



## Q&A Episode – “Wot?!”

Release Date: July 23, 2018

Running Time: 58 Minutes

EMILY: Okay, we're on

SALLY: Okay. Um, so Emily you're an expert in murder, right?

EMILY: I – [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Okay, I'll bite. What's the question? [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs] How many people have ever been murdered by books in modern history?

EMILY: [grunts]

[both laugh]

EMILY: Is this a question from your brother?

SALLY: [laughing] It is absolutely a question from my brother, who thinks he's funny!

EMILY: Perry, you're hilarious

SALLY: [laughing] I thought this question was actually pretty funny though

EMILY: It's very – I...don't know. I could Google it

SALLY: I mean, I think – did you ever watch the third *Bourne* movie?

EMILY: *The Bourne – Ultimatum?*

SALLY: I think it's the third one

EMILY: I think I saw it precisely once

SALLY: Where he fights with a book?

EMILY: No. Can't remember that. I completely blocked out those movies

SALLY: He jumps through a window and they're fighting in a small European apartment, and he's fighting with a book. And he uses the book to, like, punch – it's a harder, it's a hardback book. So it's harder

EMILY: That would break his knuckles!

SALLY: I mean, I don't think Jason Bourne is *super* concerned about breaking his knuckles

EMILY: I just hate those movies

SALLY: They're bad! [laughs]

EMILY: [groans]

SALLY: Did you Google it?

EMILY: Yeah

SALLY: Oh my god

EMILY: [giggles] I don't think there are any

SALLY: There are no stats?

EMILY: Well, there are things like *The Black Book of Communism*, because communist regimes have killed, you know, millions of people. Blah blah blah blah. You can make an argument for *Mein Kampf*, but [

SALLY: I mean, yeah, philosophically speaking

EMILY: Philosophically speaking, but has anyone ever been killed by a book?

SALLY: Yeah has anyone ever picked up – I’m looking at your shelf over there – *The Gathering Storm*

EMILY: I may be killed by *The Gathering Storm*

SALLY: And used it as a blunt

EMILY: Instrument?

SALLY: Object. Yeah

EMILY: I feel like that – uhh [clears throat] – the thing is, books have give to them, so if you hit someone on the head with it – you can kill anyone by hitting them on the head with something, but, like, you have to do it a bunch of times, frankly

SALLY: Yeah, and who has the arm strength to hold *The Gathering Storm* long enough to hit somebody with it

EMILY: Exactly. It would have to be a real crime of passion

SALLY: Yeah, and then the jury [laughs], the lawyer’s defense could be, “Sir, *The Gathering Storm* is the largest book of all time, she had to really want to kill this person”

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: “It was a murder in the first degree.” Or whatever

EMILY: Or the defense could be that, “It wasn’t that she dropped it on him, it was the book is so heavy that gravity just pulled it down because – and his head happened to be there”

SALLY: Yeah, the book is so heavy and it makes all of us so sad that gravity was just like, “I’m not gonna have you keep holding this”

EMILY: Damn. Damn. And so over and over again

SALLY: [laughs] Over and over again, gravity was just like, “Stop picking it up!”

EMILY: Repeatedly [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs] That’s exactly what happened

EMILY: Okay

SALLY: [laughing] Okay, anyway

[THEME SONG – “Tubthumping” by Chumbawamba plays]

SALLY: Welcome to our Q&A episode!

EMILY: Hi

SALLY: Hiiii

EMILY: These are questions. We have answers, sometimes

SALLY: We have some answers

EMILY: Yeah, do we know how many people have been killed by books? Absolutely not. Philosophically I suspect –

SALLY: Philosophically, millions

EMILY: You could make an argument that the *Wheel of Time* books killed Robert Jordan

SALLY: Oh my god they probably did

EMILY: Yeah, he just couldn't keep it all straight and was just like, "Well"

SALLY: His heart was just like, "Nah, RJ"

EMILY: "It's over"

SALLY: "It's over"

EMILY: "Peace out"

SALLY: "We're done"

EMILY: And he was like, "Seems reasonable"

SALLY: "Only death could cure us of this"

EMILY: [laughs] "Finish them in heaven"

SALLY: "Finish them in heaven, Robert Jordan." And Jesus was like, "Robert"

EMILY: Saint Peter met Robert at the pearly gates and was like, "I have a different book for you," because you know how Peter looks through the book of your deeds or whatever? And he just dropped that to the side and just picked up a book that was all off the *Wheel of Time* books. And it was about six feet tall and he was like, "Robert, what happened?"

SALLY: He was like, "James"

EMILY: “James, where did we go wrong? With you?” [laughs]

SALLY: “James, the only book you needed was the Bible, and instead – ”

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: “- you wrote fourteen more.”

EMILY: And Robert was like the shrug emoji. And Peter was like, “Fine”

SALLY: “Fine go in”

EMILY: “Go in”

SALLY: “Find Jesus in here I guess”

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: “Didn’t find it in the Bible.” I don’t know what Robert Jordan’s relationship to religion was

EMILY: Yeah let’s not

SALLY: I don’t mean to – let’s put some respect on his name [laughs]

EMILY: [laughing] Let’s not make assumptions about him

SALLY: [laughing] Okay, anyway. This is our Q&A episode. Thank you all for sending in questions. We got about 31 questions, a significant amount of those are from my brother on Twitter, so

EMILY: Yeah

SALLY: We will not answer all of them, Perry, because you suck

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Just kidding I love you! Thank you for supporting my podcast. Um, so we’ll just get to it, yeah?

EMILY: Yeah. Go for it

SALLY: Let’s do a *Wheel of Time* related question now. Ummmmmm

EMILY: I haven't read some of these. Sally has read some aloud to me, but I have no idea what's coming

SALLY: I have. Let's – sorry, I'm trying to think of a good one to start. We'll start with Sarah's. She asked me this question actually a really long time ago. This question comes from Sarah McClintock. Um, hi Sarah. And she asks, "What are your opinions on the term 'Randland' for the world, and 'Randlanders' for the fandom?"

EMILY: Uhhh ohhhh. I don't know. I feel like you use the phrase Randland sometimes. I never do, because it's, like, weird to me?

SALLY: Yeah, I use the term Randland only because there's no other term

EMILY: It's a convenient term

SALLY: I hate it, and it pisses me off that Robert Jordan, who has done much and named so many other things, didn't name the continent

EMILY: Yeah, it's wild that Robert Jordan didn't, um, I don't know. He's always said, "This isn't supposed to be a medieval fantasy, it's supposed to be seventeenth or eighteenth century without the invention of gunpowder, like, if you just leave that out of the mix. Um, kind of see how things would go differently. It's almost like a parallel history." But then it's like, you'd also have world exploration going on at the same time and people would have names for the continents. People have always had names for continents, like?

SALLY: Yeah, that's like the first thing you name?

EMILY: Yeah, Europe is named after Europa which is an ancient Greek?

SALLY: Uh-huh

EMILY: Concept. So yeah, it's like...Robert

SALLY: And it's especially weird because you have two continents coming in conflict with one another

EMILY: Yeah

SALLY: You have the Seanchan invasion, and I feel like there would...it's just weird to not have a unifying name

EMILY: Like, it makes sense for the Seafolk to just have this nebulous sort of group of islands or whatever. But it's like, you have Shara and Shara's this whole other thing, and we don't really know if it's connected to the continent or not. But it's like I don't know. I don't know

SALLY: It's just weird

EMILY: I think he just didn't want to go through the trouble of defining what's in the continent

SALLY: Yeah

EMILY: Like, are the Aiel part of the continent?

SALLY: Exactly

EMILY: Like, what's beyond the Blight? Like, what's up there?

SALLY: [coughs]

EMILY: You just have parts of the map that meet the page, and you don't get to see what's beyond it. So

SALLY: Which is like, part of it is interesting. Like, in – on the flip side of it, it is interesting that there's – the borders are fuzzy

EMILY: Yeah, sure

SALLY: What is this continent? What is this thing?

EMILY: Especially because you can assume there hasn't been exploration beyond the Blight. People wouldn't get far enough into it. Or beyond the Aiel Waste, really

SALLY: Yeah, they mention what's beyond the Aiel waste a few times, but it's always this

EMILY: And that's Shara, I think?

SALLY: Yeah. It's always this weird thing

EMILY: [making unsure noises, sounds kind of like 'I dunno']

SALLY: where you don't know. You could be making everything up

EMILY: Yeah

SALLY: Anyway, I don't like it. Especially because naming it after the main character is ridiculous I think

EMILY: Yeah

SALLY: It's just convenient because Rand rhymes with land

EMILY: I don't like Randlanders for the fandom. Fandom's kind of...

SALLY: I don't –

EMILY: A weird term for me to begin with, especially with *Wheel of Time*, which is so – like, is there a fandom? I suppose there is, but it's not large enough to warrant a name to me

SALLY: I don't like names for fandom at all

EMILY: Yeah, I think it's strange

SALLY: I think it's –

EMILY: It gives me that very specific 2012 tumblr vibe that we all want to escape. We all want to get away from that

SALLY: Yeah, we all want to get away from the One Directioners

EMILY: [groans]

SALLY: Or whatever the fuck they're called

EMILY: Superwholockians

SALLY: YEAH

EMILY: Or whatever the hell

SALLY: We all want to get away from the Superwho – I just, like, it's

EMILY: [groans] My gag reflex is activated

SALLY: [laughs] I know my skin crawls whenever I hear that. And everyone always had those URLs like...Winchester brothers in the TARDIS, or whatever

EMILY: [groaning] Stop! Stop!

SALLY: AH

EMILY: I think if we want to refer to ourselves we should just say, [in a bad British accent, Cockney maybe?], "What?"

SALLY: [in the same accent] "What?"

EMILY: You know like, *Wheel of Time*. Wot?



SALLY: There's another thing on tumblr. It's the...unreasonably attractive fandom? Have you seen this?

EMILY: Yeah, I don't buy that because I'm not unreasonably attractive

SALLY: Yeah it's like –

EMILY: Like, I'm reasonably attractive, you know?

SALLY: [laughs] Emily's very unreasonably attractive. You should see her cropped hoodie that she's wearing

EMILY: I'm wearing the most *me* item of clothing that I own. It's a cropped, sleeveless black hoodie

SALLY: Convenient that we talked about your clothes when we talked about Sarah's question

EMILY: Hell yeah. Sarah

SALLY: Sarah McClintock has a podcast called *Unpick*

EMILY: We guest starred on it

SALLY: Yeah we did. The tagline is “the non-binary power hour,” because she's interviewed a lot of people who are not cisgender. We are cisgender

EMILY: Yeah, I think we are the only [laughs]. The only

SALLY: Maybe listen to a different episode other than ours

EMILY: Yeah and diversify

SALLY: Anyway, take a listen. But yeah the unreasonably attractive fandom. There's like a post and it was a typo on tumblr. Have you seen the original post?

EMILY: Uh-uh

SALLY: It was a typo thing

EMILY: What was the intent, one wonders?

SALLY: I don't actually remember

EMILY: The unseasonably attractive fandom

SALLY: No, it was something – like, is there a reasonably active fandom?

EMILY: Ooooh

SALLY: And someone was like, “No, there’s an unreasonably attractive.” Or something. Or reasonably attractive and someone...

EMILY: Got it

SALLY: So it’s like a cute little joke

EMILY: Sure

SALLY: But I think ‘wot’ would be really funny

BOTH, in that accent: WOT?

[both laugh]

EMILY: [in an almost Austin Powers-eque voice] Tell me another question

SALLY: [mimicking her voice] Tell you another question. Um what – WOT question would you like? Want a random question?

EMILY: Whatever

SALLY: Let’s ask a personal question

EMILY: Oh no

SALLY: This is from @ferglearns on Instagram. Thank you, Ferg. Also thank you for the pen recommendations. Um, so it said, “Sally used to live in Utah ???” That’s true. “Is Emily also from some remote red state like Idaho or Iowa or something?”

EMILY: [laughs] We’re both from Utah, actually

SALLY: Yeah

EMILY: We went to the same college, the University of Utah. We’re both – you weren’t born there?

SALLY: I was not born there

EMILY: You weren’t born there. I was born there, but both of our parents are, both of our sets of parents are transplants to Utah. So, your parents are both from the South, Louisiana. My parents are, my mom’s from Philadelphia and my dad’s from Seattle. And I don’t quite know how your parents ended up in Utah. For my parents they, uh, they’re both Mormon and the Mormon

university, Brigham Young University, is in Utah. So, they both went to school there, met, got married, and for whatever reason, stayed. So, we're both from Utah. We met on a study abroad through our college

SALLY: Not in Utah, in London

EMILY: In London. We were studying abroad, but our college is based in Utah

SALLY: Yeah. Uh my parents got there – my mom always wanted to live in the mountains and my dad had a job offer

EMILY: Ooh

SALLY: And my dad originally didn't want to take it, but my mom was like, "I really want to live in the mountains, just give me six months and if we hate it we can move back." But, and so they moved there, my dad did the six months, loved it, and they stayed

EMILY: Yeah, that's so good! Your mom is a good Utahn

SALLY: Right?

EMILY: She's very Southern, but she's also, like, a good Utahn

SALLY: Yeah, it just...makes sense

EMILY: She likes nature and she likes hospitality, you know. All the good things about Utah

SALLY: All the good things about Utah. Utah at its purest is just so hospitable and so granola earthy

EMILY: Yeah, my parents feel a bit like [laughs], they don't quite mesh with the Utah vibe. The very specific suburban Mormon Utah vibe that exist in Utah County, which is where I'm from. They kind of feel like European immigrants to America

SALLY: Oh my god

EMILY: It's sort of weird

SALLY: That makes so much sense

EMILY: Like, weirdly cultured

SALLY: Yeah

EMILY: And just, I don't know. It's a very weird vibe

SALLY: Her parents are so funny

EMILY: My parents are hilarious

SALLY: I love Emily's parents...so much. Ummmm buh buh buh buh. Let's get, um

EMILY: [singing flatly] Physical

SALLY: [singing with more energy] Physical! Let's get one of Galen's questions. This question comes from Galen Russel, who's one of our five dollar supporters on Patreon. I hope I'm saying that correctly. Is Galen (gal-in) or Galen (gay-lin). Let me know if I'm saying it incorrectly

EMILY: Yeah, DM us

SALLY: Um, "Which ajah would you join, and why?"

EMILY: Hoh boy. I think I'd join Brown, because it feels like Brown fucking loves freedom to just pursue their own weird thing, ya know? You can study *ter'angreal*, or you can be like Verin and just, I don't know, be bookish but also be out in the world and shit. Everyone else has very specific purposes

SALLY: Yeah

EMILY: Which I don't necessarily buy into. Like, I'm not smart enough to be a White

SALLY: You're gonna have to go over the ajah for me again. I know we just had this conversation

EMILY: Okay, okay. That's okay. Red is the mean ones who hunt men. I couldn't do that, because I'd feel bad [laughs]. Green is ostensibly the battle ajah, but really they're just the sluttiest

SALLY: Yeah! [laughs]

EMILY: I also couldn't do that because I have a very low sex drive [laughs]. White are the logic puzzle people, so kind of the rationalist, scientist a little bit. Couldn't do that because I'm not smart enough, or not smart enough in that particular way. Grey is the mediators. Couldn't do that because I hate conflict. Brown's the librarians. Blue's the – I'm missing one

SALLY: Yellow

EMILY: Yellow. Yeah. Yellow's the healers. Couldn't do that because I hate blood

SALLY: [gagging noise]

EMILY: [laughs] And then Blue's the, like, that one's the weirdest to define

SALLY: That one's the miscellaneous

EMILY: Yeah, kind of miscellaneous. They're whole spiel is that they have causes. So, like, Moiraine has a very specific PhD she's pursuing and goes out into the world to...do it

SALLY: They're our activists

EMILY: Yeah. Yeah, they're our activists, which, like, sounds nice, but I don't think I could sustain that lifestyle for very long

SALLY: Not in seventeenth century *Wheel of Time* continent

EMILY: Yeah, no. I'd hate it

SALLY: No thank you. Um, I stand by, firmly, the belief that academia is the only thing I'm truly good at

EMILY: Sure

SALLY: So I would also be a Brown

EMILY: Really, I don't think I'd be an Aes Sedai. I think I'd want to be an Aiel Wise One

SALLY: Yeah that'd be lit as hell

EMILY: I think that would be the funnest. They're, like, so competent and don't care how powerful you are. It's just, like, get married to your cool Aielman and sweat and stuff

SALLY: I do bad in heat

EMILY: I do hate sweating

SALLY: I'm very heat sensitive

EMILY: But I like to think if I grew up in that environment, I'd be better at it

SALLY: Yeah, you'd be fine. I don't know if I'd be an Aes Sedai either

EMILY: I just hate – I'm a little bit of an anarchist so that would really bother me

SALLY: See, I'm not. And I'm also, like to the point of self-destruction, really ambitious

EMILY: Sure

SALLY: So, I think I actually would be

EMILY: You could be the Amyrlin

SALLY: [laughing] No, I think I'd be bad at that

EMILY: I think you'd do really good at being the Keeper

SALLY: Yeah! I would like that

EMILY: Like, if you had a good Amyrlin like Egwene you could be a Keeper

SALLY: I would like to be power adjacent

EMILY: Nice

SALLY: But I'm really bad at being in charge of things because I have to be

EMILY: But you're such a good secretary

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: You'd be so good. You'd be like Leane, for Suian

SALLY: Oh my god I love Leane

EMILY: Just like hella secretary, hella put together. Always know what's going on. In on all the secrets

SALLY: Have we told you guys the story of how Emily and I first truly became friends?

EMILY: Oh god [laughs]

SALLY: There was, uh, our study abroad was a bunch of kids from our university. It was a transplant from our university over there. It was like a partner thing. It was a bunch of kids from Utah, all of us were kind of in the same study, areas of study, and so we're all like, "Oh, we're just gonna sit down together and if anybody wants to go off on day trips we can partner up and like, so we won't have to do it alone"

EMILY: Yeah if multiple people want to go to Ireland or whatever for the weekend, let's figure that out so they can make travel plans together

SALLY: Yeah, exactly. And it was a really good idea, except that everybody was a fucking disaster [laughs]

EMILY: Yeah, we all gathered in our little living room and just, there was no organization. Everyone was yelling

SALLY: Yeah , and so Emily, like a fucking legend, sat up on the windowsill with her feet on the table

EMILY: [snorts]

SALLY: With a notebook in hand and a pen in hand, and was just, like, directing people like a conductor. And I was sitting faithfully by her right side typing up things that she and the others were saying

EMILY: I was like

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: “Is someone taking notes?” And Sally was like, “I’m taking notes,” and I was like, “You’re beautiful and I love you”

SALLY: And I was like, “Look at her she’s so powerful. Quite literally above all the rest of us” [laughs]

EMILY: [laughing] That was literally just because it was the only seat available

SALLY: [laughing] It was so cool, though

EMILY: And it wasn’t technically a seat it’s just I’m...gay. So I’ll sit wherever

SALLY: It’s true

EMILY: With my arms [laughing], with my legs over the arms of chairs

SALLY: It was really a very powerful meeting of minds

EMILY: Yeah. That’s...that’s how it began

SALLY: [laughing] So, anyway

EMILY: Then I fell asleep on Sally in a lot of classes

SALLY: She did, yeah. That’s true. One time Emily fell so hard asleep that I elbowed her *very* hard in the ribs and she did not wake up

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: And was like, “Oh man. Emily has died in class” [laughs]

EMILY: I don’t think I ever truly got over jet lag

SALLY: True

EMILY: I was just tired all the time

SALLY: This is a really good transition into another one of Galen's questions which is, "We've heard a lot about Sally's focus in undergrad, but what did Emily focus on?"

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Emily, tell us about yourself as a student

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: I saw this tumblr post one time that was one of the, you know how they'll do chaotic to lawful and good to evil?

SALLY: Yeah

EMILY: It was like chaotic to lawful, but then 4.0 to failing

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: And I was a chaotic 4.0. Like, I don't think I actually had a 4.0, but I passed all my classes easily, but through very little effort of my own. Um, Sally did the thesis program at the University of Utah, which was through the Honors Program?

SALLY: Yep

EMILY: Which I technically got accepted to, but I looked into it and realized it was additional work and was like, "I'm out [laughing]. I don't want to do that"

SALLY: Yeah, it's, it's the great lie at the University of Utah. If you're considering going to the University of Utah, don't do the Honors College

EMILY: Yeah, I was like, "I'm not interested in that. I'll just do the normal thing." Um, I always knew I was going to be an English major, because that was the only thing I was interested in studying. So, I was on the track right from the beginning. I did a minor in History, mostly because I needed classes, basically, to fill out my schedule, and to get me enough credits. And I figured I should have a minor, so History was the best option because – I'm really bad if I take a class and I'm not interested in the course material, I'll completely not do it. I took a couple of – I had to take science classes and math classes, and I was barely there. I passed through sheer force of will, basically. So, I only ever put effort into things that have earned my respect, which is bad



SALLY: No, I think it's good

EMILY: So I did the History Minor and sort of had a normal academic career. Most of my undergrad was defined by my job. I worked at the school's newspaper, first as a copy editor and then as the managing editor, so a lot of my classes would be interrupted by me getting articles from the sports editor being like, "Could you edit this really quick so we can throw it up online?" And that was most of my life, I guess. I didn't really think about classes the last two years

SALLY: [clears throat] Yeah, the newspaper would have crumbled without Emily

EMILY: The newspaper, like, sucked the life out of me. God bless it, but I hated it and loved it. I hated all the people I met there

SALLY: Yeah

EMILY: Most of them

SALLY: They were all very good eggs

EMILY: Yeah, except for the photographers who were all creepy. [softly] So creepy

SALLY: Okay! Should we do another question?

EMILY: Sure

SALLY: Okay, so this about our process, and this comes from bartonsedai on tumblr. Thank you for question. And they write, "I have unfortunately fallen a little behind on the podcast, because working life is hard." I get you, working life sucks. "But there's one thing about your particular style of podcast that I'm curious about. Most *Wheel of Time* and other book series podcast that work through the book chronologically read the books at the pace at which they are reading or seem to. Yet Sally is halfway through *Lord of Chaos*," – by the way, motherfuckers, I finished – "why don't you guys read the parts you'll be discussing for the week? Or if you do, how do you keep things straight because I know the events of the books really blur together for me." So I think this is a little bit of a clarifying question

EMILY: Mmhmm

SALLY: We *do* read the chapters that we are discussing that week

EMILY: Yeah, yeah

SALLY: Or at least Emily does. Sometimes I just read the summaries

EMILY: Sometimes I just read the summaries. I'm, uh, I have a weird memory where I can pretty much remember anything that I read

SALLY: Yeah, she's really good about it

EMILY: So it isn't super necessary for me to read the entire chapters. I usually just read it to get the, um, sort of vibe of the chapter. But I usually remember what's going on so it's easy for me, I guess, although I understand how it would not be easy for other people to keep what's going on in the books straight, and to keep the trajectory of the series straight. I don't really know how you do it

SALLY: I don't!

EMILY: Yeah, well

SALLY: I think we established that in episode one

EMILY: That's partly why I do the synopsis, I think?

SALLY: Yes

EMILY: Because it's a bit easier for me to keep it straight

SALLY: Because I couldn't

EMILY: [giggles]

SALLY: I don't keep them straight. It is very difficult for me. I, as I was telling Emily the other day, I have absolutely no mind for plot. I don't –

EMILY: Which is fine

SALLY: [laughing] I don't think it is

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: [laughing] I just literally – I don't have any mind for plot

EMILY: Well, it means that Sally picks up on character things that I don't pick up. And I tend to keep the little nuances of the plots, and the battles that are going on and whatever, straighter in my head. So, we're compatible in that way

SALLY: Last weekend, after finishing *Lord of Chaos* at two or three in the morning, which was not the right time to be reading the end of that book

EMILY: Especial – yeah, especially the end of that book

SALLY: [coughs, laughs] Yeah

EMILY: “*Ash’aman, kill.*” Like, hello

SALLY: Like, okay. Also, count it, I think this is the fifth podcast we’ve recorded where I still have a cough

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: [laughing] So, pray for my soul. Um, after reading that I was like “I need to cleanse from reading something super dense.” So I picked up the second and third *Captive Prince* books, which Emily had on her bookshelf. Because I read the first one and I wasn’t crazy about it, but I was like, “I heard they get better,” and I trust Emily when she tells me things like that

EMILY: Also, Sally is neurotic, and if she starts a series she has to finish it

SALLY: I...[whispers] am so neurotic, you guys

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: It is so troubling. And so I read them both in, like, thirty six hours [laughs]. Um

EMILY: I would, like, come home from a work shift and she’d be, like, about to finish the second one and I’d be like, “What the?”

SALLY: Yeah, it’s all I did. I have no idea what happened

EMILY: I can tell you

SALLY: Like, I have no idea what the plot was. I have absolutely – I would be reading it and something would be happening and I would literally feel it just flowing through my brain like water through I sieve [laughs]. Because I was like, “I can’t, I don’t. I just have nothing in here sticking, but I do know that they had sex, and it was. That’s what happened.”

EMILY: Yep. Given those books don’t have, like, super good plots

SALLY: But seriously, if you tried to be like, “What happened in Book 2?” I would just be like, “I think there’s a...horse” [laughs]

EMILY: There probably was a horse [laughs]

SALLY: So I have no mind for plot, so *Wheel of Time* and I are struggling a little bit. A lot

EMILY: Usually in a fistfight

SALLY: Usually in a fistfight, because it’s just so dense and there are so many things that are happening

EMILY: I mean, I think it helps that we talk about it every week

SALLY: It helps *a lot* that we talk about it every week, and that I can come to Emily and just be like, “Emily I don’t know what’s going on!” But that’s why I really do only hold on to characters. Which is like, not to be dramatic, I think Mat really does sa – not save it in that it isn’t good, but saves my sanity in the series

EMILY: Definitely

SALLY: Because there’s so much about his character that is interesting, and it’s a place for me to safely land and safely think

EMILY: Yeah, he’s like a touchstone for the series

SALLY: Yeah, and same with Egwene

EMILY: Mmhmm

SALLY: They’re just characters that are really interesting and I can always be like, “I know what’s going on with them and I understand this”

EMILY: “This is a refuge for me”

SALLY: Yeah, as characters. So whenever I have to read a Rand chapter, I’m like, “I seriously have no idea what’s going on with the political climate. I don’t really know what the fuck’s going on with Rand.” Basically –

EMILY: Who does?

SALLY: Basically I have no idea what’s going on, so, um, the question is that I don’t. And it’s not even that they blur together, it’s just that I don’t remember them

EMILY: [laughs] Thumbs up

SALLY: But, Emily’s really good at that. Emily will be like, “Remember this one scene specifically in a book that I read ten years ago?” And I’ll be like, “How do you do this?”

EMILY: It’s a gift and a curse

SALLY: It’s so awesome

EMILY: No, it’s a curse

SALLY: It’s not a curse

EMILY: My head’s always filled with random book moments that I can’t get rid of

SALLY: That's why – that's why you're so good at stuff like this!

EMILY: UGH. Yeah, finally I've found my calling

SALLY: Exactly

EMILY: Podcasting with a shitty audio setup

SALLY: Hey, if you guys are interested in helping us fix our shitty audio setup you should consider looking at our Patreon

EMILY: [giggles]

SALLY: Where we are raising money to buy *new* and *real* podcast microphones

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: [laughing] So if you dedicate to that cause you will be enabling us to not sound like garblygook

EMILY: Let's do some rapid-fire questions

SALLY: Okay, let's do some rapid-fire questions. One, "I ask only because I'm knee deep in reading it, but have y'all ever read *Les Mis*?" This is from Matt, on Twitter

EMILY: We have not

SALLY: Not read *Les Mis*. Have seen the movie. Not the play, the movie

EMILY: I've seen both movies. The one that's not a musical and the one that is a musical

SALLY: There's one that's not a musical?

EMILY: Yeah it's got Liam Neeson as –

SALLY: WHAT the FUCK?

EMILY: As Jean Val Jean. I'm not kidding

SALLY: Okay, well guess what we're watching after this

EMILY: It's not good

SALLY: Just kidding we're watching *Outlander* after this

EMILY: Oh, it has Uma Thurman as Fantine. It's a very weird movie

SALLY: What the fuck?

EMILY: And I think the ending is different

SALLY: Okay. Who's your favorite slash least disliked Forsaken? This is another one of Galen Russell's questions

EMILY: [giggles] Asmodean

SALLY: Asmodean

EMILY: Asmodean. I live for his gay drama

SALLY: I live for his gay, forgettable drama

EMILY: I know, yeah he's just there for a book and a half just doing his thing

SALLY: And then everyone's like, "I can almost hear him" [laughs]

EMILY: [laughing] "I can almost hear his voice"

SALLY: But he is actually dead

EMILY: Yeah, all the other Forsaken – I guess second place for me goes to Demandred because he stays in his lane. He's like the king of staying in his own lane

SALLY: He is the king of staying in his own lane. So this is also from Ferg who asks, "What are your favorite colors?" @ferglearns on Twitter<sup>1</sup>

EMILY: Huh! That's funny. I've been saying red since I was a kid, but I never wear red, so I guess it's different. I like to look at red

SALLY: Yeah, I feel like it's different. What's your favorite color to wear? And what's your favorite color that you like to see?

EMILY: I wear black a lot. I like to wear black and blue and gray. And I like red

SALLY: I apparently only wear green anymore?

EMILY: You wear lots of orange

SALLY: Yeah. Orange is my favorite color to look at. I really like orange

---

<sup>1</sup> She means Instagram

EMILY: And orange looks really good on her

SALLY: Oh, thank you. I had – one of my favorite teachers in high school one day – my high school colors were so tragically bright, *bright* sunburst orange and navy blue

EMILY: Because your ma – what was it?

SALLY: We were the Brighton Bengals

EMILY: It's better than us. [speaks close to the mic] We were the American Fork Cavemen

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Just kill me!

SALLY: All of this is better than our university, which is the University of Utah Utes, which is terrible

EMILY: Which is so racist

SALLY: Yeah, because that is an actual Native American tribe. It is not a mascot. Fuck you

EMILY: That is neighboring to the university. Honestly

SALLY: And they have all these posters around campus that are like, "Ute Proud" with people from the tribe who are like, "We're supporting this. It's fine." And it's like "Are you? Do you really have a choice at this point?" This is awful. This is so, like, um exploitative and disgusting

EMILY: It's bad

SALLY: Fuck you. Anyway, I really do like wearing orange – but this professor, this teacher told me, I was wearing one of our really disgusting hoodies because my older brother was in Student Government so he had all these bright, bright orange hoodies that I would wear, because when I was in high school I hated my body and only wanted to wear hoodies

EMILY: Sure

SALLY: Because high school's disgusting. And she's like, "You're the only person I've ever known who can wear orange," and I was like – which I don't even know if it's true

EMILY: Oh thank god. I thought this was going to be a terrible story

SALLY: No

EMILY: Where she was like, "Orange isn't your color," or something

SALLY: No, she was the most delightful, ethereal, beautiful person

EMILY: That's so good!

SALLY: And she was like, "You're the only person I've ever known who can wear orange. It just looks so good on you." I don't even know if that's true

EMILY: Teachers, you need to compliment your students in good ways, because they carry it with them for the rest of their lives

SALLY: Yeah! And so now I like to wear orange because Mrs. Hayden would say this looks good on me

EMILY: It does look good on you. You have a very cute outfit today

SALLY: Oh, thank you. Um, but yeah I also like to really look at orange. It just hits every neurotic, bright spot in my brain and I fucking love it

EMILY: Isn't your bathroom orange?

SALLY: My bathroom – my mother is a saint and let me pick the color that I wanted to paint my bathroom

EMILY: [cackles]

SALLY: And I also picked bright sunburst orange, so

EMILY: Nothing wrong with that

SALLY: Anyway

EMILY: I like red which is why I have a red laptop

SALLY: Hello, Rosencrantz

EMILY: Yep, it's name's Rozencrantz

SALLY: Um, okay. What's another – okay, what is your favorite, this is also from Ferg who just asked some nice, rapid-fire questions. What is your favorite crappy *Wheel of Time* book cover, and why?

EMILY: Oh god

SALLY: I have to look them all up

EMILY: Yeah, do it



SALLY: [typing noises] *Wheel of Time* book cover

EMILY: I really like six, because it has Rand standing there with his shirt unlaced to his bellybutton or whatever

SALLY: Oh my god, and he looks like a fucking

EMILY: It looks SO BAD

SALLY: Here, I think this is all of them. He looks like a fucking romance novel

EMILY: No, but *Crown of Swords* with his dumb bicep shot

SALLY: YEAH

EMILY: It's so weird

SALLY: [laughing] With his weird coat

EMILY: *Knife of Dreams* has Perrin with like a beer gut

SALLY: What the hell? [laughs] Will this get bigger? I need to see them all. No, it won't get bigger

EMILY: Here's the thing: they're all bad

SALLY: They're all really terrible. I really like *A Memory of Light* because why is Rand standing like this?

EMILY: That's the only one with a normal artist. Like that was the e-book artist, did that one. Just period. But all of their proportions are super off

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: It makes no sense. Like, why does Perrin look like that?

SALLY: Um, I love

EMILY: Mat always looks middle aged

SALLY: Right? Mat always looks like an old man. On this one, on *Fires of Heaven*, when Mat's there like a middle aged man. I love *The Dragon Reborn* because at the front of it Perrin looks like a fucking Mortal Kombat character

EMILY: Exactly. With a headband? Perrin wasn't even there!

SALLY: [laughing] I know! That's the best part

EMILY: Mat wasn't even there

SALLY: It's so funny. Also, I just love all of them so much

EMILY: I think I'm going to say *Crown of Swords* is the funniest one to me

SALLY: Like, what is Rand doing?

EMILY: Who knows? He's just standing – I think that's supposed to be Shadar Logoth?

SALLY: He's just standing there flexing

EMILY: Honestly

SALLY: Like so fucking hard. Like, [mumbling], "Aviendha look at my biceps"

EMILY: UGH

SALLY: I also like *Crossroads of Twilight* with Mat and his Robin Hood band of merry men

EMILY: Yeah, with the melting snow. I don't even think that's a scene that happens

SALLY: It's so funny. This one is really funny, though. Perrin looks really tiny

EMILY: *The Gathering Storm*, I literally just threw away that cover

SALLY: [coughs] Excuse me

EMILY: Because it offended me so much

SALLY: Yeah, they're all – I can't really say which one is my favorite

EMILY: I love them all

SALLY: Because they're all so bad and so good. I really do think *Lord of Chaos* is so funny with the

EMILY: With the fucking – is that a Draghkar behind him?

SALLY: Yeah, it's this thing

EMILY: They aren't even there

SALLY: And who is this in front in this fucking

EMILY: I think it's an Aes Sedai

SALLY: Oh, 'cause it looks like she's wearing a denim jacket with something printed onto the back of it

EMILY: Yeah, it's supposed to be the Aes Sedai symbol

SALLY: Oh yeah. You're right

EMILY: That's her shawl

SALLY: She's surrendering to him, or whatever

EMILY: Yeah, swear fealty

SALLY: But also like the background is lilac and peach. It's hilarious

EMILY: Who did this?

SALLY: I'd say *Lord of Chaos* is my most favorite bad one

EMILY: *Lord of Chaos* and *Crown of Swords*

SALLY: Yeah, six and seven. Which one do I most wish didn't exist?

EMILY: Oh, I hate them all!

SALLY: I think this one is really bad

EMILY: Yeah, *Knife of Dreams* really offends me

SALLY: *Knife of Dreams* is [laughing] really terrible. I really don't like it. Those are our covers. Our cover questions. Um, should we...what other rapid-fire questions do we have. Oh, Sarah asks, Sarah McClintock asks, "How are things going with you both? I hope you are well"

EMILY: Aw! That's nice!

SALLY: I know. She's so good

EMILY: Things are a little crazy because we're about to move back to Utah

SALLY: Yeah

EMILY: Which has less to do with us wanting to be back in Utah than wanting to get out of New York. And basically just needing to get out of New York. So that's a little crazy, but things are also good. Sally's job just ended

SALLY: Just ended. It's cha girl, unemployed yet again. I'm so good at being unemployed

EMILY: Yeah, but it was a bad job, so. My job's going – my *jobs* are going to end this next week. And then I'm traveling home, and I'll get to see my nephew for the first time

SALLY: Uh! He's *so cute*

EMILY: Like, I've seen him in pictures

SALLY: He's the softest, angriest boy

EMILY: But I want to cuddle him. I know. He has hair like mine. Just so much hair. All sticking up

SALLY: I can't wait for all the pics

EMILY: God, I can't wait

SALLY: [clears throat] He's such a good boy

EMILY: So, we're good

SALLY: Pretty good, yeah. Gotta do a lot of packing, which I'm not unfortunate – I do have a lot of glass that I have accumulated

EMILY: Well, because you worked at a glassblowing studio

SALLY: Yeah, that I now have to figure out how to pack. Even though packing glass will now and forever and for always be one of my top five anxieties

EMILY: Aw, I'm sorry. Hopefully it won't – it will be less inducing when you can just do it here in the comfort of your own home

SALLY: I hope so. I had to work our big gala and auction, and for three weeks a good sixty percent of my job would be unpacking and moving around and repacking up art, because we had to put it in different place and photograph it and stuff. And at one point they were like, "Here is, quite literally, an eleven-thousand-dollar mirror. Please make sure it is packed safely." And I would be like, "My heart is going to burst out of my chest"

EMILY: Jesus!

SALLY: So [clears throat]. I hate packing glass [laughs]. Fun Sally fact. Um, okay. Here is a question from, from Cindy, another one of our five dollar patrons. Thank you, Cindy. She asks, “At what point do you think Robert Jordan had the ending figured out?”

EMILY: Ohh, that’s a good question. From what I’ve read, just online, I think he knew the trajectory. He always was going to end it with Tarmon Gai’don, and he had very specific things he wanted to happen at Tarmon Gai’don, which I can’t talk about too much because Sally hasn’t read it and we’re trying not to spoil the last book

SALLY: Mmhmm

EMILY: I think it probably wasn’t until book 4 or 5 that he realized how long it was going to take him to get there

SALLY: Yeah

EMILY: Like, I think – ugh. One of the things that makes this series such a masterpiece is how well he portrays the preparation for the end of the world, and what that means for all these groups of people, and how it’s different for people who believe that it’s coming and know that it’s coming, and for the people who take a little longer to get there. Like, what’s happening with the White Tower, and how Egwene believes that they have to be ready for what’s going to happen. Whereas all the other ladies can’t be bothered. And so I think it took Robert probably a little longer to realize, “Oh, it’s gonna take me a while to get the people who need to get there, there”

SALLY: Yeah

EMILY: Probably he had to figure out, “Oh, what’s Mat going to be doing for that entire time. What’s [laughing] Perrin going to be doing for that entire time,” and the answer is usually: shitty stuff

SALLY: Yeah. A lot of almost nothing

EMILY: But I think he must have known pretty early on [door slams in the background]. Like, when he was writing the first book I imagine he knew what he wanted to do. Like, he knew Rand was going to be the Dragon Reborn, and wanted to have him face the Dark One, basically

SALLY: Yeah. I feel like, for all the twists and turns and how much we complain about how things don’t make sense, *Wheel of Time* does have a very straight trajectory from here to [laughs] the end of the world

EMILY: The Last Battle, yeah

SALLY: And here to confrontation with the Dark One, and, like, so, um, I feel like in that sense the big ended has been figured out. I obviously don’t know how the Last Battle plays out so I

don't know how much, how complicated it was for him to figure all the details out, but in my experience of writing climaxes, if I know what happens the details all just come out later

EMILY: Yeah, and you can tell

SALLY: All that comes together

EMILY: You can tell when you're reading it, I think, that, "Oh, Robert Jordan knew this was going to happen, whereas this was a side plot that he didn't really know." Like, there's a whole side plot with Alana bonding Rand as a Warder against his will

SALLY: Which is...

EMILY: And it's kind of clear that Jordan didn't really know how that was going to play out. But maybe he wanted to have that in there basically for the discourse of what happens when you bond someone against their will. Um, and then he was like, "Oh, I have to do something with that," so he threw something in in the Last Battle about it

SALLY: Yeah. Robert Jordan is really bad about [laughs], uh, side plots that seem like they're going nowhere

EMILY: Yeah, Yeah

SALLY: Where I'm just like

EMILY: He's really bad at starting shit, and being like, "Oh, I have to finish it"

SALLY: Like, Robert you can't just do that

EMILY: [laughs] What a weirdo

SALLY: He's so strange. Saint Peter was like, "Your first sin: [laughs] side plots that aren't going anywhere. Robert! James!" Okay, let's get into, um. There are multiple questions that people asked about adaptation and stuff, but I'm not really gonna get into that. I think it's really interesting so I may do a side, like special essay on Patreon on something about all the adaptations of *Wheel of Time*. So, sorry if you asked questions about that, but we're not really going to get to them. Since it's the last day of pride month when we record this, why don't we tackle another one of Galen's questions

EMILY: Ooh

SALLY: Which is, "What's your favorite queer fantasy novel?"

EMILY: [sighs] When this email came in we were like, what? We had a whole discussion about it, and sorry we're not getting that on tape. Because it was too long winded, it would take this entire episode. But we had a whole thing about what constitutes "queer fantasy," or – yeah, queer

fantasy, because I don't know. The only queer fantasy that we could think of off the top of our heads was *Captive Prince*, which reads so much like fanfiction so of course the queerness is front and center

SALLY: Yeah, and I also don't know if I would really technically qualify *Captive Prince* as fantasy?

EMILY: Except in that it's, like, "fantasy"

SALLY: Yeah, exactly. Like, it would be one of those water margins novels where it has to be in line with fantasy, but nothing fantastic happens

EMILY: Yeah, exactly

SALLY: So, yeah, and we were talking about is it queer if the queerness is intrinsically tied to the plot of this fantasy world? Or is it queer if queer characters exist? Um

EMILY: Because there are lots of books, especially now, and especially in the YA sector, that are having queer side pairings. We love those. We love – *The Raven Cycle* has some of – is a very fantastic series in a lot of ways, and also has a really good queer side pairing. I don't know if it's side so much

SALLY: Yeah, it's like main

EMILY: It's main

SALLY: It's not the love story that's marketed with the books

EMILY: But two of the main characters fall in love and it's really lovely and beautiful

SALLY: It's everything to me

EMILY: Lots of Rick Riordan's books now have queer characters, and have queer love stories that are part of the plots. I love the pairing of books *Six of Crows* and *Crooked Kingdom* by Leigh Bardugo, and she has a few queer characters throughout that are also really good. I love those books because they're heist books. And I love a good heist

SALLY: Love me a good heist

EMILY: Um, what else

SALLY: Um, I love – one of my favorite characters of all time is Arjuro from the *Finnikin of the Rock* series

EMILY: Yees!

SALLY: Who is a gay priest. [laughs] And is quite literally, like I'm not joking, one of my favorite characters who's ever been written [laughs]

EMILY: The entire – Melina Marchetta's, we've talked about it before, but *Finnikin of the Rock*, and the two books that follow, are – is one of the most incredible trilogies of all time

SALLY: Perfect?

EMILY: Yeah, it might be perfect

SALLY: It might be perfect?

EMILY: But that has queer characters. As well as some really good straight romances, which is rare

SALLY: Which is confusing

EMILY: Yeah, like, ooh what?

SALLY: What? But I love him. He's gay and...perfect

EMILY: Similarly, Kristin Cashore's

SALLY: ugh

EMILY: Starts with *Graceling*, then it's *Fire* and *Bitterblue*. That also has some queer characters in the background

SALLY: Really sweet lab boys who fall in love

EMILY: Yeah!

SALLY: Because they're lab partners

EMILY: And good lesbians who have a printing press

SALLY: And good lesbians. Who have a printing press, and just want to start the reading revolution

EMILY: Yes!

SALLY: They're so awesome

EMILY: Those are also possibly perfect books

SALLY: I actually think they are perfect books



EMILY: Yeah, except for the love interests

SALLY: Okay there's a bad lo – two...two baddish love interests

EMILY: The love interests go from good in the very beginning to real bad

SALLY: To delete them

EMILY: Yeah. Delete him!

SALLY: There's also some – it starts, again it starts with some rough disability discourse, but she realized it and so did really a lot of work in the last two books to fix that

EMILY: Yeah, which is a really good message I think. Like, you can learn and grow from your mistakes, and acknowledge them

SALLY: And she writes about it in her afterword to *Bitterblue*, which is beautiful

EMILY: Yeah

SALLY: I'm obsessed with her. Um, so in terms of queer fantasy, I don't – again, I think genre markers are, this is what I said to Emily, like I'm more interested in genre markers telling me what I'm getting into. So, if you want to label something as “queer fantasy” that doesn't necessarily have the queerness front and center, like, I would just be happy to know that there is queerness present in that novel

EMILY: Um JY Yang's book *The Black Tides of Heaven*, which I just read, and the follow up. And I think she – they, excuse me – are coming out with more books in the series and that has a lot of queerness front and center

SALLY: Yeah, I'm trying to think if there's anything else. I really think – these are my reading recommendations for you all right now. One, *The Raven Cycle*. I read *The Raven Cycle* during the summer, and you also read them during the summer?

EMILY: I read them a couple of summers ago, yeah

SALLY: Anyway, they're great summer reading. I read them all during a lake vacation and it was delightful. So should be reading that. You should all be reading *Finnikin of the Rock* quite literally right now. Like, turn off the podcast

EMILY: Get it

SALLY: Buy it. And *Bitterblue*, etc. I always want to say *Bitterblue* as the first one, not *Graceling*, which is really weird

EMILY: I know. They're technically stand-alone novels in that trilogy. Like, there's a different protagonist for each novel, but they're very much – it's best to read them, I think, in the order in which they were written

SALLY: I agree

EMILY: Which is *Graceling*, *Fire*, *Bitterblue*. But *Bitterblue* is probably my favorite in the trilogy

SALLY: [whispers] I agree. *Bitterblue* is so close to being

EMILY: A masterpiece

SALLY: A perfect novel. Um, and also *Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard*

EMILY: Yes!

SALLY: Those are my summer reading recommendations for you guys

EMILY: Read those! So, it's the end of pride month and you need some queer content

SALLY: Yeah

EMILY: Those are our recs

SALLY: Also, *Sense8*. I cannot stress enough how much you should all be watching *Sense8*

EMILY: [laughing]

SALLY: It is. So good. Okay. "If you could, where would you steer the main characters at the end of Book 1? Say, if you were Moiraine and could direct the boys where to go, and you had no knowledge of later events, what would you do?" and this comes from slannen20 on tumblr

EMILY: Damn, that's deep

SALLY: Yeah

EMILY: Like if I were like, "You gotta go do your shit?" Well, it's different if I were Moiraine. Because if I were Moiraine then I'd, like, get them to Tar Valon, you know? Which I think is sort of her intent

SALLY: Mmhmm

EMILY: But if I were me? [laughs] If I were me, let me emphasize this, I would not be involved

SALLY: Yeah

EMILY: Period. If I had no knowledge? [whispers] Damn. Da – I don't know. Do you have an answer?

SALLY: Um, well I'm *super* worried about Mat at the end of Book 1

EMILY: Oh yeah. Yeah, okay, obviously I'd get Mat to Tar Valon, regardless

SALLY: Regardless. But if Mat...like, if I could get Mat to Tar Valon and heal him, then I would so badly want to set Mat free

EMILY: I know. I'd be like, "Go out and do your thing and let your fate drag you back in." Kind of. Because if I believed they were *ta'veren*, you're just not gonna get very far

SALLY: Well, I kind of want to send Mat to Illian, to do the hunt for the horn thing

EMILY: Yeah, sure

SALLY: Where Mat would be where there's a lot of people and gambling, and he would just be so happy

EMILY: He'd be happy, and he'd also wouldn't feel restrained

SALLY: Yeah, I just want him to be free

EMILY: I guess I'd want to send Rand to sword school, or some shit

SALLY: Yeah, I'd wanna send Rand somewhere where he'd be, like, contained a little bit

EMILY: I'd want to send Rand to the Aiel Waste

SALLY: Yeah, immediately

EMILY: Yeah, just be like, "Get with your ancestors and, like, get your shit together"

SALLY: You know who would be a much better male mentor for Rand than Lan?

EMILY: Rhuarc

SALLY: Rhuarc

EMILY: Rhuarc. Yep

SALLY: Rhuarc – if I could immediately get Rand to Rhuarc, and Rhuarc would be like, "I guess this is my boy now"

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: “I guess I shape this boy” [laughs]

EMILY: It would be so much better!

SALLY: It would be so much better! [coughs]

EMILY: Yeah, it would be cool. I know it’s, like, important that Rand has to be Westernized before he goes to the Aiel and whatever, but it would be so cool if Rand just led the Aiel with them fully behind him, and him actually aware and understanding of their culture

SALLY: Yeah

EMILY: Having gone to summer camp with them

SALLY: Oh my god. He went to Aiel summer camp

EMILY: [whispers] God I would love that

SALLY: That would be so lit

EMILY: I guess I’d just be like, “Perrin, go back to the wolves”

SALLY: Yeah, I’d be like, quite literally, “Perrin, go home”

EMILY: Yeah, I’d be like, send him towards home and trust that the wolves would

SALLY: Guide him?

EMILY: Yeah. We’re a little more laissez faire, I guess. Just like

SALLY: I just, like, if you trust fate that much. I guess Moiraine’s like, “You have to have a heavy hand with these types of things”

EMILY: Mmhmm. But if you’re going to say, “Oh, fate is shaping around them and fate is guiding them,” then yeah. I guess I’d be like, “Do your thing”

SALLY: Yeah

EMILY: I’d want to be accessible to them

SALLY: Yeah. Like, lingering. I also feel like this is not totally taking into account this question, assuming you had no knowledge of later events. But, it’s so obvious with each of these three boys that the heavier hand you put on them, the more unlikely they are to do what you need them to do

EMILY: Yeah!

SALLY: So, if you were able to take a step back, and let them figure it out

EMILY: Yeah, I guess I'd stick with Rand, because obviously he's the most dangerous. But I'd be like, "Let's go to the Aiel," and then I'd be, like, doing my own thing and sort of being present, but not at all taking a hand in what happens

SALLY: Yeah, and, like, seriously just being like, "Here's Rhuarc. Here are the Wise Ones. They'll whip your ass into shape"

EMILY: Mmhmm

SALLY: And then we'll –

EMILY: Yeah, I guess I'd send Egwene and Nynaeve off to Tar Valon with Mat. Get Mat healed and kind of be like

SALLY: 'Kay, Mat

EMILY: Yeah, and let them try and restrain him, in whatever way they wanted to, but trust that he'd figure it out

SALLY: 'kay. Here's an addendum to this question. At the end of Book 1 [laughing], you've dreamed Jude Law into the *Wheel of Time* world

EMILY: Oohhh my godd

SALLY: Where does Jude Law go?

EMILY: [laughing] Where does Jude Law go? Okay, is Jude Law like fantasy Jude Law? Or he's just

SALLY: He's just Jude Law [laughing]. It's quite literally Jude Law

EMILY: Okay, he'd be so confused

SALLY: I know

EMILY: God, could he channel?

SALLY: Oh, what a great question

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Can Jude Law channel?

EMILY: I guess not, because you have to be born with it, right?

SALLY: You're right, you're right. So, Jude Law cannot channel

EMILY: Okay, so he can't channel. All he has in terms of skill set is acting

SALLY: Yeah

EMILY: He has no sword fighting – well maybe

SALLY: He might have some training

EMILY: Movie, yeah. Where would I send him? Caemlyn, probably

SALLY: Yeah?

EMILY: I'd be like, "You've been in enough Camelot movies to get your bearings here"

SALLY: Hmm. Yeah, like, settle in Caemlyn

EMILY: Yeah, do your thing

SALLY: And then... but yeah, Caemlyn would be good for Jude Law

EMILY: I'd, like, trust him – I'd specifically want Jude Law to mentor Galad and Gawyn, ya know? Because then maybe Gawyn would turn out okay

SALLY: Turn out better

EMILY: I trust Jude Law

SALLY: Trust Jude Law

EMILY: To shape Gawyn a little bit better. Also, Jude Law is the original Young Pope, so he would be good at giving the real Young Pope a love interest

SALLY: Yeah

EMILY: Like here, "I've shaped this boy for you"

SALLY: Jude Law is like, "This is my boy." [a door slams in the background]

EMILY: Yeah, be like Galad have your gay awakening

SALLY: Galad, you're gay. And Galad would be like

EMILY: [crying noises] "I knew"

SALLY: [singing from the *Mulan* soundtrack] Who is that girl I see? [laughs, clears throat]

EMILY: [laughs] Okay

SALLY: Okay. So Cindy asks, "The Black Tower part with Taim. Why?"

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Which is just a *hilarious* question. Cindy, thank you

EMILY: I'm – I don't know if she's referring to the end trajectory of what happens with the Black Tower, which isn't a – I don't think it's spoiling it too badly to say Mazrim Taim is evil

SALLY: [scoffs, laughs] I would have never guessed!

EMILY: Would you never have guessed?

SALLY: I would never have guessed!

EMILY: That the guy who charges in there and says, "*Ash'aman*, kill" is a little bit evil? Yeah, Mazrim Taim turns out to be a Darkfriend

SALLY: [flatly] That's surprising

EMILY: Yeah, *super* surprising. And, of course, giving a Darkfriend superpower is a bad thing, Rand, you fucking idiot

SALLY: Yeah

EMILY: Um, and there's sort of a big conflict at the end with the Black Tower, involving Logain trying to take over what remains of the good men in the Black Tower. And Mazrim Taim literally brainwashing a bunch of dudes into being Darkfriends, which is scary!

SALLY: Yeah. He's a cult leader

EMILY: He's a cult leader! Yeah

SALLY: Jeeez

EMILY: Which is go – oooh, I love me a cult. We get some of that with the Whitecloaks, but, um, yeah. The Black Tower does feel like a cult sometimes

SALLY: It feels more cultish in that it's smaller and there's one specific leader

EMILY: Yeah, yeah. And it sort of ends with everyone being sort of self-destructive and gross. Um why? Why, why, why? I think the Black Tower [door slams in the background], what's happening with the Black Tower is meant to be a – is Robert Jordan's big nudge towards the future of this world

SALLY: Mmhmm

EMILY: And sort of one of the lasting legacies that Rand leaves. Because so much of what's happening in this plotline is reactionary to what happened in Lews Therin's plotline, and we lost so much there with the men losing their magic, and Rand restoring that is a really important part of what happens in the book series

SALLY: Mmhmm

EMILY: So, I guess that's what I think. I think the Black Tower has to exist, not just to create tension for what happens in Tarmon Gai'don, and for Mazrim Taim to be a big bad to counter Egwene being a big good, and for there to be all this tension. But I also just think it's supposed to be, "Oh, we have some hope for the men who now exist"

SALLY: Of the big good. Egwene

EMILY: The big good. Egwene is THE BIG GOOD!

SALLY: THE BIG GOOD!

EMILY: Grabs Perrin's axe and throws it at Lan

SALLY: Does she really?

EMILY: No, that was our –

SALLY: Oh, that's from last episode. What am I talking about?

EMILY: What do you think?

SALLY: I haven't gotten that far into it. I think it's really interesting. Um, just because, like, it's just a bunch of farmers? Basically [laughs]

EMILY: The men involved in the Black Tower fascinate me. And you're about to get into it with the five *ash'aman* who kind of end up as Rand's coterie [door slams in the background]. And one of them, spoiler, is one of the Forsaken. Der der der

SALLY: Really?



EMILY: He's the one who acts like one of the Forsaken Shocking, I know

SALLY: Rand is such an idiot

EMILY: Rand, I can't emphasize this enough, Rand is so stupid

SALLY: The entire time Lews Therin is like, "You should maybe kill this motherfucker," and Rand's like, "Hey, crazy voice in my head, be quiet." And, like, I know there's a voice in your head, but at some point I want Rand to realize that Lews Therin is acting out instincts that maybe he should pay attention to

EMILY: Uh-huh

SALLY: He's not *just*, like, a voice in your head

EMILY: It takes Rand so long to realize that Lews Therin is – to acknowledge Lews Therin as something real that can help him

SALLY: Yeah

EMILY: Because yeah

SALLY: Like I get it

EMILY: Yeah

SALLY: It would be so frightening to have a voice in your head, but as the reader it's like OH MY GOD

EMILY: Yeah

SALLY: And also, like, why would you trust Mazrim Taim? He gives off such skeezeball vibes

EMILY: Mazrim Taim literally...is the worst

SALLY: Like, I just want a woman to be like, "He gives off skeeze vibes"

EMILY: They all do. There's a scene where Mazrim Taim, when Elayne goes back into Caemlyn and has to take power. And she has to meet with Mazrim Taim a couple of times, and she's like, "He is so gross. Like, gross. He gives off the worst vibes. I don't know what Rand's doing"

SALLY: He really does! He walks on screen and the first, what?, chapter of Book 6 and I'm like, "Cancelled"

EMILY: "He's evil"

SALLY: “Cancelled. Disgusting”

EMILY: It’s so funny because you get the sharp contrast of –

SALLY: [coughs]

EMILY: – Forsaken who surround Rand and eventually try and kill him, and Mat meets, I feel like, every Forsaken, and they don’t know who he is

SALLY: [laughs, snorts]

EMILY: And he just gets away scot free, [laughing] which is hilarious to me

SALLY: Mat is so funny

EMILY: Yeah, yeah. The *ash’aman* are some of my favorite parts of the series

SALLY: They’re really interesting

EMILY: Rand has a few of them. Flinn. There’s one who’s just a teeny booper boy, who’s so sweet and you just want him to succeed. There’s a man who’s really pretty, and that’s his main character trait, is that he’s gorgeous

SALLY: Oh my god

EMILY: And you’re like, “I want to know his entire story”

SALLY: Yeah, what is his entire story? Is it quite literally that he’s just very pretty?

EMILY: He’s very pretty

SALLY: Oh my god. What if he and Galad fell in love?

EMILY: God. Narishma and Galad?

SALLY: That would be really interesting. A Whitecloak and an *ash’aman*

EMILY: Right?

SALLY: Really beautiful boys who are at odds but just wanna fuck so badly

EMILY: Right? Ooh, that would almost be as good as Galad and Mat

SALLY: We’re so good at – ooh! [snaps] Polyamory!

EMILY: Oooh

SALLY: Two things Mat hates: authority and magic

EMILY: And witchcraft [laughs]

SALLY: And witchcraft [laughing]. And he's like, "I just wanna fuck both of them so badly! I hate this and I hate myself! But also, they're so pretty"

EMILY: [laughing] Authority and witchcraft

SALLY: [laughing] Mat Cauthon's two hatreds. Authority and witchcraft

EMILY: So true

SALLY: [laughs]. I'm really interested in the *ash'aman*. I'm really excited – I knew they were coming and I was really excited in Book 6 to see them

EMILY: Yeah, I'm a little upset with what Brandon Sanderson does at the end with them, because it feels so much like something Brandon Sanderson would do? Like, he introduces a couple of characters really late in the game who are just like, he's like, "Now these are main characters!" And it's like, "Oh. I don't want this to happen." So, that's a little annoying

SALLY: Yeah, where's my pretty boy?

EMILY: Yeah, I wanna – yeah, you just wanna – I wish Robert Joran had, earlier, introduced a few touchstone characters in the Black Tower camp. Because that's what Brandon tries to do in Book 13. It's a little late in the game for that

SALLY: It's seven books too late for that

EMILY: Um, yeah. That's where I'm at

SALLY: I think it's really interesting. I find – again, the Aes Sedai and now the *ash'aman* and the politics of magic

EMILY: So interesting

SALLY: Really interesting. Like, on all fronts. Egwene, in Book 6 – Siuan and Leane introduce this idea to the girls that there's this really, like, implicit hierarchy among Aes Sedai of how much you are able to channel, and how much that impacts everything. But like

EMILY: Some of the best scenes are working with that. There's a part in Book 7 where the ladies that Elayne and Nynaeve are traveling with just won't respect them, until Elayne is finally like, "I have the power, I technically have the position. I can assert my authority, and you have to listen to us," and just gets there with them

SALLY: It's awesome!

EMILY: Yeah, it's great

SALLY: And the fact that everyone is just like, "I guess the Amyrlin has to be Egwene because she's a nuclear bomb" [laughs]

EMILY: She's a nuclear bomb of power, and we can't do Nynaeve, because Nynaeve's the worst

SALLY: And Nynaeve can't channel yet

EMILY: Nynaeve can't do anything

SALLY: Nynaeve, also a nuclear bomb of healing power, but can't do anything because she's just not angry enough

EMILY: And Elayne...

SALLY: Is a piece of shit

EMILY: Technically has a country to rule, I guess

SALLY: [laughing] And also I hate her. And everyone's like, "She has a country to rule, which is a good thing, because she's a bitch" [laughs]

EMILY: [laughing] "Because we hate her"

SALLY: [laughs] So. But, I'm really interested to learn more about the *ash'aman* [chair creaking]. I want to just adopt some of them, so I hope there are some good boys

EMILY: Oh! Definitely!

SALLY: Oh good

EMILY: All of them. One of them's old, and I'm like, "He's still my son"

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: "Flinn, you're my son. I've adopted you"

SALLY: [laughs] The idea of an old man learning magic

EMILY: Yeah

SALLY: Just going to a farm and being like, "I learn magic now"

EMILY: It's so fascinating to me what motivates the *ash'aman* to be like, something – like, they have to go get tested

SALLY: Yeah, by Mazrim Taim

EMILY: Which is not necessarily a thing that's, like, "I feel like there's something different about me so – or I feel like I've channeled a couple of times, or something so I want to get it under control," it's like a "I genuinely want to know if this is something I can do." So that, just as an underlying character trait to all the *ash'aman* makes them so fascinating

SALLY: So interesting

EMILY: Like, "I want to harness power that could kill me. And drive me crazy"

SALLY: Like what? Tell me all about that

EMILY: And the idea – oh, Perrin has two very good *ash'aman*, too. Grady and Neald. They're the cutest

SALLY: I can't believe Perrin gets all the best side characters. Gaul, Loial

EMILY: Right? Grady and Neald are just too tired

SALLY: Grady and Neald. Verin

EMILY: Ugh! Verin's sort of a Mat side character – Verin bounces

SALLY: Verin does whatever the fuck Verin wants to do

EMILY: Verin is a great side character to Mat in Book – in the book I'm on

SALLY: So, anyway Perrin just gets a really good retinue and [laughing] it pisses me off

EMILY: [whispers] I know. He has such a good retinue

SALLY: Gaul is my favorite boy

EMILY: Yeah, it's sad that Mat has to have all the Aes Sedai

SALLY: Perrin also gets Berelain?

EMILY: UGH

SALLY: My actual favorite character [laughs]

EMILY: UGH I want to have – I want to give Mat some *ash'aman*. That would have been so much better

SALLY: Again, an *ash'aman* love interest. Imagine the, just, chaotic gay energy

EMILY: [whispers] I know. God. Okay

SALLY: Okay! This is the end of our Q&A episode. I'm sorry if we didn't get to all your questions. Just means that we'll have to do another Q&A

EMILY: Yeah!

SALLY: Or, you know, something. We'll answer them sometime, somehow. Thank you again, a million times over for asking questions. Super fun. I love answering questions

EMILY: Yeah, you're getting this episode after a week-long break, so it's been a while since you had content from us. Thanks for

SALLY: Waiting

EMILY: Waiting. Thanks for sticking with us. We're sorry we're at a weird transitional period in our lives that kind of luckily happened to fall when we were going to finish *The Eye of the World* anyway, so

SALLY: But, as they say, absence makes the heart grow fonder, so

EMILY: Yeah

SALLY: There was a book in my fourth-grade classroom that I couldn't – even when I was eight – couldn't figure – could never hold in my mind which of it the words it was. And I still can't to this moment. There was a book, and it was an old-fashioned woman, like with her hat and her suitcase on the train platform, and the tagline was either “absence makes the heart grow fonder” or “abstinence makes the heart grow fonder” and I swear to god – even at eight I understood what that was

EMILY: [cackling]

SALLY: [laughing] And I couldn't keep it in my mind which one it was. And I still can't. It was just on the bookshelf in the classroom [laughs]

EMILY: That's your sign-off

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Abstinence makes the heart grow fonder

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: Goodbye!