

Episode 5 – “Give Me More Sentient Fog”

Release Date: February 12, 2018

Running Time: 50 Minutes

SALLY: Ummm okay! So

EMILY: What’s some book news we can talk about?

SALLY: Some book news. A little bit past the moment, but sort of all over the book news-o-sphere this past little bit has been the announcement that Dumbledore will not be explicitly gay in the new *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* film

EMILY: That like [laughs] bothers me for two reasons. One of which is very obvious. Obviously representation matters and if a character is gay as stated by the author, and as we’ve stated before, reader-response theory that’s not canonical in the books, so it doesn’t count as representation, basically. But here they have an opportunity to make the representation count, but they chose not to. But it also bothers me because this is purportedly going to be a five book – five movie deal, and they’re on movie two, and they’ve already decided that in the next four movies there’s not going to be a single moment of this dude being gay.

SALLY: Yeah, and isn’t Jude Law playing Dumbledore?

EMILY: Yeah, what’s the deal?

SALLY: So imagine the sprawling gay wizard epic starring Jude Law that these four films could give us. Imagine. Imagine for a second. Also imagine that Johnny Depp died in a fire

EMILY: BLEGH

SALLY: and Colin Farrell continued to play our villain. So it was – or better yet, anybody else. I don’t know

EMILY: Yeah, I have a hard time buying that Jude Law, *Jude Law*, the Young Pope himself

SALLY: Yeah! [laughs]

EMILY: [laughs] Would ever have a crush on Johnny Depp’s crusty ass. Like, ew. Colin Farrell? Sure

SALLY: Colin Farrell? Sure.

EMILY: They’d make a hot couple

SALLY: Yeah, so imagine. Jude Law and Colin Farrell in a four movie, sprawling gay wizard epic.

EMILY: That would be great

SALLY: Where it’s, like, two and a half movies of sexual tension, movie three or four they just have this epic make out scene, final movie –

EMILY: [laughing] They’re PG-13 so we can’t have an epic

SALLY: We can't have a sex scene!

EMILY: [laughing] *fucking* scene

SALLY: But we'd have an *epic* kiss. And then movie five they're like together finally, working together

EMILY: *Then* their ideologies

SALLY: Then their ideologies *CLASH*

EMILY: And they have to fight each other

SALLY: They have to fight each other. Imagine!

EMILY: I don't remember how it goes

SALLY: Ah it's something like that

EMILY: They fight each other

SALLY: They fight each other, and then it's, like, after that, like

EMILY: Dumbledore takes his gay ass off to run Hogwarts for some reason

SALLY: [laughs] that – don't you do that when your heart gets broken? You just go to England to become a wizard professor

[both laugh]

SALLY: Isn't that what happens?

EMILY: Dumbledore rolls into Hogwarts and is like, "I'm sorry. This is my post breakup rebound career. I'm just here to party." [laughs]

SALLY: "I'm just here to party and lie to my students and sacrifice them for the greater good of the world."

EMILY: Heh, boy

SALLY: Troubling [laughs]

EMILY: So it's super funny that Dumbledore is only the second worst teacher in Hogwarts history. Severus Snape, serial child abuser, being number one

SALLY: Number one. Soooo

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: That's the tea in book news

EMILY: Yeah so um

SALLY: Don't go see the new *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* movie. Love yourself and love

EMILY: Yeah don't give them your money. I mean, I fucking don't care if you pirate it later to just watch it. Do that, just don't give them the satisfaction of giving them money. Hollywood, all of Hollywood's choices are based totally on money, so

SALLY: Yeah. Pirate it later. Wait until it inevitably comes on Netflix, or whatever. Or on an airplane. That's a great place to watch *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*.

EMILY: That's true. I watched *Fantastic Beasts* number one on an airplane. Not because I had anything against the first movie. It was fine, but, like, I was very poor [laughs] I had to choose my movies carefully. For example, *Black Panther* coming out this month

SALLY: YOOOO

EMILY: Yo, get lit

SALLY: I'm so excited. HAHHHHHH

EMILY: Get hyped. I'm so excited

SALLY: It's gonna be incredible

[THEME SONG – *Tubthumping* by Chumbawamba]

EMILY: Okay

SALLY: Welcome to our podcast!

EMILY: Welcome to our podcast. This is Everybody Hates Rand the comedy-literary podcast [laughs] about Robert Jordan...and Brandon Sanderson's *The Wheel of Time* series. We're currently on *The Eye of the World*. We however are going to be talking a lot about things that go on throughout the rest of the series up until Book Fourteen, so if you're worried about spoilers this might not be the show for you. If you are not worried about spoilers, this is definitely the show for you! If you're my mom, it's not the show for you. If you're not my mom...

SALLY: It's *definitely* the show for you

EMILY: It's definitely the show for you! Listen, on. I'm Emily Juchau [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs] And I'm Sally Goodger

EMILY: And today we're talking about...Well, in our last episode our heroes had just left Baerlon, they're first city. Now they're on the run with a bunch of Trollocs and Myrddraal chasing them

SALLY: Yes

EMILY: And this is a very short block of text that we're going to be talking about, but a lot goes on. First they leave Baerlon, and they're actually three days on the road, but it feels like that three days passes A)

in the space of a paragraph, and then just as you're reading it really feels like the jump from Baerlon to Shadar Logoth, which is where they end up, feels like it's in one day. I don't know about you, but like

SALLY: Oh no it was very – it's very – very – [sighs, frustrated] Mother – oh boy. It's a very difficult time period to keep track of because the timeline is super confusing and it feels like it just happens. Like they walk out of Baerlon through a door into Shadar Logoth

EMILY: Yeah

SALLY: I totally forgot that they had an encounter with Trollocs in between the two. I'd totally forgotten that

EMILY: Like I would forget except that battles, like Mat Cauthon, interest me [laughs]

SALLY: True. They do

EMILY: But yeah, I think it's just because Robert Jordan got committed to maintaining the sprawl of this continent. So it's not reasonable for them to leave Baerlon and then they same day encounter a huge city. That would sort of indicate that people are coming across it a lot more. So this way he can be, like, "Oh yeah. It's like way out of the way. In the middle of this weird wilderness. As opposed to neighboring a populous city." But it does kind of feel weird, because that means they're – I hate when people are running from things for extended periods of time without encountering them?

SALLY: Yeah it's...not believable

EMILY: I know, and it happens a lot in fantasy. They'll be like, "We've been running for, I don't know, seven days."

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: I only like it when it's literally Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli, and they are *on* the trail of the Uruk-hai for several days

SALLY: Yeah, and they're doing the chase, so it's more interesting to have the people chasing not find what they're chasing than it is to have the people being chased not encounter they're threat

EMILY: And acting like there almost is no threat. Like, the indication that we get for these three days is that everyone's just sort of chill. Just eating cheese. Egwene complains about the cheese

SALLY: Relatable

EMILY: And then kind of Lan runs off and comes back and is like, "Oh, there's some Trollocs really close." Which is when they – when they start heading – do they go off the road at this point? I can't remember

SALLY: I think so?

EMILY: They're basically – there's kind of hurried little conversation between Moiraine and Lan, much akin to the little conference that happens in *Fellowship of the Ring* between Gimli, Aragorn, and Gimli – did I say Gimli, Aragorn, and Gimli?

SALLY: [laughs] You did

EMILY: [laughing] Gandalf, Aragorn, and Gimli, where Gandalf does not want to go into the Mines of Moria, instead he wants to take the mountain pass. Oh, and Boromir wants them to take the long way around past Isengard, so it's just kind of a confliction of routes. Here, Moiraine's plan, as it is later revealed, she just wants to make it across the river, because running water kind of deflects Shadowspawn as it were, and she's gonna, like, throw up a ward with the Power, so she can hold them off. But Lan doesn't think they're gonna make it that far so he's suggested that they go to Shadar Logoth because it's a cursed city and Shadowspawn don't enter, so maybe they can regroup there. But for now, I think, they're headed for the river?

SALLY: Yeah, I ... yes

EMILY: Yes?

SALLY: I would believe

EMILY: We don't really know because we're in Rand's point of view and he doesn't really know what they're talking about

SALLY: Yeah he's just like fear incarnate, more Trollocs

EMILY: Okay, well before they get to Shadar Logoth they encounter three *fists* of Trollocs, which is a unit of Trollocs unknown to us

SALLY: Incredible. Amazing

EMILY: "Each led by a halfman, maybe five." That's what's behind them. First they run into some Trolloc scots, and Lan's plan when they encounter this line of scouts is to just rush through them on horseback, which is their one advantage. Cavalry always has the advantage over infantry. But Lan makes straight for the Myrddraal – there's one Myrddraal and some Trollocs – because he knows that if you kill a Myrddraal it's gonna be like cutting the head off a chicken. There's gonna be some flailing, but everyone's gonna go down. So this is kind of our first pitch battle sequence, although very brief and very chaotic because none of our heroes have ever been in a battle before, like a close quarter combat situation. And Rand, whose point of view we get, doesn't know how to handle himself. He's basically just trying to stay alive. He does have one moment of clarity where he sees Egwene – who's doing fine by the way. She's just with Nynaeve and Moiraine, and Moiraine's like got a ring of fire around her – [sighs] and Rand's like, "Gotta protect Egwene" who's, like, I repeat, doing fine

SALLY: [laughs] yeah, doing much better than he is at the moment

EMILY: Meanwhile Rand's getting pulled out of the saddle by three Trollocs. But Lan manages to kill the Myrddraal before anything happens. The only one who's been unseated is Mat, who, tellingly – this is foreshadowing – one of the Trollocs got a noose around his neck and pulled him out of the saddle. Rand is later [laughs] Mat is later going to be hanged. For knowledge. But they sort of leave their first pitch battle. None of them are injured which is, um, miraculous. Although the intent here does seem to be to catch them? The Trollocs aren't wielding weapons. They're wielding these, like, I can't remember what they call it, but basically these sticks with some rope on them to catch these guys and pull them out of the saddle. So that's interesting. Moiraine has a pretty good show of Channeling here. She grabs her *angreal* and basically Channels Fire and Earth to make sort of an explosion and to make a line of fire between them and the Trollocs, which freaks out all the boys, of course, because they're very easily frightened.

And that exhausts her, which is a problem, because it means that if they do get to the river, she won't be able to use the One Power to put up a ward to protect them while they make a raft. So they kind of have to go to Shadar Logoth

SALLY: Which is, interesting – like, conveniently, not conveniently, but interestingly the same way the debate is solved in *Fellowship of the Ring*.

EMILY: Yeah

SALLY: And the same way these debates are often solved. If there are conflicting paths then one or multiple paths are closed to you, so you are forced into the least desirable option, which is a sentient mountain that has mines under it, or a cursed city that not even the evil will enter

EMILY: There's always a, a cursed city

SALLY: There's always a cursed city, and I love it!

EMILY: I think – does Moria count as a cursed city? Moria's freaky because they enter it and everyone's dead

SALLY: Moria's super freaky. Yeah. If it's not cursed yet it probably will be in the future. A bunch of dead dwarves down there. May they rest in peace. But going back to what you said about Mat being noosed out of the saddle, which, first of all, sounds awful.

EMILY: Yeah, I mean you'd just be choking. You'd be like [makes a choking sound.]

SALLY: I hope he's okay. But this sequence is really important for Mat, obviously. This is sort of the set up of his, uuuuh, journey throughout. I'm having a rough time with words today, kiddos. And the next little bit is really interesting because you have the sequence with Shadar Logoth, which is not all about Mat, but becomes really important for Mat's arc.

EMILY: Yeah, and also in this battle sequence, sorry to interrupt. Also in this battle sequence he [laughs], they all do like a little war cry coming down, which Egwene kind of calls them out later –

SALLY: which is so funny [laughs]

EMILY: – for being masculine nonsense. She's like, "What are you doing, stupid idiots?" But Mat in particular yells something in the Old Tongue, which turns out to be a battle cry of Manetheren, and that freaks him out, and in a way relieves Rand and Perrin a little bit – although they immediately feel guilty about it – because they're like, "Mat's showing signs of being special in some way, so maybe it's him who's the target of this hunt." And Mat, of course, is thinking the same thing, so he's in a really creeped out position as they enter Shadar Logoth, which I think is important for what happens next.

SALLY: Yeah! Because what happens next is *farcical*

[both laugh]

SALLY: So they go into Shadar Logoth, and Lan, of course, finds the best possible fortress for the night.

EMILY: Yep. He's like, "Camping here."

SALLY: Camping here. Moiraine's –

EMILY: Yeah, there's a sweet interlude where Nynaeve's trying to force some herbs on Moiraine, who's like, "I just need to sleep," but is also trying to be welcoming and kind to Nynaeve, and it's all very sweet [laughs]

SALLY: It's all very tender. [laughs] And Lan's trying to be like, "She doesn't need your help," and Nynaeve's like, "I will stab you."

EMILY: [laughs] Lan's like, "I'm turned on."

SALLY: Yeah, Lan is like, "Mark me down as scared, but horny!" Or whatever that is

EMILY: [laughs] Yeah. Frightened, but also aroused.

SALLY: How he constantly feels – how we all constantly feel around Nynaeve.

EMILY: Yeah, honestly.

SALLY: So [laughs]. Lan hilariously, to Mat, Perrin, Rand, and Thom, is like, "Farmboys, get the horses inside," and Thom is very put off by being directed like one of the servants or one of the farmboys.

EMILY: Thom's like, "The audacity."

SALLY: Thom's like, "The audacity. I, Thom Merrilin."

EMILY: "I have had an affair with *the queen*."

SALLY: "I am a court bard."

EMILY: "I know politics."

SALLY: So [laughs] Thom is very put off. So they lead all the horses inside, and Mat, very tellingly, is not unsaddling his horse and Perrin gets super mad at him, which is just a very hilarious moment. [Emily laughs]. He's like, "I'm not gonna unsaddle your horse for you," but Mat is like face first in the alley and is like, "Let's go exploring."

EMILY: Yeah, sort of [laughs] I think a little bit as a coping mechanism

SALLY: For sure

EMILY: But also because it's just Mat's nature

SALLY: Yeah, and I love this interlude, basically. It's so bizarre for so many reasons. Like the logic of the book seems to totally change when they enter Shadar Logoth. Where we've had this very frightening, epic fantasy type chase scene, and we enter this cursed city and it enters very much into fairy tale logic to a certain extent.

EMILY: Yeah, that's true

SALLY: And nobody came here for lessons in Russian Formalism, but [laughs] I'm going to bring it up anyway

EMILY: That's the title of this episode

[both laugh]

SALLY: Mmm, yeah. Nobody came here for lessons in Russian Formalism, but there is a – so Russian Formalism, briefly, is a literary theory where people in Russia during the early 1900s, Communist Revolution time, I believe, if I'm remembering that correctly, approach literature the way that people were approaching science. They wanted to approach it very methodically, and saying that you could analyze the parts of literature, and by looking at how all the parts are put together you can sort of see what it's doing. So that's how, like, defamiliarization is the big example from Russian Formalism where you take something and make it new or make it weird. But there is a Russian Formalist fairy tale critic, Vladimir Propp who wrote *The Morphology of a Folktale*, which outlines 31 functions that fairy tales follow after the inciting incident. And the notion is that fairy tales have to function in this specific order. They don't have to possess all 31 functions, but you can't – like function 7 can't come function 2, for instance

EMILY: That's interesting

SALLY: Yeah, it's super interesting. And there's a lot of criticism with Formalist literary analysis, anyways. People are, like, its very reductive, etc, etc, but it is a very interesting way to approach the fairy tale, which is such a formalist, structuralist type thing anyway. And so, I – I mean I didn't do – I'm not a structuralist or a folklorist, much to my chagrin, I would love to be both of those things, but briefly I looked back through my notes about *The Morphology of a Folktale* and the 31 functions and there are a lot of markers in this episode that match up with fairy tale functions. And it doesn't do it exactly, of course, because it is not an actual fairy tale, but for instance, it begins with an absention. So our three lads, Mat ropes his friends into it, and they leave a place. And can I just say this is the most charming interlude, because if I recall correctly it's one of the only instances of the three boys having an adventure...

EMILY: Together

SALLY: Just them. Yeah, which is so charming

EMILY: Yeah, we only ever see them in the Two Rivers kind of interacting with other characters interacting with other characters of the fellowship. They might be new comers like Moiraine, or they might be old, familiar faces like Nynaeve and Egwene, but we rarely get all three boys together alone. And I think this might be the only time in the entire series where it's just the three of them

SALLY: Yeah, and so it's so charming, and it really, I don't know, showcases their relationship to one another. Everyone is like Rand is the main character, but Mat is very much the leader of this particular section of shenanigans

EMILY: And Perrin's kind of the cautious, responsible one

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah!

EMILY: All of which is very telling by the way, because Perrin's gonna do some audacious shit later in the series. Meanwhile Mat is, against all odds, going to be [laughs]

SALLY: The most cautious character

EMILY: Yeah, the most cautious character because he, by then, understands what he's up against, and understands the odds better

SALLY: And then Rand is just sort of dragged along

EMILY: Rand's sort of the everyman friend. He's along for the ride [laughs]

SALLY: Rand is just like, "Well, I guess –" Mat, later Mat follows the strange guy that appears out of the stones basically, and Rand's like, "Guess we've got no choice but to follow him [Emily laughs], which is like, what the fuck? Why is that your response? That's so weird, but anyway. So they have their absention, and this – okay this doesn't exactly apply, but the next one after that is the interdiction, so a rule is give. And technically at this point they haven't been given rules, because they don't really know what's happening in Shadar Logoth, except Moiraine is like, "Don't fucking –"

EMILY: Yeah maybe like, don't leave the city?

SALLY: – wander around. Yeah. So it's kind of like an unspoken rule. Like, don't run away, you fucking idiots...and then they do. [Emily laughs] Which is the next one. The violation of the rule, and then you have the reconnaissance where the villain, who, again, pops out of the stones basically, this creepy guy. And he's like, "I'm a treasure hunter," and Mat is like, "YO." [laughs]

EMILY: He's like, "First of all, I'm a treasure hunter. Second of all, he says my name is Mordeth." Pronounced MORE DEATH

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: [laughing] It's like that Jessica Jones line, "Was Murder Corps already taken?" like what do you need? How many more hints can I give you, Mat Cauthon, that this dude is fucked up?

SALLY: Yeah, but Mat hears the word treasure and he becomes, like, a cartoon character with money signs for pupils

EMILY: Exactly. Mat's ideal scenario is where he becomes Scrouge McDuck, swimming in money.

SALLY: 'kay. Li – literally, though. That would be Mat Cauthon's literal *i-deal* scenario. So anyways, I'm again not gonna go through all the functions because that is boring

EMILY: But you're right, though. It follows a different sort of logic, like, I don't know. The fact that Mat convinces them to leave to begin with

SALLY: Yeah, which is, like, they just experienced something super freaky and the only reason they got through it is because they're with an Aes Sedai and a Warder. If that was me I'd be like, "I'm never leaving Moiraine's side every again even if she is sick. Especially not in a place they refer to as a cursed city that Shadowspawn will not enter.

EMILY: I know like. God, I don't know the logic – I think it's supposed to be a mixture of teenage boys. Robert Jordan is like speaking into the microphone, like whispering into the microphone, "These are dumbass teenage boys. Remember that."

SALLY: Remember they are stupid teenage boys who get into shenanigans

EMILY: And also they're on an adrenaline high because they just went through a battle where they had to fight to survive, and they just don't know what to do with all that energy. Make out with each other? No

SALLY: So there are reasons for why the logic begins to slip here, but the point being that the logic does begin to slip. It starts to operate really weirdly

EMILY: And it works because Jordan is aware of that

SALLY: Yeah, he sets it up to be, like, everyone is really manic in this scene for whatever reason

EMILY: It's not just a character acting out of character. It's everyone's acting a little bit out of character

SALLY: Yeah

EMILY: It's just the influence of the city

SALLY: And the fact that they're in this city that nobody else is in, and that's got this weird history and this weird vibe to it. He does a really good job setting it up where I believe that yeah these guys want to go exploring and weird shit starts to happen. Again it's that horizon of expectations. So yeah, the fact that the logic just operates really bizarrely and you have this montage basically of these boys just wandering around and getting lost

EMILY: And it's basically a ruined city, which is already a creepy setting, but it doesn't become creepy to them until after they're encounter with Mordeth, who, like, what happens? He convinces them, hey come look at my treasure. Mat's like, "Okay, sir!"

SALLY: Yeah because he's like, "I need help carrying it, and whatever I can't take with me, you guys can have." And Mat is like, "Yes."

EMILY: "I'm down." They go downstairs [Sally laughs] there's basically a dragon's hoard of treasure. They're looking around, and Rand the entire time is like, "Something's off about this."

SALLY: So mad props to Rand for being the sensible one in this scene

EMILY: Yeah Rand kind of is the perceptive one in they're little trio

SALLY: [laughs] because Mat is, again, money signs for eyes

EMILY: Even Perrin is like, "Look a cool axe."

SALLY: [in a deep voice] "Look at this axe."

[both laugh]

EMILY: Dumbass. But Rand is the first one to notice that Mordeth doesn't have a shadow, which is [weird voice] hella creepy

SALLY: Super creepy

EMILY: And which point Mordeth freaks out and, meanwhile, he's realized they're not alone?

SALLY: Yeah, because initially Mordeth is talking to him and he's like, "Oh, travelers." And Rand's like, "Yeah, we're on our way to Caemlyn, which is a very benign city to throw out." And then at this point I think it's Mat who's like, again, mesmerized by gold, is like, "Oh, we're on our way to Tar Valon," and then Mordeth flips out, because he assumes that an Aes Sedai is with them otherwise why would they be going to Tar Valon. Or that they're somehow connected to the White Tower.

EMILY: Yeah, he basically, like, it's at that point that Rand says, "You don't have a shadow," and he kind of freaks out. And he says, "So it is decided." And that's all he says before he kind of, he basically just reaches out and his hands seem to get bigger, and they all kind of freak out. Rand's trying to get his sword out. He gets the wind knocked out of him. He has a great moment where he's fighting his cloak to get at his sword, which is such a thing that would happen that we rarely get to see because most people are competent with their swords. Mat just like falls behind a treasure pile [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs] He's just like, "This will protect me."

EMILY: He has a dagger, which is our first throwaway mention to *the* dagger

SALLY: Yeah, the infamous ruby hilted dagger

EMILY: But Mordeth has basically gone into the fetal position in the corner of this room, and he starts, like, screaming, "You are all dead. All dead," and he just dives across the room, but vanishes. So at this point, these three boys are like, "We're out of here." Or I should say, Rand and Perrin are like, "We're out of here," and Mat's like, "But the treasure!"

SALLY: "But the treasure!" and they both grab – which is such a charming image – they both grab one of his arms and haul their gangly friend out of the treasure room

EMILY: They're like [imitating *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*] "Do not seek the treasure." [laughs]

SALLY: "Do not seek the treasure. Oh, George. Not the livestock." [laughs]

EMILY: "We thought you was a toad."

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: But of course they don't think to pat Mat down before they leave

SALLY: That would be funny

EMILY: And they haven't registered that there's any danger to the treasure

SALLY: Yeah, they just think it's a weird treasure hoard, and, like, there's so much with the fact that it's *treasure*, that's so charged in terms of

EMILY: Yeah! Cursed treasure is, like, such a fantasy thing. Like *The Hobbit*

SALLY: *The Hobbit*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*

EMILY: Yes

SALLY: *El Dorado*

EMILY: Yes

SALLY: Every fairy tale ring or piece of jewelry that you're given is some

EMILY: Heck yeah

SALLY: Is somehow gonna be weird. So obviously Mat Cauthon has not watched the *Pirates of the Caribbean* trilogy

EMILY: How?

SALLY: [laughs] I know. What has he been doing with his spare time? [laughs]

EMILY: But *Wheel of Time* does have a canon of stories

SALLY: Yeah!

EMILY: and that's what makes things like this so irritating, because you're aware that in this canon of stories is everything that's sort of past and present and future for us, because that's the way that this world functions. So they're going in there and they must have some peripheral knowledge of other stories where treasure's cursed because it's, like, if it exists in our world, then stories of it exist in their world. That's *The Wheel of Time* logic

SALLY: For sure! And cursed treasure is one of those mythological archetypes that seem to be grooved into the human unconscious

EMILY: Yeah

SALLY: You can find it across fairy tales and across myths and across movies. So I would like to imagine that if *Wheel of Time* has Hero's Journey heroes, they have to have something with cursed treasure, but it doesn't cross Mat's weird little weasel mind to not pick up the cursed treasure

EMILY: Yeah, he's just pure greed in this moment, which is really interesting because Mat, throughout his entire character development, is like – he always has an eye for what's valuable and what's not valuable. He enters a room, and when we get his point of view, this is interesting, he's always assessing the worth of things. But it's, like, he's able to be objective about it in the later series. He can look at things without being like, "I have to touch that," or "I have to have that." It's really interesting

SALLY: Yeah, it's another moment when the logic of this scene slips, because Mat becomes a literal caricature

EMILY: Of himself, basically

SALLY: Of himself. Of greed, of the trickster figure, of, you know, the weird fairy tale type prince like hero. Where he's literally a caricature. And Perrin and Rand are allowed a little bit more depth, but they do also become the caricature of a hero's companions. You have the perceptive one, and then you have Perrin who's sort the, like, cautious one

EMILY: Yes

SALLY: So it's really – and even Mordeth, who's name is literally More Death, is a caricature of a villain. He becomes big, he's got a big a hoard of treasure

EMILY: And Mordeth, just like cursed treasure, Mordeth as a character, included in his history which Moiraine tells us in a little bit, that's totally an archetype. He's kind of the evil advisor archetype. Or, I think TV Tropes, which I like to look at a lot, because they're so good at cataloging these things, they call it the Evil Chancellor, so if you want to look it up: they're you go. So they get back to Moiraine, who yells at them as they deserve. Lan's out looking for them. It's nighttime. Everyone's mad worried, and she's like [claps] "What happened?" And they all tell her the story in a rush

SALLY: Which is another charming moment. They all start at different moments, too

EMILY: It's so cute

SALLY: Which is so telling

EMILY: I know. Mat's like, "The treasure." Rand's like, "The villain." Perrin's like, "Here's how it all happened."

SALLY: [laughs] Perrin's like, "The scene opens on a dark and stormy night."

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: "Our three heroes leave the stables. Mat's horse still unsaddled."

EMILY: Thom's like, "You still have a lot to learn, my boy." [Sally laughing] "But you're getting there. Perhaps next I'll teach you how to juggling."

SALLY: Ooooh. Perrin would be very good at juggling I think

EMILY: I know

SALLY: Them arms, though

EMILY: Yeah, juggling like bowling pins or something

SALLY: Juggling axes

[both laugh]

SALLY: Anvils. Okay, anyways, sorry. That was totally off topic. Surprise

EMILY: So eventually the name Mordeth comes up and Moiraine is like, "What the hell?" Freaks out. Is like, "Did he ask you to carry anything for him?" She's literally like, "Did he ask you to carry anything for him? Did you go beyond the walls? What's the deal?" And they're like, "NO."

SALLY: And we're all like "You're so stupid."

EMILY: And we're all like, "You're so stupid. Please just tell her the whole story."

SALLY: And this is another – the story that she ends up telling about Mordeth is another really fairy tale-like story where it's, like, he'll ask you to carry treasure and if he can get you beyond a certain place he gets to take your body and walk throughout the world. So there's a lot of conditions, and a lot of villainy

EMILY: She asks if he touches them. So the story of Shadar Logoth, or Aridhol, as it was called, is that it was a nation at the time of the Trolloc Wars and at the time of Manetheren, which, eventually... Well, we're introduced to a benevolent king and a benevolent people, and one day in comes Evil Chancellor Archetype, Mordeth, who starts whispering in the ear of the king until eventually Shadar Logoth collapses in on itself. First of all, if you want to know about more Evil Chancellor types, you just have to look at Wormtongue in *Lord of the Rings*, obviously. Jafar.

SALLY: Mmmmm. In *Aladdin*.

EMILY: In *Aladdin*. There's lots of really good ones out there. What's his name? Long Feng in *Avatar: The Last Airbender* in Ba Sing Se

SALLY: Oh yeah! Long Feng. Oh god *Avatar*

EMILY: You know, "There is no war in Ba Sing Se."

SALLY: Yeah. UGH. Gives me chills

EMILY: Yeah, lots of good ones. In the *Divine Comedy* the eighth circle of hell is also reserved for Evil Advisors

SALLY: Really?

EMILY: It is interesting. Basically people who lead their rulers astray. Because you're kind of breaking your oath of loyalty

SALLY, whispers: Wow

EMILY: And the whole deal with Mordeth is that he tells them, "The victory of the Light is all. It was said that some would rather see Trollocs come than the men of Aridhol." So my take on this is that Robert Jordan is telling us that extremes are incredible dangerous. Shadar Logoth isn't meant to be anything associated with the Dark One really and Mordeth, we're never given, is like a creature of the Dark One. He's just like a dude who tells them that victory of the Light is all. So it's kind of like extremism in either of its forms, whether it's for the darkness or for the light, ends up being dangerous and consuming everything that it touches. As is the case with Shadar Logoth where even though the prince tries to rescue the people he fails. He eventually has a tragic downfall apparently

SALLY: Hamlet, probably

EMILY: Yeah [sighs]. Hamlet. Very Hamlet [both laugh softly] But "The armies of Manetheren came to avenge him and found the gates of the city torn down. No living thing inside the walls, but something worse than death. No enemy had come to Aridhol, but Aridhol." And they had basically created, and when you think about it there could have been a very scientific backing to this. That they had created mashadar – is it the black wind? Or is that the thing in the Ways?

SALLY: Oh, the black wind is a thing in the ways. Yeah.

EMILY: Well, they created a – they call it mashadar, and it's this kind of sentient, like, mist that goes through Shadar Logoth basically eating people. Super freaky, but it says they created it. So there's some possibility that people were literally trying to create some kind of watch dog for things of the Shadow

SALLY: Yeah, it's basically like a weird chemical weapon of sorts.

EMILY: Yeah. Yeah, and it just turned on them. Which is also another archetype, of people creating weapons that turn on them

SALLY: Mmhmm

EMILY: *Frankenstein* for one

SALLY: Yep, it is very derivative of the *Frankenstein* myth

EMILY: But there's also still that fairy tale wording to it, because Moiraine tells it to them in this very brief way. She says, "Their hate and suspicion created it," like that's what it was. So it just becomes an embodiment of what was wrong in the city. So it's just this toxic, freaky thing, and one of *Wheel of Times*, I think, cooler creations

SALLY, whispers: Oh, absolutely.

EMILY: I love it. That and the black wind, which is an embodiment of the taint on *saidin*.

SALLY: UGH

EMILY: Give me more sentient fog. I love it [laughs]

SALLY: Yeah! Really, though. More sentient fog, please. No, Shadar Logoth is so fascinating as something that functions as – it's not an evil, but it almost has a *Lord of the Rings* type "it's got it's own will" to it. A big thing throughout *Lord of the Rings*, not so much in the movies, but definitely in the text, is that JRR Tolkien will give wills to what we don't typically think of as sentient creatures, like trees, mountains, forests

EMILY: Like the mountain

SALLY: Yeah, the mountain, Caradhras, has a will of its own and is attacking the fellowship. And so Shadar Logoth, Aridhol, starts to function in that way. It's not exactly evil, though it is antagonistic, and it seems to have its own sort of agenda in a weird way. It wants to attack Shadowspawn, obviously. It's not on the Dark One's side. It's just doing, it's functioning...

EMILY: It's just become...it's so brainless. It doesn't just attack Shadowspawn, it's attacking everything. It attacked these people, these people who were supposed to be free of Shadowspawn. Mordeth was the only one who escaped. And this is another warping of logic, that he's survived somehow these years as this sort of embodiment, and he and mashadar are sort of one and the same now.

SALLY: Yeah, they've, like, fused

EMILY: Yeah, he's the figure that mashadar takes when he's in human form. Shadar Logoth comes back several times in the series

SALLY: Oh good

EMILY: You're not there yet. There's going to be a brief visit at one point with Rand and a bunch of his bodyguards, and there's – most importantly – outside of the city is where Rand's going to cleanse *saidin*, the function of which is basically he throws mashadar and the taint in Shadar Logoth against the taint in *saidin*.

SALLY: Ooooooh

EMILY: So it's basically like they cancel each other out

SALLY: oooooh-ooooh

EMILY: So, it's really cool! But we'll talk about that more when we get there

SALLY: No, I'm super fascinated by that

EMILY: But the fact that that's eventually used as a powerful good thing. However, he doesn't destroy mashadar completely, because later we're going to get Padan Fain, who becomes sort of this outside parasitic embodiment of Shadar Logoth and mashadar. But that's all future. For now it's just this really cool cursed city. Which also – sorry I forgot, but isn't this also very reminiscent of the Barrows scene in the *Fellowship of the Ring*?

SALLY: Yes! Yes, with the Barrow Wight

EMILY: Oh, good

SALLY: Where they go in, they're out on the moors of some type in the Shire. Or like on the edge – between the Shire and Bree. What they don't tell you – if you haven't read the *Lord of the Rings* books, which if you've read *Wheel of Time*, I really doubt that, but if you have read the *Lord of the Rings* books, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, has a *massive* section between the Shire and Bree [Emily laughs] where so much happens to the hobbits that is so important, and it's

EMILY: So interesting

SALLY: It's so interesting. And I understand why they took it out of the movies, but, like

EMILY: Pacing, whatever

SALLY: Pacing, whatever. Blegh. You can't actually have a seven hour movie [laughs], but so much happens including they get – they're basically, I think, running. Probably from one of the Ring Wraiths, I don't exactly recall, but they end up in this barrows, which are like burial mounds basically. They're really big in England and Ireland, basically in the British Isles and the reminiscence of...what is the word that I want?

EMILY: Mausoleums?

SALLY: Anglo-Saxons

EMILY: Oh

[both laugh]

SALLY: Of Anglo-Saxon culture

EMILY: Yeah, yeah. Bury your dead in houses

SALLY: So the Hobbits end up – no what happens is they fall asleep, I think, under the – and they try to travel at night, which is bad. And they get sort of drawn in basically by the evil spirit of this burial mound, which – I'm so glad you brought this up because I have something to say about daggers

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: So they get [laughs] drawn into this burial mound and there's the spirit of an evil king and he's got – not an evil king of an old king, who was buried there – and he's upon a pile of treasure, and something, I think, similar happens where there's just an interaction between the treasure and the hobbits and this evil spirit. I don't remember exactly how it's played out, but basically Frodo is able to defeat the Wight, the Barrow Wight, by – actually I think it's probably Gandalf, or – it's Tom Bombadil!

EMILY: Yeah! He comes back

SALLY: Oh my god I need to re-read these books

EMILY: No, I haven't – I remember the barrows scene only vaguely. So I'm glad you're here

SALLY: So Tom Bombadil is basically like, "If you ever need my help say this incantation," and Frodo does it, and Tom Bombadil comes and he punches a hole in the barrow and something about light, which defeats the barrow mound blah blah blah

EMILY: Whee!

SALLY: Which is big in *Lord of the Rings* mythology. Light and the sun. But they end up getting – like all the hobbits get, like, ceremonial daggers, which are a very good size for a sword for a hobbit, so they're like, "Oh, we're going to take these because we need swords."

EMILY: Yes

SALLY: "Because we're little." So they end up getting – Merry and Pippin, in particular, the daggers they get are really important, because later way, way, way down the line at the battle outside of Minas Tirith, they come into interaction with the Witch King of Angmar, who is one of the Nazgul. One of the Ring Wraiths. And the dagger that Merry – or Pippin – Merry? Picks up?

EMILY: It's Merry

SALLY: Yeah, at the barrow has some sort of deep mythological history that's connected to Angmar, so basically there's magic and a lineage in this dagger in particular that allows him to help in the defeat of the Witch King of Angmar. When he stabs it – this is not depicted in the movie at all, either. When he stabs in the leg, or something happens

EMILY: That's in the movie. Yeah

SALLY: But the fact that the dagger's important. When he stabs it that is part of the destruction

EMILY: We're just like, "Oh, any weapon could do that."

SALLY: Yeah, any weapon could do that, would just hurt him. Then allows Eowyn to do what she does. But the dagger that Merry has has something built into it. So this is a *huge* diversion, but basically there's more happening with the dagger that Mat picks up that also has a lineage

EMILY: No, I think there's a lot of – there's a big theme in fantasy of reclaiming something that's been cursed. And, of course, weapons having lineages. Frodo has his own weapon, Sting, that has been passed down to him from Bilbo, and just the idea that weapons have histories of their own. That's very interesting, but also, yeah, the idea that you can go into a bad situation and come out with something gained. And indeed – oh, god, I just said the word 'indeed' out loud –

SALLY: HA!

EMILY: And Mat does come out with this dagger that negatively affects him really badly for the next three books, but it's ultimately what leads him to some of the biggest parts of his character development. God, I think it's super interesting that we don't get Mat's point of view until after he's been removed, or the dagger has been removed from him and the holes in his memory are present

SALLY: Yeah

EMILY: We basically don't get to see Mat as the full person that he is ever. We don't get him until after, aftermath

SALLY: Which I – I have not thought enough about it to articulately say what's interesting about getting a hero's perspective for the first time after one of their many significant traumas, but it is very interesting that we're not given Mat

EMILY: Well, it's just, like, we don't know how much – we don't get to see whether he's been changed in any drastic way. By his outward behavior we're given he hasn't. Lots of people comment on how Mat is the same and Mat will always be the same, which is very interesting because Mat experiences some of the most fascinating growth in the series. But we don't get to see if, in Mat's internal monologue, he really is as greedy as he is in Shadar Logoth, because we don't get to see him until after where he isn't

SALLY: Where he definitely isn't. No I'm –

EMILY: And I don't think Robert Jordan would do that unless he meant for us to ask those sorts of questions, like

SALLY: Oh, for sure. I agree with you. And it is – we have so much to talk about. Math Cauthon is a fascinating character. But Emily and I have talked before about how Mat is the most internal character in the series. And so I often wonder, like, what division there is between Mat's internal life and the way that he acts

EMILY: It's a lot, I would argue

SALLY: Yeah, and I'm just, like, there's obviously a huge division, but I wonder how much of that is a conscious thing that Mat is doing? And I need to think more about it, and re-read some passages, but it's

basically, like, internal Mat is very wickedly intelligent, very observant. Of course a total weird, self-preservationist, isolationist weirdo [both laugh] but does care very deeply about people, but Mat externally – everyone’s like, “Mat’s fucking gambling again, fucking lecher.” Super interesting dynamic there between Mat Cauthon as viewed by everyone else and Mat Cauthon as presented to us from his point of view

EMILY: And you might think that that would lead him to be...I think this is where the trope would lead us of trickster character, that he then would have one of the least reliable point of views, that he’d be an unreliable point of view narrator, but he’s actually the most objective and the most reliable narrator as it refers to events around him. Maybe his own presentation of himself is a little flawed, but I think everyone’s is in this book

SALLY: Oh, yeah

EMILY: But Mat tends to present things as they are with the people around him and what’s going on

SALLY: Yeah, I love when I get a Mat point of view for an important scene, because I’m like, “Okay, I’m gonna get this.”

EMILY: I’m gonna trust what’s going on

SALLY: I’m gonna trust what’s happening, whereas Rand’s always putting his best light on it, Egwene has her ambitions that kind of color everything that happens, Nynaeve is, like, super dramatic as a narrator, but Mat is just kind of like – Mat is also very dramatic as a narrator, but he’s also just like – basically, this is a weird way to boil it down, but if Mat says that it’s raining really hard I trust that it’s raining really hard not that he’s overblowing it

EMILY: Yes

SALLY: The way that I would imagine Nynaeve probably would

EMILY: Well Mat has a tactician’s view of the world basically

SALLY: That’s a very good way to put it

EMILY: So he looks at things, yeah, objectively. Just like looking at the pros and cons of things, and little pieces of him slip through, like the way he assesses things’ worth, the worth of things, I should say, but it doesn’t color how he truthful he’s being about other people

SALLY: UGH he’s such a good, fascinating character, and a fascinating character. I know

EMILY: Which is why it’s so sad here to see one of the

SALLY: I know. AH

EMILY: Because when you’re reading it for the first time you’re just, like, infuriated

SALLY: Oh yeah

EMILY: You’re like, “AH this is the dumbest thing. Just tell her where you went. Tell her that you took a dagger. Please god.”

SALLY: But Mat is just like, “No.” Which is also very true to his character and – this is not the first instance, but one of the first strong instances of when he’s like “Let’s do this lads,” and Perrin is probably like, [mopey voice] “We should probably tell Moiraine.”

EMILY: Yeah

SALLY: And Mat’s like, “Are you fucking stupid? She’ll never let us go. She’ll just keep us on a leash. Whatever.”

EMILY: Mat’s very secretive. And it’s also very telling that when they exit, the first thing he does is dance around basically and say, “Freedom!”

SALLY: [laughs] “Freedom!”

EMILY: “We’re free!”

SALLY: What a fucking weirdo

EMILY: Which is just Mat’s instinct, always to escape in some way. To be free

SALLY: Which is like

EMILY: To pursue his own ends

SALLY: To pursue his own ends, that’s a very good way of putting it. So yeah, they come back

EMILY: Talk to Moiraine, and sort of this little scene ends with...they all try to sleep. It’s all pretty shitty sleep. They’re all having bad dreams, and Lan comes back in and says there’s Trollocs in the city, and that’s sort of where we’re going to end

SALLY: Yeah, so, in summary, Shadar Logoth is one of the most interesting episodes in the first book. It is a hallmark of immersive fantasy for many reasons. One: it is a ruin, which is, of course – immersive fantasy has a lot of ruins to let us know that the world has a long history, but it also functions a little bit outside the conflict of good and evil. It’s got it’s own dynamic going on. So, that was a hot summary of this episode

EMILY: We love it

SALLY: We love it. It’s the best. It’s the best. Weird logic, Mat dancing in the streets, super –

EMILY: Mordeth

SALLY: Mordeth!

EMILY: Well, a little bit of housekeeping. We’re going to be trying to do shorter episodes for your sake as well as our sake, and we are going to try and release them every Monday. That’s the schedule we’re going to try – we’re pretty much on it, but that’s what we’re trying to stick to. We are on iTunes. Find us under Everybody Hates Rand. We invite you to rate and subscribe. That’s the first time I’ve ever said that in my life what a feeling

SALLY: Oh oh

EMILY: [singing] hooked on a feeling [laughs]

SALLY: [sort of to the tune of “Hooked on a feeling”]do do do do

EMILY: You can also find us on PodOmatic, right?

SALLY: Yes, on PodOmatic, and on SoundCloud, but since we do not pay for a SoundCloud subscription you can only find episodes two and three, because we are over the limit of our SoundCloud

EMILY: Really?

SALLY: Yes

EMILY: God, I don’t know anything about SoundCloud

SALLY: Um, so I would recommend – I mean, use SoundCloud if you want to get caught up on the latest stuff, but PodOmatic or iTunes is probably your best bet

EMILY: We post about the things we talk about in the episodes, and we post links to these episodes, on Twitter. We’re @EHR_Podcast.

SALLY: Yes. We’re also on Tumblr. It’s everybodyhatesrand.tumblr.com. We are on Instagram at – I think it’s also EHRpodcast, but you can just search everybody hates rand. And, by the time this episode goes up, hopefully our website, which is – it’s a WordPress site guys, it’s not very fancy, but you can also find some general information about us and links to podcasts if you get lost. It’s ehrpodcast.wordpress.com. And, yeah, I was prepping myself to say the link, but I already did that

EMILY: No, yeah you’re good

SALLY: [laughs] so its ehrpodcast.wordpress.com

EMILY: You can email us at everybodyhatesrand@gmail.com. We welcome feedback and [obviously smiling as she talks] constructive feedback

SALLY: Constructive criticism in super lovely ways. Um, and just wanna – it’s been a really exciting couple of weeks for engagement with you guys. We’ve got a lot of new followers on Tumblr and a lot of lovely messages from people. You don’t always have to message us with compliments, like, I got a hilarious message from someone who was, like, I posted a picture of the book that we got and she was like, “You guys are from Utah, so you know what it means when I say DI, right?” And I laughed for like ten minutes. It was so lovely

EMILY: Boy do I know the DI

SALLY: [laughs] We were like, “Have we been to the DI.” So it was

EMILY: DI be popping, come on

SALLY: Yeah, DI be super popping. So it’s just super fun to hear from you guys. It’s been great to know that people are listening and love it. We were number 25 on PodOmatic in our category this week for a

while, which was just super exciting. So basically I love you guys and I would die for you and I wish I had something to give you other than my unconditional love over these radio waves

EMILY: [laughing] My love is more conditional. You have to earn it

SALLY: Eh heh [laughs]

EMILY: I'm not very open about my affection

SALLY: She's not. I am, though

EMILY: Yeah, so

SALLY: My one gift in life is enthusiastic affection

EMILY: Good cop, bad cop. Listen up, scrubs

SALLY: We – ugh – I love you and I'm just super happy to be able to meet the ones of you that I have met. So like, subscribe, follow, tweet, email, Tumblr, Instagram

EMILY: And we'll be back next week to talk about the fellowship getting broken

SALLY: Yeah, UH, so good. Just a fun fact to end with quickly, because if I don't do this now I will forget. I'm reading, slowly, but surely, I will probably never finish, this Companion to World Mythology, and there's a really interesting entry about Belenus, who is "a god of Celtic Gaul, who Julius Caesar compared to the Greco-Roman Apollo as a solar god of light and reason." But there were these certain festivals "fires of honor for the god were lit for the Celtic festival of Beltaine, which is Bel's fire"

EMILY: Heeeey

SALLY: Which may or may not have some connection to fantasy Christmas, Bel Time. So, there's your mythology fact of the week

EMILY: Was that your sign off or do you want to give us another one?

SALLY: Uh, I mean I can give you another one

EMILY: [laughing] sign us off, Sally Goodger

SALLY: Okay, a little known fact about me is that I don't get enough calcium [laughs] so this week I've been trying to take two Tums every day to get the calcium that I needed, but I literally hate it. Like, my body has a visceral reaction against it where I almost throw up every time I put it in my mouth

EMILY: That's your sign off? [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs] I just, like, can't handle it. But I've done it every day this week. That's the sign off. Health. Health and fitness. Meet your goals [laughs]

EMILY: Take care of yourself. Bye

SALLY: Self care!

EMILY: Bye

[Sally laughing as it ends]