



Episode 134: Indigenous Peoples'
Day Special Episode

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(theme song by Glynn MacKenzie plays)

Emily: The title of this episode might as well be “Ground Printer.”

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Our house looks -- our old -- our old house, which we are still living in --

Sally: Unfortunately.

Emily: As of the time of recording and the time of the release of this episode -- um, all the wall hangings are down. All the books are gone, which was a Herculean feat.

Sally: Emily did a great job.

Emily: Eh, we both did a good job. And we just took the small shelf that the printer was on, so now the printer is just on the ground, like unto the days of New York.

Sally: Yep, where we just had a printer on the ground by the front door.

Emily: I think we -- I -- then I got that shelf, right? That the TV is on currently? And then the printer was off the ground.

Sally: Maybe.

Emily: But no TV in New York. (laugh)

Sally: I can't believe we did not have a television. That's correct. We just watched things, usually on Emily's laptop.

Emily: New York -- I am amazed that this laptop has lasted as long as it has.

Sally: I know. It's done great.

Emily: I know it theoretically hasn't lasted, really, a long time. It's only been five years. But in laptop --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: In PC years, especially, that's like -- it's a grandma.

Sally: Yeah. Sorry, I shouldn't be drinking this Diet Coke right now.

Emily: No, I think it's fine. Tybalt, how was dinner?

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: This is the last time -- well, I dunno. This may be one of the last times you hear Tybalt eating in the background because in the future, we'll be recording in a place that is not next to his food bowl or his litter box.

Sally: Yeah, we will be a whole floor away from both of those things.

Emily: Yeah, if you can hear Tybalt eating or using the litter box in a recording in the future, then that is, um, a serious problem -- (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Yeah, 'cause we -- who knows what we've done.

Emily: That needs to be addressed.

Sally: Yeah, please check in on us if you hear that.

Emily: "Uh, are you guys okay?"

Sally: Yeah, just send us a Tweet. "Y'alright?"

Emily: "You good?"

Sally: "Y'all good?"

Emily: "You good?"

Sally: "Heard your cat shitting." I can't give you a thumbs-up.

Emily: I -- I understood. (laugh)

Sally: My thumb is always up. (laugh)

Emily: Sally is wearing a brace.

Sally: I think it is a little too tight. It's a little red.

Emily: I was like, your finger -- (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Is your thumb supposed to look like that? (laugh) It's turning purple.

Sally: (laugh) It's -- yeah. I -- this brace is fine; it's not, like, very expensive. Um. But I'm having a really, really bad pain flare-up in my wrist, so it's like, "I'll try this."

Emily: Which I'm sure isn't helped by the fact that we're moving, so.

Sally: Yeah. Well, I'm -- and I -- we're really close to being done with transcripts in season four. Like, we have two left.

Emily: Oh, yeah.

Sally: The one I'm working on now and then next week's. So I've been, like --

Emily: Yeah, and we're about halfway done with season five. Which is great.

Sally: Transcribing a lot, and that is just ... (inaudible)

Emily: Yep. Hurt -- it hurts the wrists.

Sally: "Click, Clack, Moo, Cows that Type."

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: Um, that's a fun book. I'd recommend looking it up. See, it looks a little better.

Emily: I recommend -- EHR -- I hope there's a list that's like, "EHR Recommends," and on it, now, is "Click, Clack, Moo: Cows that Type." (laugh)

Sally: It's a fun book.

Emily: I just love it.

Sally: I remember reading it a lot. (laugh) I should add that --

Emily: We just should build a -- a -- syllabus around it. I couldn't remember the word "syllabus" for a minute. I thought "resume."

Sally: Yeah, build a resume around it.

Emily: Build a resume around "Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type." I assume it would all be typing speed-related.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Not that anyone really needs to know your typing speed either.

Sally: I feel like it'd be very hard to type if you had cloven hooves.

Emily: Yeah. Is that, like, the central conflict of the story? I haven't read it in a long time.

Sally: (laugh) I can't remember. I have to look up "Click, Clack, Moo."

Emily: "Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type."

Sally: What's the plot of "Click, Clack, Moo"?

Emily: I still put my typing speed on my resume, not because I think it is actually relevant but because I have an impressive typing speed and I just want prospective employers to know that.

Sally: What's your typing speed?

Emily: It's like 120 or something.

Sally: Nice. I think last time I did mine it was, like, 115 or 120.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: It's that writer's life, you know?

Emily: It's writer's life. It's English major's life. When all you're doing is writing essays, you just become very good at typing.

Sally: "'Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type' is a 2000 children's book by Doreen -- Doreen Cronin, illustrated by Betsy Lewin. The Simon & Schuster books tells the story of Farmer Brown's cows, who find an old typewriter in the barn and proceed to write letters to Farmer Brown making various demands and then going on strike when they aren't met."

Emily: That's -- so it's a -- it's a book about social justice --

Sally: Yes.

Emily: And activism rather than, um, overcoming --

Sally: Your cloven hooves.

Emily: Disability? Not disability to have cloven hooves --

Sally: It's -- it's about unionizing.

Emily: If you're a cow. If you're a person, maybe look into that. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Might want to get that checked out. Um.

Emily: You're the Anti-Christ, maybe?

Sally: Yeah, it's about union -- it's about -- (laugh)

Emily: "Wouldst thou like to live deliciously?"

Sally: It -- I was trying to make it's about -- it's -- (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) What's happening?

Sally: This joke sounds so much funnier in my head 'cause I, like, cannot say the word. (laugh)

Emily: Still don't know what the joke is. Just waiting for -- (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: She's dying.

Sally: I can't breathe. Ahh! (laugh)

Emily: Hey, Tybalt, do you want your sheep? (pause) OK, I have to move on, apparently. (laugh)

Sally: No, the joke was just that they were -- moonionizing. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: And I don't know why it cracked me up so much. (laugh)

Emily: It took you so long to get that word out. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Ugh.

Emily: Moonionizing.

Sally: Moo -- moonion --

Emily: That's the title of the episode. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: This episode isn't even about the Lord of Chaos.

Sally: Or "Click, Clack, Moo."

Emily: Or "Click, Clack --" Damn, a whole podcast about "Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type." (laugh) Um, we could do that. This is Everybody Hates Rand, a Wheel of Time podcast. Friendly neighborhood -- I can't do the own --

Sally: Yep. Nailed it.

Emily: This is Wheel of -- (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) This is Wheel of Time.

Emily: Fuck! This is Everybody Hates Rand, your friendly neighborhood Wheel of Time podcast. I'm Emily.

Sally: And I'm Sally.

Emily: And we're not talking about Lord of Chaos, um, partly because we're very busy with moving, and we didn't want to read the book.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, and also 'cause ... well, mostly just 'cause we didn't want to read the book yet. (laugh) Lord of Chaos is a really tough book, you guys.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: I don't know if you've read it recently or are in the middle of reading it or anything like that, but, like, three things happen.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And that's it.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And the rest of it is just sort of Rand going between Caemlyn and Cairhien repeatedly. And it's like, why? To what end? What's happening? Here are the three things that happen that I remember: Egg becomes the Amyrlin Seat. Um, Rand gets kidnapped and put in a box. And someone says "Asha'man, kill," famously.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And those are all war crimes. Not Egg becoming Amyrlin, although that scene is very transphobic. So it's not just, like -- there are things that happen, but they're not, like -- they're gonna be things that we're complaining about, and it's kind of hard to face that --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: When you pick up a book. At least when we picked up Fires of Heaven, we were like, we're going to reach a scene where Mat Cauthon takes over an entire army, and we'll have nothing, really, bad to say about it because it's fine. It's good.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: It's delightful. But in Lord of Chaos, it's all just, like, bad. It -- you know how bad Lord of Chaos is because it starts with a scene where Demandred address -- is talking to the Dark One, and the Dark One talks in all-capital letters.

Sally: Oh, yeah.

Emily: There's something about that that I feel is deeply uncreative.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And, um, I'm not interested in. But we'll get into that later. Blegh.

Sally: Also the Black Tower gets started. That's the third thing that --

Emily: Also, the Black Tower gets started. Also, Rand, um, gives Mazrim Taim an educating license despite the fact that Mazrim Taim is like, "I've done war crimes." And Rand's like, "That sounds great. I'd like you to teach every man you come across how to also do war crimes." Mazrim Taim's like, "You got it, baby."

Sally: And then, by the end of the book, they're all doing war crimes.

Emily: There's just rampant war crimes.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's the anti -- It's the EHR antithesis book --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Because of all the war crimes. I mean, who -- I mean, the war crimes doesn't really go into an uphill slide form here --

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) It's all -- it's all -- there's just more and more war crimes present in Wheel of Time from here on out.

Sally: I know. I'm on chapter, like, twelve of the Path of Daggers, and in, like, every single chapter, someone's been tortured thus far.

Emily: Yeah, there's just, like, a lot of torture -- we're, like, reaching -- I've been thinking a lot about how Robert Jordan could not decide how long to make this book series when he started. Like, he originally meant it just to be a trilogy, which goes to show you, um, how bad he was at planning things, I guess.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But it's like, up until, I'd say, book five, it's easy to be like, OK, he was a guy who didn't know how many books he was going to write but still had a pretty good grasp on the story and what needed to happen in the story. Around about book six, you realize this is a guy who has no idea how many books there will be and also has no idea how to get to the ending. Like, he is just fuckin' --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Flying by the seat of his pants here. And that's, like, not a great feeling --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: To have, as a reader. You want a sense of some slight control --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Over the narrative coming from the author. And I think we'll probably end up talking a lot about that. But I think it's just something to reflect on as we are roundabout one-third of the way done with the series now. And, um, the second third of the series is definitively the worst. 'Cause at least when you get to books, you know, ten -- well, books eleven through fourteen, there's like, OK, something's happening.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Even though it was because Brandon Sanderson got a hold of the series and was like, "I can't spend my life writing this. Something HAS to happen."

Sally: (laugh) Thank you, Brandon.

Emily: (laugh) So thank you for your service in that, Brandon. Mat Cauthon died for -- (laugh) everyone else in the series to reach a conclusion. Maybe not good, satisfying conclusions, but conclusions nonetheless. This episode is so chaotic. I'm so sorry.

Sally: I mean, we did have a purpose, but.

Emily: We did have a purpose, but it sort of flew off the rails. OK. Here's what we wanted to do. Today, if you're listening to this on the Monday it's released, it is Indigenous Peoples' Day. Some people still refer to it as Columbus Day, but those people are wrong because Columbus did nothing worth celebrating. Indigenous people, however, survived, which is worth celebrating.

Sally: Yeah, and they've also done a lot of other amazing things that just --

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Aren't considered amazing by West -- the lens of Western history because it wasn't, like, conquering other nations and things as -- like that. So.

Emily: Yeah, so we wanted to talk a very little bit, um, about indigenous peoples, uh, and how they are represented -- if they are represented -- in the Wheel of Time and in fantasy as a whole and maybe give you some recommendations if you are looking for some indigenous authors or things to be reading right now.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, so question number one: Are indigenous peoples represented in Robert Jordan's the Wheel of Time series?

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Answer: Not in the traditional sense. There are tropes that are associated with, um, native peoples, um, tropes like having a sacred connection to the land, um, tropes like being, quote unquote, less civilized than a different, majority group -- or the majority in the sense of who is telling the story, I think. Um, and there are tropes involving, also, colonialism and imperialism and who has the right to inhabit, uh, which portions of land, et cetera, et cetera.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And all of those things are talked about in Wheel of Time but they are actually not really combined into one set of people.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: When it comes to, like, sacred, um, connections to the land, all we really have to go with is the Ogier. Which is interesting because the Ogier are the only non-human race that are also not the -- that are also not monstrous --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: In the Wheel of Time. Um.

Sally: Although they are often mistaken for Trollocs.

Emily: They are, yes. They're often, um, put into monstrous -- a monstrous lens by people who are not familiar with them.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: So you do have some, like, tropes going on there, I think.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: It's also interesting that the land that the Ogier inhabit is, um -- I mean, it is literally they have a sacred connection to the land in that they cannot leave their portions of land, the steddings, or they will die after a certain amount of time.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: But it's also this land that just, like, imposes a lack of, um, magic slash technology -- because in Wheel of Time, those two are often conflated -- we have magical advances happening at the same rate or more than technological advances.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, so it just, like, sort of vaunts you back into a different era whenever you enter a steddung.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: Which I think is another thing that is often associated with native peoples.

Sally: Yeah, absolutely. We can talk more about this when we talk, um, about some authors that you can read, but, um, the indigenous authors writing in, uh, genre fiction right now are writing in, uh, a genre that has been coined as indigenous futurism, so -- which is a term that was coined by, uh, Doctor Grace Dillon, professor in the Indigenous Nations Studies Program at Portland State University.

Emily: Hmm.

Sally: Um, and I believe that phrase, um -- I believe the term African futurism came first.

Emily: Afrofuturism, yeah.

Sally: Yeah. I've heard Nnedi Okorofor say it should be African futurism --

Emily: Oh. Cool. OK.

Sally: Um, I --

Emily: African futurism.

Sally: She Tweets about it enough that if I have fucked that up, she can come here and beat me up. That's totally fine.

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: You have my permission. Um, just wear a mask. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: Um, and so the idea with both of these genres is that, um, so often, um, when people are depicting, uh, Black or specifically African, as in, like, of the African continent, um, or indigenous peoples, it is like that step back in time.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Um, there's a quote from this author, Darcie Little Badger, who says, um, "A lot of times when there's an Apache main character, it feels --" Um, "It takes place in the 1800s. It almost feels like fiction. People think we didn't survive, but we did, and we're still flourishing." So this idea that people think indigenous and African people only existed in the past and that whenever we, like -- or even just, like -- even if they're like, "Of course they exist today," there's this, like, cognitive split, where it's like, there's no technology on reservations, there's no technology --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: In Africa. Everyone in Africa is still living in these tiny little villages where they don't have running water. Same for, um, Native Americans or other indigenous peoples. So this idea that you're taking a step backwards in time as opposed to indigenous and African people -- but we're focusing on indigenous people today -- indigenous people living in the present, and then this genre, indigenous futurism, is imagining a future for these peoples and what it can look like. Um. Hopefully in a more liberated --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Future.

Emily: It makes me think of how, um, it was such a cognitive dissonance, and an intentional cognitive dissonance, in the Marvel movie "Black Panther --"

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: To have Wakanda be this highly advanced, technologically, um, based society --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: That was just, like, miles and miles ahead of any other country in the world.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And everyone's just like, "Ahh."

Sally: Yeah. "That's not going to happen in Africa --"

Emily: "But they're in Africa."

Sally: Exactly. So yeah, that's a really interesting point about the Ogier and technology and, like, stepping backwards.

Emily: Yeah, and you just have, um, the Ogier singing to the trees, et cetera, et cetera, so you just kind of have, um -- when you get native characters, I think they're often depicted as a little bit Druidic. They have nature powers --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Quote, unquote, or however you get like that. Um. And, I don't know, you have a connection, also -- the Ogier also are very Ent-ish. They're also incredibly long-lived, and a lot of what we have with the Ogier is with Loial and recording history.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: Which I just think is very interesting in, um, context to how indigenous peoples -- especially in America -- and I should clarify that: I am mostly talking about indigenous peoples in America because those are the ones with which I am most familiar.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: I don't -- I know very little about aboriginal peoples elsewhere. Um. But, uh, like with oral storytelling and oral histories and things like that being passed down, generation to generation, and you have the Ogier, who are also doing much of the same when you have these incredibly long-lived Elders.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Stuff like that. I dunno.

Sally: Yeah, no, I think there's a lot of parallels. I, uh, definitely would not quality it as any type of indigenous representation --

Emily: Yes.

Sally: Obviously, and not even, really -- like, the tropes that we're calling attention to border on problematic, only because the -- the Ogier, as Emily pointed out, are the only, quote unquote,

non-human race. Um, and so often -- like, the machine of colonialism functions by dehumanizing --

Emily: Mm.

Sally: People that are not part of the colonial empire.

Emily: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Um, another trope that I sort of referenced but didn't, maybe, clarify as much is, um, you have a trope where you have people from a Western society -- and Western, often, is characterized by the type of government --

Sally: Mm.

Emily: I think, that there is. There's some sort of monarchy or democracy or empire, coming across a group of people who have a less centralized government. And we have that represented with the Aiel --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Who, um, have a really intricate, um, tribal society and clan society --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And everything going on there, so I think that is another reason why the Aiel might be your first thought if you're thinking, "Who are the native peoples --"

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: "In Wheel of Time?" but of course, the Aiel also don't fit any sort of represent -- representation because, as I said to Sally, they are more like knock-offs of Dune, which itself is a knock-off of, um, Arabic cultures.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: So you're just having too many layers of, I mean, plagiarism, going on there. (laugh)

Sally: Let's call it for what it is.

Emily: I mean, Robert Jordan, you -- Robert Jordan just read Dune and was like, "Sounds neat. Bet I'll just sprinkle that into my fantasy world." (laugh)

Sally: (whisper) Stupid.

Emily: Less sci-fi, though. More fantasy.

Sally: Yeah, there's gonna be a magic fog city where Mat dies for the second time. First time?

Emily: First time, I wanna say? (laugh) How many times does Mat die?

Sally: Who's to say.

Emily: Like Groundhog Day. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: There's also, in Wheel of Time, lots of, uh, imperialism in the form of the Seanchan. And what you're doing there, by having the Seanchan be the invading force, is have all of the main continent, Randland, be characterized as the indigenous people.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Which itself is not necessarily true. You -- you, um -- the word "indigenous" is rendered sort of meaningless in the context of Wheel of Time because we're living in a society, um, that Robert Jordan has gone out of his way to remove any, um, really ethnic borders from.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: The only borders people come across in this world are national borders, like, where you're from, essentially.

Sally: Yeah, with the exception of, like, the Aiel and --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: The Tinkers. So I think, like, if you are going to, like -- like you said, like, if -- your first thought would probably be the Aiel --

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Because they are rendered ethnically different.

Emily: Yes.

Sally: Um, and the Tinkers kind of have the same -- not, like, necessarily ethnically different, but there's, like, a huge divide in culture there, so you might be, like, "Well, hold on."

Emily: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sally: But again, they are not indigenous peoples.

Emily: Mm-hmm. Um.

Sally: 'Cause indigenous -- the Aiel's -- (sigh) It gets complicated.

Emily: It -- yeah, it does get complicated. But the problem, of course, with the Seanchan and colonialism is that the Seanchan are ultimately, um -- the way Robert Jordan writes them, they're either not a bad thing, or they're a good thing.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Because the countries, the parts of the continent that they invade and end up taking over, are just, like, cool with their, um, new form of government. They're like, "It's cool. They make us swear these oaths, and we have to, um -- you know, the government changes slightly, but ultimately it's better for the common people." And we see it, uh, later in the series after the invasion of Ebou Dar. We see, um -- what's her name -- Tylin and her -- more importantly, her son, Beslan -- is that his name?

Sally: I think so.

Emily: Yeah -- um, who was, like, briefly friends with Mat -- we see them coming to terms with the Seanchan government taking over and them inserting themselves into the Seanchan hierarchy and finding a way to, like, make it work.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And it's just, like, um, I dunno, pretty problematic?

Sally: Yeah. 'Cause I feel like that is also not part of the colonialist machine but part of the colonialist myth --

Emily: Yes.

Sally: Or justification is that we are going to come in and teach these, quote unquote, savages how to live in a proper society, and we are going to govern them better than they could ever govern themselves.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Um, and that is simply not true. Like, every group of people has the right to self-govern. Um, and also, like, empires have -- there's never been an instance of history in which, like, a major empire, massive empire machine like the Seanchan come in and make things better for people that they are colonizing.

Emily: It's literally never better.

Sally: No.

Emily: But you're right, that is totally the mythos. Like, when King Leopold the third of Belgium --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Colonized the entire Congo and most of central Africa --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: The, like -- the myth that he, um, and his government was feeding the outside world, because at this point the outside world was interested in the goings-on of other --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, countries was that, uh, he was improving the infrastructure of the places --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And, uh, increasing the employment rates and things like that. And it's like, you're not increasing the employment rates if you are enslaving the entire population.

Sally: Yeah, and, like, brutally enslaving them.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Like, the whole thing -- King Leopold would, like, chop off people's hands if they didn't meet their quotas.

Emily: Yeah. The worst.

Sally: Like, he was -- like --

Emily: He's burning in hell currently.

Sally: Yeah. Yeah, so that is definitely part of the colonialist myth. Um.

Emily: And it's just frustrating to have it not be called out as a myth --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: In your fantasy text, which is what fantasy should normally be doing if you're a -- a responsible fantasy writer --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Is taking things that happen in the real world and rendering them more, um, I dunno, a little more accessible to people.

Sally: Mm-hmm. Yeah, or just, like -- like, fantasy is a way of, like, re-seeing the world --

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: That we live in, and so, like, to just take our world and then plop it in again and be like, “It’s totally fine” -- it’s why we’ve talked so much about how we have problems with, like, people just taking this world’s gender politics and this world’s racial politics. Like, these are all structures. Colonialism is also a -- a, you know, structure.

Emily: Structure, yeah.

Sally: Something that people invented. Um, and, like, you should be reinventing it or investigating it in a way that isn’t beholden to this world’s realities. And Robert Jordan is doing that but in a deeply unethical way, because, like, no empire has ever been like, “Yes, we are definitely governing the people for the better, and the people are totally cool with us just taking control of their lives.” So I guess he is reimagining things, just, again, in a deeply unethical and fucked-up way.

Emily: Yeah. Fantasy should be a way to interrogate power structures --

Sally: Yes.

Emily: Not reinforce them. It’s so buck wild.

Sally: Such a much more succinct and powerful way than what I was getting at.

Emily: But you --

Sally: Thank you.

Emily: You helped me think of it.

Sally: I feed you. It was the assist.

Emily: Yeah, you were --

Sally: You dunked it. (laugh)

Emily: You were, like, putting a chocolate-covered strawberry in my mouth. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: I don’t even like strawberries.

Sally: OK, I can feed you, um, uh, a Hug. A Hershey’s hug.

Emily: Oh, I do love those.

Sally: That powers Emily.

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: She's a robot who runs on Hershey's.

Emily: I just ran out of Hugs.

Sally: Oh, no. (laugh)

Emily: It's OK, I have Junior Mints now. I'll just eat Hershey's Hugs and Junior Mints. I dunno. I guess I -- have you read any good books by indigenous authors? I've only read so very few.

Sally: Yeah, I was gonna say, it is, unfortunately, like, a -- like, a huge oversight in my reading. I just haven't read very many. And most of what I have read I have been assigned -- it's been assigned reading.

Emily: Yeah. Yeah. It's been, um -- and I mean, there are -- there are a number of reasons, I think, um -- I don't want to be, like, a fragile person who's like, "It's all on me," but it is also true that there are fewer indigenous authors in the publishing industry, mostly because the publishing industry is a horrible racist machine.

Sally: Yes.

Emily: But in America, a lot of indigenous peoples' storytelling is oral storytelling, which is not to say that they can't write books or shouldn't write books, but I think that there's --

Sally: Yeah, they definitely do. Yeah.

Emily: Yeah, of course they do. But I think there is, um, a certain amount of, um, coming to it still in the process.

Sally: Yeah. I -- yeah, and I mean, a huge part of it, really, is that, like, machine. Like, there are so many different ways to tell stories these days --

Emily: Mm.

Sally: That if someone really wanted to let, like, a group of indigenous artists do something really cool that was, like, somehow based in the oral medium --

Emily: Yes, it'd be so cool.

Sally: There is a way to do that, but everyone is like, "We simply must let Brandon Sanderson write another 5,000-page book and spend --" And it isn't even just a matter of if they're getting published; it's if they're getting marketed correctly, if they're getting protected by the publishing industry. Like, there are so many authors, if they, like, do something wrong, the publishing industry will be, like, there to back them up. Like, I think of that American Dirt lady.

Emily: Ugh.

Sally: Like, the publishing industry sunk so much money into her book that they, like, had to be there to, like, protect her from anything. And so it's like, indigenous authors probably just aren't getting the support.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Um, and it's much like, unfortunately, like any minor -- quote unquote, minority group in this country, where it's like, a few people stand out and are doing excellent, like Rebecca Roanhorse, who's written, like --

Emily: I think it's Roanhorse.

Sally: Roanhorse, sorry.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: I was -- thank you for correcting me. Uh, Rebecca Roanhorse, who's won, like, a ton of awards and, like, is a New York Times bestselling author and, um, Stephen Graham Jones who's, like, deeply prolific in the horror genre and has also won a ton of awards. And so people are like, "There we go. Problem solved."

Emily: Yeah, it's the myth of exceptionalism. If a few people --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Are doing, um, really well -- it's like how people thought, when Obama was elected president, racism was over.

Sally: We are now living in a post-racial era because a Black man was president.

Emily: Ahhh. When -- yeah, that's the myth of exceptionalism.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: You have to look at, uh, what is happening with the people as a whole. Is everyone afforded these opportunities?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um. Speaking of Rebecca Roanhorse, I've only read one of her books, called "Trail of Lightning," which --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: I don't know if that qualifies as indigenous futurism. But it was definitively set in the future.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: But it was more, like, post-apocalyptic.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: It was a really interesting book, and I think about it all the time. I don't know if I -- I don't remember loving it, but I would still recommend it, if that makes sense.

Sally: No, I get it, and I think, like, a problem with the idea of everyone -- I just think this is a problem -- not to get, like, pretentious English major on people, but everyone is like, "I want to read genre fiction and, like, fucking love it as much as I love the Wheel of Time," or, God forbid, Harry Potter --

Emily: Mm. Yeah.

Sally: If we're -- people still can't let go of that despite the TERF-ery. Um. And I just feel like there's this expectation that genre fiction is, like, fun and escapist and comforting, and that might just be more of the, like, historical baggage around it, but I think people, like, really do struggle with the idea that, like -- like, that's how I feel about Who Fears Death. Like, I think about that book all the time. Um, and it's -- I would, like, classify it as one of my, like, favorite reads because it's really interesting and challenged a lot of my ways of thinking, but it wasn't necessarily that I, like, really liked it.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Y'know? Like, that --

Emily: That was tough to read.

Sally: Yeah, that qualifier "like" is so difficult, because it's like, I like "Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type," but it doesn't challenge me in any way or teach me anything or, like, really expand my, like, creative understanding of the world.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: So, like, that qualifier of, like, liking something or loving something is tough, I think. Sorry, that was a total sidebar.

Emily: No, I think it's interesting. I think -- and I -- and I think it's probably my personal hang-ups that prevented me from liking "Trail of Lightning." I can totally see how someone would get very into it --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: 'Cause it's got a lot of really cool things going for it. The main character is this very, like, um -- she's, like, hunts supernatural creatures. That's really cool. And she's very, like, cocky and sarcastic and you love to see it in your female protagonists, y'know? And she's got weird, interesting relationships with gods. The love interest is very good and interesting. Just cool. I dunno, it's just, like, an interesting way, because it is set in a post-apocalyptic world, where I think most of the country has flooded? I could be wrong. And so it's, like, set kind of in the Rocky Mountains, uh, region, where a lot of the surviving peoples are people who were on reservations.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And it was just, um -- I dunno. It was a lot of what I like about the CW's Supernatural put into a book and also told from a -- a Navajo woman's perspective.

Sally: Yeah, going back to your point -- this is a little bit tangential -- but going back to your point about, um, so much of, uh, indigenous storytelling in the United -- in, you know, the land that we now call the United States --

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Um, being oral, is I read this article in the New York Times about, um, indigenous authors writing in the genre fiction -- that broad umbrella -- and apparently, like, a lot of -- like, a -- a significant contingent of, like, Navajo elders, like, are really upset that, like, Rebecca Roanhorse was --

Emily: Hmm.

Sally: Like, using these stories because it's like, they're not for -- I think their quote was like, "They're not for entertainment." Like, they are --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Part of our --

Emily: She uses a lot of the mythology.

Sally: Yeah. And I think that is ...

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Just interesting.

Emily: It is interesting. And -- yeah, something to look into further and --

Sally: Yeah, I definitely would say that, uh, my research for this episode was definitely, uh, much more cursory than the topic deserves, and so I hope that we can revisit it in a year, on --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Next year's Indigenous Peoples' Day and hopefully, uh, y'know, I would like to challenge us to read more indigenous authors and learn more about it. Um, to have, you know, the ability to do them the justice that they deserve.

Emily: Yeah, but if you're, um, looking to get into it, starting points we can offer are Rebecca Roanhorse --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, if you're looking for fiction, I recently read a book called "The Round House" by Louise Erdrich. She's a very prolific writer, um, not in fantasy but in fiction.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And her book -- I mean, I've only read the -- I think I've read a few of her books. But that one was really incredible and has stuck with me and tackles a lot of the issues, um, that are ongoing, such as the rampant, um, violence against women in indigenous communities. Um, so would recommend that. If you want YA, Sherman Alexie wrote, um -- the one I read of his was "The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian."

Sally: Um, I have not read this book, but in the research that I was doing, um, I think this one sounds really interesting. It's the author Darcie Little -- Little Badger, who I quoted earlier. Her, um -- she has a novel -- it's either coming out or has come out. I can't remember when this article was written. But it's called "Elatsoe." And it's a young adult fantasy about "a seventeen-year-old Lipan Apache girl who can awaken the ghosts of dead animals and sets out to solve her cousin's murder."

Emily: Damn. Cool.

Sally: Doesn't that sound lit?

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: I think it sounds lit as hell.

Emily: What the.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Cool.

Sally: Um. Also, uh -- I mean, it's -- these days, it's very easy to find lists of, like, X -- like, five books by X identity author that you need to be reading --

Emily: Yeah, we talked about that briefly a little while ago. Um --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: How lists like that are problematic because you don't ever want to recommend people based solely on their ethnicity.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But those lists make things more accessible to readers who don't have --

Sally: Yeah, so it's like -- it's -- yeah. It's complicated. Um. But they are out there if you just -- like, I just Googled "indigenous fantasy authors," and there are, like, literally a dozen articles. So, yeah. But.

Emily: If you do read anything by Stephen Graham Jones, just know that he taught us an entire class about werewolves.

Sally: Yeah. But --

Emily: And it was, um ...

Sally: (laugh) That is not to say -- I have not read any of his work.

Emily: I thought you read that one book.

Sally: I did read his, like, weird memoir, but I'm gonna be honest, that was the summer after I graduated college, and I was, like, not fully there, so I don't really remember it, because I was literally sustaining myself on saltines and my anxiety about moving to New York City, so I would not -- I can't remember anything I read that summer. Um, and that, I think, is also very different than his other work.

Emily: Yeah, he does horror a lot.

Sally: Yeah, he does horror. Um, uh, and -- I mean, he's very prolific. He's written a ton of books, and he wins, like, all the awards. And, like, there was a reason, apparently, that he was brought to our university to teach this class. Apparently he's some type of expert. Uh, personally, on a personal level -- (laugh) we did have to sit through an entire werewolf class where he once used Gerard Way from My Chemical Romance as a stock image. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) I forgot about that.

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: That werewolf class -- you could've listened to, like, three episodes of Lore by Aaron Mahnke --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And, uh, got the same effect as that full semester of werewolf classes. But, uh, yeah, I mean, if you read him --

Sally: It's one of those things --

Emily: Let us know how he is.

Sally: Yeah, it's one of those things, uh, Emily and Sally lore --

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: Uh, we took a werewolf class, we drove a U-Haul across the country.

Emily: There she -- there she goes.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: OK, so, uh, homework.

Sally: Homework.

Emily: Find an indigenous author to read, one we recommended or one --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That you go out and find.

Sally: And then, if you like them, please let us know.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: So we can continue our education too.

Emily: Read and, uh, within a year, we will do the same and come back next Indigenous Peoples' Day and, uh, review.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Talk a little more about it.

Sally: Yeah. There are just, like, two teens, like, mackin' out in front of our window.

Emily: ... What's happening?

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: He's wearing a Bernie shirt.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Should I go yell at them? “Get off my lawn!” (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) That -- sorry, that was really random. ‘Cause I was like, “What is Tybalt looking at?” And then these two kids are just suckin’ face out there.

Emily: Tybalt’s never seen aggressive mackin’ like that. Damn.

Sally: That kid looked gross, though. I hope she dumps him.

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: I developed no, um, opinions on them.

Sally: He just had, like, a really thin mustache.

Emily: Oh, he did? I didn’t see that.

Sally: And, like, long snowboarder hair.

Emily: I saw the long hair.

Sally: And the Bernie shirt.

Emily: Like he’d be wearing -- oh, yeah. It’s just, like, a combination of unfortunate things.

Sally: Yeah. Like, the Bernie shirt I would def have no problem with if the other twos weren’t -- the other two weren’t indicators of Bernie bro-ness.

Emily: Yeah. You don’t want to be a Bernie bro. Hey, guys. The election is coming up. Just a reminder to vote and to vote for Joe Biden.

Sally: Yes.

Emily: He’s a centrist, but, you know what, it’s better than a fascist dictator, and that’s, uh, where we’re at in the political climate right now. So, uh, get out there.

Sally: Yep. And, uh, please, uh, vote safely. Um, if that means you are voting, uh, by mail-in ballot, um, that’s great. But everything is recommending that you actually go and drop your ballot off at one of the drop boxes rather than sending it through the post. Um, I think that’s supposed to help cut down on some workload at the post office, I think is what that is. Um, but, um, if you are voting in line and in person, that’s awesome, just remember to keep your social distancing and wear your fucking mask. ‘Cause if I see any of you out there voting without a mask, I will personally --

Emily: Well, we know who you're voting for if that's the case.

Sally: Yeah. Well -- yeah, good point. But I will personally come and kick your ass.

Emily: Um, in terms of programming, sorry that this wasn't Wheel of Time-specific, although we did talk about Wheel of Time. Sorry this wasn't Lord of Chaos-specific.

Sally: I mean, you shouldn't apologize. That book sucks ass.

Emily: We are getting to Lord of Chaos. But again, we are in the middle of a move, um, and we do not quite know what the future will hold. We're taking another bye week, but then we will for sure be back the following Monday with your regularly scheduled Lord of Chaos content. Our reading schedule is up on the website --

Sally: It is up on the website; correct.

Emily: Uh, we're taking two full episodes to talk about the prologue, because the prologue is so long and covers so many points of view, so hashtag prayers, please, for us.

Sally: I hate prologues. I hate Wheel of Time prologues the most.

Emily: Yep.

Sally: I don't want to listen to Demandred talk to the Dark One.

Emily: It's just most of the Forsaken talking. That's the entire prologue is just the Forsaken talking. Scheming.

Sally: But I hate the Forsaken.

Emily: They're all terrible. This is the one where we start getting people resurrected.

Sally: I don't -- noo.

Emily: And I don't caaaare.

Sally: It's so complicated.

Emily: Baaaaahhh.

Sally: The point of having thirteen of them or whatever is that we can just systematically kill them off.

Emily: (simultaneously) Kill them off. That's what I want --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: From a group of bad guys.

Sally: Stop fucking resurrecting these motherfuckers.

Emily: I know, it's not fair. It's stupid.

Sally: Ughhh.

Emily: OK. Anyway. That's that. Do you have anything to add?

Sally: Yeah, I just want to give, um, a quick plug for our Patreon. Um, it is the only way that we support this podcast and honestly support the kind of astronomical amount of work that we do to make this podcast possible. Um, we don't, obviously, have any advertisers or you would have heard them, um, and so the Patreon funds are a great way, uh, if you want to, um, support this podcast that you like and get access to some really rad bonus content. We are about to finish our watch of HBO's Watchmen. Perhaps we will do Trail of Lightning next.

Emily: Hmm.

Sally: That might be kind of interesting. Um, and Emily has got eight weeks left of A Memory of Light?

Emily: Nine weeks.

Sally: Nine weeks left.

Emily: At the time of recording.

Sally: Nine more blogs.

Emily: I will end on blog number 69.

Sally: Niiice.

Emily: It has to happen.

Sally: Nice nice nice.

Emily: I plotted it out with sticky notes. You can see my copy of A Memory of Light. (laugh)

Sally: Amazing. Um, Emily has blogged through her reread of the last three Wheel of Time books, so if you want to subscribe -- uh, subscribe to our Patreon, even at the one-dollar level, you have sixty more blogs you can read of her --

Emily: No, that's just A Memory of Light.

Sally: Oh -- what? You have, like, a thousand blogs you can read --

Emily: Yeah. So many.

Sally: A Memory of Light is too long. Holy --

Emily: I probably have fifty for the other two.

Sally: I need --

Emily: Like, each. So, yeah -- (inaudible)

Sally: I need to fall asleep now.

Emily: OK. (laugh)

Sally: A Memory of Light is too long.

Emily: I know.

Sally: Anyway. So, yeah, please support us on Patreon if you are able to and interested and, yeah, we will see you on the other side of the war: this move.

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Are we doing a sign-off, or is that --

Sally: I -- I don't really have one.

Emily: OK.

Sally: So.

Emily: Hey, don't do war crimes.

Sally: Please. Dear God. It's not that hard.

Emily: Goodbye. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)