



Episode 85 - **“Public Marriage Proposal Gun”**

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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 Glynna MacKenzie plays)

Emily: Hello, this is Everybody Hates Rand -- (laugh) your friendly neighborhood Wheel of Time podcast. I'm Emily Juchau; that's Sally Goodger. We're primed for efficiency. I've already locked away Tybalt. The last three episodes, I've just deleted our entire intros anyway, so what the fuck.

Sally: OK.

Emily: (sigh)

Sally: That was a little alarming.

Emily: It's OK.

Sally: But I mean, I brought notes this time, so I guess we're good to just dive in --

Emily: I am really excited about that, actually.

Sally: It's not even anything to do with Wheel of Time.

Emily: OK. Well --

Sally: Really.

Emily: That's better, almost, because --

Sally: I just -- these chapters are really insufferable, so I tried to think of something a little more academic for us to talk about.

Emily: Yeah, reading Wheel of Time this week made me wish that I wasn't devoting a good portion of my life to talking about the Wheel of Time.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Sorry if that upsets you. But these are, like, all my least favorite character, uh, dynamics -
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Sally: Yeah.

Emily: At play in these couple of chapters, and -- anyway, sorry, I didn't mean to make you feel like we just had to talk about Wheel of Time right off the bat. I just was like, I'm just gonna get this intro right out of the way so that I don't have to, like, search for it --

Sally: Mm.

Emily: In my editing process.

Sally: OK. I'm sorry if we've made it -- if I have made it difficult for you.

Emily: You have -- you're not the problem here. It's all -- this one -- this one's on me. I'm dressed like a commando --

Sally: You do look awesome today.

Emily: In my joggers --

Sally: Emily and I are dressed very, uhm on brand today.

Emily: Like our archetypes. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. (laugh) If only we could be on Sarah McClintock's podcast today.

Emily: Yeah, Sally's dressed like, um, a professor who would get, like, the chili pepper on Rate My Professors --

Sally: Oh, thanks!

Emily: For being hot. And I am dressed like a teen boy who wandered into the military. Which actually is how the military gets most of its recruits ...

Sally: First of all, yes, too real, but I also think you look like one of -- a boy who fell into the maze in the Maze Runner.

Emily: Ahh! That's my whole aesthetic! Thank you.

Sally: You're welcome.

Emily: I love those costumes --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: They're just, like, henleys and cargo pants, but --

Sally: Yeah, if only you had just, like, combat boots instead of sneakers, I think it'd be perfect.

Emily: And, like, knee pads and shit.

Sally: Yeah. And -- yeah, for some reason, knee pads, and, like, fingerless leather gloves.

Emily: God. You fuckin' know I would --

Sally: And you're just, like, sweaty and dirty.

Emily: (sigh) I would fuckin' kill for --

Sally: Dylan O'Brien's there.

Emily: Ah, don't bring him into this.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: He had a lot of sex appeal in the Maze Runner.

Sally: He did. That was the only good thing about the Maze Runner.

Emily: Yeah, that really -- the -- yeah, the Maze Runner was just, like, a group of sexy individuals kind of forcing themselves to be heterosexual. It was really pretty odd. I wouldn't say that's my main complaint about the Maze Runner, especially having read the book, which is, in fact, one of the most poorly written books of the --

Sally: Sorry, James Dashner.

Emily: I'M not sorry, James Dashner. You wrote a shitty book. You should pay for it. Um, in the last, like, decade, you know?

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: But, uh, it was one of the most painful things about it. Seeing it portrayed on screen with, like, older teen boys --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: As opposed to, like, kind of younger teens --

Sally: Babies.

Emily: That you read about -- it was, like, oh. OK, well, you can't just be like, "It's a bunch of teen boys, all at once. None of them are fucking." And it's like, yeah, obviously they're fucking.

Sally: Yeah, they are fucking.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: My sexual fantasy is to be dropped in the maze with all those hot boys. Are you kidding?

Emily: Yeah. There's some good-lookin' ones.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: Mm. OK. I didn't mean to start us out with my erotic fantasies about the Maze Runner. (laugh) So I guess we -- yeah -- yeah, it's just a bunch of terrible, terrible things happening. There's lots of points of view in these two chapters. But we start out with Perrin and Faile -- well, Perrin. And he's like, (sing-song) "Early morning. Been having some shitty dreams. I'm just gonna go bother Loial to take me through the Ways." (normal voice) And he goes to bother Loial and Loial's like, "Hey, Perrin. Here's my adorable, charming room. It's just filled with books. Here's my adorable, charming self. Look at me. I'm so cute." This is the first time we've seen Loial in the Shadow Rising.

Sally: I know.

Emily: And I'm like, why hasn't he been here the entire fucking time?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I just love him. (sigh) And he's like, "Hey, Perrin, what's up? Wild and crazy night, huh?" And Perrin's like, "Yeah, it was pretty crazy, I guess. Hey, listen, Loial. Can you do me a favor?" And Perrin's like, "Yeah, I'd love to do you a favor, Perrin," and then Faile's like, "Hey,

I'm also here," and Perrin's like, "Oh, shit. All the flowers in the room disguised your scent from me, and that's just a normal sentence in my point of view." (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: "You and your stealth." And Faile's like, "Hey, Perrin, do you want to know about Loial's heroism? He, like, got a bunch of kids and put them in a room and was like, 'I will guard this room from all the Trollocs and Myrddraal,' and then he fucking did. And all these flowers are from their moms." And Perrin's like, "That's nice. Let's just skip right over that and get back to my problems."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Loial's like, "It was no big deal, really," and Perrin's like, "I know it was no big deal. That's why I want to keep talking about me."

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) It's so fucking insufferable. I can't handle either of them.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Ugggh! Um. Anyway, Perrin's like, "Loial, will you take me through the Ways?" and even though Loial fucking hates the Ways, he's like, "Yeah, of course. I'm a good friend. I'll take you through the Ways." And Faile's like, "I extracted a promise from you that before you -- I extracted a very, deeply specific promise from you, last night, in fact --" (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Yeah.

Emily: "And this should -- this entire thing should've made you very suspicious, but you, Loial, are a sweet cinnamon roll." Who are they gonna cast as Loial is the real question. Is he just gonna be CGI? (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, listen. There's some perfect characters in Wheel of Time that you can't cast: Loial and Galad.

Emily: I was trying to think of someone who could be cast as Loial --

Sally: Gaul.

Emily: I just want to be, like, you know, a Hollywood handsome white boy who then they've CGIed out of being a handsome white boy --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like Chris Evans. (laugh)

Sally: Could you imagine if Chris Evans or Chris Hemsworth played Loial?

Emily: I feel like Chris Hemsworth would be really good at it. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Wouldn't he be so charming? Oh my God.

Emily: Ahhhh.

Sally: What a charming man.

Emily: Yeah, I would be delighted.

Sally: That's an excellent choice.

Emily: Thanks. It came to me in a bolt of inspiration.

Sally: (singing) You're the meaning in my life ... (normal voice) We -- I can't even -- there's a reason I'm singing that song, but that will derail us like a hundred years.

Emily: Well, it's the song that has the word "inspiration" in it.

Sally: Yes, but there's, like, a more specific reason.

Emily: OK. We'll talk about that off-air, I guess. If I remember. I'll remember when I edit. Hey.

Sally: It has to do with puppets.

Emily: I don't want to hear it anymore.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: No. Erase it from my mind. I don't want anything to do with puppets. Puppets are the freakiest shit.

Sally: You're telling me.

Emily: Is that why it freaks you out when I do my muppet walk? (laugh)

Sally: Maybe. (laugh)

Emily: You're, like -- it just triggers the button in your brain --

Sally: It's like, I see you as a muppet -- yeah.

Emily: That's like, "Puppet?"

Sally: Muppet.

Emily: And it's like, "Oh, Emily's a puppet." Nope. I'm a real boy. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: I'M the manic one this week. Auggggh! OK. Uh, yeah, Perrin and Faile are like, "Blah blah blah blah blah blah, marital troubles, or -- relationship troubles." And Loial's like, "I didn't want to be the middle man in this." And they're like, "That sucks to suck, 'cause we're just making you be that. You're -- you're -- you don't matter. Just us. Just we matter." There's a -- there's a hilarious line where, like, Perrin realizes what Faile has done, that she's going to, like, make it so that she goes to the Two Rivers with him, that she's maneuvered this situation, and he's like, "She's just, like, eradicating everything I went through in making her hate me." It's like -- all of the suffering of the horrible things he said to her is just, like -- it's all -- it's all *my* horrible things. He, like, does not take into account at all the fact that, oh, she was probably hurt and has agency and is reacting to you hurting her with her agency. Given, in a really terrible way. Like, don't fuckin' bring Loial into it, Faile. Ugh. I don't know. I can't, like -- what is there to say about it?

Sally: Um, well, I have some notes about toxic monogamy --

Emily: Ooh. Ooh!

Sally: That I would like to talk about.

Emily: Ooh. (inaudible)

Sally: Because I feel like these two chapters are a very good case study for toxic monogamy. (laugh)

Emily: The definition of toxic monogamy.

Sally: Um, so I had to do -- sorry, my friends are texting me about Nickelcade. What is my life?

Emily: Are you guys going to Nickelcade tonight?

Sally: I guess --

Emily: Tonight or tomorrow?

Sally: Tomorrow. I'm not going to Nickelcade tonight. Fuck that shit.

Emily: "Fuck that shit, I'm out."

Sally: I had to do a lot of stuff today.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: After this, I want to do my laundry and read my book.

Emily: That sounds great.

Sally: And pay my rent.

Emily: Great.

Sally: Fuck.

Emily: I'm gonna edit We Don't Watch Outlander.

Sally: That one gets a little wild, folks.

Emily: Yep.

Sally: OK. Um, so yeah, I wanted to talk about toxic monogamy, mostly because I don't want to talk about anything else that happens. (laugh) Um, but the -- this definition of toxic monogamy comes from the website "aligo." I don't know if I'm saying that right. But the article is called "What Is Toxic Monogamy?" and it's written by Jae Lin, who writes, um: "Monogamy, the practice of having only one sexual and/or romantic partner at a time, in itself is not a bad, lesser, or toxic structure for romantic relationships. However, through its prevalence and influence in patriarchal and heteronormative systems, many harmful concepts of control and power have been entwined with common messages of what true love and monogamy means. Toxic monogamy, as defined by Hillary Berry in her article Toxic Monogamy Culture, refers to --" quote, "monogamy as a cultural institution [that] has been interpreted and practiced in ways that are unhealthy." Unquote. "These ideas are often romanticized or perpetuated in media, cultural norms, and social expectations." So. Ummm, that's what toxic monogamy is.

Emily: Sally taught me what toxic monogamy is like eons ago by -- I think you were the -- you told me it was like in "Friends."

Sally: Yeah. That's how I learned about it, is an article on Everyday Feminism.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: That goes through, like, scenarios in "Friends" talking about toxic monogamy.

Emily: Yeah, you, like, shared that article with me. Yeah, "Friends" is a great example because, like, in their pursuit of the one, quote unquote --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: I guess, all -- like, all of the, uh, titular friends engage in really toxic behavior centered around the idea that they're going to be in a relationship or are in relationships with --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: The one.

Sally: The one. Exactly. And -- so some of these examples that are common in these articles -- there are a lot of them, but I tried to pick out ones that are specific to Perrin and Faile and then a little -- in the second half of this chapter -- to Lan and Nynaeve. Um, and so this comes from, uh, an article written by Paige Turner on Poly.Land, um, titled "How Bisexual Erasure and Toxic Monogamy ... Are Linked." Unfortunately can't talk about that rich topic, um, because there are no bisexual people in Wheel of Time.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: At least not canonically.

Emily: Queer people don't exist.

Sally: Didn't you know? Um, so some things, um, indicative of toxic monogamy is the belief that "you must do whatever is needed to protect The Relationship — a simultaneously fragile and all-important entity. If this involves complete isolation, then so be it." Um, one that constantly cops -- pops up is that "jealousy is the best indicator of love."

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Um, and that "commitment is chiefly about exclusivity and forsaking all others" and that if you have, like, um, one person, then, um, you're never gonna be, like, attracted or have feelings of attraction to another person.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Um. And then there -- oh, and then another one -- this comes from another article. Hold on. I'm really just trying to cite my sources.

Emily: No, you're doing great.

Sally: And not be a shitty, um, person. So this comes from wellandgood.com, an article by Erin Bunch: "Seven Questions to Ask Yourself When 'Toxic Monogamy' Is Affecting Your Relationship." And they go through several, but one of the major ones is "Do you expect your partner to know what you need or want without telling them?" Which is, like, Perrin and Faile's whole, um, bullshit.

Emily: Yeah. That's a big one.

Sally: Um, and -- just one last example before we kind of talk about how this plays out in, um, them, because it points to what Emily was saying about Faile's, um -- Perrin's sort of disregarding Faile's own agency in regards to his decisions. This comes from a website, um .. beinmodernlove.com ... I don't -- it doesn't have the authors listed, but, um, they write: "The most important question for determining if a relationship has healthy ethical feminist potential: do you both respect and admire each other's decision-making abilities?" So. Um, and this sort of

-- this article, I think, is really interesting, 'cause it talks about the history of marriage, um, in, like, a social context and how, um, marriage -- our modern concept of marriage -- has arisen out of the social model of a man owning his wife.

Emily: Yes.

Sally: Um, and how unfortunately instead of that evolving to be -- evolving with the feminist movement to take that ownership aspect out of it, it has evolved where both people feel that they have ownership over the other person.

Emily: Ooh.

Sally: Um, so instead of removing ownership, we just elevate it to both people being possessive over the other person, which is where these ideas of, like, jealousy and not wanting your partner to be with other people, not trusting them, expecting them to know everything about you because they are your person and if that comes at the cost of you isolating yourself from your friends, like, you want to believe that you've done that for a reason and that this person knows you completely and lots of different things. So, sort of pairing this with the chapters -- um, like, I think a lot of it's pretty obvious. Like, Perrin and Faile have this whole nonsense with, like, jealousy and aggression that everybody wants to point to as part of Faile's culture, and I think we've talked about this before and probably will as we get further into it, but --

Emily: Basically that's bullshit.

Sally: Yeah, just because it's, like, a cultural norm does not mean that it is acceptable.

Emily: And we also see it play out in the, um, -- like, within the, uh, framework of the cultural norm in, uh, Faile's parents --

Sally: Mm.

Emily: Who generally seem to have just, like, a much healthier relationship and attitude towards each other and an admiration for each other --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And their, um, just, agency. I dunno. We'll get into that a lot more, I'm sure, as we actually encounter them as characters --

Sally: Yeah, I really like --

Emily: In the text.

Sally: Faile's parents.

Emily: Yeah, but they just, like, don't set off the red flags that Faile and Perrin do.

Sally: Yeah. Yeah. Um, because I think, like, Faile and Perrin have so many of these other things going on. Like, we talk so much about how, like, Perrin's narrative becomes, uh, separated from the others in, like, an interesting way, and I think this -- like, the language of it, of isolation, to quote unquote "protect your relationship" is kind of an interesting way to look at that. Like, would a narrative that's written in this way -- I'm trying to talk this way without value judgment, 'cause so often we've placed value judgments upon Perrin and Faile. I'm trying to be a little more analytical this week, guys. But, like, would Perrin and Faile's marriage have held up if they were, like, formed while Perrin was a part of the main plot? Do you know what I'm saying? Like, the way that this culture is -- the way that the, like, social structure of the story is written, like, would it have quote unquote "not given Perrin enough time" to form a relationship, like, to dedicate himself to Faile?

Emily: Yeah, it's -- it's like their relationship doesn't kind of enter into the plot. Their relationship becomes Perrin's plot.

Sally: Yeah. Thank you.

Emily: Which is -- and, like, everything else is almost secondary to it. Like, the Two Rivers getting fucking invaded is, like, secondary to the fact of Perrin and Faile's relationship.

Sally: Well, yeah, you think about the huge plot point that Perrin -- spoiler alert -- Perrin's entire family gets brutally murdered --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And that's, like, swept under the rug --

Emily: Nothing. Fuckin' nothing.

Sally: Because immediately Faile offers him, like, a shred of tenderness, and that's supposed to be, like, a turning point in their relationship.

Emily: Yeah, and after that, it's just, like, they're good. Perrin, like, doesn't fuckin' think about his family again. It is buck wild.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's so weird. And, like -- yeah, not to place value judgments on it because pretty much every relationship in Wheel of Time does this --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I think to a lesser extent than Perrin and Faile, which is why this one is so stark --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Uh, but yeah, it's, like -- Mat meets Tuon and, like, Tuon kind of just becomes his plot for a little while.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's just that the stuff he has going on in the background is a little more interesting than what Perrin has going on in the background.

Sally: Yeah, well, jumping ahead just for two seconds -- I don't want to leave this completely -- but, like, Min's, as we've talked about, entire plot becomes Rand.

Emily: Yep.

Sally: So it's not just a man -- men -- 'cause that's also a common narrative, is men give up their lives when they get married --

Emily: Yes.

Sally: Which is nonsense. But, um -- because literally, for centuries, women have been giving up their rights over their body and property when they get married, so fuck off.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Um, but Min's -- literally has a plot for two minutes, and then she falls in love with Rand and goodbye, plot and agency. (laugh)

Emily: And if you want to see it played out on the other end of this gender spectrum, Lan's entire plot becomes Nynaeve.

Sally: Yep.

Emily: I think it's fair to say.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He also has kind of background stuff going on, but that background stuff is so, like, shitty and weird and adjacent to --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: His, like, love of Nynaeve that it is just, like -- it's not even present. Like, when he does finally go off to, like, seek vengeance and, like, fight for Malkier and whatever, it's like Nynaeve's involvement in that is so integral to it --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: That it is just, like -- it wouldn't happen without Nynaeve.

Sally: Yeah. And it's really -- like, another one that -- I kind of have said this -- but this idea that, like, your person is the most important thing in your life --

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Is a huge indicator of toxic monogamy because it, like -- again, going back to this idea that agency, like, you don't trust that the other person has enough agency to make decisions in their life that still value you as part of their life but don't have anything to do with you.

Emily: Yeah. Exactly.

Sally: It's just very possessive and gross. And that happens so much in this section with Perrin and Faile where they're just, like, refusing to believe that the other person can make decisions that are best for them and best for being a partner for the opposite person.

Emily: And just flat-out refusing to communicate with each other.

Sally: Yes.

Emily: It's so weird and upsetting.

Sally: Yeah. And there's this, like, power dynamic that's going on between them that is extremely frustrating when Faile, like, makes this stupid thing into her dumb oath with Loial that anybody who wants to come with them has to ask her permission --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And Perrin refuses to. And, like, it's so petty and ridiculous that it becomes, like, who do you agree with? Nobody. (laugh)

Emily: No, yeah, they're just --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: They're both so equally immature --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And wild about it that it's like the only person whose side you can be on in this entire thing is Loial's.

Sally: Yeah. And just be like, "Free him." (laugh)

Emily: Yeah, Loial, who is just like, "What the shit?" Like --

Sally: Yeah, Loial's just like --

Emily: "I don't want anything to do with your --"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Like, weird nonsense," and then, like, the Aiel get involved, because --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Oh, yeah, fuckin' highlight of the chapter: Perrin walks out and Gaul's like, "Hello."

Sally: Ha.

Emily: Perrin's like, "Ah, my boyfriend." (laugh)

Sally: Perrin's like, "Ooh, this hottie."

Emily: "Ooh, this hottie." And Gaul's like, "I hear you're going to the Two Rivers." And Perrin's like, "What the fuck? How does everyone fuckin' know about this?"

Sally: And Gaul's like, (whisper) "I know everything."

Emily: Gaul's like, "First of all, I know everything. Don't put anything past me. (whisper) Walls have ears, Perrin."

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) "And I can camouflage myself to look like a wall."

Sally: He probably can.

Emily: It's like that scene in the Hunger Games --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Where he just, like, peels himself off -- (laugh) He's like, "Oh, no, Rand told me and was, like, telling a bunch of other people and was like, 'Hey, if you want to go with Perrin, that would be much appreci-oh-ted -- appreciated.'" Don't know what happened with that word.

Sally: Yeah, appreci-oh-ted.

Emily: Yeah, appreci--appreci-- yeah. (laugh) Um, and he's like, "Obviously I'm the only volunteer because I love you, and you're my boyfriend."

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And Perrin's like, "Thank you. That's so sweet. I would love to have you along."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: The end.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's like, OK, at least Gaul will be there. Saving the plot.

Sally: Seriously.

Emily: And Bain and Chiad, when they get involved.

Sally: Yeah. Although -- some other toxic stuff going on there.

Emily: Yeah, and then, like, the Aiel take sides with --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: The battle of the sexes.

Sally: It's ridiculous.

Emily: And it's all just dumb. Because then again, it's all reduced to battle of the sexes.

Sally: Yeah. Um, and just one quick literary point: like, the best way that this novel's relationship to monogamy can be played out is Loial's absolute terrifying fear that if he, um, gets married, he will not be able to have adventures anymore.

Emily: Yeah. That's so sad.

Sally: Yeah. Which is like -- first of all, Loial's wife ends up being the cutest person alive --

Emily: But they're also found because Loial largely exits from the plot after --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He gets married.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's like, OK. Yeah, I know he does shit in -- sort of.

Sally: But yeah, it's just like --

Emily: I'm -- I'm literally reading the fourteenth book right now, and Loial hasn't appeared yet.

Sally: Babyyyyyy.

Emily: So, I -- like, I know he does at some point, but -- shrug emoji.

Sally: Yes. And so this is, um, not totally related, but I was thinking about this quote when Perrin and Faile are having their whole, like, battle of the wills. Like, Perrin won't ask, and Faile won't be like, "You don't have to ask." It's stupid.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: But, um, I read this essay a while back that struck me so much I wrote it in my little --

Emily: Oh.

Sally: Gospel of things that are interesting to me. Um, and it's this essay called "Fucking the Patriarch," which is --

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: It's about -- it's like a close read of three novels where younger women have relationships with older men.

Emily: Mm-kay.

Sally: It's, like, fairly interesting. Um, one of the books sound interesting, because I'm not interested in that plot, but the analysis of it --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Was interesting.

Emily: Sure.

Sally: Um, and it was written by Jennifer Schaffer, um, who wrote of her own experience at the end and said that, um, "Every genuinely erotic experience in my life has involved thousands of minute, ever-shifting imbalances of power." Um, which I found really interesting in context of, like, what it means to be in a relationship with someone -- particularly, like, I guess, an erotic relationship. But, like, any relationship is all about, like, the shifting back and forth of power in small ways. Um, and, like, in a way that doesn't necessarily, like, diminish from your ability to have power overall. It's just, like --

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: I dunno. It's just, like, a really interesting thing to think about, especially 'cause I think so much of the battle of the sexes, quote unquote, in this Wheel of Time world is that nobody is willing to -- and I -- it sounds like such a counterfeminist statement to say, like, "Give up your power for a second," but, like --

Emily: Well -- it's so, like -- you just wanna tell Perrin and Faile -- (clears throat) "Hey. Maybe just, like, work out a BDSM relationship --"

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: "That is about the exchange of power --"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "That the two of you clearly find interesting in some way."

Sally: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Emily: And, like, have that in the bedroom and then just kinda, you know --

Sally: Be normal.

Emily: Have a functioning relationship outside of that.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Not to say that you can't -- like -- you know what I'm saying.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's just like -- it would -- and then -- h-hey, presto, here's a fun idea: what if Wheel of Time included sex scenes? Then we could actually see stuff about the exchange of power that was interesting.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Y'know?

Sally: Instead of just this, like, constant sexually charged anger and repression that comes from nobody, like --

(distant clanging noise in background)

Emily: What the fuck?

Sally: What the fuck is going on? Is someone doing blacksmithing outside? (laugh)

Emily: Jesus. I swear to God, I thought it was, like, the creak of bed springs, and I thought Tybalt was jumping on the bed.

Sally: (laugh) Um, you heard the creak of bed springs and immediately was like, "Our cat," not "The people above us are fucking."

Emily: Well, it sounded -- it sounded like it was coming from down the hall. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Yeah.

Emily: Um.

Sally: (laugh) That would -- Tybalt is just in there, like, "Wheee!" Boing-y, boing-y, boing-y ...

Emily: I wouldn't put it past him. Vertical leap. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: A trampoline. Anyway, like, switching over to Nynaeve and Lan, the other, kind of, toxic monogamous --

Sally: Theirs is toxic in a way that is much more violent.

Emily: It's very weird. Well, first we have Elayne talking about --

Sally: Oh my God.

Emily: Her relationship with Rand, where she, like, gave him a letter that was like, "I just fuckin' love you, blah blah blah blah blah," and she's all, like, worried because, again, she feels like she's given too much power --

Sally: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Emily: To him at that point. And then she's, like, second-guessing herself and eventually resolves, "Oh, I'm gonna give him a second letter that is taking my power back."

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

Emily: And staking it over him and -- you know what that'll do? It'll just leave him completely bewildered.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: 'Cause he's like, "What? What does this fuckin' mean?"

Sally: "What's happening?"

Emily: It's not like he's seeing a time lapse between them.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You're just giving him two completely contradictory letters. Elayne, you dipshit. (laugh)

Sally: It's like -- the most important lesson I have learned in my millennial adolescence is that you really should not have important conversations over text message.

Emily: Duh.

Sally: (laugh) Like, it took a lot of false communicatives for me to learn what Romeo and Juliet should've taught me in eighth grade, I guess. But --

Emily: Yeah, we gotta talk face to face or it don't -- it don't count. It don't count if you ain't --

Sally: (laugh) Yeah.

Emily: Talking face to face. I don't know what happened --

Sally: It ain't.

Emily: I just, like, slipped into prospector -- an old prospector that -- (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) What's the guy from Toy Story? Like, Prospector Pete or whatever?

Emily: (laugh) Yeah, like, Stinky Pete.

Sally: Oh, yeah. (laugh) Emily's become Stinky Pete. What -- isn't he the villain?

Emily: Yeah. OK. Uh, yeah, Nynaeve and Lan are, like, weirdly violent -- this is a testament to my -- I read this book when I was, what, twelve -- just on the, uh ... cusp of adolescence, and --

Sally: (laugh) Why did you say it like that?

Emily: Because that was how I felt like saying it. (laugh) I dunno. Um, because the word "cusp" kind of creeped me out --

Sally: Cusp.

Emily: Because I feel like only old men use it to describe women --

Sally: Ah.

Emily: On the "cusp of womanhood."

Sally: Cusp of womanhood.

Emily: Yeah, exactly.

Sally: Disgusting.

Emily: Anyway, I was about to be a teeanger. (laugh) And it was, like, you know, sexuality. Hormones. Whatever. And, like, reading this, I was like, "Oh, yeah. Pinnacle of romance because, yeah, my understanding, as a twelve-year-old --"

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: "In this particular community in which I am situated --"

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: "Is that all relationships between men and women are, uh, inherently combative?"

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: "And that that can equal for the greatest romance." And that, lads, is why I'm -- (wheeze, laugh)

Sally: Read Wheel of Time and was like, "Nope."

Emily: No, that was just -- that's just a testament to how, uh, you know, I didn't know shit when I was twelve.

Sally: What was I saying?

Emily: I don't know. I'm sorry. I totally derailed that with my personal anecdote.

Sally: No, it is OK. Um, no, but I -- what I was -- uh ... I'm sorry that I always have to bring my, like, personal experiences into this, but when I was 18, I had a piece -- a fiction -- a non-fiction piece published in a literary magazine, so I got to go to a conference, is the point. Not to, like, self- ... (inaudible). Um, and it was an academic conference where people were publishing their thesis and I went to my first-ever panel kind of discussing the topic of toxic masculinity.

Emily: Mm.

Sally: And the man who, um, did the research was, like, specifically focused on, um, kissing scenes. It was really interesting, 'cause he was, like, looking at kissing scenes in movies and the way that -- in, like, all of the classic movies, it starts out with, like, the man is the aggressor with the woman initially putting up a fight, but after the man continues to, like, push forward, she just, like, submits to him, and it's, like --

Emily: Yes, and she loves it. Yeah.

Sally: Romantic and sexual. Yeah. And he was talking about that and, like, how, like, seeing those images constantly perpetuated are, like, a problem for young men and particularly, like, rape culture, because that's the way that men are taught to pursue romance, is with force.

Emily: Mm-hmm. And also it doesn't matter if she doesn't seem to be into it initially --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Because she will be.

Sally: Yeah, you just gotta keep trying.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: It's that, like, dumb joke from Anchorman, that it's like -- it's like, "Seven no's and a yes is still a yes," or something like that.

Emily: Yeah, it's fucked up.

Sally: And all that type of shit. Um, and -- so, like, a big part of toxic monogamy in the definition that I read at the beginning is that it's perpetuated by our media. And so when you read this when you're twelve -- and I'm sure a lot of people who read this are like, "Yeah, Lan and Nynaeve have, like, a very classically romantic narrative."

Emily: Tempestuous --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Yes.

Sally: And it's, like, very, like -- you imagine, like, Wuthering Heights, you know? Like --

Emily: Yeah. You're twelve. You're -- you feel weird about yourself --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: All your friends are hotter than you. You're like, "Yeah, I want a tall, hot man to literally sweep me off my feet."

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: "With his kissing prowess," or some shit like that --

Sally: Do you think Lan's ever kissed anybody before Nynaeve?

Emily: Is he the -- he's a huge virgin, obviously. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: No, I don't know jack about that, and I don't care to know jack about that. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Forty-year-old virgin.

Emily: I think -- literally, thinking about Lan's sex life -- yeah, 'cause again, he's, like, what -- he's like Aragorn, who's like, "Oh, I'm actually 93." (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) "I just happen to look like this." Flexes.

Emily: Yeah. Lan's like, "I'm 110, but my Warder powers make me appear only 56," and Nynaeve's like, "Ah, perfect hotness."

Sally: Gross.

Emily: And it's like, (gagging noise). Anyway, yeah. So that was what I thought when I was twelve. And then I was nineteen, and I was like, "You know what's actually nice? Asking permission." (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. Especially because, like, there are so many levels of violation. Like, he enters the room -- like, he knocks the door down; he doesn't even, like, knock. He, like, kicks it in. He completely ignores Egwene and Nynaeve -- er, Egwene and Elayne -- like, he and Nyaneve are fighting and talking about, like, fairly personal stuff --

Emily: Yeah, he just has it out in front of everyone.

Sally: Yeah. And, like, then he just kisses her without her permission, in front of people. So, like, there's so many levels of him not respecting her boundaries.

Emily: Yeah, and then Nynaeve's like, "Wow, thanks a lot of kissing me in front of literally everyone," and Lan's like, "Well, if I can do that in front of everyone, I can also tell them how I feel about you in exquisite detail, like, in front of everyone." And it's like, that's not necessarily, like, the recipe to a woman's heart.

Sally: Yeah, like --

Emily: Some women? Sure. Not necessarily all women. They don't all want the Disneyland marriage proposal.

Sally: Dear God. Please, please, unless you are 175 percent certain she will say yes, do not propose to a woman in public. You're only adding social pressures for her to say yes.

Emily: Yeah. That's, like, shitty.

Sally: It's such a manipulative thing to do.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Unless she, like -- my sister-in-law wanted the whole public proposal.

Emily: Well, she -- yeah.

Sally: And, like, my brother knew that, and he, like, set it up, and she loves it and talks about it all the time because that, like, really was important to her. Me, I would take a gun -- I would find a gun -- I don't know where I would find one, but I would find it -- and I would blow someone's kneecap off. So.

Emily: I'd be there with the gun. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Emily would be like, "Hold on."

Emily: "Hold on." They, your --

Sally: Just --

Emily: They'd be like, "Hey, I'm gonna propose to Sally in this really public place," and I'd be like, "Oh, yeah, sure, go for it." And I'd --

Sally: (laugh) Emily would be sabotaging.

Emily: And I'd get my gun. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Then when you were like, "Fuck," I'd be like, "Here's a gun."

Sally: And I'd be like, "Thank you."

Emily: "Blow their kneecaps out."

Sally: You're the only one who really knows what I want. (laugh) Anyway, I hate Lan so much as a character. I'm mad that the actor is so hot.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: 'Cause now I have to be horny for Lan, which is confusing --

Emily: God. Fuck, right? Ugh.

Sally: On a lot of levels. Like, I already had to get through being horny for Perrin, and that was confusing enough.

Emily: It's -- yeah, it's just really, like, a -- hooo. It's going through a lot of stages. Um, then we have to, like, flip over to Thom and Moiraine, also having their --

Sally: Oh, yeah, I forgot about this.

Emily: Their single conversation --

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: Together as adults before they're like, "Hey, we're getting married." And Mat's like, "What?" What was that meme? "What the cinnamon toast fuck?"

Sally: Yeah. (laugh) That was my favorite Tweet of all time.

Emily: It's a very good Tweet. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) What the cinnamon toast fuck. Please follow us on Twitter.

Emily: And it is, like, the opposite of a romantic conversation.

Sally: (laugh) It's so --

Emily: Moiraine's like, "Hey, let me bring up all your emotional trauma --"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "In an effort to manipulate you into doing something I want," and Thom's like, "Get out, please."

Sally: (laugh) Yeah, it's so --

Emily: And then they're like, "Hey, let's fuck." And it's like, "WHAT?"

Sally: Yeah, it's so confusing.

Emily: Robert Jordan! What the fuck?

Sally: What were your personal relationships like, my dude? Especially -- 'cause it's also, like, really -- the way that Thom describes her in these -- this chapter is gross.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: He's like, so, like, "If she wasn't an Aes Sedai," like, ugh. Gross.

Emily: He's like, "Oh, she's just, like, a handsome woman --" It's like -- what it really got me thinking about, skimming over all the romantic shit, was, like, what a different series it would've been if Thom had not gone with Elayne and Egwene -- I mean, Elayne and Nynaeve -- and had instead stuck with Rand.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That is a fucking interesting dynamic I want to see.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: A) Thom among the Aiel.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: How fuckin' hilarious would that be?

Sally: Yeah, he's like, "None of these people think I'm funny."

Emily: Yeah. B) Thom can continue being relevant where it matters, with Rand and Mat, who are his, like, apprentices in various ways.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: C) Thom and Moiraine might actually have a chance to have a real relationship, not necessarily romantic relationship, but *a* relationship about their, like, opposing --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: But, like, how cool would it be if they, like, fuckin' ended up teaming up? You know?

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Book four's all about, oh, they learn to respect each other and their, like, cool techniques. In book five, they're like, "Hey, Rand, we're going to co-parent you now into, y'know, taking over the world." And Rand's like, "Ah, sweet. Thanks, Mom and Dad."

Sally: (laugh) Yeah. "Awesome."

Emily: (laugh) I'm just saying, it would be so much cooler.

Sally: It would -- I bet Rand would be --

Emily: And then Lan could go with Nynaeve and Elayne and they'd be like, "Oh, yeah, romance. Blah blah blah."

Sally: Yeah. And then they could also -- also have more time than, like, five minutes to be like --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: "Now we're in love, and we're gonna get married and have babies."

Emily: And also that would be, like, an interesting character choice, y'know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: If Moiraine was like, "Oh, yeah, shit. I don't need you. I'm gonna be with the Aiel. They're like the fuckin' coolest.:

Sally: Yeah, look at --

Emily: "I got Rhuarc. Daddy as fuck." (laugh)

Sally: Rhuarc is so cool.

Emily: Yeah. Moiraine's like, "Listen, bucko. I know I'm gonna die anyway." (laugh) "Your presence here is irrelevant. Just go with your wife."

Sally: Yeah. Moiraine's like, "I'm planning my death already."

Emily: Yeah, Moiraine is like, “I am, like, laying out the funeral plans.”

Sally: “I’ve got my last words right here.”

Emily: Yep. “Ooh. Got ‘em down. Except they’re not gonna be last words; they’re gonna be a last tackle.” Ah.

Sally: Oh my God. That’s really the way to go out.

Emily: The power move, yeah.

Sally: Forget last words. Who’s gonna be your last tackle?

Emily: (laugh) God, I hope it’s Lanfear.

Sally: God, same. “WHO’S AVIENDHA?” (laugh)

Emily: “WHO’S AVIENDHA.” Whppppt. (laugh)

Sally: God, I love that scene.

Emily: Uh ... oh, then we bounce over to Min and the Tower, and that’s, like, more weird shit. Robert Jordan totally outs himself as knowing nothing about make-up --

Sally: Oh, yeah. (laugh)

Emily: ‘Cause he’s like -- he’s like --

Sally: (laugh) Oh my God, it’s --

Emily: “Min just totally transforms her entire face with make-up.”

Sally: (laugh) It’s --

Emily: And everyone’s like, “Oh, Min, you’re so pretty.” And I’m like, we can tell it’s make-up.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: People --

Sally: We’re not stupid. Like --

Emily: Yeah, people who aren’t total dipshits -- like, apparently, some men -- are like, “Yeah, I fuckin’ know -- I know contouring when I see it, bitch.” Like --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I’m not like, “Oh.”

Sally: Everybody knows my eyebrows don't really look like this.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: They're colored in.

Emily: Yeah. Come on, homies.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Anyway, it's so funny.

Sally: It's so funny. I just want to read the paragraph again because it's literally hilarious.

Emily: I just, like --

Sally: Except I went too far ...

Emily: It's so upsetting, too, because it risks being funny. Gawyn and Min are just, like, dancing on the fine edge of being a funny --

Sally: I know.

Emily: Cute relationship.

Sally: I was thinking about that. I was like, Gawyn is almost charming in these chapters. Almost.

Emily: Yeah, when Gawyn is just like, "Oh, Min, you're so -- you're such a sweet adorable lass." (laugh)

Sally: I know. (laugh) It's so adorable.

Emily: Doing, like, fun older brother mischief.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Min's like, "I'mma fuckin' punch you in the kidneys."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's like, oh, yeah, I can get behind this dynamic.

Sally: Meanwhile, all pretending for Galad, who apparently cannot be on -- in on the ruse. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah. Galad is just like, I'm here with my Whitecloak propaganda," and Min's like, "I don't give a shit about this. This is not on my problem list." And Gawyn's like, "I do give a shit about this, but also, I give more of a shit about the women in my life."

Sally: "I don't care about my brother at all and the fact that he's joining a terrorist organization. I do care about fucking Egwene."

Emily: Yeah. "Where's Egwene, though?"

Sally: Where's -- where's Egg?

Emily: Where's EGG? (laugh)

Sally: Where's my egg? "A dark cream lining her eyelids and a fine powder that emphasized her lashes made her eyes seem larger." A dark cream lining her eyelids.

Emily: I think he means eyeliner.

Sally: Lining her whole eye -- yeah, I guess, on the bottom, but, I mean, what a weird way to put it.

Emily: He's like --

Sally: Like, why not just write eyeliner? This bothers -- I've really, for some reason -- the one fantasy thing that really gets me is make-up.

Emily: Well, yeah, when they're just like, "It's like creams and things like that."

Sally: I'm like, say eyeliner, bitch.

Emily: I'm like, yeah, it's fuckin --

Sally: Say lipstick.

Emily: No one gives a shit.

Sally: Stupid ho.

Emily: Yeah. Eyeshadow.

Sally: You're out here saying, like, pigeon. And -- (inaudible)

Emily: He's like, "Suddenly she had cheekbones." I'm like, it's called contour.

Sally: It's called contouring. Any drag queen can do it --

Emily: Oh my God.

Sally: Min's not special.

Emily: Yeah, Min is not special --

Sally: Sorry, Leane.

Emily: Oh my God, what if Leane was a drag queen? (pause) AHHHH!

Sally: (laugh) If Leane was like, "Here we go. Contour. Gotta get my eyebrows --"

Emily: (laugh) If Leane was Bianca del Rio.

Sally: What an amazing casting that would be.

Emily: (sigh) That would be real fuckin' good. OK.

Sally: Anyway, Min's like, "Oh, no, Logain's gonna be -- have some glory," or something, which apparently doesn't happen for like a hundred thousand pages.

Emily: Literally, it's like the last page of book fourteen is like, "Oh, and now he does an important shit," and it's like, I don't care about this sad boy. Sad man.

Sally: Stupid. I really don't care about Logain. He's creepy and stares at women.

Emily: And they're like, "Oh, Mazrim Taim escaped," and they're like, "Is Siuan --" Oh my God, this is the most hilarious throwaway line. Siuan's like, "If they recapture him, I want him just, like, gentled on the spot," and Leane's like, "That's against the law," literally three pages --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: After Moiraine was like, "I'm so sorry, Thom, that some people broke the law and gentled your nephew on the spot --"

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: "Causing him to die. And if you do this, then I will --" This plot never plays out, by the way --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "I'll give you the names of the women who did that to him so you can have your vengeance," and I'm like, oh, I wanna get behind that. Thom's like Kill Bill for the sake of his nephew. Which, like, I can get behind. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. Oh my God.

Emily: I love my nephew. Anyway --

Sally: (imitating Emily's nephew) "Bus?"

Emily: Yeah, Leane's like, "That's illegal, Siuan," and Siuan's like, "I don't give a fucking shit." And it's like, hey, Siuan? Like, no wonder -- have you ever thought? Like, no wonder --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: People don't want you to be in charge no more.

Sally: Literally, like -- I didn't know that the Tower's gonna break at the end of this book when I read it for the first time, but rereading it, I'm like, fuckin' finally, somebody gets Siuan Sanche -- I'm not saying Elaida is a good choice, but Siuan is like, "Do a war crime. Lie to children."
(laugh) Like --

Emily: Honestly.

Sally: (laugh) "Use children as weapons of war. It's like, you are not a good leader.

Emily: Min's like, "Maybe if you told Gawyn and Galad this, this would, like, ease some tension," and Siuan's like, "No. I'm not telling anyone anything."

Sally: Yeah. "Gawyn and Galad? Fuck them."

Emily: "The best way to keep a secret is to just murder people."

Sally: We're all like, OK.

Emily: And we're like, OK, yeah, Siuan, you're from the sea, pirates, dead men tell no tales, blah blah blah blah. But it's like, hey, Gawyn and Galad are -- Gawyn's a fuckin' prince.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So is Galad, I guess. Step-prince.

Sally: He's a --

Emily: Step-prince?

Sally: Prince-adjacent.

Emily: He's adjacent of prince -- like, they've got enough power --

Sally: He's hot.

Emily: Yeah. (laugh) Consider this, though: Galad's hot.

Sally: Like, I dunno, like, you can't lie to hot people. You think he would just sit there and be hot and lie? (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) It just, like -- Siuan -- Siuan's just constantly underestimating people.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, arguably the reason that the Tower breaking goes so incredibly poorly is ‘cause Gawyn is like, “I don’t know where my sister is.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “I don’t know where Egg is. All I know is that the lady who’s up top is, like, preventing me from knowing where they are.”

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: “‘Cause I know she’s lying to me, ‘cause I’m not a dipshit.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “All evidence in the following books to the contrary.”

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: “Until this point, though, I’ve been a mostly mild character who hasn’t --”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “Done too much bad shit.”

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: “So, like, come on. Just tell me where my sister is. Come on.” Oh my God, it makes me so mad.

Sally: I know.

Emily: I’m sorry, these chapters just makes me --

Sally: They’re just angry chapters. You read them, and you’re like, fuck. Fuck.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Shit.

Emily: Punch a wall.

Sally: What in the cinnamon toast fuck?

Emily: Yeah. Exactly. Anyway, we should probably end now.

Sally: I cannot believe that Moiraine and Thom end up together.

Emily: It is, like, so buck wild.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's like, what?

Sally: Like, literally anything else would make more sense.

Emily: Yeah. Literally. I'm -- like -- Thom ending up with Lan. That would make more sense.

Sally: (laugh) That would be the best twist of all time.

Emily: (laugh) That'd be pretty fuckin' lit. Then Nynaeve and Moiraine could get together.

Sally: Gosh, that's a tempestuous relationship --

Emily: Yeah, that would be --

Sally: I might be mildly interested in.

Emily: (laugh) Yeah.

Sally: Enemies to lovers --

Emily: I'm intrigued.

Sally: Is a good trope. Yeah.

Emily: I'm intrigued.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Tell me more. OK --

Sally: Yeah. Could go badly, but I am intrigued.

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: Tell me more, lesbians. Lesbians, what is your verdict? (laugh)

Emily: OK, that's those chapters. I guess. Do you have anything else to add?

Sally: Um ... Pfft. Oh. We did -- EHR -- it's us, I guess -- but it's also its own entity? What is a podcast? Are we in a simulation? Yes.

Emily: Welcome to the Matrix. Bend a spoon or whatever.

Sally: Yes. Um ... Oh my God, what is happening to my brain? Oh, OK ...

Emily: The podcast.

Sally: The pod --

Emily: Were you going to talk about how we did a -- we did a shit-ton of downloads --

Sally: Yeah!

Emily: In the month of September? Thanks to Tor.

Sally: Tor dot com and Christina Orlando. I'm assuming --

Emily: They once rejected me for a job.

Sally: Well.

Emily: Not Christina Orlando personally, but Tor.

Sally: Tor.

Emily: At least I think they did? They just didn't get back to me. (laugh)

Sally: Oh, how the turn tables.

Emily: Oh, how the turn tables --

Sally: Just kidding.

Emily: And then they were just like, "We'll just publish this article about you."

Sally: Tor dot com. We love you.

Emily: Yeah, you're great, actually. Thanks a lot.

Sally: Um -- (laugh) I just want to say thank you to everybody who's been listening to the podcast and found us through that avenue or whatever new avenue in September. It's really exciting to see the podcast take off in a lot of ways. We've gotten, seriously, like 5,000 more downloads in the month of September than we have the past, like, previous months. We had a huge jump -- huge jump in Twitter followers and Instagram followers, and Tumblr's always slow and steady, but. You do you, Tumblr.

Emily: Yeah, Tumblr's its own word.

Sally: (laugh) Um, and it's just been really exciting talking to, um, our new listeners. We've got some really hilarious emails from people this week who were listening to some of the early episodes --

Emily: Oh, no.

Sally: Of EHR and I just, like can't --

Emily: I know that was only a year ago -- a year and a half ago --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But I'm like, what the fuck? Was I?

Sally: Yeah, I'm like, I don't even know who that person talking is. But, like, we got this hilarious email from, um, uh, Simon -- I can't remember your last name, Simon, I'm sorry -- but we mention something about, like, a vibrator ter'angreal in, like, one of the first episodes, and he, like --

Emily: And I stand by that.

Sally: Dug through the Wheel -- no, like, dug through the Wheel of Time wiki and was like, "I think there is one," and sent --

Emily: WHAT?

Sally: Me a link about it. Yeah, I need to forward it to you. I'm saying "he." I shouldn't assume your pronouns. They sent it to me, and -- I should put pronouns on our contact form.

Emily: Sure.

Sally: So that I know how to address you guys. That's a good idea. I'm gonna do that. Um, don't want to misgender anybody. If I've ever misgendered you, feel free to, um, Tweet me the flip-off emoji and correct me. So.

Emily: Yeah. That is a blanket statement.

Sally: Yeah. Um -- and, anytime. On air, online, please correct me. Um, but yeah, it's legitimately, like, the funniest article. It's just, like, a little couple of sentences. It's amazing.

Emily: God, I love that.

Sally: I know. (laugh) Um, but, anyway. So it's just been, like, really fun to see people experiencing the podcast and figuring it out for the first time. We've gotten some mean reviews on iTunes.

Emily: Oh. That's fun.

Sally: So just remember that, like, people have feelings. (laugh)

Emily: I mean --

Sally: As you -- I know Emily doesn't care. She's unfazed by other people's opinions of her, but I am --

Emily: (laugh) I just --

Sally: Deeply fazed by people's opinions of me. Um. Not to say you can't leave negative reviews. I think you should just remember that people have feelings. That's what I'm saying. Um. You also don't need to Tweet us if you hate our podcast. I don't know why that's a thing people do.

Emily: Yeah, you don't need to, like, @ people if you're gonna --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Complain about them. It's just, like, not necessary.

Sally: It's just kind of impolite. (laugh)

Emily: It's just, like -- yeah, it's like -- it's like you're talking about someone -- talking bad about someone, and then you, like, see them pass the room, and you're like, "Hey, come in here," and then continue talking bad about them.

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: And it's like, what the fuck?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Don't -- what?

Sally: Be shady behind our backs, thank you.

Emily: Yeah, that's what shade is for. Anyway. Many of you have commented on our banger of a theme song.

Sally: Yeah!

Emily: That is thanks to Glynna MacKenzie, unless you're talking about "Tubthumping," which is in the first season. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) In which case, that is Chumbawamba.

Emily: In which case, all credit to Chumbawamba. Please don't sue us, Chumbawamba. Thank you, though, to Glynna MacKenzie --

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Who arguably created a better masterpiece than "Tubthumping."

Sally: I know. Our theme song is so good.

Emily: Yeah, it's very good.

Sally: Sometimes I just listen to it, and I'm like, shit, this is a good theme song.

Emily: Yeah, it's real good.

Sally: I just get lost in it.

Emily: Anyway. That is gonna do it for us this week. Do you have a sign-off?

Sally: I do. We have a listener-submitted sign-off.

Emily: Ooh. So fun.

Sally: Yeah. If I can work my --

Emily: Now I'm gonna go look at our mean reviews on iTunes.

Sally: I mean, they're really not that mean. I'm just sensitive. I'm a Pisces. You guys --

Emily: Oh, they're just like, "You dicks.

Sally: They're like, "Stop mispronouncing things. You guys are --"

Emily: Oh ho ho ho!

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: (very close to the mic) Let me just turn the mic over to me for a second while Sally pulls up her, um -- her sign-off. I don't give a fucking shit --

Sally: (laughing in the background)

Emily: About the pronunciations in a fantasy book. The fact that there is a pronunciation guide means bullshit to me. And if you have a problem with that, don't fucking listen. No one's -- is there someone with a gun to your head, making you listen? Don't -- who cares? Who gives a shit? It's a fantasy book. Don't you have better things to do? The Amazon's burning, people!

Sally: (laugh) That's true, though. I shouldn't laugh.

Emily: So anyway. Sign-off? (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. So this comes from Kitt Taylor, who also made the meme about Tybalt and his eight-foot vertical leap --

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: So they are our superstar listener this week. Um. Uh, and Kitt writes, “I’m a preschool teacher --” Brave.

Emily: Yeah, honestly you are.

Sally: (laugh) “I’m a preschool teacher, and I am the lead in preschool two. But just as my kids were going to move to Pre-K, the teacher quit. So they moved me up with my kids because consistency and all that jazz. So they moved out of my beautifully decorated class into one with bare walls. I decided to grin and bear it and decorate the room. I couldn’t reach the top of one of the bulletin boards, so naturally I stood on a table. A parent came in to pick up, and I shifted my weight, resulting in the table to -- in the table flipping over, sending my head and back onto the ground and my legs on the edge of the table. I rolled around, gasping like a fish, trying to catch my breath, while an army of three-year-olds surrounded me, asking if I was OK. They sent me home, but my boss said she wasn’t letting me drive my son home and -- and would only release him to someone who hadn’t just beefed it. Luckily my wife was getting off work and picked us up. I’m OK now, but whenever I see sneeze, I get shooting pains in my upper back.” You are not OK! (laugh)

Emily: What the shit? You’re the -- not the -- OK. What the hell?

Sally: (laugh) Please go to a doctor!

Emily: Go to the urgent care.

Sally: Anyway. “It’s funny to me now because I wasn’t seriously hurt and I knew better than to stand on a table.” (laugh) Kitt, you’re not OK. Please go to the doctor.

Emily: Go to the doctor.

Sally: Please go to the doctor.

Emily: Don’t do a war crime.

Sally: Is that gonna be our new sign-off?

Emily: Fuck mispronunciation. Yeah.

Sally: “Don’t do a war crime. Fuck mispronunciation”?

Emily: Yeah, and to the person who was like, “Oh my God, vocal fry,” fuck off.

Sally: I think I have really bad vocal fry.

Emily: Who gives a shit? Vocal fry’s just a way of speaking.

Sally: Yeah, but it just kind of felt like a personal attack.

Emily: I'm sorry.

Sally: (laugh) It's OK. It's like, I'm sorry that I talk like a valley girl, but I do. I have a Bachelor's degree.

Emily: I -- you shouldn't even have to -- you shouldn't have to --

Sally: (laugh) I know, Emily. I know! Dominant narratives don't affect you the way they affect me. I understand.

Emily: Just fuck you if you're like "oh, vocal fry."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Do some self-examination. Look in a mirror. Talk to your mom. Goodbye.

Sally: (laugh)