



Episode 65 - “Fresca Heart”

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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: (laugh)

Sally: What?

Emily: I just remembered when I walked in from work -- (laugh) and the Backstreet Boys was playing very loudly while Sally cleaned the kitchen. It was a pretty on-brand moment --

Sally: (laugh) Yeah.

Emily: For this household. (laugh)

Sally: I don't know why you're surprised. (laugh) Or why you were so shocked.

Emily: It was also an on-brand moment for this whole segment of chapters.

Sally: Yeah. I'm sorry if it seemed really loud.

Emily: (singing) And that makes you ... (normal voice) I mean, it just, like, felt loud, 'cause it was sound after coming in from the outside.

Sally: Yeah. Where there was no Backstreet Boys playing.

Emily: Where there was no Backstreet Boys playing at all.

Sally: Which was pretty rude of the outside.

Emily: I was listening to a podcast, though, that was talking about, um, bedazzling. (laugh)

Sally: Amazing.

Emily: And I remembered that -- is your Twitter bio still this?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: One time I, like -- early on in our relationship, I, like, went to follow Sally on Twitter and your bio was "Still has her bedazzler" --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And I was like -- (laugh) I been knew.

Sally: That's a reference to Lady Gaga's "Marry the Night" music video.

Emily: Which, like, I didn't know.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Still didn't know until this very moment.

Sally: Yeah. (laugh) That music video -- at least I think it's "Marry the Night" -- is -- I'm pretty sure it's "Marry the Night" -- is so iconic. I'm gonna make you watch it after this. It's like ten minutes long --

Emily: No.

Sally: It's so good.

Emily: I already had to watch a weird YouTube video today.

Sally: Emily. But it's so good. And there's a part where she's like -- (laugh) I can't do this. But yeah, that's where my Twitter bio comes from. I've thought a lot about changing it to "Brought to you by Excedrin," but. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: I do really like "Still has her bedazzler."

Emily: I don't know what mine is.

Sally: Isn't it, like -- I think it's "Words, words, words."

Emily: Oh, yeah, I think it is too. (laugh) Which --

Sally: (laugh) Which is a line from "Hamlet," so we've got Lady Gaga and Hamlet.

Emily: I just never know what to put on my Twitter bio, and then I think of Hamlet being sassy to Polonius, and I'm like --

Sally: "Words, words, words."

Emily: There's a lot of gay drama.

Sally: I just -- I just searched Twitter for "words, words, words" --

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: Instead of Emily.

Emily: I don't know what else I would put on --

Sally: Yeah, it's "Words, words, words."

Emily: My Twitter bio.

Sally: All lowercase.

Emily: Yeah. I don't believe in capitalization.

Sally: (laugh) I don't believe in capitalism.

Emily: Yeah, exactly, that's --

Sally: Any forms of capital. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) So this is the energy we're bringing to this podcast today. It's been, like, a full two weeks since we recorded.

Sally: I know, it's really weird.

Emily: I know. There's, like, a little hair on my ...

Sally: I've been missing them. Oh, I didn't even realize until just now that we were back with Audacity.

Emily: I know, it's 'cause I haven't had time to, uh, make the transition from free trial of Audition --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: To actual purchase of Audition --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: So here we are. Tybalt, whatcha doing? Oh.

Sally: Our cat is a fucking idiot. (laugh)

Emily: We put him -- (laugh)

Sally: So fucking stupid.

Emily: This has been your cat update. Cup --

Sally: He's still down.

Emily: Cupdate?

Sally: Cupcakes.

Emily: Aw. I want a cupcake.

Sally: After this, I have several errands to run. If you want to come with me, I'll buy you a cupcake.

Emily: OK!

Sally: (laugh) Kay.

Emily: That had almost the exact same energy as my mom saying to me --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Do you want to come to Target with me? I'll buy you something."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And me being like, "Yes."

Sally: Yeah, I need to go get food for that chucklefuck.

Emily: Oh, OK. Yeah, I'll go with you.

Sally: Um. So he doesn't starve to death. And then I was thinking we'd go to Michael's and get a frame for Ferg's present.

Emily: Oh, OK, yeah. I would like that too.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Maybe, if we're feeling really bold and sexy, we can run into the Home Depot so I can get flower boxes.

Sally: We can do that.

Emily: OK.

Sally: We can feel bold and sexy.

Emily: I'll just do some little household chores after this. OK --

Sally: I might also go to Barnes and Nobles and get Business for Dummies.

Emily: I was gonna go to Barnes and Noble today and get you the next Aru Shah book.

Sally: Aww. Emily, that's so nice.

Emily: But then, um, I was -- I ran out of time.

Sally: It's OK. Time is a limited -- of limited quantity.

Emily: Yeah, and also, I've been up since 5:30 a.m. --

Sally: I knooooow.

Emily: And I was just tired. So I was like, "Mm, can't do it today. Can't go to the Barnes and Noble today. Especially 'cause then I have to confront the reality that nothing makes me happy anymore, apparently."

Sally: Yeah, Emily had a -- a trial in the Barnes and Noble.

Emily: I had a traumatic experience at Barnes and Noble.

Sally: Did you go to the Fort Union Barnes and Noble?

Emily: No. We already talked --

Sally: Did we already have this conversation?

Emily: About this, but I think I edited it out.

Sally: Oh, yeah.

Emily: And now it's on the blooper reel. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) 'Cause that Barnes and Noble sucks ass.

Emily: Yeah, we give a whole Barnes and Noble review about my bad experience in the Barnes and Noble, where they were playing the Fifty Shades of Grey soundtrack, and I couldn't find a book.

Sally: Oh, yeah, I think we did a review of Salt Lake City Barnes and Nobles. Now I remember. It's been so long since we last recorded.

Emily: I know, it's just been --

Sally: I've missed you guys. How are you?

Emily: (muttering)

Sally: Emily went to Disneyland. I got better. I don't have -- I mean, I probably still have the virus, but I can use my hands now.

Emily: Yeah, you can use your hands. You do seem a little more energetic.

Sally: Yeah. I have a lot more energy.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: So I'm back on the climb to health. So I cleaned the kitchen today 'cause I've been a disgusting goblin to live with. Mad props to Emily for surviving that disgust.

Emily: It's OK. I lived for two years in New York with some, mmm, people. (laugh)

Sally: Hmm. Certain folks. (laugh)

Emily: Who shall not be named. Although I could name them, 'cause I don't think they listen to this podcast at all. Yeah, no. Um. But I shan't, because I'm polite. Polite society. And I do my own dishes. Kay.

Sally: Sometimes she does my dishes. (laugh)

Emily: Oh, I don't care about that because none of your dishes are gross.

Sally: I do -- we did live with some folks who didn't believe that it was necessary to wash, like, sauce-type items out of pots.

Emily: It was -- I can't -- I couldn't.

Sally: Before leaving them in the sink for, like, upwards of 48 hours.

Emily: I couldn't.

Sally: It was pretty gnar. (laugh)

Emily: Uggggghhh.

Sally: OK --

Emily: I can't talk about this, or I'll get angry again. OK, welcome to Everybody Hates Rand, your friendly neighborhood Wheel of Time podcast. (laugh) I just remembered the part -- oh, SPOILERS for Avengers: Endgame! Fast forward 10 seconds. I just remembered the part in Avengers: Endgame when Spiderman comes back and is like, "This is nice," when he gets hugged by Tony Stark.

Sally: "Oh, this is nice."

Emily: I just love Peter Parker. OK, END of SPOILER. Back to Wheel of Time.

Sally: You can come back.

Emily: But there will be Wheel of Time spoilers. We discuss that in the disclaimer at the beginning. If you didn't -- if you skipped that, fuck you. (laugh)

Sally: Also, Emily, future Emily, this is your reminder to put it in. (laugh)

Emily: What?

Sally: Put in the intro.

Emily: Oh, yeah. (laugh) Future Emily, put in the intro. Emily, you dipshit, put in the intro --

Sally: No.

Emily: You dumb fuck. No, I'm doing this tomorrow, so I'll remember.

Sally: Oh, that's right. Yeah, we're recording on Saturday. Poor Emily has to record -- edit --

Emily: It's 'cause I was in Disneyland from Monday through -- Sunday through Wednesday, and then I was working the other three nights of the week.

Sally: Yeah, and this week has been shit garbage.

Emily: OK. Now that's our update. You've now heard what our week has been like, Sally's health update --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: The cat update -- um, our daily chores after this update --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, what other updates do we have? I didn't have an anxiety attack in Disneyland.

Sally: Holla!

Emily: There's an update.

Sally: Yeah, that's a very good one.

Emily: Yeah, it was pretty good. I just went on Pirates of the Caribbean with my nephew repeatedly.

Sally: Your nephew is the cutest.

Emily: My nephew is very cute and very -- just, he's a happy baby.

Sally: He's a very cute little guy.

Emily: As long as he gets to sit on my shoulders and put his little chubby hands in my hair --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Then he is good to go.

Sally: Contented little guy.

Emily: Yep. OK. Here we are, talking about the most iconic chapters in the entire Wheel of Time, arguably.

Sally: I don't think we said our names.

Emily: Oh, fuck me.

Sally: (laugh) But if you've gotten this far, I think you know.

Emily: (laugh) It's episode sixty-something.

Sally: It's episode 65. I believe.

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: Um, but that's Emily, and I'm Sally.

Emily: (muffled laughter, sigh)

Sally: Thank you for tuning in. Now we're gonna talk about the most iconic chapters in the series, probably?

Emily: Yeah, that's what I'm saying. The entire Wheel of Time, in, arguably, all of literature, perhaps?

Sally: That's true.

Emily: So just, like, pull up a playlist. We will, with this episode, release -- I'm giving us a challenge to do in the next 36 hours -- release, uh, a short playlist of songs that can be playing during this sequence.

Sally: OK. That's -- that's fine. Baby girl, playlists are my speciality.

Emily: Yeah, with -- with Sally's knowledge of Lady Gaga --

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: And my knowledge of ... (long pause)

Sally: Emily has a wonderful knowledge of independent music.

Emily: I don't, really. I don't know music very much -- very good.

Sally: I just know slutty pop music. Exclusively.

Emily: But that's all we really need for this sequence. It's a very slutty pop music sequence. OK. (laugh)

Sally: Kay. Stay tuned.

Emily: Mat's in the White Tower, prepping to leave. He's -- early on, he's like, "I can't disguise the fact that I'm leaving, so I'm just gonna make it look like I'm a total idiot."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Who's just like, "Ah, I have to -- I have to try."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "You ladies know. I'm a --" with some Aes Sedai. Um. So he just basically packs up and walks out --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And everyone's like, "OK, fine, there goes that fuck-o."

Sally: "He'll be back."

Emily: “He’ll be back, ‘cause we -- as we’ve told him repeatedly, he can’t get past the river guards.” And Mat’s like -- “(laugh) That’s what you think.”

Sally: “Now I have my hall pass.”

Emily: “Now I have my magic hall pass, so fuck you. I can do whatever I want.” Which he does. Um. It’s actually funny how early on in this sequence, you’re, like, two pages in, and then you immediately enter this blurry zone of Mat winning at dice.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Mat talks about how he’s, like -- goes sort of down to, like, the harbor district and just sort of, like, goes inside --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: One of the inns and is like, “This sounds pleasant.” Like, “Just -- I want a dice game,” ‘cause he’s addicted to gambling or whatever.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And then you just have this, like, two-page description of Mat repeatedly winning.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: He’s like, “I can’t lose.” And it just, like -- everything becomes extremely blurry.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It’s a very weird sequence. Like, you feel a little bit like you’re on drugs while reading it.

Sally: Oh, totally. I was gonna say, it’s very kind of like a --I -- not to bring this up, because it’s the worst reference possible, but if you guys have seen the Percy Jackson movie --

Emily: Oh, yeah, that --

Sally: And they’re in the, like, Lotus Casino -- it’s like a lotus-eater kind of weird thing --

Emily: Yeah, it is.

Sally: That’s happening.

Emily: And it’s just interesting because we know Mat hasn’t, like, ingested anything --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Usually when you get these sequences, the character involved, the point of view character, is -- like, is either drunk or high on something --

Sally: Drugged, yeah.

Emily: Or, I don't know, extremely injured --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So you enter this, like, fever state.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And you have Mat, who's totally healthy, as we've been told multiple times, but he's just having this extremely weird psychological moment.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And you could argue that he's, like, high on gambling, a little bit --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But, like, towards the end of this sequence, it breaks off with someone saying, like, someone he's gambling with being like, "You have the Dark One's own luck," and Mat, like --

Sally: Flips.

Emily: Snaps out of it -- yeah, flips out. Which is classic Mat. Like, he describes -- like, before he even knows it, he's, like, off his -- like, standing up and pushing this guy into the wall and being like, "Don't fucking say that."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which -- Mat, as I've said before, is our character who acts without thinking --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And often has bodily responses to things that, um -- that come before he provides, like, his own emotional context for them. Mat, for being a character with very different internal and external lives, very rarely provides us, um, like, actual context narration --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Of what's going through his head.

Sally: Absolutely.

Emily: It's a very weird style of writing, but you do have characters who are, like, kind of constantly updating you on what they're thinking and feeling, and Mat's not one of them.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: He, like, gives you different clues to what he's feeling or thinking, and usually those clues come with his physical reactions.

Sally: Yeah. Yeah.

Emily: So you realize -- and kind of at the same moment that Mat realizes -- that this is really freaking him out.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He's like, "Oh my God, I --" Like, "I have to get out of here."

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: So he goes out, basically to chill outside, and is like, "OK, quick recap: has this always happened to me?" (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, "What's going on?" And is like, "I think I've always been lucky, but, like, never to this extent."

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: He talks about, like, when he was a kid, he got in trouble as much as he got away with shit.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's like, he -- he says after he got the Shadar Logoth dagger, that he got luckier, but we, the readers, since we haven't had any Mat point of views, are, like -- we don't really know whether that's true --

Sally: Yeah. It's impossible to say.

Emily: Or whether that's, like, being affected by his memory. And Mat's -- the holes in Mat's memory are part of what makes this sequence so, like -- the whole thing just feels like it's slipping through your fingers. I don't know --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: How to describe it otherwise. But the way he talks about himself and his experiences are always, like, with the qualifier, like, "I think."

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Or "As far as I know."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: 'Cause he's aware of something missing.

Sally: Yeah. And it's really interesting. There's, like, a narrative -- um, like, a term for, like, narration where you're in, um -- it usually happens in third person point of views, where, like -- it's called mediation.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: So instead of, like, allowing the reader to be completely focalized through the narrator's perspective and being, like, you know, um, "Mat was mad," it was like, "Mat felt mad," and there is always that, like -- so the idea being that there's, like, a distinction. Like, you're -- be saying that he felt mad instead of being like "he was mad" -- this is a very basic example, but being, like -- it's sort of, that mediation reminds you that there's a separation between you and Mat.

Emily: It's like saying, like -- I do this all the time in my own writing; this is one of my, like, weakest, um, points -- but, like, saying a character saw something happening --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Rather than just describing what is happening.

Sally: Yeah. That's a much better example. Thank you. And --

Emily: Just --

Sally: Go ahead.

Emily: No, you go ahead. You know this better than me. You're the one who told me about it in the first place.

Sally: Yeah. I -- (laugh) That was probably the only good piece of writing advice I've ever given Emily.

Emily: No, that's not even --

Sally: I'm not a very good editor. (laugh)

Emily: True, but she did point that out to me, and I was like, "Oh, fuck." Now I catch myself doing it all the time --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: 'Cause I always wanna say verbs for some reason. Anyway.

Sally: Yeah, I'm a verb -- I'm an adverb-heavy bitch, though. That's my problem. But, so mediation in that aspect tends to happen more in, like, the character-reader level, like, mediating between you and the character, so it's really interesting, using that specific verb, like, "I think," for Mat, it's like he's mediating his own experiences. So it's like --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: There's this -- like, we've talked about this before, there's this really odd disconnect between Mat, 'cause he just, like, doesn't exactly know how to fit inside of his body and his experience, and so this scene, that Emily says, really does, like, slip through your fingers and become this, like, lotus-eater-y -- which comes from the Odyssey, by the way -- lotus eaters are an episode in the Odyssey --

Emily: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Sally: Um --

Emily: Which -- Mat has very Odysseus-like experiences, by the way.

Sally: Absolutely. Yeah.

Emily: And he's a very Odysseus character as, like, the clever one.

Sally: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Emily: The war general, et cetera, et cetera.

Sally: Yeah.

(rustling noise in background)

Emily: Tybalt! Can you chill?

Sally: Tybalt is ...

Emily: Stop moving the blinds, you dumb fuck.

Sally: (laugh) Our cat is so annoying.

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: I told Emily -- earlier this week, when she was gone, Tybalt woke me up by, like, stroking my face with his paw. It was --

Emily: He's so weird.

Sally: Very weird. I was like, "Hello?" Um. Anyway, I don't even remember what I was saying about Odysseus.

Emily: Lotus eaters -- this lotus eater-y --

Sally: Yeah. And, like, it's interesting that this type of lotus eater-y episode would then happen for Mat because, as Emily said, he's like our most Odysseus character. And, like, obviously the journey is an interesting part of all -- all of our characters' arcs, but Mat, as we've also talked about, has a really, like, journey in mythical terms.

Emily: Yes.

Sally: Where he's, like, going through these odd episodes -- well, of course he's moving through physical space, but his, like, experiences are moving through, like, very archetypal episodes. Yeah. So Mat is moving through these sort of, like, mythological, archetypal episodes, where he goes through his, like, weird Frankenstein slash exorcism in the White Tower, and here he's got his lotus eater thing, but also, like, a really interesting conflation of, like, god of wealth and god of death in these chapters in particular.

Emily: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Sally: And then he gets hanged like Odin does, and, like, all this, like, crazy stuff.

Emily: Yeah, no, you're point out something that I've, like, always known but never thought explicitly --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which is that, like, Perrin, for example, has this journey that is defined very much not in episodes.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, Perrin's narrations, much like Perrin himself, are just kind of, like, slow, steady, often just day-to-day stuff.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And things happen in those days, but they aren't, like, big things, necessarily. And sure, Perrin has these epic moments like Mat, but there's usually more build-up to them; they're usually contextualized more.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Whereas Mat just sort of is stumbling through --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: These scenarios, like, over and over again. This never stops. You can define Mat's journey literally by these little --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Weird episodes of things happening.

Sally: Yeah. Because, like, when I think about Mat as a character, I'm like, oh, remember when he got hanged in Rhuidean? That was weird. Remember when he walked through this door, remember when he, like --

Emily: Remember his episode as, like, this weird scenario where he's basically a sex slave. Y'know? Like --

Sally: Yeah. Like -- yeah. Which is all just like this crazy --

Emily: We need to talk about that in context of Princess Leia sometime.

Sally: Huh. Yeah, there's a lot of ...

Emily: Yeah. There's a lot --

Sally: Sex slave stuff that we'll talk about.

Emily: Just put that on the backburner.

Sally: You just wait for Crown of Swords.

Emily: For book seven, yeah. Ooh. There's gonna be some dunking.

Sally: Yeah, somebody's about to catch these hands.

Emily: Yeah. Um --

Sally: And it's Tylin.

Emily: (laugh) I think a kind of interesting and weird example of Mat mediating is this song that's going on in the background --

Sally: Mm.

Emily: While he's, um, dicing, right before this incident with the guy calling him out on his luck. Um, and it's like ... "the singer had named the song as "What He Said to Me," and Mat remembered the tune as "Will You Dance With Me?" with different words," and it's just like this thing that constantly happens with Mat.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And this is sort of a foreshadowing of, um, Mat having different memories of different people from different eras --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, completely different historical times and places who -- these tunes, like -- Mat's familiar with tunes --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But never with words.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He's always like, "I'm familiar with different words, different lyrics."

Sally: Yeah. Which also -- not to keep bringing this back to, like, mythological archetypes -- but, like, the -- uh, one of the Romantic periods -- in terms -- like, "romantic" meaning, like, literary, like a literary period, like the English Romantics were, like, Byron and Wordsworth, and I think this was the German Romantic -- some other weird Romantic movement -- which I studied in my fairy tale class, 'cause there's a lot of songs in fairy tales --

Emily: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Sally: Um, and the, like -- an interesting, like -- the reason that they kept coming back to this is that there was something that they suggested that was in tune -- like, wordless music -- that allowed your, like, soul and your inner life to, like, transcend to a different level. And so it's like -- again, not saying that Mat has, like, the most transcendent --

Emily: (snort)

Sally: Arc --

Emily: OK, he does.

Sally: That's obviously -- I mean, for me, personally, but within the context of the narrative, it's obviously Rand that goes through the apotheosis.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: But, like, having, like, tunes without music is just another kind of, like, archetypal thing that's just interesting about Mat.

Emily: Yeah, just having, like -- it's -- it's the way that, like, you hear a little -- um, you can hear, like, things from soundtracks --

Sally: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Emily: And just, like, instantly be taken back there. Like, this is dumb, but in Disneyland, when you're waiting outside to get into Disneyland, they play little bits from various Disney songs, including the Pirates of the Caribbean soundtrack. And, like, the instant I hear that, I'm just, like, on full body, like --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: (laugh) "Release the kraken!"

Sally: Yeah, it's -- Seriously.

Emily: It's -- like, it's very -- like, music just has a way of jumping you into moments --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which is what Mat himself does.

Sally: Yeah. What is -- oh my gosh, there's a word that I am trying to think of, where it's like -- we studied this in Lord of the Rings -- where there's, like, a -- a musical theme and it has, like, an impact on the body --

Emily: Oh, yeah.

Sally: Literally, what is it called?

Emily: I don't know. Sorry.

Sally: It's a film term. Agh! This is gonna drive me crazy.

Emily: Look it up. Um. She'll get back to the -- after our -- at the end of our segment, Sally Googles It. Um. But Mat's waiting outside this inn and, like, looks down at himself and is basically just, like, draped in gold --

Sally: I know.

Emily: He's like, "I've just had gold coins sticking to my fingers this entire time."

Sally: (mutter) So legendary.

Emily: It's a very strange, like, Midas moment. Which, Midas is kind of one of Mat's archetypes.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Of just, like, turning everything into gold.

Sally: I never even thought about that. I never even thought about Midas.

Emily: It's very weird. And, like, Midas has, like, his own weird tragic ending and all this bullshit stuff that's going on, but -- um. Oh, God. Yeah, Mat has such weird -- Mat also has an Orpheus theme, by the way, speaking of music. Music, actually, uh, now that I'm thinking about it, is one of the things that, uh, Mat and Thom and, um, Noel -- Noal? What's his fucking name? I always want to call him --

Sally: Noam?

Emily: Well, Noam, I think, is the werewolf guy, right?

Sally: Oh, yeah, that's right.

Emily: So then Noal -- and I always get those two mixed up -- Noal is actually Jain Farstrider.

Sally: Ahh!

Emily: Um, but when they go into the Tower of Ghenjei, the things that they go armed with are, uh -- it's, uh, "courage to strengthen, fire to blind, music to ... dazzle, iron to bind."

Sally: Music to dazzle?

Emily: Some -- like, music has a hypnotic effect on the Aelfinn and the Eelfinn.

Sally: Oh, interesting.

Emily: It's -- so they go armed with, like, musical instruments and, like, iron weapons and, um, it's just, like, this really weird sequence of, like, using music to go into the Underworld and out again.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So Mat has Orpheus themes of music, by the way.

Sally: There's another episode.

Emily: Yep. Um. Did you come up with it?

Sally: No, because I can't even know -- I don't even know what to Google. It's, like, right on the tip of my tongue. This is driving me absolutely bonkers.

Emily: I'm sorry.

Sally: It's OK. It might just be one of those things that I suffer with for eons.

Emily: (laugh) If you know it, let us know. Unless Sally thinks of it before the end of this episode. Um, so Mat, in realizing that he literally has money stuffed into every one of his pockets, which is just, like -- he just must be making the most unearthly clanking noises as he walks -- what the fuck --

Sally: Yeah. Right, like -- (laugh) Alphonse Elric walking down the street.

Emily: (laugh) Suit of armor clanking. Um, but he's walking around, just, like, full of cash, and he suddenly is like, "Oh, I could get mugged at any minute."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And, like, just right when someone, like, exits the pub behind him and is like -- and Mat's like, "Oh, fuck," and starts sort of reacting more defensively. So he sort of switches modes. And that brings the narration more into, like, the present moment rather than this, um, like, narrative sequence of weird, dizzy events. But Mat just starts walking along, uh, the streets in Tar Valon. Eventually he realizes he's being followed and he kind of ducks into a corner to hide and is like, "OK, I'll just wait here, and then they'll see me, and I'll attack them." Uh, but they don't see him, and he just hears them talking and is like, "Oh, my luck is, like, not just dice."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "It is this, like, weird survival mechanism as well." Which then comes out again as he, um -- (laugh) What is it with Mat and high places? Actually, I know what it is with Mat and high places. I, in my current Dungeons and Dragons campaign, play a rogue, and I fucking always am trying to get to a high place. If there's something to climb, I will climb it, 'cause, like, that's the only advantage I ever have, is if I can hide up above, then I get to use, like, sneak attack --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Which, like, quadruples the damage I can do. So, whatever the fuck. Mat loves high places like the little rogue he is. So he climbs up onto these rooftops and is just, like, sneaking about. And then, uh -- (laugh) kind of crosses on this bridge and is looking down and just suddenly realizes someone's behind him with a knife.

Sally: Which is ...

Emily: Horrifying.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And I think it's implied that it's a Gray Man, in that, like, Mat didn't notice them at all --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Until that moment, and, you know, it's sort of implied that luck is what allowed him to notice it.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: But, uh, Mat catches the guy's hand, like, inches from his throat, but the guy pushes him up against the edge of the bridge, so Mat's just, like, balanced there on the small of his back. And just because he's this lunatic -- this reminds me of that scene in Percy Jackson, when he, like, takes the wheel of the bus and is like --

Sally: Oh, yeah. (laugh)

Emily: "This is the most ADHD thing I've ever done." (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "This is so stupid." Mat is like, "Uh, OK, I just gotta, like, go for this," and he just, like, flips himself over the railing, and takes this guy --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: With him, so they just fall, like, three stories.

Sally: Which is ...

Emily: I know. But it's like, it makes total sense in Mat's head.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, that's --

Sally: 'Cause he's just like, "Meh! Time to toss the dice."

Emily: (laugh) That's the absolutely bizarre thing about being in Mat's head --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Everything makes so much sense to him.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I think Rand says something like that in, uh, one of the later books, and it's, like, very clearly a Brandon Sanderson-written line, but it's one of the ones I actually like, when Rand is like, "Mat's always doing weird shit, and it always makes so much sense to him at the time." (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Like, he's always -- it -- it's always so logical to Mat --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: In the moment. But to everyone else, it's like, "What the fuck are you doing?"

Sally: "What the fuckening?"

Emily: "What the hap is fuckening?"

Sally: "What the hap is fuckening?"

Emily: So Mat again, like, accidentally weaponizes his luck against this guy because he falls, but the guy falls and, like, cushions the fall so that Mat is -- walks away completely uninjured, and this guy has fallen literally on his own knife.

Sally: Yeah. Um, I'm sorry to interrupt. I just texted film major and former EHR guest expert Brie Olds --

Emily: Oh, good.

Sally: And she informed me that it is "melodrama."

Emily: Ahh.

Sally: The idea that is, like, everything says it's, like, melodramatic, being, like, overemotional, and that comes from the film term where, like, the --

Emily: The music is swelling. Yeah.

Sally: Yeah. The melody -- the melo --

Emily: Oh, OK.

Sally: Is affecting, like, your emotions in terms of the story. So.

Emily: This is a very educational episode --

Sally: Melodrama.

Emily: Of EHR. Thank you.

Sally: Yeah, we're dropping a lot of, uh, vocabulary. (laugh)

Emily: Thank you, Brie. I was about to, uh, text Kaitlin, 'cause she loves music and --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: If anyone knew what that was, she would.

Sally: But thank you, Brie.

Emily: Thank you, Brie.

Sally: You're my hero, and I love you.

Emily: Um, OK. So Mat has just killed a person, uh, albeit accidentally --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And in self-defense. So he's like, "OK, I'm standing here, right over this dead body in the middle of the street --"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "In the dead of night."

Sally: "Full of money." (laugh)

Emily: Full of -- just, literally coated in money. So he just, like, ducks into the nearest inn.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And who should be performing there but Thom Merrilin.

Sally: Mm, yeah. Forest of coincidences, baby.

Emily: Forest of coincidences --

Sally: That's *ta'veren*! (laugh)

Emily: But it's like -- also, like -- Mat, as he tells you later in this book -- Mat is, like, the walking forest of coincidences.

Sally: Yeah. It's true.

Emily: Like, he -- when they go to Tear later, Mat is, like, searching methodically through inns and then realizes, "Oh, I should just let luck guide me."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And as soon as he does that, like, everything falls into place.

Sally: Yeah, the idea -- and, like, this is why -- like, the concept of *ta'veren*, with Rand and Perrin, is so, like, forest of coincidences in not a fun way --

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Whereas, like, with Mat, it is really fun --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Because Robert Jordan just, like, really leans into the idea that it's going to be random and absurd, and it's not gonna make any sense, but, like, everything that Mat needs to happen is gonna happen if he just, like, jumps into it --

Emily: Yeah, like, of course he would --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Walks into Thom here.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: This is, like, literally -- like, there's some element of expecting it a little bit --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: When Rand walks into Thom in Cairhien, I think because he's setting us up for it in the scenery.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, he's walking through Cairhien describing musicians and, like, the new players, how people are putting on plays, and this is a new thing, and Thom would hate it.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And then he walks into Thom.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Mat is like, "I just killed a dude, and I'm going into shock. I need to go sit down and have a drink." And then there's Thom.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's like, OK. This might as well happen.

Sally: Yeah. Jumping into another vocabulary word, but, um, I think we've talked about this before, but the horizon of expectations?

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Which is a term for, like, how -- like, what the reader expects to happen based on what is set up. So, like, the horizon in the distance. You're being set up for what you expect. And, like --

so when Rand's walking through Cairhien, listening to music, being like, "Thom would fucking hate this," like, of COURSE we're thinking about Thom --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And we expect him to pop up any minute. In this scene in particular with Mat, the horizon of expectations is just, like, obliterated into a hundred thousand pieces, and we've got --

Emily: Every page.

Sally: No idea what's gonna happen. (laugh) It's, like, so bonkers.

Emily: (laugh) So Mat just, like, sits down, and a a serving girl walks up to him, and Mat orders a couple drinks, and then Thom finishes his set, more or less --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which is a story, by the way, about Mara and the Three Foolish Kings, which is Mary and the Three Wise Men.

Sally: Yeah. And we get a section of it, and it is absolutely absurd and nonsensical in a very, like, folktale-y way --

Emily: Yeah, it's like --

Sally: Which is another one of Mat's little pings.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: So it's like, this whole sequence is like, "Do you get it? Do you get it?!" (laugh)

Emily: It's, like, about this woman, who I -- it -- it's implied, is just kind of like a peasant woman --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You know, a very Nynaeve-ish woman --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Who's just, like, putting some royal buffoons on their, like -- putting them back in their places.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Y'know? And it's, yeah, very Mat. Who insists, much throughout this sequence, that he's not a nobleman --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And, like, actually, isn't -- you know, important in that way.

Sally: Yeah. Little folk hero baby.

Emily: Um, but Thom drunkenly stumbles to Mat's table and is like, (slurring) "Half of these people don't even know the difference between Common and High Speech." And Mat's like, "OK?"

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: "This is fine." And then Thom just, like, starts drinking more. And the serving girl is like, "I'm sorry, why -- if I'd known you were buying for Thom, I would not have provided this alcohol for you."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Mat's like, "How was I supposed to know that he was fucking wasted --"

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: "Playing the harp. Like, dude was playing the harp." (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Yeah. "Excuse me."

Emily: So this woman -- and then her sister, I guess -- (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Is just, like, berating Mat. Um. And Thom. And Mat orders three chickens -- (laugh) and then is like, "Thom, do you want anything?" (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: And these women are like, "What the fuck?"

Sally: "What is happening?"

Emily: He's just so casual about it.

Sally: I know. This is the a --

Emily: "I'll get three or four chickens. Thom, do you want anything?" And Thom's like, "What?"

Sally: No, and I love this too, 'cause it's another scene where, like, there's a lot of talking, and the narration doesn't mention that Mat is eating until Thom is like, "What the --"

Emily: "Where'd it GO?"

Sally: (laugh) So you imagine Mat is just, like, inhaling Kentucky-fried chicken at a god-awful rate.

Emily: It is, like, so -- (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) It's so funny!

Emily: Oh my God.

Sally: I love him so much.

Emily: Anyway -- (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: They're kind of sitting there -- eventually the chickens come, and Mat is just, like, eating them -- yeah, just inhaling them like a fucking -- oh my God.

Sally: Just, like --

Emily: But Thom's sort of, like, blurts out his many traumas and, like, we have it contextualized for us --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Because we saw how Thom's freakishly young girlfriend got murdered and then Thom was like, "I'm gonna kill the king." So, like, we're accustomed to that. Mat is not up to speed --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And doesn't care.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It is hilarious. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: It is frankly hilarious. Thom is, like, the crazy uncle who is just full of batshit stories --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Mat's just like, "Whether or not these are true, I do not give a fuck."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Because Mat is having his own absurd experience.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And later, Thom will be like, “Are you gonna tell me the truth about this bullshit?” And Mat’s like, “I did tell you the truth. That’s --”

Sally: “It just keeps happening.”

Emily: “That’s all there is to it. Don’t know what to tell you.”

Sally: “That’s the end of the line, babe.”

Emily: Um. But -- (laugh) Oh my God. But Thom’s like, “I love two women. Morgase was so mean to me, and then this other lady I got killed, so then I killed someone,” and Mat’s like, “Could we stop talking about murder? Like --”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “I’m trying to eat here. I too just killed a man. It’s old news.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “Can we --”

Sally: (singing) “Maammmaa --”

Emily: “Can we get past this?”

Sally: (singing) “Just killed a man. Wanna eat my chickens.” (laugh)

Emily: But Mat has this particular brand of helping Thom, which is that he’s like, “OK, enough with the self-pity. Are you gonna come with Caemlyn -- to me with Caemlyn or --”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “To Caemlyn with me or not?” Which is very odd, because again, Mat doesn’t provide us with the context of being like, “I’m going to be helpful for Thom.” Like, “I feel bad for him.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “He saved my life once. I really wanna help him.” It’s Mat just being like, “OK. Stop being -- like, come to Caemlyn with me.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But, like, the only advantage Mat gains -- like, Mat doesn’t gain an advantage from having Thom with him.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Mat could just as easily do this on his own.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Certainly now, with his weirdo luck.

Sally: With his weirdo superpower.

Emily: But he brings Thom along because he's like, "OK, this is my crazy drunk uncle who loves adventure, so."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "He clearly needs to get out of here."

Sally: Especially 'cause Thom has this annoying monologue about how he's in Tar Valon to punish himself. (laugh)

Emily: He's like, "I'm just flagellating myself. This is as self-destructive as I can get."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "What are you doing in Tar Valon?" And Mat's like, "I'm getting out of Tar Valon, like you should be. What the fuck?"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: "You're insane."

Emily: It's like -- yeah. Thom has this very boring, like, plotline about just drowning his miseries -- his very dumb miseries, 'cause they're all about how he's suffering because women died or whatever --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And, like, OK, "ugh" to that bullshit. But then Mat sweeps in and is like, "A) Don't care."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "B) Come with me. C) Don't talk to me about women ever again." (laugh) Like, "I just don't care." (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um. Which, again, makes Mat the most refreshing point of view character --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: In the entire world.

Sally: Ugh.

Emily: Um. (laugh) Thom's like, "What did you do with those chickens?" Mat's like, "Sometimes I get hungry."

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Thom's like, "That is not an explanation." (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: So Thom's like, "Yeah, sure, I'll come with you."

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Like, this conversation takes place over, like, three pages. It's very -- (faint finger-snapping noise)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Everything's just going.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Thom goes off to get his stuff, comes back, the servant girls who were berating Mat earlier are like, "Oh, you're not so bad. You're getting Thom out of here." One of them gives Mat some of his money back 'cause he tipped her and is like, "Here, this is for your pretty eyes," and it's just, like, Mat's like, "OK."

Sally: Mat's like, "Oh, I have pretty eyes, don't I?"

Emily: "Ooh, I have pretty eyes."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: She's like, "You look like a starved lunatic."

Sally: Um. Another -- I was thinking about this today when I was listening to the song -- but another good Mat Cauthon song is "Oops, I Did It Again" by Britney Spears --

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: Which is kind of about not totally knowing that you're flirting with somebody. (laugh) It's just, like, sort of happening.

Emily: I know. Yeah, Mat has these, like, just little moments of flirtations --

Sally: Yeah, which I love.

Emily: Where he's like, "That girl has pretty eyes," and she's like, "YOU have pretty eyes," and he's like, "Thanks. Love that."

Sally: "Yeah!"

Emily: "Love your attitude." (laugh)

Sally: You know that, like, meme of Tom and Donna from Parks and Rec where they're like --

Emily: Yeah. Exactly. (laugh)

Sally: I think about that every time Mat's like, "Oh, she thinks I'm pretty."

Emily: Yeah. Um, so they walk out, and Thom's like, "OK, where are we going," and Mat's like, "I'm getting on the first ship out of here -- like, literally the first," and Thom's like, "What's your hurry?"

Sally: He's like, "It could be sinking, and we'd be on it." (laugh)

Emily: And Thom's like, "What's your hurry?"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Mat's like, "We're getting out of this city. I hate this damn city."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So, um, they go down to the docks and they meet a guy who's like, "I know you, kid. You're not getting out of here," and Mat's like, "What about this fucking magic hall pass?"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "I CAN get out of here," and the dude's like, "OK, you can get out of here, but that boat's already leaving," and Mat's like, "No, I can make it." And actually, according to the canonical text --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He does not pole vault --

Sally: I know. That was upsetting.

Emily: But in my mind, he does pole vault.

Sally: He, like, fucking -- instead, he, like, javelins -- he yeets his fucking staff --

Emily: He yeets his staff and then just leaps --

Sally: Onto the boat and then long jumps like some fucking Olympian.

Emily: But I'm telling you, he should've pole jumped. Come on, like, Robert.

Sally: But usually with pole jumps, the pole stays behind, so. Really he's thinking very tactically, but in my head, he totally ...

Emily: It would require, like -- like, either for him to be, like, stepping down --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Or, like, to have intense upper body strength to get the momentum, 'cause his staff isn't bendy --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: To pole vault. But I just want to believe he's pole vaulting.

Sally: But wouldn't it be -- it's just, like, in my head, he pole vaulted, but -- yeah, instead, he just yeets his staff and then himself.

Emily: He yeets his staff and then, like, ducks and rolls onto this ship.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And meanwhile Thom's like -- (wheezing noise)

Sally: (laugh) Thom, like, smashes into the side of the boat.

Emily: (laugh) Thom's like, "I'm, like, ninety! What are you doing?!"

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Mat's like, "With me, you're a spry sixty. Stay on-board."

Sally: "My luck takes 30 years off anyone's life."

Emily: Yeah, come on. (laugh)

Sally: That's why Rand acts like a baby. (laugh)

Emily: It's my love of fireworks.

Sally: Oh, that boy and his explosives.

Emily: Um -- I know. (laugh) So then commences the most hilarious negotiation of all time --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: With the ship's captain, who's like, "Get off my ship." Like -- (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) "Get the fuck out."

Emily: Mat's like, "Here's some money. I want to stay on your ship." And the dude's like, "Heh, you know how much money it would take for you to stay on this ship?" And Mat's like, "Here's what I want. I want you to tell me how much it would cost for me to stay on this ship and have a cabin --"

Sally: "And have YOUR cabin."

Emily: "Have YOUR cabin and be, like, fed really well."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like -- "I'd be feed -- getting fed what you're getting fed." And the guy's like, "Ha, you don't have enough money. With inflation, that's, like, 1,000 dollars."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Mat just, like, pulls --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, opens his little wallet --

Sally: His little coin purse, yeah.

Emily: Sifting through all the other gold coins that aren't heavy enough --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And is like, "Will this do?"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And the guy's like, (whisper) "What the fuck?"

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: And Thom's like, (whisper) "What the fuck?"

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) And Mat's like, "Take me to your cabin, sir."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So they go to the captain's cabin. Uh, the captain is, like, monologuing at them this entire time about his various political opinions -- which, yeah, men be like that --

Sally: They really do be like that.

Emily: And Mat, of course is just listening -- he tells us he just listens 'cause it's to his advantage to know --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Like, what kind of con man this guy is.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: 'Cause it's already, like, "OK, this guy's gonna try and screw me over."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, while they're just getting set up. And the only thing of importance, really, is that this guy is, uh, Tairen and kind of reports that there's this new High Lord who has these very fascist opinions. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, who's like, "Fucking genocide for the Aes Sedai."

Emily: Yeah, he's just like, "Just kill all the Aes Sedai --"

Sally: "Chans for our neighboring countries."

Emily: "Kill the --" yeah, and the only -- the best part about this is Mat's little intervening, like, mental commentary --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Where the guy's like, "Let's just put all the Illianers in chains and make them work for us," and Mat's like, "I don't think they'll be inclined to work if they're in chains. Like, I just -- I don't really see how slavery works. I just don't get it."

Sally: Yeah. Which is --

Emily: And I'm like, OK, farm boy.

Sally: A very charming thing about our farm kids, where they're like, "Wait, what? Slavery?" But also, like, also very naive because they don't fully grasp the, like --

Emily: Well, and Mat's just, like, "You really think that will work?" Like -- in terms of, like, there's no standing here, I guess.

Sally: Yeah, but also, like, if we're taking our, like, real-world reference --

Emily: Yeah, of course.

Sally: Like, slavery is, unfortunately productive --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And, like, work camps are unfortunately productive because you are producing high amounts of labor with threats of death and violence, so --

Emily: Yes.

Sally: Again, Mat doesn't understand fascism, which is good, 'cause that means he's grown up in a world without fascism. (laugh)

Emily: I know, like, good for him, he's just like, "Here I am, from the Hundred-Acre Wood over here."

Sally: (whisper) Oh my God.

Emily: Little -- little boy -- little farm boy with my stick. And the guy's like -- (laugh) like, Mat finally kicks him out by being like -- like, he's -- this is what I was laughing at when you walked in --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I -- Mat -- there's literally the line, um, "Mat felt mischief bubble inside him."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And I'm like, oh, Mat.

Sally: Um, related to that, apparently yesterday my niece had some Fresca, and she said, to the room -- I wasn't here for this -- she said to the room, "This tastes like what my heart feels like." (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) That's so good.

Sally: (laugh) So, anyway. Mat's little Fresca heart.

Emily: Do you have a thing that, like, your family constantly mocks you for saying when you were little? Or, like --

Sally: Oh, I'm trying to think ...

Emily: Just is like, "This was a charming thing you said when you were little"?

Sally: I don't think so.

Emily: My family's always telling me about this time we visited my great-grandparents, who, by then, would've been in their nineties -- my great-grandma lived to be 104 --

Sally: Jesus Christ.

Emily: This is when I was, like, four or five, and my great-grandpa was still alive. But I guess he, like, left the room or something, and I, like, little five-year-old, just, like, looked around and was like, "Where'd the little man go?" (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: 'Cause he would've been, like, five feet tall. Like -- (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Emily.

Emily: So, anyway, kids -- kids be wild.

Sally: Kids be wild.

Emily: Anyway, Mat teases this guy about his dumb opinions and --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: The guy leaves.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, and then they kind of settle in. Mat is like -- Thom's just stripping down while Mat's, like, just playing with his dice --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And Thom's like, "OK, those are clearly loaded dice." And Mat's like, "They're not."

Sally: "They ain't, bitch."

Emily: "I won all this money with other people's dice," and Thom's like, "OK, you weirdo." Which commences the, like, long beginning of no one believing what Mat is saying --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: When he just tells them the truth.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um. Uh, because -- it's like he has this weird "boy who cried wolf," like --

Sally: Yeah. or like, Cassandra.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: In Troy. (laugh)

Emily: A little bit, yeah. Just full of Greek archetypes, y'know.

Sally: Yeah. (laugh) Mat's just a little bundle of archetypes.

Emily: Mat is a bundle of archetypes. And it's -- yeah, like, there's this element of people being like, "Mat always exaggerates," or "Mat doesn't --"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Tell the truth," and it's, like -- like, that's probably true of Mat when he was a kid, and it's, um, this weird thing of being inside Mat's head and being the reader and knowing that, like, Mat has made a fundamental shift.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And no longer does that --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I guess. Or it's just this weird -- weird -- so yeah, he has this weird thing of always telling the truth and everyone's like, "No, fuck you."

Sally: "Don't believe you, bitch."

Emily: "Don't believe you." And, like, Mat, being the charming character, gets frustrated with this way less than I would.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He's just like, "Whatever."

Sally: And he also, like, uses it to his advantage sometimes --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Where he's just like, telling -- he's like, "I know they'll think I'm lying."

Emily: "So I just flat-out tell them the truth."

Sally: "All the time." (laugh) 'Cause he's such a fucking psycho.

Emily: (laugh) So fucking absurd.

Sally: Mat's life is truly a comedy of errors. (laugh)

Emily: I know, like, oh my God -- and then Thom's like, "I hope you don't snore," and Mat's like, "YOU snore." (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: 'Cause they're sharing a bed, which, like, was a weird -- like, Mat is so young --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: In this, like, sequence especially, for me -- I never really think of Mat until later in the books, maybe around book six or seven, as, like, a young man.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He's like a teen in my head, so the idea of him sharing a bed with a man who's not related to him --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Or even one who is related to him is, like, freaky to me.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And I'm like, "Uh -- oh -- don't like this."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But Mat's just like, "Normal day in the office, sleeping next to Thom Merrillin." (laugh) And he's just laying there thinking, and then, because this sequence has to go on --

Sally: Yeah. As if it couldn't get any weirder.

Emily: As if it couldn't get any weirder, he starts hearing, like, footsteps up ahead -- like, up above, on the deck, and then, like, right outside his door. So he's like, "Thom! Wake up!" (laugh)

Sally: Thom's like, "Fuck you."

Emily: Thom's like, "M-m-murder." And Mat just, like, gets out of bed and gets prepared with his quarterstaff, so then when the door bursts open and there's two people literally there to kill him, Mat just, like, kills them first.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's like, he has this moment of, of, y'know -- it's my life or theirs, and I'm just going -- yeah. It's my life.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, and then he's like -- I actually don't know how he jumps to this conclusion of, like, thinking that there are more people -- give me a second ... oh, yeah, he just hears more over -- ahead.

Sally: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Emily: So then he just grabs the cloak from one of the dead men and, like, pulls the hood up over his, like, fucking boxer briefs that he's wearing --

Sally: Yeah. His MeUndies.

Emily: His MeUndies.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: And just, like, goes up to the deck to, like, the guy who's now steering the ship, and Mat's like, "Uh, he's dead --" (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And the guy's like, "Oh, good," like, "Finally, he's caused enough trouble --"

Sally: And then he's like, "Wait, WHAT?" (laugh)

Emily: "Wait, who are you?" (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Yeah, "What voice was that?"

Emily: "Lewis?" (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) And then Mat kills him too.

Emily: Yeah, and then Mat's just like, "Fuck you." Then another guy, like, comes up to kill Mat, but luckily Thom is now awake and knifes him.

Sally: Yeah, yeets a knife at him.

Emily: Yeets a knife at him, and then, like, they go to the side of the ship, and there are two more -- like, literally --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Half a dozen dudes sent after Mat.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And this is never, like, given ...

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Context for us. We don't know who sent these guys. It's just people constantly trying to kill Mat.

Sally: It be like that, I guess.

Emily: And this, like, just happens all over the place. Mat is constantly the victim of random would-be assassins. Like, why not? It's his accumulation of money, I think.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: Partly.

Sally: Karma.

Emily: Yeah. (laugh)

Sally: When you get rich, people try to kill you.

Emily: Yeah. As it should be.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That's the circle of life. (laugh)

Sally: THAT'S the circle of life.

Emily: Jeff Bezos, watch out.

Sally: Coming for you.

Emily: Um --

Sally: Bunch of hoodlums.

Emily: Mm. Uh, anyway, so, uh, Thom's like, "Should I kill these dudes too?" And Mat's like, "No, I'm --" like, "I've killed three dudes --"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Technically, four, tonight."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "So I'm a little bit done with the whole --"

Sally: "I'm all good with murder."

Emily: "My bloodthirstiness is --"

Sally: Yeah, "My murder quota is good."

Emily: "Dampened." Uh, and, like, thus sort of ends the night. Thom remains behind to, like, talk to the captain about it, and Mat just walks off, and someone's like, "Ah, he's cold --" like, "He's an assassin."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Mat, like -- again, we have Mat going through this thing of walking into the cabin and then just falling.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, not even making it to the bed, 'cause he's in shock.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which, again, classic Mat. And Mat is the last of the three boys to go through the classic male coming-of-age in fantasy, which is killing someone. Perrin, uh, does it in book one and immediately becomes emo --

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Rand does it in book two, at the end, and also immediately becomes emo --

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Mat does it here and is like, "Survival instincts on lock."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And does not change a thing.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which -- thus proves that Mat has the superior plotline. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um --

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: That's all I'll say about that. Speaking of Rand, we cut over to him --

Sally: Oh, yeah.

Emily: As he's, like, lingering by the fire, having one of his, uh, y'know --

Sally: Emo moments.

Emily: Post-war flashbacks --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, to how depressed and manic he is. Um, where he has a little aside about what it is like to be *ta'veren*.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, people changing things around them. Which, I think, is supposed to be Robert Jordan slyly being like, "And here's the explanation for this weird sequence of Mat's --"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That just happened, but it's also, like, yeah.

Sally: I get it.

Emily: I'm not dumb. Like, I know Mat's one of the three main boys. Like, weird shit should happen.

Sally: I haven't forgotten.

Emily: Of course, I haven't had -- I haven't experienced it like this before -- (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: But sure.

Sally: (singing) Never seen a girl like you before.

Emily: Yeah, the one thing -- weird thing about Rand's whole thing is that he talks about people coming to kill him and wearing faces of people --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He loves. Which --

Sally: Is that in his dreams or in real life?

Emily: That -- yeah, that's what begs the question.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily; Because we do, throughout Rand's very infrequent points of view throughout this book, like, people do actually try to kill him.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Physical people tangibly try to kill him. And then the question becomes, like, are there actual people in, like, some disguise? 'Cause the Forsaken can do that.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Who show up looking like other people or normal people who show up to kill Rand and he just interprets them as looking like other people?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Or is he just dreaming these things? And it's another thing that's never settled for us.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Umm. What else -- is there anything else to say?

Sally: No.

Emily: We covered that sequence. We did it due diligence.

Sally: I mean, can we ever do it enough due diligence?

Emily: You can't. It's just so perfect.

Sally: It's so funny.

Emily: It is -- (laugh) so hilarious. And it's -- like everything with Mat, has, also, this weighty -- these weighty moments to it.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Of, like, Mat's the one character who can kill a person and be affected by that and me, like, actually feel for him.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I'm, like, desensitized enough to violence in fantasy books that when Rand kills someone and is like, "Oh my God, I just killed a person," I'm like, "Yeah, yeah, skip that."

Sally: Bored.

Emily: "It's part of the Hero's Journey."

Sally: Bored bored bored.

Emily: I'm bored. Bored bored bored.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But when Mat's like, "Fuck, I just killed three people in self-defense, and I'm not gonna feel sorry about it, but it is a traumatic thing that just happened to me --"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I'm like, yeah. Fuck.

Sally: This baby just can't catch a break.

Emily: I know. And he hasn't even slept. And he's only had three chickens. Like, he's probably still hungry.

Sally: He needs at least 12 chickens.

Emily: And he has to sleep next to Thom, who snores.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's like, cut him a break.

Sally: Get that boy more chickens.

Emily: At least he's out of Fantasy Vatican.

Sally: He is out of the fantasy vagina city.

Emily: Yep. And --

Sally: God bless.

Emily: Tragically we now have to cut over to Perrin for, like, a few episodes.

Sally: (gagging noises)

Emily: I know. Hopefully this sequence can just, like, sustain us --

Sally: It's so good.

Emily: To the next Mat point of view. (laugh)

Sally: Ugh! I love that dumb boy.

Emily: He's so good.

Sally: In this house, we stan a legend.

Emily: We do stan a legend: Mat Cauthon.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Uh, OK. Who knows how much I'll edit out of that. Uh, if I didn't edit very much out, then sorry for the long episode, but hashtag no regrets.

Sally: Yeah, no ragrets.

Emily: Three chapters -- three very good chapters that talk about ...

Sally: (whisper) Three excellent chapters.

Emily: Um. What do we have?

Sally: Um. Some housekeeping. In April, we got really close to breaking 4,000 downloads, so that was really exciting. Thank you to everybody who listened, and in May, it would be super exciting if we could bring that up to 5,000 downloads.

Emily: Hell yeah.

Sally: Five thousand for the fifth month of the year, if anyone's counting.

Emily: Tell your friends to download this episode specifically.

Sally: Yeah, this episode specifically.

Emily: Because this is what will get them into Wheel of Time.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: This crazy bullshit.

Emily: This crazy bullshit.

Sally: Um, and if we get to 5,000, we'll -- I'll make Emily do something fun and crazy again, like we did with Supernatural.

Emily: What? Oh.

Sally: It might not be on the podcast. Maybe it'll be, like, on --

Emily: (laugh) I thought you meant, like, get a tattoo or something, and I was like, “Ahh.”

Sally: No. No no no no no, like --

Emily: I mean, I would get a tattoo for this podcast. It wouldn't be related to this podcast. I wouldn't do that, but --

Sally: What if you got one that matched Cami's? Doesn't she have, like, “Till water runs out” or whatever? That'd be ...

Emily: Oh, yeah, actually, I would -- I would do that. Cami -- Cambria, our number one listener, has a cool tattoo of her bicep -- this bicep, I think -- that says “Till shade is gone.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That'd be fun to get a matching one.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Say “Till water is gone.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Yeah, I would do that. That would be chill. But --

Sally: So -- (laugh) maybe Emily will get a tattoo, or maybe we'll, like --

Emily: Who's to say? I haven't broken the news about my belly button piercing to my parents yet, so we should probably see how that flies before I run around getting tattoos.

Sally: I think it's incredible that you would break the news to them at all.

Emily: I just would feel weird about, like, suddenly showing up and having a belly button piercing and a tattoo, like, in my swimsuit, y'know? 'Cause my mom has, uh -- my mom -- it's both my parents, but it's my mom's swimming pool, y'know?

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: 'Cause Chris doesn't give a fuck. Uh, my parents have a swimming pool in their backyard, so I will unavoidably have to go swimming in it at some point this summer.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: So it's like -- I can't do both at once to them. They'd have a heart attack.

Sally: Well. Anyway, Emily may or may not get a tattoo --

Emily: (snort)

Sally: Or maybe we'll, like, live tweet or blog about something on our website. If you guys have any ideas of fun things you want EHR -- or painful things that you want EHR to do (laugh) -- if we get to 5,000 downloads, let us know. That's kind of the main thing. As always, you can find us on Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram. Now on Goodreads.

Emily: Oh yeah.

Sally: Um, you can check out our Patreon.

Emily: I know what we're reading! I'm reading the Foxhole Court for the third time. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, I have not put that on the Goodreads yet. I forgot to.

Emily: You don't have to.

Sally: I've been reading Chalice by Robin McKinley for ... about two months. So.

Emily: Well, you couldn't pick up a book for about three weeks, so.

Sally: Yeah, that was pretty painful. And last time I read Chalice, the scariest thing that's ever happened to me in my entire life happened, so I'm a little ...

Emily: Yeah, you could put it down and pick up a different one.

Sally: Traumatized. But I really love Chalice. It was like sliding into a warm bath of honey.

Emily: It is. Especially because it's all about honey and bees.

Sally: I know, and bees. And it really makes me want to take a beekeeping class.

Emily: We can sit in our -- after we're done with our errands, we can sit here, and you can watch -- you can listen -- rrrgh.

Sally: Maybe I can watch Yugioh.

Emily: You can read Chalice or watch Yugioh. And I'll read the Foxhole Court --

Sally: (snort)

Emily: And we'll both be sinking into our baths.

Sally: No, actually, I have to -- I have to, mm, figure out my D&D -- my new D&D character sheet, but I legitimately always --

Emily: Oh, I'll be with that too -- that reminds me, I have to write down my list of tasks to do in Dungeons and Dragons next session. Number one: Someone Tweet -- if anyone knows who, like, the god whose, like, symbol is rabbits is in the Dungeons and Dragons thing, let me know --

Sally: We can --

Emily: 'Cause he showed up, so.

Sally: We can look up that shit in --

Emily: No, I don't want to look it up. 'Cause that feels like cheating. But if someone in the podcast tells me, that feels less like cheating.

Sally: OK. Um, I know for sure that Sarah McClintock plays Dungeons and Dragons --

Emily: OK. Sarah. Call me.

Sally: I know she's DMed --

Emily: Sarah, tell me.

Sally: Wouldn't it be amazing if Sarah was your DM?

Emily: (whisper) Oh my God.

Sally: I'd cry. A lot. Sarah, I love you. Goddamnit.

Emily: OK --

Sally: Um.

Emily: Do you have a sign-off for us?

Sally: I was gonna read this screenshot that Sarah sent us. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) Yeah, speaking of Sarah McClintock.

Sally: I'm sorry. We just love her. OK, so this was after we, um -- (laugh) recorded --

Emily: Yeah, for context, we starred on her Yugioh podcast -- listen to it, it's called Pod of Greed, which is a Yugioh reference, as we learned --

Sally: Yeah, and Yugioh actually kicks major ass. I've recently started --

Emily: Yeah, Sally's into it now.

Sally: Watching it. Um. (laugh) Speaking of which, the other day, Gethin, like, flagged me down -- he's like, "I saw that you're watching Yugioh. I'm very proud of you." And I was like, "Thank you, Gethin." (laugh) "Thank you for your approval, finally."

Emily: I love Gethin. So much. But yeah.

Sally: OK. Anyway -- and so, this is in reference to Sarah telling someone that Everybody Hates Rand --

Emily: This is on their Discord --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: For their, uh, Pod of Greed podcast with -- she's talking to her co-host --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Who also spoke to us that episode.

Sally: So they said, "Very late to the party, but when you did your Ayn Rand confession, I should also say that I used to think Everybody Hates Rand was just, like, a podcast dunking on Ayn Rand and her various works, so, like. Pobody's nerfect." (laugh)

Emily: And on that note.

Sally: Oh, it makes -- it's so funny.

Emily: Mat Cauthon. Pobody's nerfect. (laugh)

Sally: Pobody's nerfect. You gotta work it.

Emily: (laugh) Bye.