.

Tomahawk [Lou]
Wait what?

Erika Ishii
No!

Aabria Iyengar
Wow. Deep cut.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Yeah. Like "is the dress blue and black, or white and gold?" That?

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah.

Tomahawk [Lou]
At what point do we pull the ejector?

Erika Ishii
It's more like the vase, ya know, the vase with the two face—is it a vase or is it two faces looking at each other, right?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Right.

Erika Ishii

I can understand, that the plumage of an actual birds of paradise bird, is—it looks similar to the top, of that plant to the orange part of the birds of paradise plant. Right? So I can see where it looks like one of those things dipping into the green part. But also, it's just the whole thing, looks SO bird-like.

Aabria Iyengar

I don't know man, I just dropped a link in the chat, and if you don't see the bird correctly off of that, then you just have to go home, and not do plants anymore.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So, yeah, this is the picture. And now, is discussing a picture on a podcast good? Do people like that?

Tomahawk [Lou]

I think this one's pretty tough.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah I think everyone likes it.

Tomahawk [Lou]

I think we gotta pull the—

Aabria Iyengar

We'll include the link in the episode notes.

Tomahawk [Lou]

Yes! Exactly Go down below and here, at minute around 15 or 20. I feel like we should pull the ejector seat, and go talk about cool dog. But you should get in this last point.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

There are 45 species within birds of paradise.

Aabria Iyengar

Okay, stop.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So there are lots of different kinds of birds of paradise—

Aabria Iyengar

You're making it uncool.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I'm just saying.

Erika Ishii

In the family Paradisaeidae?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

What's that?

Erika Ishii

Why are we talking about Paradisaeidae? Now?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Seventeen. Genera. Let's talk about our friend the fox!

Erika Ishii

Yeah. Also Mr. Soup.

Aabria Iyengar

Ah! Mr. Soup!

Erika Ishii

That whole scene with Mr. Soup.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I love Mr.—

Tomahawk [Lou]

My beautiful Mr. Soup. Had you guys talked about cool dog before? How much pre-talk was there? Because I remember at the table being like—

Aabria Iyengar

That's a good question.

Tomahawk [Lou]

—I remember at the table being like, DAMN! Brennan is just going like, "your familiar's a fox." And there was something—we were so deep in it at that point, because I think that was like, day two or three of playing—that I was like, "wow, I guess everyone's just cool with it!"

[Chortles from Aabria and Erika]

Tomahawk [Lou]

We had been together for two days at that point, so I was like, well, when would Brennan and Erika have slipped away to decide what Erika's familiar might be?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Um, this is—so actually, actually factually. Erika selected the Fox familiar early! Before—I think before we'd even played one time. Erika, when—

Erika Ishii

Before we'd even played, before we'd even—before you'd written the class. Yeah, I just felt like—I think this went all the way back to when we're talking about Ame, the character, and the formulation of her, and how she is kind of tricky and, you know, also tying it in with—there's so much of the symbolism, and imagery, and a sort of culture of shrine maidens, Japanese shrine maidens, the Inari.

Erika Ishii

And in that first cabin adventure, the first camp that we all did, where we were just like, talking about things, I brought Neil Gaiman's Dream Hunters, his crossover, he wrote it—the little short novel, with

Yoshitaka Amano's illustrations, and it's about a fox who is a fox spirit, kitsune. And I was like, Brennan, this is very important for my character! And, it kind of stemmed from there, I wanna say.

Tomahawk [Lou]
Mm!

Erika Ishii
But I didn't know, he was gonna be a butthole.

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah, you did. Yeah you did.

Erika Ishii
[Huffing] I didn't!

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah, you kind of did though. [Giggles]

Tomahawk [Lou]
A little bit, you knew.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I think, you know "methinks the lady doth protest too much," right? Within the wish, of "please don't be a butthole." You know the old—there's a great—I think it's a Hindu myth. There's a Hindu parable about—it's a story about an atheist, who spends all day everyday meditating, on sort of—his mantra is, "the gods are not real. The gods are not real. The gods are not real."

Brennan Lee Mulligan
And then one day he dies, and appears at the right hand of, I think it's either Vishnu or Shiva, and he's like, "wow!" He's like, "what am I doing here? I was an atheist. I can't believe you're real." And the divinity looks at him and says, "you kept the gods in your thoughts, at all times. You're one of the most devout people there's ever been."

[Everyone laughs jovially]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Which is a great parable, an awesome story! But that idea of, like—it doesn't matter if you frame a thought in the negative of "please don't be a butthole." To me, the magic of "what did you envision in that moment, and why were you worried about that?" Like, yeah, it's related to Taro a LITTLE bit.

[Aabria and Erika both chuckle]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
But also, Ame is the person who wrote "Be Kind" on her wall, and that is aspirational, but also, what do we create reminders for?

Erika Ishii
[Reciting, annoyed] The things that we're bad at.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So, you know, there's a little bit of something there, of what the familiar represents on a spiritual level, that the fox HAD to be a little con man. He had to be a little trickster guy.

Erika Ishii

The concept that started forming of—that witch's familiars are the things that they need to work on—

[Brennan laughs]

Erika Ishii

funny to me. We were like, oh, Taro was just the cranky side of Grandmother Wren. Oh no!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah. And then the fox is like, the mischievous side of Ame., It's great. Taro—like Grandma Wren devoted her life to taking care of these kids, and Ame, and the people in Toma, and the idea that her rooster is—what was Taro's big asshole thing he did, that he would show up in places and wouldn't let you catch him? Like, all things—

Tomahawk [Lou]

Pretty rude. Pretty rude.

Aabria Iyengar

It feels very much like as you grow into the sort of traditional understanding of witches being very serene, and very wise, it's so cute to have a physical reminder that you are just a little guy at the end of the day.

Erika Ishii

[Deep voice] Just a little guy.

Aabria Iyengar

As you become more the thing that people expect you to be as a witch, there is a physical reminder of, like, yeah, I'm a crafty little jackass in the corner. Can't be that all the time, but that is my heart. And it's so cool!

Erika Ishii

It's also interesting, because it took Ame in a somewhat different direction, because originally—well okay, it was twofold. Number one, we got kicked off on a very important adventure, very fast. Number two, it was—yeah, because there's the externalization of her id, it's just like, she has to be the one to step up, which is WILD.

Erika Ishii

And it's also crazy to see Brennan, say and do things, that is dead on what my character would be doing, without me telling him that's? Insane. That's insane. So thank you for that. And this episode was also the introduction to our sweetest, sad boy, now,, at this current time in the campaign of Eursulon.

Aabria Iyengar

Oh my goodness!

Tomahawk [Lou]

There it is.

Erika Ishii

Tomahawk, can you speak to that?

Aabria Iyengar

[Cackling] I forgot!

Erika Ishii

Oh, I didn't.

Tomahawk [Lou]

It's nice. It always comes back. Never forget when you asked to be called Tomahawk. No! A thrilling introduction. It's funny, we've talked about it a lot—I feel like we talked about it last time because—we talked about it last time because it was in the previews. Okay. Thank God. My Chrome's been chuggin' over here, and I was terrified that everything—I was going to lose it. It's been trying to load this picture of a bird of paradise for like, 20 minutes.

Aabria Iyengar

[Cackling]

Erika Ishii

Nooo!

Aabria Iyengar

But you did this. You did this to us.

Tomahawk [Lou]

We're in the mix, baby! It was definitely—I will say, because I thought about it last time, because the last time we talked about it, Brennan, you always say this thing where I'm like, "I didn't think it was going to be that sad." And then you're like, "well, it's the saddest thing in the world." Now, here's what I'll say.

Tomahawk [Lou]

I thought, and in my head, part of the reason I've described it as funny is because I thought we would get through more of the performance, and that was very funny to me. Is like if we did a full bit—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Wheezing laughter]

Tomahawk [Lou]

—as an ogre and a knight, I was like, that would be very funny—

Erika Ishii

[Incredulously] How would that be funnier?

Tomahawk [Lou]

Because comedic beats would have happened!

Aabria Iyengar

Explain comedy to me right now.

Tomahawk [Lou]

Yes happily. No! It's like, of course, thematically it would be sad, but the actual ACT would have been funny. BUT instead, what we got was the absolute nightmare, of your mom yelling in the middle of your middle school show, and you immediately realizing, you're on stage in tights, and everything in your life is broken.

[Aabria and Erika cannot breath from laughing]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I think what was so perfect—

[Aabria and Erika are still dying]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I think it was so perfect—first of all, I think Lou is assuming, number one, that I would be in that scene, helping him be funny, which—let me tell you right now, everything there—I'm over here just, Lou being like, "this is hilarious." And I'm over here, like, "GAH! My heart!" Like, just dying from literally the thing.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And look, Adelaide is a very comedic—he has that kind of [Professor Adelaide Voice] mid Atlantic, like, "Professor Adelaide!" Listen to what he's saying. There's a line that he said, I don't know if anyone caught or reacted to it. He said, "we make our money selling the tomatoes—

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—that the kids throw at him—

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah!

Tomahawk [Lou]

Yes!

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—at the end of the show.

Tomahawk [Lou]

Yes!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Yelling] SAD!

Tomahawk [Lou]

Hilarious! It's hilarious!

[Brennan chokes from laughing]

Aabria Iyengar

I heard that, Aabria took it personally, and then went, I'm going to ruin this man's entire career.

Tomahawk [Lou]

Hilarious!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Wait, can we talk for a second about Suvi, busting into that fuckin' wagon?

Aabria Iyengar

Thank you for letting me have that.

Erika Ishii

Mm. Intimidating Suvi.

Aabria Iyengar

Look. Suvi was not trained for emotional things. That's Ame's job. I can solve—like, I feel like in that moment, I was my dad, who, in lieu of ever apologizing for anything—

Tomahawk [Lou]

Oh I do love that moment, yes.

Aabria Iyengar

—washes my car, instead of ever apologizing. So I was like, I'm going to go wash the car real quick.

Tomahawk [Lou]

I do love your description in that moment of being like, I can't fix this. I can fix this other thing. Like that—just like, I'm going to go deal with the things I can handle alright? I know how to turn the hose on. And I got soap. I got lots of soap.

[Aabria and Erika are wheezing with laughter]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Lots of soap. Well, I feel like it's great, too, i mean this is—it's only episode two, right? And in a campaign this long, the first twenty episodes are going to be like, developing pieces on a chessboard, right? If you're planning to go for, like, 100 plus episodes, then you still—you have so many episodes of just like, "we're developing pieces, developing pieces." And watching Suvi's contempt for bad hedge magic, I feel like.

Aabria Iyengar

[Giddy laughter]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It puts the scene at the Citadel—that's what's so fun about this kind of longform world building, is seeing professor Adelaide's wagon and being like, "the arcane lock on his chest is filled with glue, and there's just a secret compartment at the bottom."

[Wheezing cackle from Aabria]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

When you've seen the Citadel, when you've seen the Citadel—so it's the idea of like, understand what the Citadel means. Now, in episode two, when Suvi is like, just busting open a shitty fuckin'—you know, like. It was so badass. And just what did you say to Adelaide that made him sprint into the field? I forget what it was. It was—

Aabria Iyengar

[Whispering] I don't remember.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Suvi's very intimidating. Very very intimidating.

Aabria Iyengar

I'm sure that will last forever.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Bright laugh]

Aabria Iyengar

She's so scary. And nothing will be scarier than her, probably.

Erika Ishii

Also the fact that she looks like Eursulon's sister too, at that moment.

Aabria Iyengar

That is—I forgot about that. And it was like, oh, what a fun context!

Erika Ishii

Big, scary-ass sister comes a callin'

Aabria Iyengar

Little big sister's like [Badass voice] "fuckin' move."

Tomahawk [Lou]

There it is.

Aabria Iyengar

"Give me my brother."

Brennan Lee Mulligan

It was—no, I—so wait, for Aabria and Erika. Talk me through the moment where you guys—because Eursulon is on stage, rolls an Insight Check, sees the two of you in the crowd, and your reactions were so perfect, and so honest. When I'm playing as the DM, I'm always thinking—you spend more time bird's eye, right?

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah.

Erika Ishii

Mm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Your reactions were so accurate, so loving, but also, like, sniper bullet, to be the thing that would be the most heartbreaking for Eursulon. Like, pity, disgust, shame—

Tomahawk [Lou]

The way you described your faces was. My nightmare.

[Cackling]

Tomahawk [Lou]

[Indignantly] You took my Funny Scene, and you revealed how sad it was!

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughing] I know, I'm sorry! I'm so sorry!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

When you did that, was that just honest, like, "I am in character and this is the honest self-reporting of the emotion I'm feeling?" Or did you have a bird's eye view of like, "Oh, this is going to demolish Eursulon?"

Aabria Iyengar

Like, I'm going to be honest, I was trying to hurt his feelings. [Breaks down laughing]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Wheezing]

Tomahawk [Lou]

Worked. Worked. Worked.

Aabria Iyengar

I just wanted that thing of like, accidentally just causing way more collateral damage, in a moment. I think there is that—yeah. I don't wanna get—Yes. I just wanted to hurt your feelings, I'm sorry.

Tomahawk [Lou]

No. My feelings deserve to be hurt.

Aabria Iyengar

No!!

Erika Ishii

No, he did that to us, though. He did it. He did it to us. I will say that, I think whenever I am playing, I have a couple of brains going—or like a couple of parts, in the theater of the mind, going at the same time. Of course, yes, there's the performer, and you have to be what's honest to the character. But you always do have to have—or at least I do—like a little bit of a bird's eye view.

Erika Ishii

And it might not always be conscious, but it's like, Where are we going—where's the story going next? How will other people react to this? What makes most sense? Sort of—I mean, even producer brain, too, of like, oh, we have a guest next episode, or something like, in other productions. Right. How do we get

from point A to point B? And that one was like, mostly, I wanna say, honest character reaction. So that was the acting brain, acting part of the theater of the mind.

Erika Ishii

But then also a little bit of the storytelling writer brain, because yeah, I think if it had been just PURE character, Ame would be able to compose her face. You know, emotions would have been kept in check if she saw Eursulon looking. But yeah, Erika being like, that—I definitely want to see what happens when Eursulon sees the saddest expressions on his friend's faces.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Perfect. Just perfect.

Erika Ishii

There's so much of that too—the storytelling brain part—that we only kind of discover later. Or like, Aabria will say something, and I'll be like, "Oh my god, we did do that."

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Mhm.

Aabria Iyengar

[Giggles]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Unbelievable. It was such a beautiful moment. And it was the moment of our characters meeting, as adults for the first time.

Aabria Iyengar

[Sweetly] Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

That was the moment of their meeting!

Erika Ishii

Oh my god.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

God, it's so great, and you're all together, and it feels so cool! I love it! Should we do some questions?

Erika Ishii

Yeah. [Clears throat]

Aabria Iyengar

Oh sure!

Aabria Iyengar

I also want to say just a quick shout out to the beginning of the Fox's, just absolute—like, literal fox is my favorite thing. The little interaction with "can you give us a second?" Between Ame and the fox was my favorite thing. I went back and listened to that several times because it's just such a cute moment.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

There is—it's so funny. There are some characters I play that make me feel, like, relaxed in certain ways. There's a couple of them I've done, like, Dimension 20, other places. The Fox. It's such a relaxing thing to Turn Off. The thing that I'm turning off in my brain when I'm playing the Fox is sort of like. Like, it's almost like ego, or like, worry about social—just truly like a huge energy of just like, I'm good. Yeah, man, I'm good.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

There's a— of just him being— of you like, "Can you give me a second?" And he's like, "Yeah! Oh, you want me to leave." Like, having the thing—

Aabria Iyengar

[Chortle]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Also, thinking about the fox's voice—it was funny, I was going over a bunch of different voices in my head, and ended up going with kind of a slightly altered version of my own voice? Or just like—it's my voice, but with a little of emotional affect in it. And I don't know if anyone—especially like Erika with all of your VO background. There's a little homage in how kind of, un-affected his voice is—

Erika Ishii

Yes, yes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—to Phil Hartman, who did the English dub of Kiki's Cat, from Kiki's Delivery Service.

Erika Ishii

[Laughing] Aww.

Aabria Iyengar

Aww! Jiji!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

If you look at—[Phil Hartman voice] he just kind of sounds like Phil Hartman! He's just a guy—now he plays him a little anxious. So the idea of taking his voice, and not doing anything cat-like, but being like, I'm just going to give a little bit of an emotional affect to this. So there's a little bit of the Phil Hartman—

Aabria Iyengar

Aww

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—homage in the Fox's voice of like, yeah, if magic made you suddenly be able to talk, maybe you'd be like, "Hey, it's me! I'm a guy!"

Erika Ishii

Just a guy!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Just a guy! Just a small quadru—

Aabria Iyengar

It's also the most terrifying thing in the world, because I think there's a bunch of fans of like, D20, and other stuff that you've run Brennan, that have a natural fear of whenever you do your own voice? That that's actually the scariest thing in the world. Like, oh no.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Mimicking] Oh no!

Aabria Iyengar

And I remember having that first little beat drop, I was like, "Uh oh. It just sounds like Brennan. This fox is going to kill us all."

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Cackling]

Aabria Iyengar

I will die by this fox's little paws. Alright!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Well, it's very funny, I've been having to—this campaign was an opportunity for me to rethink some of that, because I've seen that go around of like, "Brennan uses his own voice!" And so I gave a little bit—not to say that we know everything about The Stranger, but you'll notice that he's got a little bit of a twang—there's a little, twangy, kinda thing to his voice a little bit. And I was like, ooh, yeah. I do default to giving villains—I feel like villains and people's love interests, I oftentimes gift my voice to, so I was like, oh, gotta switch it up a little bit!

Erika Ishii

Ope!

Aabria Iyengar

What does that say about you?

Erika Ishii

Hoo hoo hoo.

Tomahawk [Lou]

Yeah that second one's pretty—okay.

Aabria Iyengar

I want the therapy of this right now.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Sternly] You are forbidden to examine that.

[Aabria and Erika belt out laughing]

Tomahawk [Lou]

Okay! Alright!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You are forbidden!

Tomahawk [Lou]
No! My brain is thinking about the thing!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I think Villains and Love Interests are the same! DON'T! Look into that!

Erika Ishii
[Loudly cackling] Ideally, yes.

[Everyone laughs]

Erika Ishii
Okay, well, to deflect from Brennan's little reveal there.

Tomahawk [Lou]
Quick! Quick!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
[Harried] Quick, quick. Deflect, deflect!

Erika Ishii
Let's look at a couple of these questions. There are still, there are THOUSANDS of them.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Thank you, everyone, for all the awesome questions. Absolutely.

Aabria Iyengar
Thank you thousands!

Erika Ishii
Thank you so much. It's truly lovely. Actually, this is jumping off of the Fox. Brennan, you were talking about how the Fox is just kind of completely unfiltered, without any sort of socialization at all, which makes sense, but how—this is something I'm wondering, and also Zach is wondering: "Do you have advice for improvising dialogue? I often catch myself giving up, and saying, 'this person relays to you, "fill in the information" instead of playing things out. I was very impressed with how Fox always has an answer to stump us." And for Tomahawk and Aabria, same question will go to you. So think about that.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Wait, so sorry. The question's from who?

Erika Ishii
Zach. Pronounced Zack.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
From Zach.

Erika Ishii
Thank you Zach.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Give me that one more time.

Erika Ishii
"Do you have advice for improvising dialogue. I often catch myself giving up, and saying, 'this person relays to you "information"' instead of playing things out."

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Zach, that's a great question. I could give you a pat answer. I could give you like, you know "just dream your heart! And follow the stars!"

Aabria Iyengar
[sudden shocked laughter]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
The truth is, if you want to get better at extemporaneous dialogue, I would recommend improv classes. Just straight up. Like, in terms of improvising dialogue. Improv classes, public speaking classes. YouTube tutorials are great, but I would say, in the same way that you can read 100 books on running, and you won't be able to run a marathon, ingesting information is not going to do what it sounds like you need, which is just reps. Reps, and practice, at extemporaneously creating dialogue. Practice is not fun—or it can be, what am I saying? Practice is very fun. It can be.

Aabria Iyengar
I mean, sometimes it can be a little rough, I think you were being fair.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Yeah, practice can be fun and it can be rough, but ultimately. It sounds like a cliché, but there really ain't nothing to it but to do it. And if you want to supplement the time you're already spending doing it at your roleplaying tables, then there are a lot of complementary practices, like improv, like acting, like public speaking, and the more extemporaneous ones, like improvisation in particular, can help with that creative performance—like making it up, as you are saying it.

Erika Ishii
Aabria, you are a master of being able to do dialogue in character, but also still move the story forward, in a lot of your games. You're incredible at it.

Aabria Iyengar
Oh my god thank you!

Erika Ishii
Do you have any advice for that specifically? Because they're asking about how to relay information, but without making it seem out of character.

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah, well, one, thank you VERY much. That was very nice. I'm going to clip that and listen to it at night, when I'm nervous. I think for me, it's always having like, the line. There's always one line, that if I can get

to, and ramble toward—if I can hit it, it's a piece of information. It's like a good metaphor, or an analogy. And you have that like, "Okay, how am I going to get there? Doesn't really matter."

Aabria Iyengar

The way people normally speak is like you're moving towards a point, you start with the end in mind. And I think if you treat all of your extemporaneous discussion, as a character, or as an NPC, with that same compassion for yourself, where you're like, "oh, I just wanted to get to this last line, and I'll kind of ramble to get there." I think it takes a lot of pressure off of being profound in every sentence, which for me is the thing that makes me nervous.

Aabria Iyengar

You don't have to be profound the whole time. You just have to hit a strong point at the end. So if you keep that in mind—even write it down. Sometimes I will be in the middle of talking, and I'll come up with where I want to end and give myself a little note to be like, okay, end there. But that's also because I have ADHD. And I'll just ramble if you let me, like I'm doing right now.

Erika Ishii

That's incredible. Tomahawk, this is your one chance to change back to Lou Wilson, if you would care to do so.

Tomahawk [Lou]
[Dramatically] Never!

Erika Ishii
All right, well, Tomahawk—

Tomahawk [Lou]
I should change back, but no.

Erika Ishii
Okay. Tomahawk, same broad question for you, but also, you are so good at making a button, that is very quotable. I see your quotes online constantly. Do the buttons come first, like with what Aabria does? Or is it just something that happens in the course of the conversation?

Tomahawk [Lou]
Alright, first off, these compliments are out of control.

Aabria Iyengar
They're so good—uh!

Lou Wilson
I mean god damn!

Erika Ishii
Let me tell you. It comes from—you know, I did Marvel red carpets here. So you got to kiss some ass to get some interesting information.

Tomahawk [Lou]
Ok, well. I feel it.

Erika Ishii

I mean it though. I mean every word.

Tomahawk [Lou]

I feel it. But no, I mean I think—I think I—I do think—budlebudleboh. Bing!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Breathless laugh]

Tomahawk [Lou]

It's definitely—my tip or thought in this space is patience, and giving it to yourself. I think sometimes—kind of to what Brennan is saying, when everyone at the table is watching you, or looking at you, there is the feeling of like, "I should be talking, I gotta be talking. Everyone is looking at me. Talk!" And I think giving yourself that space—

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughing] That's so real.

Tomahawk [Lou]

To either, describe something for a second, while you let your dialogue thoughts catch up to your—just giving yourself that space to internalize the moment, so that you can think about what—literally talking about what's around a character, I think sometimes, or what the character is doing, can kind of ground you in the thing they would say next.

Tomahawk [Lou]

But I think it's also feeling comfortable being like, I need 10 seconds or 5 seconds or a few moments to think about what it is—the next thing that I want to say, or how they would respond to the information they were just given. PCs, of course, can just fly off the handle because they're PCs, and they're loose, and whatever happens, you'll make them roll dice.

Erika Ishii

[Mischievous Giggle]

Tomahawk [Lou]

But I think as a DM, sometimes you do find yourself in that space where you're like, "oh, what you just said is actually significant enough that the quip answer that I would give to you [clicks tongue] now is not actually what the character would say," so take those 10 seconds. But I also very much agree with everything that's been said, especially with regard to just nothing to it but to do it.

Erika Ishii

Yeah. I also came up through improv, though not as [Intensely] intensely as Tomahawk and Brennan.

Tomahawk [Lou]

Your commitment to Tomahawk is unbelievable. Unbelievable.

Aabria Iyengar

Erika is the best moderator. Here's the thing. What if we make them do all of these? Because I was imagining in my head a rotating thing, but now I don't wanna.

Erika Ishii

You know, what? If that is something that people would like—this could be, ya know, "Brennan runs the first campaign, I run the first segment of being moderator for talk-backs."

Aabria Iyengar

I like this.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Oooh!

Tomahawk [Lou]

I like that.

Erika Ishii

[Giggling]

Aabria Iyengar

I like this a lot!

Tomahawk [Lou]

I like that the fans are getting to hear our negotiations, our internal negotiations. It's part of the Fireside.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I like it! I like that.

Erika Ishii

I feel like, yeah, everything that I have learned, in my career of hosting, has led to this moment. Getting to talk with my friends! I would say that for dialogue, it's still, yeah, I have those moments of like, "oh god, respond! Respond! Your friends are talking to you." But for improv, what helped me most was listening and relaxing.

Erika Ishii

That was such an important component of it. Instead of thinking about what I'm going to say next, or how I'm going to reply, I have to listen to what somebody says to me before I can reply. And it just happens a lot more organically that way. I think the trap you tend to fall into with, especially with comedy, is the idea of "I have to tell jokes" or "I have to say something profound" or "I have to have something," but sometimes the funniest thing you can do is just respond honestly. I think some of my favorite moments—my favorite quotes—have been from just responding directly to something.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah.

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Aabria Iyengar

Hell yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Honest self reporting. Honest self reporting.

Erika Ishii

Honest self reporting. Somewhat—a related question, from Deese Poly, which is a great name, is: "When starting a session or a campaign, what is a good way to get into character? Where do the ideas for your characters come from?" And I wanted to—especially because we've talked a little bit about where the ideas for characters came from, but generally speaking, how DO you get into a character?

Aabria Iyengar

Ooh.

Erika Ishii

Aabria.

Aabria Iyengar

Ah! Hah. This is the fun thing of like, I wish I could take five to 10 seconds to think, but we're not going to edit this so I'll talk until I have an answer. My real answer, and I always think it's so, like, I try very hard to not talk about it, is that I have a character doc that gets loaded up whenever I think about things, and I read through all of it and add to it all the time.

Aabria Iyengar

I'm quite obnoxious sitting and watching any sort of media at home. And if it reminds me of anything about any character that's sort of in flux, or in play, I will sort of add it to the doc. So a lot of my getting into character is going over the big Google Doc, and listening to the playlist, and trying to sink into the touchstones that help me feel like my character in any given moment. But that's just a lot of work. So I don't know if there's a good answer other than make a really beefy Google Doc.

Erika Ishii

Here's the thing, though, is I think a lot of people WANT the answer to be "Ya know, you just feel it in your heart, and you listen to music and stuff." But it really is work. I mean, what we're doing is work. You know, it's art—

Aabria Iyengar

I Manchurian Candidate myself to get into character like Raymond Prentiss Shaw. Get in there.

Erika Ishii

Yeah. It's art and it's fun—

Tomahawk [Lou]

DEEP cut reference.

Aabria Iyengar

Thank you

Tomahawk [Lou]

Love it, love it, love it. Let's—ey, we're dropping the Manchurian Candidate, alright?

Erika Ishii

Oh, my god, that was it!

Tomahawk [Lou]

I hope you all are keeping up. I hope y'all are with 2004's finest.

Aabria Iyengar

Yes! I love that movie. UGH!

Erika Ishii

Oh! I was thinking of the Angela Lansbury one.

Aabria Iyengar

Oh, the OG one.

Erika Ishii

The OG one. It was so scary. I saw it when I was a kid, and it kind of stuck with me. For my life.

Aabria Iyengar

The remakes got Meryl Streep, and Jeffrey Wright, and Denzel Washington.

Tomahawk [Lou]

And Denzel.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah!

Erika Ishii

[Gasp]

Aabria Iyengar

And what's his name? I can't remember. [Uncertainly] Liev Schreiber. There we go. We got there.

Tomahawk [Lou]

Liev Schreiber, yeah.

Erika Ishii

Woah.

Aabria Iyengar

it's really good.

Erika Ishii

Yeah. If I could just snap my fingers, and just drop into character, I think that would be it. But I think the build up to building the character, does a lot of that work for me. And then, yeah, like, listen to the playlist—and I also have a character doc that's like, big and beefy, and anytime I'm walking through my day, and I think of something, or I think of like, "oh, yeah, that's what" something or, "ooh, I just spotted a theme" that's good to explore, I toss it in the document.

Erika Ishii

Yeah, there's sort of the nitty gritty bones of it. And then other things like, music, and vocal warm ups and, you know—

Aabria Iyengar

[Gasp] You do vocal warm ups? [Whispering] Oh that's so smart.

Erika Ishii

Oh by which I mean like, I'll sing along in the car, or—

Aabria Iyengar

Aww!

Erika Ishii

—just sort of like, you know, for voiceover a lot of times, they play you reference, before you come back. Especially if it's been a couple of days, a week or even months, since you've done the character, they'll play you audio from your last session, and you can click into it again, and you'll do a listen and repeat.

Tomahawk [Lou]

Mm. I like that.

Erika Ishii

Tomahawk, how do you get into character?

Tomahawk [Lou]

I'm the opposite. I've only made a Google doc for one character ever. And it was because I was having—

Aabria Iyengar

[Hungry for the gossip] Who was it?

Tomahawk [Lou]

—I'm not going to say.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughs]

Erika Ishii

[Disappointed] Aww!

Tomahawk [Lou]

But it was because I was having a hard time connecting intuitively to the emotions of the character.

Aabria Iyengar

Gotcha.

Tomahawk [Lou]

And so I was like, I need to Manchurian myself into, kind of that space, because I'm actually having trouble connecting it to, what feel like realistic emotions and feelings that I have in my own life. But I would say, my thing is more that I'm just not in character for about the first 35 seconds that I'm talking in any given session.

Tomahawk [Lou]

And then once I have gotten enough data to ping my intuition off of, with regard to the parts of myself that I pull from the character, we're locked and loaded, and we fly from there.

Aabria Iyengar
Oh that's so real.

Tomahawk [Lou]
But I would say the first, like, 30 seconds you hear me talking in character, in any given piece of D&D content I've ever done is me being like, alright I—unless I've been playing during the day, like on a back to back, like, Dimension 20 day? That first session, it was in that. And by the second one, I'm like, here we go. Let's fly

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah.

Tomahawk [Lou]
Or, too, for Worlds Beyond Number. But it's like those first 35 seconds of a day in character, is me pinging the data I'm getting, against the feelings that I tie to the character, finding the chord, and then just—then we improvise.

Aabria Iyengar
Mmm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Hell yeah. Let me know by the way, because I've seen—this is not from a particular question from the sheet, but just from questions I've seen floating around in space, if we have a second for—[Singing a little song] It's Brennan's story time clean up minute! I'm just gonna do little songs.

Erika Ishii
I also have some of that too. And yeah, if anybody's looking through the doc, and sees something that they want to address, please feel free to bring it up, or put it in the chat and—or if there are things generally you want to discuss about the episode or things, please always bring that up. But for this one how did you get into characters-uh? So many characters.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Who me? How do I do it?

Erika Ishii
Yeah!

Tomahawk [Lou]
How do you do it?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I feel like—when I was, like, three years old, my dad called my mom and said, Brennan has been the Tin Man for three days. And I'm worried.

Erika Ishii
[Screams]

Aabria Iyengar
I was muted, and you can't hear how loud I just screamed at that.

Erika Ishii

I screamed. You could hear that. Oh. My god.

Aabria Iyengar

I believe that. With my whole heart.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah. I used to—

Erika Ishii

Did we discuss this? Brennan did we discuss this, that I lived in my Dorothy costume?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I didn't know that! Oh my god!

Erika Ishii

My mom is, like a collector of Wizard of Oz memorabilia, and I loved Dorothy, and so I had a little Dorothy costume, and then we went to, I think it was the Oz Festival, the Wizard of Oz festival in—somewhere in the Midwest. And she put me in a little Dorothy costume contest, or something, with all these other little girls. And I was the only one that did not have actual brown curly hair and stuff, and I was the only one, like, absolutely running amok amongst the other gingham-clad girls. I played Wizard of Oz so much, oh my god. Oh, my god that's wild. Anyway, please continue. So you just do it?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

No, for sure. I would run around pretending to be Sir Gareth of Orkney, who's an Arthurian knight. Wild times back in New York up in the Upper West Side.

Erika Ishii

Why Gareth?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You know... I was three, so you're going to have to take it up with a tiny little version of me.

Aabria Iyengar

[Cackles] You little nerdlet!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Okay, Sir Gareth of Orkney—there was a children's book called The Kitchen Knight, and Gareth of Orkney worked in the kitchens of Camelot and so was like a—had a humble story.

Tomahawk [Lou]

And three year old you was like—

Aabria Iyengar

I resonate with that

Tomahawk [Lou]

—even at three years old, you were like this. This is—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I had a strong proletarian—yeah. I was like, This Guy.

Tomahawk [Lou]

"I don't care about the round table, alright? I care about the man who puts food on it!"

[Everyone laughs]

Erika Ishii

That's. So good.

Aabria Iyengar

That's a banger of a line, by the way.

Tomahawk [Lou]

Hey, I'll write for three year old—Brennan, you want me to do your biopic, you call me, bro, I got you, dude, I'm in your head. I'm like you with Erika, bro. I know exactly what you're thinkin'!

[Laughing]

Erika Ishii

[Screams joyously]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I love it. It's great—all of us has one other person that we're fully mind reading at all times, and it's a little closed loop.

Tomahawk [Lou]

[Hearty laugh]

Aabria Iyengar

Mhm. Mhm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Which is just to say, that I feel like—I feel like I have spent some kind of percentage of my life as other people, that is probably pretty, staggering. Just between hours logged playing D&D.

Erika Ishii

Oh my god.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Larping, performing. It's not a competition, but I would just say that there's a lot of time spent.

Tomahawk [Lou]

[Chuckle]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I would not be surprised if I have a—way on the other side of the bell curve of "hours clocked being made up people."

Tomahawk [Lou]
Who are you in your dreams?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
In my dreams?

Aabria Iyengar
[Shocked, Coughing Laugh] Oh my god!!

Erika Ishii
Jesus Christ.

Tomahawk [Lou]
Are we turning this into group therapy session?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Tomahawk, you need to fuckin' relax! [Breathless laugh]

Tomahawk [Lou]
[Yelling] who are you in your dreams, bro?!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
[Deep, Menacing Voice] Who are you in your dreams.

Erika Ishii
I would argue that all of those hours spent playing other people, are a self exploration, for Brennan.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Yes! Of course!

Erika Ishii
Some people think of acting, or use acting as a way to escape from their own lives. I think the best, use it as a method of introspection.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I—and well—I think that there's—I don't think there's anything "self-loathing about ego destruction? Does that make sense? There's nothing about destroying your ego that means you don't like yourself. I think I'm just fine. I got no complaints. But it is very fun to have that sense of self melt away.

Erika Ishii
Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
That's actually the most fun thing. It's the thing—if I had a choice between doing something as me, or doing something where I got to not be me for a little while, that's—the number one hobby I've pursued in my life is not being myself. So I don't know what that says. But.

Tomahawk [Lou]
I just want to take us back to an earlier moment where Aabria's answer to this question was, "I make a word document," and now my man is talking about ego death.

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Ego death!

Tomahawk [Lou]
This is why the four of us fit together, guys. I'll tell ya—

Brennan Lee Mulligan
There's a moment—

Tomahawk [Lou]
—we cover the spectrum.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
There's a moment where you're on stage, or where you're at the table, and the little you inside of your head, that is managing your day to day activities and sort of logging them, in the story of you, the you that watches yourself from within. There's a moment where you're on stage, or at the table, or any other kind of performance, where that thing melts. Where the sugar stirs into the tea and dissolves, and all of a sudden you are existing in a state of being, released from the burden of identity and ego. And, boy, what a tasty little dessert that is. Yum yum!

Aabria Iyengar
A fact. Just my last note on that is—because I've had people ask how I went from sports to this, and it's because it's the same thing. Sports is high level performance, and that same sort of like—they call it the zone more often than not in sports—but it's that same ego death.

Erika Ishii
Flow.

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah and Flow. Yeah. So we all just out here seeking flow, baby!

Erika Ishii
I. Crave. That.

Tomahawk [Lou]
We all seek Flow.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I want to be melted into the everything. And I'm not gonna say I'm sorry for that. Little story time—I'm going to do a little story time roundup here in episode two.

Erika Ishii
[Sing-song] Story time roundup!

Aabria Iyengar
Wait, is there a song for the segment?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Sing-song] It's Story Time Clean Up Minute! Which is I've seen a couple questions floating around about the nature of departing from Toma, in search of Eursulon, and a lot of people were like, "what of the villagers of Toma!?" This is one of those things—the casualty, I think, of when we recorded these episodes at camp, because this was established potentially off mic. So this was resolved, but I don't think was resolved in front of a microphone, sadly. Daomei, Mr. Soup is going—

Aabria Iyengar

[Crying] Mr. Soup!

Erika Ishii

Yes, that's right! I remember that part, yeah yeah yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yes yes yes. So unfortunately, I think some people were left with a little bit of "Ugh! I'm worried!" Fear not, you wonderful friends of the show, and our amazing patrons. Any villagers that come seeking the aid of Grandmother Wren will be able to mourn her, with a wonderful and strange old man, tending to the cottage—

Erika Ishii

[Breathlessly] oh my god!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—which will be, of course, Mr. Soup in his glamoured form.

Aabria Iyengar

[Crying]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So Mr. Soup's looking after the chickens. So the cottage is in good hands. That's why—the shrine on the hill has long looked after the house, so all as well, as Ame, and Suvi, and Eursulon, and the Fox, are runnin' around together. So never you fear, wonderful listeners.

Erika Ishii

I love Mr. Soup.

Aabria Iyengar

[Crying] I love Mr. Soup so much.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Oh, and there's actually—wait, there was a question too, that—speaking of glamour, that I actually—hold on. [Sing-song] There was another one! And we're looking for it! And it's story time! Where did you go? Story time. Buh buh bah buh buh bah.

Aabria Iyengar

I have a question for Tomahawk. Do you think—while you look this up. Do you think that Eursulon's glamour looking like Suvi's brother? Like, when they finally reunited? How correct do you think it was?

Erika Ishii
[Gasp] Ohhhhhh!

Aabria Iyengar
Or did you make some guesses and then you're like, oh, puberty did not go the way I thought it would for you.

[Aabria and Erika dissolve into laughter]

Tomahawk [Lou]
I mean if anything—WOAH! Hachi machi! No—

[Everyone laughs for a second]

Tomahawk [Lou]
I think I'm pretty close. The decision to look like your brother, I think happens in the Children's Adventure, when maybe the baker comes by?

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah! Lohan!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Lohan the Baker, yes.

Tomahawk [Lou]
When Lohan comes by, I think the decision is like, "of the children I can look like I'm like, well i'll probably"—there's a moment where I'm like, I'm going to look like Suvi's sibling? So I think I'm probably still close. I bet we have the same body type? I bet facially we're maybe not. I'm sure I lost some stuff in the nose. I'm sure I made some guesses on the nose and the mouth. But I bet, in terms of stature and like—I bet we look mostly like siblings, but if somebody looked at us, they'd be like, oh, I bet he's got a little bit more of his dad in him, and she's got a little bit more of her mom.

Erika Ishii
Awww. Yeah, you're siblings, not twins.

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I would also say I love people being like "Eursulon! His glamour looks like Suvi's brother! Has anyone commented on it or noticed it? Or is anyone going to say, like, hey, are you—" and I just want you to think about the—I know this is a fantasy world—the fucking chutzpah to walk up and be like, "yo you two. You guys related? You—straight up, you're brother and sister?" How many shots are you guys, listening to this, calling like that in your day to day life, that you're walkin' up—

Tomahawk [Lou]
Okay, can I be real?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Yeah.

Tomahawk [Lou]

Can I be real, though? I was at the pickleball courts yesterday, and I did almost do it.

[Screaming laughter]

Tomahawk [Lou]

There were these two bald guys, who looked like straight up brothers. And then, one of them was like, "I'm gonna go." And the other one was like, chastising him and being like, "don't leave." And I was like, I really wanted to ask, because it was just—I don't know, it was just two bald guys who looked of the exact same height, both wearing glasses—

Tomahawk [Lou]

[Cackling]

Tomahawk [Lou]

—and I was like, "These guys gotta be brothers." I did NOT do it. But I really thought about it!

Erika Ishii

Sometimes that happens, and you're like, "Should I ask?" And then they kiss or something, and you're like, "Ope, I'm glad I didn't!"

Tomahawk [Lou]

There it is.

Erika Ishii

Speaking of looks, real quick, I'm not going to clean this up for right now, but I realized I never said on mic what adult Ame looks like.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

What!? No, that can't be true. Didn't you?

Erika Ishii

It is—no

Aabria Iyengar

just a little mystery.

Erika Ishii

A lot of it's, like, contextual, but, yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

We have character art, I guess so people saw Lorena's—

Erika Ishii

They did see the character art, but—and I also described baby Ame, but like, I realized I never—

Aabria Iyengar
Whoops!

Erika Ishii
Oop! Oop!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Whoops!

Erika Ishii
Alright. What were you saying? You had one more question, Brennan?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Oh, I was gonna say well—I was going to say that there's a fra—of thinking about telling people—I'm just gonna—I'm gonna opine. I know this is not what this show is about.

Erika Ishii
[Laughing hard]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
This is just now—now you're listening to like, a morning radio show. I'm just going to opine. This is how I feel, this is a personal philosophy. I've nev—when people say, "hey, are you guys related?" Or when people go like, "hey, you know what celebrity you look like?" Here's a phrase I use in my head that stops me from ever saying that. It's "What's the best case scenario?"

Erika Ishii
[Cackling]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
What's the best case scenario? You go up and you say—because, there are a lot of worst case scenarios! Maybe you say a celebrity that that person, doesn't find attractive, or they don't think looks that good. Or maybe you say something like, "Are you guys related?" And the answer is "No. Why would you think that?" And it's just—I think there's a phrase, "What's in it for me?" That is normally said by villains in a very [Mobster Voice] "What's in it for me?" Kinda way. But I think sometimes, in terms of politeness and manners, that's not a bad little sentence to run through in your head—

Aabria Iyengar
[Impressed] That's good.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
—and go like, "huh. What's in it for me if I tell this person that I think they look like some other kind of person? How does that—what's sorta the big jackpot here of that interaction?"

Erika Ishii
For the record, I do not— I only SOUND like Akwafina, sometimes. And I would argue even more like Natasha Lyonne! Ya know?

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah, if you smoked more. For sure.

Erika Ishii
Yeah, if I smoked more.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Not a lot of red-headed—

Tomahawk [Lou]
Erika, ya gotta start smoking more. We've all been talking about it.

Erika Ishii
If that'll make me more like Natasha Lyonne, then. Yeah. Light it up!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Wait oh—there's a question here. I actually can't see the end of the question, unfortunately.

Tomahawk [Lou]
Is it the firbolg one?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Yes. It's from Jerrad T. Thank you, Jerrad T. "Absolutely love Lou and all he does. Question about Eursulon does his glamour match the disguise time limit of a firbolg? And then the question gets cut off in the in the little excel sheet. But—I think Lou, the decision we made that I kind of like—

Aabria Iyengar
I'm sorry, his name is Tomahawk?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Sorry, Tomahawk. The decision we made, Tomahawk—is Tomahawk a different guy from Lou? What's the bit?

Tomahawk [Lou]
No, same guy. Same guy.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Same guy different name.

Tomahawk [Lou]
We've walked into a space in which Lou, emerges, from the waters of transformation. As Tomahawk.

[Everyone is struggling to breathe]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
As Tomahawk, okay!

Tomahawk [Lou]
But your question?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
We decided—and I think this is something that—

Tomahawk [Lou]
Yes, it is.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

There's nothing that I think is blanket true of all spirits, right? One of the things we talked about when thinking about the spirit world, was the beautiful idea of exceptions, and the idea that more things—there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in your philosophy, kind of ideal behind the spirit world. But in general, spirits tend to have a single glamour.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So, in other words, unlike a normal firbolg in 5e, that can cast a very limited Disguise Self, that ends after a certain amount of time. Eursulon's Disguise Self is limitless, but is always the same figure. It is THAT human figure, that looks like Suvi's brother with the red hair. And that is what Eursulon—Eursulon's glamour is a fixed thing.

Tomahawk [Lou]
Fixed! Locked in!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Locked in, baby.

Erika Ishii
Incredible.

Tomahawk [Lou]
Always going to be—always the PERFECT amount of rugged stubble.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
[Sultry] Yeah.

Erika Ishii
Yeah.

Aabria Iyengar
Bless you. Thank you.

Erika Ishii
Well, this has been our talkback episode for episode two, The Naming of Things. Thank you so much, Brennan, and Aabria, and Tomahawk. I'm Erika Ishii, and thank you all so, so, SO much for supporting our Fireside for Worlds Beyond Number.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You're the best. Thank you so much.

Aabria Iyengar
Yay!

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

Erika Ishii
Goodbye!

Aabria Iyengar
Buh bye!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Goodbye!

Tomahawk [Lou]
CHYAOW!!

[Music fades out]