

EPISODE 13 – “He’s Doing Bird Math”

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Run Time: 50 minutes

E: Yeah, we’ve cultivated a really weird energy here. We’re sitting in – I’m sitting in Sally’s spot. Sally’s sitting in nobody’s spot.

S: The ghost’s spot.

E: Cause we have like a – our table’s pressed up against the wall, so there’s three sides, and usually Sally sits against the wall and I sit on the – I don’t know how to describe it.

Sally: On the – on the outside side of the table.

E: Yeah, but now we’re both sitting next to the wall, facing each other, and it’s like . . .

S: It’s like . . . wow.

E: Well, it’s like we’re in a booth at a restaurant, for one thing.

S: Yeah.

E: Also, we’re both sick. Sorry. [laugh]

S: [laugh] Sorry. Yeah. Emily’s more sick than me, so send her your well wishes. Get well Tweets.

E: It sucks because the episode we just posted, the mini episode, I was sick in that one too.

S: She’s not always sick.

E: I am frequently sick these days.

S: Maybe you need to take more vitamin C.

E: Oh, that one.

S: The one that comes in oranges.

E: I don’t like it. I tried – I got the –

S: [laugh] Okay. Breaking news: There’s a vitamin that Emily just doesn’t have a taste for.

E: Well, it does taste bad!

S: [laugh]

E: I got the supplement. Chris, my dad, paid for me to get the vitamin C supplement. Everyone in my family is really worried I’m going to get scurvy for some reason. I do eat fruits and vegetables. [pause] I have apples!

S: [laugh] Those are yours?

E: Fuck you! Those have been switched out like three times! I get two apples a week!

S: That is the first I'm hearing of this. I – it's not that, I'm not judging your eating habits because that is a shitty thing to do. I just have never noticed that there are always two apples sitting on the counter. This is so weird to me. I'm learning so many new things about you.

E: Oh, anyway, I took a vitamin C pill, and a) they were about the size of my pinkie finger, so that was disgusting. Also they were like the type of pill that feels chalky.

S: Oh, yeah.

E: And actually when you – actually, it starts to disintegrate in liquid and stuff.

S: Yeah.

E: And it had a bad taste. So I tried. It almost killed me the first time I took the vitamin C supplement.

S: [groan]

E: [sigh] But let's not talk about how I'm sick anymore and how I'm making really disgusting mouth noises that I'm gonna have to edit out later.

S: That one was okay.

E: Let's talk about book news.

S: [sing] Book news! Okay. In the realm of personal book news, we finally saw "A Wrinkle in Time."

E: Yeah. Here's our review: We liked it. We liked Oprah. It has the cutest little boy in the entire world.

S: Playing Charles Wallace.

E: Yeah, playing Charles Wallace.

S: He's so cute! He's wearing sweater vests the entire movie and has missing teeth.

E: He was adorable.

S: Awawww!

E: It wasn't like – I see why – a lot of people have been critical of it for being . . . I dunno, it's hard to define what people are critical of. I think it's just that it's a very positive movie with like a very simplistic message? Like self-love and love defeats evil and stuff like that.

S: Mm-hmm.

E: And people are expecting some sort of revolutionary theory.

S: Yeah, because it's like a science thing?

E: I dunno.

S: Or just because people – and that's, 'kay, that's annoying to me, then if people want to have high standards for this but yet they'll go consume the garbage that is the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Excluding "Black Panther," that was an amazing movie.

E: I really do think people just had really high expectations for Ava DuVernay. Which, by the way, Ava DuVernay had like a hilarious –

S: [laugh]

E: like, director's note before the show even started? Like, before the movie came on, Ava DuVernay showed up and was like, "Hi, I'm director Ava DuVernay. Here's 'A Wrinkle in Time.'" I don't remember what she said. I was so confused.

S: She was basically just like, "Thank you." It was so weird. It was super weird.

E: Like, "Thanks for seeing it. We had a great experience. Bye."

S: Yeah, and I don't know if she's trying to start some new thing where directors get to talk about their movie or if she was just like, "I get to do this because it's my movie." It was really weird. I didn't like it. Um, I also know some people had some problems with the pacing. I did too. I know you didn't. Um, I just think the pacing is kind of weirdly proportioned. Like I feel like – not to boil everything down to a super basic structure, but I feel like there were high points and the gaps between the high points are like proportioned weirdly. Like the beginning of the movie is a little bit slow and fast at the same time and there's kind of like a really weird valley throughout the rest of the movie and then the climax happens really quickly.

E: I mean, I . . . yeah, yeah, I understand that. I think I just was not expecting to be super entertained by the plot?

S: No.

E: So maybe that helped. But also – I thought there were some – yeah, I thought that was a bad thing about it. I thought it was really – had amazing visuals.

S: Oh, it was beautiful.

E: We didn't talk about that afterwards, but it was a really beautiful movie. The costume design was both beautiful for the Mrs. – you know, Mrs. Who, Mrs. Whatsit, Mrs. Which – but also hilarious because our two main teens –

S: [laugh]

E: Played by Lev Miller and Storm Reid, started out with like six shirts apiece.

S: Yeah.

E: And then got stripped down to one each. It was weird.

S: It was super weird, yeah.

E: Lev Miller kept taking off shirts, and I was like, "How many does he have under there?"

S: A million.

E: Like every time something happened, he'd lose a shirt. Which was incredible.

S: Yeah, which, I dunno, was weird. [laugh]

E: Was it for the costume design to be like, "Look, time is passing"? But.

S: But like –

E: But I don't care.

S: I don't want to watch a teenage boy just strip down T-shirts after T-shirts.

E: Yeah. Which, by the way, I was really happy he was like a *teenage* boy. And she was a teenage girl.

S: Yeah, not like – not like Zac Efron. [laugh]

E: Yeah, God. Yeah, he wasn't the usual, Disney cast a boy of, you know –

S: Yeah.

E: Twenty-three.

S: He was actually lanky and his body was proportioned kind of weird.

E: Yeah. God bless him.

S: God bless him. He still kind of had a baby face.

E: Yeah.

S: He was very sweet. I liked him a lot.

E: Yeah, I liked the – little, you know –

S: Calvin? I wanted to say Simon. [laugh] What's the other chipmunk? Theodore.

E: Calvin's not one of the chipmunks. Oh, *Alvin*. Aha!

S: Alvin, you're right, it's not Calvin. It's Alvin.

E: Still good.

S: I was about to say Calvin and the Chipmunks. No, it's *Alvin* and the Chipmunks.

E: Calvin and Hobbes. I do love the name Calvin.

[Theme song – “Tubthumping” by Chumbawamba]

E: Okay, welcome to Everybody Hates Rand, our Wheel of Time podcast. Um, I'm Emily Juchau.

S: I'm Sally Goodger.

E: And we're here, two invalids, to tell you.

S: Invalids.

E: [sick voice] Invalids. To tell you about –

S: [snort]

E: What?

S: It was just funny. [laugh] We'll get through this together, kids.

E: [cough]

S: [laugh]

E: I sneezed at least forty times today.

S: Oh, I did too. At work I kept being like – just like a fucking choo-choo train.

E: [laugh]

S: Honking, with the tissues. Blowing my nose.

E: I'm really good at blowing my nose one-handed because I have to keep ahold of the leash of the dog I'm walking with the other. So that's like a weird skill that I have.

S: It's a good skill. Put it on a resume.

E: "Hello. Can blow nose one-handed."

S: "Can blow nose with one hand."

E: "Can do many other things with one hand."

S: [clicks tongue]

E: [imitates tongue-clicking]

S: This is our Wheel of Time podcast. Spoiler alert: We play fast and loose with spoilers. That's your alert. [claps]

E: And it's over.

S: [laugh] They know. If they've gone thirteen episodes – I assume. If you're starting on episode – episode twelve? Thirteen.

E: No, it's thirteen. Hey, lucky episode thirteen. [clicks tongue]

S: If you're starting on episode thirteen –

E: We're making a lot of clicking noises this time around.

S: [clicks tongue]

E: 'Kay.

S: [clicks tongue again]

E: If you're starting on episode thirteen, I don't know what you're doing.

S: [laugh] Maybe they're just like gonna try it out. Like when you – I dunno.

E: "Here's their new one." I think they'd start with episode twelve cause that's the shortest one.

S: Yeah, then they'd be very misinformed because that's not what the podcast is. Also, thank you for listening if you listened last week. I hope you enjoyed it. It was very weird.

E: Okay. [sniffs] Do I have the book with me?

S: You do have the book with you.

E: I have the book under a pile of –

S: Tissues.

E: Tissues. Ugh.

S: We're super clean and healthy.

E: I have my trash can next to my bed. I just wake up in the night – blowing my –

S: Oh my God, you have your own trash can?

E: Yeah, I'm very rich. [laugh]

S: I have a bag from Uniqlo.

E: Oh my God.

S: [laugh] Emily's the bougiest.

E: Because I have my own trash can?!

S: Not the bougiest. The wealthiest. The most successful.

E: I think my mom gave that to me. Anyway.

S: Okay. This episode we are going to talk about . . .

E: Uh, mostly Perrin and Egwene, but first we've gotta get through this really brief Nynaeve point of view.

S: Yeah.

E: Basically, it's her, Moiraine, and Lan. They have a little bit of a montage where they're traveling, uh, to Whitebridge and they get to Whitebridge and check in at the same inn that our boys and Thom, uh, went to, and they kind of find out the news that, um, they kind of find out sort of a sketch of what happened. They find out that two boys were here, and there's something about a gleeman, and something about a ship. We find out now from these guys that, uh, Bayle Domon and his crew got away from Whitebridge safely.

S: Good.

E: Although sort of rushed out town with – you know, torches and pitchforks, because they've been accused of bringing the Myrddraal down on them. And Moiraine decides, instead of going after the two boys that were there – and she doesn't know which ones they were – she's gonna go after the one of them that still has the coin. Because she only tracked Rand and Mat this far on the basis that they were going down the river and Whitebridge was the logical stop.

S: Mm-hmm.

E: But now she's figures, "Oh, well, Caemlyn is the next logical stop. So I can safely assume that if they get there, that's where they're going to be. Meanwhile I've got to go get the one who's veering off through the wilderness."

S: Yeah. She's like, "Some idiot's taken a detour."

E: "Running in circles."

S: She probably thinks it's Mat.

E: Yeah. I mean, who wouldn't?

S: "He's running in circles. It's definitely Mat."

E: It's Mat. He's doing fuck knows what.

S: [laugh] Up there in the woods.

E: Making crop circles.

S: [laugh] Yeah, oh my God.

E: [laugh] A few things to note in this little point of view. We've got the increasing sexual tension between Nynaeve and Lan. Which, I'll be honest, I give no fucks about. They're the least interesting heterosexual couple in basically the entire world?

S: Yeah.

E: Yeah. Can't think of one more boring.

S: Well, it's like my least favorite trope of – not, 'kay, I say that about every trope about straight couples is my least favorite trope – but this particular one where he's like significantly older than her . . .

E: Yeah. Don't like that.

S: And like that's always just – and everyone's like, "It's fine because they actually love each other." And it's like, "Sure, whatever. Age is but a number." But it happens so frequently in fiction, and it's always the woman who's significantly younger?

E: Yeah, and there always seems to be the basis of, like, "Well, she's mature enough for him." Which is definitely not true. Nynaeve's a very immature woman.

S: Oh my God, she's the most – 'kay, sidebar, though, I saw an article from The Reductress today – do you know what that is?

E: I know what the Reductress is, yeah.

S: I didn't, for like a long time. And then Lauren set me an article and I deadass thought it was real. And I was like, "What the fuck is this?" And she was like, "No, you stupid idiot." [laugh] But anyway, the article was like, "A man is dating a woman significantly younger than him because she's 'mature' and also doesn't know that she's supposed to cum too." [laugh]

E: Awwwww. That's really sad.

S: Yeah, and I was like . . . super sad. Um. But that's all I can think of when I think of these relationships.

E: Yeah, there's also the whole, like . . . the, um, thing where Nynaeve's kind of doing all the emotional labor in this relationship because Lan's super shut-off and "has a tragic back story" and fuckin' . . . bleh bleh bleh.

S: And they also have that trope which I – we literally just had a conversation about how not everything comes from Harry Potter – but they have like the Lupin and Tonks trope where he's like, "You should go have a –"

E: Oh, yeah, the cursed lover trope.

S: Yeah, thank you. That was the only example I could think of.

E: No, yeah.

S: Where it's like, "You should go have a more fulfilled life because I'm – bleh." Like, shut up.

E: Yeah. Yeah.

S: Shut up. Anyway. Agreed. This is me rambling about how boring it is. It's fine.

E: No, they're so boring. Even I – I even find Rand's various relationships more interesting because they at least have to deal with polyamory and polygamy.

S: Yeah.

E: Um, in its various forms. Um, we also have Nynaeve's kind of developing internal relationship with the idea of being an Aes Sedai. She's sort of starting to come to terms with that, like she always – she's always using, like, frankly racist language, like the word "filthy" are usually used, um, racistly –

S: Mm-hmm.

E: Okay. Anyway, Nynaeve doesn't speak internally very positively about Aes Sedai but she's sort of coming to terms with the fact that she's going to be one and that she at least wants to go to Tar Valon to kind of like milk whatever she can get from it. She also has an interesting confrontation with Moiraine at the end of this where, um, Moiraine's saying, "I'm going to go find this one boy who went off on his own," and Nynaeve says, "Well, I want to find the boys too, but what about Egwene? 'You never even mention her, and you ignore me when you ask.'"

S: Mm-hmm.

E: "I thought you were going to take her off to Tar Valon." And yeah, Moiraine has kind of a weird, cold response where she's like, "I hope to find Egwene alive and well too. I do not easily give up young women with that much ability, but it will be as the Wheel we—[stutters]—ugh."

S: Ha! See, here we go! The tongue-twister.

E: It's such a tongue-twister! "But it will be as the Wheel weaves." God. How did he not realize "Wheel weaves" is the worst fucking phrase?

S: I think you're right, I don't think he ever said it out loud.

E: Anyway. I don't get why Moiraine has that response. It's a reasonable question from Nynaeve.

S: Yeah.

E: Nynaeve's just like, "Well, what about Egwene? We haven't really been talking about her."

S: Moiraine is just like, "Don't question me. Peasant."

E: Yeah. Yeah.

S: It's a really weird interaction.

E: Yeah, I don't get it?

S: It almost feels out of character? I mean, I know normally Moiraine is like distant and whatever, but how hard would it be to be like, “Of course I’m worried about Egwene too.” But like instead she’s like, [laugh] “The Wheel weaves [stuttering] The Wheel will do as it wills with your weave.” Which was the best Tumblr post I’ve ever seen.

E: Yeah, I agree it’s out of character. Moiraine, in terms of like leadership, she’s often very vague and ambiguous and it’s one of her main mentor faults, but yeah, this isn’t a place where she needs to be ambiguous. Like, “Sure, I’m worried about Egwene.” Like, what is she worried about, betraying emotional attachment to Egwene?

S: Yeah, well, I mean.

E: Like, she’s not.

S: As we’ve already discussed, if you don’t tell people your feelings you can’t die.

E: Yeah.

S: So.

E: Moiraine does die, though.

S: Yeah, well, does she? [laugh]

E: [laugh] Well, yeah, actually.

S: But also like – the language is really weird? Where she’s like, “I don’t give up young women.”

E: As though she’s done it before. I don’t think she has.

S: Yeah, and it’s also like, you’re – like, I don’t know if at this point she just hasn’t come to terms with the Emond’s Fielders’ relationship to Aes Sedai, but you shouldn’t just play into the rhetoric of Aes Sedai –

E: Are kidnappers, yeah.

S: Collecting young girls and even these boys. Like, you should – like they’ve openly said, “Aes Sedai just steal –“

E: Steal kids.

S: “Steal kids, basically.” Not exactly in those words. But those attitudes should be really important. I mean, should be really obvious to you. And so it’s just like a really weird thing that you’re doing. And yes, then we kind of get into, like, what is the mentor’s role in emotionally –

E: Well, for someone who is supposedly a master of manipulation, Moiraine was raised in the French Louis the fourteenth court –

S: Yeah.

E: You know, she’s not being very successfully manipulative here.

S: No. She’s doing a really bad job at manipulating.

E: So in some ways – I keep doing this, and I probably shouldn’t – but I keep chalking things up to like Robert Jordan just not knowing the larger scope of these novels as he’s writing this first one.

S: Yeah.

E: And so . . . but, yeah, maybe it's just an out of character moment.

S: Or just like a badly written one.

E: Yeah.

S: Like these books are so large and there's so many of them that I just get the feeling that not – there was an incredible – *wasn't* an incredible amount of rewriting.

E: Yeah. I agree.

S: Um. Which is interesting. To kind of see a story in its most raw form. Not its most raw form, I don't think that would have been published, but like a reasonably raw form. Um.

E: Okay, so this next chapter –

S: [laugh]

E: Phew. Sorry, my voice just cracked. [laugh] Um, this next chapter, back to Perrin and Egwene. And it's basically them with Elyas, and they're kind of being driven forward by this sort of weird anxiety that only Elyas seems conscious of.

S: [laugh] Which is hilarious to me.

E: Yeah, which is pretty hilarious. He's like not letting them build fires every night, like he's being real careful. He always makes sure that their campsite is – he makes sure that it is perfectly concealed, that there wasn't any sign that it was there, and Perrin's like, "I dunno what the fuck's going on." Perrin's like, "Is this to do with my dreams?" Dumbass.

S: Fuckin' weirdo. Not everything is about your dreams, Perrin. Shut up.

E: I know. Egwene's like, "Are the Trollocs back?" And Elyas just shakes his head and is like, "No." And Perrin knows that there aren't Trollocs because the wolves would have smelled it. So really they're just being confused as their – Elyas runs them forward.

S: Yeah.

E: For like a few days, it sounds like. Um, Elyas is also doing this thing where he's complaining about everything he's doing. [laugh] Like, they're in this sort of ridgy landscape, I'm picturing it kind of like the – you know the opening sequence in "The Two Towers"?

S: Mm-hmm.

E: That really rocky, ridgy landscape.

S: "The Two Towers" is a great film.

E: "The Two Towers" is a great film. I concur. One of my favorites. Elyas is like having them go around the hills, on the basis of, once you get to the top of the hill you're really easily spotted for like miles around. Um, and he's complaining about this, but anytime Egwene and Perrin try and like, "Okay, well, we don't – you're the one who is making us go around the hills. Why are you complaining?" He's like, "Shut up."

S: [laugh]

E: Oh, this is great. They exchange glances and Elyas – [laugh] Egwene sticks her tongue out at Elyas' back. I love Egwene.

S: [laugh]

E: She's so hilarious. Eventually they reach a hill where, uh . . . when they do reach hills they can't go around, Elyas just creeps to the top and gets down on his stomach and army-crawls up there to look around and scout out the terrain, looking, again, for we don't know what.

S: Fuckin' weirdo.

E: And conveniently, the first time that Perrin says, "I'm gonna come with you," is when they actually see something. Anyway, they're looking out over the land and Perrin starts to stand up and immediately about a hundred ravens burst out from some trees and spiral into the sky.

S: Dun dun dun.

E: And Perrin's like, "Hwah." And freezes. And he's thinking, "Oh, they're the Dark One's eyes." Like, "Did they see me?" Like immediately he's aware of the danger of this, like when you see that many ravens all at once – this is one of the aspects of this world, is that ravens and rats are already intrinsically linked to the Dark One. So it doesn't take any pushing from Elyas to be like, "Oh, this is really dangerous for us."

S: Mm-hmm.

E: Perrin just knows. Perrin asks, "Why didn't the wolves see them?" And Elyas says, "Wolves don't look up in trees much." Which is hilarious. And it's kind of like there's just these birds out scouting, following Perrin's dream, like Ba'alzamon knows now sort of vaguely where he is, but not exactly. And maybe the ravens don't even know what they're looking for. Just kind of something. Sort of like how Elyas doesn't really know what he's running from. And so Elyas sort of calls back the wolves, they're ahead scouting, now Elyas wants them to go around to the back trail to see if the ravens are behind them. Basically they call up Egwene, they're like, "We've gotta keep moving," they tell her what's going on, and thus begins the hunt. Anyway, it's like "The Birds." Alfred Hitchcock over here. They see an animal – it's a fox – tear this poor little animal apart. And that's sad. And they do that to a bunch of animals, and they keep seeing them, and that's really scary and dramatic. People are throwing up. It's just like this really long fucking chase.

S: Yeah, I remember it being really long.

E: Yeah. And the whole time, you know, they're – Perrin's narrating what they're doing, but he's also being very internal about it. He has a whole segment where he kind of has to admit that he can feel – he can understand what the wolves are saying.

S: Mm-hmm.

E: Because he [clears throat], he feels them have an encounter with some of the ravens, and he and Elyas both kind of like stop and exchange looks, and he has to say, "Oh, they're behind us."

S: This is such a weird chapter. But yeah, it's very long, and it's like a really – it's a period of really extended, heightened anxiety. Like it's a terrible chapter to read. It just acts upon the reader in super gross ways.

E: Yeah, you feel really anxious too.

S: Yeah.

E: And, like, kind of nauseous cause you're getting all these descriptions of animals that got torn apart, and that's really upsetting.

S: Yeah, it's really graphic.

E: Yeah.

S: Like almost out of line with the rest of the book.

E: Yeah.

S: At least this first book. Like we've discussed, like the second and third ones, and on and on, gets more graphic with like the depictions of people who are flayed alive – super disgusting.

E: Yeah. Violence in the – it's pretty interesting. The Wheel of Time, for being so PG-13 as it is about sex and absolutely G-rated in terms of swearing is like so video game about its violence.

S: I have so many thoughts about this particular thing. About –

E: What, about being graphic about violence but not sex?

S: Yes! What the fuck? What the fuck. I would so much rather read an extended twenty-five pages of people fucking.

E: [laugh]

S: Like I do not care. I do not like the word semen. You can say "semen" as many times as you want. I would rather read that than just like fucking people killing each other. Why are we so much more comfortable with that? It – ugh. It drives me crazy.

E: Maybe because violence is a male arena, and sex brings women's bodies in? [sneeze]

S: But then there's like violence against women. That – and people are like way more comfortable with.

E: Yeah. Especially sexual violence against women.

S: Violence against women is like invisible. Yeah. I hate it. I hate it. I hate it so much. And I'm – ugh. It's fine.

E: No, I wanna – yeah, I don't ever think about that, but you're right, there's a lot of stuff that like . . . I also, growing up in a conservative household that was like really strict about what I watched and what I, the sort of stuff that I consumed, we'd always go on this website called Kids In Mind – you can look it up, it's still up – that rates movies in three categories. Their sexual – sex slash nudity, violence, and then swearing. And it's like out of ten. So you know, you'd get movies that are like, Quentin Tarantino, that are like nine, nine, nine. Whatever.

S: [laugh] What Quentin Tarantino movie is a nine out of ten? In any of those categories, especially violence.

E: I dunno.

S: Like I feel like they should all be ten out of ten? I don't know, that's just so . . . anyway. That's random.

E: I used to, when I was a kid, just out of curiosity, find the movies that had tens.

S: Yeah.

E: Cause then you click on them, and it like gives you the description of what happens.

S: Then what's the point of the website?

E: It's for parents. Like I wasn't supposed to be reading these.

S: [laugh] Okay.

E: But these descriptions would be like, "A man and a woman have sex." Like, "a side of a breast is seen. We see half the man's dick." Stuff like that.

S: A half a man's dick. Vertically, though.

E: Like, "we see thrusting." Blah blah blah blah blah. Gross stuff like that. But anyway. The point is that my parents were always way more comfortable with me watching stuff that had like violence – high violence ratings, than anything that had high sex ratings. They're also pretty comfortable with swearing.

S: Okay.

E: I mean, yeah.

S: Yeah. Yeah, I don't even –

E: They were easiest about swearing, then violence, then sex. I think it might have something to do with conservative communities' relationship to pornography?

S: Mm-hmm.

E: You know, the – porn, for the most part's, not a great industry for women.

S: Yes.

E: And a lot of people have porn addictions. I can't believe we're talking about this on a Wheel of Time podcast. [laugh]

S: You never know what you're gonna get when you come to Everybody Hates Rand.

E: A lot of people, especially in repressed religious communities, develop pornography addictions that can lead to a lot of problems in their sex lives and with their partners, if they happen to have partners. So I think maybe my parents and other parents kind of viewed sex in movies, like casual sex, as like a gateway to that? But that's in movies, again. That doesn't necessarily relate to books. Maybe it does a little bit. There's pornographic books.

S: There are definitely pornographic books.

E: Hell yeah.

S: I don't know. This is endlessly fascinating to me. And yeah, I think you're right, it probably does have to do a lot with, uh – I don't know exactly how to unpack it, but I think it probably does have a lot to do with what role women play in it.

E: Yeah.

S: And like what we're comfortable with in terms of . . . because, the women – ugh, see, now we're getting into all types of weird stuff that we don't need to talk about extensively. But the female body, for how much it is accessed, like how much it's treated as public access, is also policed so heavily.

E: Yeah.

S: And you're right. Like there's never – even if a woman were to be in a scene where it's violent, it'd be not – she wouldn't be naked. Well, that's a whole other issue, she probably would be naked, because people don't understand that women need armor. Um. [laugh]

E: [humorlessly] Ha ha ha.

S: So it's just like this weird thing. I don't know. It's like you can't see women in any type of way that is – I don't know, loose? Pleasurable? It's very weird. And I grew up – honestly, I've never thought about it, but I think that my mom had a pretty opposite –

E: Oh, she was . . .

S: She was much more comfortable with me – like I remember watching a show with her on something, and there was just like a man's naked butt, and I was probably like little, and she was just like, "Oh! Whatever." Like it was no big deal. And like yeah, I mean, it's a butt. It wasn't like a man's full dick. But she was just like, "Whatever." Super casual about it, and it wasn't a huge deal. But she hated when we watched things that were violent. Like she got upset when my brother was playing video games that were violent, and I know that's like a whole other conversation about what prompts violence, but she didn't even want to see – she hasn't seen "The Hunger Games" films yet, to this day, because she's like super uncomfortable with spectacle – violence as spectacle. Which is hilarious, because that is the entire theme of that book.

E: Yeah.

S: And she doesn't seem to see the irony there. I think it's super funny. But it was like very backwards. And so – very backwards to what your experience is, I believe.

E: Like I remember watching, when I was little, my mom renting the movie "Kindergarten Cop" with Arnold Schwarzenegger.

S: Oh! You mean the most incredible movie ever made.

E: It's an incredible movie.

S: That movie is *so* good.

E: I must have been like seven or eight, I swear.

S: Mm-hmm.

E: And my mom must have got like an edited version or something. I think my dad was out of town. For some reason I watched this movie alone with my mom. I don't know where my siblings were.

S: What a wild experience.

E: I have no idea. But I have this distinct memory of watching this movie, and it's like – it's a very violent movie. Like Arnold Schwarzenegger is going around punching people –

S: Super violent.

E: Someone gets hit by a car at some point. There're also some funny sexual moments, like there's a little kid in the kindergarten class that's like, "Boys have a penis and girls have a vagina!" Like loudly, like three times in the movie.

S: Yeah.

E: And I remember like picking up on the discomfort from my mother whenever moments like that would happen versus the, you know, basic comfort of when violence was happening. So I just like, was accustomed . . . I don't know, maybe she just thought it was more likely that I would see violence on TV.

S: Yeah.

E: Unmonitored. But I don't know, I'm interested that you had the opposite experience.

S: Yeah, I just – I don't know. Yeah. It's just very fascinating. And I don't know if there's like one thing that's like – obviously I don't believe there's a right thing for parents to be upset about, like kids can see all type of shit on TV these days, which is like not good.

E: I mean, I was also the kid who, the big TV show that I was interested in as a kid was Redwall.

S: Yes.

E: Which is animated and has like mice instead of people, but there's also like sword-swinging and there's like a giant snake that eats some of the mice, and it can be really scary. So I was clearly a child who was like . . .

S: "Violence."

E: "I'm into it."

S: "I'm into it!"

E: "Bring on the warfare."

S: Yeah. I dunno. It's just, it's very weird to me and like really interesting the responses that people have to it – and that varies – like, parents have to it. Like to this day, violence makes me uncomfortable. Like I don't like watching violent things.

E: Yeah.

S: I don't like reading about them either. Like I don't really like – like parts of Wheel of Time – like any time there's a war scene or a battle scene I barely even read it to be honest.

E: Yeah.

S: It's like, not – like the war, on a conceptual level, is really interesting, especially when you get to Mat in book five once he has his memories of dead generals, that's all super interesting – but I'm not really on board with just reading all these depictions of violence. And I'm kind of that way in a lot of books, like I

don't really read action sequences. Which is probably like a – it's not probably, it's definitely a personal fault. And so it's just, it's just weird. Anyway. We did – this is – I'm taking an interesting theoretical discussion and taking it to my own reading practices, which is not the point. But just something that I'm endlessly fascinated in, and I want answers. Like why are you – why are we so uncomfortable with sex? But we're totally fine just watching this guy on "Game of Thrones" get his head squished like a grape.

E: I didn't watch that.

S: It was disgusting.

E: I got lucky, because I knew it was coming.

S: Yeah, it was nasty. I mean, yeah.

E: Basically I took off my headphones and walked away for five minutes. I think I made a snack.

S: It's – anyway. I would so much rather have graphic sex scenes.

E: Well, speaking of graphic violence in this scene . . .

S: Graphic! What the fuck does that even mean?

E: Ugh.

S: 'Kay. Anyway. Sorry, that was totally off topic.

E: Well, on topic but also related to violence, um, this is probably the most interesting part of this chapter. Also the most upsetting. Um, at some point Perrin realizes that now that they have ravens behind them, that they're going to catch up eventually, before they – before the sun sets? Which, they're sort of racing to get to some place that Elyas says, like, "I know a place where we'll be safe, but also if the sun goes down then that's good because ravens roost at night, so we'll be fine."

S: Mm-hmm.

E: But Perrin kind of realizes, "Oh, it's two hours before it's fully dark but they'll catch up with us in an hour. So. You know. We're not gonna make it."

S: Bird math. [laugh]

E: Yeah, he's doing bird math. I don't know what he's fucking doing over here.

S: [laugh] Sorry, that's super funny to me. "As the crow flies."

E: I guess, yeah, he's basing it off where the wolves are and like his understanding of where the wolves are –

S: Yeah.

E: It's really stupid.

S: It's just really hilarious that Perrin has like a bird algorithm. [laugh]

E: Yeah, but, um, here's how this scene goes.

S: Ugh.

E: It's totally, it's totally unprompted. He realizes this. Egwene says, "It's your turn to ride, Perrin." He says, "In a bit. I'm good for miles yet." She's like, "Fine," stays in the saddle. His thought process, in italics, is, "*She is tired. Tell her or let her think we still have a chance to escape? An hour of hope, even if it is desperate, or an hour of despair?*" And, uh, Elyas sort of looks over at him. Perrin thinks, "Oh, he knows this too, but he's not saying anything. "Perrin looked at Egwene again and blinked away hot tears. He touched his axe and wondered if he had the courage. In the last minutes, when the ravens descended on them, when all hope was gone, would he have the courage to spare her the death the fox had died? *Light make me strong,*" he thinks.

[long pause]

E: Okay. So.

S: Let's unpack this, kiddos.

E: Well, let's get through the entirety of this process.

S: Okay, sorry. Let's get through the entirety of it.

E: No, no, I'm . . . he's sort of thinking these thoughts of whether he's going to mercy-kill Egwene, but very shortly after that, they reach the *stedding*, which is the safe space that Elyas mentioned, where the Dark One's spies can't get them. And obviously they're very relieved. They come to a campsite, and Perrin kind of on his own isn't willing to meet Egwene's eyes, because he's like, "Oh my God."

S: "I thought about killing you."

E: "I thought about killing you. Would I have done it?" They camp and eat . . . anyway, he has this conversation with Elyas where Elyas says, "You hate her that much? Do you hate the girl, despise her? That's it, you were ready to kill her because you despise her, always dragging her feet, holding you back with her womanish ways." Perrin says, "No, she doesn't drag her feet. I don't hate her. I love her, because she's my friend." And Elyas says, "Yes you do. If she had to choose her way of dying, which do you think she'd pick? One clean blow of your axe or the way the animals we saw today died? I know which I'd take." And Perrin says, "I don't have any right to choose for her. You won't tell her, will you?" And then they change the subject about – and go into Perrin's entire relationship with violence, which in my mind is irrelevant.

S: Correct.

E: So, here's a few thoughts I have. Uh, Perrin immediately regrets thinking this, and he says he doesn't have any right to choose for her, which is correct. Perrin does not have any right to choose how Egwene dies. It's a very paternalistic thing to think that because I'm the man with the axe I get to choose how Egwene is going to experience her death. Like, if she asked, it would be different.

S: Mm-hmm.

E: But as it is it's just making me think of the ending of that Stephen King movie "The Mist." Which, for some reason I read the synopsis on Wikipedia the other day. I think it's – yeah, "The Mist." At the end there's this whole thing where the guy mercy-kills everyone, including his son, and then right then, the police show up.

S: I was about to say that's exactly how that scenario would've played out. Like, the tragic – in the Greek tragic tradition, it would be like, Perrin mercy-kills everyone and then all the ravens disappear. Or are shot out of the sky by some other deus ex machina.

E: Yeah, yeah.

S: Type scenario. That's like totally, one hundred percent –

E: How it would've happened.

S: How that would have happened. And so it's like good on Robert Jordan for not doing that because I would have been pissed.

E: Yeah, just kill off Egwene, book one.

S: I would have been like, "There's no point in reading anymore. Egwene is the main character."

E: Yeah, I wouldn't have asked you to read it. [laugh]

S: [laugh]

E: Um, I can make an argument for the fact that it's important to have narrators' thoughts, even the ones that are ugly and that we don't like. And I don't know, we've never been in this type of situation. Like if I was running from danger with someone that I cared about, would I consider – and I had a big weapon, and they didn't – would I be like, "Is it my responsibility to end this person's life so that they don't have a really terrible death of being mauled?"

S: Mm-hmm.

E: Mauling is, I think arguably, the worst way to die. [laugh] Um. So I don't know if we can fault Perrin for having the thought. I do think we can fault Robert Jordan for writing it in the way that he did.

S: Yeah.

E: Which is to not unpack it in its entirety.

S: Yeah.

E: And also to not have Perrin talk to Egwene about it. It's pretty telling that he then talks to Elyas about it.

S: 'Kay, but if you had – if you had a passing thought, "Oh, I should kill my friend," would you then tell them about it?

E: He just has this – he's very traumatized by it, obviously, and it's like – it's not just a passing thought. I mean, it is just a thought and he gets away from it pretty quickly, but like he does continue thinking about it for the rest of the chapter, and he's like, "Can't ever tell Egwene about this." But I'm like, I don't know. I think the only way you get over it is to talk to them about it. I dunno, maybe that's just me. I sort of think that the solution to every problem is open communication, so.

S: Yes, that's the healthy reason. That's the healthy response. As a person who doesn't deal healthily with things that have traumatized me, I would never.

E: Okay.

S: Ever.

E: Yeah, that's fine.

S: If I had a passing – not, I mean, you're right, it's not a passing thought – but if I was like, "I thought about whether I not I should kill you to save you from this death," I would not be then like, "I had this thought. And I realize . . ." No, that sounded very condescending. I would never a) start a conversation that condescendingly, I hope, but I would never be like, "I had the thought about killing you and I think I should tell you that." I dunno.

E: I'd want you to tell me.

S: O-okay.

E: For the record. [laugh]

S: Okay. That's good to know. I hope we're never in a situation where I have to think – first of all, if anyone's gonna have the weapon, it would be you. I would never be like, "Give me the weapon."

E: Oh my God.

S: We just had a conversation about how averse I am to –

E: You would be with the horse because the horse would like you better than me.

S: 'Kay. That's my ideal scenario. Everything loves you, though. Everybody loves you. The horse would love you too.

E: Okay, I guess I just think that like because they're dealing in this "what if" scenario, the reason I'd want to talk to her about it would be like, "I had this thought and it really scared me because I don't know what you would want in that moment."

S: Okay.

E: And like, "I guess I want to be clear. In the future, it seems like we're going to be running for our lives a lot more, like at what point – I don't know, I just think we need to hash this out. What do you want from – what do you want in your death?" That's like another thing. They're both really young.

S: Yeah.

E: They'd – I'd want to be talking about, like, "Here's how I want my body – here's what I want to happen to my body. Here's what I want you to notify my parents of."

S: Okay, that – see, that I can get more on board with. If Perrin were going to be like, "Hey, this kind of crossed my mind. If this were ever gonna happen again, what would be your wishes?" And he was like asking the question, that I get.

E: "Here are – here are my wishes."

S: "Here are my wishes." I get – I can understand that. But I would just not understand him just being like, "This is a thought that I had and I think I should tell you about it."

E: Yeah, you're right. That makes it sound like he's asking for permission to have that thought.

S: Yeah, he's just like, "Is it okay that I thought about bludgeoning you to death with my big axe?"

E: Ugh.

S: Like, wouldn't that upset you? It would make me very upset.

E: Okay. Good to know.

S: I mean, if you do have thoughts about bludgeoning me, I don't blame you.

E: We need to stop. [laugh]

S: [laugh]

E: The point is, um, he then – he does communicate with Elyas about it, but a) Elyas brings up the topic, and then they just don't really talk about it in relation to Egwene herself.

S: Yeah, no, I agree with you. It's super troubling that Egwene is entirely removed from the scenario.

E: Taken out of the equation.

S: Yeah, it's like –

E: She's basically treated at this disposable feminine thing –

S: Yes.

E: That Perrin loves but like – I don't know.

S: Isn't actually a person?

E: It's sort of like an extension of this whole attitude where he's taken the leadership position and he has the power because he has the weapon?

S: Exactly.

E: Which is really troubling, especially because Egwene's going to be able to kick his ass in about five books.

S: True. Hell yeah, Egwene. Egwene is the coolest.

E: Egwene *is* the coolest.

S: But yeah, it's like a really . . . for some reason the metaphor I want to reach for, which I don't think is super correct, but is the idea of like Snow White being in a glass coffin. Like I don't know why I want to reach for that, but just the idea that Egwene exists but is like not an accessible part of – doesn't have access to this conversation.

E: No, yeah, you're like – yeah, it's like, if Perrin's having this thought, he's creating this world where he's just going to mercy-kill Egwene and she's just not going to have a say in it.

S: Yeah.

E: So it's like not even am I gonna mercy-kill her, but it's not like the ravens are going to be descending and Perrin's just gonna insta-kill her rather than be like, "Hey, real quick –"

S: "You wanna be dead?"

E: "Yeah, do you want this? Cause I'm about to slice my own throat." Like, "What do you want?"

S: Yeah.

E: You know? Yeah, and also just treating it like she doesn't have options. She has a fucking knife, she can kill herself if she wants to.

S: She has a knife. She can use a little bit of the Power. Perrin doesn't know.

E: I know. Ugh.

S: It's super annoying.

E: It's a really troubling part of these books.

S: It's really – I feel – like it's one Wheel of Time moment that sticks with me that I wish didn't. Because like it's so – speaking of the fact that it's a heightened chapter to read and it – like anxiety-wise, and it acts on your body – like that moment is physically like something oily is on my skin. Like it is nasty.

E: And it's nasty, I think, partly because we just don't get the closure that we want afterwards.

S: Yeah, and I agree with you that it's really important to have characters think thoughts that are unpleasant.

E: Yes.

S: Because so often you read, and you're like, "This isn't a person." Like, "People have really bad, intrusive thoughts. They have thoughts that are uncomfortable." Like, "People have bad thoughts. They do." And it's really interesting when a character – especially because it's a thought, and it's not an action, like Perrin doesn't think it and then follow through with it. Like I feel like we see very little of that in story. Like, "What is the power of this thought that I had? Which is interesting because it does affect him in a lot of ways and it is interesting to think about an action that he doesn't take. But it's – yeah. Just kind of talking in circles, but it's really – it doesn't come to a good conclusion. Which is what you've already said, so.

E: Yeah. The way Robert Jordan treats it as furthering Perrin's relationship to violence –

S: Which, then, Egwene just exists –

E: Yeah.

S: It's like everything in Perrin's –

E: As opposed to exploring Perrin's relationship to women and like why he's thinking about women in this way or Egwene specifically.

S: Yeah.

E: Like what makes him think he has the right, even for an instant?

S: Ugh. It's so annoying. So many things in Perrin's narrative arc exist just for the sake of Perrin's narrative arc. The wolves, basically. The dream world, kind of. Maybe a little bit more complicated. Egwene, in this first book. The Tinkers, in this first book. To an extent, Faile throughout the entire books. The people of the Two Rivers. It's like everything just exists to try and have – get Perrin to have some interesting discourse about violence, when it's like, it's not interesting if it's just one character surrounded

by more or less objects that are treated one- or two-dimensionally. It's, it drives me crazy. I hate Perrin's point – like, I don't like his arc for that reason. And because the fourth book almost killed me.

E: [laugh] Egwene has a bad-ass moment in this chapter where she slingshots a raven out of the air before Perrin can get to it. Super cool.

S: Yeah, it's pretty fucking cool. Because Egwene is capable.

E: [laugh] Um, I'm sorry you wrote down all your notes. We should get back to that next time.

S: I wrote down so many notes. And I was so excited to talk about so many things, including one of my favorite poems, but I guess you'll just have to come back next week and see what my thoughts were. [clicks tongue] That was a teaser. It's what the kids call a teaser trailer.

E: Yeah, sorry, I'm – we're just going to be short because my medicine's gonna kick in soon and put me to sleep.

S: Yeah, poor Emily is ill. Did we even talk about anything in this episode?

E: No, we had a very – we had a really weird beginning of this because I, we're both sick and we couldn't get a handle on anything. Um, next week we'll come back to Perrin and Egwene, basically right where we left off. We're gonna talk about Artur Hawkwing's statue and we're gonna talk about them getting –

S: Fucking snatched by the Inquisition.

E: Snatched by the Whitecloaks.

S: Yeah.

E: Um, Hopper's untimely death.

S: Ahh.

E: RIP. Perrin's first berserker moment.

S: [whisper] I know. I was thinking –

E: I don't know. We'll see how far we get. Maybe we'll be able to have a normal pace.

S: Maybe we won't –

E: Speaking of pacing problems. Sorry, "A Wrinkle in Time."

S: Yeah, I know. I like – look at me, I read myself.

E: Oh, man.

S: Okay, okay. [laugh] So house – housekeeping! Socials have not changed. Find us on Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram. Our Wordpress site is ehrpodcast.wordpress.com. Where you can find such things as our transcripts! We're almost caught up on our backlog. We have our Patreon account now, which is patreon.com/everybodyhatesrand, and a huge shout-out to the four people who are supporting us on Patreon so far.

E: God bless you.

S: It's super exciting.

E: If enough of you support us, we'll actually get better audio quality, which I know some of you desperately want.

S: Some of you desperately want, which – a story about that: Last week I talked about how I got new headphones.

E: Uh-huh.

S: And I listened to the episode that we posted this week, just like on the way home from the train one day – on – yep, nailed it.

E: Yep.

S: Um, because it was downloaded. And like, I hadn't realized just how bad the audio quality is because just like everything I'd been listening to the last three or four months was just garbage.

E: Yeah, fam, it's really bad.

S: And so like our audio quality on our podcast wasn't any different from like anything else I was listening to. So I was like, "Why are people like so on this? Like I think we're fine." But then I was like, "We're not."

E: You can hear everything. You can hear, periodically, our apartment building's front door buzzer going off. You can hear the sirens when they go past.

S: [makes siren noise]

E: Yeah, it's bad. You can hear me every time I shift in my chair, which is a lot. I'm very fidgety.

S: I read a podcast tip about that where you should hold a stuffed animal.

E: Copy. I have my –

S: Maybe you'll be less – yeah –

E: Giant stuffed [stutters] shark. Huh.

S: You could hold Pablo.

E: Yeah, his name's Pablo.

S: He's our mascot. Just kidding. Emily wouldn't let me use him as a mascot because it was *degrading*.

E: It was! [laugh]

S: [laugh]

E: HE didn't ask for that!

S: I did!

E: No, *he* didn't.

S: Oh, he didn't. He *didn't*. Pablo is a beautiful boy. Um, but anyway, thank you to the people who are supporting us on Patreon. You guys are super awesome.

E: Besides getting new microphones, if you support us on Patreon, you'll get access to such stuff as our bloopers reel, my blog about the Wheel of Time reread. We are this week going to record our first episode of "We Watch Outlander." So we are going to watch Outlander. We think we're going to have to do it separately.

S: Yeah.

E: So that we don't say all our funny stuff to each other right off the bat. But we're figuring it out.

S: Because we're hilarious. So, for those of you – those four of you, those four beautiful souls, you have your first episode of "We Watch Outlander," which I guess is now what we're going to call it –

E: Sorry, that's what I labelled it on the –

S: That's fine, it's funny. "We Watch Outlander." Coming at you soooooon.

E: Hell yeah.

S: I know you're really excited about it.

E: I am.

S: I am – I'm super excited. I have a lot of thoughts and feelings. If you're interested in this week's discussion of sex and violence you will love "We Watch Outlander" because those are ninety-eight percent of my thoughts about "Outlander."

E: Hell yeah! Okay.

S: The other two is miscellaneous.

E: Okay. Scotland.

S: You'll have to listen to find out.

E: Anything else we have? Sorry that we're sick and sad.

S: Super sad.

E: Yeah.

S: This has been like a mental health week, straight down in the pits of the gutter.

E: We did just go on vacation and it was a really nice vacation.

S: It was so lovely!

E: We had a great time but then we got home and got sick.

S: We had so much Nando's.

E: Ah, I love Nando's.

S: It was so awesome. We love Nando's. But then we took a stanky bus home and got the plague.

E: [sigh]

S: [laugh] Em – again, Emily has it much worse than I do so send her your get-well Tweets. Um, draw her some pictures. PG.

E: This is gonna come out on Monday, hopefully I'll be cured by then.

S: But then you'll feel good in your heart.

E: [non-committal noise]

S: Because you'll know that retroactively people wished you got better and you did. So it's the magic of the podcast.

E: I repeat one of the catchphrases of this podcast: Sally loves you. [laugh]

S: I do love you!

E: Sign us off.

S: Okay, so as we've already discussed, super sick this week. Yesterday was like really bad because I got sick at work is when I started to feel bad.

E: Oh, no.

S: Like super terrible, and so I didn't have any medicine, except the migraine meds I keep in my drawer, and I was like, "I can't take migraine meds for my throat, what is that gonna do, kill me? Probably." But so I was coming home and I stopped at the grocery store and ended up buying bagels just because I was like, "That's a thing that I can cook right now when I feel like I'm dying. I'll just put it in the toaster." Somehow on the way from the Target by my work to our apartment I lost the bagels. Out of my bag.

E: Oh my God.

S: [laughing] That I purchased them in. And so I come home and then I get into my comfy clothes, my Ellis Island shirt that I love, and then I came back out here and like my bagels were missing. And so I said to myself, "I'm gonna go find them." And I was like halfway down our block before I was like, "What the fuck are you doing?" [laugh]

E: [laugh]

S: "Are you just going to pick up bagels? First of all, you're not going to find them. Second of all, are you just going to pick up bagels off the streets of New York City? What the fuck are you doing?" [laugh]

E: [laugh]

S: So anyways I bought new bagels.