

Ubisoft Game Makers Podcast  
Writing & Acting in the World of Games  
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CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

You're listening to the Ubisoft Game Makers Podcast. I'm Charles-Adam Foster-Simard. In this episode, we've got a conversation with Ashly Burch, who is a renowned voice actor featured in games like Horizon Zero Dawn, Life is Strange, The Outer Worlds, The Last of Us Part II and many, many more. Ashly plays the role of Rachel on the Apple TV+ television series, 'Mythic Quest', which is produced by Ubisoft and is set in a fictional video game studio. Ashly is also part of the show's writers' room and she is credited as the writer on a special episode called 'Everlight', which was dropped in April 2021. Ashly joined me from Los Angeles to talk about her involvement on the show and her passion for games.

Well, hello, Ashly Burch.

ASHLY BURCH:

Hello.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Thank you for joining me.

ASHLY BURCH:

Thanks for having me.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Now, you've been involved in the industry for quite a while and I just wanted to start off by asking you, how did you get started working in video games? And what do video games mean to you as a person?

ASHLY BURCH:

So, everything started with the web series that I made with my brother, called 'Hey Ash, Whatcha Playin'?' Which started as just, honestly, a mini film school. Anthony wanted to learn how to use a camera because he had other ideas for projects that he wanted to do. And so, our sketch series was just a way for him to practice but it ended up becoming the thing that led to everything else, strangely. He was working at Destructoid as the features editor. And he started putting the sketches up on Destructoid and people liked them, and then we went to GameTrailers and people liked them, and then it became this thing of, we sort of had this niche audience that seemed to really like the sketches.

And because the sketches were about the games industry, it was targeted enough that I think devs caught wind of it, so he ended up getting hired at Gearbox to write Borderlands 2. And then I auditioned for Tiny Tina and booked that, and then from there, it just became a kind of cascading effect, which I'm very, very lucky, where I was either writing or voicing in games. And I think it really did start with the exposure that we got from that sketch series that we never intended to really make as an end, in and of itself.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

It was more kind of like a personal project just for fun?

ASHLY BURCH:

Yeah. And then it became... Which I think often happens if you're just doing something for fun and it catches on. Yeah, I have everything... I owe everything to that weird little web series that we made.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

For people who haven't seen 'Hey Ash, Whatcha Playin'?' what is the pitch for it? What's the concept?

ASHLY BURCH:

Oh, boy. I mean, we basically... (LAUGHS) It's weird. It's like a sketch comedy series but with consistent characters, which is sort of strange, I'm realising in retrospect. So it's like a weird, dark comedy, bizarre sitcom sketch-show hybrid but about video games? Is that a good pitch?

(BOTH LAUGH)

ASHLY BURCH:

But basically, I play... I mean I wouldn't say, I'd say exaggerated version of myself 'cause Ash is kind of a psychopath. But I play basically a psychopath version of myself. You know, my brother is my brother, our actual dad is in it, our actual mom is in it. But it's very much just mine and my brother's humour concentrated in three minute bursts. Some of it's good, some of it's really bad.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Tell me more about your love of games also. Because I feel like it's such a strong through line through all your work is just like this passion for video games. Have you always played video games since childhood? And is there a specific kind of game that you've enjoyed over the years more than others? What kind of player are you?

ASHLY BURCH:

Oh, man. Yes, I've always loved games. I remember I went over and visited my mom at one point and we were watching home movies and there's a home movie of me in a diaper waddling around holding an NES controller that's not connected to anything. But I...

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

(LAUGHS) Wow.

ASHLY BURCH:

But really since I could walk I guess I was into games.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Your hand reached for the controller immediately.

ASHLY BURCH:

Yeah, exactly. So I've always loved games. When I was younger I really loved JRPGs, so I was a big Final Fantasy nerd. And I also liked, I don't know what you would call... I've never known how to categorise Harvest Moon but I loved Harvest Moon, a farming sim I suppose. But I loved... Harvest Moon was my favourite games and I played anything that came out on the

N64, so we played GoldenEye and Perfect Dark and Zelda and all that. And then as I grew older I got more into narrative heavy RPGs, like Mass Effect is one of my favourite franchises.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Mm-hmm.

ASHLY BURCH:

I dabbled in rogue-likes for a while, which I still love rogue-likes but I think now, in my old age, as I grow older I really like cooperative PvP games. And also, I still really love narrative, heavy narrative story-driven games, but I play less rogue-likes I think because my sanity has lessened. (LAUGHS)

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Your ability to try over and over and over. (LAUGHS)

ASHLY BURCH:

Yeah. My resilience for punishment has diminished. So, yeah. I really love a good story and I also like an excuse to hang out with friends. So I play cooperative games with friends and then story games by myself.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

So you're obviously a player and I think your career is really interesting because you're skirting around different aspects of video games. And obviously you're a voice actor, now with Mythic Quest and some other series you're also just an actress on those shows. And you're also in the writing room for Mythic Quest, which is about a video game development studio and it's like, I guess, workplace comedy set in that world. How does these different aspects of your work feed into each other?

Do you just see them as totally separate pieces? Like when you're in the writers' room you're a writer and it doesn't really have anything to do directly with video games, when you're playing your character on Mythic Quest you're acting. That's what you're doing when you're voice acting for a video game, you're doing voice acting. Or do they feed each other in terms of what you're doing and what you're aware of? Because it's all related to video games. So I'm just wondering if they're connected for you when you're doing them.

ASHLY BURCH:

Yeah. They can't help but feed into each other, I think. You know when I'm voice acting I just have a writer part of my brain that's always on. And so I think it's mostly helpful, it helps me to be able to process, synthesise, and perform quickly because I can read a line, understand the intention, and perform it because I had that script processing ability from being a writer.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Mm-hmm.

ASHLY BURCH:

It also sometimes helps me if I... Because I'm also frequently thinking of, which I think all actors are, but you're thinking of the narrative arc of your character and I often also think of how my character ties into the larger narrative if they're not the main character. So, thinking about that in terms of being a writer, it sort of helps you think, "OK, I'm a piece of this puzzle so what do I need to do or provide that best serves the story at large?"

And as a writer, you're always thinking about... You have to be thinking about character motivation. And I think being an actor, obviously when you're performing, it's narrowed to the character that you're performing, but I think those concepts still help with the writing process because it gives you a language and a vocabulary and a framework to apply that process to every character. You basically have to be the actor for every character as you're writing. You need to be able to understand their motivations or see how when A event happens that B action follows from that. You want to make sure that everyone has an internal consistency and that they feel real.

And I think being an actor and having to dissect character and justify actions and motivations helps with the writing process so much, because I can really... I hope, I believe when I'm writing a script, I'm thinking of it in that regard of, "Can I follow knowing who the character is?", "Can I follow this through line?", "Does it feel consistent with who they are?", "Am I feeling like all the choices that they're making are motivated and consistent with who they are?" And obviously if you're a great actor you can do that without being a writer, if you're a great writer you can do that without being an actor. But I think being both it helps inevitably to inform the other process because they're so linked.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Now obviously as a voice actor, you've worked with some great writers and some great writing teams. Because you said your writing brain was always on still because you have that experience and that's part of you, do you find yourself sometimes also wanting to collaborate when you're voice acting? Like to edit the script a little bit or add something that maybe is beyond just the role of the voice actor?

ASHLY BURCH:

Sometimes, yes. I try to be very mindful. I work with really talented people I'm not-

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Yeah, exactly.

ASHLY BURCH:

... Trying to come in and be like, "I know what I'm doing more than you do." Because I don't. But I think part of hiring an actor, casting an actor is that you want their perspective. I mean some folks... Part of casting an actor, I believe, should be wanting their perspective on the character. Because if you're just looking for a very specific type of person, if you're basically casting for exactly what you picture in your brain then you're leaving things on the table. You know, they say that 50% of directing is casting because you really want someone to come in and bring their expertise, but also their opinions on the character. You want them to have a perspective.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

There's a collaboration there, there's a give and take, right? It's not just-

ASHLY BURCH:

Yeah. I believe it should be. Some folks they have what they have in mind and they want you to do that and that's fine, but I find that the best performances, the best outcomes are when the writers are willing to collaborate with the actors, and vice versa.

So, on Horizon, there have been many conversations where I will be maybe confused, or I'll have a thought and I'll talk to the writers. "Where are we thinking Aloy would be at this point in the game? Because this is where I'm coming from and this is what I'm seeing, but I also know

that we have to fulfil this, this, and this objective. So how do we balance these things? What's your perspective on that?". Or if something bumps me I might say, "You know I've..." On *Forbidden West* I remember having a conversation with Ben McCaw, who's the Head Writer there now since John Gonzalez's departure, about a monologue at one point that Aloy has. And it was really interesting talking to him about it because he had one perspective on it and I had another. And because they're so open to my perspective on the character we were able to do both and that now they get to choose what works best.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Right.

ASHLY BURCH:

But I think if you're not bringing in the perspective of your actors and if you don't want to hear from them, then you're potentially missing on some really lovely stuff. It was the same thing on *Last of Us Part II*, that Neil, as the director, really was open to what the actors were bringing to the characters. And I think in those performances you can see that there's such a naturalism and such a groundedness, and I think that's because there was that give and take. You know?

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Yeah. I like what you said about not leaving anything on the table. Like you can take us somewhere else or you can get new perspectives or make it richer.

ASHLY BURCH:

Yeah. I mean there's a balance, right? Because it's not about you ultimately, you're a piece of the puzzle. So if you're going to spend two hours arguing with the director or the writer that's not really... It has to be coming from the right place. And I think and I hope that the folks that I've collaborated with see that because I... In terms of how I've interacted just because I obviously want my performance to be effective, but I want it to be effective to serve the game. And especially with a game like *Horizon* where I'm just talking, non-stop. I really want to feel like I'm doing my best to serve the story because the stories that Gorilla has written for both games are phenomenal. So it's my job to execute on those stories as best I can. And part of me doing my best work is being able to have those conversations.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

So, shifting gears a little bit to *Mythic Quest*, where you are both an actress and part of the writers' room, can you first tell me how it got started for you? How that project started for you?

ASHLY BURCH:

I just got a call. It was really-

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

(LAUGHS) Hello.

ASHLY BURCH:

... Surprising. Yeah, it was really surprising. My agent at the time called me, I was visiting my mom, and he said, "Rob McElhenney wants to talk to you about writing for a new show that he's making." And I was like, "I'm sorry?"

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

And it was for the writing part first.

ASHLY BURCH:

It was for the writing part first. Yeah.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

OK.

ASHLY BURCH:

And I'd never spoken to Rob in my life. It was a complete cold call. I think he... Megan Ganz, who's the co-creator, and the associate producer on our show, Bryan Swarberg, I believe that they both independently found me through doing some research of folks that are writers that also know the games industry. And they found the web series and they were like, "Well, she seems to be in sort of the same..." It's dark sometimes blue humour kind of thing. And so, yeah. I got hired almost sight unseen I had one meeting with Rob. Yeah. That's just, sort of, how it started.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Wow.

ASHLY BURCH:

So I came into the writers' room and was terrified and slowly built up my confidence. And then at a certain point Megan said, "You know if you guys have any recommendations or thoughts for casting let us know. We're curious what your thoughts are." And I steeled myself and then I texted her after the day was over and I was like, "Well, could I audition?" And apparently Rob had already been thinking about me for Rachel, which was a relief.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

And did you... When you were thinking of auditioning, did you have Rachel in mind as a character? Or it was just like an open kind of thing?

ASHLY BURCH:

When I read it I thought, you know what? I think I can fit this part. It just made sense. When I was reading the script, I just felt like I knew what it needed to be and I knew how I can do it and I related to her. And so, yeah. I think I specifically said, "I'd like to audition for Rachel." And so I did and true to form I was terrified, but then I ended up getting the part which was great.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Can you tell us who Rachel is according to you? Like what's your handle on Rachel?

ASHLY BURCH:

Yes. So, Rachel is a video game tester at Mythic Quest. So she's the bottom of the totem pole in terms of power in the company, but she has delusions of grandeur. I think we get to see this more in season 2, but Rachel really talks the big talk without much to back it up. She really feels entitled to more power and more influence than she's really proven herself to be capable of handling. So I like her because there's a sweetness to her, she's very much infatuated with her co-worker Dana, who's also a game tester. And they have a really sweet, earnest connection. But she is also sort of a... Kind of a holier than thou. (LAUGHS) Yeah. I guess the best word is she feels a bit entitled to power and influence. But the thing that I really like about her is that she's a little dumb, like she's a little bit oblivious. Not that she's not smart necessarily, but she's not great at social cues. She's not particularly savvy. She's just ambitious.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

What I love about her is the way she brings in all the literature and wants to analyse, and talk it over, and study the structural aspects of everything. But at the same time she seems like totally oblivious to the most obvious things that are right in front of her.

ASHLY BURCH:

Yeah, it's funny. Her heart's very much in the right place but she is totally clueless.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Yeah.

ASHLY BURCH:

I think it's fun because a lot of characters on the show have tremendous ambition and a lot of skill. And Rachel has just as much ambition and basically no skills...

(BOTH LAUGH)

ASHLY BURCH:

... Which I think is, kind of, fun. I've always longed for, as a writer and as an actor and it's changed so much since I was a kid, but girls and women that weren't perfect. A lot of what I came up watching... It was often like a group of five boys and then the one girl who was always the killjoy. Who was good at everything and cooler than them and often was like, "Knock it off boys." When they were being stupid. And that was just never me, I was the stupid one.

So, you always want to have something that reflects you, you know? And what I love about our show is that there are so many women and so many different types of women. So Poppy, for example, is extremely capable, extremely smart but she's also a total asshole. Or like Jo is ambitious and driven and psychotic. And Rachel is sweet and also kind of a dumbass. Like there's all these sorts of different things, different shades of humanity that we're getting to show in all these different characters, the women specifically that I just didn't have when I was younger or a teenager.

I think that's why... I remember Sailor Moon was one of my favourite shows and I think I loved it so much because Sailor Moon was such a cry baby. She cried at the drop of a hat, but she was also powerful and cool and she loved her friends. And so, it's really fun to get to be in a cast full of super, talented women playing a whole range of characters.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Can you tell us a little bit about the writers' room? How does it work? And I'm just curious to see how you fit in with the other writers and if you have a specific thing that you're often called on to do. Or if there's a specific character that you particularly like to write story for?

ASHLY BURCH:

Yeah. So, the writers' room, when I started, I very much was leaning on my video game knowledge because I'd never... I'd been in several writers' rooms, but I'd never been in an on-camera writers' room. And I came from animation where the max amount of people we would have in a room at a time was maybe four or five, and an on-camera writers' room you have 10 people.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Wow.

ASHLY BURCH:

And a lot of those people were people that I knew and admired from the work that they had done, and so I was definitely intimidated. But I also just love story and I love being in writers' rooms so much. So I used, not as a crutch, but I leaned on games at the beginning because I knew that was something that I knew, but very quickly I just became another writer that was worried about story narrative arc characters. I mean it sounds like a cop out, but I really love writing for all of the characters. I really love at the beginning of a season of the room what we'll usually do is what's called blue skying, which is like you think about the season as a whole, what you want to say, where you want your characters to go.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Like the bigger picture stuff?

ASHLY BURCH:

Yeah. You talk big picture and then you get more granular as time goes on. And I love blue skying because there's just so many... Some people hate it because there's so many possibilities but I love it because it's really fun seeing ideas coalesce and finding narrative arcs start to take shape. And it often happens organically when you crack one part of the story it starts to flow out. That happened a lot in season 2, there were certain pairings that we changed up in this season. One in particular that I think people are going to really like. And when we discovered that pairing, it really opened up a lot of the show.

And it's just so... I mean, being in a writers' room, it's like it always feels like solving a puzzle with some of the smartest and funniest people you know. It really feels like, "OK, there's a story in the air somewhere and we're all just putting our heads together and trying to pick out the right pieces to put together to fit the best puzzle that we can make". And it's really gratifying to be stuck and someone in the room finds that one little thing that opens up the whole story. I mean, there are several episodes in the season that we were rewriting over and over and over again and you, sort of, feel like you're bashing your head against the wall.

And then finally when you break through and you see like, "Oh, if we just we move this idea here and open it like this that just makes everything work so much better". So, it really is extremely collaborative there's no like, "Oh this person's the Brad person, this person's the David person." We have a lot of the actors in the writers' room and so, by that nature, you're sort of, I'm in the best position to advocate for Rachel, David's in the best position to advocate for David. But whenever I'm in the room I really am thinking about every character equally and their arcs and how those arcs coalesce.



And we often use things that are happening in the games industry as inspiration or as a jumping off point. We always want it to feel authentic to the games industry, but also it's important for it to feel like any other office as well. So, we really do try to come at it from a place of character because ultimately that's what's going to be the most interesting. If we're just focusing on the success of the game or the failure of the game, that gets tiresome pretty quickly, if you don't care about the characters.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

You're credited as the sole writer on a special episode featured between the two seasons which is called 'Everlight'. The episode features an in-game holiday for Mythic Quest and some live action role playing or some LARPing. How did the concept for that episode come about?

ASHLY BURCH:

Honestly, the idea of an in-game holiday, and separately the idea of LARP, I think they both came up season 1. And then we resurrected those ideas as we were breaking story in season 2. And I can't even remember... I think I'd been thinking about an in-game holiday, but I think actually the person that brought it up was one of our writers Humphrey Ker. And we actually had it, as we were breaking the season, we had it as episode eight, I think, seven or eight originally. And then the pandemic hit and we were actually in our first week of filming so we shot an episode and then everything shut down.

And in the intervening time between the shut down and coming back for season 2, Rob and Megan and David, our Eps, were going back through the season and looking at everything again. And Rob had the idea of moving 'Everlight' up. So, I had written a whole draft that had a completely different storyline. It was just a fun episode that broke the tension of the season thus far and was meant to just be silly and fun. But we knew the structure of it which is like it's an in-game holiday with LARP and eventually it turns into a real fantasy. Those things were preserved but basically everything else was changed.

And so, Rob, Megan, David, and I all talked about that rebreak of 'Everlight' over Zoom as the pandemic was still going on. And it went through quite a few iterations. Basically, the ending and the beginning changed a lot because really the book-ending of the episode - it starts with this animation that sets up the premise and then ends in this fight - were really the thematic ties of the episode. And so we had a lot of juggling to try to figure out how to best make that theme hit home. It was interesting too because you also had to set up a lot of expositional, structural stuff, like what is 'Everlight'? What is LARP? How does LARP work?

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Yeah. There's like lore that you need to, kind of, explain.

ASHLY BURCH:

So, we had lore to set up, and then just the mechanics of what the fuck LARP is, for people that don't know what LARP is. And then setting up the rigging of the fights and then setting up the themes and re-introducing the characters, it was a lot of heavy lifting. But ultimately, I'm really proud of with how it turned out because I think... I think it gives a feeling that we were hoping it was going to give. Which is sort of... You know we had the quarantine episode which I think really effectively captured the feeling of, especially the early days of the pandemic.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Uh-huh.

ASHLY BURCH:

And now as we're, at least the States, we're luckily moving out of that severe lockdown because lots of people are getting vaccinated. Trying to picture a world after the pandemic where we find some semblance of normalcy and hope, and I think those two episodes partnered together work pretty effectively. And yeah, I feel really happy with how they turned out.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

So as someone who's aware... Well you work in the video games industry as well you're not just aware of the video games industry.

(ASHLY LAUGHS)

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Are there specific kind of themes or topics that you're interested in exploring when you're in the writers' room for Mythic Quest?

ASHLY BURCH:

Yeah. I mean we usually talk about anything that's relevant to the time that we're starting to write. That something that seems like... Not obviously like an isolated incident, because we write well in advance of the show coming out. So they have to be larger issues.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Things that are in the air.

ASHLY BURCH:

Yeah. And persistent, something like crunch or the way that women are treated in the workplace. But there's definitely... I mean there's definitely a drive within the writing staff to make the show feel authentic. And so I think we'd be remiss to not talk about some of these topics that are so at the forefront of people's minds when they think of the games industry. And for me, I also want to try to balance, because it's one of those things where we really want it to feel authentic to games, but we also want it to feel satisfying for people that don't know anything about games.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Right.

ASHLY BURCH:

So I think it's really good to always come back to games as our contextual backdrop and as a way to get into stories or inform character. But I think also it's really important to, like I said earlier, to think about the characters themselves and what they want and where they're going. And if we're doing our job right, then, ultimately, focusing on characters ends up speaking to games and every other creative process or office workplace. Because those struggles are pretty prevalent no matter what industry you work in, in particular, Poppy, I think, has an interesting arc this season now that she's co-creative director.

Someone that's wanted power for so long and now has it, what does that look like? What does it look like to be a leader after being subjected to the abuse of this guy for so long? Who is she in that position? How does she deal with the fact that she and Ian are now equals after that imbalance in power for so long? I think those are more universal concepts that still do apply to people in the games industry. I mean...

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Sure.

ASHLY BURCH:

I can think of so many folks that they were the best on their team and then they got promoted to a management position, but they don't necessarily know how to manage people, they were just the best at the thing that they were doing. Which I think is a similar position that Poppy's in, she's a brilliant coder, but is she a brilliant leader? Who knows. Because those are not the same skill sets. So, yeah. We always try to, of course, remain true to games but then not get so referential or so bogged down in what's happening in games that we lose sight of the fact that this is a show about these people. And what are the most interesting stories to tell about these people?

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Do you think the show has a role - maybe not a role to play maybe that's a bit too strong. But that it could play a role, let's say, to bring a more mainstream audience to the world of video games? And to have a more mainstream audience like acknowledge that world and know a little bit more about that world?

ASHLY BURCH:

I definitely think so. I mean, even just anecdotally speaking to folks that are a little bit older that have watched the show, they suddenly get an understanding of games that they didn't have before. Which I think is just that it's a normal workplace. I think there's an assumption that everyone's-

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

It's magic.

ASHLY BURCH:

... Yeah. It's either magic or everyone's still in a basement somewhere or everything's Mario, you know what I mean? There's just such a weird veil that I think this show helps pull back, which is like, yes, you know? This guy wears 70 bracelets and speaks in florid, douchey prose, but also, they're still in an office and there are still desks and computers and meetings and egos and creative arguments. So yeah, I think even just based on feedback of folks older than me that don't know anything about games giving me feedback about the show, they really respond to it and it makes them see games differently. Just more as like any other office really.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Have you ever written for video games?

ASHLY BURCH:

Kind of sort of. I mean I've consulted, but I haven't sat down and wrote a script for a video game before.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Right. Is that something you'd be interested in?

ASHLY BURCH:

Totally. I mean, gosh. I have such respect for games writers because it's especially, God... Like especially an open world game, all of these contingencies of like well if, I mean just even recording Horizon it's like, well if Aloy did this mission but she didn't do this mission, or if she just happened upon this mission without finding the person that tells you about the mission, or if she has this item but she didn't get it before she did this mission. It's craziness. And then also having to track everyone's arcs in a context like that. I mean it's hard enough as an actor to be like, "OK, well this person may have done the entire game and then come back to the Nora homelands and decided to help," I forget her name, "find her rabbits." Like one of the very first quests that you get.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Yeah. Like do one of the very first quests, but do it like 60 hours into the game kind of thing.

ASHLY BURCH:

Yeah. And so it all needs to feel consistent, but imagine writing that. Oh my God. But it would be a fun challenge if I didn't go insane. It would be a fun challenge.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

What game are you playing at the moment?

ASHLY BURCH:

Right now, I mostly... Well, I was playing a lot of Valheim.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Oh, OK.

ASHLY BURCH:

Which I was really enjoying. Now I'm playing mostly the ARAM mode of League of Legends with friends, because it's an easy way to get to talk to pals and play games at the same time and-

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Right. A way to hang out.

ASHLY BURCH:

... A good way to hang out. Yeah. I'm getting better at it I think. I'm still pretty bad but yeah, that's mostly what I'm playing right now.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Well, thank you so much for taking the time and for chatting with me.

ASHLY BURCH:

Yeah. Thanks for having me.

CHARLES-ADAM FOSTER-SIMARD:

Episodes one through four of Season 2 of Mythic Quest are available to stream now on Apple TV+ with new episodes releasing every Friday until June 25th. You can also catch up on season 1 now with all nine episodes plus the special bonus episodes, including Everlight, available to stream on Apple TV+.

I'm Charles-Adam Foster-Simard from Ubisoft. This episode was edited by Manu Bachet. The music in this episode was taken from the Mythic Quest season 1 and 2 Apple TV+ original series soundtrack by Takeshi Furukawa.

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