



Episode 64 - **“Watch What Happens Live with Mat Cauthon”**

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Running Time: 42 Minutes

Sally: Everybody Hates Rand is a Wheel of Time podcast that will contain spoilers for all 14 books. So if you're 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 by Glynn MacKenzie plays)

Emily: Um, 64 is a lot. Hello?! HELLO? It's good if it gets into the yellow, so maybe I -- I don't know how to turn the volume up on this thing quite yet. (laugh)

Sally: It's good if it gets into the yellow?

Emily: Yeah, that's, like, speaking volume. It -- is that, like --

Sally: Oh.

Emily: Um. I dunno. I don't really know anything. I'm also very scared of this time, 'cause it feels more like a countdown --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Than -- it feels like that's the time until we all blow up. (laugh) We're talking about A-Adobe Audition, which I have recently downloaded because you guys are amazing and freed me from Audacity, but it turns out Adobe Audition scares me. It's too complicated for my, um, idiot brain, so we're just gonna see how this goes.

Sally: It kind of looks like a robot. You know, Audacity just looked like a program from the nineties.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: It was pretty, like -- a child could, y'know, probably figure it out.

Emily: Yeah. Yeah, I feel you.

Sally: This one is -- you need a full degree in audio production and --

Emily: I know, I opened it and it was like, what do you want to do? Do you want to make a radio show? Do you wanna mix music? And I was like, no-o-o-o-o.

Sally: No, I don't want to mix music.

Emily: Just let me plug in my microphone and record my dumb voice.

Sally: I would just like to record.

Emily: For 30 to 45 minutes.

Sally: Yes.

Emily: Yes. That's all I want. Hello.

Sally: Um, this -- the fact that -- I'm gonna be watching the entire time to see if my voice is in the yellow.

Emily: Sorry, I shouldn't have freaked you out.

Sally: See, look, now it's not. Ahhhh!

Emily: I think it --

Sally: Oh, that got in the red --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: That was bad.

Emily: I think it's actually OK if it's not in the yellow. We will -- probably -- probably Audacity is used to you talking into the microphone like this, and -- not Audacity, Audition -- and since we

only have the one microphone that we're both using because using two microphones is a whole-ass production on any editing software --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Yeah. I hate it.

Sally: Maybe we should record on two different laptops.

Emily: Oh my God, that would be ... horrifying.

Sally: Then I didn't have -- I would never have to look at you. I could just look at my notes. You're so pretty, it makes me nervous.

Emily: Stop it. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Today I look peak skater boy.

Sally: Yeah, you look great. I like the pineapple socks.

Emily: Yeah. New Vans high-tops. These shorts that are too short, so you can see my boxers through them.

Sally: Looks great.

Emily: And my vacant -- my -- what's that word? I don't know how to pronounce this word. It's spelled v-a-u-c-o-u-s. Is it vacuous?

Sally: I thought it was vacuous.

Emily: Vacuous.

Sally: I don't -- don't trust me on that. I'm a dyslexic poster child.

Emily: I just feel like that's what my resting face is, is kind of vacuous, like -- (laugh)

Sally: I think I fully have resting bitch face.

Emily: Um. I think I do too, really.

Sally: Like, I fully -- and, like, I mean, I can be a total bitch sometimes, but generally, I'm, like, probably one of the more pleasant people you could, you know, interrupt.

Emily: You're extremely pleasant.

Sally: So ... it's definitely not presenting my true identity. Like, I fully don't usually mind being interrupted, unless you're a man in Target. Then you don't fuckin' talk to me.

Emily: Did a man in Target speak to you?

Sally: I mean, they always do.

Emily: Really?

Sally: It's just, like, the archetypal man-in-Target -- yeah. I mean, I think, as someone who presents pretty feminine --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And sort of just kind of lost, in general --

Emily: So, like, helpers? Like --

Sally: Helpers or just, like, men in Target. They won't always, like, try and help, they just kind of, like, say things.

Emily: What a fascinating --

Sally: Yeah. It's not all the time, but it just happens fairly frequently.

Emily: I know, I'm just very interested in that because I wish I had done some sort of study of what my experience as a consumer was before I started presenting as more butch --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And, like, actively shopping in the men's section. 'Cause I always go into the men's section, and I'm, like, on-guard for if someone --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, an old person will say something to me.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But I think at this point that I have, like, a confusing enough gender presentation that I don't necessarily --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Look like a woman on first glance.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And I think when that happens to people, they get so caught up in trying to figure out whether -- like, what my actual gender is that they --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, don't have any space left over (laugh) to ask me questions.

Sally: Yeah. I was thinking about this the other day. I was in the men's section of Target, looking for, um, a flannel. I really wanted, like, a flannel, 'cause I don't really have any.

Emily: And they have good ones there.

Sally: Yeah. And I don't like women's flannel, because they seem to forget that women typically have breasts, y'know?

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: And so it's like, here, the buttons just don't work. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah, it's like women's flannels are all, like, made to be worn over something --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And wear it open.

Sally: Yeah. It's very frustrating.

Emily: And it's like, no, I want a flannel that I can button up to my collar-bone if I want to.

Sally: Yeah. That's, like, my whole thing, is wearing button-ups all the way up to the --

Emily: Yeah. Sally came in the other day with a button-up under her Hozier sweatshirt, and she looked extremely professional.

Sally: Oh, thank you.

Emily: I was like, damn. How she do that?

Sally: I --

Emily: 'Cause I roll into work in, like, my slacks and my little cardigan and whatever, but I still, like, manage to look like I just rolled out of bed and don't want to be there. (laugh)

Sally: That's probably for the best.

Emily: Which I do. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which is true.

Sally: Um. But anyway, I was in the men's section, and I was looking around, and there were a bunch of older men, and I was -- like, in my head, it was this crazy running monologue. I'm like, if they ask me a question, I just should say that I'm shopping for my boyfriend. And I was like, what? Like, it was the weirdest, like --

Emily: 'Cause you --

Sally: Built-in response. You know? Just, like, I just am here to buy a flannel, but it is just, like -- and it was the fact that I was, like, I'll just say I'm shopping for my boyfriend, like, a bunch of lies all in a row --

Emily: 'Cause that'll end the conversation the quickest.

Sally: Yeah, 'cause it'll just be, like, done. Yeah. And it was like, I don't want to explain to them that -- (sigh) yes, I have very long blonde hair, and yes, I'm in a dress, and --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: But I just want man -- a male flannel so that I can wear it without worrying that my breasts are gonna pop out in the middle of my grants meetings. Anyway. Gender is the worst, and if you -- I mean, it's the worst and the best. Policing gender is the worst. And if you feel like you have the right to talk to anyone --

Emily: Basically, yeah, if you're a man --

Sally: Depending, on where they're buying clothes, shut the fuck up.

Emily: If you're a man, just don't really speak to a woman in a public space.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I've never had a positive interaction --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Where a man sought me out to say something when I was in a store or anything like that. It was just, like, I just don't want ...

Sally: Yeah. Just, like -- and --

Emily: Don't --

Sally: Just don't comment on what people are buying. It's their money, and it's their life, and if you know, they want to buy a dress or they want to buy a flannel, it's none of your fucking business.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: They want to buy condoms? Or tampons? It's none of your fucking business.

Emily: Ugggghh. Ah, that just made me think of a poor -- a-any poor boy who tries to shop in the women's section.

Sally: I know.

Emily: It would be so hard. God bless.

Sally: I'm just gonna start walking around and fighting gender policers.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And if you need someone to come fight people in the Target for you, hit me up. It'll be me, your gay aunt, with a baseball bat.

Emily: I have this -- (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Today, I'm -- I'm gonna make you take a picture of me after this, 'cause I got a fanny pack today. (laugh)

Sally: Oh my God.

Emily: 'Cause -- my family's going to Disneyland next week, which, uh -- this week, when you're listening to this, I will actively be in Disneyland --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which comes with a lot of mixed emotions, 'cause I was officially diagnosed with a panic disorder the last -- no, two times ago I was in Disneyland --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: The last time I went to Disneyland, Sally made me a scavenger hunt --

Sally: Oh, yeah.

Emily: And that really helped, actually.

Sally: I'll make you another scavenger hunt.

Emily: You don't need to. I'm, uh, a little better medicated these days and, uh, less anxious about the whole experience. Although you can if you want to. It was just really fun. Um, anyway, so

we're going to Disneyland, and this is the first time we're going with, A) my brother-in-law, who I'm pretty sure has undiagnosed ADHD --

Sally: Yes.

Emily: Yeah. He also has anxiety and just, like, a variety -- he's just, like --

Sally: He's kind of just, like, a bundle of neuroses.

Emily: Yeah, he just got -- he just loves his wires. We don't know what else to say about Collins.

Sally: (laugh) That is a wire boy. Is Jack going?

Emily: And Jack is going.

Sally: Ohhhh.

Emily: My little nephew, Jack, who will be, uh, just about eleven months old --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: When we're there. So I was in Target today, and I was in the men's section, as always, and I was -- started thinking about how every time we go to Disneyland, my mom is carrying this giant-ass, like, purse thing, only usually it's one of those little backpacks, and it's full of, you know, our stuff, but also snacks. Because my mom -- my mom is such a lunatic about snacks. I just, like -- I can't explain it to people.

Sally: It's -- Emily told me this when we first met, and I was like, whatever, and then I met her mom, and I was like, dear God.

Emily: She just fucking loves to have little snacks.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: She, like -- every time, in high school, I would bring friends over to my house, especially if they were friends she hadn't, you know, met --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: A whole bunch of times, she would, like, prepare a little snack basket. We'd be down in the basement watching a movie or whatever, and she'd come down with her little basket full of snacks. It's a very interesting, like, way of demonstrating her love.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And then, you know, when we go on -- like, I went on a trip to Seattle a couple months ago, and my mom made me bring a snack bag. A little Ziploc bag full of snacks.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: 'Cause she was like, "I know you are going to suffer from want of snacks in Grandma and Grandpa's house, 'cause they have nothing to eat, ever."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Except, like, Raisin Bran, y'know.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Typical grandparents. Anyway, so we always go to Disneyland, and my mom has this giant bag, and it weighs about 200 pounds --

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: And after about an hour, she'll start complaining that no one's helping her with the bag -- the bag -- (laugh) and my dad will be like, "WHY do we need so many tiny bags of M&Ms?!"

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: "What the fuck?" And Anne's like, "I'm diabetic," and I'm like, "Pass the M&Ms," and it's just, like, a whole thing.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And now we have a -- an 11-month-old, so it's gonna be even more of a big thing.

Sally: Yeah. Poor Jack.

Emily: So I was like -- I texted the family, and I was like, "I have a proposal to solve the 200 bag -- pound-bag -- and that is that we all carry our own individual bags." This is why I now own a fanny pack. (laugh)

Sally: Nice.)

Emily: And my mom was like, "But we'll have a stroller this time," and I was like, You don't get a stroller in Disneyland in the lines. You have to go park the stroller.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And then you're on your own. And that's when we eat the most snacks.

Sally: True.

Emily: So yeah, I'll have you take a picture of me in my fanny pack, and -- this is probably the exact outfit I'll be wearing in Disneyland. These shorts, these shoes, these pineapple socks.

Sally: They're very good socks.

Emily: They are good. H&M has good men's packs of socks. (sigh) Anyway. That's our update.

Sally: Yeah, that was a lot of stuff.

Emily: I'll edit out -- some out. But also, who knows how much we actually have to talk about -- did you read the chapters?

Sally: I read the summaries.

Emily: That's fine.

Sally: I apologize, guys. I'm still in, uh -- hand limbo.

Emily: You also -- yeah, Sally also worked for, like, 11 hours today, so.

Sally: I did. I worked for 11 -- I mean, technically, I worked for almost 11 and a half hours, but I did take a seven-minute break to get a bagel, so.

Emily: (sigh)

Sally: God forbid we put that on the fucking clock.

Emily: So mad. (laugh) Anyway, this is Everybody Hates Rand. Do you wanna do the thing?

Sally: Oh, sure. This is your friendly neighborhood Wheel of Time podcast.

Emily: (laugh) OK, I'm Emily Juchau.

Sally: And I'm Sally Goodger.

Emily: And we're here to talk to you about one of the most iconic scenes in Wheel of Time history, and that is the part where Elayne is like, "Don't you wanna do it for me, the future queen of Andor, your royal personage?" And Mat is like -- (laugh)

Sally: "Ba ha ha ha ha."

Emily: "No. Fuck you."

Sally: "Absolutely not."

Emily: It is --

Sally: "Eat the rich."

Emily: So funny.

Sally: Yeah. "I am the rich, but eat the rich." (laugh)

Emily: Well -- he's not yet, though. He's got, like, three pennies in his pocket.

Sally: He's only -- we haven't got there, yeah, yeah, yeah, you're right.

Emily: Yeah. Soon to be, though. (laugh)

Sally: Soon to be the rich.

Emily: Literally --

Sally: Eating the rest of the rich.

Emily: Literally, we're about to enter that zone of Mat never worrying about money ever again.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which is such an interesting --

Sally: I know.

Emily: Trait to give to a character.

Sally: I know, and what a dream.

Emily: I know.

Sally: Like, it's --

Emily: It's an interesting way of giving Mat power that then surpass -- like, we've talked about how Mat, in contrast to most of the other main characters, has no relation at all to magic.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And, like, y'know, Perrin, at least, is nature boy and has got some wolf telepathy going on that gives him certain powers.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And also, Perrin is basically officially, like, a noble person --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: After about book four. And then you have Mat, who's just, like, "Don't have anything, really, except money --"

Sally: Money.

Emily: "And my war brain."

Sally: And my brain.

Emily: "My dumb, warfare-riddled brain."

Sally: Yeah. Warfare-riddled is a good way to put it.

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: There's a lot of things going on in that little boy's brain that I don't fully understand.

Emily: Anyway, this sequence begins with Mat actively eating what he refers to as a snack, and it is, like, six apples, ham --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: (laugh) And, like, a variety of other --

Sally: Gross.

Emily: It's the ham that gets me.

Sally: I know. Ham is the worst meat, objectively speaking. I hate ham. (laugh)

Emily: And he's literally sitting there shirtless, and it's like, I've never related to a character more.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, I don't -- you can testify to how often you'll come in, and I'm sitting there eating --

Sally: That's true.

Emily: In, like, a sports bra, especially when I had no air conditioning in New York.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um. So, yeah, I fully endorse the shirtless-while-eating look. I think it frees you up to enjoy the eating experience a little bit more. (laugh)

Sally: Interesting -- that's an interesting hypothesis, Emily. Listeners, test it out. Let us know what you think.

Emily: Go topless in the kitchen. But not while cooking.

Sally: Not while cooking --

Emily: Don't splash oil on your chest.

Sally: Unless you have, like, a nice apron on that, like, fully covers the sensitive bits.

Emily: Yeah, then that could be sexy and --

Sally: Then it could be like that -- have you -- “right in front of my salad” porn.

Emily: Yeah, right in front of her salad.

Sally: Right in front of her salad?!

Emily: Ugh, are you guys serious?

Sally: Ugh!

Emily: Ugh, so gross. (laugh)

Sally: It’s ridiculous. How did I not know immediately -- (laugh) that you guys were having sex in the kitchen? There’s no fucking shirt under your apron.

Emily: Oh, man. Yeah, have you ever seen a man shirtless with an apron over and not thought --

Sally: Porno.

Emily: Well, he’s clearly having anal sex at this moment. (laugh)

Sally: Exactly. At this very moment.

Emily: I might not be able to see everything that’s going on, but I do know.

Sally: I do know. It, just -- we been knew.

Emily: Anyway, Mat is eating shirtless, and then all three girls come in without knocking, and Mat starts to get up to get a shirt and then is like, “Well, never mind. Fuck them. They didn’t knock.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And then remains shirtless throughout the rest of the scene, which is just a really endearing --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Image to me, ‘cause he’s also still very skinny.

Sally: Yeah. Just a skinny lad eating his ham. (laugh)

Emily: Just eating -- he’s really bitter ‘cause they come in, and all he has left is apple cores, and he’s hungry enough that he would just fucking scarf down the apple cores, like a goddamn horse -- (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: But instead he's like, "Can't do that with company in the room." (laugh) "There -- even I have limits."

Sally: "Even I have some dignity."

Emily: "Even I, Mat Cauthon, sweaty, shirtless boy, have limits."

Sally: Is this still working?

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: How does the top part work?

(pause)

Emily: I dunno.

Sally: OK. Whatever.

Emily: Who's to say?

Sally: I'm sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt the conversation 'cause I don't understand the robot.

Emily: No, it's just very slow. It's not like Audacity, that --

Sally: Oh, yeah.

Emily: Went super fast, but it is moving across every once in a while.

Sally: OK. I feel like we should name the robot.

Emily: Robot? Um. I can't come up with any good robot names yet.

Sally: Melissa refused to name her next D&D character Chad, and I'm pretty upset about it.

Emily: She refused?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: What the fuck?

Sally: She was like, "I wanted it to be just, like, a one-syllable kind of silly name," and I was like, "Chad --"

Emily: OK, but when you think about it, that's karma for when I wanted to name our cat Chad, and you refused, so. (laugh)

Sally: I -- did you really want to name the cat Chad?

Emily: Yeah. (laugh)

Sally: But we thought Tybalt was a girl at first.

Emily: Yeah, and I still wanted to name him Chad. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Oh my God, that's probably why I said no. Because for some reason I was deeply committed to gender-naming our cat.

Emily: (sigh)

Sally: I don't know what that was. It was very weird.

Emily: (laugh) OK, back --

Sally: If he had been -- if I had known immediately that he was a boy, I probably would have agreed to naming him Chad.

Emily: It's OK. Tybalt is fine.

Sally: What's your cat's name? Tiberius?

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: It's OK, we're gonna name our pit bull Chad.

Emily: Awww. Even if that pit bull's a girl.

Sally: Yeah. I guess.

Emily: Thanks.

Sally: Gender is fake. I don't know why it bothers me more for animals than it does for people. (laugh) I can't explain this.

Emily: Probably because people feel more free to be obnoxious about gender when it comes to animals.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, if you're like, "This is my pit bull, Chad," and they're like, "Aw, he's such a cute little boy," and then you're like, "Oh, it's a girl, actually," then they're like, "What?!"

Sally: "What?!"

Emily: "Ah! I'm the gender police. Here's my badge number."

Sally: "Here's my badge number. It's --"

Emily: "Fuck you."

Sally: Yeah. 1-800-Suck-a-Dick.

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: Ugh. I'm so over everybody constantly.

Emily: Just fighting the good gender war, this episode.

Sally: The good gender war.

Emily: The good gender war. The great war. Nope, that was World War 1.

Sally: That was World War One.

Emily: (laugh) Um. Uhh, fuck. Anyway. Mat has this conversation with the girls that, uh, starts with Nynaeve, like, pressing her hand to his forehead, just -- which is so condescending, in a way.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But is also, like, this has been -- it's like if you -- it's such a weird ... how do you -- how do you explain Nynaeve in terms -- like, Nynaeve as some -- like, their main health care professional?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But also a 26-year-old or whatever she is.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I don't know.

Sally: Um.

Emily: Like, there's no real-world terms for that, really, 'cause there's an element of -- I don't -- I just don't know, I'm trying to think of -- if I know anyone who's around my age who's a doctor.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Who, then, if they doctored me, I would be like, "What the hell?" I dunno. But Mat's skeeved out, mostly because he's like, "I'm in a different setting. I'm not in the Two Rivers anymore."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "I'm in the White Tower, and Nynaeve is actively in training to be an Aes Sedai, along with the other two girls. And so now, when someone touches me --" Like, Mat has a -- a genuine aversion to being touched by channelers --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which is very ... I dunno, there's a lot going on there. Mat also just --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Isn't a touchy person.

Sally: No. Mat is --

Emily: Which is fascinating. Um. But, she's like, "OK, fuck you. Well, you seem fine. Like, you're doing a lot better. You should be out and about, running a marathon," and he's like, "Yeah, I feel great, what do you -- whatcha guys -- whatcha guys up to?"

Sally: Hmmmm.

Emily: Like, they're all, like, asking after his health, and he's like, "Ain't -- Mama didn't raise no fool." (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: "Three girls come into my bedroom?"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "I know you want something."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And they're all like, "OK, well. Fine. Fuck you. We do need you to deliver this letter for Elayne, to her mother, in Caemlyn." And this is a hilarious sequence of events, where Mat's like, "Oh, really? What do I get out of it?" (laugh) And Elayne's like, "You're not just gonna do it 'cause you're loyal to the crown of Andor?" and Mat's like, "Pffft. The who?"

Sally: (laugh) "The what?"

Emily: "No?"

Sally: "I don't know who that is." (laugh)

Emily: And they're like, "OK, well, do we have to threaten you?" Like, "You've never done anything in your life without being threatened." And he's like, "I just asked what I would get out of it."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "You're asking me to literally go on a very long cross-country journey. I expect some payment of some kind."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, but they're like, "You'll get to go to Caemlyn. You'll get to see the dang queen. What else do you want, you dumb adventure boy?" And he's like, "I'm gonna stop you guys right there. I would love for this conversation to go on, but I do have to tell you that I cannot --" (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Physically leave Tar Valon." And it's just very funny because he, um -- like, the way that scene is written, it implies that Mat, from the get-go in this conversation, was like, "I could tell them immediately, just, no, I can't --"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But was just like, "I'm just gonna let them go."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Because it's funny."

Sally: See what happens.

Emily: Mat is so weird.

Sally: Watch what happens live, with Mat Cauthon. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: He's such a jackass. (laugh)

Emily: He is so -- I know. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: He's also -- before we get too much farther in this, it's very interesting how, um -- I just think this chapter very well encompasses Mat's quote unquote sexuality as it is --

Sally: Mmm.

Emily: Written in canon, which is his general relationship to women and his reactions to women, and that is that he sees all of them, and he's like, "Oh, they're all very pretty, and I would love to dance with any of them." And that is literally -- as far as I can tell -- in Mat's general train of thought regarding women -- all he ever wants to do is dance with them. It's a very fascinating regard.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But he doesn't, like, sexualize any of them.

Sally: Any of the three girls?

Emily: Any of the three girls.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He'll say, "They're pretty, and it would be ... sure fun to flirt and dance with them." But, like --

Sally: I dunno --

Emily: It's a very weird -- he does, later, sexualize women.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It just -- it just struck me how much Mat often is like, "I want to dance with women, and I get genuine enjoyment from being with women in that particular setting."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And we actually have scenes of him dancing with women later. I just -- I just don't know. I -- don't know what to do with it. Mat's the only character who really values a good dance.
(laugh)

Sally: That boy does love to dance.

Emily: And, like, considers that kind of, um, like, an important facet of his relationship --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: With women and part of the, like, flirting and courtship.

Sally: Yeah. Mat's relationship to flirting is very interesting.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Where he's -- 'cause, like, Perrin goes, like, zero to one million in his relationship.

Emily: And so does Rand.

Sally: Yeah. It goes, like --

Emily: Rand has no concept of flirting.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Rand has these relationships with women where, like ... he and Aviendha are kind of at each other's throats for a long time --

Sally: Which is just unbearable.

Emily: Elayne is throwing herself at him, and Rand is just like --

Sally: Which is also unbearable.

Emily: "No, I just have to, like, I dunno, flagellate myself for being attracted to a woman." And, uh --

Sally: (snort, laugh) I mean, yeah. That is kind of the --

Emily: Yeah, no, and then Min waltzes in and is like, "I'm literally going to sit on his lap. Like, do everything explicitly flirty as possible," and Rand is just like, "Can't compute."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Mat is the only one who is just like, "I'm going to, like --" Mat flirts.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's just very, like, I dunno.

Sally: Yeah. And I think it's just, like -- we've talked, like, before about how Mat seems to have the most, kind of, like, positive relationship with women outside of, like, a explicitly sexual --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Because, like, not -- Mat has relationships with women that aren't explicitly sexual --

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Like, obviously Perrin does too, but his arc is defined by his sexual partner, pretty much, in a lot of ways.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And Mat is just kind of like, “Yeah, I like flirting.” Which is, like -- just, like -- I dunno, just, not to automatically take it into, like, a rape culture phase, but it’s like, so often, flirting is presented as, like, not enough.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: You know? Like, it’s -- like, there -- it’s like it can’t just be the end. You can’t just, like, have a fun conversation with someone or flirt with someone or dance with someone. Like, there has to be, like, a purpose. And so, like, it kind of presents Mat in, like, an interesting sexual spectrum.

Emily: Well, no, it’s so -- what makes it so fascinating is that Mat, in his own perspective, never qualifies flirting as not being enough.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: For Mat, flirting is, like, yeah -- that’s, like, the point --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Is to have a fun, like, flirt session.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But then it totally warps everyone else’s perspective of him to -- like, all the women think that because he flirts, he’s also having a ton of sex.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And possibly going after women who don’t necessarily want his attention.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it just informs, like, what happens later, with Tylin, where Elayne’s just like, “Oh, yeah, well, you were asking for it, ‘cause you like to flirt.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It’s just, like, a very depressing thing, and I think it actually probably happens, um ... I dunno, I think it’s also -- I -- I just don’t know. Mat has a very interesting, like, relationship with quote unquote slut-shaming.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And how his quote unquote sluttiness is just, like, flirting.

Sally: Yeah. No, I think of, like, those people where it's like -- like, being flirty is part of their personality.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: And that, like -- and just, like, how they interact with people. Like, I -- I've known, like, several people like that, and I've always thought it was kind of strange until I, like, got over myself, and it's like, what is -- like, that's fine. Like, flirting is fun.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: No big deal.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Yeah. No, Mat does have a really interesting relationship with slut-shaming. That's an -- I've never quite explicitly put it in the terms -- those terms -- in my head.

Emily: Well, yeah. 'Cause it's just, like -- and it becomes -- I think it's been particularly obvious to me because Brandon Sanderson buys into it.

Sally: Mmmm.

Emily: The other -- like, when Brandon Sanderson -- and I've talked about this a lot on my Patreon blog, so apologies if you've heard this from me already -- but, um, when you get to the Brandon Sanderson-written books, it's very obvious that he's writing Mat because Brandon Sanderson clearly doesn't quite understand the nuance of Mat's perspective of himself and how he presents in his own points of view --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Versus how other people see him. Brandon sort of is like, "I'm going to write Mat as though he's the character that everyone else sees." So, yeah, he is kind of creepy towards women, and he is, like, sexualizing them overtly and just all this creepy stuff. And also he's a dunce, and he's comic relief, and he's duh duh duh duh duh.

Sally: Listen. I don't mean to, like, put everyone's favorite author on blast, but if you want to count yourself as one of the quote unquote literary greats of modern fantasy, and you cannot grasp that Mat Cauthon has a very different internal versus external life, perhaps you are not very good at writing.

Emily: (snort, laugh)

Sally: Or reading. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) Shots fired.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Ooh, boy, that's gonna bring some -- (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Listen. I tried -- last night, I couldn't sleep, because now that the mono is like, "This is where we live," my insomnia is like, "But I also live here," and now they're at war.

Emily: Sorry.

Sally: So I was like, "Oh, I know what will put me to sleep." (laugh)

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: And so I picked up --

Emily: Fucking Mistborn. (laugh)

Sally: The second Mistborn book, which I have not finished, and I, like, opened it and was like, "Bleeeegggh." (laugh) "OK, not even this will work. I hate it too much."

Emily: (laugh) Oh, man.

Sally: Anyway, sorry. I don't mean to be -- I know we're trying to avoid being Brandon Sanderson bombastic on the podcast, but --

Emily: (laugh) It's just very frustrating.

Sally: It upsets me.

Emily: And it -- I'm comforted somewhat by the fact that everyone seemed to pick up on this.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's a universally acknowledged truth that Brandon really sucked at writing Mat.

Sally: Did Brandon write the "women are like goats" monologue?

Emily: He did.

Sally: Oh my fucking Christ.

Emily: And that is ... evident.

Sally: Yeah, I should've known.

Emily: Yeah, I don't think Robert -- I mean, Robert Jordan might've written that out and then been like, "No, this is too overtly misogynistic. I'm gonna trash this." (laugh)

Sally: And Brandon was like, "Art."

Emily: And also, Mat actually isn't much of a talkative character. It's very, like --

Sally: Mat only talks to himself.

Emily: Mat talks to himself -- Mat is in conversation with himself constantly.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's hilarious.

Sally: I love it. It's a very endearing --

Emily: He's also singing to himself constantly --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: The way this whole conversation with the girls is resolved is they're like, "Oh, well, hey, I guess you can have one of these letters that was given to us by the Amyrlin Seat that basically gives you permission to do whatever the fuck you want."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's like the Presidential Seal. Just go about and do whatever you want. And Mat, as he's reading it, starts, like, humming a little ditty to himself. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. (humming) Clicks his heels. (laugh)

Emily: Literally, after they leave, he does a caper.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: It says that. He does -- he's like, "Hell yeah, never gonna catch Mat Cauthon," and it's like, babe. (laugh) What --

Sally: What is your deal? You're such a weird little gremlin. (laugh)

Emily: I know. And Mat is constantly singing to himself --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Humming to himself, dancing with himself -- he's so weird.

Sally: He's very -- I know, it's a miracle that he has, like, any people, like, talk to him.

Emily: I know.

Sally: Like, why does Talmanes hang out with him? (laugh)

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: I don't get it. He's such a little psycho.

Emily: Talmanes is like, "This absolute lunatic."

Sally: "This absolute lunatic is the love of my life."

Emily: Yeah, but, anyway -- ugh, Talmanes is so gay, and I'm outraged at anyone who thinks differently.

Sally: Right? Talmanes is --

Emily: He's gay and in love with Mat.

Sally: Beautiful Frenchman.

Emily: Yeah, he's just -- (kissing noise)

Sally: I love Talmanes.

Emily: Who doesn't?! (laugh)

Sally: He's such a babe. Such an absolute fucking unit. (laugh)

Emily: Ah, God, I love Talmanes. My only regret is that Talmanes isn't in Ebou Dar with Mat. That he, like, has to take control of the army while Mat's gone. And I'm like, fair point, yeah.

Sally: Talmanes would've just fuckin --

Emily: Talmanes is obviously the most competent person to take control of the army.

Sally: Yeah. Which is why he would've just shanked Tylin, been like, "Don't touch my fucking boy."

Emily: Yeah, but also Talmanes would've been like --

Sally: (laugh) Stab.

Emily: Stab -- "I'm about to stab a queen." (laugh)

Sally: Talmanes would've been like, "This is interesting. Queen stabs queen."

Emily: "This'll be fun. Assassination. I'm into that."

Sally: "Ooooh."

Emily: "Sexy."

Sally: That's a very brave and sexy thing of you to do, Talmanes.

Emily: Ah, Talmanes ... um. Anyway, back to the point, Mat doesn't actually talk all that much.

Sally: No.

Emily: He's not one for monologues. He just chats with people. He doesn't initiate conversations. (laugh) He's an odd little character.

Sally: Odd little duck. And I love him.

Emily: Anyway, Mat now has the means to leave Andor, and he's also, like, to the women, as they're -- it -- there's this little scene where he talks about, like, how he just sits around and reminisces with them for a little while, which I'm a little bit sad doesn't actually get made into a conversation --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I know for, like, I dunno, book length reasons, we can't just write out every conversation every character has, but it's like, that is the type of thing I want to read about, is Mat having a normal relationship with his childhood friends?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I guess, and just being like, "Yeah. Egwene and Nynaeve and I have a rapport and, you know, get along in a normal way."

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: I dunno. Just one of those things, I guess.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um. But then they're gonna leave, and he's like, "OK, well, hey, if you ever need me, like, I will help you. Like, I'm -- I know I act like a dick sometimes, but you really can count on me." And they're like, "Ha ha ha ha, we've observed that men always wanna be the hero -- like, will always volunteer to be your hero, but they're never actually there when you need them." Which is incredibly ironic because Mat is, in fact, there the moment they need him --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: At the end of this dang book series, so fucking -- that's just such a stupid sentiment.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That, like, oh, yeah, a man is never there when you need him, he just says he will be," and it's like, what -- a man can't follow you around, waiting for you to faint in the streets or whatever the fuck --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Requires him. You gotta ask for help before you'll get help.

Sally: (laugh) What?!

Emily: I know. Fuck you, Nynaeve. (laugh)

Sally: That's a shocking and ridiculous idea, Emily.

Emily: Ugghh.

Sally: People should just know what I need constantly --

Emily: Just intuitively, be like --

Sally: At all times.

Emily: Ugh.

Sally: Open communication is a lie. The liberal media wants you to believe -- (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) Um, anyway, then we have a scene with the gals as they're cleaning in the, uh, kitchen.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And Siuan comes in and basically creates enough terror and mayhem that she can get a moment alone with them.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Only, she, uh, has to send Elayne and Egwene off, 'cause she's like, you know, ostensibly, like, Elayne's not part of the group, so I've got to get her out of the equation. But it leaves her alone with Nynaeve for a minute so Nynaeve can report, "Oh, here's what we found. We're going to Tear. It's super weird that you trusted Else Grinwell to give us this message, but, you know, we followed through on it, and this is what we want to do." And Siuan's like, "Uh, well, I didn't give a message to Else Grinwell, and, in fact, all the Black Ajah stuff was burned, like, a while ago. So no idea who the fuck that was or what that stuff was."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "But sounds horrifying."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And no one is like, "Red flag, red flag, red flag." (laugh)

Sally: And isn't -- isn't she like, "Else's been gone for, like --"

Emily: She was like, "Else literally left. Like, she got here, would just stare at Galad practicing in the Warder stuff --" and everyone was like, "Yeah, that's relatable --"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "But, you know, she didn't really have what it takes, so we sent her home." And it's like, OK, homie.

Sally: And Nynaeve's like, "Mm, that seems like standard fare."

Emily: Oh, and Nynaeve's like, "Oh, this is creepy. This means anyone could be Liandrin."

Sally: That's true.

Emily: Which is such an interesting leap because you're being presented with the reality in this book that, uh, channel -- with channeling, you can literally warp your appearance. You can, uh, change what you look like and basically -- you know, not literally shapeshift, but you can present an illusion of yourself. And it's just interesting because that's nothing that the girls will themselves master until --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I think book seven --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Is when they start utilizing it on a regular basis. But -- and then they encounter a little bit, again, with some of the Forsaken. Moghedien disguises herself for a while. But, um, I dunno. It's just like, there's no mention in this little, uh, scene of Nynaeve being like, "Oh, that's creepy. Is that something you can do with the One Power? Is just, like, changing your appearance?" and then Suan could be like, "Eh, theoretically, you know. We don't know how, but the Forsaken might be able to." (laugh) You know, it's just, like ...

Sally: Frightening.

Emily: Yeah. Um, but ultimately, Nynaeve's like, "OK, well, we're still gonna go to Tear." And Suan's like, "OK, well, great. Have fun."

Sally: "Bye." (laugh)

Emily: "You guys and Elayne." And Nynaeve's like, "Oh, I thought you didn't know about Elayne," and Suan's like, "I'm not a dumbass. I know Elayne -- you guys can't keep a goddamn secret from Elayne."

Sally: "The dumbest person alive."

Emily: "The dumbest bitch in Andor ... and the entire world."

Sally: (whisper) Yeah.

Emily: Um. So she's like, "Yeah, go on." And -- (laugh) She -- this is just kind of a funny little thing -- as she's leaving, she's like, "I gotta fix the kitchens. This -- the woman who runs the kitchen, uh, Laras -- is actually, y'know, a gem, and I don't wanna disturb her too much," and Nynaeve's like, "Are you kidding? She's been beating people with sticks, and she's the worst," and Siuan's like, "Oh, yeah, you're a great judge of character. She stormed in and was like, 'I will not be party to these women being, like, basically abused, like --'"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "'To break their character, which is what you seem to be doing to Nynaeve, Elayne, and Egwene. Like, you gotta leave -- ease up or something.'"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "So, yeah. Fuck you, Nynaeve. Excellent judge of character." And Nynaeve's like, "OK, well, I'm gonna keep judging people superficially." (laugh)

Sally: "I'm just gonna never learn that I should maybe be a little bit less judgmental." (laugh)

Emily: I know. I know. Actually, Laras is genuinely a character that I really wish --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Was in the series more. She then helps Siuan and Leane escape the White Tower. And she just, like, appears kind of throughout any White Tower scene. She's just, like, a cool character.

Sally: She's just nice.

Emily: I just think she's cool. She just has her kitchens. Doin' her best.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Good for her. Love her.

Sally: Workin' nine to five, baby.

Emily: (singing) "Workin' nine to five ..."

Sally: (singing) "What a way to make a living ..."

Emily: (humming)

Sally: (singing) "... All taking and no giving ..."

Emily: Um, so that kind of ends that segment, I guess?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I don't know what else there is to say about it.

Sally: It's kind of like, we've been -- this whole block of chapters we've been talking about for a couple weeks is mostly just, like --

Emily: Yeah, we're -- literally, the next -- we are at the halfway point.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: We're at the halfway point, and the rest of the book, I guess, is the actual plot. So.

Sally: Robert! Who taught you how to structure?

Emily: Make of that what you will. (laugh)

Sally: Robert. Who allowed this?

Emily: (laugh) The good news is that our next, uh, segment is Mat going on his waking-up-in-Vegas, poker-face --

Sally: Yes. Amazing.

Emily: (singing) P-p-p-poker face, p-p-poker face, na na na na ...

Sally: That's what ... it would be Poker Face while he's gambling, and then Waking Up in Vegas would play when he and Thom wake up on the boat the next day and Thom's like, "I'm so hungover!" (laugh)

Emily: "'Cause I'm literally an alcoholic right now!"

Sally: Yeah. And vomits.

Emily: He's like, "I just killed two kings" or whatever.

Sally: (snort) Thom "Killed Two Kings" Merrill.

Emily: The real Kingkiller Chronicles. Eat that, Patrick Rothfuss.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Is his name Patrick?

Sally: His name is Patrick.

Emily: OK.

Sally: You done good, baby girl.

Emily: I just -- (laugh) really questioned myself there for a minute.

Sally: We're just throwing a lot of shade this chapter -- this episode, I guess.

Emily: Uh, yeah, we really are. Sorry for everyone. But, um --

Sally: (laugh) Um.

Emily: OK, our creepy Audition robot, Polonius, is telling us that, um --

Sally: Oooh.

Emily: We are about forty-one minutes in, and who knows how much I'm gonna edit out, 'cause, like, I guess we're done. So.

Sally: OK.

Emily: Yeah, I don't have anything else to ...

Sally: Um. Just kind of the general PSAs. You can follow us on Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, and now on Goodreads.

Emily: Hey, yeah.

Sally: Um, Abigail on Twitter specifically asked that we link to our Goodreads page, because Goodreads is kind of impossible -- 'scuse me -- it's kind of impossible on Goodreads to find people. I have not done so yet, 'cause we're recording on Monday, and we released on Monday, so I'm just, like, kind of in a weird space, but anyway, you can find us on Goodreads, EHRPodcast, where you can see what we're reading and what we recommend, et cetera, et cetera. Uh, you can also check out our bonus content on Patreon, where we are trying to raise money to create some EHR merchandise. And the more money we get there, the less likely it is that I have to work 11-hour days, so it would be great if you could free me from this capitalist prison that's trying to break my body, mind, and soul. Um. I think that's about it.

Emily: Yeah, that's about it. Sorry if this ends up being a shorter episode than usual, but, uh. It was a weird segment of chapters, and also I am going on vacation soon, so.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: For my editing --

Sally: Editing.

Emily: Ease ...

Sally: That just means next week I can do my own rendition of both Poker Face and Waking Up in Vegas.

Emily: Yeah, next week is gonna be a long 'un, 'cause we -- there will be so much to talk about, mostly screaming about Mat.

Sally: About how Mat just goes on some weird gambling rampage.

Emily: I know. Such a weird fucking lunatic.

Sally: What a weird boy.

Emily: Umm. But that is it. Do you have a sign-off for us?

Sally: I mean, not really. I did work 11 hours today, and that was unfortunate. So. Do you have a sign-off?

Emily: No, I just thought maybe there was one on Patreon.

Sally: No ... if somebody -- we're -- I think we're out of listener sign-offs, so this is a good reminder that if you guys have traumatic experiences that you want to share with our listening base, you can --

(clanging noise of metal against glass)

Emily: Oh, God, I keep banging my dang watch against the ...

Sally: Send them to us at everybodyhatesrand@gmail.com or drop us a message on Twitter, TUmblr, or Instagram. Tybalt is fully chewing on Emily's phone.

Emily: (sigh)

Sally: Oh, he's doing so many bad bites.

Emily: So many bad bites.

Sally: So many bad bites. I don't really have a sign-off.

Emily: Um. I feel like the first 10 minutes of this episode was a sign-off, so --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That's where we're at.

Sally: Just go back to the beginning. Or Emily can splice some of the beginning and put it here at the end.

Emily: Nope. Too hard.

Sally: As she remembers, next week, to put the theme song in.

Emily: FUCK.

Sally: This is your reminder! This is your --

Emily: That's my sign-off! I woke up this morning and was chatting with my brother online, and then Sally was like, "You forgot the theme song," and I was like, "FUCK," and spent the next three hours --

Sally: Oh, no.

Emily: Trying to upload the goddamn other version because the online audio converter is a total dick, so I ended up having to download an entire new program so I could get it up.

Sally: Sorry.

Emily: Anyway. Fuck that. I'm really sorry, Glynna. Thanks for the theme song, though.

Sally: We really like it.

Emily: Yeah, we really do like it. I'm just dumb.

Sally: No. Emily's not dumb, she just works really hard managing a whole hotel, my sick and ridiculous ass -- Emily has basically kept me alive through her sheer -- sheer willpower --

Emily: I'm OK identifying as a dumbass. It's just, like, that's where I am in my journey, y'know? It's OK.

Sally: Gender: dumbass.

Emily: Gender -- (laugh)

Sally: You guys should listen to Queery with Cameron Esposito, 'cause she always says that her gender is fighter pilot, and I love that. (laugh)

Emily: My gender is dumbass. So that's about where I'm at. Thank you for listening. (laugh)

Sally: OK, bye! (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) Fuck. Bye.