



Episode 77 – “**This is Sad Bornhald**”

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SALLY: Everybody Hates Rand is a *Wheel of Time* podcast that will contain spoilers for all fourteen books, so if you’re anti-spoiler pause this, read all fourteen books, and come back. We’ll be here. Waiting.

EMILY: Our title is a joke and is meant to be taken as such. In the context of this podcast, “everybody” refers to us and our cat. You are free to feel however you want about Rand, who is a fictional character. Don’t DM us.

[Theme song by Glynna Mackenzie plays]

SALLY: I think it’s a real, real power move to take your wife’s last name.

EMILY: Yeah, I think it’s just saying a lot about you.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: If you’re like – [scuffling noises in the background].

SALLY: Tybalt, I’m sorry I left the cabinet open! That doesn’t give you free reign to knock things out of it.

EMILY: [distantly] Stop it!

SALLY: Anyway.

EMILY: Um, yeah I just think if you're a man and you can say, "Oh, that's my maiden name," when someone refers to you by your last name then what you're saying is [laughing], "I'm a bold and decisive man. I don't take no prisoners. I could save China."

SALLY: You right. You could.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: This is what a feminist looks like.

EMILY: *This* is what a feminist looks like, bay-bee!

SALLY: Yeah. "Oh, that's my maiden name."

EMILY: [laughing] "That's my maiden name."

SALLY: Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson rolls up, "Oh, that's my maiden name."

EMILY: [laughing] "That's my maiden – Johnson? That's my maiden name."

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: "My real last name is The Rock." We saw the best Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson movie of all time on Saturday.

SALLY: I feel like that is...a radical [laughing] statement that I don't agree with.

EMILY: [laughing] what – okay, actually *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle* might be my favorite.

SALLY: I was gonna say *Moana*.

EMILY: Oh! I was thinking, like, him in live action.

SALLY: Okay. His not animated movies. *Jumanji's* pretty good.

EMILY: *Jumanji's* pretty good, but in terms of sheer entertainment value, *Fast & Furious Presents Hobbs & Shaw* was pretty good. Like, I'll say this much for it, I was entertained [laughing] from start to finish.

SALLY: It was very entertaining.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Today my coworkers asked me to give it a review and I said, "Not enough car chases."

EMILY: That's true.

SALLY: But very entertaining.

EMILY: That's true. They leaned a little too much into Hobbs and Shaw being, like, punchy dudes.

SALLY: That's exactly what I said! I was like, "There's too much fist fighting for my tastes and not enough cool car stunts."

EMILY: Yeah. Car stunts is, like – like, I get that they're like, "We're not the *Fast* – we're not the ninth *Fast & Furious* movie, we're *Fast & Furious Presents*. We are an *offshoot*, and we have set ourselves up for multiple sequels [laughs].

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But, yeah. Cars aren't as big of a thing and I'm like, "But they could be."

SALLY: But cars are cool.

EMILY: If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

SALLY: Exactly.

EMILY: That's what the *Fast & Furious* movies are *for*.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Car stunts.

SALLY: That's why they're called fast...and furious.

EMILY: Yeah, and they're also to lay a framework so that we, as a human race, can understand just how good *Mad Max: Fury Road* is.

SALLY: That's true.

EMILY: Like, damn those stunts in *Fury Road*? Very good, very well edited.

SALLY: True.

EMILY: So good.

SALLY: *Mad Max: Fury Road* is a perfect movie.

EMILY: [sighs]

SALLY: In the vein of car chases it did pretty good. Remember when the pregnant lady blocks people with her pregnant body?

EMILY: Yeah, blocks her sisters, essentially.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Her fellow...women with her pregnant body, 'cause she's like, "Fuck you."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: "*Fuck* you." [sighs]

SALLY: So good.

EMILY: And then she dies, which is really sad. And also, spoiler if you haven't seen *Mad Max: Fury Road*.

SALLY: Turn it on.

EMILY: But I think about that a lot, 'cause I think it's an interesting – I talk about this in one of my blogs, and I don't know why I didn't think of this! About how pregnant women are always present to either be deliberately put in danger or to be, like, have plot armor.

SALLY: Mm.

EMILY: Like, if a woman's pregnant it either means she's untouchable or she's –

SALLY: Gonna die?

EMILY: Gonna die. Yeah.

SALLY: Or get seriously injured or kidnapped or looted or threatened.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: That's interesting.

EMILY: Which is because, and it's a whole thing about women being vessels, etc. etc., and how once you're pregnant you're worth more.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: But it's just, like, an interesting thing. And for some reason I don't – it doesn't bother me too much in *Mad Max: Fury Road*.

SALLY: Well, I just feel like there's so much else going on – it's the, like, rule of multiplicity.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: There's so many women with so many different arcs that her arc isn't just played off as she's more important because she's pregnant. She, like, uses that belief against the enemy.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: There's the idea that she's, um savvy of that trope and is using it for her own benefit.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And then the fact that he, like, she dies with the unborn child is, like...is, like, still in itself a revolutionary thing, because it hurts the bad guy.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Anyway, it's just a perfect movie. I can't emphasize enough what a perfect movie it is.

SALLY: It's really good.

EMILY: I just love it so much.

SALLY: It's really, really good.

EMILY: It's one of, like, life-changing things that happened to me in London. [pause] *Mad Max: Fury Road*, *Night Nurse*.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: [laughs] Nando's [laughing]. Lasting friendships.

SALLY: Aww. There we are.

EMILY, at the same time: There you are.

[both laugh]

EMILY: What's the fifth thing? I don't know. I made up the number five on the spot. Just in general a love of –

SALLY: Sandwich world?

EMILY: Sandwich world was a pretty good one, but I couldn't quite enjoy Sandwich world –

SALLY: Oh, yeah your jaw.

EMILY: – as much as everyone else could, because I couldn't [laughing] open my mouth.

SALLY: What other good things happened in London?

EMILY: I think it's the one thing we haven't talked about in London.

SALLY: Yeah, Emily had some jaw problems.

EMILY: I had some jaw problems, because when I have anxiety – which I didn't feel like I did in London, but I guess I did a little bit – my jaw is just like, "Goodbye."

SALLY: What about that night where everybody went out clubbing, and you and I stayed home [laughing] in our respective bunkbeds?

EMILY: Yeah, we didn't even, like, hang out.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: We kind of texted throughout.

SALLY: Yeah, we were just, like, chatting, but both of us were like, "Introverts need to introvert tonight, thank you" [laughs].

EMILY: Yeah, that was when I knew.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: I was like, "Not only was Sally the only other person who was like, "Fuck this," to the club night."

SALLY: Yeah [laughs].

EMILY: "But she also was like [laughing], "And I don't need to hang out with you, either."

SALLY: I'm gonna go sit in my top bunk and you can sit in your top bunk, and we'll both scroll through Tumblr for the rest of the night.

EMILY: I fucking loved that top bunk. That might be the fifth thing, is bunkbeds. I just love bunk beds.

SALLY: Emily does love bunkbeds.

EMILY: Love bunkbeds. Buuuhnkbeds.

SALLY: Looooove buugbeds.

[both laugh]

SALLY: I. Love. Bugbeds.

EMILY: Oh, wait I thought of the fifth thing. It's the song "Steps" by Handsome Ghost. I don't know why I found that song in London, but it's one of my top songs.

SALLY: I'll have to – I don't know if I've heard that one. I'm sure you played it for me, I just can't –

EMILY: I'm sure – I play it in my car a lot. It's very soothing.

SALLY: – think of it off the top of my head.

EMILY: It's also right in my vocal range, which is to say...

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: That one [laughs] you know? C, the main C chord. How does it go? I don't know music notes.

SALLY: I don't know shit all about music.

EMILY: Did you play piano as a child? We're avoiding talking about *The Shadow Rising*, if you can't tell [laughs].

SALLY: Um, I got several piano lessons from my grandmother, who was in the early throes of dementia.

EMILY: Aw.

SALLY: [laughing] So I did not learn a lot.

EMILY: [laughing] Understandable.

SALLY: She's also the person who taught me how to play chess. So, I *love* chess. Like, I love chess more than is probably reasonable.

EMILY: We should get a chess board! You can teach me how to play –

SALLY: You would whoop my ass.

EMILY: No, I wouldn't!

SALLY: Do you not know how to play chess?

EMILY: Well, you could teach me how to play properly.

SALLY: Oh.

EMILY: I kind of get a little too sentimental when I'm playing chess, and I forget that they have, like, rules.

SALLY: That's true.

EMILY: And I'm like, "But the queen should be able to do this!"

SALLY: Well, the queen can pretty much do whatever she wants.

EMILY: Yeah, the queen – she can do pretty much anything. But I want her to be able to teleport and shit [laughs].

SALLY: [laughs] Boop-boop!

EMILY: She loves him that much!

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Protect your *man*, queen!

SALLY: Should play with two queens.

EMILY: Yeah, oh!

SALLY: Lesbian chess. I'm gonna invent lesbian –

EMILY: Lesbian versus gay chess [laughs].

SALLY: [gasps] Amazing!

EMILY: Where you have to have [laughing] – you'd have to have – two – you'd have – you'd have to stack the odds some other way, because if you have two queens –

SALLY: Yeah, obviously.

EMILY: – were by the same rules. And the two kings who were both useless and [laughing] equally vulnerable.

SALLY: Yeah, I feel like we're really depicting the true reality of lesbian relationships.

EMILY: Yeah, that's true.

SALLY: Put two lesbians together? Unstoppable.

EMILY: Ultimately just super powerful.

SALLY: Yeah. In any way. Yeah, then I feel like you could just give the queens only have pawns otherwise [laughs].

EMILY: Yeah, exactly. Exactly.

SALLY: Well I can't believe we just invented the best game of all time.

EMILY: Gay chess! We'll update you once we get a chess set.

SALLY: I know. I kind of want to take chess lessons and learn, like, strategy and get really good at it. I'm sure I could do that, like, on YouTube and not actually pay somebody.

EMILY: I don't – you could also get, like, a chess app and that would like hone your – and play against a computer at varying difficulty levels.

SALLY: You're so smart. I'm gonna download a chess app right now.

EMILY: Oh, damn. Okay.

SALLY: I really...like chess. Did you guys know this about me?

EMILY: I didn't know that about you until just now.

SALLY: I really, really love chess.

EMILY: I took piano lessons until I was twelve.

SALLY: What? I didn't know that about you.

EMILY: Well, I didn't want to. It was a dark time in my life. I was deeply unhappy every time I had to go over –

SALLY: Really bad chess?

EMILY: – over to the Widmore's house to take piano lessons. April Widmore, who has now since passed, God rest her soul, was a lovely woman, but I did not like having her as a piano teacher.

SALLY: Well.

EMILY: I would have preferred if she was just my neighbor. Because my mom forced me to take piano lessons. And now look. Nothing came of it, because I can't even name the, the keys on the keyboard between the one where you put your right thumb and the one that your pinky can stretch to. What's that called? Who's to say?

SALLY: I only know how to play chopsticks.

EMILY: Oh.

SALLY: I know there are black keys and white keys.

EMILY: I also played the cello.

SALLY: I did know that one because it was, like, bigger than you, right?

EMILY: It was very much bigger than me [laughs]. That was kind of why I picked it.

[pause]

SALLY: Power move.

EMILY: Yeah, just 'cause I was like, "I gotta have a weapon."

SALLY: [laughs] Gonna use my cello, like Ellen Page before me, I'm gonna use my –

EMILY: Yeah, that was my middle school mentality.

SALLY: – string instrument.

EMILY: 'Cause, like, fuck middle school, you know? Okay, we're now ten minutes in and I guess we have no choice but to talk about *The Shadow Rising*.

SALLY: We could just play chess.

EMILY: That's true [laughs]. [in a British accent] Knight to E3!

SALLY: Aw, thanks Ron.

EMILY: You're welcome.

SALLY: Or Harry.

EMILY: Is that even a line that he says? I just made something up on the spot.

SALLY: Ahhh, sure.

EMILY: It's very endearing that Ron loves chess.

SALLY: That's because Ron is a *good boy*.

EMILY: I know. Book Ron is a very good character and I love and would die for him.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Well, maybe I wouldn't die for him. I – I say that a lot, but I don't really mean it most of the time [laughs].

SALLY: Yeah. I get that.

EMILY: Yeah. Um.

SALLY: Anyway.

EMILY: This is, in fact, Everybody Hates Rand, a *Wheel of Time* podcast. I'm Emily Juchau.

SALLY: [laughing] And I'm Sally Goodger.

EMILY: Why do you always laugh when you say it?

SALLY: [laughing] Because you're like, "This is a Wheel of – " [laughs]. I don't know. Because I'm a joke.

EMILY: NOOO. You're not!

SALLY: How 'bout that one? [laughs]

EMILY: Stop.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Who was it today who posted, obviously we record way before we release these, especially these days.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But who was it that we, that you, like, reblogged their Instagram story.

SALLY: Oh.

EMILY: And they'd just written stuff.

SALLY: Oh, yeah!

EMILY: That we'd said?

SALLY: [laughing] Yeah, that was Morgan. I'm obsessed with Morgan.

EMILY: Oh.

SALLY: He, like, wrote out Emily's Larry monologue [laughing] in his work notebook or something.

EMILY: I can't emphasize enough to you guys how whack it is to be a podcast person and people are like, "Remember when you said this?" And I'm like, "Literally no."

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: No fucking recollection of what passed through my lips in the space between when I press the record button and when I press the unrecord button.

SALLY: Sometimes I remember and then sometimes I'll be listening to the episodes and be like, "Did I fucking say that?" [laughs]

EMILY: Sally can also listen to the episodes. I edit them and then it's, like, goodbye I have to purge this from my – it's like math.

SALLY: [laughs] Well, it is one, because I have, um, a complex where I need a lot of attention and validation and listening –

EMILY: [laughing] Am I not giving you enough attention and validation?

SALLY: – and listening to my own podcast sometimes makes me feel important. Second, when I'm working on transcripts, which I know I'm miserably behind at guys, and so bad. They're just really time consuming and it gets –

EMILY: No, they're very time consuming.

SALLY: – kind of exhausting sometimes.

EMILY: I don't do them anymore, 'cause they're so time consuming, basically.

SALLY: Yeah. We're trying. I'm doing them – I know it doesn't seem like it, but literally as fast as humanly possible while having a life...and I don't really have much of that [laughing] either. It's just being able to go to the grocery store.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: And go to three Wal-Marts, because today has been stupid.

EMILY: Yeah. Sally came home and I was sitting there eating onion rings, minding my own business, and she was like, “I just went to three Wal-Marts.” And I was like, “What the fuck?”

SALLY: [laughs] It’s because I have the stupidest job of all time. Um, but anyway, yeah those are why I listen – it’s really weird, especially the – we’re still, I’m still working on transcripts for our first season, and I’m like, “What were we even?” I just feel like completely different people, you know?

EMILY: Yeah I was – I’m a completely different person than – I’m a completely different person every time we fucking edit this, we record this podcast.

SALLY: Well, no it was super weird, ‘cause, like, we ended season one over a year ago, and, like, we were still living in New York and, like.

EMILY: Ew.

SALLY: And the stuff we talk about and who – yeah, we’ve been home from New York for about a year now, which like.

EMILY: We’ve been home from New York for almost exactly a – we already talked about this in one of our other podcasts, where we reached the year mark. Okay, now we’re fourteen minutes in and I’m seriously not gonna delete any of that, because it was pretty fucking good so.

SALLY: Yeah, we’re pretty funny. Did you guys know what doesn’t rock? The opening chapter of *The Shadow Rising*.

EMILY: [laughs] Which Sally read and I mostly skimmed.

SALLY: I...mostly skimmed it. Because I mean, you can only read a description of Sivan Sanche so many times before you’re like, “I get it. She’s small. She’s angry. She used to be a fisherman.”

EMILY: Yeah, like.

SALLY: Duh duh duh duh.

EMILY: We’re kind of retreading old ground.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: In the – and we'll probably keep calling it the prologue, but it's actually the first chapter of *The Shadow Rising*, but I think of it as the prologue. Because it has the *Wheel of Time* prologue format, which is a bunch of randos talking.

SALLY: Yeah, like, not main points of view characters, setting up stuff that you will then deal with –

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: – God knows how many hundreds of pages later.

EMILY: Oh my god. I came up with a brilliant theorem that is going to be on my blog about how to measure the utility of these random scenes that come from random point of view characters. Like whether they're actually worth keeping or not.

SALLY: Lay it on me.

EMILY: Picture a graph where one axis is the functionality of the scene in terms of, like, what does it establish about the world, about the plot. And on the other is the – the word I used was personality, but it's really –

SALLY: [laughs, snorts]

EMILY: [laughing] – it's how you measure how annoying the character speaking is.

SALLY: Mm.

EMILY: Are they too memorable?

SALLY: Mm.

EMILY: Like, if it's a random one-off character –

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: – then, like, are they just super annoying?

SALLY: Mm.

EMILY: And it's, like, you have to find the happy medium between high functionality and a character who is inoffensive.

SALLY: Okay. So, you want it to be kind of like a low line?

EMILY: Yeah. So – Or you can –

SALLY: Or, you want it to be this.

EMILY: Yeah, or if you have high personality down at the bottom and low personality up there, then you want it that way.

SALLY: Okay.

EMILY: Or maybe. I don't know. It's a work in progress.

SALLY: Anyway, it's a good theorem and I agree. I'm gonna use that in my own writing.

EMILY: Thank you. I had a fun – it's 'cause I just read the opening, well, some of the opening sequences of *A Memory of Light* and there's actually a very good one in the very beginning of *A Memory of Light* where you have a character who is not particularly annoying, and also is doing a lot to establish.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Which is not typically what happens when Brandon Sanderson is at the helm, which I also talk about. Anyway [laughs].

SALLY: Unrelated, but your eyebrows look really great today.

EMILY: Thank you!

SALLY: Yeah. Completely unrelated they just excellent.

EMILY: Okay, thanks. I...color them in. A little bit.

SALLY: You use, like, a pencil or a pot?

EMILY: No, like, a little pencil. You just get these little pencils. E.L.F has a bunch of them that are really nice.

SALLY: Yeah. That's what I was using – I'm trying out some new eyebrow products, because my eyebrows and I are constantly at war. Um, so I tried an E.L.F pencil and then I got one of their little pots that I'm trying now. That you, like, paint on with a brush. Anyway, [laughing] this is EHR's makeup tips.

EMILY: Yeah, here are my suggestions for eyebrow maintenance. One, grow up with Becky Juchau as your mother, because she will fucking pay you, like, five dollars to pluck your eyebrows. Because she's a weird ass woman who just loves –

SALLY: [laughs] Kind of a sadist?

EMILY: – Yeah, well. It's not the pain it's the nitpicky thing. She just likes to, like, pick at little things. It's one of those weird compulsions. And she also is just, like, throw – throws money around like nobody's business.

SALLY: That's true.

EMILY: She'll be like, "Sit down for five minutes. I'll cause you pain in your eyebrows, but I'll also – " Anyway, what that will do is establish in you a hatred for having your eyebrows plucked. Then, you also have to be born at a specific time in history where full eyebrows will come back in. Then, you have to be unafraid of what your face actually looks – will look like, because that it's how I've done makeup my whole life. [laughing] It's working out so far. [sighs] Anyway.

SALLY: Anyway, that wasn't a total derailment because technically we start in Min's point of view.

EMILY: Oh yeah.

SALLY: And here thing is all about being *feminine* in this book as a *disguise*.

EMILY: Yeah, Min. We're catching up with Min after she parted ways –

[clanking in the background]

SALLY: [laughing] Would you –

EMILY: He is literally just leaping like two feet in the air.

SALLY: Twelve lords of leaping.

EMILY: Tybalt, I might have to exile you because this is bad audio.

SALLY: He's just, like, leaping up into oblivion, trying probably to catch, like, a freaking gnat.

EMILY: Yeah, he's always –

SALLY: [laughing] That's on the outside of the glass.

EMILY: He always finds a bug on the outside of the glass.

SALLY: Look at him.

EMILY: Can you calm down? I'll play with you after this. Maybe. [whispers] No promises.

SALLY: Don't promise him anything.

EMILY: [laughs] Um.

SALLY: Nothing promised, no regrets.

EMILY: Yeah, so Min is finally getting to the White Tower after she set out for it in the beginning of Book 3?

SALLY: [laughing] 700 pages ago.

EMILY: Yeah, 700 pages ago. And, um, I don't recall. You'll have to fill in my memory gaps. But she basically rolls into Tar – like right into the White Tower.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And is kind of in disguise. She's not in her men's – is she in her men's clothes?

SALLY: No, I think she's in a dress. I think she mentions specifically.

EMILY: Yeah, she's in a dress, and, like, a little hood.

SALLY: Yeah, her hair is longer.

EMILY: And she comes up to one of – this is kind of our first, um, our first introduction to the fact that people can just come to the White Tower and seek, I don't what the word is?

SALLY: Counsel?

EMILY: Some kind of amnesty in a way?

SALLY: Yeah. That's true. Yeah.

EMILY: Yeah, counsel. You can specifically request an audience with the Amyrlin Seat.

SALLY: If you're a woman.

EMILY: If you're a woman. If you're a man –

SALLY: It's any – Min says, because at first one of the Accepted, Faolain? [pronounced Fowl-in]

EMILY: Fayo-lain. I don't know.

SALLY: Fowl bitch.

EMILY: She's, like, relatively – yeah, she is a fowl bitch. But.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: She's also, like, relatively important in the vast scheme of Aes Sedai. She comes up every now and then.

SALLY: Yeah. And so, she's like, Min. She's like, "What the fuck are you doing here? Lady, I've dealt with a hundred people today." And Min's like, "Any woman has the right to request –"

BOTH: An audience with the Amyrlin.

SALLY: "And you have to grant it to me, because I request my rights. Tell her Elmindreda's here." And Fao – whatever.

EMILY: [mumbles]

SALLY: Oreos is like.

EMILY: [giggles] No, wrong podcast.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: We'll get to that.

SALLY: [laughs] That's a little Easter Egg for our patrons.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Um, and so basically. And then while she's waiting, Min has a – dun dun dun – viewing.

EMILY: Yeah. There's – the whole scene of this we're – I'm – I'm – I wanna get us a little – as we get into *The Shadow Rising* we're gonna stop doing beat for beat recaps of each chapter a little bit and kind of just talk about themes a little bit.

SALLY: Kinda get a little more literary.

EMILY: Yeah. Try and get a little more literary. Not to say we won't do the Drunk History thing –

SALLY: [snorts]

EMILY: – every now and then. Which is really funny, because neither of us has ever drunk, I just sound like this [laughs].

SALLY: It's true.

EMILY: Um, but. Yeah. There's – what happens here is Min's trying to – [laughs] stop.

SALLY: [laughing] Sorry. We're just so funny.

EMILY: Min's trying to get an audience with Siuan, and she encounters a few people but throughout is this omnipresent, building dread, because she's having viewings. As she's told us, it's a well-established fact that she tends to have viewings more with Aes Sedai and their Warders, so this is kind of a viewings heavy place.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: She's also been here before, so it's not like a...it's not like there's a shock factor in her seeing all these people. She's seen these people, people like them before.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: But suddenly, she's seeing all these really violent and gruesome, uh, viewings, indicating that these people are going to die or be injured or captured. And she's like, "What the hell? Like what the fuck?" She's getting more and more freaked out. It's very horror move-esque.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um, and she has viewings of people she knows. Like, at one point she has an encounter with Gawyn, who's like, "Hello. Where are all the women that I own?" And she's like –

SALLY: [laughs] She's like, "Perish."

EMILY: She's like, "Fucking fuck you, my guy."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: She's like, "I don't know where – " Well, first she's like, "They didn't *get here*? That was like nine books ago!"

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah.

EMILY: And he's like, "No, they came and they left already." And she's like, "Are you saying that they spent, like, two weeks in the Tower?" And he's like, "Yeah." And me, a reader, was like [laughing], "Yeah, it was stupid as hell. Why did they even come here?"

SALLY: It was dumb. Yeah.

EMILY: Ugh.

SALLY: It was a really confusing part of the plot.

EMILY: Damn, he got over there fast.

SALLY: [laughs] He was like, “BUG.” We’ve got the freaking flash cat over here.

EMILY: Yeah, that weird plot. But, um.

SALLY: So stupid. Book 3 is so dumb.

EMILY: [laughs] What? Book 3 is so good, except for that part.

SALLY: No. Book 3 is amazing, but it is kind of objectively the bitch idiot book [laughs].

EMILY: Yeah, like, we’re *so* stupid.

SALLY: [laughing] Yeah, every character is just, like, full dumbass in that book.

EMILY: Which book is this? The, like, edgy?

SALLY: Yeah, this is the edge lord.

EMILY: Edgy bastard?

SALLY: Oh my god! We need to make an alignment chart.

EMILY: I know. We’ll figure it out.

SALLY: Ah shit. Oh shit.

EMILY: Or at least sometime. I’ll do that at work tomorrow.

SALLY: Fuck. God damn. Yeah, we gotta get on top of that, before someone steals our intellectual property.

EMILY: Um...[laughs]

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: My friend is trying to live text me *Bachelor in Paradise*, which I can’t emphasize enough I don’t care about. But whatever.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: [singsong] Cultivating friendships. And she's like, "Oh, sorry for the small break. One of my best friends just got engaged and it was totally out of the blue and I was on the phone with her." And I'm like, "Sorry for not responding to you, I'm recording my dumb podcast."

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: [laughing] And also, I don't care enough to respond.

SALLY: *Bachelor in Paradise* – like, *Bachelor* is bad. *Bachelor in Paradise* is literally like putting...

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Acid in your eyeballs and ears?

EMILY: That's why I'll never watch it. But.

SALLY: I'm sure it would be fun to get it second hand

EMILY: Yeah. Maybe the recaps will be funny. Who's to say?

SALLY: Mm.

EMILY: Anyway, yeah Gawyn's like, "Oh, they came and they went already. But now I just don't know where they were because no one will tell me because I'm a man and no one believes in telling me things here in the White Tower." And Min's like, "I agree with you that it's a problem, that someone should probably have informed you where your *sister* went."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: "Because, like, you do have a legitimate claim to her, more or less. But, uh, you know also not my business. I don't know where the fuck they are."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Gawyn's like [mopey voice], "Okay. Also, I'm in love with Egwene." And Min's like, "Literally couldn't care less."

SALLY: And he's like [mopey voice], "But Galad loves her, too." And it's like did you not just hear what I said?

EMILY: "Galad loves her too." Like, go cry to your diary about it.

SALLY: [laughs] Gawyn would keep a *journal*, excuse you. Diary is too feminine [laughs]. He would keep a leather-bound journal [laughs].

EMILY: No, he would bring a typewriter to coffee shops.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: [laughing] I hate him!

SALLY: [snorts]

EMILY: [laughing] He's literally the worst. Um.

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: And, uh, and before – [laughs] first he's like, "I'll just go practice with my sword. It's the only time I feel alive or whatever."

SALLY: [laughing] Yeah, it's so stupid.

EMILY: [laughing] Min's like, "I hate you."

SALLY: Min's like, "'kay. Get gone."

EMILY: [laughs] "Get gone, girl." And also, she's like, but before he leaves she's like, "Shit's gonna go down with him, too."

SALLY: She sees his face all bloodied or something.

EMILY: Yeah. Just some gnarly stuff. She doesn't quite know what it means. Like, of course she's seeing people that she's, like, sure that they'll die, but she – no one we know, so. It's irrelevant.

SALLY: Yeah, obviously they're, uh, a bunch of red shirts.

EMILY: Yeah. Min, this entire time, is accompanied by a little novice named Sahra, who's starstruck by Gawyn.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And I only mention because she'll have a small point of view later on in the book.

SALLY: [laughs] Oh yeah.

EMILY: She you know, duh duh duh.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But Min finally gets taken to Siuan's study. Siuna's like, "Hello? What do you fucking want?"

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: And Min's like, "Your track record for dealing with people is as good as ever. Your social skills? Fucking astounding."

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: "How did you get a position [laughing] that literally requires you to be a good diplomat?"

SALLY: Yeah, it's anybody's fucking guess at this point.

EMILY: "You're the fucking worst." [laughs] But she's like, "Siuan, big news. Something bad's gonna happen." And Siuan's like, "Literally I don't care, [laughing] because I have no perspective."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Siuan's like, "I'm too stressed about the Dragon Reborn, who's on the other side of the continent, to care about what's happening in my own home. And Min's like –

SALLY: Which is why she gets displaced [laughing] at the end of this book.

EMILY: Min's like, "Sounds fucking great."

SALLY: Min's like, "Awesome. Cool, cool, cool. Glad I'm here."

EMILY: [laughs] "Glad I'm here. Glad I was able to give you this valuable information. Don't say I didn't fucking warn you."

SALLY: Siuan's like, "Okay, but tell me about Rand."

EMILY: Yeah. Siuan's like –

SALLY: And Min's like, "I love him."

EMILY: Min's like [high pitched voice], "I love him. Daddy, I love him!" Siuan's like, "Didn't ask, bitch."

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: No, Min's like, "He's on his way to Tear." And Siuan's like, "Oh, great. So, Moiraine's going to take him to get the sword out of the stone" [snickers].

SALLY: [laughs] Do you guys get it?

EMILY: Do you fucking get it?

SALLY: Do you get it? It's not like we didn't get beat over the head with it.

EMILY: And Min's like, "I very much wish that was what happened. But what actually happened was that Rand [laughs], ran out in the middle of the night, like a teenager that's been grounded, and was like, "Fuck you, mom," and now I don't know where he is or where they are. For all I know he's already got the sword."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And Siuan's like, "Great. Sounds lovely."

SALLY: "This is significantly less good news" [laughs].

EMILY: Siuan's like, "Ugh. He must have heard the Prophecy. I'm so mad he heard any of the Prophecies." And Min's like, "Why?"

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: "Doesn't he have to do the Prophecies?" And Siuan's like, "No, but I want – I want us to, like, force feed him what knowledge we have and completely manipulate him." It's only now as I'm an adult that I'm kind of like, "Oh. The White Tower...like, Siuan really would have fucked it up, you know?"

SALLY: Oh, no. For sure.

EMILY: Which isn't to say that he didn't get fucked up by everything that happened. It seems like it was a lose-lose situation. But.

SALLY: No, yeah. It was kind of – I – my first read through, of course, I was so like, "Rand is being such a pissbaby about everything" that I'm like, "He could really use Aes Sedai help." Then she says stuff like this and you're like, "Dear god. I'm glad you are not in the White Tower."

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Just very manipulative.

EMILY: Yeah, and as – it's so weird, because I'm often on Moiraine's side of things, and I still kind of am. Because she has good intentions and ultimately, she's there to be a resource for Rand.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But she also has a learning curve, where she doesn't learn how to offer that until the book that she dies.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So it's a little bit upsetting.

SALLY: Yeah, it's very frustrating. Because I mean – I mean everybody's at fault. We've talked about how Moiraine and Rand's relationship is like two egos just –

EMILY: Clashing, yeah.

SALLY: – going nuclear on each other constantly.

EMILY: Clash of the titans.

SALLY: Because it's like neither of them can swallow their ego for, like, one point five seconds to have an actual human conversation, but it still is kind of, like, I don't know. I understand the fate of the world is at stake, but maybe don't, like, manipulate teenagers.

EMILY: Yeah, it's just generally like a bad vibe. And it speaks a lot to like – like I hate to use the term “reverse sexism,” but as we've spoken of at length, *Wheel of Time* is set up as a world where men, in some instances, are just not as privileged.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And this is one of those instances where we're talking about Vatican, but female fantasy Vatican, where it's, like, these women have a lot of power politically. And if they are in a position to be near you then, like actually physically.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So.

SALLY: Yeah, for sure. Like, I think Rand gets it a little bit harsher, but as we talked about at length in *The Dragon Reborn*, she treats Egwene, Nynaeve, and Elayne very much the same.

EMILY: Yeah, it's just bad. Just generally.

SALLY: She just believes that people – and I think Min says it at some point. She's just like, “People are just tools for you,” or whatever.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: And blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. So, of course, Siuan has to have a humbling arc at the end of this, where.

EMILY: Which is itself kind of annoying.

SALLY: Yeah, we'll talk about that at length I'm sure.

EMILY: Yeah. I've been thinking a lot about how, like, this little prologue functions to set up the, quote unquote, bloodshed that will happen at the end of this book. And it's, like, like I remember it being a very impactful scene, because it's so deeply creepy and upsetting.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: First of all, we already have Min with a kind of creepy power set who sees things that no one else sees.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: This very, like, prophetic thing that isn't, you know, it's not a dream thing the way Egwene's are, these happen in her most conscious waking moments.

SALLY: Yeah!

EMILY: Which is kind of disturbing. Um, but then it's also just the idea that she can see into a future where something bad is going to happen, but she doesn't know when or how or why.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And literally anyone reading this can kind of see, because we break from Min's point of view to Elaida's point of view, and Elaida's like, "I'm gonna fucking get rid of Siuan Sanche" [laughs].

SALLY: Yeah. She's like, "I'm gonna kill that bitch."

EMILY: Yeah, and it's, like, I'm – I'm a little bit frustrated by the breaking of the Tower itself in that we do see it through Min's perspective.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Like...we don't – what we don't get from the breaking of the Tower is how violent it is.

SALLY: Yeah, and I think we've...talked about that before. How Min is an obvious choice if you want to go the least knowledgeable character route and make it scary in that Min has, quite literally, no idea what's going.

EMILY: Yeah. That's freaky.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But it's also, like, the idea that you have women fighting and murdering each other.

SALLY: Yeah, and literally being tortured in the basement. And it's, like, again it's scary because Min's, like, hearing these things and hearing people talk about things and she doesn't know. But at the same time, like, there is something to be said about placing – and *Wheel of Time*, as we've talked about, has an interesting relationship to, like, the trauma narrative. Where, like, it doesn't want to focus that at the center. It's very Greek in its rendering of violence sometimes, where it's, like, off-screen. But it's like, this is a huge political trauma and we're getting it through the eyes of someone so far removed.

EMILY: Yeah, and I also just think it would – it – like because we're not with any of the women who are experiencing these things, we're not, like, experiencing it on the kind of macro level we get later White Tower conflicts.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Like when the Seanchan invade the White Tower in Book 12, or whatever it is.

SALLY: Damn.

EMILY: You see it through many, many characters' points of view.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Some we're very familiar with like Egwene, and some we're less familiar with. And that works really well, because it tells you what's happening at every level of personhood. You know, the powerful, the non-powerful, etc. And with the White Tower it's like...now we're going to split and we're going to be very much involved in the aftermath of it, and women at war with each other, but we as readers don't necessarily understand the motivations of these women.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Like, if I was in the White Tower and saw one of my friends get murdered, then of course I wouldn't be like, "Yeah, let's go make peace with them."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: I'd be like, "Fuck them."

SALLY: Yeah, of course.

EMILY: But we're not really seeing that.

SALLY: Even like, as much as I hate him, like, a lot of Gawyn's arc is formed by, like, what he has to do here, and technically breaking his honor code by letting them leave or whatever. And it would be interesting to see more of what he's doing.

EMILY: Yeah, it's pretty frustrating that we don't see Gawyn as he's doing – like he has to kill his mentor.

SALLY: Yeah! Which I'm sure is awful.

EMILY: Yeah, that's fucking upsetting. And, like, I hate Gawyn points of view but that would be a pretty valuable one to have.

SALLY: Yeah, to, like, understand then his, like, shitty mindset going into the next couple of books.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Being like, "Yeah, of course he's, like, doesn't know what to do. His entire moral code has been just, like, scattered."

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: "So he's holding on to what scraps he can, which is Elayne and Egwene and [laughs] killing Rand."

EMILY: Ugh. Like, it's an admirable experiment with this particular trauma to try and do the before and after of trauma.

SALLY: Yeah. Of course.

EMILY: In the way that the girls are experiencing it, you know?

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: The girls are far removed from it, and so they just kind of hear about it and have to participate in the aftermath.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But it's like...that would really work for a lot of things. I think a lot of more personal traumas.

SALLY: Yeah, that's exactly what I was going to say.

EMILY: But on a geo-political trauma like this, you kind of have to be in it for your readers to understand what's going on.

SALLY: Took the words right out of my mouth.

EMILY: Thanks.

SALLY: No, I just I think you're right. I think like as much as it's important to render trauma in literature, you also – it's literature you can't render trauma in exactly the same way.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: It gets a lot easier when you're doing it on the level of an individual person, but, like, at some point, Robert, we do also need to be plot conscious.

EMILY: Yeah. The only way I could think of for it to be better would [laughs] require, like, a serious rewrite of *The Dragon Reborn* as well as *The Shadow Rising*, because I'd want all three girls in the White Tower when it breaks. And then them, in a way, fleeing from that as well as pursuing the Black Ajah.

[meowing in the background, collar jingling]

SALLY: Oh, my hell! You know better than this. Just because there's water somewhere doesn't mean you have to be there [jingling].

EMILY: [softly] Snatch. Gotcha.

SALLY: Ha.

EMILY: Goodbye. Oh, anyway, then the end of this little point of view with Min is that she's now going to be disguised as a more feminine version of herself.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And spoiler alert, [whispers] she's gonna love it.

SALLY: Because...she's hot.

EMILY: Yeah, because ooh, look I suddenly have sex appeal.

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah, suddenly – performs femininity and suddenly everyone's nicer to you.

EMILY: Yeah. The idea that you have to perform femininity in order to be sexy is so absurd. Like, butch women exist.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: They're the sexiest creatures.

SALLY: Have you ever seen a butch woman? Jesus Christ.

EMILY: Come on.

SALLY: It literally takes my breath away sometimes. Like, butch women really do have style and sex appeal on lock in a way that I guess straight people just can't comprehend.

EMILY: Yeah, can't touch it. Have you seen that tumblr post that's like, "Butch women don't dress like straight men, straight men [laughing] dress like butch women and they're failing at it."

SALLY: Yeah! Have you ever seen a butch woman in just, like, a really well-cut suit?

EMILY: [sighs] I can't.

SALLY: Or just, like, a really well-fitting flannel? God damn.

EMILY: AGH.

SALLY: God damn.

EMILY: Anyway, so, but this is gonna kind of be the disguise of ditzy-ness and –

SALLY: Yeah. Like –

EMILY: [laughing] Floozy-ness.

SALLY: In a way, I think it's interesting because it, like, um makes obvious the fact that gender is a performance.

EMILY: Uh-huh.

SALLY: Of course, so there's an interesting level to that. And if Robert Jordan complicated it a little bit more than Min is suddenly delighted to be, you know, sexy or whatever. Because that's, you know, an interesting commentary on – like, I've heard – like, an interesting thread in feminist thought is women having to unlearn the part of them that's like, "Oh, I do kind of feel good when I get catcalled, because it means that somebody thinks I'm attractive."

EMILY: Mm-hmm.

SALLY: As much as, like, that doesn't mean catcall people.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Think about it critically.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: And so, like, there's part of it that's, like, interesting, but again it just kind of ends with then this is the absolute demarcation of Min stopping being fully Min in a non-binary kind of presentation, to definitely presenting more feminine just, like, not in dresses. It's in, like, sexy floral trousers instead.

EMILY: Yeah, it's, it's pretty absurd.

SALLY: [laughs] It's –

EMILY: Style strange.

SALLY: If you think about the way that she dresses it's, like, [laughing] she's in what kind of pants?

EMILY: Yeah, I just. Like, embroidered pants or something?

SALLY: Tapestry pants? [laughs].

EMILY: Anyway, it is a pretty amusing scene when it happens, because Siuan's like, "We're gonna dress you up like a girl." And Min's like, "Oh, no." And Siuan's like, "With makeup." And Min's like, "OH, NO!"

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah, it's pretty funny. And she's like, "No one will recognize you after Leane gets you."

EMILY: Christ. Which is, like, Leane. The untapped potential [laughs].

SALLY: I know.

EMILY: I just want to know Leane's entire story.

SALLY: I know. Leane, the –

EMILY: The one good thing to come out of the weird White Tower breaking arc, when it's through Min's perspective, is that we get Leane.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: In her full glory.

SALLY: Leane just being, like, "Yes."

EMILY: "I'm gonna fuck men."

SALLY: Yeah, she's like, "I've lost my purpose, so I'll just become a huge slut."

EMILY: [laughs] It's like, "Damn, girl."

SALLY: Okay. That's a secondary life I can get behind.

EMILY: I respect that. Yeah.

SALLY: Yeah. Good for you.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Anyway, then we sadly bounce over to Dain Bornhald, my least favorite.

SALLY: I literally forget he exists.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: And then a point of view of his comes up and I'm like [whispers], "Who is this?"

EMILY: Exactly. He's just so –

SALLY: "Who is this?"

EMILY: He's so unmemorable, with his just vague masculine energy and his dad issues.

SALLY: Yeah. You could literally call him a different frat boy name every time, and I wouldn't know it was –

EMILY: Yeah. You could be like, "This is Chad Bornhald. This is Brad Bornhald."

SALLY: [laughs] "This is Tad Bornhald."

EMILY: Yeah. "Bad Bornahld."

SALLY: [laughs] Thad?

EMILY: "This is Sad Bornhald."

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Because that's what he is. He's like [mopey voice], "Ah, my dad's dead, so I'm gonna go massacre some people." And Padan Fain is like [Gollum impression], "Yesss, my preciousss."

SALLY: [laughing] Gross.

EMILY: [laughs] Sad Bornhald is like, “Yeah, this seems fine.” [laughing] And that’s the extent of his point of view, literally.

SALLY: Yeah, like, “I think you just killed some Tinkers, but.”

EMILY: Yeah. But shrug emoji. Like, I can’t be bothered.

SALLY: I’ll do a war crime, sure. I’m sad.

EMILY: Yeah. [mopey voice] My dad’s dead so I can do war crimes. And it’s like, okay. Fucking [laughs] fuck yourself.

SALLY: Like, what is going on?

EMILY: He’s just the most obnoxious character of all time. Um.

SALLY: [laughing] Sad Bornhald.

EMILY: Sad Bornhald. Then I think we jump over – who else? Whose other?

SALLY: Oh. It’s the High Lady Suroth, I think?

EMILY: Yeah then – I swear there’s another one.

SALLY: There’s Elaida, but we kind of touched on what she’s talking about. There might be one more, I just can’t remember.

EMILY: [distantly] I just can’t fucking recall. Yeah, so then we jump over to Suroth, who is equally boring.

SALLY: That’s true.

EMILY: And she’s like, “And I’m doing fascism and torturing people.” And it’s, like...I – no.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Like, why – of all the violence to depict Robert Jordan, why this stuff?

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Why couldn’t you stick with the normal high fantasy of fantasy Vatican blowing itself up from the inside?

SALLY: [laughs] Papal Schism.

EMILY: Papal – yeah, you couldn't do the fucking Papal Schism, you had to do, like, here's our violent fascism and enslavement of human beings?

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Ugh.

SALLY: Yeah, and I know, we'll get into this more because I have a lot of feelings about the Seanchan, I know everyone's gonna pull the, like, "Well, it's, like, a twenty-first century concern, and it's depicting realism." But it's, like, you literally cannot give a point of view to a villain, fascist or otherwise, without giving them some sort of credibility. So.

EMILY: Yeah, and here's a great example of my new theorem. Suroth's, um, perspective here does have high functionality in that it reminds us that the Seanchan are an omnipresent threat.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And are going to come back, and, like, shit's gonna go down. But it has extremely high levels of personality in that Suroth is the most obnoxious character. And just, like, like you said it is not ethical, actually, to give her a point of view.

SALLY: Yeah, it's really not. Like, it's, like, as we've said a hundred times, points of view are inherently humanizing.

EMILY: Yes.

SALLY: That's just how it works occupying another person's perspective. And that's why, you, like, writers have a high responsibility to, like, give points of view to characters who are...who, I don't know. Who have value. Like, I've seen people give villains points of view with an interesting end, but not to just be like, "Remember, how the Seanchan invasion is coming?" Like, if you want to do that, like, have Egwene thinking about how she was in the hands of the Seanchan for...

EMILY: Yeah, and, like, it becomes a little bit troubled when we get points of view from Tuon and, like, Tuon is very much part of the fascist regime in that she's at the peak of it. She's literally going to be the empress. But there's also the insinuation that Tuon, as much as I think that this was not done well enough in the series, is going to have some sort of redemption in changing the empire and the way that it is set up.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So, it's, like, okay that can be acceptable, but –

SALLY: Yeah, like –

EMILY: – this, where it’s just, like, an irredeemable character who’s doing irredeemable things to other humans is just gross.

SALLY: Yeah. So, anyway, as usual, like, yeah. It should have been, as much as I am anti-prologue, this functions like every other *Wheel of Time* prologue in that it’s a series of foreshadowing, like building blocks of foreshadowing.

EMILY: Yeah. “Here’s the shit that’s gonna happen.”

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And it’s, like, okay. We could have found out about this when Perrin finds out about the Two Rivers shit going down.

SALLY: Yeah, like.

EMILY: The only thing I think stands is Min, because, after all, she’s going to be the primary point of view.

SALLY: Yeah, and it also, like, there’s a few other things going on there, too. It’s not just, like, Elaida being like, “Do a murder!”

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Sand Bornhald being like, “Okay.”

EMILY: This is literally just a bunch of villains, except for Min, who are like do war crimes.

SALLY: Well [laughs].

EMILY: Yeah [laughing]. Then there’s Min, who’s a villain in her own right.

SALLY: Yeah, but no it is –

EMILY: [laughing] Self-sabotage.

SALLY: Three villains, who are really into massacring people and enslaving them, or as good as enslaving them.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: And so it’s like [laughing], “Cool. This is why *The Shadowing Rising* is such a fun read.”

EMILY: Like, can we not just jump right into chapter two, which is the funnest chapter of all time.

SALLY: Yeah, so it's a really weird tonal shift, which is why, like, again, like it should have been a prologue, because it's, like, if you want to have something that's truly so tonally different, like, you should demarcate it from the story proper. Like, the tonal shift is really jarring. Because, I mean, it does kind of set the tone for the book overall, but suddenly Mat is gambling and you're like, "But war crimes are happening?" [laughs]

EMILY: War crimes are literally happening –

SALLY: [laughing] What's going on?

EMILY: – at six different points across the continent.

SALLY: Yeah, so it's just kind of a weird intro to the book for sure.

EMILY: [groans] Good news is next week we will, in fact, talk about the funnest bubble of evil, and bubbles of evil in general, because that's gonna be –

SALLY: So interesting.

EMILY: – like, a thing that's coming up through the entire series. And this is the first, I think, major one?

SALLY: I think so. The first one where they know what's going on.

EMILY: Yeah, where they're conscious of it at least. I can't recall, honestly, if they've happened before. Of if they have –

SALLY: If they have, yeah, they've been super liminal in that it could be any number of things, but now we're very sure that this is happening, because the seals on the Dark One's prison are fading.

EMILY: Yeah, Moiraine tells us it's happening.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But, uh, yeah. That'll be fun, and a much better kicking off point for *The Shadow Rising*. But, until then, kids, don't do a war crime.

SALLY: Don't do a war crime!

EMILY: UGH.

SALLY: Got a listener submitted sign-off this week that has such –

EMILY: Oh great.

SALLY: – since we invented super lesbian chess at the beginning, this one has real sapphic energy [laughs].

EMILY: [laughing] Ooh, I'm so excited.

SALLY: Um, this comes from Sarah Widhalm – did I say that right? Sarah, if I didn't I apologize. Um, who writes [laughs], "So I was in bed with my then girlfriend, now wife, one Saturday morning when my mom called out of the blue to chat. I'd forgotten to charge my phone the night before and was down to, like, five percent. As the conversation went on I was seized by this great need and I said, "Yeah, so, I've been seeing someone lately. HER name is Morgan," and then my phone died."

EMILY: [whispers] Damn.

SALLY: Isn't that so cool?

EMILY: That's such like a fucking power move.

SALLY: Yeah, I know! I read it and I was like [screams, laughs].

EMILY: Like, good! Excellent! Is her – her family was just like okay? Cool, right? Like, they were supportive?

SALLY: Yeah, and then it's like, "By the time I got it plugged in and charged enough to call her back, she and my dad had talked about it and told me they supported me and wanted me to be happy." So really just a good, wholesome love story all around.

EMILY: Yeah. A good sign-off. But also imagine coming out to your mom and then your phone dies.

SALLY: Seriously such a power move.

EMILY: My mom would murder me, probably.

SALLY: Yeah, Becky would.

EMILY: Not for the gay thing, but for the then unreachable thing.

SALLY: Yeah, Becky would murder [laughing] your father, your siblings, all of Utah just to reach out, and then you.

EMILY: WHAT?

SALLY: [laughing] She'd just go on a murder spree until your phone was charged, because her rage would be so uncontrollable.

EMILY: [laughs] Okay.

SALLY: Okay, anyway, support us on Patreon.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Don't do war crimes!

SALLY: Don't do war crimes!

EMILY: Bye!