



Episode 75 – “H.A.G.S.”

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Generously Transcribed by Erica Dix

SALLY: Everybody Hates Rand is a Wheel of Time podcast that will contain spoilers for all 14 books, so if you are anti-spoiler, pause this, read all 14 books, and come back. We'll be here. Waiting.

EMILY: Our title is a joke and is meant to be taken as such. In the context of this podcast “everybody” refers to us and our cat. You are free to feel however you want about Rand, who is a fictional character. Don't DM us.

(Theme song plays)

EMILY: Um, that might not actually be our actual cold open because we need to get PUMPED!

SALLY: [singing] Half past twelve, when I'm watching The Late Show in my flat on my own, how I hate to spend the evening all alone. I think I mixed those last two sentences up but that's okay.

EMILY: I can't recall. [singing] Where have all the good men gone and where are all the gods...

SALLY: To prepare for this we watched Mamma Mia 2 here we go again, and then Emily put together a playlist so we both...

EMILY: It's not finished.

SALLY: Yeah, it's a work in progress apparently.

EMILY: But it is in fact art. This is like, like if I released it now, it would be like DaVinci's sketches you know? It's incomplete but it's still very good.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: And everyone would be like, "oh shit."

EMILY: And both of the songs we just sang are on it, and I apologize, I'm not as good as Jennifer Saunders in the Shrek 2 soundtrack of "Holding Out for a Hero" because that is probably the best version of "Holding Out for a Hero" that exists.

SALLY: I don't know, I'm pretty partial to Bonnie Tyler...

EMILY: You're pretty partial to the Bonnie Tyler...

SALLY: Yeah, original..

EMILY: But that Jennifer Saunders version...

SALLY: Oh yeah, is very good.

EMILY: Literally changed my life.

SALLY: Oh yeah, it changed many lives. When Shrek is riding through with Puss and Boots and the big...

EMILY: With Mongo the giant gingerbread cookie man?

SALLY: Beeee-gooodo....

EMILY: And that's the energy that we are trying to bring to this, the breaking into the Stone of Tear by multiple parties.

SALLY: [singing] Half past twelve, and I'm watching the Late Show...

EMILY: Tybalt! Shut up!

SALLY: In my flat all alone. On my own.

EMILY: We're going to need all 43 and a half minutes of airtime to talk about...

SALLY: [unintelligible]

EMILY: Okay. Yes. So this is Everybody Hates Rand, we're fucking going for it.

SALLY: Yeah. You know who we are.

EMILY: Yeah, you don't even need an introduction.

SALLY: No Tybalt, for fuck's sake...

EMILY: You don't get on the table.

SALLY: This is a bad thing you haven't done in a long time.

EMILY: You are not Mat Cauthon breaking into the Stone of Tear.

SALLY: Maybe he thinks he is.

EMILY: On the rooftops.

SALLY: Tybalt and his bag are going into exile. I was trying to think of a good ABBA song to fill that silence but my brain got clouded because they're also good. My re-watch of Mamma Mia 2: Here We Go Again has given me a new appreciation for Andante Andante.

EMILY: For what? Oh that song.

SALLY: [singing] Andante Andante.

EMILY: I didn't know as many of the songs in that one.

SALLY: Yeah those ones are like, Mamma Mia is all the big'uns, and Mamma Mia 2 is a little more niche.

EMILY: A little more deep cuts.

SALLY: Yeah, a little more like real ABBA. I didn't know a lot of them before Mamma Mia 2, don't think that I'm some type of like, ABBA gatekeeper. I don't give a shit how much ABBA you know...

EMILY: Yeah, keep me from storming the gates of ABBA. Okay, here we are to talk about the most hotly anticipated moment in this entire book series, we will not be on an energy level this high until 10 books from now. Probably.

SALLY: No, when Mat catches the nice, that's a pretty...

EMILY: Yeah, actually that's a pretty orgasmic moment and I'm not going to lie, that one's going to be real horny so...

SALLY: As if this one isn't.

EMILY: As if this one isn't also very horny.

SALLY: Not to hit the nail on the head but when Mat gets knocked down by the Aiel and someone steps on his wrist I was like, what if this was Gaul, and Mat like looks up and there's a 6-foot-9 sexy boy standing on his wrist?

EMILY: Oh man, there are so many moments for Mat to have a sexual awakening in these chapters, it's actually fascinating how pretty much every named character in this sequence, much like in the *Eye of the World* as a, you know, compact book is going to be a major, like, pretty much all of our main Aiel characters are introduced here. At least the ones who are going to be running around actively crossing plots. As opposed to like, the Wise Ones who are just like, doing their own thing for most of the time. And we're weirdly introduced to High Lord Darlin, the one good High Lord of Tear, he eventually takes over as like a steward for Rand for a while. Rand is like, this is the only boy I can trust apparently. Because he actively led a rebellion against Rand. And Rand was like, "Okay, I can appreciate that. It's a ballsy, ballsy move. So yeah, here you go Steward, that's you." And he's like, "This is not how I intended this whole political maneuver to go."

SALLY: Weird flex but okay.

EMILY: Alrighty then.

SALLY: I do like when he's like, fighting Mat and he's like, you'll die if I want you to, peasant.

EMILY: Mat's like, would rather not, bitch. Sorry, my mom is really confused about *Spider-Man Far From Home*.

SALLY: Would she like to listen to our recently recorded Tom Holland interlude?

EMILY: I don't think she could cause we talked too much about Tom Holland's thighs.

SALLY: That's true.

EMILY: That was another kind of horny episode. It like, veered wildly from overprotective parents to sort of horny for Tom Holland. And I just wanna apologize.

SALLY: We're occupying a confusing space there.

EMILY: Yeah I just want to apologize for that energy, it's pretty confusing.

SALLY: Okay, we open with Mat Cauthon saying, no one with a single goddamned brain cell would be doing what I'm about to do.

EMILY: Which, as I have said, is like, pretty how all Mat Cauthon points of view should open. No one with a brain would be doing what I am currently doing, yet, here we are.

SALLY: You might be wondering how I got here. Well... I'm a fucking idiot. [laughter]

EMILY: I'm telling you, if we were in charge of The Wheel of Time series, The entire thing would open with this moment, and that it would freeze frame, and Mat would like be like, "you might be wondering how I got here." And it would have rewind to the idyllic Two Rivers.

SALLY: No, it would be so good if he like, blows it up on the monkey bars and the stone of tear freeze frames the camera and he's like, "you might be wondering how I got here..."

EMILY: you might be wondering how I ended up in this position.

SALLY: Let me tell you a story.

EMILY: Okay, Mat is on the rooftops in Tear, he is searching for a way into the Stone, he is sort of scouting along the one place where the city wall meets the actual fortress, which is just kind of like, right along the sea, he can't get straight from a house or a building rooftop to the Stone because there's just like, a big courtyard or street right around it, so he's kind of like, okay that's clearly the way to go, but after that like, I don't really know how I'm going to get in. That's where I can cause my commotion but after that I'm not really sure what the dealio is gonna be. So he's kind of running around and being like, this has been a terrible evening and I've got a huge sack of fireworks strapped to my back, I'm carrying this weird little...

SALLY: Lunch box.

EMILY: Metal lunch box.

SALLY: With a burning hole in it.

EMILY: With mysterious contents in it because we are going to find out what's in here.

SALLY: He's just carrying...

EMILY: The lid is hot. You as an innocent reader are like, what the fuck.

SALLY: What the fuck do you have in there?

EMILY: What the hell is Mat Cauthon doing? And he is like, "I've already slipped on some tiles tonight and sent them like careening comically off to wake up a guy," who was like, "who's there? Thieves! Thieves!" And Mat executed a classic Aladdin escape maneuver. So Mat is sort of, Mat gets up to go along and is immediately knocked over by someone, or no, a knife is put right in front of his throat and he knocks it away and sort of has this little scuffle which ends with him pinned to the rooftop. He's like, maybe I can go for my staff, but someone puts their foot on his wrist so he is pinned. And he looks up and it's a bunch of dudes in veils, and Matt is like, "I seem to recall something about the Aiel."

SALLY: Hmm.

EMILY: This is a troubling thing for me. What are Aiel doing here? And he says something that it is implied he actually says in the old tongue, because none of the Aiel really respond to it, and also he mentions kind of feeling like it came out weird. He thinks that they're thieves initially, he doesn't really realize they are Aiel, he's just like, "hey, if you don't bother me I won't bother you, just let me up and I'll go on my merry way." And they are like, "yes we are Aiel," because Mat, as usual, has said aloud what he thinks he's thinking. Cause he's that character.

SALLY: He's probably like, "fucking Aiel?"

EMILY: He's like, "What the fuck, Aiel? In Tear?" And Ruark's like, "yes, we are Aiel."

SALLY: Hello?

EMILY: And Aviendha or whoever is like, "You're a pretty good dancer, we should properly dance sometime," and Mat has a smile that turns into a frown as he's like...

SALLY: I don't really think she means what I think she means.

EMILY: I don't really think it means what I think it means. I think that means a blood thing and not a sex thing.

SALLY: And I don't really like it when the two cross paths.

EMILY: Which, gross. Yeah. And they are like, so they just sort of let him up and are like, what the fuck are you doing here?" And he's like, "me, what the fuck are you here?"

SALLY: I asked you first.

EMILY: And Juilin's like, "You guys, what the fuck are you doing here?"

SALLY: It's like that scene in The Office.

EMILY: Juilin? Honestly.

SALLY: They are all just holding their guns at each other.

EMILY: It's a very amiable scene where Ruark is like, "you've been out here, Juilin, watching the Stone of Tear, so don't go pointing your fingers at us," and Juilin's like, "fine, I confess dramatically. I feel very badly about something I did, but I don't really know what I did that's wrong, and I'm just sort of having a weird ambiguous moral moment here." And Ruark's like, "That seems legit. As long as you go on your way we shan't murder you." And Juilin and Mat are like, "That seems like a fair trade." And then Juilin is like "well, what are you doing?" And Ruark's like, "we're breaking into the Stone of Tear." and Everyone's like, "well okay. This seems fine." And Ruark is like, "Well what about you?" To Mat, "What are you doing?" And Mat's like, "I'm just on a moonlit stroll." And immediately has six knives pointed at him. He's like, "Fine, some people I know are in the Stone of Tear so I am also on a rescue mission. Seems we are all here for similar reasons." And everyone's like, "okay great, now that we've figured that out..."

SALLY: I'm just on a moonlit stroll.

EMILY: I'm just on a moonlit stroll.

SALLY: With my hot lunchbox.

EMILY: Mat's like, "We could all join forces if you want, because I've got good luck, and you guys are real good at kicking ass." And Ruark's like, "We'd rather not. You are..." And then at one point someone says something to Ruark and Ruark's like, "yes Gaul." So we know Gaul is there.

SALLY: Graaah! That made me so feral, when I read his name.

EMILY: Sexual tension. I was like, my boy is there. But for first-time readers it's like, whoa, Gaul got all the way over here and has met up with people so now we know that there is sort of this movement of Aiel all centered on here. So the Aiel kind of peace, like, fade into the night as is their want, just [poof sound] into the wind, and Mat's like, "oh my god, why do these things keep happening to me?"

SALLY: He's like, "How hard did I hit my head?"

EMILY: The concussion, it's getting bad. And Juilin's like, "Are the people you are rescuing, do those happen to be three ladies?" and Mat's like, "how the fuck do you know that?" And Juilin's like, "Well I.... Well, you know, hey, I will help you into the Stone of Tear." [laughter] And Mat's like, "Okay, that doesn't seem suspicious at all." Juilin's like, "I actually know of like a little gate that we can use, where like, you can pretend to be my prisoner and I can take you in. And Mat's like, I'm not 100% sold on that idea because I just met you on this rooftop in the dead of night and it's not like you have your little FBI badge or something to prove to me, and even if that were, fuck the police," you know, so. Mat's kind of uneasy about this and he's like, well let me go set off a little distraction over here. And Juilin's like, "okay weirdo." So Mat gets on top of the wall and runs over to the stone of tear and as predicted there's like an arrow slit in the actual fortress and he just crams his little bundle of fireworks here, he tells us how he spent some time in his room earlier that evening jerry-rigging all the fireworks so that the fuses would all go off at once. So then he whips out his lunch box which turns out to hold a call because Aludra's matches, so he sets fire to the fuses and then just takes off running. And then...

SALLY: Ka-boom!

EMILY: Explosion. Mat is thrown forward, it is the loudest sound he's ever heard, and he miraculously doesn't get knocked off the wall.

SALLY: Or drop his staff.

EMILY: Yeah he like catches it as it's falling. And he sort of gets up and looks back and is like, "oh what the shit, this hole looks a lot bigger than it did. That was a larger distraction than I was intending." And then makes this seat-of-the-pants decision could just run straight for the hole rather than going back to Juilin. And only as he enters the now man-sized entry does he realize

“oh, the reason I was going to set it off a distraction and then enter somewhere else is because I knew all the guards would come here. So now here I am fighting ten guards.”

SALLY: He is so stupid. Literally the dumbest person alive.

EMILY: It's incredible. Of the two rivers they have like three brain cells between them, Egwene always has two, and the other one just bounces around, and Mat currently does not have it.

SALLY: Does Matt ever have it?

EMILY: Maybe not.

SALLY: It's so funny cuz he's like, oh fuck. it would be a perfect freeze frame.

EMILY: He's like, oh shit. But then Juilin kind of swings in after him and they together because they're both quarterstaff people, fighting against dudes with swords, lay waste to all the defenders, and it's pretty funny because Juilin's like, “are you a dude who can channel?” and Mat's like, “no, it's fireworks. Don't fucking ask me questions.” take me to the cells.

SALLY: It was just my booms.

EMILY: it was just the booms that I love.

SALLY: It was just my favorite booms.

EMILY: It was just my big noise machines.

SALLY: I love big noise.

EMILY: Um, and then we flash over to Rand who's like, “huh, that's weird, I just heard a very loud noise and now alarms are going off.”

SALLY: could you imagine how funny this would be filmed though, it's like, you don't see the explosion at first oh, you just see all the characters hearing this loud explosion.

EMILY: Yeah you see Mat set fire, then you don't see, you see him running away. And it flashes over to Rand who hears this weird thunder noise and his like “what the fuckening?” and the girls are like...

SALLY: What the f...

EMILY: What the hell?

SALLY: And Moiraine's like...

EMILY: and even Perrin in Tel'aran'rhiod is like...

SALLY: Then we go back to Matt being...

EMILY: It flashes to the Aiel and they're like oh my god...

SALLY: And Gaul's like, okay.

EMILY: And then we Flash over to Mat and he is flat on the Stone of Tear. He's like, "that did not go..."

SALLY: Oh my God. This scene is so funny.

EMILY: Anyway, Rand's like "wonder what that was, it must have been one of my weird manic phases so I'm not going to investigate further." The DM's like, "would you like to roll an investigation check," and Rand's like, "would rather not."

SALLY: Absolutely the fuck not. I'd prefer not to.

EMILY: And then laughing to himself like a literal fucking loon, he just takes off running. And he's already in the Stone of Tear. Earlier Mat was like, is that or is that not a person climbing the Stone of Tear?

SALLY: [laughter]

EMILY: That would also be a perfect if he was talking to the Aiel and sort of like looks behind him and sees Rand going up and is like...

SALLY: [whispers] what the shit.

EMILY: But Rand turns around just as Ruark turns around and it's like,

SALLY: What is up with this[snaps] are you okay?

EMILY: He's like, I don't know.

SALLY: Am I?

EMILY: And then we flash over to Egwene who is just waking up in one of the cells with the girls, she's totally injured, they're all shielded, she kind of takes a minute you catch up and they're just like, yeah, we're in this really bad situation, we know that someone is holding our shield, our shields, and someone is like guarding the cell but that's pretty much all we know. And Egwene's like, "I can't believe they're using us for bait." And Nynaeve's like, "Bait for what though?" and Egwene's like, "well, Rand, I know Rand is coming because I've been dreaming about him." And in her head she's also like, I know that Mat and Perrin, this feels like a very fateful moment. Again not really going to investigate that further.

SALLY: Fate. Don't know that bitch.

EMILY: But as they're talking she realizes she still has the Ter'angreal that allows them to get into Tel'aran'rhiod. And she's like, what the shit, they didn't even take this from us. And Elaine's like, "Yeah, we weren't important enough." And Egwene's like, "well, joke's on them motherfuckers. I'm going to use this to kick their asses." So she's like, "I can channel in Tel'aran'rhiod, so if I go there then I should be able to figure out a way to get us out." And so she puts on the ring, goes to sleep, it's a very tender little moment where Elayne's stroking her hair and Nynaeve's singing her a lullaby so she can go off to sleep.

SALLY: Very tender.

EMILY: While the building is exploding around them.

SALLY: It's just like, what is happening.

EMILY: It's just like, okay, this might as well happen. But she wakes up in Tel'aran'rhiod and kind of visualizes the Stone of Tear and immediately finds one of the Black Ajah but shields her and binds her up quickly and there's this little moral moment of Egwene deciding whether she's going to, A, kill this woman, which she pretty quickly decides not to do, or torment her, by beating her cause this is the same woman who beat Egwene up really badly, or C, just kind of like leave her bound up. Which because she's lawful good, she decides on the C option.

SALLY: Yeah, she gives her like a little smacko.

EMILY: She gives her like a little smacko and then is like, "oh, this is really distressing to me actually."

SALLY: I don't like this actually.

EMILY: She's like, "I'll have to learn how to slit throats so that at least."

SALLY: She's just so legendary and the woman is like [alarm sounds] don't slit my throat

EMILY: But then she kind of goes off in Tel'aran'rhiod looking for the cells. Meanwhile, also in Tel'aran'rhiod, Perrin is running around in wolf form trying to rescued his beloved. Which I forgot he's actually running around in the Stone of Tear while this takes Place. And since so many of our characters including Rand are going into and fighting in Tel'aran'rhiod kind of brings Perrin into the story line a little bit.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Although yet I wish you was doing something more active like maybe he helped Rand with killing what's his bucket at the end.

SALLY: Ishi?

EMILY: Ishi.

SALLY: Good old Ishi.

EMILY: But he is just kind of running around with Hopper fighting people or whatever. And they will enter a room and Faile will be there, and she'll be like, "oh Perrin, thank you," and Perrin will be like, "ohhhh," and then she disappears. And it's very melodramatic.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And then I just kind of have to keep looking.

SALLY: And Hopper's like, "for fuck's sake."

EMILY: Hopper's like, "literally this is the stupidest adolescent shit I've ever been a part of." Hormones are skyrocketing right now. Perrin's like, "I don't know if I'm a wolf or a man." and Hopper's like, " That's called being a teenage boy. Just chill out a little bit."

SALLY: That's called being horny.

EMILY: Yeah, that's called being a horny dude.

SALLY: Calm down. You're fine.

EMILY: Just bring it down a few notches.

SALLY: Just dial it back. Click click click.

EMILY: Then it cuts back to Mat who is actively fighting Darlin who is saying all this bullshit but Mat's using his quarterstaff and Darlin's got a sword, so Mat's kind of at the advantage able to keep him at a distance but he's blocking the entire hallway. He's like, "Juilin, can you make it past me?" And Juilin's like, "nah, not without decreasing your reach." And this guy is like, "you will be honored to die on the blade of the highlord Darlin, peasant, if I allow it so." And Mat's like, "I don't think I will."

SALLY: I know.

EMILY: And Darlin's like, "Rude as hell."

SALLY: You interrupted me.

EMILY: And Mat finally knocks him out. And then is talking...

SALLY: [Laughter] This is my favorite part.

EMILY: And then is talking to Juilin who is like having an existential moment of like, " hey, maybe all people are the same regardless of economic class..."

SALLY: Regardless of rank. And Mat's like, "yeah."

EMILY: Mat's like, okay, and goes to swing the quarterstaff up on his shoulder and accidentally knocks someone over the head who is sneaking up on them.

SALLY: So good.

EMILY: And Mat's like, "oh."

SALLY: Luck be damned.

EMILY: Luck be damned. Here I am again. And is also talking to Juilin and sees Rand go by in the corridor ahead of him and Mat is like, "what? What is going on?"

SALLY: What is going on? I know, I love that Rand's just sneaking around.

EMILY: I know, it's so funny. But Matt and Juilin and then start going back to searching for the cells. Then we get to the first Rand point of view of any substance in, I think the entire book,

where she is entering the Stone, the Heart of the Stone of Tear and sees Calandor and is like, “ooh, shiny, want to grab.” but then a man who is Balal comes out and is like, “take it, Lews Therin,” and Rand is like, “that seems suspicious.” Anytime a bad guy wants you to do something, seems like you just shouldn't do that.

SALLY: So Rand has the other brain cell at the moment.

EMILY: Rand's currently operating with the brain cell.

SALLY: The rotating brain cell. He's like, “I'm not going to do that.”

EMILY: “I'm not going to do that.” He's like, “you put Nynaeve, Egwene, and Elayne in a cage, I saw it in my dreams.” And this dude's like, “Yeah, taunting taunting taunting about women. You're at his mercy, blah blah blah.” And Rand's like, “Who the fuck are you?” and Balal's like, “I'm Balal, bitch! Don't you remember me?” And Rand's like, “no, that's not how reincarnation works in this particular universe, until I'm actively enlightened, like 12 books from now. It ain't happening.

SALLY: Damn, twelve books.

EMILY: Well, we're in book 3 and he like, reaches enlightenment, it's so funny to say, in book 12. So nine books.

SALLY: But it does take him 12 books but 9 books from now.

EMILY: 9 books from now he will be like, “oh yeah, I fucking remember Balal, bitch.”

SALLY: I get why Moiraine kills him.

EMILY: Actually Moiraine is the MVP. Does Moiraine have the braincell? No, Moiraine's not technically part of the Two Rivers crew.

SALLY: No, and does Moraine have any brain cells. Considering.

EMILY: Hard to say. Anyway, Balal's like, “go, reach for Calandor,” and Rand's like, first of all that seems suspicious, but also I am suffering from some insecurity right now, and although I have allowed myself to be proclaimed the Dragon Reborn, this is sort of a big moment where I'll find out if that's actually true. So he isn't like, wanting to go for it with this dude watching him. But Balal attacks him and they kind of have this big sword fight and Balal's like, “don't you remember, we fucking invented fencing,” or whatever the shit, back in the good old days when

swords were a sport instead of death. And Rand's like, "okay, what sort of Orwellian bullshit is that?"

SALLY: Yeah [laughter].

EMILY: But Balal's like, "take it or I'll kill you." And Moiraine's like, "No!" in the John Mulaney voice.

SALLY: That's my wife!

EMILY: That's my wife!

SALLY: That's my protege.

EMILY: Moiraine is like, walks in and Balal's like, "I thought you were out of the way, you bitch," and Moiraine immediately Balefires him and it's a very transcendent moment.

SALLY: Yeah, it's very good. And he's like, "nooooo!"

EMILY: And he's like, "noooooo!" Sizzle sizzle.

SALLY: Some magic [unintelligible] Noooooo!

EMILY: Noooooo!

SALLY: I underestimated womennnn!

[laughter]

SALLY: I forgot how funny that scene is.

EMILY: It's a very funny scene. And Moiraine casually like just murdered a bitch, is like, "He was right though, you should take Calandor. It is your destiny." And Mat's like, "Again I'm having some self esteem issues, here so could you turn around?"

SALLY: "Can you turn around? I can't perform when you're watching me."

EMILY: I can't perform in front of a crowd.

SALLY: Because meanwhile there are Aiel just like, kicking ass all around them.

EMILY: Yeah just a sword fight is going on, Rand is like becoming aware that there's other fights like, there are Aiel and they are fighting guardsman kind of all around the Heart of the Stone, and Rand's just like, "I can't even really pay attention to that right now."

SALLY: Until he trips over a body.

EMILY: Yeah, until he trips over a body with like, sucks to suck. That sort of brings it, you want to visualize it as, it's all happening in the periphery but then when you're tripping over bodies, that's like, Jesus.

SALLY: Lots of people.

EMILY: Getting pretty close for comfort. But Moiraine finishes her little speech and immediately whips of Black Lightning curl around her and then are throwing her rag-doll style to the other end of the room and she's down for the count. And Rand is like, "oh, what the fuck was that?"

SALLY: What the fuck was that?

EMILY: Who the hell-

SALLY: What the-

EMILY: Who the hell? And then the Shadows descend and it is Ba'alzamon, the gayest, most dramatic...

SALLY: I know, you do got a love his flair for the dramatic.

EMILY: Yeah, he's got a very big Labyrinth energy David Bowie singing,

SALLY: oh my God, may he rest in peace David Bowie, I wish he was still with us so he could play Ishmael.

EMILY: [screams]

SALLY: [laughter]

EMILY: Why would you put that into the world? I'm so excited. That would be so good.

SALLY: It would be really so excellent.

EMILY: Yeah, and he's like "twice in this life I've been willing to offer you to serve me living but twice you've refused. Now you have to die." And Rand is like, "every time man, every single fucking time you come at me with these monologues and it just, it always ends the same way, can you just give it a rest buddy." And so Rand sort of goes for Calandor but also, Ba'alzamon does this weird thing that's like, I don't know, trying to rip out his soul or some shit.

SALLY: Very strange.

EMILY: It said, like, the description is very like Rand is being stabbed but he's clearly not being stabbed but because he's not being injured oh, that's not a physical thing that happens to him, but as soon as he gets a hold of Calandor and he is channeling, then it goes away. I don't know.

SALLY: It's weird.

EMILY: I don't know mechanically what was happening there. That all always annoys me a little bit when... Oh, I don't know, more or less I can piece together the things that happen at the end of the book to you know, in terms of channeling, like oh yeah, okay, I get what that was, but this, I'm like, what? So that's a little weird. Once he's got Calandor he's like, I'm going to fucking finish you, and Ba'alzamon's like, "eek."

SALLY: Yeek, that wasn't supposed to happen.

EMILY: Yikes, and takes off running. He does like a little gateway in the air and Rand just as is his want, copies him, and they both end up in Tel'aran'rhiod but Rand doesn't know that at all.

SALLY: [phone rings] Sorry.

EMILY: Then it flashes over back to Egwene's point of view who miraculously I don't think sees Rand running by. That would be hilarious.

SALLY: She's like, what the, Jesus Christ.

EMILY: But she has found her way into Tel'aran'rhiod down to the cells and has found that there's sort of a, one of the Black Ajah is sort of flickering in and out of you so it's kind of like oh, she's falling asleep at her post and she's sort of playing with one of the Ter'angreal that would put you in one of the Tel'aran'rhiod, so she's sometimes here and sometimes not. And Egwene Prepares a shield and like, slams it on her the next time she sees her in the dream. So that sort of creates this really weird situation where the shield is weaker on them but not exactly gone, so Egwene wakes up and is like, "did it work?" And they're like, "um, not really."

SALLY: Not really.

EMILY: “Not really. But it's different, for sure for sure, you're doing great girl. Honey...”

SALLY: Awesome work.

EMILY: Awesome work. You are really MVP this time around. But unfortunately we still cannot Channel. And Egwene’s like, “aw shit. Also I opened the door in Tel'aran'rhiod,” but things you do in Tel'aran'rhiod to inanimate objects as Egwene reminds us, don't hold in reality. It's just a law of organic material apparently. But Egwene’s like, “just go to sleep again and try to figure it out.” But luckily, at that moment...

SALLY: “Luck” -ily.

EMILY: Heh heh heh.

SALLY: You see what you did there.

EMILY: I didn't do it on purpose.

SALLY: Don't tell them that.

EMILY: Oh, sorry. Kind of a peek behind the curtain there. Most of my jokes are on accident.

SALLY: Are they? Or are they fate?

[laughter]

EMILY: Mat and Juilin enter the cells pretty much uncontested because everyone's gone off to investigate the explosion. And also the Aiel invasion.

SALLY: And also just like...

EMILY: Everything.

SALLY: The dragon Reborn running around with his magic sword...

EMILY: There's just a lot of shit going down.

SALLY: The prisoners are the least important, the least of our concerns.

EMILY: So Mat just walk down there and sees this woman who is like, apparently just like sitting there helplessly like, crying and unable to move. And Matt is like, “oooh, this is horrifying.” And Juilin’s like, “oh, that’s one of the ladies who took them, so she’s a bad guy.” and Mat’s like, “okay,” just going to a very slowly like Indiana Jones, reach for the keys,” grabs them, opens the cell and there is a very comic moment where Nynaeve’s like, “what under the white are you doing here Mat Cauthon,” he’s like, “saving your lives, fuckwit, like, come on!”

SALLY: God dammit.

EMILY: “I came to rescue you! Can we just please get out because apparently me setting an explosion is not the wackest shit but has happened tonight, which is like, what the fuck, come on. Who could have anticipated that.” And everyone’s like, “well, it’s fate. And you are a quote-unquote main character.”

SALLY: Ta’veeren.

EMILY: Ta’veeren.

SALLY: Shrug.

EMILY: And Nynaeve is like “Mind your language.” And then Egwene wakes up and is like, “Mat Cauthon, what in the fuck are you doing here?” And he’s like, “You tell her,” he says to Nynaeve, “I’m too busy minding my language.” He’s the sassiest.

SALLY: I know, I love him.

EMILY: It’s just very very good. But they’re all glaring past him, and he looks around, and is like, “it’s Juilin, curse your sudden but inevitable betrayal!” Juilin’s like, “Yeah, well, okay, see, I might have been the one to put them here but I didn’t mean to, and my head got all fuzzy and it was confusing.” And the girls are like, “yeah, you were probably being manipulated by darkfriends, so you are more or less forgiven. And Juilin’s like, “Okay, thank you. Thank you for your mercy.”

SALLY: More or less. We’re still going to keep you under quasi indentured servitude for the rest of the story.

EMILY: Yeah, really. And Mat’s like, “okay, great, now that we are past that, can we please endole, exit, what’s it, get out of here. Vamanos.

SALLY: Vamanos. En diamo. Allez!

EMILY: And they very rudely tie him up and are like, “how dare you even,” oh, Nynaeve goes and punches the gal who was watching them. Who is now immobile and unable to...

SALLY: Pretty iconic.

EMILY: Yeah, and as soon as she punches her then the shields drop. And Mat is like, “I’m not clued into any of this paneling shift so, all I just saw was you punching a woman who was unable to defend herself. Basically. And so I’ve gotten my wack masculine ideas about honor, the battlefield, that was Bad News Bears.” And Nynaeve’s like, “don’t fucking tell me what to do.” and Mat’s like, “Okay, well don’t tie me up with your witch powers. With your witchcraft.”

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Like, hello, I just rescued you.

SALLY: He’s a man of science so it’s obviously witches.

EMILY: Everybody go see the new Spider-Man movie.

SALLY: It’s very delightful.

EMILY: But Nynaeve’s like, “Okay, fine, you’re right, you did get us out of there sooner than we would have, but of course we would have done as well for ourselves.” So what’s him down and then the ladies are all like, okay now we are going to go find the Black Ajah and murder them. And Mat’s like, “Great, great great great great great,” to Juilin, “you want to hop in on that?” And Juilin’s like, “No, I saw what happened to you, idiot.” And Mat’s like, “Great, thank you.”

SALLY: Thank you for the backup.

EMILY: Thank you bro. Broseph.

SALLY: What happened to the bro code?

EMILY: Yeah, come on.

SALLY: Bruv. Son. Tiger.

EMILY: Cheeky Nandos.

SALLY: [laughter]

EMILY: But this sort of sequence ends with the ladies taking off and Mat sort of taking off after them...

SALLY: I'm leaving! As he's following...

EMILY: You can't make me come with you!

SALLY: And they're like, "okay," as he follows along directly behind them.

EMILY: And then we get to Perrin who again is like, "aw, I can't reach my wife or whatever the shit," it's like, oh, he finally enters a room and he's all like, weak and wounded and whatnot, where he has to fight through a bunch of Falcons to reach this woman, and like the symbolism is so absurd, it's like, you're going to have a really great and fulfilling relationship, but only after you suffer through the abusive stages of your relationship. Like what the hell.

SALLY: Yeah, Faile is pretty abusive.

EMILY: Yeah, they're both just really bad.

SALLY: You right you right, both of them.

EMILY: But he does manage to rescue Faile in her Falcon form, which I guess again is like symbolism of accepting her for how she wants to be, but it's like, that's a normal human polite thing to do, that should have happened, oh I don't know, 400 pages ago so not exactly compelling stuff. He wakes up and it's the little ter'angreal that had them trapped in Tel'aran'rhiod is broken and Faile's like, "my dear Perrin, you're so wounded."

SALLY: And Perrin's like, "my lady love, my Falcon."

EMILY: Give me your favor dear mademoiselle.

SALLY: And she's like cleaning blood off his face.

EMILY: I know.

SALLY: Take him to the hospital!

EMILY: The ER. The fantasy Urgent Care. Mother Guenna. Oh my God, imagine going to Mother Guenna and Thom was there...

SALLY: And Thom's like, "the fuck?" Being held hostage.

EMILY: What is happening.

SALLY: By this witch-woman.

EMILY: And Mother Guenna's like, "god, every single fucking person from the Two Rivers has come to me."

SALLY: [laughter]

EMILY: But we go back to Rand who is running through Tel'aran'rhiod, kind of, it's a very weird liminal sequence...

SALLY: It's a little hard to follow.

EMILY: Yeah. But more or less he is chasing and Ba'alzamon is setting traps or, you know with kind of a later stage reader's understanding of Tel'aran'rhiod he's just shifting the world of dreams to suit his needs and Rand doesn't really know what's happening but is sort of unconsciously fighting back against him. But eventually Rand does catch up with him and like back in the Heart of the Stone and Rand is like, "I destroy you," and stabs him in the chest. And then they blink out of Tel'aran'rhiod and are back in the real world and Mat, and Rand is surrounded by Aiel and other people, and there is just this dude's body. And Rand is like, "oh, I did it, I killed The Dark One." And it's like, "no you..."

SALLY: Bitch, if only.

EMILY: Bitch, if only. Just delete the next eleven books I guess. I like how you would have finished that a very high point.

SALLY: Yeah, that would have been a good ending.

EMILY: But that is more or less it, the Aiel and everyone else starts chanting, "the Dragon Reborn, the Dragon Reborn!" and we sort of time skip to the next day when people are sort of chanting, because they've heard the news, and Mat is inside the stone of Tear in a sort of conference room setting with Moiraine, and girls, and Ruark, and Mat's just kind of like, "you know, where I went wrong was getting on a boat."

SALLY: Where I went wrong was leaving the Two Rivers.

EMILY: Yeah, some mistakes were made, I'm willing to admit that, couldn't certainly not have predicted this outcome. This particular set of circumstances. He's like, "Ruark's over there reading a book, who the fuck even though that Aiel could read."

SALLY: Mat you racist asshole.

EMILY: I know and Ruark flips him off, like, "of course I can read. You're the one who's illiterate."

SALLY: You are the illiterate one.

EMILY: I do read sometimes. Absolute buffoon. And Nynaeve's like, "I can't believe Perrin's here." And Moiraine's like, "yeah, he was in mortal danger when I left him but I have postponed returning to that situation in order to have this little chat."

SALLY: And his companion was also in Mortal Danger.

EMILY: And everyone is just like, "his companion? Is this when I find out that Perrin is gay?" Egwene's like, visualizing Gaul.

SALLY: She's like, "I mean, I get it."

EMILY: And then she meets Faile, and is like, "oh, I just lost the plot somewhere."

SALLY: She's like, "I think this was the wrong choice."

EMILY: And Nynaeve is like, "as always, Moiraine, your priorities are impeccable. Great. Glad we could have this talk." But Moiraine's like, "yeah I wanted to show you all this." And she shows them one of the seals on the Dark One's prison or as Moiraine calls it, a focus point, so the physical incarnation of a very magical thing. And it's broken, like, has been in the last two books right? There's been a broken seal at the end of every book?

SALLY: Mmhmm.

EMILY: And they are all like, oh yeah, well, that sucks." But they're all like, "it doesn't really matter now, or Mat's like, okay yeah, I just need someone to like, clarify what the fuck is going on because as far as I can tell, the Stone of Tear's down, Rand has the Calandar..."

SALLY: He's got the calendar, yeah.

EMILY: He's got the calendar, and he's like...

SALLY: Scheduling appointments.

EMILY: The prophecy said that the People of the Dragon would rescue, would like, break the Stone of Tear, so does that mean we are the people of the Dragon? And Ruark's like, "No, actually there's a fun Aiel thing, where when you sort of go into Rhuidean, you become a clan Chief and also this fun Dragon Tattoo, it is exceptionally exciting."

SALLY: And glittery.

EMILY: Yeah, it's like this huge fashion statement. And everyone is like, "oh that is very fun." Imagine him with a little fishnet shirt, you know. Very sexy.

SALLY: Oooh, I mean, Gaul isn't a clan Chief but still in a mesh shirt would look very good.

EMILY: Gaul isn't a clan chief. What the fuck is he doing not being a clan chief.

SALLY: Clan of my heart.

EMILY: Yeah. Exactly. God. So Moiraine's like, "oh, the Aiel are the people of the Dragon. I hadn't considered that." And Ruark's like, "It's cause you're all racist."

SALLY: [laughter]

EMILY: I've spent five minutes with you people.

SALLY: Yeah, this one thinks I can't read.

EMILY: This one thinks I can't read. You're all terrible. And Mat's like, "Okay, well then it's great. The prophecies are fulfilled, we can all go home, more or less, because you know, the Dark One is dead, Shaitan is dead." And Moiraine's like, "you fool."

SALLY: Shut the fuck up, Mat.

EMILY: You fool of a Took.

SALLY: Smack. [laughter]

EMILY: She's like, "Do you want to call attention to you?" And Mat's like, "he's dead, I saw the body." And she's like, "you saw a body, do you really think the cosmic incarnation of evil would have a body, you stupid asshole?" And Mat's like, "I don't know how high fantasy works!"

SALLY: I'm just a character inside a book with no goddamn memories.

EMILY: I'm just a character. I've never read the travels of Jain Farstrider, I'm not genre-savvy at all!

SALLY: I don't know how to read!

EMILY: I don't know how to read! What the hell. And you're telling me...

SALLY: You're telling me to use my literary schema to figure this out? That's ridiculous.

EMILY: All I know is that if there's a body it means someone is dead.

SALLY: That's the schema I know, bitch, I've killed at least four people.

EMILY: That's the number one rule of the streets.

SALLY: I'd like to see you survived one night out there Moiraine.

EMILY: Yeah Moiraine, with all the gold I fucking had in my pockets. My fucking gold.

SALLY: She's like, "you've been talking for 20 minutes." [laughter]

EMILY: Moiraine's like, "no, you saw Ba'alzamon's body. And by the way, it's very weird that his body is decomposing as quickly as it is." And everyone's like, "That is very odd and creepy," but also, bad guy, sort of don't know what you expect. Sort of weirdly decomposing bodies. But Egwene is like, "I have this fun revelation."

SALLY: I forgot it was Egwene who's like, "BTW..."

EMILY: Yeah, she's like, "I saw this page in a book about 600 Pages ago where Verin was like, look, it mentions Ba'alzamon and Ishmael together, and it mentions a name hidden behind a name, which is such, like, a (sigh). I've complained so often about the Ba'alzamon and Ishmael thing being not clear at all, and it is further frustrating that it is made clear to us, sort of, with this revelation that came to a character a long time ago and was not called attention to at all. Like, who the fuck remembered this, you know.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And so Egwene's like, "well maybe Ba'alzamon is Ishmael." And Moiraine is like, "maybe so."

SALLY: It's like what the fuck, stupid hoe.

EMILY: She's like, "but if it was Ishmael, then Ishmael's dead, Bal'al's dead, the two at the Eye of the World are dead, so four down, nine to go. So how do you like them odds, Mat.

SALLY: Mat's like, "fucking don't."

EMILY: Mat's like, "I hate it. Why are you talking to me about this? But they are magic people. I'm not magic people."

SALLY: Not a magic boy.

EMILY: Sounds like a you problem.

SALLY: Yeah, you're magic lady.

EMILY: Then Berelain walks in and is like, "Here, I have a message."

SALLY: That's my cleavage girl.

EMILY: Yeah, what does Mat say about her?

SALLY: She's got an admirable bosom.

EMILY: Red silk left those shoulders bare along with a considerable expense of what Mat noted as an admirable bosom which is the most eloquent way of saying that.

SALLY: You have nice tits girl.

EMILY: Be like, oh good tits.

SALLY: An admirable bosom.

EMILY: That is an admirable bosom. I'm going to comment about that.

SALLY: I feel like Anne Hathaway could also play Berelain.

EMILY: Oh man, you are so right. She's got the right coloring and the seductress energy.

SALLY: I also think Emily and I are just really hot for Anne Hathaway.

EMILY: Oh yeah. We are really horny for Anne Hathaway.

SALLY: She would also just be a fun Berelain, like, she has that saucy sassy, she's very smart...

EMILY: She's so clever. I love her.

SALLY: She plays good characters. I don't know Anne Hathaway personally but these are the things I assume about her based off of her career and her interviews.

EMILY: She's like, "here's a message," and Moiraine is like, "who the fuck are you?" and she's like, "I'm Berelain, the first of Mayene." and Moiraine's like, "who gave it to you, this letter?" And she's like, "I don't really remember but she was very impressive and kind of ruined my self esteem for a minute."

SALLY: Which is the first time that has ever happened.

EMILY: Which is literally the first time that has ever happened to me. I came out of the womb with the self confidence of Beyonce herself. Picture this, Berelain played by Beyonce.

SALLY: Well we all know Perrin could not...

EMILY: Yeah, that would not make sense. And then she hits on Ruark and tis like, "farewell." And leads in a cloud of perfume.

SALLY: Ruark like, "Hmm, my child."

EMILY: Ruark's like, "Mmm, don't like that. I'm happily married."

SALLY: I know. Berelain and Ruark have a weird relationship.

EMILY: I know, we'll talk about it I guess in book 6? Whenever it comes up again. But Moiraine is like, "Let me read this creepy letter out loud. Lews Therin was mine, is mine and will be mine forever. I give him into your charge to keep for me until I come. It is signed Lanfear." And then she looks at Mat and says "you really think the pattern is done with you, bitch?" And he's like, "I don't even fucking know Lanfear. Why you gotta keep dragging me into this?" And everyone is looking at him and he has this kind of iconic moment where he says, "Oh yeah, for sure, I'm totally ready for whatever happens," and his inner monologue is like, how the fuck am I gonna get out of this one.

SALLY: Yeah, and then Renegade with a Stick starts playing.

[both start singing]

SALLY: Either that or Ready to Run by One Direction.

EMILY: Meanwhile, the people outside are still chanting for the Dragon Reborn. And thus ends Book 3 *The Dragon Reborn*.

SALLY: Take a moment to dab friends.

EMILY: Take a moment to dab. Sorry, that was like, all plot summary.

SALLY: That's okay.

EMILY: I mean, we can keep talking, this is going to be a long one, we warned them.

SALLY: Yeah I mean, I don't really know what else I have to say except I love it.

EMILY: It's just a very good sequence.

SALLY: Yeah, it's just very satisfying. Like, all the characters are doing interesting things...

EMILY: Yeah, like, Egwene... I don't know. I am struck this time around that there's a poetry in having people doing things in Tel'aran'rhiod at the same time that things are happening in the real world that of course the people doing things in Tel'aran'rhiod are our main Tel'aran'rhiod characters, Egwene, Perrin, and to a lesser extent Rand, who only ever goes there when he has no clue what's going on. And usually when he's fighting The Forsaken.

SALLY: In a fit of rage.

EMILY: Yeah, for whatever reason. Like, almost the exact same thing happens with Rahvin, right? At the end of book 5? Very weird.

SALLY: Fuck you Rahvin.

EMILY: So yeah, I take back some of my earlier criticisms of Perrin's place at the end of the Dragon Reborn.

SALLY: Yeah, I forgot that he was also running around the Stone of Tear. I thought that he was out in the woods for some reason, that's what I...

EMILY: Yeah, for some reason I was like, picturing dungeons in The Legend of Zelda which is more or less what the Stone of Tear is, like, he is tied in there well enough that I can't really complain.

SALLY: And as we've discussed, Perrin's plot is always sort of adjacent to what everyone else is doing so...thematically it sets him up for the rest of his arc pretty well where he is like connected but by much looser threads than say, Matrim.

EMILY: Mat, who is more or less always, physically and verbally bound to the things that are going on. Mat is always compelled to join into the fray because of his own sense of what's right and wrong.

SALLY: And the girls are like, "fuck you, I'll be here." Which you gotta admire about them.

EMILY: It does get very good in book 7 when finally Ahvienda's like, "so you're saying he went into basically the Pentagon to rescue you, got you out when you weren't being successful getting yourselves out, and then you tied him up and left, and were like, fuck you. And You think that's okay?" And Elayne's like, Yeah, isn't that how you treat men? And Aviendha's like, "no. What the hell?"

SALLY: "Why are you still alive?"

EMILY: "Why are you like this? You need to apologize to him." And they do apologize to him, all of us collectively were like, thank God.

SALLY: And Mat's just like, "I kind of I hate this."

EMILY: Mat's like, "ohhh."

SALLY: It's obviously forced. Mat's like, "I asked for this but now that it's here, I don't want it.

EMILY: Yeah, it's like when your mom forces your sibling to go apologize to you. You're like, "Okay yeah, you're fucking forgiven. But only because mom's listening."

SALLY: Yeah, and I'm a little drunk.

EMILY: I'm super hungover from a night out on the town with Birgitte.

SALLY: I really do, we'll talk about, Emily and I were talking about this, 7 is both my least favorite book because of...

EMILY: Rape?

SALLY: Yeah. The rapist who shall go unnamed. But also the dynamic between, in Ebu Dar between the characters are so interesting.

EMILY: There's just a lot to talk about and think about in book 7 which is why it's one of my favorites.

SALLY: I wish that Matt got to bro out with Aviendha a little bit more though.

EMILY: I know, Aviendha occupies this weird space that we will talk about a little more much more as we get into *The Shadow Rising*, of being like, one of the guys, which is already a terrible Trope to put women in, but also like, she's being forcibly feminized with a throughout the series which sort of breaks her apart from....

SALLY: She becomes very much in the female camp.

EMILY: Which is silly. It's dumb that we don't have more characters who can occupy both spaces, like Birgitte.

SALLY: And like, we will talk about her when she arrives, the masterpiece that she is, but...

EMILY: She's perfect.

SALLY: Able to be both very feminine and very masculine and comfortable in both roles. It's very awesome.

EMILY: Yeah, there's that iconic moment ahead-of-its-time in book 7 where Mat and Birgitte are meeting up to do surveillance or whatever the hell they're doing, and it's on one of the festival days where all the women are scantily clad, and Birgitte like, saunters out in the sluttiest...

SALLY: The Princess Leia bikini.

EMILY: And Matt is deeply confused, and she's like, "what? I like it when people look at me." And Mat's like, "Okay. Same. Same same same."

SALLY: Well at this point Mat cannot relate.

EMILY: At this point Mat is like, "I wish no one will look at me or touch me ever again."

SALLY: I have no physical body.

EMILY: God bless.

SALLY: Which is deeply upsetting but Birgitte's like, "look at my titties."

EMILY: She's like, "look at my titties!" And Mat's like, "weirdly, I don't really need to. Which is a really refreshing relationship for me to have with a woman."

SALLY: Birgitte's like, "I'm not interested in you, literally at all, get out of my face."

EMILY: Mat's like, "Because I'm not fucking ugly, which is your type."

SALLY: I love Birgitte so much. How is she the perfect character. I can't wait to have my mom here.

EMILY: But we're not even there yet. She won't even be introduced, I think she has a scene in the next book.

SALLY: I think she has a brief interlude and makes her appearance.

EMILY: She steps up and...

SALLY: "Yeah, bitch. It's me, Brigitte. Fuck you." I love her.

EMILY: Anyway, the Stone of Tear, or what we are calling the Stone of Tear, referring to the sequence, is a masterwork in how to write A, an action sequence, how to flip very seamlessly between character points of view...

SALLY: Very good.

EMILY: Which I talked about this a lot in my blog but as we get into the later books, that happens a lot more frequently but it has a much more Brandon Sanderson stylized version of that, where there is a... the cinematic quality of that is emphasized rather than the literary quality of that. Probably if Brandon Sanderson was writing this scene, he would have written it as though it was a television series where the boom takes place and then we flip over to a bunch of characters reacting to it. Which, yes would be very pleasant to watch on the screen, but doesn't translate as well...

SALLY: Not very fun to read.

EMILY: Yeah. To the written word.

SALLY: Yeah, interestingly *Good Omens* does the Salat wear it's very Greek in its rendering of, in that like the violence or quote-unquote dramatic things that happen off screen that are presented through another character's point of view, and every time it was like having the floor whipped out from underneath me, I got so tired of it towards the end of the book.

EMILY: It's not a great reading experience.

SALLY: Yeah, it's really fun to watch but it's just not very good to read, it just doesn't translate in the same way. But this one is just seamless. Robert Jordan has such a gift between like, transferring between different points of view really quickly but still having them be distinct. Like, you can tell in that short paragraph where Rand hears the boom and then it switches to Egwene, I didn't even need him to tell me who those two characters were.

EMILY: It's one of the fantastic things about Robert Jordan's writing style is that, context help you place those characters also, but every character also has a distinct voice. No other character would start out a chapter the way that Mat does. With the, "oh my God, what? Only a fucking idiot would be doing this right now. And of course I am doing it also."

SALLY: And of course I am a fucking idiot.

EMILY: Mat's got his self-deprecating constant inner monologue going on, humming constantly, there's all these hallmarks of the characters. Rand has got his little laughing to himself, blah blah blah, Rand's the only character who ever does that.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: It's hard to talk about that, but it's there. It's a good quality of the series.

SALLY: It's really amazing. Actually at this point now that we have read my God, nearly 2,000 pages with this set of characters, you really feel the points of view, they feel like points of view that have been lived in and walked around in.

EMILY: Yeah, and it's really astounding that that happens, that we get for example, this is the first book that has Mat as a major point of view character, and so it's amazing that we can get to that level with him so quickly.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: It's also telling that Mat's is the point of view that ends this book because as we've said before, this is very much a Mat book even though he is not the character carrying the central plot. Mat is not the one who is getting Calandor out and fulfilling all the prophecies, Mat is adjacent to that, still a participant but adjacent. But this is still very much Mat's story, and that kind of stepping into his role as Ta'veren, and a plot character. And it's interesting that it's bracketed by those two things of him blowing the Horn of Valere at the end of book 2, and this one where he unconsciously but very much of his own free will entered the main plot. That's all, I think.

SALLY: Yeah, I just love this book so much.

EMILY: It's very good.

SALLY: Thank you, sorry that was a long one, but also we did warn you.

EMILY: It's the season finale.

SALLY: It's the season finale.

EMILY: Speaking of, we are going to be back with *The Shadow Rising* in a few weeks, next week we will be taking a bye week, Sally is going on family vacation, I am also starting a new job, so we're just going to be a little too busy to record. Please forgive us. But any patreon things will be posted as usual.

SALLY: And also I don't think we've taken a bye week since last summer. I think we've gone pretty much a year Non-Stop. So...

EMILY: We just need a little vacation.

SALLY: Don't forget about us though.

EMILY: H.A.G.S.

SALLY: Yeah, H.A.G.S.

[laughter]

EMILY: And then the week after that we will probably be back with one of our classic in between Seasons bullshit.

SALLY: Yeah, probably something weird. If you have any ideas, drop them in.

EMILY: Yeah, if you really want us to do another Q&A, or if you want us to get a guest-pert on here...

SALLY: My brother-in-law can tell us about trains.

EMILY: Oh my God.

SALLY: Yeah, we could get my brother-in-law here, he would probably love that. Colin would be like, what the fuck is your technological set up, and then I would have to kick him out of our apartment.

EMILY: No, he really would. Colin would be very upset by my laptop and single mic recording setup.

SALLY: He would like, have soundproof foam all over our apartment in two minutes.

EMILY: But yeah and then after that, we will be back with the first bit of the Shadow Rising.

SALLY: Which I actually do really enjoy.

EMILY: Although, does that one have a prologue?

SALLY: I mean, I prefer to pretend that no prologue in history has ever existed. But I do like the opening sequence where all the boys are fighting aspects of themselves basically. Except for Rand which is all emo and shit. They're all emo except Mat's.

EMILY: Mat's is just fun. Still kind of emo.

SALLY: Everything that has to do with fighting yourself is by definition emo, you know? But at least Mat's has got some Alice in Wonderland vibes to it. Where Rand is like, I'm fighting the mirror because I hate myself.

EMILY: Perrin's like, "I'm fighting the axe because I hate violence." Mat's like, "I'm fighting playing cards because of my addiction to gambling."

SALLY: [Laughter]

EMILY: Big mood.

SALLY: Thank you for coming on this wild ride of *The Dragon Reborn* with us. Season 3 has been lit. Especially because there's been a lot of fireworks.

EMILY: Yes, that is really one of the defining traits of season 3. We will be releasing the definitive Mat Cauthon playlist alongside this episode, so if you haven't seen that yet, go check it out. It'll probably be on our Spotify and whatever other mediums.

SALLY: Yeah, we'll put it up on YouTube. Yeah.

EMILY: That's it. Do you have a sign off?

SALLY: I do. So I've started a new medication last week, and it's like, fine, but the doctor and the pharmacist both were like, the only side effect is that it might make you pee a little bit more. And I was like, impossible for me, a person who is constantly attached by the mouth to some form of water cannot pee anymore that I absolutely do already. Anyway, every time I see my mom, she's like, have you been peeing more? And I'm like, "Mom, we have to stop talking about this conversation." And she's like, "The nurse in me is just curious," and I'm like, "If I am having bladder issues, I will let you know. But if we could leave it out of polite family dinner conversation."

EMILY: One of my siblings who shall remain nameless, but you can guess which one it is, constantly updates us on their world record for how long they've peed. So just hold that in your heart.

SALLY: Happy season 3, H.A.G.S.!

EMILY: H.A.G.S.! Bye!