



## Episode 36 - “Trope Maze”

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Sally: I’m not talking about it, I promise. God. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) This episode opens up with a mystery.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: What is Sally not talking about?

Sally: A lot of things.

Emily: I mean ... what should we open with? Should we open with a very brief discussion about the Wheel of Time adaptation?

Sally: Sure.

Emily: OK, so as we’re recording, they announced, uh, that Amazon had signed on to the Wheel of Time adaptation a few days ago.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Soooooo we’ve been hearing a lot about that.

Sally: Too much.

Emily: Too much, yeah. We’re both kind of cynical and don’t really, uhh, buy into the idea that the Wheel of Time would make a good adaptation, so ... sort of complicated feelings on that.

Sally: Yeah, I think we just need to stop adapting -- adapting? Adaptating? Adapting.

Emily: Adapting, I think. (laugh)

Sally: I think. I dunno. I think we just should stop adapting books for many reasons. One, I don't think they ever work. I think Harry Potter and Lord of the Rings and Crazy Rich Asians are the three exceptions to that rule.

Emily: I don't even think Harry Potter worked that well. I know everyone -- I know there's like a -- to me, there's such a divide between Harry Potter books and Harry Potter movies.

Sally: Yeah, and I think that's why it works.

Emily: Yeah? Kay.

Sally: Like, I don't -- like, I feel like Harry Potter did enough to have it be like -- and I think this is the same way with Lord of the Rings -- where it's like, there's a way to divide Lord of the Rings movie from Lord of the Rings book and Harry Potter movie from Harry Potter book. And there isn't, like, this weird crossover that happens with a lot of adaptations where it's like, they're true enough. But they also stand as good movies.

Emily: Mmm.

Sally: Most adaptations don't stay true to the book and they don't stand as good movies. Like, they're all bad. (laugh) Um, so I think Harry Potter is a fine adaptation. I think it loses a lot, but, like, how could you not? Because books are not visual mediums.

Emily: Right.

Sally: Like, you shouldn't do it. I also feel like this trend to adapt things is also, like, lessening the, like, creative output of, like, visual medium. Like, I feel like people --

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Are falling back on adapting things instead of making new things.

Emily: Like, I can understand the sentiment of how exciting it is to see your favorite book turned into, um, a visual medium, and I think everyone is particularly on this kind of, like, craze after -- not after, we're still in Game of Thrones -- and I personally don't like the Game of Thrones TV show, and I didn't like the books all that much, but, like, um, I dunno, it worked well enough --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That that was exciting for a lot of people, and so everyone's kind of hoping that Wheel of Time will be, uh, like that. But sort of forgetting that Wheel of Time is an impossible text to adapt --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Without changing it really significantly and, I think, losing a lot of what makes it good.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I'm also particularly annoyed by the fact that they keep marketing it as a women-led fantasy when that's not true at all. Our three main characters are men.

Sally: It's so obnoxious.

Emily: And, like -- I understand that what they're saying is that this fantasy world is, um, in some way matriarchal, but in a lot of ways it's also not?

Sally: It's not matriarchal at all.

Emily: And it's just saying -- it's just simplifying a really complex issue.

Sally: Well, and it's using -- it's frustrating because it's, like, using, like, a feminist issue as a marketing ploy when it's not true, and I don't think the show will be that way.

Emily: Mm-mm.

Sally: Because it can't. Because the main characters are three men, and Rand is the most misogynistic piece of garbage that has ever walked the pages of a book. So.

Emily: (laugh) Yeah, are you gonna, like, delete that entire aspect of Rand's character?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: What is left if you take the misogyny out of Rand Al'Thor?

Sally: Nothing. Red hair.

Emily: Red hair. Tall.

Sally: That's it. And even that thing --

Emily: A tall --

Sally: He uses his height to basically intimidate women. So.

Emily: A tall, ginger shell of a man.

Sally: I'm not excited. And I'm like -- like, I'll probably watch it just because we're doing this, and, like, it feels --

Emily: Weird to not watch it? Yeah.

Sally: Yeah, it feels irresponsible to, like, what we're talking about to, like, not engage with it, but I just, like, can't be bothered to care that much.

Emily: And, like, obviously if you're excited, then be excited. That's great. Like --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Do your thing.

Sally: Don't let my cynical assholery dampen your excitement.

Emily: And feel free to talk to us about it. Just, like, be aware that we're really cynical about it. So. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Our enthusiasm is somewhat dampened by that.

Sally: Like, my favorite books in the entire world at the moment are the Raven Cycle, and they're adapting that too. Could not give a fuck.

Emily: Yeah, I'm ...

Sally: (laugh) So, like, I'm not excited about any adaptation and haven't been since the seventh Harry Potter movie came out when I was, like, fifteen.

Emily: I'm dreading the Raven Cycle adaptation.

Sally: It's gonna be garbage! I'd feel better -- the pilot might be interesting because Maggie wrote it, but -- anyway.

Emily: Well, even then, it's just, like, there's this whole thing with authors writing TV pilots --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Or TV, and that doesn't really adapt well.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's just ... uggggh.

Sally: Anyway. So that's where we stand. Here's your thread of darkness in the bright time of your Wheel of Time excitement. But I just -- I also -- I'm not -- I've never watched an Amazon original TV show.

Emily: The only one I've watched -- no. God, no. I haven't seen one either. I've seen ones that are through Amazon, but they're on Starz.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like American Gods. Which was, I think, a fairly good adaptation.

Sally: I haven't watched it. But I feel like Amazon is kind of a weird choice for this.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Like, I wish it was happening on Starz or HBO -- I wish it was happening on Starz. I don't want HBO to get it 'cause then it would get Game of Thrones gritty, which it shouldn't.

Emily: I do trust Starz in a weird way --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Because they had Black Sails.

Sally: Yeah. Like, they've made some really good TV.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: But --

Emily: And they are allowed to be, like, gritty. Although that's a whole other thing. I don't want the Wheel of Time adaptation to be gritty because the text isn't gritty in that way --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Necessarily? Like, there's some violent shit that happens --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But all the sex is very PG-13. There's no swearing. I mean it's just, like --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's almost a family-friendly show. (laugh)

Sally: So I -- but at the same time, like, there's a lot of violence and a lot of, like, traumatic things that happen that I don't want to be erased.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: So that's why I feel like Starz is a happy medium.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Because HBO will take you to Game of Thrones fisting level and, like, Amazon -- I dunno. I dunno.

Emily: Who knows ...

Sally: Who knows? But I don't trust Amazon at all because Amazon is a garbage company.

Emily: Yeah, as with most things, I guess it's wait and see.

Sally: Yeah. So. Anyway, yeah.

Emily: Just wanted to address the excitement in the air. Oh, I should turn off our AC, that was probably really annoying.

Sally: Oh, no.

Emily: (distant) Agh!

Sally: I didn't even think about that. So yeah. We'll see. We'll see.

Emily: Now we get to talk about hentai!

Sally: Oh, Jesus --

Emily: Theme song!

Sally: Christ. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

(clip from "Tubthumping" by Chumbawamba plays)

Sally: Anyway, this is the first Everybody Hates Rand from new EHR HQ.

Emily: Oh, yeah, hey.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Hey. Here we are. Glass table.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Cat paper chain.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, lots of puzzles.

Sally: Yeah, Emily did a whole puzzle last week and did it in one sitting. It was incredible.

Emily: It was --

Sally: Awesome. Don't let --

Emily: Um, a mark of my obsessive personality.

Sally: Don't let her tell you otherwise.

Emily: Now there's another, uh, not even half-finished -- like, one-eighth finished --

Sally: She hasn't even finished the border yet.

Emily: I haven't even finished the border 'cause I lost interest.

Sally: She'll come back.

Emily: Shakespeare's map. Yeah, one day, when I'm really bored. Ummm, OK. This is Everybody Hates Rand, your friendly neighborhood Wheel of Time podcast. Here we are, not sitting on one of our beds in our parents' houses. (laugh)

Sally: Yay!

Emily: I feel so mature again. I'm Emily Juchau.

Sally: I'm Sally Goodger.

Emily: Um, and we're talking about the Great Hunt. So here's your spoiler alert: beware of spoilers.

Sally: Yeah, especially if you're only listening to this 'cause you just saw the show and are like, "Now gonna engage in Wheel of Time content."

Emily: Yeah, we're gonna tell you all the shit that happens.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Except the shit that happens in the very last book, 'cause Sally doesn't know and, um, I've mostly forgotten. (wheeze)

Sally: Jesus, Emily. (laugh)

Emily: I remember the major things, but, like -- yeah, are you OK? Sally's got notes.

Sally: Hell yeah, I got notes.

Emily: Ummm.

Sally: I'm ready to get --

Emily: That's because this is --

Sally: Analytical.

Emily: We've got three chapters today, and it's the three full chapters where Rand and co. are in what is called on the Wheel of Time Wikipedia the mirror world.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: I think. I forget.

Sally: Mirror world.

Emily: So they're in this alternate dimension. Don't you love alternate dimensions that we never visit or hear about again? (laugh)

Sally: I'm actually really interested in it. 'Cause it's annoyed me so much and we've talked about it so much but it's like -- plays such a weird role in, like, forming Rand --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: For the rest of the series that I'm like, would this have happened? Like, did Robert Jordan specifically craft this to get a specific Rand out of it?

Emily: Yeah, like Robert Jordan sat down and was like, "The only way I'm going to get Rand on this path to leadership is if I drop him in an alternate dimension where he has no choice."

Sally: (laugh) It's --

Emily: And, like, what does that say about the character?

Sally: Yeah. It's like -- it's like -- I don't know if that was the choice, like, he has to do this, but, like, if this is the only reason, like -- it just goes to show, like, how completely Rand's character, like, veers off. Because he goes into an alternate dimension and then he becomes a completely different person. It's --

Emily: Yeah. Kind of out of necessity because when you're in a traumatic situation, it's -- you can become a totally different person.

Sally: Yeah. It's just really strange.

Emily: I think it would --

Sally: It's really weird.

Emily: I think it would have worked as well if he managed to separate Loial, Hurin, and Rand from the group in some other, uh like, traumatic way. Or dramatic, not necessarily traumatic, but dramatic. I.e., separate them entirely --

Sally: Yeah.



Emily: And have Rand kind of be forced to be in this leadership position. Because this grows out of, like, Hurin's necessity and then Loial just kind of being like this weird --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I don't know, not willing to take leadership position?

Sally: Yeah, but I feel like this particular scenario also has the parallel trajectories of Rand taking leadership in, like, a baseline, but it also has him really weirdly interacting with saidin --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: In a way that may not have happened, um ...

Emily: A lot of what he does stems directly from him feeling like he got them into this --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So now he's responsible for them.

Sally: Yeah. Which is an incredibly annoying part of Rand's character in general.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: But he's got -- yeah, these, like, really interesting moments with saidin, like, in the -- we can give summaries, but, like, in the third chapter of these three when he's, like, shooting the monsters with arrows --

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: And he, like, completely blanks and then he has to go, like, full nuclear or whatever the fuck he does to get them back.

Emily: Oh my God. It's very --

Sally: It's very strange.

Emily: Yeah. Just this whole -- this whole segment is very strange, and it's made stranger by Lanfear cropping up --

Sally: (gagging noise)

Emily: Midway through -- I know. Gag.

Sally: I was reading it last night and I, like, was physically unable to bear how much I hate her. (.augh)

Emily: Sally texted me last night and said, "I wonder what demon crawled inside Robert Jordan and forced him to create Lanfear." (laugh)

Sally: I hate her so much. (laugh) It's --

Emily: I don't just, like, hate her in the villain sense. I hate a villain. It's -- she's literally the worst character --

Sally: (laugh) I know.

Emily: That a person has created, of all time.

Sally: I hate her. Like, at the end, when Rand's like -- or, at some point, he's like, "She's beautiful and intelligent and she thinks I'm brave. What more could a man want out of a wife?" And I was like: (gagging noise)

Emily: I know, it literally -- (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) It grosses me out so much.

Emily: I threw myself out a window --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: When I read that.

Sally: I hate it.

Emily: Like, "Goodbye."

Sally: Killing -- kill me. I wanna be dead. (laugh)

Emily: Ugh.

Sally: OK. Anyway, but we don't -- luckily we have one full chapter without Lanfear here. So God bless the mirror dimension for that, I suppose.

Emily: Yeah, the one full chapter just involves them, uh, kind of crossing this mirror world, following the trail. There's a brief interlude where Loial just sort of charges into this strand of trees, and Rand and Hurin are like, "What the fuck?" And Loial's --

Sally: And then he makes love to a tree. (laugh) Basically. He's, like, running his hands over it and, like, singing sweet nothings to it.

Emily: You just took a very innocent form of tree magic --

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: And made it graphic and upsetting. I hate this.

Sally: I'm sorry. It is very innocent. Continue.

Emily: Yeah, Loial would never.

Sally: He might.

Emily: OK, yeah, he might.

Sally: Don't tell -- he's -- he's still a wee, he doesn't know what his sexuality is yet.

Emily: OK. OK, I'm just super upset by everything you've just said --

Sally: I'm sorry. You can delete it. Let's start over. You're right.

Emily: Loial sings to the wood to make a quarterstaff. And it's amazing because singing wood is really amazing and it's also a really rare talent, which, again, we're in this age in Wheel of Time where every single talent is really rare, like Dreaming, Foretelling. And then we're also dealing with this new crop of really old talents that are coming up in such a way that they're new again, like --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Sniffing and also Min's weird brand of foretelling and aura-reading, which makes me really wish that, uh, there was someone else who matched Min's, um -- I know this is sort of off-track, but I was thinking about it last night when I was reading the chapters, like, it would be really interesting if we met another character who has Min's same abilities because then we'd be sort of led on this track of, like, oh, and now the old is becoming new again and it's becoming -- here are the -- here's the new set of magical talents or abilities that are sort of cropping up in the population.

Sally: So is that what you think is with -- the situation is with Min and Hurin? That they're old talents --

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: That are just cropping up again?

Emily: Yeah, it -- and technically Perrin too. 'Cause everyone talks about, like, oh, these are really old things that are coming up. That's, like, mentioned in the text a few times.

Sally: Really? I've only heard that mentioned with Perrin.

Emily: I feel like I've heard it with Min and Hurin, but --

Sally: I mean, I've only read six books. It's not --

Emily: I can't remember. But yeah, that's what I think is happening.

Sally: That's great.

Emily: Either that or they're brand new. Which is also interesting.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But it's also like -- if we had more than one data point, as with Min --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Then we might actually be led to some conclusions.

Sally: Yeah. Well, because we only have one data point, that's why I'm more inclined to believe you that, like, you know, the Wheel is making a rotation --

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Is basically what we're led -- the whole, like, structure of the book is that, like, the Dragon is back, so it would make sense that, like, new things cropping up --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Old things cropping up.

Emily: So it's just this interesting thing that we have Rand, who's a *ta'veren* and is the Dragon Reborn, and he's being placed with this sort of dying-out talent that is Loial and the singing of the wood and also Hurin, who's maybe this new talent.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Or maybe this really old one, and it's just sort of this, I dunno, weird group of boys.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: But Loial makes his quarterstaff, and then he's like, "I dunno, dudes, those trees really wanted a weapon to be made, and that's fucked up."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And everyone's like, "Yeah. We concur." And they move on. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. Yeah, this, um -- that -- this particular chapter, like, struck me as really Tolkienian -

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Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: And I know that's, like, a ridiculous thing to say, but, like, the whole -- like, a huge part of Lord of the Rings is, like, the agency of the land and how, like, it demands things from the Fellowship at certain times. And Loial, I think, is the most, like, Tolkienian character in that sense, that he's like connected to the fabric of reality in the way that Tolkien tried to connect his angels and his Ents and whatever to the fabric of reality.

Emily: Yeah. Loial's very Ent-ish.

Sally: Yeah. Exactly.

Emily: Pretty much every aspect of his personality.

Sally: Yeah. Um, and so, like, the fact that the land has, like, made a demand upon Loial and, like, has agency in that way is freaky. You're right.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Especially to, like, demand a weapon, which is like -- I always, like -- trees are another thing -- part of fantasy that's, like, so entrenched in it, which I find really interesting, it's like it's always that archetype that pops up, like, I wonder about the connection -- why fantasy is so tied to trees. 'Cause it just is always like, "Oh, look, a tree," and you're like, oh, that makes sense. But --

Emily: Well -- yeah, like, ooh, a magic tree.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: I'm in fantasy land so therefore --

Sally: Obviously.

Emily: Yeah, this would happen.

Sally: This tree is talking to me or whatever. But, um --

Emily: And it's so background in Wheel of Time, like, we do have this pervasive set of magical trees -- the Tree of Life or whatever that we're --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Is mentioned a lot at the end of the Eye of the World, and of course, we actually see in, um, the Shadow Rising when Mat gets hanged from its branches --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And it's sort of this thing that caused the war from which Rand was born. But also, like, then it never happens again. It never crops up again. It's just this sort of weird --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Almost like, um, set piece.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Is magic trees in Wheel of Time.

Sally: Yeah, of course. It's like -- yeah, like a set piece, and part of the, like, mythological, um, infrastructure --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Of the world, almost. Or the mythological scaffolding. But it really is like a set piece.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Most of the time it's the tree that the Cairhienin king cut down, and it's the -- whatever, whatever. But then you have moments like this, where you come into a place that is very fantastical, and like -- as we've talked about, like, the steddings, um -- the steddung? Steddung is already plural, right? You don't say steddings.

Emily: Yeah, I think --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Steddung is a plural.

Sally: It's plural and singular, like deer. Or moose.

Emily: Moosen.

Sally: Stop. (laugh) I survived high school in Utah, I never have to hear that joke ever again. Um. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) If you've never listened to Brian Regan, he was --

Sally: Don't.

Emily: All the rage in Utah high schools for a long time.

Sally: (gagging noise)

Emily: God bless.

Sally: Anyway. As we've talked about, the steddung, as these kind of, like, magical circles within the Wheel of Time world where, like, magic gets more intensified, like --

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: That's also happening in this place, so then we see more magical trees.

Emily: Yeah, so there's just, like, a lot of archetype stuff happening.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, it makes sense that this is the place where Ba'alzamon appears to Rand, later in this chapter, and Rand has his first heron marking, which is sort of like a big event.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Even though it's very, um -- I dunno, in the context of this crisis, it's very much, like, not the most important thing that happens, but it is very important for Rand's character.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And of course this set of terrible female archetypes, Lanfear, would appear in this world. It's just like -- yep. Everything makes sense. The mirror world, in this way, does serve its function.

Sally: Yeah. It's the worst mirror -- this is actually holding up the worst possible timeline, 'cause this is where Lanfear shows up.

Emily: (sigh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: I'm so sad.

Sally: OK, but they're --

Emily: First, there's the dream sequence, where they stop to camp for the night and Rand, like a dipshit, is like, "I'm just gonna stay up the entire night and let them sleep," like, what the fuck?

Sally: I know, it's literally so dumb. In the morning Loial is like, "What the hell, Rand? That was stupid as shit. I hate you."

Emily: (laugh) Like, it's, um -- it's actually, like, this very neat little nugget of what makes Rand a terrible character is his self-sacrifice which actually makes the situation more dangerous --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: For everyone around him.

Sally: Yeah!

Emily: Take -- like, staying up all night, being on watch, that's super dangerous. That's, like --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Duh, you don't do that.

Sally: Right.

Emily: There's a reason the watch changes.

Sally: Like, Rand, do you know what sleep debt is?

Emily: Yeah, you stupid --

Sally: You're so dumb.

Emily: You stupid asshole. (laugh)

Sally: I hate him. Like, God.

Emily: Ah, but he's like --

Sally: Humans need sleep to function and need to function well enough to keep other party members alive. I hate you.

Emily: (sigh)

Sally: Ugh.

Emily: Yeah, and, like -- ugh.

Sally: I do love the thread throughout these chapters where, like, it's like -- Hurin is obviously like, subservient to Rand --

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: 'Cause he needs that to function, but Loial's a little bit removed, and there are these moments where Loial is like, (whisper) "Rand is being so dumb."

Emily: Rand's like --

Sally: And you can just, like, feel --

Emily: Loial's like --

Sally: The exasperation rolling off of him. (laugh)

Emily: In the Wheel of Time adaptation, I want this sequence to be adapted specifically with Loial looking at the camera every once in a while like he's in the Office.



Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Just like, "What the fuck?"

Sally: Yeah, like --

Emily: "What's going on? 'Cause I'm not part of this whole thing."

Sally: "I don't know what's happening over here."

Emily: "Just -- whatever. Rand got fancy clothes, and now he's being an asshole, so."

Sally: Is there a word -- like, I don't want to use homoerotic, because that's thrown around, but the, like --

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Really intense relationships that men have about honor?

Emily: I don't --

Sally: Honor-erotic?

Emily: Honor-erotic.

Sally: That's what Rand and Hurin are in this series.

Emily: Yeah, they're both very like, "Ooh. Ooh. Shienaran honor."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "It's better for a man to die protecting a woman than for a woman to die, bleh."

Sally: (laugh) Disgusting. Anyway, Rand sees Bell -- yeah. That guy. (laugh)

Emily: He sees (trails off, mumbling).

Sally: You know who I'm talking about.

Emily: Balthazar?

Sally: Mm -- B --

Emily: Don't --

Sally: Barney?

Emily: What the fuck?

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: OK, the level of horror I feel --

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: What's that image of, like, Barney in the distance?

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: Like, imagine Rand. He's on watch. He's sleep-deprived. He's probably hallucinating. Suddenly: a purple dinosaur.

Sally: (laugh) Makes more sense.

Emily: I know. But what actually happens is, like, this mist crops up, and he's, like, suddenly talking to this dude, Ba'alzamon. And he's super freaked out, of course, because he thinks it's the Dark One, and for some reason the text still hasn't provided us with the context to know that that's false.

Sally: (whisper) I know, it's really stupid.

Emily: We've talked about that enough, though. And they have this dumb conversation where Ba'alzamon, as usual, is like, "We are the beginning and the end, you and I. We're born together, and we'll die together, and we'll kill each other, and fucking came out of the womb together, and --"

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: "We love each other. Let's make out." Like --

Sally: Honor-erotic.

Emily: Honor -- oh, my fucking God.

Sally: (laugh) But, like, yeah. Still honor-erotic.

Emily: It's --

Sally: Honor-erotic. Category, uh: foils.

Emily: And it's this stupid thing where Ishamael, champion of the Dark, is addressing Lews Therin, champion of the Light, and Rand Al'Thor, an idiot, is like, "The Dark One is talking to me personally about how he's gonna kill me." And it's like, that's not quite what's going on. But what's going on is almost worse because it's just as stupid. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) No, I was really struck -- 'cause this is -- we're, what, we're only, like, 200 and something pages into the Great Hunt, which is like, a quarter or so --

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: So we've had a book and a quarter of Rand having these weird dream sequences with -- 'scuse me, with Ba'alzamon, and so I was really struck this time -- 'cause I was barely even reading it because I'm like, I know what bullshit he's saying, I could not care less --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: About this drama, so I'm really interested about the fact -- because these pop up so often, and it is, like, malaise for the reader, where you're like, bored, bored, bored, bored, bored. I get it.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Rand's being threatened by some dude with fire in his eyeballs.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Who cares anymore?

Emily: It's really freaky -- and, like, it's really freaky for Rand, but because we've already seen it so much and we're still so confused --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's, like, not freaky anymore.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's not like -- I don't know, the relationship between the evil and the good is really well-done in Harry Potter in that we are threatened enough by Voldemort as the series continues to still be freaked out whenever he appears --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: But that's also because we have a certain level of understanding, and that understanding increases, of, like, what he is to Harry.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And, like, why he hates Harry and what is going on. Y'know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: With this, just, the confusion is so great that it's like, OK, here's this archetypal villain, but I have no idea what personal threat he --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Manifests, and I just don't care.

Sally: Yeah. And so I feel like there's --, like, and it starts in this book, I feel like, and continues, in that there is, like, a disconnect in the effect on things -- on, like, what's happening to Rand and how that affects the reader differently than how it affects Rand.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: And I feel like it creates, like -- it's one of the reasons that I feel like I have a hard time with Rand is that I don't feel like I'm asked to -- or, I don't -- maybe not asked is the right word - - I don't feel like the text supports me being or feeling the same emotions that he feels.

Emily: Right.

Sally: And, like, part of that is really interesting because of course he's a character who's dealing with madness and going crazy, and so of course there's that division, but it's also stuff like this, where it's like, I don't understand his paranoia because I'm not invested enough, or I've been asked too many times to feel it. Um. So, anyway.

Emily: This sequence ends with, like, um, Ba'alzamon making Rand's sword really hot and so then it brands Rand's hand. OK. (laugh) And that's important --

Sally: Of course Lanfear heals him later.

Emily: Oh my God.

Sally: We'll talk about that.

Emily: That sequence, oh my God.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Yeah, let's just, like, get to Lanfear because we're gonna be talking about her for a long time, even though I don't --

Sally: (whisper) Because she's the devil.

Emily: Want to. Yeah, Rand ends up with this brand, which is important for his archetype and for the Prophecies of the Dragon. But basically, otherwise, this scene passes --

Sally: You're like --

Emily: Without incident.

Sally: OK.

Emily: As usual, we're not sure what's real or not. We don't know. If this is Tel'aran'rhiod and Rand fell asleep or Ba'alzamon can just appear to him as he choose -- it's so fucked up. Anyway. Um, then the next day happens, and they have a fun time walking through mirror land, and eventually they come to this big-ass monument, and they're like, "Cool, it's the monument to Artur Hawkwing." Just kidding, it's the monument to the Trollocs, who defeated Artur Hawkwing.

Sally: Yeah. Loial's like, "Maybe let's not go towards the big scary tower."

Emily: And Rand's like, "I just wanna go to the big scary tower!"

Sally: Yeah. Rand, of course, is drawn to the phallus. (laugh)

Emily: (wheeze)

Sally: "The higher he builds his tower ..." (laugh)

Emily: Fuck. If you guys want some good phallus imagery, (laugh) watch King Arthur: Legend of the Sword, literally, it has the line, "The higher he builds his tower, the greater his power grows."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Or some shit like that.

Sally: (gagging noise)

Emily: But yeah, Rand sees a big thing pointing upward and is like, "Gotta see it. Gotta touch it."

Sally: "Gotta do it."

Emily: "Gotta go toward it."

Sally: Mm.

Emily: So he and Hurin just, like, gallop toward it and then they're like, "Oh, fuck."

Sally: And Loial's like, "Son of a bitch."

Emily: Loial's like, "What the hell?"

Sally: Yeah. "I did not sign up for this tomfoolery."

Emily: Yeah, and then immediately they hear a woman screaming.

Sally: And everyone -- like -- it's so funny, because, like, Loial is like, "We need to have a conversation about, like, how we're continuing to proceed through this dangerous land --"

Emily: Yes.

Sally: "Let's be careful." And Rand's like, "You are so right. Let's be more careful." And then 30 seconds -- no, three seconds later, a woman's screaming, and Rand is just gone.

Emily: Gone like a shot.

Sally: (laugh) Yeah.

Emily: Just doesn't even -- nothing.

Sally: It -- I swear to God, at this moment, Loial is just, like, praying.

Emily: And, like, I can understand -- like, if I personally heard a woman screaming or anyone screaming, yes, I too would go toward the source of the screaming to try and help or to understand what's going on.

Sally: But in, like, a controlled way.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: You can't just run into a scenario and be like -- because if you get hurt, then everyone's dead.

Emily: Yeah, if I'm in this freaky scenario -- it's like that -- you know that urban legend about, like, someone, uh, having the recorded noise of a baby crying and using that outside a woman's house to get her to open the door?

Sally: Jesus Christ, no.

Emily: Have you not heard that?

Sally: Horrifying.

Emily: 'Cause, like, the obvious thought is that if a woman -- I would argue that if anyone hears a baby crying because the sound of a baby crying is very distressing --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You would -- and you heard it on, like, your porch, you'd go out there and see what's going on. And then the urban legend is that it's just, like, a recorded noise to get you to leave your house so that, y'know, the evil -- the burglar or the serial killer or whoever can then access you and your house.

Sally: Jesus.

Emily: So in the same way that if I heard a baby crying on my front porch, I'd be really wary about opening the door.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: If I heard a woman screaming in this strange, fucked-up land where, apparently, Trollocs won the war, I'd proceed with caution.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Rand, being Rand, does not.

Sally: He's like, "I can't let a woman get hurt."

Emily: Oh my God.

Sally: "I can't let it -- a woman -- a woman? In distress?"

Emily: Boobs?

Sally: Kay, the rest of this chapter is literally, though, just boobs.

Emily: Question mark.

Sally: It's like Rand runs, kills a monster, and for the next 40 pages, it just is boobs over and over again.

Emily: Yeah. Why don't you direct us here?

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: You've got the notes. Why don't you tell us what's --

Sally: I don't even know if I wrote anything about Lanfear, because I was --

Emily: Oh, OK.

Sally: Um, so annoyed. Most of my stuff is about the dream world. But. Rand shows up -- it's annoying, because Rand shows up, and Lanfear's getting cornered by this, like, I don't know --

Emily: Frog-bear?

Sally: Frog-thing -- yeah, welcome to Avatar: the Last Airbender. This is a frog-bear.

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: And Rand shoots it. And then Lanfear, suddenly, is, like, completely composed after her screaming, so this is how you know she's a lyin' ho.

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) And she's like, "You have to shoot it in one of its eyes."

Emily: Yeah, she calls that out, and it actually calls to mind the traditional, uh, mythological archetype where a man shoots a target in order to win a woman.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: This happens in the end of the Odyssey when, um, Odysseus has to be able to draw his bow, um, and then, y'know, gets back with Penelope, whoop-de-doo, and also in the Ramayana, when Rama --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Uh, shoots -- um, I can't remember whose bow it is, but he's able to shoot the bow so that he can win --

Sally: Also in Brave, they do this.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: They have a shooting contest for Merida's hand.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: "I'll be shootin' for me own hand!"

Emily: (in a bad Scottish accent) "I'll be shootin' for me own hand!"

Sally: That was terrible, Emily. (laugh) We both did so bad.

Emily: (laugh) I have a friend who can do the accent really good.

Sally: (laugh) Anyway.

Emily: And it's -- (inaudible)

Sally: Brave is one of the very few DVDs that we have.

Emily: And I'm thrilled. Because I've never been so angry as when we left the movie theater of Brave and my dad was like, "I didn't like that because it didn't respect the men enough," and I almost punched him.

Sally: I thought --



Emily: I know.

Sally: I know Chris has a problem with the dad in that movie --

Emily: I know.

Sally: But that is one of my favorite Disney dads.

Emily: He's a good dad!

Sally: Yeah. He's hilarious.

Emily: I've, like, had further conversations with him, I'm like, it really annoys me because what you're doing is diminishing this dad's dad-ness --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Because he's not a Smart Dad, like you are.

Sally: Yeah. He's just a --

Emily: He's just a good, protective, happy dad.

Sally: Yeah. Not everyone has Smart Dads.

Emily: Yeah. Not everyone has academic dads, Chris.

Sally: Not everyone needs academic dads.

Emily: Yeah. Academic -- there's no --

Sally: There's no need.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Anyway. So it's like the Odyssey, the Ramayana, and Brave. (laugh) Except not Brave because the woman is actually a garbage can.

Emily: Yeah, because that actually, um, upends --

Sally: Yeah. The trope, completely.

Emily: The trope.

Sally: But the woman is in fact a garbage can with boobs. That's Lanfear.

Emily: (sigh)

Sally: Um. What is -- I think it's a line from Veronica Mars, where Veronica says something about one of the men, one of the boys, and the other one's like, "Well, he would flirt with a garbage can if it had tits." And that's how I feel about Lanfear. And Rand.

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: So anyway.

Emily: What's happening with Lanfear -- dear God.

Sally: But Rand kills the monster and then Lanfear, like, comes down, like, swishing her hips dramatically, it's a Victoria's Secret fashion show, a fan turns on. Um.

Emily: Yeah. Jesus.

Sally: (laugh) Titties out. Rand --

Emily: Rand's like, "She smells good."

Sally: I know. It's --

Emily: And I'm like --

Sally: I really have to look at her description again.

Emily: Please don't. I don't wanna -- it's just how she's all -- wearing all white --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's blinding white --

Sally: And her horse is white, and --

Emily: And she's got this fancy belt, and her boots are white, but she's got dark hair and dark eyes.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But she's super pale. And it's like, if I saw a woman with pale-ass skin with dark hair and dark eyes --

Sally: I'd be like, a demon.

Emily: She's almost me. Yeah, I'd be like -- dun dun.

Sally: Yeah, I look at you, and I'm like, a demon. (laugh)

Emily: Well. Like people do.

Sally: No. I think you're precious.

Emily: (laugh) It's 'cause I look like a 12-year-old. Um --

Sally: No, you don't!

Emily: I do. That's OK.

Sally: "Fool, you can't tell --" Oh, yeah, and then it's like -- oh, yeah, and then she kneels before him.

Emily: Ew.

Sally: Yeah. Because he -- she, like, she comes down, she's like, "She was in all-white, blah blah blah," and then he -- Rand's like, "But this woman. His tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth." (laugh)

Emily: Oh my fucking God.

Sally: And then she's like, "Oh, your retainers," meaning Loial and Hurin, and then she obviously thinks of him as a lord, and then she kneels before him and says, "I am called Selene. You have risked your life and saved mine. I am yours, Lord Rand Al'Thor." And then Rand is like, "Uhhhh immediate boner."

Emily: In terms of plot, what happens next --

Sally: (laugh) I'm sorry.

Emily: No --

Sally: For that division.

Emily: What happens next is that Lanfear joins -- Lanfear, a.k.a. Selene --

Sally: Selene.

Emily: Joins their party and they, uh, keep traveling and eventually are cornered by more frog-bears. Rand shoots some of them 'cause he's unwilling to go to the Stone through which, uh, Selene claims she arrived. She says the same thing happened to her: she went asleep next to a Stone and woke up here, voila. Um, but eventually they are forced to go to this Stone and, uh, Selene instructs Rand on how to channel to get them back, and he does. And they find they're in Cairhien, and they're actually ahead of the Trollocs.

Sally: Yeah. Which is neat, because Lanfear then talks about how, like, time is different there --

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: And it's a mirror, and so, like, Hurin was actually smelling, like, future violence.

Emily: Which is interesting.

Sally: Which is super interesting.

Emily: But now that we've covered the plot, let's talk about Lanfear. Unfortunately.

Sally: Um, well, she's a demon. Have we said that enough? (laugh)

Emily: She's just such a fucking set of tropes.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And in a way it's almost interesting because she is manipulating the tropes to her own ends. Y'know, the whole, um, damsel in distress, et cetera, and, um, the very Arthurian woman gets rescued and now, like, owes the man her life, like --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That set of tropes. Um, but of, course, really, she's a femme fatale --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: In this disguise.

Sally: So it's just tropes -- it's like nested tropes. Lanfear is a nested --

Emily: Yeah, it's just trope central.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You, like, can't find -- it's a trope maze, you, cannot --

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: Find your way out to what is really happening, especially because she seems to be, like, manipulating her own image to these men.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And I guess Rand's our point of view, so that's what we're getting, but, like there are a couple points where he'll be like, "Ugh, something's weird about her," and then he'll look back at her and like, "Oh, now she's softer and more appealing."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And the whole -- her -- she smells good and everything. It's just like, we don't know how much she's literally manufacturing via channeling.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, is she just -- how much is she making herself look like what Rand wants to see? How does she know what Rand wants to see? And it's really annoying because this is never explained to us, so we're just left to believe that Lanfear slash Selene is just capable of seducing anyone and anything.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And will look -- like, just part of who she is is that she'll look like what you want. When that's, like, not necessarily true.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I really wish this book, by the time of Lanfear's demise --

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Not this book, this series -- had, like, dissected what she does.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And, like, what she really -- not necessarily what she really looks like, 'cause I don't really care, but the efforts she goes to to look like what men want to see.

Sally: Yeah. Which is --

Emily: (grumbles) I don't know.

Sally: But, yeah. I don't know what else to say. It's -- she's just, like --

Emily: She's just, like, not even (laugh) -- I know why she's in the book. But I don't even think she's worth her place in the book.

Sally: No.

Emily: Nothing she does interests me. Later in the series, she'll just come back and be like, "Oh, hey, Lews Therin, I'm just here to, um -- we can band together and do this dark, uh, couple thing, and rule the universe together," and it's just, like, not interesting.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: There's nothing intriguing about that at all.

Sally: No. It's -- mmm.

Emily: She's such a trope that everything that she does is expected.

Sally: Yeah. She's even a trope in the, like -- because we're still at the point where Rand and -- Egwene is like, "Girl, bye," but Rand has not, um --

Emily: Accepted that.

Sally: Accepted that he and Egwene are no longer betrothed or whatever. And so she does that, like, really annoying thing where she's like -- she's, like, the cool girl --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Quote unquote, who, like, treats men the way that, like --

Emily: They want --

Sally: They want to be treated, as opposed to, like, real women, who are like, "You're an idiot piece of garbage, please listen to me."

Emily: Who have their own set of --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Agendas and, like --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Have their own desires and what they want. They're, like, their own people --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So of course the way they treat men isn't what men want.

Sally: Yeah. The -- Egwene is just not hopelessly devoted to him.

Emily: And part of growing up and engaging in a healthy romantic life is realizing that the people you have romantic relationships with have their own agencies and aren't gonna treat you like some -- in Rand's case -- prince.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Because they're not. Like, they're people.

Sally: Yeah. And so she does so many annoying things in the -- like you said, it's like a trope maze.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Where she's this, like, femme fatale cool girl who, like -- I think, then, has some really negative impacts on how Rand treats women.

Emily: Right.

Sally: Or what Rand expects from them. Like, he always gets so mad when -- particularly his three love interests, and particularly Egwene -- like, are -- disobey him, for lack of a better word, and, like, go and, like, put themselves in danger or, like you said, exercise their own agency.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Because he's afraid of them, and he's like, "Well, Selene wouldn't do that."

Emily: Yeah, it's really troubling, like, these first two books before he realizes Selene is --

Sally: Lanfear.

Emily: Lanfear. Where he's just like, "Yeah, Selene, she's my ideal woman." Even though he's, like, well aware of the fact that she's out of his league.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which is, like, a further trope, of the out-of-your-league woman who, like, condescends to be with the man.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: The, y'know, farmer peasant dude. The princess who ends up with the pauper.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Trope maze.

Sally: She's a trope maze. And, like, of all the worst possible tropes that a woman can carry.

Emily: And like every labyrinth, of course there's a monster waiting in the middle.

Sally: Oh, Emily, that was so fucking good.

Emily: You're welcome!

Sally: Ugh.

Emily: Fucking hell. Except in the actual labyrinth, the minotaur is a really interesting --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, monster, and has a lot to say about monsters and what we do to create monsters. Lanfear's just a fucking demon who doesn't deserve to be in any book.

Sally: No. Lanfear does not deserve the title "monster."

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: There's nothing interesting about her.

Emily: She's not really monstrous. She's just stupid.

Sally: She's -- you're right. She doesn't deserve to be in any book. I wish that Harriet had --

Emily: Let's look at her on this cover.

Sally: She looks so bad!

Emily: (cackle)

Sally: She both looks like a housewife and someone from, like, an '80s porno.

Emily: Yeah --

Sally: An '80s porno about a housewife.

Emily: She look -- mm, God. It's so interesting -- like, what's she wearing? This, like, particular dress --

Sally: I don't know, the boob cups?

Emily: The boob cups and the waist thing. There's just, like, some lace going on. Again, where's Hurin? (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Hurin's like, "Girl, bye."

Emily: Hurin's dead.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: The look on her face -- (sings) Ahhhhhhh.

Sally: Oh, and another -- the thing I hate most is that --

Emily: It's almost an "oh" face.



Sally: She probably perpetually has an “oh” face.

Emily: She’s just like, “Oh! Oh!”

Sally: All the time, yeah.

Emily: (gagging noise)

Sally: Um, what -- of all the things that Lanfear does that annoys me, in this chapter, what annoys me the most is that she keeps talking about how, like, Rand -- Rand lets it slip that he’s after the Horn of Valere, and he’s like, “Aw, dunk, that was stupid,” but then Lanfear’s like, “Oh, you’re gonna be a man of legend. Oh, are you gonna accept greatness, or is it gonna be thrust upon you? Oh, a man of greatness, oh, a hero, oh, meh meh meh.”

Emily: And she’s, of course, trying to manipulate him because if he becomes the type of person who wants to get the Horn of Valere for his own ends, he’ll be a lot easier for her to manipulate.

Sally: Yeah, exactly.

Emily: Um. But yeah, it’s really annoying because it’s also adjacent to what men want to hear.

Sally: Yeah. Like -- well, yeah, exactly.

Emily: Or, at least, what Rand wants to hear.

Sally: And, like -- yeah, exactly. That’s why it’s so annoying. Thank you for putting it in those words. Because it’s like Lanfear is just, obviously, manipulation central --

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: From start to finish, which is an annoying thing in general because women are always portrayed as manipulators and as spiders?

Emily: Yeah, and especially in this series.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, Rand has this deep fear of women because all of the, uh, women that he meets manipulate in some way --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Or he thinks are going to --

Sally: Yeah, so he claims.

Emily: Manipulate him in some way.

Sally: And women -- yeah, and even if they aren't manipulating, they're, like, unclear. Like, there's the infamous two letters from Elayne --

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Which is, like, more to the fact that Elayne is an idiot than anything else.

Emily: God, Elayne.

Sally: I hate Elayne.

Emily: Fucking asshole.

Sally: But, like, his constant, like, "Women are inconstant, women are, like, playing these emotional games all the time --"

Emily: "Women can't, like, keep --"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "To one line of reasoning."

Sally: Yeah. And, like, Lanfear just, like, lifts up this line of reasoning for all of the men in the series.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: And, like, therefore justifies their, like, hatred and distrust and fear of other women.

Emily: Really quick, can we talk about how Lanfear's one interaction with Mat is that she walks in on him naked, gives him a dismissive once-over --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And is like, "Mm."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Bye." (laugh)

Sally: And Mat's like -- (laugh) I love that basically the same thing happens with Berelain too. Where they're just like, "Mm."

Emily: (laugh) "Can't do it."

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: In Berelain's case, and maybe in Lanfear's, they're just like, "Meh ... too much like me."

Sally: "Too much like me."

Emily: "Too manipulative. Too flirty."

Sally: So. Funny.

Emily: "Too self-preservationist."

Sally: Anyway, that is the most hilarious scene in book three, where Mat is just naked, and he's, like, shoving food in his mouth --

Emily: And multiple women walk in on him --

Sally: Yeah. And it's -- Lanfear --

Emily: And he's just like, "Fuck me."

Sally: Siuan -- (laugh) He's got, like, a full bread roll in his mouth.

Emily: (laugh) He's literally just, like, shoving meat in his mouth, and everyone's like, "What's going on?" He's like, "I'm really fucking hungry. Can you let me eat?"

Sally: I also love it -- 'cause I think Mat also mentions how she's, like, the most beautiful woman, but then she leaves and he's super annoyed. (laugh)

Emily: He's like, "OK. Copy."

Sally: Anyway, I love the Dragon Reborn in so many ways. I can't wait to talk about it.

Emily: I can't wait to get to that chapter. OK.

Sally: Um, anyway. So yeah, Lanfear just -- yeah, like -- 'cause, like, once Rand learns that she's trying to, like, play these games with him, it just further justifies his relations -- so then he holds in both of his mind, the angel and the whore, basically --

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Like, he wants women like Selene, who will worship him, basically, and do as he says and be obedient, but also he's like, "Oh, women are distrustful."

Emily: "Women actually turn out to be villains in the end."

Sally: (gagging noise) So disgusting.

Emily: It's terrible.

Sally: Anyway, this -- these chapters also, I think, have one of the most, like -- this is a pretty scary book, we've talked about, like --

Emily: Sure.

Sally: A lot of stuff. But like, a lot of what's supposed to be frightening, especially in these chapters, isn't. Like --

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Trollocs, whatever. Over it. Like --

Emily: Yeah. Lost my fear of those.

Sally: Yeah. Like, Ba'alzamon, over it. Lost my fear of that.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: But one of the scariest things is when someone -- I think it's probably Lanfear -- is talking about time, and it's like, "Oh, like, when you're here, you could've been gone for, like, 20 years," and so I'm like, I guess the Dragon Reborn will just Rip Van Winkle himself through the apocalypse.

Emily: Jesus.

Sally: Just, like, not come back. Like, that's a terrifying thought.

Emily: Can you imagine?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Yeah, that was a terrifying -- like, when she said that --

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: And then no one reacted to it!

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: No one was like, "Jesus! How long have we been gone?"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: When I would've been like, "What the fuck?"

Sally: Like, "I've been gone for 58 years."

Emily: "What happened?" I know, that's a freaky thought. And especially because it's played out later in the book --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Where, y'know, they go through this -- they try to use the Portal Stones again and end up losing months.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Almost six months, I think it is.

Sally: Something like that, yeah. And so it's just, like, why is that not, like, a really real and valid fear for these people?

Emily: I don't know.

Sally: Imagine being Moiraine and Siuan, who finally found the Dragon Reborn, just to lose him through an accidental Portal Stone. (laugh)

Emily: It's -- they're just like, "Where the fuck is he? Who knows where he went? He disappeared that one time."

Sally: Yeah. Anyway, terrifying. And everyone's like, "Meh. Shah dah dah."

Emily: Um, anyway, the only other thing of note that happens, really, is that Rand, by, uh, Selene's prompting, now has channeled intentionally

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And has not just, like, shied away from it at the last minute but has embraced it because of the necessity --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Of the situation. And again, he's put there. He's -- that situation is very manipulate -- manipulated, so --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He really doesn't have a choice.

Sally: Yeah. Especially because he's like, "Well, Selene must be able to channel if -- even if she doesn't know it, 'cause that's how she got here, buh duh duh duh."

Emily: "Bur bur durr." And Selene's like, "I dunno. But I do happen to know everything else you'll need to get back."

Sally: It's like -- that is number one red flag. If you're on a fantasy quest, and you meet someone who knows a lot of shit: distrust.

Emily: Yeah. Fucking --

Sally: Period. Unless they're Loial.

Emily: Ugh. Yeah. And -- but Loial is, like -- doesn't know a lot of other shit.

Sally: Yeah, Loial's --

Emily: Like how to interact with people.

Sally: (whisper) Oh, God bless him.

Emily: I know. I love him.

Sally: He's so good.

Emily: Good, socially awkward boy.

Sally: (laugh) I know, when he first sees Lanfear and he's like, "If there was ever a perfect form of beauty --"

Emily: He's like, "If ever I saw a human woman --" And Rand's like, "What the fuck?" (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) It's so funny.

Emily: He's like, "Can you chill?"

Sally: That's the -- and we're like -- we're like, Rand, you're --

Emily: "Could everyone chill?"

Sally: Yeah, could everyone chill? She's just a --

Emily: Can you imagine if Hurin was gay.

Sally: And Hurin was like, "OK ..."

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: I think this -- this sequence would be infinitely better if either Loial just wasn't interested 'cause he's not the same species --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And doesn't get it or if, like, Hurin was gay and just was like, "What's going on with you guys?"

Sally: (laugh) Yeah.

Emily: Like, "I don't get it."

Sally: "She's kinda weird." (Laugh)

Emily: Yeah, "I kind of -- she kind of freaks me out."

Sally: Yeah. Or if Loial was both not the same species and gay.

Emily: Oh, God.

Sally: What if Loial had run away because he was gay --

Emily: Oh, that's kinda sad.

Sally: And didn't wanna marry a woman. And then his mom finds him and he's like, "I just didn't want to marry a woman," and she's like, "I can work with that." And then she forces him into a marriage -- (laugh)

Emily: Like, "I can work with that. I know all the gay Ogier."

Sally: Don't run away 'cause you're gay, that is really sad. I'm glad Loial just ran away 'cause he wanted to.

Emily: Yeah. That's good.

Sally: Loial is a perfect boy. What if Loial was the Dragon Reborn?

Emily: (sigh) Every episode we end with, "What if blank was the Dragon Reborn?"

Sally: (laugh) Basically I just don't --

Emily: What if a sentient tree was the Dragon Reborn?

Sally: Yo.

Emily: Exactly.

Sally: That'd be lit. That'd be lit as hell.

Emily: But, anyway --

Sally: Then we'd see Moiraine talking to a tree.

Emily: Thus ends those three terrible chapters.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, next up, we're gonna get a little palate cleanser with an Egwene point of view --

Sally: Yay.

Emily: As she enters the White Tower.

Sally: Yay.

Emily: For the first time. But then, tragically, we're back to, uh, Rand, and then they're gonna, like, rescue the Horn of Valere and whatever. And then end up in Cairhien. At least they'll eventually be with Thom. My good --

Sally: Yeah, and Thom's, like, 14-year-old side piece.

Emily: My good crazy uncle. Yeah, Jesus.

Sally: I hate that.

Emily: But then Thom, like --

Sally: Then she dies for unknown reasons.

Emily: Yeah, basically to prompt Thom to, um, kill the king and produce anarchy in Cairhien. I - it took me so long to realize that that's what happens. Everyone's like --

Sally: Oh, see, I didn't --

Emily: "The king was assassinated," and I'm like, oh.

Sally: See, I didn't even remember there was a king in Cairhien.

Emily: Exactly, 'cause he dies in the second book after Thom murders him.

Sally: Thom is just really good at murdering high-level nobles. We all know he murdered Morgase's husband. (laugh)

Emily: I know. Love that.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Like on the one hand, I'm like, bleh, but on the other hand, I'm like, Thom just has a really solid talent for murdering people.

Sally: He murders a lot of people.

Emily: Kind of admirable.

Sally: A big murder boy.

Emily: Yeah. Um. Any housekeeping?



Sally: Don't think so. Follow us on social media. Congrats to the person whose identity I promised not to steal, ha ha ha, for winning our Instagram giveaway. Thank you for participating, um, and thank you for donating your money to our patron -- our microphone fund. We're getting close, everybody. Soon.

Emily: One day.

Sally: One day. So if you're interested --

Emily: (singing) One day more ...

Sally: In helping us buy some microphones, check out our Patreon.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: It's Patreon dot com backslash Everybody Hates Rand, and for your moneys, we will give you lots of bonus content, um, including our new podcast about Ender's Game. It's not a new podcast, it's just -- Ender Game is -- Ender Game? Mm-hmm --

Emily: (snort)

Sally: Is the most recent iteration of that.

Emily: We just talk about other books in detail.

Sally: And Tom Holland. (laugh)

Emily: And Tom Holland's weird-ass movies.

Sally: It makes sense if you listen to the podcast.

Emily: Yeah, it just --

Sally: Does it? I dunno, but --

Emily: No, it doesn't.

Sally: Anyway, that's, um, that's housekeeping.

Emily: OK! Um --

Sally: Do you have any housekeeping?

Emily: No, not that I know of. Will you sign us off?

Sally: I don't have a sign-off prepared.

Emily: You don't have a sign-off --

Sally: I'm so sorry. Give me a second. Oh, here's -- this is not very good, but on Thursday night, my brother and my sister-in-law came over to the hot -- to our apartment to use the hot tub --

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Which was super fun. We were all sitting there, and it was great, 'cause it was just the three of us, but then this old guy showed up and just sat down, like, uncomfortably close to my brother.

Emily: Oh. My God.

Sally: Just, like, uncomfortably close. (laugh) And then -- all of us were like, "OK" -- and then five minutes later, his -- his lady friend comes, and then they just start, like, canoodling in the hot tub. She was, like, sitting on his lap.

Emily: Oh, no.

Sally: They were, like, making out a little bit.

Emily: I hate this.

Sally: It was really uncomfy. (laugh) So then we left.

Emily: Kill me now. That was Lanfear in disguise.

Sally: (gagging noise)

Emily: (laugh)