



## Episode 177: No Crickets Were Harmed in the Making of this Podcast

Release Date: November 8, 2021

Running Time: 45 Minutes

SALLY: Everybody Hates Rand is a *Wheel of Time* podcast that will contain spoilers for all fourteen books, so if you're anti-spoiler pause this, read all fourteen 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: Okay, well [laughs]. Let's get this over with.

SALLY: Want to hear some good news? Look at this cute Rock Lee wallpaper that I found today!

EMILY: Oh! That's so nice.

SALLY: Isn't he so cute?

EMILY: Oh, I love Rock Lee.

SALLY: I know.

EMILY: Who doesn't?

SALLY: Absolute fucking unit.

EMILY: Just one of the best anime characters of all time.

SALLY: God, true. I know I've told you this, but I'll say it for podcast posterity. I would always – before I watched Nart, I would always see, like, Rock Lee cosplay and I'd be like, "I just don't get it. This kid is the [laughing] ugliest motherfucker I've ever seen in my life. Why would you willingly want to look like him?" And now I'm like, "Damn. I would wear a green jumpsuit every day for the rest of my life."

EMILY: Put your hair in a bowlcut [laughs].

SALLY: Because I LOVE THIS BOY SO MUCH!!

EMILY: [laughs] He's a great, great, great character.

SALLY: I know.

EMILY: Nart really went off with a few of its characters. A few of them, it didn't. Sasuke [laughs].

SALLY: They were like, "Well, this will work, I guess."

EMILY: Yeah, fuck him, but, uh, Rock Lee. Might Guy.

SALLY: Might Guy!!

EMILY: Kakashi.

SALLY: [gasps]

EMILY: What an icon. Okay, we could keep talking about Naruto for the run time of this podcast.

SALLY: I know. Sorry.

EMILY: Don't tempt me. But this is, in fact, Everybody Hates Rand. It's a *Wheel of Time* podcast. Um, we [in a singsong voice] just don't want to talk about the chapters today. I'm Emily Juchau.

SALLY: And I'm Sally Goodger.

EMILY: Um, okay. Let's just, let's just put this right out there. We're going to talk, pretty briefly, about the chapters, but, as we have discussed amongst ourselves, we don't have much productive to say that we haven't said already.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So I'll do a little summary. Um, anything we feel like saying during the, during the time [laughs].

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: We'll say. Um, then we'll – Sally has some notes about domestic and intimate partner violence.

SALLY: Correct.

EMILY: So we'll just have a little PSA.

SALLY: Yep.

EMILY: [laughing] A really relevant little PSA, um, and then if we are – and then if we just have so much more time, [laughing] we'll just keep talking about Naruto.

SALLY: [laughing] We'll just keep talking about Naruto! I have so many thoughts.

EMILY: Um, but to start us off: trigger warning, content warning. The chapters we read deal directly with sexual assault and rape. Um, if that's going to be a problem for you – it's a problem for everyone, I imagine.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But if that is a particular, um, trigger for you, then, uh, take breaks if you need to or feel free to skip this episode.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: It will probably mostly be Naruto related.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And I really doubt you'll miss anything.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um, but these are two chapters, both from Mat's point of view, except for a very brief Reanne point of view at the end of the second chapter.

SALLY: For what fucking reason, Robert Jordan?

EMILY: For two paragraphs.

SALLY: So stupid.

EMILY: I don't know.

SALLY: I hate when he does this.

EMILY: Um, they deal with Mat moving into the Tarasin Palace with all of his guys. Um, he gets a really nice set of rooms, which he is really excited by, except for he is, the entire time, very nervous because the dice stopped rolling in his head. He's like, "Oh my gosh, what the fuck could happen?" The first day he is there he is, like, touring his rooms and Tylin corners him in his rooms and, uh, assaults him. Um, but is interrupted by Thom and Juilin coming to talk to Mat. Uh, so she leaves and they talk about Elayne and Nynaeve who haven't come back yet. Elayne and Nynaeve are, at this point, with the Kin or on their way back. Thom and Juilin reveal to Mat what they have just discovered themselves, that Nynaeve and Elayne can make disguises using the One Power and everyone is like, "Oh, [laughs] well that sure explains a fucking lot."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: "Thanks a lot." But Nynaeve and Elayne eventually do get back and, to Mat's surprise, are pretty gung-ho about the idea of bodyguards since they have just spent most of their morning being dragged from place to place.

SALLY: Dragged around.

EMILY: And, uh, almost kidnapped slashed killed at the end. Like, had bricks thrown at them or whatever [laughs]. And Mat's like, "Okay, well, okay. Great. Here. Have some bodyguards." Uh, the party then does not go to the Rahad directly, which is what Mat is expecting. Um, Nynaeve and Elayne are deciding to pursue the Kin angle, apparently.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um, we don't really get their full reasoning behind this. Not that we really need it. I'm sick of hearing Nynaeve and Elayne's quote unquote "reasoning."

SALLY: [laughs, sirens in the far distance as she talks] Uh, yeah. Reasoning in the loosest possible terms. Like, why would you suddenly start chasing this random group of women when your magic dream told you it was in the Rahad?

EMILY: Yeah. What? Why not? They're like, "We'll just – these ladies, we're hoping, will eventually lead us to the Bowl of the Winds." And it's, like, you just worked up the gumption to talk to Mat about wandering into the Bowl – the Rahad to look for it. I guess Mat hasn't sat them down and been like, "Okay. Here's how it works. For me."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: “The most, the *most* random thing ever. So I literally could just walk into the Rahad, choose some random streets, and probably show up there.”

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: You know? We, the readers can assume that would be pretty effective.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But Nynaeve and Elayne are pursuing the Kin angle, so they’re having Mat, uh, watch the house. They don’t really tell him why he’s watching the house. That’s just what he’s doing, and they seem to be sort of, uh, mostly watching Carridin in their disguises. Uh, but it’s mostly the two of them and their bodyguards and Aviendha, and Mat gets paired up with – Mat is hanging out mostly with Nalesean and then Birgitte joins them. Birgitte and Mat’s burgeoning friendship is sort the high points of these chapters. Um, and it itself is framed in the ‘men are from Mars, women are from Venus’ gender dynamics of Robert Jordan being like, “In Mat’s world, men and women can’t be *friends*.”

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Mat says, “Oh, I have friends who are women, but we are, we are so different, and we view the world differently. And the way Birgitte is, Birgitte is just one of the guys, you know?” Which...is pretty boring gender dynamics, obviously. But about as much as we can expect from this series and this point.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And, like, it’s just so god damn refreshing to have Birgitte and Mat, two characters who aren’t horrible to each other, hanging out. That it’s just, like, whatever. I will wade through the dumb gender politics to get to Mat and Birgitte hanging out. [laughing] If that’s what it takes.

SALLY: Yeah, that’s such a good way to put it. It’s, like, at this point I’m so exhausted by the gender dynamics that I’m just like, “This is such sexist bullshit, but I just, like, would love to have Birgitte and Mat having a nice conversation.”

EMILY: Yeah. All they do is just chill. They’re just chilling.

SALLY: Two bros.

EMILY: Mat’s like, “Birgitte is so funny because she points out women for me to look at and [laughing] she expects me to point out men to look at, which is easy because it’s just the ugliest man I can find.”

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah.

EMILY: [laughing] That’s what she finds interesting.

SALLY: I love her so much.

EMILY: She's hilarious. Um, uh so he's hanging out with Birgitte and Nalesean sort of by day. Just these miserable hours-long vigils just outside this gross inn.

SALLY: Yeah, like the food is nasty. The drinks are nasty.

EMILY: Yeah, Nalesean is like – or someone is drinking lemonade. Juilin is, I think. And Mat's like, "I'm not fucking drinking lemonade. I've tasted a lemon, that's disgusting."

SALLY: Yeah [laughs].

EMILY: Juilin's like, "It's refreshing."

SALLY: And he's like, "Nah, dog. Not for me."

EMILY: Mat's like [coughing noises].

SALLY: He references taking a bite out of a lemon, which is so funny.

EMILY: Mat would take a bite out of a lemon.

SALLY: Because it's, like, I feel like I get it. Like, if you weren't familiar with lemons.

EMILY: Yeah, you'd be –

SALLY: You'd be like, "Oh, it's a fruit." What do you do with a fruit? You chomp it. Or, it looks like an orange, you peel it and you just take a bite out of it. Right? Oranges are nice. Surprise, lemons are not nice.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Unless you're my niece Zoe, who loves sucking on lemons.

EMILY: Okay, Zoe!

SALLY: I know. What a freak [laughs].

EMILY: Fucking bizarre. What the hell?

SALLY: I know. So weird. She, like, cries when you take them away from her.

EMILY: Oh my god.

SALLY: [laughing] Little alien baby.

EMILY: [laughing] That is so troubling.

SALLY: I know. Fucking weirdo.

EMILY: Um, boy I'm gonna have trouble [laughing] getting over that.

SALLY: I know. It's so weird.

EMILY: Uh, so that's Mat's daytime activities. He does have some, have some pretty funny lines about how he's like, "I'm just here, apparently, to do *ta'veren* stuff. I don't know how being *ta'veren* works."

SALLY: Yeah [laughs].

EMILY: "I'm gonna go see if being *ta'veren* works over in that alley."

SALLY: Yeah [laughs].

EMILY: "It doesn't. I don't know anything."

SALLY: Yeah, at one point Nalesean's like, "I guess I'll just walk down this alley? What are we doing?"

EMILY: Mat's like [high pitched], "I don't know man."

SALLY: "I don't know, Nalesean. Fuck if I know."

EMILY: "What are we doing?"

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Who's to say? Um, Mat, after that first time being cornered by Tylin in his rooms, the next night he, like, looks here out, but hears her outside, very creepily – oh, and he, like, comes back to a note inviting him to dinner with her, which he wisely does not...

SALLY: Attend.

EMILY: Attend, yeah. He's like, "Okay." But he has a little room in his vast chambers where he's like, "I'll move Olver into these chambers and then, you know, that is a sort of measure of protection for myself." Um, he does that. Tylin, off screen I guess, sort of, uh, recruits the entire staff of the Tarasin Palace in on this, including the kitchens. So they won't feed Mat because they're like, "You have to go to dinner with the queen." So Mat, like, gets around this by eating during the day and picking up, like, 7-11 food on the way home. Um, but he is obviously being coerced into potentially attending a dinner with the queen that will turn into a sexual assault.

SALLY: Yep.

EMILY: Eventually, on the day of the Festival of Birds, which is our second festival after Swoven Nights, that was our last one. When Birgitte and Mat and Beslan got drunk together.

SALLY: Yeah, which was, like, I think canonically like a day and a half ago [laughs].

EMILY: Like three days ago, I think.

SALLY: [laughing] Yeah!

EMILY: So –

SALLY: So just festivals all the time, baby.

EMILY: It's very confusing. Um, this is the Festival of Birds. We found out a bit more about it. People dress up as birds. There are these things sort of like parade floats moving through the cities. They're called "settings" and, according to Beslan, they're normally indoors, but because of the hot weather right now everything's sort of moving outside.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: It's, as usual, with all of the festivals we've seen, an excuse for people to dress up and be slutty and go crazy. Which is all fine under normal circumstances. Uh, but Max – [laughs] Max. Mat wakes up that day with the dice rolling in his head again, and he's so freaked out by that that he doesn't even notice when Tylin enters his room, bundles Olver off. He attempts to leave by getting the key from her and she holds him at knifepoint and backs him up into his bedroom, uh, and rapes him. Uh, of course, Robert Jordan skims over the rape itself. We have to PG-13 folks, so we just pick up an indeterminate amount of time later.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: With everyone getting dressed again. Um, Mat – Tylin leaves, Mat also leaves to go to his normal daily stuff, this time in festival time. Um, he meets up with Birgitte and Nalesean. Birgitte is dressed scantily in a fun bird outfit. Mat's like, "What the? This doesn't seem like you?" [laughs]

SALLY: You don't wear dresses!

EMILY: She's like, "I like people to look at me!" And he's like, "Okay."

SALLY: "Okay."

EMILY: "10-4"

SALLY: "Accepted."



EMILY: Uh, Beslan then joins them.

SALLY: [sighs] I hate this guy.

EMILY: For some reason. I guess he's like, "Mat and I have to hang out every festival day."  
Mat's like, "I'd rather we didn't, though."

SALLY: I'd rather you fucked off.

EMILY: I'd rather you left.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Beslan's like, "You're *ta'veren*, it will be fun." Mat's like, "I assure you, today will not be fun. We're sitting on a bench. All day."

SALLY: All day.

EMILY: Beslan's like, "No, it will be fun!" Unfortunately, they do get attacked by a random group of beggars, who [laughing] we can –

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: [laughs] We can figure out are connected to the swarm of beggars in this city who are under Old Cully's command.

SALLY: [laughing] Yeah like what's happening?

EMILY: [laughing] Old Cully's like a figure in the shadows with the marionette strings.

SALLY: Moving all of the beggars around.

EMILY: Beslan's like, "These aren't real beggars. These are just people dressed up as beggars."

SALLY: Yeah, he's like, "They don't have the special pinky ring."

EMILY: The guild.

SALLY: "That marks them as belonging to the guild of beggars."

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Mat's like, "Holy fucking shit."

EMILY: "What is it with this city?"

SALLY: “You have to belong to a guild in order to beg?”

EMILY: “Everyone in this city.”

SALLY: “For money?”

EMILY: Um, it’s a good little action sequence. They’re getting attacked. Mat and Birgitte are, like, fighting back-to-back.

SALLY: It’s very cool.

EMILY: Mat talks about how later, when they’re out of danger, Birgitte is just like, “Thanks.” And he’s like, “Yeah. Thank you.” It’s just like –

SALLY: They’re like –

EMILY: Moving along.

SALLY: Gentleman’s handshake.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: They, like, tap each other’s cups. We survived!

SALLY: Yay!

EMILY: Doop-ch-do

SALLY: They’re very cute.

EMILY: Uh, but they return to their stakeout at which point Beslan reveals to Mat that he knows, um, that Tylin is, in Beslan’s worldview, seducing Mat. That she has made Mat her quote unquote pretty, or, in layman’s terms, I guess, her consort. Um, Mat gets so freaked out that he gets up and immediately follows the first woman who leaves the, um, house. Which he’s done before to no avail, but then we switch over to Reanne’s point of view and sort of find out that this one might actually lead somewhere. It’s implied. Reanne in her point of view is like, “It’s so weird. For the last few days, I’ve been dying to do this one thing and I just haven’t.”

SALLY: [gasps]

EMILY: But now I’m finally doing it. So, Mat’s *ta’veren* influence has been working all along. Just has taken this long.

SALLY: Just not in a normal way.

EMILY: [coughs] Um, here's what I have to say about it. The whole thing is framed comedically. These chapters are very funny because they're Mat's point of view. Mat himself is a very comedic character. So, the sexual assault is bracketed by these very funny sequences. Um, it leads to, if you're not a white guy writing it in the 90s I guess, a really unsettling sort of cognitive dissonance.

SALLY: Yes.

EMILY: Um, Mat reacts to the whole thing with what is his typical trauma response, which is that he does not, um, in his inner monologue talk about what he's feeling or why he's feeling that way. It is all coming through in his physical actions. Um, and this will continue in his time with Tylin. He talks about feeling weepy. He is hypervigilant. He's very scared. He wraps a sheet around himself because he's just, like, freaked out that someone is going to jump at him. So, clearly, he feels very violated and very upset even if he doesn't tell us that.

SALLY: Yes.

EMILY: So, it's interesting that Robert Jordan is able to write that trauma response with the typical clarity with which he writes Mat's trauma response, and yet not frame the scene at all as traumatic.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Again, cognitive dissonance here. Um, the whole thing is framed as a trauma not because it's a sexual assault, but because it is a flip of the classic, um, gender dynamic.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: We don't have a men – a man pursuing a woman. We have a woman pursuing a man and that is what is so quote unquote upsetting about it. Obviously, that is meaningless. It's rape, regardless of who is doing it to whom. Uh, but Robert Jordan's thesis here seems to be, "Well, in a world where women have the power –" Like, like Mat says afterwards, "This just isn't how it's done," and Tylin says, "Oh, well you're in Ebou Dar." So, sort of the idea is in Ebou Dar, a place where women have the power over men, not just women channelers having political, social power, but women socially, legally having power over men, then women can do whatever they want to men and get away with it. Um, so Robert Jordan is sort of, in 1999 or whenever this was written, doing what 20 years later that lady would do with the book *The Power*, which is propose that when women are given power and the patriarchy reverses itself then women will do the same corrupt, upsetting things to men that men do to women now. Um, and I think we've talked already about how that's a pretty silly little thesis statement.

SALLY: Yeah, it's just so empty. Like, there's no critical thinking, there's no actual...understanding of people.

EMILY: People or power dynamics or social dynamics.

SALLY: Yeah, or power dynamics or just, like...anything.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: It's just completely empty as far as my opinion is.

EMILY: Yeah, there's nothing there really worth talking about. It's just bullshit.

SALLY: Yeah, it really is just bullshit. Like, Tylin is bullshit character. Every quote unquote argument she – Robert Jordan is trying to make with her is bullshit. She's bullshit. This plot is bullshit. I hate – I hate it. I hate it.

EMILY: Um.

SALLY: Um, it's also very just like – one quick comment about the *Wheel of Time* community's response to this and then I never want to talk about it again.

EMILY: Yeah, let's do it.

SALLY: Um, for some reason, it apparently is an argument as to whether or not Mat is raped in these chapters. It isn't. But the community, the fans of this series, have really latched on to these few lines about Mat being like, "Oh, it would be fine if it was reversed, you know. This just isn't how it's done. I'm so upset because I'm not the one doing the chasing." And they've just really latched on to this as an excuse for the way that Mat is very obviously responding as someone who has been violated and traumatized.

EMILY: Yeah, you don't ever get to judge a rape victim by what they say immediately after being raped.

SALLY: Yeah! Also, I – like, I think it was a poor choice on Robert Jordan's part to have Mat say something like this, but also, as I will talk about in my notes – if we don't get to them this episode that's fine – like, people do and say really strange things after they have been traumatized. Trauma is not a neat and tidy thing. Like, the woman in the presentation I watched, um, was talking about how one the survivors of assault that she'd met who'd been like the most, like, one of the more brutal instances she'd seen, in the hospital immediately after was just laughing hysterically. Like, everything was so funny to her. And it's just, like, the brain is doing things to protect itself, um, and so Mat trying to rationalize that maybe something bad didn't happen to him, it's just not what he is used to, is also part of his trauma response. So.

EMILY: Yeah, and it's interesting that the community latches onto that phrase when there is, in the same chapter, Mat has the line, "I have never pursued a woman who made it clear that she did not want to be pursued."

SALLY: Yes and Mat has made it *abundantly* clear to Tylin that he does not want to be pursued with his words, with his actions, with literally saying no. Like, there is – not that – just one of those things is fine. Or just the context of him maybe not being enthusiastic is also fine. So. That's all I have to say about it. I'm never talking about it again. I do not acknowledge anybody who claims this isn't rape, so.

EMILY: Yeah, it's a pretty, pretty dumb thing to say. Or to think. Like, get over it.

SALLY: Yeah, fuck. And honestly? If you're that type of person, get fucked. So.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: I don't have any sympathy.

EMILY: Yeah. Yeah. Just because Robert Jordan was shitty at writing sexual assault doesn't make the act itself any less of an assault.

SALLY: Yeah, and, like, the – I think what you said is so interesting. There's just so much cognitive dissonance around, because there are parts of it that are so gut wrenching and so well portrayed and then there are other parts of it that are like what the fuck? What the fuck?

EMILY: Yeah, it's like Robert Jordan himself didn't know what he was doing. Which, we have had moments of cognitive dissonance before and will in the future in this series where it just seems like Robert Jordan was off the rails.

SALLY: [laughing] Yeah.

EMILY: Like I don't know what I'm doing. Thematically I don't know what I'm doing. I just don't know what I'm doing. But in these two chapters specifically it's like the guy could not figure out what he was trying to say or do or present with these chapters.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And, like, okay. Fine. But then you should have figured it out before you published it.

SALLY: Yeah. It's just – gosh, how many times have we come back to this? The series is too long and it needed to be edited more.

EMILY: Yeah. I always feel bad, because when I say that I feel like we're slamming Harriet. Who is one of the very few editors who is, like, well-known as being connected to a work.

SALLY: Yeah, that's true.

EMILY: So I want to be, like, I don't blame Harriet for doing a bad job if it was in fact her who did a bad job. I do not think the wife of the author should have ever been connected to the editing process.

SALLY: Yeah, I agree. And I also, another note I want to add on to that, to say that it needed to be edited more is also to say that Harriet, or whoever, deserved more time to be able to edit it. I very much do not believe that Tor Books had anything but the most [snaps] rushed production schedule. Like, get *Wheel of Time* out the door, we want to make so much money off of this. We don't really ultimately care that much about the final product.

EMILY: Yeah, the quality. And Harriet obviously isn't the only editor.

SALLY: No.

EMILY: Editing is a huge – especially with books these big, um, and projects these involved, that would require a huge team of people.

SALLY: Yeah and –I

EMILY: So, no, we're not just saying, "Harriet's a shitty editor." I don't know what else she's edited. Perhaps she is astounding.

SALLY: No.

EMILY: But this series is poorly edited, and it shows.

SALLY: Yeah, and it shows. And that, yeah, is the whole thing. Like, the timeline...probably the amount of people. Just overworked, underpaid editors [laughs] in New York City trying to do their goddamn best with *The Wheel of Time*.

EMILY: [blows out lips]

SALLY: Um, yeah, but it definitely isn't – so apologies if it sounds like we're like, "Fuck you, Harriet." But that's not the intent.

EMILY: No, well. That's it from me. Hopping off my soapbox.

SALLY: It's a great soapbox.

EMILY: Do you want to talk a bit about domestic violence.

SALLY: Sure! Okay, um, so I wanted to do this – I just felt like it was important to add some type of context to this. Um, because domestic violence is a very real thing and not just something that we are talking about on this podcast. Um, so this information comes from a presentation put together by an organization called South Valley Services, which is an organization in, um, Salt

Lake County that provides safe shelter, advocacy, case management, and prevention services to people, both children and adults, experiencing psychological, emotional, economic, or sexual abuse at home. That's directly from their mission statement. Um, they also have education resources on their website such as the Domestic Violence 101 presentation, which is where I get this information from. So, if you find this helpful, please consider donating to them. I'll put the link to both the presentation and their donation [pause] information, excuse me in the description of this episode. Um, so, also want to clarify around the terms domestic violence and intimate partner violence. To the best of my knowledge, they are pretty much interchangeable. Domestic violence is an older term and intimate partner violence seems to be the newer term in this, um, world. I think the intention, again, I'm not versed in this, but I think the intention is to try and get away from the connotations of domestic violence that only happens within the context of a marriage when intimate partner violence can happen in any form of a close relationship.

EMILY: Right.

SALLY: Um, but the presentation used the term domestic violence so I'm going to stick with that, so I don't use intimate partner violence out of context.

EMILY: Well, and domestic violence also covers the umbrella of children being involved, right?

SALLY: Yes. Correct. Um, so what is domestic violence? Domestic violence is a pattern of behavior where any behavior in a relationship is used to gain or maintain power and control over another person. The training called out that there's a difference between abusive relationships, unhealthy relationships, and healthy relationships. So, in an unhealthy relationship you have two people who just maybe aren't communicating well, not resolving conflicts. But in an abusive relationship, one person is dominating over the other, is asserting power or control over the other person or to maintain that power over them. Um, so domestic violence, you can think of it as purposeful and deliberate behavior in order to gain power and control. There are different types of abuse. Um, this doesn't cover all of them, but big categories are physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, financial abuse, spiritual abuse, and stalking. Um, physical abuse is the most common form that we see, um, depicted. It's also the one that we probably imagine the most frequently. That would be physical assault, any type of hitting, punching, kicking. Any unwanted physical contact.

Emotional abuse is the psychological component of this. Um, trying to get a very strong mental tie over another person through things like gaslighting and manipulation. Sexual abuse is any unwanted sexual contact between two people. That can be, like, in person, person to person, or also online, including sexual harassment through social media forums, emails, images sent through texts. Anything like that. Financial abuse is the one that is probably the most common. A survey done through the All State Purple Purse program found that over 99% of survivors of domestic violence stated that they had experienced financial abuse at some point.

EMILY: Hmm.

SALLY: Which, if you think about it, makes sense. We live in a very transactional society [pages turning] and people who have control over money have more power and social status. So,

it makes sense in the context of an abusive relationship, if one person is able to have access, or more control over their finances, they would use that to be able to take advantage of the other person.

EMILY: Gosh, I never thought about that. That's a good point.

SALLY: Um, spiritual abuse goes very much back to power structures. Um, if one person in the relationship, through their religious community or culture –

EMILY: [sneezes]

SALLY: Bless you. Abuses some of those systems and use it as a justification for that abuse, that can be really common. Um, used as a tactic to keep survivors from leaving the relationship. Um, the training the mentioned that a lot of people will say the first person they reached out to was their religious leaders, and the leaders would tell them that it is against the rules of their faith, or against the guidelines of their faith to leave that relationship. Saying things like “divorce is a sin.” And these conversations also happen around children and the idea of quote unquote keeping the family together. And finally stalking, uh, the training just emphasized that this is extremely concerning. It's often taken for granted and not necessarily considered one of the more dangerous aspects, but research shows that there's a very strong link between stalking behaviors and lethality and homicide. Um, so stalking should be taken very seriously. And if you or someone you know is experiencing stalking or concerned about that, do not take that lightly and try and get in contact with some resources. This can look like a lot of things, but common is sending multiple texts. Like 50 texts from someone in 30 minutes, or 100 phone calls in an hour. Just, like, that really high frequency. Also, includes location tracking, following someone from home to work, constantly checking in on them, calling their workplace, calling their friends. Etc. Um –

EMILY: Stalking's extremely scary because our legal system has yet to catch up to the reality that it's a very dangerous crime.

SALLY: Yes. Absolutely.

EMILY: You'll hear in tons of stories that the cops – well, the cops are a bad example of any sort of competent law enforcement – but the cops don't take stalking seriously. But, yeah, studies show that stalking leads to murder.

SALLY: Yeah! Very scary.

EMILY: So, take it super seriously.

SALLY: Yes. Um, just a few more quick things. Domestic violence does not discriminate. Any one of any race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender can be a victim or a perpetrator of domestic violence. It can happen to people who are married, living together, or dating, and it affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels. Um, but while saying anyone can be impacted, there are definitely factors that put someone at more risk to be



considered a vulnerable population. Um, and those factors are generally what you'd think. People who are experiencing homelessness experience violence at a much higher rate than other populations. Women of color are another one that are particularly at risk to experience violence in a relationship and experience sexual assault. Um [papers shuffling] the last few things. I'll skip this middle part because I don't know if it's as relevant. I just wanted to call out a few barriers to leaving. Um, and interesting thing that the presentation said is they actually don't like to spend a lot of time on this because it centers 'why didn't the victim leave' rather than 'why did the perpetrator do this act of violence.' And it's more important to try and figure out why that's happening so they can dismantle the violence from that side of it rather than trying to blame the survivors and the victims, which might happen inadvertently if you're focusing on why they didn't leave. But sometimes it's helpful for people to understand that it's not as simple as just walking away, which I feel like might be particularly relevant to Mat's plotline. So, here are a few of the most common ones. Um: guilt and shame, not wanting to start over, the unknown is scarier than the known situation, there's no support system, victim shaming and blaming – cough, cough Elayne – um, if you have history as a couple together, the survivor having low self-esteem, likely as a result of that abusive relationship. The commitment to the relationship, again, particularly if you live in a community that values families and keeping families together. Um, this organization is obviously based in Utah, and we see a lot of rates of domestic violence, um, in a very religious community that values keeping families together. Um, often times survivors will not be aware that it's okay to leave based on the history of domestic violence in their family, even before they were in an intimate relationship themselves. The current situation is familiar, there are children in the situation, financial burden, loneliness, not identifying what's happening as abusive, and finally just a lack of services. A lack of access to services due to geographical barriers, language barriers, immigration barriers. Um, generally, in the presentation they said there's just not enough access to services for every single person experiencing domestic violence to be able to access a safe situation.

So, um, how can you help? Um, the first step is to educate yourself and recognize the signs of domestic violence. The presentation showed something called a power and control wheel, which just has common examples of domestic violence. So, I'll post a link to that image in the description as well if you want to take a look at it [papers moving]. And finally, I'll also post these resources, but just want to say, um, here are a few hotlines. The National Domestic Violence Hotline. You can call at 1-899-799-3224. Or, if calling is not safe, you can text them by texting START, S-T-A-R-T to 88788. Also loveisrespect.org has lots of different options including a chat feature directly on the website, texting, and calling options. And finally, the most important thing you can do, if someone is talking to you about this, or if you see things like this, respond with empathy and kindness and believe the survivor if they are saying that they are experiencing abuse. Um, validate them if they happen to say things like, "Oh, I wouldn't have been hit if I'd done x,y,z. Or if I hadn't – If I had done this or I hadn't done that," tell them that they never, ever deserve to be abused. So, sorry that was a little bit longer probably than my allotted six or seven minutes.

EMILY: No, that was great. Thank you.

SALLY: But yes.

EMILY: Um, also in terms of resources. Today I was wracking my brains, trying to think of any other texts that deal with the specific situation of women assaulting men, which is a pretty rare circumstance in literature. It's also, statistically, one of the less reported crimes.

SALLY: Yes.

EMILY: That obviously doesn't mean it isn't happening, but it's happening at slightly lesser rates than men assaulting women, men assaulting men, etc. Um, but, uh, the only one I could think of really was *The Kingdoms* by Natasha Pulley. It's very different than *The Wheel of Time* and it's not – that isn't really the main component of the story, but it does deal with it in, I think, an interesting way. If, generally, you're looking for any texts about sexual assault specifically, that are good and nuanced and healing, I recommend *Deerskin* by Robin McKinley. Um, that's one of my favorite, but we'll post any more that we think of between now and posting. Um, that's it. Sorry, thanks. Sorry for a -

SALLY: Sorry for a weird episode. One last quick thing. The presentation also talked about how, like, actual media is really harmful. Like, the more you see domestic violence portrayed, the more, like, normalized it becomes. And that's not to say that it cannot be done well like *Deerskin*. I haven't read it but Emily has talked to me about it and it seems like it's handling a difficult situation in a way that is very nuanced and adds a lot of, like, carries a lot of empathy and kindness. It's texts like *Wheel of Time*, to an extent, and texts like *Game of Thrones*, um, that – I think it's especially prevalent in fantasy when it's like, “Oh, it was a different time. Hitting women was okay.”

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Where as if, like – that's not true. It's never been okay. It was just more normalized and also, like, you get to pick what the culture of your fantasy book looks like, so domestic and intimate partner violence does not need to be a big part of it just because you fucking suck and don't want to do the work to create a more interesting fantasy world.

EMILY: [coughs] Robert.

SALLY: [gagging noises]

EMILY: [laughs] Well.

SALLY: Well!

EMILY: On that cheery note. In all seriousness, thanks for listening.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: For sticking with us if you listened to this entire episode. Thanks to Glynna Mackenzie for our theme song. Thanks to your patrons on Patreon. Uh, if you are on Patreon a couple things to be looking out for. Sally just finished *Winter's Heart*, so the week that – when you're listening

to this, last week was a break, but I'm going to be starting this week with a few blogs on not *Wheel of Time*, just any fantasy texts – long for fantasy texts that I've read in the last couple years that I want to talk about. That won't be long, before Sally comes back with *Crossroads of Twilight*, but.

SALLY: Oh Jesus Christ.

EMILY: [laughs] Yeah, wanted to give her a little break before carrying on.

SALLY: AHHH!

EMILY: Um, do you want to talk about the stickers?

SALLY: Yes, so we – if you've been with the podcast for a long time – a couple years ago did a run of stickers. We had some really great artists design EHR related designs for stickers, um, and they're really lovely and a lot of people bought them. But, partially it was me just buying too many stickers, because it was cheaper, um, but we still have a lot of them, which we would like to get rid of just for space reasons. Um, and we would like to get rid of them by giving them to you.

EMILY: The Patrons.

SALLY: The Patrons.

EMILY: Sorry! The rest of you suckers.

SALLY: Yeah! The rest of you can not get stickers. *Boo*.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: So what we're going to do is run – Patreon calls them special promotions, so I'll call them that, a special promotion, where if you sign up, um, at the \$1 level – we'll probably start it next week and run it for, like, a month or something. If you start up at the \$1 level we'll send you one stickers, if you sign up at the \$3 level, we'll send you all 3 designs. No, extra charge it will just be part of your Patreon benefit, and if you are already a \$1 or \$3 patron who hasn't bought stickers and would like to get them free of charge, already as part of your Patreon support, just send us a message, including your address, and we'll get those sent out to you. Obviously, this is while supplies last. And if you opt for just 1 sticker, I'll post the designs again, you can give us your first choice, um, but can't guarantee we can get them to you just based on supply. Um, and if you are concerned, part of this whole thing was making sure the artists got paid a portion of the sticker, we will pay them out for whatever their earnings would be. So, the artists are still going to get their full money off of this promotion. We just want to move the stock so to speak.

EMILY: 10-4. Texas-sized 10-4.

SALLY: It was a long explanation. I'm sorry.

EMILY: No, I feel you. And that's it from us.

SALLY: That is it.

EMILY: That's it, bruh!

SALLY: I think we have said enough [laughing].

EMILY: [laughing] We've said enough.

SALLY: Every week I'm like, "That's enough out of this bitch."

EMILY: That's enough out of me. Time to go watch Naruto.

SALLY: Hnnnngh!

EMILY: Do you have a sign off?

SALLY: Um, this one is not like funny ha-ha, but funny like America's a nightmare.

EMILY: Oh, wait, we can just do the cricket story.

SALLY: Oh my god! Oh my god! I've already, like, blocked it from my memory. AHHH. Okay, every night – this is a little insight into my psychoses – [laughs] every night I have to check the garage door and the front door to make sure they are locked or I can't go to sleep. And it has become this ritual with Tybalt. Yeah, he has –

EMILY: Security check.

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah. We call it security check. He has adopted that every night after we do his eyedrop, we go downstairs. And he and I are down there for, like, a minute and he's like, "This is the ritual, now we can all go to bed." So, last night we're going down, duh, duh, duh. Like, the light is on on our front porch, but it's, like, dark in the little entryway, and Tybalt is skittering around like crazy. And I cannot see what he is getting at, and so I flick on the light and: nothing. Because sometimes there are spiders down there, but, like, I don't see spiders, I don't see like a little piece of lint. Tybalt runs upstairs. So, Emily comes down and I'm, like, crouched down –

EMILY: Tybalt, like, ran past me. I was like, "Hello?"

SALLY: I was like, "Emily, Tybalt is acting like he sees something and it is making me insane, because I do not see anything." And Emily, who's much more calm of a person, is like, "Yeah, well, who knows? Tybalt's a freak?" [laughing] So, I'm, like, finishing checking everything. Emily goes upstairs and she shouts down, "Oh, it's cricket!" [laughing] And I'm like what are you talking about? What are you talking? Tybalt had taken the cricket in his mouth, I guess –

EMILY: I don't know. Or it was riding him into the sunset.

SALLY: Like a warrior cat.

EMILY: Who knows, I just walked upstairs, and Tybalt was under one of the chairs and there was just a little cricket on the, uh, hardwood in this kind of empty space. This was the same cricket I'd seen in the garage the day before.

SALLY: Yeah!

EMILY: And it's just, like, you see a cricket in the garage and you're like, "Huh, hope that doesn't get in."

SALLY: Hey, cricket.

EMILY: It shouldn't.

SALLY: It shouldn't! I don't know how it did, the garage the door is never open for longer than thirty seconds.

EMILY: It did.

SALLY: But it made its flight to freedom, but it wasn't freedom, it was being terrorized by Tybalt. But somehow the cricket survived its –

EMILY: Ordeal.

SALLY: Ordeal. So we were able to safely release the cricket into the bush outside.

EMILY: The big mystery, truly, is how the cricket got from the downstairs to the upstairs.

SALLY: [laughing] Yeah, like, how –

EMILY: Did it cling to Tybalt? Did Tybalt carry it in his mouth? Who's to say?

SALLY: Who's to say?

EMILY: Tybalt was just spooked the rest of the night.

SALLY: Oh, yeah. Tybalt –

EMILY: And he kept looking for the cricket. He was like, [laughing] "That was my – that was my buddy. That I was probably going to kill."

SALLY: That was my buddy that I was trying to eat. [laughing] Anyway, guys – it was just, like, because of all the fucking things, how was it a cricket that Tybalt found?

EMILY: But the cricket, last we saw, was safe in the bushes.

SALLY: Cricket was in the bushes. It can tell its crickets friends how it –

EMILY: Narrowly avoided the jaws of death.

SALLY: Yeah, Tybalt's grimy little mouth.

EMILY: [gags]

SALLY: I seriously felt so crazy.

EMILY: So anyway, no crickets were harmed in the making of this podcast.

SALLY: No – [laughs]. That should be the title of this.

EMILY: That's the only title I can think of. Goodbye, everyone.

SALLY: Goodbye!