



## Episode 88: **Hammerhead-urabi's Code**

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Sally: Everybody Hates Rand is a Wheel of Time podcast that will contain spoilers for all 14 books. So if you're anti-spoiler, pause this, read all 14 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 Glynn MacKenzie plays)

Emily: I feel like this podcast should start with a funeral dirge because it's the end of an era. The era in which Chris Juchau was ignorant of this podcast's existence. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Yeah, what song should we sing?

Emily: Yeah, I dunno, but it's a sad day. I had to tell Chris Juchau over sandwiches at the restaurant called The Village Baker in Pleasant Grove, Utah.

Sally: I'm sorry that you had to do that.

Emily: It took about ten full minutes for me to fully explain what Patreon was. He was pretty befuddled by that one. (laugh)

Sally: He's like, "People pay you to be an absolute fucking idiot?"

Emily: He just didn't understand how the site worked, what it was, how people find it. It was just -- it was like trying -- I can't. I can't go into it. We can't keep doing this, Daniel. It was a pretty upsetting time.

Sally: If you, like Chris Juchau, struggle to find us on Patreon but you want to support us, for either one, three, or five American dollars a month, you can find it easily by typing it into your search bar: [www.patreon.com/everybodyhatesrand](https://www.patreon.com/everybodyhatesrand). That'll take you right to the homepage, where you can pledge some of your hard-earned cash to these fine ladies.

Emily: These fine women.

Sally: I'm not quite ready to talk about Wheel of Time yet.

Emily: Oh, OK.

Sally: Do you have some other shenanigans we can talk about instead?

Emily: (laugh) But it was good chapters!

Sally: I know, but.

(censor beep)

Emily: OK, are you ready to talk about Wheel of Time yet?

Sally: Yeah, I was trying to think of a joke. (laugh)

Emily: I'm gonna bleep all of that out into a single censor beep. (laugh)

Sally: Why?

Emily: It'll last for nine minutes.

Sally: Oh. (laugh) OK.

Emily: This is Everybody Hates Rand, your friendly neighborhood Wheel of Time podcast. We are your hosts. (laugh) I'm Emily Juchau.

Sally: And I'm Sally Goodger.

Emily: Whenever I say we're their hosts, I feel like I'm welcoming them into a mansion where I'm going to murder them, like in Clue. (wheeze)

Sally: (snort) I was --

Emily: I'm Colonel Mustard.

Sally: I'm Colonel -- I'm Colonel Mustard.

Emily: What? I wanted Colonel Mustard.

Sally: You can be Colonel Mustard. I'll be the sexy purple lady.

Emily: I thought the sexy lady was red.

Sally: Maybe she is.

Emily: Miss Scarlet -- but I know there's a purple lady too, and she's probably equally sexy because all women are equally sexy.

Sally: That's true. Except for conservatives. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) Which Mrs. White, the housekeeper, probably is --

Sally: Yeah. For sure.

Emily: Given her age.

Sally: One hundred percent.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Just kidding. You can be sexy and evil, but I just, like, don't find you personally as sexy.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: I don't know what I'm trying to say. Welcome to our murder house. We're going to murder you --

Emily: (groan)

Sally: With this sick analysis.

Emily: Of the two best chapters in -- definitely this book, if not the entire series. Well. Hmm.

Sally: Breaking into the Stone of Tear is just such a good chapter.

Emily: I know. It -- it's, let's say, top five.

Sally: It's just that he's so hot.

Emily: He really is.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Literally and metaphorically in this chapter.

Sally: Yeah, he's a sweaty, sticky boy.

Emily: Yeah. We pick up in the Stone of Tear. And the way Egwene describes the heat is so funny. 'Cause it's like, she just --

Sally: We don't pick up in the Stone of Tear.

Emily: Did I say the Stone of Tear? I meant the Aiel Waste. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: 'Cause I'm good at geography.

Sally: What? (laugh) "Did I say Germany? I meant Saudi Arabia."

Emily: (laugh) They got mixed up in my head.

Sally: (laugh) OK.

Emily: The Stone of Tear and the Aiel Waste are the only two settings in this book that are relevant. 'Cause, like, fuck the Two Rivers, you know?

Sally: What about Tanchico?

Emily: Also kind of fuck Tanchico.

Sally: OK.

Emily: You -- (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) I'm here.

Emily: Pull it together.

Sally: I'm here. I'm present.

Emily: Keep it -- keep it together, man. (laugh) Anyway, the way Egwene -- are you OK?

Sally: Yeah. I don't know why I didn't turn my phone to look at Instagram, it's ... OK. We're in the Stone of Tear. (laugh)

Emily: Fuck you. (laugh) When I said you could be the manic one, I didn't mean -- (laugh) immediately start acting as though you've had so much rum to drink.

Sally: (laugh) I haven't had anything to drink today!

Emily: Acting like it!

Sally: Mmm. Meh. (laugh)

Emily: She's now turtling in her sweater.

Sally: OK. We open on Jaime Lannister riding his horse up the stairs of the keep. (laugh) Egg is like, "Fuck, it's hot in here." (laugh) And then Mat is just, like, wringing sweat out of his hat.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: He doesn't have his hat yet.

Emily: Oh, yeah. That's a big, big character shift in this book, I guess. Egg's like, "Wow, it's so fuckin' sweaty. Literally all the moisture just got sucked out of my body in one foul breath --"

Sally: Yeah. Yeah.

Emily: "Of the desert." And I, born in Utah --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Relate.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It is so hot here sometimes. It's so hot. It's a desert.

Sally: Yeah. When you just step outside in August and you're like, "Oh."

Emily: Yeah. Sometimes you step outside in August --

Sally: (cough)

Emily: And it's like being punched in the face by heat.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: It's like the heat is like, "I hate you, personally. And I want to kill you." And you're like, "Thank you, malevolent desert. I too wish I was dead."

Sally: Correct.

Emily: Yeah. So anyway, they're all in the Aiel Waste, and they kind of look around. Egwene's like, "Water? Water! Water?! Aquacola --" Isn't that what they call it in "Mad Max: Fury Road"?

Sally: Aquacola?

Emily: I think so.

Sally: Maybe.

Emily: Anyway. Then there's a lizard that Gaul eats, obviously.

Sally: Obviously.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Gaul's not even here. What the fuck is the point?

Emily: Mat eats it. (laugh) Yeah, why isn't Gaul here? All the Aiel stuff would be so much more interesting if Gaul was just there.

Sally: Listen, what if -- if Egg had to fall in love with a man, why couldn't it have been Gaul instead of Gawyn?

Emily: That's so true.

Sally: Yeah. Right?

Emily: I always just want to substitute every shitty love interest in any book series -- it doesn't matter if it's the Wheel of Time -- with Gaul.

Sally: Right?

Emily: Because he's the ideal man.

Sally: That's true.

Emily: He's done nothing -- he's done nothing wrong.

Sally: He's also drinking his Respect Women juice.

Emily: Yeah. And also he's just so funny. He's so --

Sally: So funny. And he's so tall.

Emily: He's so fucking hilarious. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: And he's super tall.

Sally: He's very tall. But anyway, Egg's like, "It's fuckin' hot," and then Lan dumps a whole bottle of water on her head. (laugh) Which --

Emily: Lan's like, "I must care for these women," who are in full dresses --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So that sort of makes sense.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But he's just like, "OK, you have to stay hydrated and dump a lot of water on your head," and the Aiel, like -- it's pretty funny. Rand and Mat and all the -- all the white people, basically -

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Have, like, these wet washcloths --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Around their heads. Which reminds me of me when I went to church camp in Wyoming. Yeah. Pretty buck wild.

Sally: Your life is just one wild thing after the next.

Emily: My life is one, uh, church activity that I didn't want to be at after another. It was a pretty -  
- pretty brutal adolescence. Anyway, and now I'm gay.

Sally: (snort) Welcome, Chris.

Emily: (laugh) Have I said a fuck word yet?

Sally: You just did.

Emily: Now I did. OK.

Sally: "Have I said a fuck word?"

Emily: Have I --

Sally: "Emily, DON'T swear."

Emily: "Don't SWEAR." That's my mom. My dad cares a lot less about swearing. But the graphic sexual content I feel that we usually get into -- we've probably already gotten into. No,

we haven't said -- we've just said Gaul's really tall and therefore he's good, um, boyfriend material.

Sally: Yeah, I mean, that's my number one priority.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: How tall are you? Would you have comfortable hoodies based on how tall you are?

Emily: (sigh) I love comfortable hoodies.

Sally: Yeah, exactly.

Emily: Um. Anyway, Egg looks around and is like, "OK, this is weird. We're on a little hillside, and out in the distance, there's, like, the desert -- desert basin -- and in the middle of it is a big, big bank of fog." Just, like, in the middle of nowhere.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Perfectly round, I imagine. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Perfectly --

Sally: Like, spheric -- like, cylindrical?

Emily: Yeah. Half-spherical, or something.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And she's like, "Oh, that's odd. Maybe Rand isn't crazy." And Rand, in a -- in an -- in a show of restraint that can only be described as uncharacteristic, does not brag about how right he was.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But, uh, Egwene notices, up on the hillside, there are three camps -- kinda, two kind of farther away from each other, and then one much smaller one in the middle. And the Aiel look around, are like, "We were just magically teleported thousands of miles," I assume, and are like, "Well. Peace out."

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: And start packing up and leaving.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: 'Cause that's the type of folk they are.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And I love and respect them for it. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. (laugh) They're like --

Emily: They're just, like, can't be bothered.

Sally: "Time to go home."

Emily: They're like, "Well, we got here. Great. Couple months ahead of schedule. Debbie will be surprised --" Debbie's their collective wife, I guess.

Sally: Yeah. Of course, yeah. Debbie.

Emily: "Debbie -- Debbie will be surprised --"

Sally: The archetypal wife.

Emily: "To say the least." (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Every wife is named Debbie. Everyone knows that.

Sally: Yeah, when you get married, you have to change your name --

Emily: Legally, to Debbie. (laugh)

Sally: (simultaneously) To Debbie. (laugh)

Emily: If your name isn't Debbie, then you're breaking the law. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. (laugh) So.

Emily: Most people don't know that.

Sally: Yeah. Lookin' at you, Sarah Juchau.

Emily: Yeah, Sarah. SARAH. Gotta change your name to Debbie. That's how they get you in the dystopian Handmaid's Tale --

Sally: Oh my God.

Emily: Is if your name isn't Debbie, then they're like, "You're breaking the law. We can legally arrest you."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "And, you know, do fascist crimes to you."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Uhh --

Sally: That'll be our next graphic novel after Teen Narc. (laugh)

Emily: Margaret Atwood didn't include that in the original text --



Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Because it wasn't important to the narrator's journey.

Sally: Of course not.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Neither were gay people or Black people. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) Or any people.

Sally: Besides white women.

Emily: Besides upper middle class white women.

Sally: Don't you know? That's where the struggles really lie. (laugh)

Emily: (sigh)

Sally: OK. So the Aiel.

Emily: Yeah, so the Aiel. So immediately, some people start coming out of these camps and approaching, and then, uh, the Wise Ones get there first and are like, "Ollo. Hail and well met."

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Et cetera, et cetera. "What can we, uh, do for you?" And everyone is like -- well, first, Rhurc is like, "Heeeey, wifey."

Sally: He's like, "Hey, boo-boo."

Emily: And Amys is like, "Hey, honey." Amys -- what did we describe --

Sally: I don't know.

Emily: What did we decide her name is? It's gonna be different every fuckin' time. I just need you to accept that.

Sally: It's like -- Madeleine Miller, who I saw last week -- someone wanted to ask a question about Patroclus, and they're like, "I don't know how to say it right," and she was like, "Listen, do any of us?" (laugh)

Emily: Do any of us? That's the real question.

Sally: Yeah, she's like, "I've heard it pronounced every which way, and it doesn't matter, because words are fake." And I was like --

Emily: Words -- all words are made up, including the name Amys or Amys or Amys.

Sally: Amys.

Emily: Amys.

Sally: Like “Amy” with an “s.”

Emily: Amys. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: What’s Rhuarc’s, like, cute nickname for her? Meezy? (laugh)

Sally: “Hey, Meezy.”

Emily: “Meezy.” Yeah, so Rhuarc’s like, “Hey, wifey,” and she’s like, “Hey, hubby,” and then there’s just, like, a little chat where everyone’s like, “Holla, how we all doing?” Um, and then Rand steps up and is like, “Hello, I would like --” He does this really formal thing of asking to enter Rhuidean. And, um, at some point in here, uh, he gets, like, attacked by -- or, the -- the men from one of the camps kind of, like, draw weapons.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And the Wise Ones shut that down and are like, “Hey, fuck you.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “We can -- we can tell him yes if we want to. This is Wise Ones’ business.”

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: “‘Cause we’re a matriarchal society, so fuck you.”

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um. And this is where we’re introduced to Couladin, who also informs us, “Oh, we’re just here hanging out with, um--” waiting for Couladin’s brother to return from Rhuidean. Um, there -- it’s -- the, like, tense situation to which they’ve stepped into is outlined really -- like, right off the bat. The two camps -- one’s there for Rhuarc, basically to pick up Rhuarc. This is the carpool that is taking Rhuarc home --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And also they were, like, escorting the Wise Ones and they needed a fully armed battalion because they knew Couladin -- like, the Shaido would be there.

Sally: Yeah. It’s very weird.

Emily: It’s all very weird Aiel politics. But it’s also, like, going to be relevant, I guess, for the next three books, so --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: It’s just interesting to watch our group of mainly idiots just literally stumble into this -- appear out of nowhere and then are just like, “Oh. We’re having weapons pointed at us.”

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Anyway, Rand asks to enter Rhuidean, and the Wise Ones, uh, unanimously grant him permission. So they're like, "OK, great, off you go." And Mat's like, "Uh, I would also like to enter Rhuidean," and the Wise Ones are like, "... But why?" (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: "Have you considered this --" (laugh)

Sally: "Have you considered that it's a bad idea?"

Emily: "Have you considered, white boy --"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "That you are not wanted in Rhuidean?" It's very -- it's, uh ... this also, I think, really outrages the Shaido -- Shaido. Another word I'm just going to pronounce differently every time I say it. But Mat is basically like, "I gotta go -- I gotta do it." And Rand's like, "Well, I'll vouch for him," in a -- again, uncharacteristic -- show of moral support --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Rand does not usually give his friends. (laugh)

Sally: Any type of support.

Emily: Yeah. And the Wise Ones, much more hesitantly, are like -- (bumps the microphone accidentally and screams) Yeah, they do that.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: I hit my hand on the table. Yeah, they're like, "Yeah, you can go in. Just know we are not legally liable for your life. We're telling you right now, you're probably gonna die."

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And Mat's like, "Yeah, well, I'm gonna die anyway, so. Maybe that'll count --"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "As one of the times I die."

Sally: And everyone's like, "What?"

Emily: Everyone's like, "What are you saying, Mat Cauthon?" and he's like, "I can't -- I can't be bothered to explain."

Sally: "I -- listen. I'm above the law."

Emily: "My weird --" Yeah, Mat's like, "I don't -- I'm just here. Just doing my chaos thing." So then the Wise Ones are like, "OK, you gotta drop your weapons and then hit the road, Jack."

Sally: Then here's another very sexy scene, where they're like, "Drop all your knives." (laugh)

Emily: "Drop all your knives." And Egwene is like, "Mat just starts with the knife on his belt and then just keeps going."

Sally: (laugh) Yeah. He just makes a little, like, mound of knives.

Emily: He makes a mound of knives, and I am, like --

Sally: "Cool."

Emily: Really horny for that.

Sally: Yeah, like, where do you keep all of them?

Emily: Where do you keep all of them?

Sally: I like the one that's between his shoulder blades. I think we've talked about that before.

Emily: Yeah, and he even makes a big show of being like, "OK, I'm all done," and then "remembers" the one in his boot -- (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: 'Cause he decides he can't get away with it. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He's like, "Oh, I forgot," and all the Wise Ones are like, "We're impressed, buddy."

Sally: Yeah, the Wise Ones are like, "OK."

Emily: Them: "Oh, OK." This impresses even the Aiel, Egwene tells us. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. (laugh) Rhuarc's like --

Emily: Rhuarc's like, "Oh. Depths to this young lad. This slippery young lad --"

Sally: Hidden depths.

Emily: "Who's always dirty." Just so dirty.

Sally: (whisper) I know, I love him.

Emily: Anyway, the Wise Ones are like, "OK, off you go. Off -- off you run. Go play in the street," and they're like, "Great, OK, bye," and leave, chatting. Meanwhile, the Wise Ones whip around to look at Aviendha, who's attempting to sneak off --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Sniper no -- swiper no swiping --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Style. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Sniper no sniping.

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: Is a little bit more characteristically accurate. (laugh)

Emily: Oh, God, I just imagined a warfare scenario where you could say “Sniper no sniping!” and every sniper had to be like, “Alright, you got us.” (laugh)

Sally: “You got me this time.”

Emily: “You got us, boys.”

Sally: “Infantry.”

Emily: “Infantry men.”

Sally: “You got us this time.” Imagine how different every battle in World War II would have gone. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah, imagine if there was honor in warfare.

Sally: Ooh, shit.

Emily: (laugh) I might cut that out. Um --

Sally: Don’t cut that out. OK, you can cut it out.

Emily: I -- what?

Sally: What?

Emily: Wot?

Sally: WOT?

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) What?

Emily: I can just see the, like, mania in your eyes.

Sally: I’m very sleepy.

Emily: I know, I’m sorry. We’ll get --

Sally: Wot?

Emily: We’ll try and get through this.

Sally: We’re doing great.

Emily: OK. So the Wise Ones are like, “Aviendha, you gotta go to Rhuidean,” and she’s like, “Mom, I don’t wanna,” and they’re like, “Too bad, missy.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And that is when Egwene realizes -- oh, Aviendha can channel. Um, also, it's now been revealed that a couple of the Wise Ones can channel --

Sally: Mm-hmm. Two out of the four, right?

Emily: Two out of the four, yeah. Egwene now realizes, "I can suddenly -- I've suddenly acquired -- I've leveled up, and so I've acquired the power to tell when women around me can channel," so that includes Moiraine and Aviendha and a couple of the four Wise Ones.

Sally: So the Wise Ones, it's Amys -- (laugh)

Emily: It's Amys.

Sally: Amys, Bair, Sorilea?

Emily: Seana, I think, is her name.

Sally: Seana.

Emily: And Melaine.

Sally: Melaine, that's right.

Emily: And spoiler alert: only three out of four of these will be important, 'cause I believe Seana dies in this --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Book?

Sally: Sounds right.

Emily: Or possibly in the next book. And her place is more or less co-opted by another Wise One that we're introduced to later, whose name is Sorilea.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: So it's kinda like -- there are always four Wise Ones on the radar, but.

Sally: Which is interesting.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Usually it's, like, three old women.

Emily: I was gonna comment on that too.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's very interesting that we're not greeted by the archetypal three women.

Sally: Yeah. Especially when they've got this voting system where, like, you could have a stalemate constantly with four women.

Emily: Yeah, you could have an even split.

Sally: Yeah. It's very interesting.

Emily: It is very interesting. They later tell us that they're the only four Wise Ones who can dreamwalk.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Which is pretty buck wild to me.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, I know it's a rare ability, but it also is kind of made to seem as, like, oh, the Aiel have got this, at least, on lock.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: So. I dunno. Kind of a weird thing to think about. But yeah, they're not, like, doing the three Fates thing or the Morrigan or, uh ... however --

Sally: The witches from Macbeth. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah, the witches from Macbeth. However many other groups of three --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Mystical women you wanna do.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: In a way, that makes them feel just, like, tonally way more benign.

Sally: Yeah. I agree.

Emily: If that makes sense.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Like, instead of feeling ominous and threatened by the presence of three women, which readers of fantasy, I think, usually do --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: It's just kind of, like, oh. Four ladies.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: They're on my side.

Sally: Yeah. It's that horizon of expectations you get from reading fantasy that's just, like, shattered here.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And then you don't really know what to expect.

Emily: Yeah. 'Cause, in the Aiel Waste, nothing you expect really happens.

Sally: Yep. It's weird --

Emily: Yeah, lots of weird shit happens.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Some of it is expected. I think the news about Rand's parentage that we'll get in a few chapters --

Sally: Oh, yeah.

Emily: Is pretty cliché, but also --

Sally: 'Cause, even here they talk a little bit, 'cause Couladin's like, "He's not even Aiel," and they're like, "Shut up, look at his ginger-ass hair."

Emily: Yeah, everyone's like, "Uh, he look Aiel." (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) So, yeah.

Emily: "So jot that down, Couladin."

Sally: Yeah. And then Egg is --

Emily: Kool-Aid man.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) What does the Kool-Aid man say when he breaks the --

Sally: Oh, YEAH. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) Oh, God, oh.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Why did they give the Kool-Aid man a phrase that is also used so frequently in sex?

Sally: Oh, gross. (laugh) God, I hope nobody's just, like, saying it like the Kool-Aid man.

Emily: Ahhhh! (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: I have to, like, get up and leave. Oh, I feel dirty.

Sally: Emily's going to go take a shower.

Emily: Ugh.



Sally: Anyway, Egg is like, “Rand’s dad was an Aiel?” and they’re like, “Don’t be sexist, Egwene. His mom --”

Emily: “His MOM was an --” No, it’s --

Sally: No, wait --

Emily: It’s the --

Sally: (laugh) Yeah, she’s like, “His MOM was an Aiel?” and they’re like, “Don’t be sexist, Egg. His dad was an Aiel.”

Emily: She’s like, “But, Tam,” and everyone’s like --

Sally: “Who?”

Emily: Adoption is a thing, Egg.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Calm down.

Sally: Sorry I mixed that up. T -- Tigraine.

Emily: T -- who cares? Rand’s parents are just so fuckin’ weird anyway. In a way, I kind of admire that his actual biological father is mentioned once and then never again.

Sally: Yeah, everyone’s like, “We don’t know what the fuck --

Emily: Yeah, it’s kind of like a power move. It’s just like, hmm, some random dude.

Sally: But he also does have two moms die. (laugh) Which makes him, like, the supreme male protagonist.

Emily: Yeah, it is pretty upsetting. Um. God, Rand is such an anime protagonist when you think about it. (laugh) He’s got a dead mom and weird-colored hair.

Sally: Yeah, and he’s -- yeah.

Emily: Comparatively.

Sally: Yeah. And dresses weird.

Emily: God. How am I possibly gonna figure out how to edit this episode? It’s all so good.

Sally: Three girlfriends.

Emily: It’s all so quality.

Sally: Maybe we’ll just have a long episode.

Emily: Hey --

Sally: We’ll call it Long Episode.

Emily: (snort)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: "Welcome to Long Episode."

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: So, um -- (laugh)

Sally: They take Aviendha's weapons and are like, "Get naked, and get going." (laugh)

Emily: No, there was something else I was gonna say and now I forgot. Oh, the four women thing? It just sort of immediately, as we said, sort of sets the horizon for, "Hey, what you expect to happen is not going to happen," which sort of eases you into the chapters that are coming up, where the really world-shattering, like, revelations about the Aiel are dispensed. Maybe not world-shattering to us --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But world-shattering, certainly, within the context of the world.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: So it kind of is bracing you for that. And even if you're kind of like, "I don't really get it, and I don't get why this is such a big deal," it's still such a weird format for those chapters.

Sally: Yeah. Yeah.

Emily: So kind of just weirdness. Yeah, setting that horizon of expectations a little differently.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, but yeah, they're like, uh ... "Aviendha, give us your weapons," and she's like, "But I love my weapons," and they're like, "Sucks to suck," and she's like, "Fine." Gives up all her weapons, takes off all her clothes, and they're like, "Go run through the desert now," and she's like, "FINE" --

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: And leaves, after a brief hand-squeeze with Egg, which is, like, gay.

Sally: Gay as hell.

Emily: Yeah. It's so fuckin' gay.

Sally: (laugh) But yeah, Aviendha just takes off sprinting for --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And Egg's like, "She's gonna catch up with Mat and Rand."

Emily: She's like, "Oh, damn. That was -- fuckin' powerhouse there." And then the Wise Ones are like, "Why don't y'all -- why don't y'all ladies come to our tent? Lan? No boys allowed. So stay out. Go bro out with Rhuarc or whatever it is you do when you're alone," and Lan's like, "I just stare into the distance and think about pain."

Sally: (laugh) And they're like, "OK."

Emily: They're like, "Oh. You're the worst." And he's like, "I know. Why would anyone fall in love with me?"

Sally: But have you seen the actor that plays him?

Emily: But HAVE you seen the actor who plays him? He's like, "I know, but have you seen my face?"

Sally: He's like, "I know, but have you seen the actor who will play me in the adaptation?"

Emily: And everyone's like, "Oh."

Sally: And everyone's like, "Shit, you're right."

Emily: "It makes sense." Anyway, they go --

Sally: One day they're gonna cast Rhuarc. Isn't that exciting?

Emily: It is pretty exciting.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: The sex appeal -- I don't care who he is -- (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. Honestly.

Emily: It's gonna be off the charts.

Sally: Yeah. I just can't wait until they're like, "And here are a bunch of redheads." (laugh)

Emily: "Every ginger in --"

Sally: "Hollywood." (laugh)

Emily: "In Hollywood, in Britain or whatever --"

Sally: "In Britain's Hollywood. In Brollywood."

Emily: "And everyone whose hair we could reasonably dye." (laugh) "Is here."

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: Um, anyway, so they go up to the tent, have a little discussion between the Wise Ones and, uh, Moiraine and Egwene. Moiraine's kinda like, "Yo, I didn't really know y'all could channel. Like, you should let the White Tower step in and culturally appropriate or whatever it is we do so that we can train you the way we want to." And the ladies are like, "Mmm. We'll take that into consideration, but it's gonna be a no from us. Just preemptively letting you know. It'll

be a no.” And Egg’s like, “Can we talk about dreams?” and they’re like, “No. Shut up, you foolish lass.”

Sally: “Foolish idiot. Boo-boo.”

Emily: And then they’re kind of talking about Rhuidean, and it comes up that Wise Ones take two tests, and one of them involves, like, stepping into these -- a ter’angreal, Egwene immediately realizes, that kind of shows you future --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Future things. And they also are like, they’re, like, talking about their ability to see the future in dreams and how, um, some things are certain; some things are very much not. Like, they all knew that, uh, Rhuarc would be arriving back from, uh, the Waste today and that Moiraine would be with him, but they didn’t know anything about, like, Rand or Mat or Egwene. So, it’s kinda like -- it’s very much in flux. Um, but they sort of let slip that Moiraine is supposed to go into Rhuidean, and she just, like, skims right over that but then, a second later, is like, “So, do I also have to disrobe?” and they’re like, “Fine. Yes.” And then Moiraine takes off all her clothes and sprints out into the desert.

Sally: Legend.

Emily: Yeah. Super legendary. Probably the coolest -- second-coolest Moiraine moment.

Sally: Yeah. She really puts ‘em tightly together in books four and five.

Emily: Yeah. She’s just like, “Alright, well. Peace out. I’m hella naked.” And then they’re like, “Alright, later. Later days. Good luck. Goodbye.” And off she goes.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Umm. Meanwhile, they finally start talking to Egg about Dreaming, and they’re like, “Well, you just gotta -- you gotta submit to our training,” and Egg is like, “That sounds fine to me. I’m just here to learn. ‘Cause I’ve got big ambitions. Am-bitchins.”

Sally: Ooh.

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: I like that.

Emily: Umm. I can’t remember. It -- there -- it’s pretty much the end of the scene.

Sally: Oh, and then they’re just like, “You have to repeat exactly what we say to us, or you’re gonna get, I dunno, punished,” and Egg’s like, “Okay.”

Emily: Yeah. They say something about, like, “We don’t want people going to the White Tower ‘cause they’ll get soft. Like, our ways of training are way -- are not coddling young women,” and Egg is like, “I did more manual labor at the White Tower than I ever did in my life as a farmgirl, so.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "I'm not quite sure --"

Sally: "I'm not know -- I don't really know what to expect here."

Emily: "I don't really know how to interpret that, but."

Sally: "Here we go."

Emily: "I'm excited to find out."

Sally: "Mark me down as scared and horny."

Emily: (simultaneously) "Scared and horny."

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Horny for learning.

Sally: Ooh. Egg is horny for learning.

Emily: I know, Egg is the character who's most horny for learning in all of literature.

Sally: (laugh) Then there's her antithesis, Mat.

Emily: Yes. Who's like, "Fuck me. New knowledge? I don't want that."

Sally: "I don't want that shit."

Emily: "Keep it far away from me."

Sally: Yeah. But lo and behold, Matrim -- (laugh)

Emily: But lo and behold -- you're about to get --

Sally: You're about to get inundated --

Emily: Hung by a tree from knowledge.

Sally: (stage whisper) It's the tree of knowledge.

Emily: For knowledge. It's the tree of -- yeah.

Sally: It's the tree of life or something. It's Yggdrasil or whatever.

Emily: It's the ... (trails off into mumbles) Yeah.

Sally: They call it Avendesora. Which I think is derivative of something in Lord of the Rings. I think there's some tree --

Emily: Probably is.

Sally: I have to Google it.

Emily: You gonna look it up? OK, I'll start talking about --

Sally: What do you think will happen if I google “Lord of the Rings fancy tree”? Let’s find out.

Emily: (laugh) I bet the Tree of Gondor will come up.

Sally: I know. Fancy tree ...

Emily: Lord of the Rings mythology, maybe?

Sally: (laugh) “Did you mean Lord of the Rings fancy dress?” No, I DIDN’T.

Emily: I DID mean Lord of the Rings fancy dress. Specifically, I mean that dress where you can just see Liv Tyler’s entire boob.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Which really struck a chord in 14-year-old Emily. Let me tell you that.

Sally: No, the trees in the Legendarium are Telperion and Laurelin, so I don’t know what I’m getting Avendesora from.

Emily: Dunno, pal.

Sally: My brain, maybe.

Emily: Anyway, Mat and Rand are walking through -- well, actually, we pick up with them right outside the, uh, bank of fog, and they’re just, like, staring at it in a crouch. Mat has a rock in his mouth, which is just, like, the typical way to start a Mat chapter, I feel.

Sally: He’s like, “The rock in my mouth isn’t working.”

Emily: He’s just like, “Augggh!”

Sally: And we’re like, “What?”

Emily: And spits it out. And Rand’s like, “Well, I guess we gotta go in there,” and Mat’s like, “You know what’s buck wild? Is I told you a little while ago that a naked woman ran past us, and you just brushed that off.” (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: And Rand’s like, “I’ve -- I’m -- I’m descending into madness, Mat. I can’t be bothered by such trifles.” And Mat is like, “A naked woman running through the desert! She just ran right past us.”

Sally: Yeah, it’s not a trifle, it’s a bit alarming. It’s a trifle alarming. (laugh)

Emily: It was -- it’s a trifle ... weird.

Sally: Yeah, and Rand’s like, “I don’t even know if you saw what you saw.” Mat’s like, “Listen, I know a naked woman when I see one.”

Emily: Yeah. Mat’s like, “In a mirage, I would see water.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Not a naked female. Maybe later, I'd see a naked female --"

Sally: "Only after I'd had water."

Emily: "But Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Rand. Water first."

Sally: "Water. Titties." (laugh)

Emily: "Water comes before titties." (laugh) On Maslow's --

Sally: "Not MUCH before titties --" (laugh)

Emily: But they -- (laugh)

Sally: But it still does. (laugh)

Emily: Anyway, so they walk into the fog, uh, and enter Rhuidean, which is actually a really fascinating setting because it is almost the antithesis of the ruined city --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That we talked about a bit when we, uh, were in Shadar Logoth.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Ruins are so, like, cliché in fantasy -- not necessarily in a bad way, because they represent so much. Like, ruins are just, like, a setting in fantasy. It's like, yeah, you're gonna have a magical forest at some point, and you're gonna have ruined -- a ruined city. But then you have Rhuidean, which is, like, a city that is completely fine. Doesn't seem to be in any state of decay --

Sally: Yeah, but it's, like, incomplete.

Emily: But is incomplete.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which is almost so much freakier.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Because it's just, like, cut off.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: In a really freaky way. Rather than, like, a slow descent, it's just, like -- (makes whooshing sound)

Sally: Yeah, we've got the difference between, like, decay and, like, I dunno -- it's like --

Emily: Execution, almost.

Sally: Yeah. Yeah. It's very weird. It's interesting that you bring up Shadar Logoth. When you said they were walking into the fog, that was the first time I sort of connected the two cities in my brain.

Emily: Yeah, they're, like, the two big haunted cities.

Sally: Yeah. And things -- two places where huge things happen to Mat in terms of --

Emily: Yeah, that's interesting.

Sally: His construction as a character. This is a completely random thought that I'm hoping we can talk a little bit more about in later chapters, but I've been reading -- actually, like, reading deeply for the first time -- uh, Farah Mendlesohn's *Rhetorics of Fantasy*. Like, I've studied the text in, like, um, abridged versions, but this is the first time I'm reading it. And the chapter on immersive fantasy talks about how characters -- like, immersive fantasy is the one most associated with cities, 'cause cities are so insular -- insular.

Emily: Uh-huh.

Sally: Um, and it also talks about how, like, the characters that make -- the points of view that make immersive fantasies feel most immersive are characters who are actually, like, antagonists against their world and fight against the social order. Which are two things that are very connected with Mat. Like, he's the predominant, like, quote unquote antagonist against the order, and he's also very associated with cities and mythological levels and just personal levels, so.

Emily: Yeah, I'm not sure why Mat is such, like, an urban character.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But he's the one who gets out of, you know, the farm town in which he was raised and immediately is like, "Nope, cities are my schtick." He's just, like, never wants to leave cities.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: It's very interesting and weird.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I dunno -- like, I can't really think of any symbolic or mythological reasons for that beyond what you said about Farah Mendlesohn and just kind of, like, Mat's character, but I don't know. It just seems like it should be significant that, yeah, these two really world-shattering things happen to Mat in empty cities.

Sally: Yeah. And my -- my point with those two things about Mat is, as we've argued, like, Mat is the character that feels most immersed in his own point of view --

Emily: Yeah. That's true, yeah.



Sally: Um, like he's the one that reads most complete -- completely in his world, which is interesting. But, yeah. It is very interesting, then, to see, like, his life lived in, like, functioning cities and his life, like, broken in these ruined cities. It's very interesting.

Emily: That's true, yeah. Yeah.

Sally: Broken, quote unquote.

Emily: It's like as soon as Mat exits -- but then it's also interesting because you have these other major sites of trauma --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: In cities that come under attack --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like Ebou Dar is another of Mat's major cities, and I think it's weirdly significant that what happens to that city is very reflective of what happens to Mat.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Like, that city, at the end, gets violently taken over --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And is then under occupation, while Mat also gets more or less violently taken over and is then trapped --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Kind of, there, under occupation. It's a very ...

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Tracing Mat's storyline --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Through cities is pretty wild.

Sally: That's a fun essay blog. Something that we have ...

Emily: I know. That's a fun -- yeah, that's a fun idea.

Sally: Yeah. And it's also very -- 'cause I think most often, when you equate land -- the landscape is always symbolic in fantasy. Like --

Emily: Sure, yeah.

Sally: Even when we go back to, like, early, early EHR, when we talked about the concept of thinning. Like, the landscape is always undergoing some form of, like, moral and therefore symbolic decay because some evil is rising. So, like --

Emily: Yeah, literally at the end of the series -- Wheel of Time -- like, the landscape starts to crack apart.

Sally: Mm-hmm. Ooh, spooky.

Emily: It's very spooky, and it just starts happening in the very last book, and it becomes this really major plot point, and it's -- revolves around the use -- the heavy use of balefire.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: Which is kind of like a nuclear weapon, you know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But it's like, the more people use that, the more the world starts to just, like, literally crack apart.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's very scary.

Sally: That is very spooky.

Emily: But yeah, that's -- yeah, just good fantasy writing is landscape reflects --

Sally: Yeah. Like, the fabric of the universe. And not even in, like, a -- yeah, in a lot of ways it is, like, moral, especially because fantasy is so tied to dark versus -- or good versus evil, I don't like dark versus light anymore, after --

Emily: Yeah, no, that's racist.

Sally: Um. Good versus evil.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: But yeah, it is also interesting to track, like, bodies, in Mat's way, alongside a landscape. 'Cause we don't technically usually think of the city as a traditional landscape, so.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: It's just -- whatever, I'm just waxing. But it's interesting.

Emily: No. Another fun point is that Rhuidean becomes a complete city.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: Like, Rand, at the end of this book, is going to, like, bring that water up out of the, like, earth, and Rhuidean's going to kind of become this populated oasis.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: In this interesting way. And similarly, this is the site where Mat's head is repopulated by memories.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, and Shadar Logoth just has no good things happen to it 'cause nothing good is connected to what happens to Mat -- I dunno. Yeah.

Sally: It's really interesting.

Emily: Yeah, it's -- it's interesting that Mat loses something in one empty city and regains it in another --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Empty city. Anyway, so Rhuidean. Very kind of creepy setting. Um, especially once we kinda learn what is up in Rand's point of view in upcoming chapters. But there's, like, all these really high -- it's meant to be kind of like a modern city --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: All the buildings are very tall and big and grand. There are fountains. Um, which, Rand apparently channels to make water appear in one of the fountains, and it takes Mat a full, like, page and a half to realize he's channeled. He's just like, "Water?"

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Goes and stands under it. Like a --

Sally: Yeah, like a dog. Like Tybalt under the sink. He's just like -- "Bleegghh." (laugh)

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: Like, rolling in it. (laugh)

Emily: He fuckin' loves the sink. Yeah, Mat's just like, "Water! Give it to me," and Rand's like, "Huh, should've thought of that earlier," and Mat's like, "Oh, duh, it was channeling."

Sally: He's like, "I'm so stupid."

Emily: Mat's like, "Why can't I think things?"

Sally: "Why won't this brain work?"

Emily: Uh, but anyway, they, uh, just kind of follow the road to the center of the city, where all roads intersect in this big town square. Well, I guess it's more of a circle. And this, again, is just, like, an interesting visual when you picture the bird's-eye view of it --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: That there are all these paths that lead to the columns, the glass columns that Rand goes through. But in between all those paths are just, like, wild collections of sources of Power.

*Ter'angreal* --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And *angreal* and all this stuff. And then, also, there's the hundred-foot tree in the middle.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Hundred feet is so tall, you guys.

Sally: So tall. For a fucking tree.

Emily: Hundred-foot tree. And Mat goes up and is like, "I want to touch it," and tries to get a leaf.

Sally: Because he's --

Emily: He jumps to get a leaf.

Sally: But he can't reach it.

Emily: I know. He's such -- he's like that teenage boy who always has to slap the doorframe.

Sally: Oh, yeah.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: That's Mat.

Emily: That is Mat.

Sally: The same lizard brain.

Emily: Yep. (laugh)

Sally: But then he's like, "Ah, I feel peaceful," and we have our little connection to Buddhism here.

Emily: Yeah. Talking to -- I can't remember the fantasy name, but they mention Siddhartha.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, Gautama, yeah. Gautama?

Sally: Getting enlightenment under the tree.

Emily: Getting enlightened and having food brought to him by birds and things.

Sally: Yeah. (laugh) And Mat's like, "I could maybe see the enlightenment, but the food by birds is a little much."

Emily: Yeah, Mat's like, "Not OK."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "I want to pick my own food, thank you."

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: Anyway, Rand's like, "OK, I guess I have to go through the columns now, but I don't think you should come with me," and Mat's like, "No, I should come with you. I gotta do the thing." And Rand's like, "I don't -- I think you should just stay here." And Mat's like, "Well, let's flip a coin on it," so they flip a coin, but the coin falls on its edge, and then Rand channels to make it fall so that Mat will stay out. And Mat's like, "I got it that time. I understood. You channeled." And Rand's like, "Perhaps."

Sally: "Nothing gets past me. Mind like a steel trap."

Emily: Yeah. And Mat's like, "OK, fine. Then I'll stay out here. Interesting for you to show compassion for my well-being, Rand. Go for it, I guess."

Sally: But Rand's, like, already gone. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) Rand's like, "Goodbye. I have left." Um.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Maybe in the next chapters, we'll talk about Rand and Mat's weird relationship --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: In this particular book.

Sally: God.

Emily: Uh, but Mat kinda goes, is just like, "OK, I'll wait for an hour, and then I'll go in after him." Which, one wonders how that timeline would've gone. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Yeah. Mat'd be like, "What the FUCK?"

Emily: Given that time is weird in Rhuidean -- like, I think that they actually spend seven days here?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Or something? It's just, like, you -- you don't know, then, if while Rand is gone -- y'know, if the time passes in between them going through the fog or whatever, or if this means Mat was literally hanged for multiple days.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And, you know, it just works because -- I was thinking today about how he's hanged from the tree of life, and is it then the tree of life that kind of keeps him alive enough?

Sally: Mm.

Emily: For Rand to resuscitate him? Sorry if you can hear rustling noises in the background.

Sally: Yeah, that's --

Emily: Tybalt is determined to make noise even from his prison.

Sally: (laugh) Tybalt's like, "You thought you'd heard the last of me."

Emily: "Nope."

Sally: "Ahhhhh!"

Emily: "Ahhhh!"

Sally: I'm surprised he's not yelling yet.

Emily: Um, but Mat then discovers another doorway. And it's very interesting in this chapter -- Mat does make particular note of the things that he's going to end up getting --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: From, uh, them. He says something about, "I just wish I was so far away from the Power, I wish I had a way to --"

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: "Never be close to it again." And he also says something about wanting to have his memories filled. Which are pretty familiar adages for Mat, but in this chapter particularly --

Sally: Yeah. They become our, like --

Emily: They become significant.

Sally: Mark -- our sign posts.

Emily: Yeah, our anchor points, a little bit.

Sally: Yes, thank you. Oh my God, I can never think --

Emily: You're fine.

Sally: Of the word "anchor."

Emily: Anyway, so Mat, in his fit of mania, is like, "I guess I'll go through the doorway," and does. And is like, "Aw, those aren't the snake people. These are the fox people."

Sally: "Son of a bitch."

Emily: "Son of a bitch! There's this dude who looks like a fox, and he's wearing human leather." Or some --

Sally: Yeah, which is gross.

Emily: Some gross thing.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But he's like -- sort of the same thing as last time. Mat's like, "OK, take me to where I need to go," and the guy's like, "Sure, come along --" It's, again, like --

Sally: He's like, "Did you bring any fucking instruments?" (laugh)

Emily: "Did you bring music, you son of a bitch?"

Sally: And Mat's like, "No."

Emily: Mat's like, "No? Do I look like a musical boy?" I mean, a little bit, yeah.

Sally: A little jaunty.

Emily: "I love -- I love -- I like a dance. I like a jig."

Sally: "I'll click my heels every once in a while." (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) It's pretty sad that there's not a canonical moment where Mat gets so excited he clicks his heels.

Sally: There is in my heart.

Emily: Yeah. There is. (laugh) Um, but this fox guy takes him to another room, where he is met with not three -- which I think was the case in the last place --

Sally: Mm.

Emily: But, uh, like, six people.

Sally: Yeah, a lot. It's -- again, that subversion of the rule of threes that is --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Unsettling in this case.

Emily: Yeah, and there's all these, like, star shapes here --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's all very unsettling. Mat talks about, you know, the horrifying thing of looking behind you and, oh, where you came from is gone.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And passing by the same place multiple points -- it's just labyrinth-like. Um. Sorry, I was just thinking about how they describe the, like, lady fox's hair, how it, like, comes up in a crest --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And then I was kinda like, is that like David Bowie in the Labyrinth? Y'know?

Sally: (whisper) Oh my God.

Emily: (sigh)

Sally: Maybe she is David Bowie.

Emily: Maybe. But anyway, Mat comes in and is like, "Are you gonna answer my questions?" and they're like, "...". Mat's like, "Please."

Sally: Yeah, and they're like, "Tell us what you need," or something.

Emily: They -- yeah, it's a very -- it's, like, an obvious case of miscommunication when you, um --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Read it knowing what's going on. But they are basically like, "What do you want?" and Mat says, "OK, well, for starters, I want --" They don't even ask him. He just sort of says it.

Sally: Yeah. I think -- yeah. 'Cause he's asking all these questions, and they're, like, freaking out. And then Mat, of course, short-tempered, just is like, "OK, I want this and this and this."

Emily: Yeah, he's like, "I want you to give me an answer to my questions," or something like that, but I think they, like, literally can't do that.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So he's like, "And I want the holes in my memories filled. I want to have a way to be free of Aes Sedai and the Power." Which is interesting, 'cause Moiraine told us you're not supposed to mention the Power or something --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: In the last one, but skimming right over that ... and he's like, "And I want to get back to Rhuidean." And they're like --

Sally: They're like, "You got it."

Emily: Oh, that was such a creepy smile you did to me! It kinda sent a little chill down my back.

Sally: (laugh) Thank you. It was supposed to be.

Emily: That was good. (laugh) Gave me a little thrill.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, yeah, they're like, "Sure, babe. We got you." And -- (laugh) they all say, "Deal," and it's so creepy.

Sally: Yeah. Especially --

Emily: And they're like --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And they call him "fool" multiple times, which -- y'know, Mat is the fool character --

Sally: Yeah.



Emily: That particular archetype. Mat is -- if you think of the fool in King Lear, who's one of my all-time favorite Shakespearean characters, especially because he just disappears halfway through -- (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, he's like, "Bye!"

Emily: He's like, "Bye, bitches," and leaves.

Sally: He's like, "I'm not -- I don't get paid enough for this shit."

Emily: He's like, "I'm out." Probably because there was, like, some weird editing of Shakespeare's manuscripts, but --

Sally: Yeah. But also, I love the idea.

Emily: But also, that's good chaotic energy. (laugh)

Sally: That Willy -- Willy Shakes was like, "This guy would just fuck off."

Emily: Yeah, he's just like, "Nah. Can't be fuckin' bothered by this bullshit going down," and that has big Mat energy, y'know?

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: That fool in King Lear who's just like --

Sally: How --

Emily: "You're an idiot, and you're an idiot. We're all idiots."

Sally: Yeah. How iconic would it be if, just halfway through the series, Mat was like, "Bye."

Emily: It would be --

Sally: Mat just, like, finally got to fuck off the way he wanted to.

Emily: Like, I mean, I would stop reading the series --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But also, that would be the funniest thing of all time.

Sally: Wouldn't it be so good?

Emily: Talk about subverting expectations.

Sally: Yeah. If Mat was just like, "I'm done."

Emily: You're like, "Here's one of your big three," and Mat was just like, "Done-zo. I am out."

Sally: Yeah, "I am outie."

Emily: "Peace out. A building fell on top of me. I am retired."

Sally: Yeah. Retired from -- (laugh) Yeah.

Emily: "Fucking try and bring me back into the game, Perrin."

Sally: "Retired from warfare. Retired from being chosen."

Emily: "This is DUMB."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "And I'm OUT."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Take care of Armageddon without me. I will be pursuing a life of piracy --"

Sally: Ohh. Mat would be such a good pirate.

Emily: "On the open seas. With the Sea Folk. I feel like we'd get along."

Sally: Yeah. What if Mat and Talmanes just became gay pirates halfway through the series?

Emily: I know, it would be so good if Mat and Talmanes were just like, "Goodbye," and Perrin was like, "Ah, no, we gotta get Mat back for the Last Battle. He can direct our forces," and Mat was like, "NO." (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) "Me and my husband are captaining a ship.

Emily: They were like, nowhere to be found."

Sally: Yeah. Just out on the open sea somewhere.

Emily: Yeah, just lovin' -- lovin' the ocean.

Sally: Yeah. So good.

Emily: You know what the last place that the Dark One will reach? The middle of the fucking ocean.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's the safest place.

Sally: During Armageddon.

Emily: Except for sharks.

Sally: Well --

Emily: Hopefully you have enough citrus fruits to keep you away from scurvy.

Sally: Do you think sharks would fight on the side of the Light? (laugh)

Emily: (cough) Obviously I've thought about this a great deal. (laugh) I don't think sharks have a moral code.

Sally: Oh. Yeah.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: I mean, it is very, um, uh, anthropomorphic of me to assume that sharks subscribe to the type of moral dilemmas that humans do.

Emily: Yeah, I don't think sharks could be bothered by that bullshit.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I also don't think you could bribe sharks to do, uh, particular things, y'know?

Sally: You think they're un-bribeable?

Emily: I just think, like, sharks are like, "We're gonna do what we're gonna do," yknow?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "If you come into the ocean, no matter who you are, it's our right to kill you."

Sally: That's the only moral code they subscribe to.

Emily: Yeah, that's the only moral code they -- that's their law.

Sally: Only one.

Emily: That's Hammuratti's Law -- what's -- what's his name?

Sally: Hammurabi?

Emily: Hammurabi? I don't --

Sally: Pretty sure it's Hammurabi.

Emily: You're so -- I'm the -- I took history classes, and I am one hundred percent sure you are right. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, Hammurabi.

Emily: Hammur -- it's Hammurabi's Code. We get to eat anyone who enters the ocean.

Sally: Hammurabi, of course, being the shark god.

Emily: Yeah, obviously.

Sally: Actually, Hammurattii? That's what Emily said.

Emily: No, Hammerhead-urabi. (laugh)

Sally: Ahh! (laugh)

Emily: God, my pun game is on point this episode.

Sally: Hammerhead-urabi.

Emily: That'll be the fun title of this episode. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Hammerhead-urabi?

Emily: No, the title of this episode is Long Episode.

Sally: Long Episode, colon, Hammerhead-urabi. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) Anyway, so Mat gets called a fool and is like -- they're like, "You didn't even request -- like, you didn't talk about payment before making your demands, you fucking idiot. You can't do bargaining under these terms," and then it all goes dark very suddenly, and Mat is suffocating, and for the first of, I believe, two times within the series, Mat's point of view just ends --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Mid-sentence.

Sally: Yep. It's very unsettling.

Emily: It is super unsettling.

Sally: I'm always like, why do you gotta keep hurting Mat?

Emily: I know, Mat just--

Sally: Y'know?

Emily: Mat just gets injured in horrible ways so often.

Sally: Yeah. Pattern's just trying so hard to keep him from fucking off into the middle of the ocean.

Emily: Pattern's like, "Rrrrrgggh. We have to break your legs!" (laugh)

Sally: "We gotta break your -- gotta hang you, gotta break your legs, gotta steal your memories, gotta give you a dagger --"

Emily: Yep. So --

Sally: "Gotta give you a tiny wife." (laugh)

Emily: "Tiny WIFE. I love my tiny wife."

Sally: Don't we all?

Emily: Don't we all? Anyway, that is where this episode ends. Reaching the one-hour mark. (laugh)

Sally: Sorry.

Emily: It is OK.

Sally: You can cut out so much of the beginning.

Emily: I'll cut out a lot of the beginning, but I still feel we'll be pretty over time. But that said, hope you enjoyed it. I know we sort of got our shit together in the middle there to talk about fantasy stuff, so hopefully that was good for you. But also we did some good jokes, maybe.

Sally: Hammerhead-urabi is a good joke.

Emily: Hammerhead-urabi was a pretty good one. (laugh) Thank you so much to Glynna MacKenzie for the use of our theme song, which I always want to call "It's A Departure --"

Sally: I know, I literally just said it in my head, and I was like, "Don't say it out loud, idiot. Don't say it out loud."

Emily: I know, it's just so bad. Glynna, could you name the theme song for me? (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Glynna, can you pick a name so that we stop making this dumb MBMBaM joke?

Emily: Yeah. I'm so sorry.

Sally: You can name it whatever you want. You can put a vote out on -- maybe not whatever you want. (laugh)

Emily: No, you can be whatever you want.

Sally: Please don't name it "Tubthumping" by Glynna MacKenzie.

Emily: AHHH!

Sally: (laugh) But "tub" spelled a little bit differently. (laugh)

Emily: Tub with two "Bs." Tubb -- tub-b --

Sally: Tub-b-thumping. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) Anyway, Glynna, if you could just get on that -- (laugh) I'm so sorry.

Sally: (laugh) It's funny.

Emily: Uh, thank you all for listening, and do you really want me to put the dead mouse story in here as my sign-off, or do you have a sign-off?

Sally: I was just gonna say we've had Tybalt for a year, which is a tragedy for all of us. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) What's our -- what's our sign-off?

Sally: I don't know.

Emily: Something about -- something "don't do a war crime"?

Sally: Oh, yeah. Remember to be slutty, and don't do war crimes.

Emily: Be slutty, and don't do war crimes. Goodbye!

Sally: (laugh) Goodbye.