

Worlds Beyond Number

Fireside Chat: Episode 003 - The Children's Adventure

Final Version

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

Erika Ishii

Hello, everyone. Welcome to the Fireside for Worlds Beyond Number: the Wizard, the Witch and the Wild One. Today we are covering the Children's Adventure. I'm Erika Ishii, and I am here with Brennan Lee Mulligan, Aabria Iyengar, and Lou Wilson.

Lou Wilson

No, it'll actually be Mr. Børg today.

Erika Ishii

Mr. Boric? Boric?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Mr.—?

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Mr. Børg, Børg. B-O-R-G.

Erika Ishii

Oh, Mr. Børg!

Aabria Iyengar

Like—like the youth drink?

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Borg?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Confused] What?

Erika Ishii

[Incredulously] What?

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Is that what kids are drinking these days?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

What?

Aabria Iyengar

Wait, no no no, I'm not the only one that knows about this. Borgs are—

Erika Ishii

No, you are.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

No I do—you're talking about the thing—the gallon of wa—

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah yeah yeah!

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Okay, yeah. I mean, not like that.

Aabria Iyengar

The Blackout Rage Gallon.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

No, I'm named after my father, Jonathan Børg, but no, yes, no, just Mr. Børg.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughs] Amazing.

Erika Ishii

And we're off!

[Everyone laughs]

Erika Ishii

So the first question I have about the Children's Campaign—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Reading an Inside Edition headline, shocked] "'Borg Challenge' Craze Leads to 46 UMass Amherst Students Hospitalized."

Erika Ishii

God dammit Brennan.

Lou Wilson

[Shrieking laughter]

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughing so hard she can't breathe]

Mr. Børg [Lou]

You know what, Brennan, I really do like you on this side of things. I really like you.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughing] It's really good

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Erika desperately trying to start things while Brennan Googles data.

Erika Ishii
Well, well, well.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
About the Borg Challenge! I'm so sorry, it's just such a little gift to not have to be keeping things on the rails.

Lou Wilson
Isn't it nice? Isn't it nice?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
And now I'm looking up why these youths can't stop drinking these jugs!

Aabria Iyengar
Now, for what it's worth, I think borgs are smarter and safer than the way I drank when I was in college. So I'm very proud of—

Erika Ishii
Did you butt chug?

Aabria Iyengar
[Long pause] Do you want an honest answer?

Erika Ishii
Yes! Of course I do!

Aabria Iyengar
I've done a vodka tampon in my butt before.

Erika Ishii
[Shocked, breathlessly] What the fuck!?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
What?

Mr. Børg [Lou]
That's fun.

Erika Ishii
That's so dangerous—

Mr. Børg [Lou]
You gotta try!

Erika Ishii
Those things are so dangerous! It absorbs directly into your bloodstream!

Aabria Iyengar
I know! Do you know how easy it is to be, like, "cool! And I'm done now! And it took five minutes."

Mr. Børg [Lou]
That is impressive.

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah. Don't do that, everyone out there.

Mr. Børg [Lou]
Don't do that.

Erika Ishii
I never drank to get drunk.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Hi, all of our patrons over here on the Fireside. It is the express position of Worlds Beyond Number that we don't recommend putting a vodka soaked tampon in your butt.

Aabria Iyengar
Don't do it!

Mr. Børg [Lou]
Please don't do it!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Please don't!

Aabria Iyengar
Don't do it!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Don't try this at home!

Mr. Børg [Lou]
But yeah, there's a lot of water in a borg. I think the biggest problem with the borg—I'm not going to comment on the borg challenge!

Aabria Iyengar
No! Comment on it. Speak your truth.

Mr. Børg [Lou]
Well I think that—it is nice. I think there's more—drinking one of those, if it's portioned right, is actually like, yes, there's a lot more going on. You're getting drunk, but you're not just shooting shots back. But it's the commitment to drinking the whole borg that I do think is very bad.

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah.

Erika Ishii
Huh. I had never... Seen this.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughing]

Mr. Børg [Lou]

I can't wait till the next Fireside Chat is just filled with people's comments being like, "your take on borgs was not ideal."

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughing]

Erika Ishii
[Cackling]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Well, it's an acronym that stands for "Blackout Rage Gallon."

Erika Ishii
Yeah.

Aabria Iyengar
I said that!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Oh, you did?

Aabria Iyengar
I said that out loud.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Oh!

Erika Ishii
But that meant nothing to us. That meant no—thing.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I don't know that you announced it was an acronym, so I just thought more stuff was happening. Does that make sense?

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughing] Sure sure sure!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Like, you were like—

Erika Ishii
So welcome to the talkback about the Children's Adventure.

Aabria Iyengar
Hey, last thought.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughing] God—

Aabria Iyengar
Someone must name a borg after at least one of our characters. And let me know.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Mhm.

Mr. Børg [Lou]
Also, I just want to be clear, real quick, that my name, Mr. Børg, is just a Norwegian and Danish surname. All right? That's it.

[Everyone giggling]

Mr. Børg [Lou]
Doesn't stand for anything. It's not crazy.

Aabria Iyengar
Does the O have a little slash through it?

Mr. Børg [Lou]
Maybe!

Aabria Iyengar
Ooh!

Mr. Børg [Lou]
But, you know, it's just with regard to my ancestry and where my forefathers are from. Nothing fun to do with it.

Erika Ishii
[Cackling] It's not an acronym for anything.

Mr. Børg [Lou]
No.

Erika Ishii
Great. Great great great great great. Unhinged. Alright, so, for those of you who are listening to this, I imagine that you have listened to the Children's Adventure, which is an eight episode arc in which we built all of our characters from the ground up, from—we started at zero, and worked our way up through the most important summer of their lives.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Should I dive in and just talk about the rules we did? The system that we did for it?

Erika Ishii
Yeah! Because—

Lou Wilson
Yeah!

Aabria Iyengar
Please do.

Erika Ishii
That is one thing I saw a couple of these questions, I'm so sorry, I don't know exactly who asked, but a lot of people have asked about the mechanics of how we came to those numbers.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
It's fun. It's a little bit risky, it kind of takes some—it adds an element of deoptimization to putting your final ability scores in, because it leaves a little bit of mystery as to who these kids will develop into. You can put a little bit of a thumb on the scale, but I was actually sort of surprised at like—ooh! It brought some like, "will I become the person that I thought of, that I was going to be?" Which, hey, if that ain't growing up, ehhhh, I don't know what is.

[Grumbling sarcastic laughter]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Hya cha cha cha! So the way it worked is you're level zero, no proficiency. So plus 0 to proficiency bonus, you are proficient in no saving throws, you are proficient in no skills, you have some—you have no class features, and maybe some of your race features. Like Eursulon started with some of his little magical abilities, right? But I don't think Ame or Suvi started with their variant human feat, right? Neither of you had your feat at the beginning, right?

Erika Ishii
Correct, correct. Observant—also, oh my goodness, for a quick little tangent, the fact that we both took observant but INT versus Wisdom is—holy cow. Well, we talk about mechanics supporting story, oh my goodness.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Love it.

Aabria Iyengar
It's so good and cute!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
So good and cute.

Aabria Iyengar
And then began tormenting Brennan with, "Okay, now I do have a passive blank of a billion. Do I have to roll?" And Brennan constantly going, "Yes."

Erika Ishii
Sometimes we get him.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Sometimes you get me.

Erika Ishii

Sometimes we get him, sometimes we remind him that we can read lips.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughing mischievously] Yeah!

Erika Ishii

Lest he forget.

Aabria Iyengar

[Sinister whisper] Lest he forget!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Lest he forget! So what's an incredible—so looking at that observant feat or looking at the different sort of abilities—I think only Eursulon started with some little bits of magic kind of already there, and the ability scores is the main thing that got added in, right? Which was we had everybody roll 3d6 drop 1, right?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

For those that are listening for this, maybe don't play a lot of D&D, you roll for your ability scores, your ability scores are Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. From them do all of your other rolls spring. Those are sort of like the summation of your natural abilities, right?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So 3d6 drop 1, does a couple of interesting things—meaning you roll three six sided dice six times. Each time, you add the two highest numbers together, but you record the drop, you record the third lowest roll and keep that in parentheses in the corner. Then you go ahead and assign those scores. So what that does is no ability can be higher than a twelve. You're only adding two six sided die together. And you can go all the way as low as a two—because they're little kids! How big and strong and tough can they be? They're little itty bitty youngsters running around, right? It's kinda cool that you can even—

Erika Ishii

Kids are not optimized for life. They're not!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Kids are not optimized for life!

Aabria Iyengar

Let alone Adventure.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So even having a twelve, having a plus 1 in something, is pretty goddamn incredible! So what we then did is, over the course of that summer in their childhood, if they rolled that fourth die in any of their scores, right—oh wait, no! I'm suddenly remembering that some of you—you had two ability scores that you had already rolled 4d6 in. Is that correct?

Erika Ishii

Yes! Yes.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

So you pick two.

Erika Ishii

And then the rest of them, we only had one die left to roll.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

That was like a fun gamble of being like, you can—it was like a chance to—or it was something like, you let us do something where it's like, we could—because there were certain ability scores where we could use 3d6, or we could start with 3d6. But it meant we only had one more die to roll, versus if we had two dice left to roll. And it's like, "what if they're both sixes! And they beat the hell out of that three you have in reserve?"

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

I remember that being something, yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

This is terrible. People want these rules so badly, and we're fully revealing and I'm like, "I think it works something like this!"

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Yeah! I for sure thought you were reading off a Word document until that exact moment, at which point I'm like—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Wait a minute!

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Oops!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Hold on, wait. Let me actually go pull up the Word document. Let's move on to talk about something else. I don't want to get it wrong for people.

Erika Ishii

There is a Word document! Yes, well, as Brennan was saying—

Aabria Iyengar

Who uses Microsoft Word?! Is it actually a Word doc?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

No, it's Google docs.

Aabria Iyengar

Okay, cool.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

It's Google docs, don't worry, don't worry!

Aabria Iyengar

I was going to feel really weird about you, if you're like, "I absolutely use Microsoft Word." In the year of our Lord 2023.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Tell me what was the program, real quick?

Erika Ishii

What was fascinating about, sort of discovering our scores, and adding them as we went along, was that there were a lot of discoveries that we made of our characters, that informed the mechanics and vice versa. Like, for instance, I thought that Ame was going to be a little dummy, and would not have any book knowledge whatsoever.

Erika Ishii

But the idea of the friendship growing with Suvi, and wanting to—the moment where they decided they were going to secretly try and protect her?

Aabria Iyengar

[Touched] Oh!

Erika Ishii

And so she's like, "okay, I'm going to learn to read well."

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Yes! And then we did roll well!

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah!

Erika Ishii

We did! And now all of us are STACKED!

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Int was going to be my dump stat, and then it like—I think I have, like, an 11—

Aabria Iyengar

Nice!

Erika Ishii

Respectable!

Mr. Børg [Lou]

—because when we rolled for that it like, went well.

Erika Ishii

Yeah, exactly! I am a fan, personally, of having unoptimized character and sort of tailoring towards story, because it's so funny to have a character that is incredibly book unsmart, or really clumsy, or something. It's great for story. But this one, it's just the story made us absolutely stacked. Were there any surprises for you, Aabria?

Aabria Iyengar

Oh, gosh. I think in my heart, I was like, "Ah Suvi is going to be such a badass. She's going to be good at every—" I think I've got the single lowest stat out of the three of us, which is my absolute garbage Strength score.

Erika Ishii

Wait really?

Aabria Iyengar

Which I think the lowest is like, a 10. It's still double digits—

Erika Ishii

Right.

Aabria Iyengar

—but I think it's just very funny to be like, "ooh, she's built like... A wizard actually," and I think that's very fun.

Erika Ishii

Ohhh!

Aabria Iyengar

This is an unhardy girl!

Erika Ishii

Actually, her being like, fully an indoor kid really does [laughing] make sense.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughs] Because I definitely expected, like, "oh! And this will explain why she's so hardy later!" And then this was the one way in which the dice were like, "Absolutely not. You love books so much. Stay inside. You hid for a summer. You're not good at outside."

Mr. Børg [Lou]

No, it was definitely—because I remember we started rolling, I feel like, more dice in the—maybe the back half? I just remember that's when Brennan would narrate the thing, that was like, what stat are we—we started doing the kinda alternating between narrative and roll—

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah!

Mr. Børg [Lou]

—and what are we rolling for, and what's the narrative? And I do remember mine was I got—I like, crushed DEX.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah!

Mr. Børg [Lou]

And I was like "wait, what?"

[Aabria and Erika cackle]

Erika Ishii

Yeah I remember you were like "I wanna be strong! I wanna be strong!"

Mr. Børg [Lou]

And then I ended up being like, decently strong, but very dexterous! Which fit a lot of the narrative stuff we were doing and, we'll see how it all plays out in the adult campaign. But that's definitely a moment where I was like, oh! This has been a—the experiment is working.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

We're really leaning into what we're describing and what we're doing versus just quietly going, yes, he is this and he is this and he is this, and then we emerge on day one of the campaign being like, my character is done. Very much, you are listening to the journey of the creation of these characters, their strengths, their weaknesses.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So I don't have notes on how we did this anyway.

[Everyone laughs]

Erika Ishii

[Breathlessly] Oh my god, Brennan!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

People—can I just—this is literally—it's been such a long time coming, and this is the moment in The Wizard of Oz when Toto opens the curtain and it's an old man being like, "pay no attention to that man behind the curtain!" And I reveal myself as everything that seems like cool design is just me wingin' it! I'm so sorry, gang!

Mr. Børg [Lou]

I do remember it now, and I do feel like I remember it very clearly. It is that you let us roll three dice, 3d6 and drop 1, for three stats. And roll 4d6 for two stats, and drop 2, they're locked, but the chance being that for those two stats you have a greater pool of which to pull higher numbers from.

Aabria Iyengar

Uh huh.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I was going to say the exact same thing. That is actually—so the system was four of the ability scores were 3d6 drop 1. Two of them were 4d6 drop 2. And over the course of the—basically what that meant is the 4d6 drop 2 are likelier to be higher, right? Because you're rolling from four dice, you probably have a better score in the 4d6 drop 2 than the 3d6 drop 1. But those 3d6 drop 1s are more volatile. You have two unknown numbers that can show up. Because as adults, eventually you will get to every one of your scores being 5d6 drop 2, right?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So in adulthood, you sub in that next three number. So you see the kids getting higher ability scores sometime. It's not because they're suddenly, like, adding 3d6, they still are only adding 2d6. But some of them are going from 3d6 drop 1, to 4d6 drop 2, like a higher number is jumping in to that two die pairing,

right? So that's why we saw some ability scores go up in the Children's Adventure. As adults, they get to suddenly have all of them add that third die that has been like, waiting in the wing to get their final ability scores.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

I did love that, because there was something so fun, I remember us being at the table, at camp, and there would be that moment when it was like, "okay! My wisdom is either going to be a 13, or if we roll big, I could be a 16!" And it was very fun to add that element to character creation of like, "What will it be?"

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Well, because some of them—I think there were some scores that were like 4d6, where it's like, okay, this is one of your things that you've done 4d6 drop 2, and it's two sixes.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Yes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Or it's like a six and a five.

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

But then the other two numbers were like a one and a two. So you're like, "God, this is my best chance to get an 18 or a 17. But I've only got one chance to do it," right? So it was very interesting. It felt very charged, like, "who am I going to become? What's going to happen to me?"

Mr. Børg [Lou]

"Who will I be?"

Aabria Iyengar

Wasn't that Mr. Børg's DEX? Because I think that was the called shot that I remember super well, where you're like, "let's make it a six." And then you rolled a six and we all freaked out.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

I do feel like I remember that.

Erika Ishii

So many sixes that got rolled that day!

Aabria Iyengar

It was so good!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah. It was great. Yeah. What a hoot. And then in terms of the rules, everyone's sort of asking, and what's the rubric or rules after that? This was MUCH looser than I think people are imagining, because this is still character creation.

Erika Ishii

Mm.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So I didn't want to make TOO much of a "game," for lack of a better word, because this is still Erika, Aabria, and Lou making their characters.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Excuse me.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Deep beleaguered sigh] This is still Erika—

Erika Ishii

Well what's your first name, Mr. Børg.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Mr.! Just call me Mr. Børg.

Aabria Iyengar

It's Mr. Børg!

Erika Ishii

Oh! Mr..

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So you're—So if I were being formal, I would refer to you as Mr. Mr. Børg?

Erika Ishii

Mr. Mr. Børg.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

No. My name is David. It's David Børg. But that's too much. We don't need all of that data. Just call me Mr. Børg and, let's keep it easy, you know?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Please! Mr. David Børg was my father.

[Everyone is dying of laughter]

Erika Ishii

[Crying laughing] No. His father is Mr. Jonathan Børg.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Jonathan Børg, that's been established, right?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yes. Yes yes yes.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

And my forefathers are Danes. Anyway, you were saying?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So, the rest of it was just going through and finding moments that felt natural, to start adding in those other abilities. And as we got later in the Children's Adventure, it became interesting to be like, "well, we're just exploring this big old summer. What are some abilities that you—" In other words, switching the cart and the horse a little bit.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

A lot of times it was, oh, we're pursuing the story of their childhood. These powers and abilities should come into play now. And then as the summer went along, it was like, well, let's actually switch the order. What are some powers and abilities you want to get, and what's the story behind getting them? Which also felt very fun.

Erika Ishii

Holy shit though, those moments where Suvi became a Wizard, and learned protection from good and evil. Just being so wrapped up in a pivotal moment in their lives, and using the detail of her mother's cloak. And then the first—Ame's first spell.

Aabria Iyengar

Ah!

Erika Ishii

Ahh!

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Come on. Come on, now.

Erika Ishii

I just—

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Grandma Wren? In the window?

Aabria Iyengar

Now look, I'm going to jump in and say the description of Ame's other eyes opening to the forest and everything around her, lives in my brain rent free. It was gorgeous.

Erika Ishii

Ah!

Aabria Iyengar

[Whispering] So good.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Wisdom is such a cool casting stat. And the idea of Witches, and what it means to cast from Wisdom, and the idea of "What is the magic of awareness, what is the magic of noticing, of mindfulness, of being able to perceive, and to come into knowledge of." Ugh, it's great.

Erika Ishii

Also, the three babies having their different discussions, and like, three very distinct points of view of what magic is, and where it comes from. Establishing that up top in childhood—

Aabria Iyengar
Ugh! So good!

Erika Ishii
—has just so deeply informed our characters in the main campaign as well.

Mr. Børg [Lou]
Ques—

Erika Ishii
Yeah

Mr. Børg [Lou]
Question for the group. I was interested in, what were people's takes—to my other PCs—what were people's takes on playing children?

Aabria Iyengar
Oh, yeah.

Mr. Børg [Lou]
That was, I think, something I thought a lot about, going into this, because it was such a like—I'm thinking about the adult. I'll be spending thousands of hours with the adult. "Thousands of hours." I'll be spending a lot of time with the adult. But the act of playing a child in a TTRPG was a very unique experience for me. Interested in other people's thoughts on it.

Aabria Iyengar
Erika?

Erika Ishii
I fell in love with the kid characters, the kid versions, so hard. Because we started this—we started recording the Children's Campaign, well over a year ago, I want to say—about a year ago, actually, and that was before we had connected with Taylor, that was before we—you know, before camp. And I didn't expect—I think none of us expected to really fall into it as hard as we did.

Erika Ishii
I could still go back and play through some other adventures that those kids had during that summer. I just—it was glorious, and all of those kids felt so honest. It felt like going back into childhood. I think there's so often that kids are portrayed as just either tiny adults, or as just like dolls—not real people.

Erika Ishii
And those like, work—working with you all on the children's adventure just felt like we—they were so full, they were so full, these children. Yeah, I just loved that so much. And it was interesting, because I think it turned into—Ame turned into a character that was slightly different, than how she ended up in the main campaign. Aabria?

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah, no, 100% that. I think I definitely had intention set, that I've talked about in other interviews, of kind of showing what this little girl, Suvi was, and then sort of, really leaning into the void of the time we were going to miss seeing Suvi grow up inside the Citadel, and playing the 180 between what she was like as a

kid, and what she became as an adult, with all of the questions of like, what was the Citadel actually like to cause that big of a personality swing?

Aabria Iyengar

But I think I was very surprised, and I always talk about the first five minutes of our first day of recording, when Brennan started painting a beautiful word picture, and I got thrown so hard into Suvi's like, being overwhelmed by all of this, and fully realigned my character to like, "Oh! She's overwhelmed, and terrified, and scared, and small," and all those things that went to inform what the Kid's Campaign was going to be, that I had never expected, beyond just sort of sobbing for the first half hour of our gameplay.

Aabria Iyengar

But, yeah, I think I didn't know necessarily what to expect? But with this table—this table is so good, that it felt very comfortable being vulnerable in the way that you would expect a child to be—

Erika Ishii

Yesssss.

Aabria Iyengar

—and that you might remember from your own childhood.

Erika Ishii

How about you, Mr. Børg?

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Oh! Yeah, I think it was so I guess the word is like, raw.

Erika Ishii

YES!

Mr. Børg [Lou]

It was very interesting to play a child, because I think your choices become a lot more like, kinda the way Brennan describes playing the Fox. You do less kind of like socializing. You do less like, well what does my character think as an adult human being moving through the world, knowing etiquette and the nature of social interaction?

Mr. Børg [Lou]

There's just a lot more like, I'm saying what things are. I'm saying what I'm looking at. I'm not saying anything because I'm overwhelmed. And I think then, that leading you to more dynamic places, because of how open you are. When you show up with a made character on day one, you've thought a lot of—you've baked into your own head what the character's history is, and how they see the world, and how the experiences they've had have shaped them.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

And playing a child is engaging with those experiences, and internalizing HOW they are being shaped. And so I think that was really different? And not something I feel like I would do often! Like if somebody was like, "come over dude, we're going to do a Children's Campaign! I think I might be like, alright alright alright, maybe baby.

[Aabria and Erika laugh brightly]

Mr. Børg [Lou]

But with this table, I think I was very excited to do it. Because I do think there's a level of openness to the choices we're making in the way that we're playing, that I think I would only trust this group to do. I would only want to do it with you guys.

Aabria Iyengar

Aww!

Erika Ishii

It's wild, seeing some of the shots, and themes, and motifs, that got called in the Children's Campaign that are gonna—I'm like, oh that's going to pay off in 100 episodes!

[Everyone chuckles]

Erika Ishii

I don't know, Brennan, were there any sort of surprises for you? And I'm also going to wrap this into something more specific of a question from Seer of Mind 413. What were the plans for the final curse if Ame didn't jump in the way and Eursulon didn't step back in front?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I think that there's a world—

Erika Ishii

Was that a surprise?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah, absolutely. Huge surprise! I mean, you have to honor all of it, right? Look, there's a lot of the cosmology of this world that is—this world is very vast, and there are forces within it that know a great deal, but I think the idea of Umora, to me, is also the idea of like. There's nobody who's walked down every road. There's nobody who's been to every place. There's nobody who knows how it works in EVERY corner.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And the idea of what that mushroom spirit meant by "Monster" is something that Eursulon was about to learn the definition of, in the cruelest way possible. Now, he doesn't know what it means to be a monster. And, because of Ame's choice to protect him and because of his choice to protect her, neither of those people will know that.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I will say this. I know that for YEARS we will get questions of "what would have happened if." It's everyone's favorite question, because we're doing an improvisational storytelling medium. And there's always a thing I feel a little bit of like, "Well, who's to say?" I think of when I used to ask my dad as a kid of like, "What's going on in the movie?" And he would always be like, "You gotta watch and find out!"

Erika Ishii

[Gasps] Yeah! Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You gotta watch and find out! But I will say for this one, because I don't want to be too much of a tease. There was a path where—there was a world where me and Lou have a conversation—

Mr. Børg [Lou]
[Chuckles]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—about what it means to be a monster. And what that means to—for example, Eursulon only has the taboo of slumber. He only has the thing where sleeping in a bed gives him a level of exhaustion, right? Which means that if he slept in a bed night after night after night, it could kill him eventually, right?

Aabria Iyengar
[Nervous laugh]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

But, he could have had more taboos. There were other taboos that he made his constitution save for, and didn't get. I think one of them—I'm trying to remember off the top of my head. One of them would have been that his glamour either didn't work under sunlight, or didn't work under moonlight. That was another possibility.

Lou Wilson
Mhm.

Aabria Iyengar
Ugh!

Mr. Børg [Lou]
And indoors was the last one.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

There was one of them that was indoor—yeah, there was another one that was an indoor—

Mr. Børg [Lou]
Oh it was I couldn't walk through doors.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Oh, yeah!

Mr. Børg [Lou]
Like, it was wild!

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughing] Oh no!

Mr. Børg [Lou]
It was one that I was like, Brennan, this is a problem for you, dog.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Oh, yeah! One of them was you needed to be invited in. One of them was literally like—because, the taboo of invitation, that you couldn't enter a building.

Erika Ishii

Yes. Classic one. Classic fae.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And hey, we also met—we've met other spirits that have that taboo, and it's an intense one.

Aabria Iyengar

[Whispering] So wild.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

But, whatever "monstrosity" would have done to Eursulon, I think there's a possibility that we might have revisited some of those firbolg abilities or gone into other things. So Eursulon knows a ton of tragedy in his life, and let us just be grateful that he did not have to know those pains as well.

Aabria Iyengar

Okay, what I'm hearing is the like, Chris Nolan gritty reboot, where he gets the Monster One, has to be a little one shot at some point in the future.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Marvel What If? but it's Eursulon becoming not just a spirit, but a monster?

Aabria Iyengar

Ugh! That'd be very cool. Oh no I like it!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Wait, talking about the mushroom spirit, I gotta do—[Sing-songy] It's story clean-up minute!

Aabria Iyengar

[Sudden belt of laughter]

Erika Ishii

[Laughs] Someone is going to compose that.

Aabria Iyengar

Please!!!

Erika Ishii

A little jingle.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

I also like the idea of a little animation of Brennan, with just a push broom, like in the video version of this, it's like—

Erika Ishii

Yes!

Aabria Iyengar

Yes! Yes!!

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Like, a little Brennan with a pushbroom just comes across the stage and then wipes his brow, winks at you, and then jumps out.

[Everyone laughs, unable to breathe]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I did a bad job of communicating, at a very critical moment, surrounding the mushroom spirit, when I mentioned that the mushroom had been dropped. The mushroom HAD been dropped when Eursulon first got into the mortal world, but was then, later, picked up again and given to Sir Curran. So the mushroom spirit was the spore, fungal—

Erika Ishii

OHHH!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—the spore, fungal, returning, of when that mushroom had first touched earth. And I saw a bunch of people being like, [Indignantly] "My Sir Curran would never have left the mushroom!"

Erika Ishii

Agreed. Agreed!

Aabria Iyengar

Hold on! Sir Curran could absolutely be like, "This is a slobbered upon mushroom. I gotta put it down."

Mr. Børg [Lou]

See I kind of agree—

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah I kinda liked that!

Erika Ishii

[Intensely] It was a gift from an Honoured Friend.

Aabria Iyengar

No!

Mr. Børg [Lou]

I always like the idea that Sir Curran wasn't just like—was as much an ideal person as anyone can be, which is like, in a moment with a person, ten out of ten, the minute he sees me, he's like, "he can't see me?" [Grunt, as though throwing a mushroom away]

Aabria Iyengar

Honestly, that's so important to me.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Let me get my shoes on, shit!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So that was the deal with the mushroom spirit, and we were talking about—oh!

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Uh, Brennan, can I ask you one thing? Can I ask you one thing?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yes, please.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Wow. That was well done.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughs]

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Can I ask you one thing? And of course, this likely never would happen, this is—Eursulon is a child. This is very adult behavior. But if Eursulon had been like, "it's a snack. Eat it. Eat it, Sir Curran. Eat it. Sir Curran."

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Can I tell you something? Mr. Børg? Saying that that is adult behavior. There is nothing my three year old nephew Huxley does more, than take some stuff off the floor, put it on my mouth, and go, "Eat it. Eat it."

[Everyone laughs joyously]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Okay, once again, your performer sensibilities are unerring. That is exactly what a little boy would do, is glom on to an older adult caretaker figure and go, "you should eat this. I found it. I want you to have some."

Mr. Børg [Lou]

"I love you. Eat this."

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I love you. Eat this. He really does. Whatever—string cheese, chicken nugget, he's such a sweet little guy, and actually, it's very sweet that he wants to make sure other people are eating. So we love it.

Aabria Iyengar

Awww.

Erika Ishii

Is he very food motivated?

Aabria Iyengar

You know, that that's—okay one, that's what you say about pets, stop it. You know that's not like a—

Erika Ishii

[On the back foot] Brennan is very food motivated.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I'm very food motivated. And I know that's a term for pets, but it's true.

Aabria Iyengar

Alright fair. Fair. But you do know that that's not really about, like I'm trying to make sure you're fed. He's just vetting with you, is this a thing I can eat? If you eat it, then I know when the coast is clear. The next time I find a rogue chickie nuggie, that's good for me.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Now, I don't think that's correct, because he'll do it often from his own plate—he's eating. I think it's just the beginnings—look, the beginnings of kind behavior are often, you're echoing, you're mirroring, we have mirror neurons.

Aabria Iyengar

I'm saying the ground food, he is vetting. Like, what's acceptable ground food to give?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Listen, he LOVES ground food. He doesn't need to check in with me about ground food.

Erika Ishii

All ground food is good food.

Aabria Iyengar

No.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

We love ground food around here. He's such a great kid. So, wait a minute. This is the scene that the mushroom spirit, or that Sir Curran would have done if little Eursulon had asked him to eat the mushroom.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Been like "eat it." And just kinda pushed it towards him.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And Aabria—

[Aabria and Erika cackling]

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Huxley style.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Aabria, I'm sorry in advance. This is a moment from the Two Towers Extended Edition—

Aabria Iyengar

God dammit!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Which is there's a scene where Eowyn has made a nasty bowl of soup.

Aabria Iyengar

Who is Eowyn?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Eowyn is—

Erika Ishii
The blonde one.

Aabria Iyengar
Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Børg [Lou]
The blonde one.

Aabria Iyengar
Continue.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
She's the niece of King Théoden of Rohan. She is UNCOMFORTABLY horny for Aragorn, minute one. All you want is these other Rohirrim to come over and be like, [Nobly] "Eowyn. Thou art a Shield Maiden of Rohan. Just pump the brakes a little bit."

[Everyone laughs]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
"I know there's a lot of—"

Erika Ishii
Look, let me be very clear. When you meet someone who has the bearing of a king, but the humility of someone who does not wish to inherit the legacy of failure of his race, you lock that shit down.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Yeah, you lock it down by playing it fuckin' cool!

Aabria Iyengar
I dunno man.

Erika Ishii
You and I are two different people, Brennan.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
You don't stare at him from across Meduseld with the fucking Evenstar around his neck, he's sitting there, he's got the hottest elf in the world as his significant other.

Aabria Iyengar
AND HE HAS TWO HANDS, BRENNAN!

Erika Ishii
Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

But—but I'm saying, he's not going to want to fill the other one, if you decide to sleep in a sedan chair in the middle of a longhaul. What's that scene about!?

Erika Ishii

Okay, you know what?

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Guys, we're getting too deep.

Erika Ishii

To quote Elrond—

Aabria Iyengar

No, let this happen.

Erika Ishii

"Men are weak."

Aabria Iyengar

Ooh!

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Guys, we're getting way too deep—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah, and women are thirsty here in Middle Earth, and it's a huge problem.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughing]

Mr. Børg [Lou]

We're going like, too far down the nerd hole right now.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Okay. Alright.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

There's an amount of like, nerd I can take.

Erika Ishii

[Mock angrily] You shut your nerd hole!

Mr. Børg [Lou]

As soon as we start getting into it, of like, What's up dude? Aragorn—"

Erika Ishii

Okay. Okay okay okay, we got to keep this on the rails.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
That's a scene—

Aabria Iyengar
I still have your pin.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Where she makes him a nasty soup, and holds it—[gasps] "Not idly do the leaves of Lórien fall." Aabria just held up a Leaf of Lórien—

Erika Ishii
My Lórien pin—

Aabria Iyengar
It's Erika's pin.

Erika Ishii
—from when I showed up at the marathon dressed as Frodo. [Laughing]

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
But also, it doesn't matter if Aabria watched The Two Towers, because mostly it was just Aabria and Izzy hanging out and talking.

Aabria Iyengar
Yes. Yes! Yes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
[Laughing] This scene was not paid close attention to, but—

Aabria Iyengar
Yes.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
—it's the scene where she just makes him a nasty soup, and it's got a big thing of blubber in it, and she hauntingly watches him as he tries it. And it's the one sort of—everything Aragorn does is heroic, and noble, and beautiful, and then the one relatable thing he does in the whole movie, is have a bad time eating some soup. It's some great acting from Viggo Mortensen. He's like, [Unpleasantly] "Mm. Good soup." Sir Curran would have done exactly that.

[Aabria and Erika cackle giddily]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
He would have powered down that mushroom, and made eye contact with Eursulon, like, "Mm, that's a delicious mushroom!"

Mr. Børg [Lou]
"Finish it."

Brennan Lee Mulligan
"Finish it." He would have powered through—

Brennan Lee Mulligan
"Eat it all."

Brennan Lee Mulligan
—and started sweating, maybe gotten some superpowers?

Aabria Iyengar
Would he have been different? Would he get little powers?

Mr. Børg [Lou]
He got some superpowers!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Yeah, he gets some mushroom superpowers from this fairy mushroom.

Aabria Iyengar
Ooh! He's immortal.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
He's immortal now.

Erika Ishii
Dammit. So—Yeah, go ahead.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Wait, I have a question, too. This is a Sir Curran question, and this is moving away slightly from mushroom spirit stuff, because we talked in the other Fireside Chat for Episode 2, about we didn't get a description for adult Ame. We also never got a description for Sir Curran, other than—

Aabria Iyengar
It's just you, Brennan.

Erika Ishii
We said it was Brennan!

Aabria Iyengar
We said it was Brennan!

Erika Ishii
That's why Eursulon's glamour hair is red.

Aabria Iyengar
It's red!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Wow.

Erika Ishii

Because we were like, it's just Brennan.

Aabria Iyengar

It's Brennan!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Sir Curran is my expy, my Mary Sue, Sir Curran is my little—

Aabria Iyengar

Little self insert in your fanfic.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

My little self insert in my fanfic. I inserted myself into my own fiction and he's been dead for 250 years.

Erika Ishii

Hey, you're the one that made us roll for sadness.

Lou Wilson

Wait hold on, you never—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

What's that?

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah, you did.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

I know you don't describe him in the—you don't describe him in the dream?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

No. So you—

Mr. Børg [Lou]

I describe his shield.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Mr. Børg, you described his—

Aabria Iyengar

[Giggles]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Mr. Børg described all of his gear. You described all his gear. But I told you, I was like describe his gear and what he looks like. But I think the scene just took off, and we were just doing it. And then I think Aabria and Erika jokingly were like, "It's Brennan," and then Eursulon had red hair and I was like, oh. So I guess that's become partially canon.

Aabria Iyengar

Wait, Brennan. At what point did you think I was joking?

Erika Ishii

We weren't joking.

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah, what fucking joke?

Erika Ishii

No.

Aabria Iyengar

I've never joked a day in my life.

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Aabria Iyengar

We just said a true thing.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I'm so, so sorry. I will never make this mistake again. True stir—true story, Sir Curran—

Mr. Børg [Lou]

No, I want a stiry. I want a stiry.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

True stiry. Ah, my chicken parm's not here yet, I'm hungry.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

[Raucous shriek of laughter]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Now that's a true story!

Mr. Børg [Lou]

[Continues laughing]

Brennan Lee Mulligan

True story, Sir Curran has a namesake. Sir Curran has a namesake. When I was itty bitty—and so much of the Children's Adventure is about childhood and about our, you know, Miyazaki movies, and the Wizard of Oz, and Celtic myths and stuff like that. Sir Curran. The name Curran. My imaginary best friend, when I was itty bitty—

Aabria Iyengar

[Gasp]

Erika Ishii

[Gasp] No!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
—was a tiger named Curran.

Erika Ishii
[Sweetly] No!!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
And so Sir Curran is named after—

Aabria Iyengar
No!

Erika Ishii
Oh my god. You were a little Calvin?

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I still have—after I had the imaginary best friend, my mom went out and got a fuzzy stuffed tiger puppet, which I still have, and I will give to my kids one day.

[Aabria and Erika go Aww, sweetly]

Mr. Børg [Lou]
Give it to me.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Why?

Mr. Børg [Lou]
Give it to me.

Aabria Iyengar
Mr. Børg's—

Erika Ishii
Because Mr. Børg is baby.

Aabria Iyengar
Mr. Børg is baby!

Mr. Børg [Lou]
You gave me—

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Go get a stuffed bear, like your Danish forebears would love. There's no tigers native to Denmark.

Mr. Børg [Lou]
What are you talking about, Brennan?

Erika Ishii
A bjørn!

Mr. Børg [Lou]
You brought imaginary Sir Curran into my life. I think it's only right—

Brennan Lee Mulligan
That I give you—

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah. That does sound right.

Mr. Børg [Lou]
Then I'll meet your future children, and wave it in their face, and say I got it! He gave me YOUR—

Brennan Lee Mulligan
[Menacingly] I got it!

Erika Ishii
[Laughing so hard they're crying]

Aabria Iyengar
Just flipping off, just babies.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
"Not you, me. It is mine!"

[Everyone collects themselves from laughing]

Erika Ishii
Oh my god!

Aabria Iyengar
That's really cute!

Erika Ishii
I had a whole bunch of imaginary friends when I was little, and I think those may—now I'm going to put them into something. Wow! But this is actually a good question that pertains to that. Privetti asked "What is the process from turning an improvised detail, like Wavebreaker, for example, or the mushroom spirit, into a fleshed out lore behind something" and also says, "Love the pod, guys. Heart."

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Aw! Thank you, Privetti!

Aabria Iyengar
[In the manner of Eowyn] I am no Guy!

Erika Ishii
There were so many details that showed up in the Children's Campaign that end up, without spoiling anything, that have ended up in the main campaign, were big parts. Were those sort of things that you

were looking for, or that you were—were those things details you were searching for, or details that just managed to make their way in organically, Brennan?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

The joy of this was always going to be like—having years to do a theater of the mind campaign over microphones, is the ultimate freedom to take ANY little bit, or joke, or creation, or choice from you guys, and weave it deeply into the fabric of the world. That's the whole point. The second you guys started to describe Wavebreaker, I was like, I know that this is going to matter. I know that this is going to matter.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And it's something that—it's not just something that I love doing, it's something that I wish I got to do more. And I think especially for Aabria, who's also had to run games on short timetables, with physical production elements like battle sets and things like that, that need to sort of happen in a given time or space, sometimes you go, "Oops! We actually built that dungeon already. We can't accommodate that bit of improv, or that choice."

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So to me, Worlds Beyond Number, and the Wizard, the Witch, and the Wild One, is the opportunity to go, there is no piece of folly, no bit of whimsy, no jest, or jape, or joke, that I cannot dig into deeply, and make come back in a huge, significant and important way.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And the process for it is as simple as that. I mean, not to make light of it, but the process is just, listen to your players and go, "Ooh, that absolutely ripped." It has been so sad to me, anytime I've heard an amazing choice that a player did, and I can't make it the main thing of the campaign. That is a tragedy when that happens. So you better believe, given a format that allows that to happen constantly, I'm going to just take every fuckin' opportunity I can get.

Erika Ishii

Yeah, Aabria, same question.

Aabria Iyengar

Thank you. No. My question was a follow on for Brennan. What is one—I challenge you, what is one detail we offered in the kids campaign that you went, that's nothing and will never be seen again later?

[Everyone laughs]

Erika Ishii

Lock it off!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I mean, like, I forget stuff, you know what I mean?

Aabria Iyengar

No no no!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

No no no.

Aabria Iyengar

A choice, where you went? No, absolutely not.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

[Confused stammering noises]

Aabria Iyengar

You don't have to answer this. It was just a goof.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

No.

Aabria Iyengar

Unless you have an answer.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

You never joke. You never joke.

Aabria Iyengar

Oh that's right! I don't joke.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Don't fall for the bait, Brennan!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Well, I will say, the moment with Jasper was very heartbreaking because that was a moment where—

Aabria Iyengar

Oh, yeah!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

—it made sense for a character to be prevented from doing something. But where Suvi's hand got stopped by Ame, because she was going to knock on the window, and suddenly we had that—that way little kids do, where suddenly you're like, you're being hidden here, and there's a coming into an awareness of, like, a sadder, more adult truth. That was very intense.

Aabria Iyengar

Hoo. That was very good.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Yeah, yeah yeah. I loved that. I—

Erika Ishii

Mis—Oh

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Oh sorry, what were you going to say Erika?

Erika Ishii

No, I was going to ask Mr. Børg if there was anything, for him, that was like, a detail that you took that ended up with Eursulon later.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Sir Curran's hair, for sure. That was something of like, I never—in a very real way, I don't think I'd ever thought—I maybe thought, I was going to be a bear man who just wandered through the world! Just straight up! Before, before we'd ever talked about what this world was, or what it would look like—

Erika Ishii

Yeah that's true!

Mr. Børg [Lou]

—I think I was like, am I Bear Man all day? Maybe! Maybe that's just the thing!

Aabria Iyengar

Bear Man all day!

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Just maybe there are other bear men! Maybe there are bird men! Maybe it's just, we're all out here letting our freak flag fly! The answer is no!

Erika Ishii

[Laughs]

Mr. Børg [Lou]

That definitely became, I think, a lot of moments from the Children's Campaign that it's like, appearance stuff definitely was like, okay, I look like red haired Suvi! It's moments like that, that definitely—I think there's also an interesting element of my experience with—there's something even to playing a martial class, but realizing you have no background in like, "Yeah, I was like a swordsman" in a big way.

Erika Ishii

Yeah.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

It's like most of my sword—in playing it out, my sword history is: I learned a lot from a baker who came by on weekends, and we played around in the yard. That's also interesting of being like oh, I'm not the—I feel like, and I don't think this is a spoiler, but I tackle people a lot because my character is not like, "Oh, yeah, give me a sword, I know exactly what to do." I think I should physically get in their business because that's my background.

Erika Ishii

Ohhh!

Mr. Børg [Lou]

So interesting little elements like that, I feel like, are things we've improvised that have very much become like, "Oh, okay that's, the character!"

Brennan Lee Mulligan

That makes sense to me! That makes sense to me.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Hey, thanks, bro. Thanks. I appreciate that.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I dig that.

Aabria Iyengar

I liked it.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

On board?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

On board.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Can I ask a question that this—that Jamie had? Jamie, thank you. "Aabria. What was the inspiration for the names of the members of the Citadel? All of the people from your pasts' names start with S. Is that a coincidence?"

Aabria Iyengar

It was a fun little moment of improv between—is that true, Brennan? Am I making that up?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

No, you made up your parents names, and you said Soft and Stone!

Erika Ishii

Oh my god, are you serious?

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah! That wasn't—

Erika Ishii

Because I've been—all of us have been speculating like, oh, what's the deeper meaning behind it? Is this sort of like a Lingua Arcana deal or like, what? Oh my God! That's wild!

Aabria Iyengar

I think the way it actually went was, I named one, and then you named Steel, and then I named the other because I was like, oh, we're doing a pattern. Like, got it! And we will make all of this make sense later. And it just became this very cool like, oh, there's something interesting about names, and I think that was like—the idea of names being important to wizards was the thing that we've talked about. So it was a very fun moment of praxis in it, like, oh, let's make them immediately weird to begin with, and clue in the audience that there's something here going on. And it was very cool.

Erika Ishii

Oh, I did see a question about names, and about the character's names, and how we came up with them. And some of them might be you'll just have to wait and see! Watch and see! But some of them like—Suvirin Kedberiket. What a banger of a name.

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughs] Thanks!

Erika Ishii
Where did that one come from? Oh wait, I know actually, I know this one, but go ahead, you tell.

Aabria Iyengar
Well, I'm going to play very coy and say that, the meaning of her full name is a thing that I know that I want to reveal later.

Mr. Børg [Lou]
Mmm!

Aabria Iyengar
So I'm going to be quiet about it—

Mr. Børg [Lou]
Mmm.

Erika Ishii
—and say that it means something specific to me, and to Suvi, but will come into play farther down the line.

Mr. Børg [Lou]
[Gasp of Realization]

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Is it messed up if I—is it messed up if I say on the Fireside Chat right now, that in this moment, I just figured out why—because as we've said, it was an improvised choice, right? Aabria—you all heard the moment of Aabria saying what her parents names were.

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
So there couldn't have been a convention, because it was anything. But! In this moment, recording this Fireside Chat, I know what the actual explanation in-world is.

Aabria Iyengar
Ah! That's so fun!

Erika Ishii
I am so curious if it's the explanation that I thought of, that I've been thinking about as well.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Wait Erika, text me yours. Yours might be better than mine.

Erika Ishii
Okay. [Sudden laugh]

Aabria Iyengar
Wait! Hold on, hold on.

Erika Ishii
We'll use whichever one's better.

Aabria Iyengar
Group chat, group chat!

Erika Ishii
Group chat, group chat, okay!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Everyone hop on. Months from now, everyone will see!

Erika Ishii
Yeah. Lou, Eursulon. Is that—

Aabria Iyengar
Sorry—

Mr. Børg [Lou]
It's Mr. Børg.

Aabria Iyengar
Mr. Børg!

Erika Ishii
I'm so sorry, Mr. Børg.

Mr. Børg [Lou]
It's Mr. Børg. My name is David Børg.

Mr. Børg [Lou]
Mr. David Børg, son of Jonathan Børg. Is there—is Eursulon just a messed up way of spelling, ursa, ursine, bear?

Mr. Børg [Lou]
Yep! Straight up!

Aabria Iyengar
[Choking laugh]

Erika Ishii
Wait what?!

Mr. Børg [Lou]
Yeah it's just straight up—

Erika Ishii
Boo.

Mr. Børg [Lou]
—the Ursa Major, kinda, the Great Bear in the sky. And then I was like, you can't just spell it like the damn stars! So I threw an E on there!

Aabria Iyengar
[Wheezing breath] Oh my god.

Mr. Børg [Lou]
There it is! Ya know, keep 'em guessing.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I also want to talk a little bit, if I can, about—because we're talking a lot about world building stuff, and we have different naming conventions—and wait, actually! Knowing Eursulon and knowing Suvi. Where did Ame come from? The name Ame?

Erika Ishii
That's so interesting. Well, I remember we talked about why Ame was not introduced, or doesn't have a last name, as well.

Aabria Iyengar
Yeah!

Erika Ishii
Which is—you get that little reveal at the end of episode eight. But the name Ame, it can mean either rain, or sweets—like candy—in Japanese, depending on how it's written. So I loved that dichotomy, and it felt very appropriate for the character. But also we were talking about Ame-no-Uzume, who is a goddess in the Japanese pantheon, the Shinto pantheon, who is the goddess of the dawn, and merriment, and sort of a trickster.

Erika Ishii
There's a story about how the Amaterasu, the sun goddess, went into a cave—she was upset, she went into a cave. And so Ame-no-Uzume went and did like, a comedy striptease, essentially, outside of the cave. And all of the other gods were like, "Ha ha, look at that!" And the sun goddess was like, what? What are we talking about here? I'm too curious. And came out. That's a shorthanded version of the short story. But I was like, that energy. That energy. The idea of being like, I'm going to do something ridiculous, was very of this character, and that sort of inspired the name.

Mr. Børg [Lou]
Mm!

Aabria Iyengar
Amazing!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
I love it! I want to ask if everyone here—I want to hear everyone's favorite moments of—just from Children's Adventure all told, everyone's favorite moments of each other? But I also want to shout out to the incredible—the incredible music and sound design, especially in the preludes that went up, I think all

of our friends over by the Fireside—the incredible brass instrumentation of the Citadel, the gorgeous strings for Grandma Wren's cottage.

Aabria Iyengar
Heck yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
And then that fuckin' bear parade!! Holy shit!

Aabria Iyengar
Ah! The bear parade music!

Mr. Børg [Lou]
Love a bear parade.

Erika Ishii
Oh my god I—that's Mononoke meets Paprika parade. Like, holy god.

Aabria Iyengar
So good.

Erika Ishii
I want that so bad, just to listen to.

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Our incredible producer Taylor Moore who—

Aabria Iyengar
Tay-tay!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Tay tay. Who is—has, in defiance of God and man, learned composition, to come here and dunk this podcast in the face—

Aabria Iyengar
[Laughs]

Erika Ishii
Unbelievable.

Aabria Iyengar
So good!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
—of musicians everywhere. Came in, and those tracks are unbelievable. And I think some people also had questions about—anything with music. These are all ongoing conversations. It's a small team over here at Worlds Beyond Number, gang, so we're like, spinning up and getting the podcast up on its feet. But ways to share game mechanics, and share music, and share all that stuff, all of it is In The Woiks, as they say. Yeah. I just love that so much.

Erika Ishii

Favorite moments, my god, Brennan.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

I know, it's such a big question, but I do kind of want to hear it.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

I think I got big love for Ame and the goats at the top. Is just very, like, really—I think after the intensity of the Citadel, you're like—

Aabria Iyengar

For sure.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

—this won't be the children's campaign, right? The goat moment feels like it really settled us into like, welcome to the far—or like, welcome to the cottage.

Aabria Iyengar

[Wistfully] Yeah.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

These are the hijinks of this place. These are the troubles of this time. And I think it was just well done on both sides. Both Brennan and Erika.

Aabria Iyengar

Gotta say—

Erika Ishii

I love the description. "Livestock? No! This is an eldritch horror!" That is goats for sure. Little sideways ass pupils. Anyway, what were you saying?

Aabria Iyengar

Eursulon's goat button was so good, of just politely asking, and then the little head butt for dominance. Mm. So good.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

There it is.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So good.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

That goat was so fun. What a fun NPC villain, of the Children's Campaign!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Level 0 kids! What's the villain? Goats!

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Yes, exactly. It's a goat!

Aabria Iyengar
It's a goat!

Brennan Lee Mulligan
It's a goat! I went to someone's house, and they had a goat, and I went, we're in danger!

Erika Ishii
Izzy and I went to goat yoga. I took Izzy to goat yoga, and we did yoga, and these little goats just sort of hopping around on us.

Aabria Iyengar
You love havin' animals on you.

Erika Ishii
I love animals on me at all times, yes. I just I can't—starting everything off with such a bang of Suvi, and just—god, I think about that a lot, that whole exchange, and Aabria saying, "This is the moment I regret." And it's like oh my god! You did not have to go so hard! You didn't!

Aabria Iyengar
We're here to hurt feelings!

Mr. Børg [Lou]
I mean, hey.

Erika Ishii
I've been seeing—some of my favorite moments are ones that have been illustrated like, of course, the first spell, Grandmother Wren saying, "Ah, what a wonderful first spell."

Aabria Iyengar
Ah, god.

Erika Ishii
And the two girls in the bed together cuddled up was—it was just, oh my god. And then, I mean, Eursulon, just how much you can pack into "mhm."

Aabria Iyengar
Truly!

Erika Ishii
Like, whenever he says that, my heart just like—

Brennan Lee Mulligan
Ugh!

Erika Ishii
Ugh! This little boy!

Mr. Børg [Lou]
Those are some mhms that even I at the moment am like, this is an uh huh. This is a sentence. There's period after this.

Erika Ishii

A whole sentence of it. Oh my god! Ugh! Yeah. Just how communicative you were about that. Also, big shout out to the moment where we captured Taro. We're like [frenzied babbling] we didn't know what we were gonna do!

Mr. Børg [Lou]

Very fun. So good.

Aabria Iyengar

I got to give it up for that very last scene, when Ame and Grandmother Wren are alone, and we get that little—that important bit of lore that Ame was sidestepping the entire summer they were together, which was like, her context, and it was just so heartbreaking. And having Grandmother Wren say like, I hate it, and you feel that with all of the like, I'm not going to show you the full face of my anger because that will be frightening, but I need you to know that this is the strongest word I can use for that.

Aabria Iyengar

Ugh. It was just so good and made me sob on a boat. Erika heard me listening to the Children's Campaign on our little decks next door to each other.

Erika Ishii

I poked my head out, like, I thought I heard my voice—

Aabria Iyengar

Yeah! [Laughs]

Erika Ishii

—and I poked my head out the balcony. [Laughing] And I heard Aabria listening to—

Brennan Lee Mulligan

So fun. Well, I think, too, with that Grandmother Wren thing. I remember in that moment where she says, I hate it, and I was like, she is a Good Witch. She is deeply Good, but she is a Witch. There's no part of her that would be like, there are bad emotions, right?

Brennan Lee Mulligan

There's no part of her that would be like, there's bad feelings that are always wrong to feel. It's like, oh no. For you to understand, that this thing that I'm talking about, it is the antithesis of me. I am opposed to it in every way that I can be, right? I wish it was not. I wish it was not.

Erika Ishii

Ugh.

Aabria Iyengar

Phew.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

There are moments for each thing, where I saw a vision of the adult character in the little kid. And I think about it a lot. Which was Ame wrapping up Suvi on her first night, and you see this sweet—makes you want to cry, this little caretaker child, who you can see is like a wise—it's like it's like her first foray with wisdom, of being like, "I need to—I'm so excited to have a friend."

Brennan Lee Mulligan

"I'm so excited to not be alone anymore, like have another kid. But she's having a hard time, so it's not time to be happy right now. It's time to take care of somebody," right? And I think Suvi—the moment—and it's heroic in a kind of bleak way. But I think the moment—and it's the first time Suvi is mad, where she goes like, "that's not how magic works. I know how magic works."

Erika Ishii

[Giggling]

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughs] Yeah, yeah yeah yeah.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

You see a glimmer of the adult Suvi of the Citadel.

Aabria Iyengar

[Laughs] That's so real!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Archmage Apprentice, like, on the way. And I think for Eursulon, there's a moment that captures so much—and I know it's funny to call this heroic, but I think it's heroic about the journey he's going to go on. And it's your honey is quiet.

Aabria Iyengar

[Whispering] Yeah!

Erika Ishii

[Crying] I know, oh my god I know

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Those three moments really live for me as moments where I went—where it felt like, lock it in, like ope! There it is. That's the thread that we're going to follow—oh because they're all sort of, there's a conflict in each of those moments, right? Eursulon feeling out of this world, Suvi having an impossible standard to live up to, and Ame going to caretaking, in a moment where we also see that there's something that she deeply needs.

Aabria Iyengar

Ooh!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

And it was like, boom, boom, boom, right?

Erika Ishii

Ooh. Oh no.

Aabria Iyengar

Oh, dang. That got profound as hell.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

How 'bout these children? How 'bout these children?

Aabria Iyengar

How 'bout these children!

Erika Ishii

[Agonized] How 'bout these children.

Brennan Lee Mulligan

How about these children? Children are fully—children are emotional beings. They have hearts and minds. They think and they feel.

Erika Ishii

I just, there are so many thematic elements that were SO strong in that first little arc, and I'm so excited to explore them, as these adults grow. So thank you so much, everyone. I'm sure that there will be other ways that we will address moments, and themes, and mechanics questions, from the Children's Adventure in the Fireside. But for now, thank you so much for joining us on the Fireside for the Children's Adventure. I'm Erika Ishii, and I've been here with Brennan Lee Mulligan, Aabria Iyengar, and Mr. David Børg.

Mr. Børg [Lou]

[Mispronounced] Hej, hej!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

My chicken parm just got here!

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

Aabria Iyengar

Yayyy!!!

Mr. Børg [Lou]

What a thrill!

Brennan Lee Mulligan

Let's go! Let's go!

Erika Ishii

Food motivated!

[Music fades out]