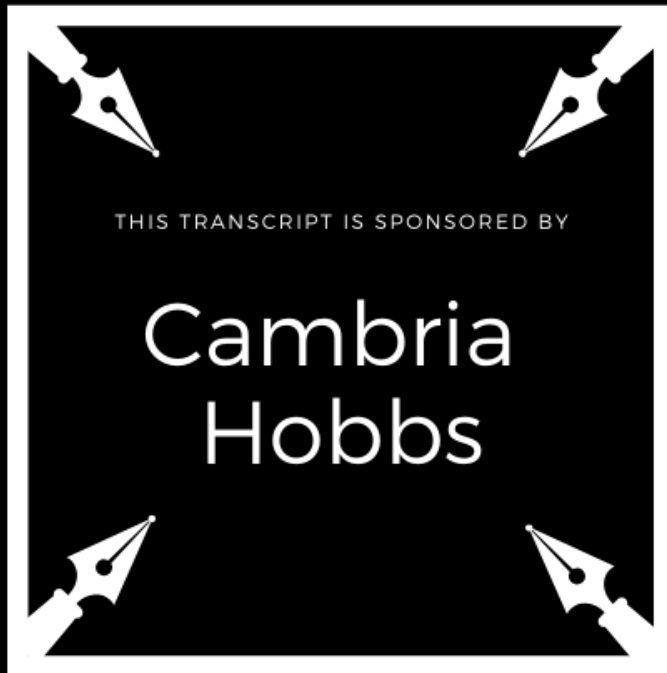


Episode 89: Covert Sexism Juice

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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 Glynna MacKenzie plays)

Emily: Welcome to the bad time of the year.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: It's cold now.

Sally: It's so fucking cold outside.

Emily: And it's pretty unfortunate. Um, I have, like, this caveman brain where, as soon as the weather starts getting a little cooler, I, like, have to grow my hair out.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: And every April, like, as soon as the weather shoots above 75 again, I'm like, "I have to shave it all off now."

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: It's, like, just this weird instinct -- like, lizard instinct --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: That I can't really describe. Um, so my hair is longer than it usually is, but it's also hat-wearing season, which is just a real trial for me personally, because my hair has a gravitational force and just sort of -- (laugh) So, the -- the short story is that I have four or five pins in my hair right now.

Sally: I was gonna ask if you had a cute little barrette in your hair. I can see the top of it.

Emily: I have, like, four, yeah.

Sally: Cute.

Emily: I have to, because otherwise, I look like Sonic the Hedgehog.

Sally: I have a fuck-ton of bobby pins if you ever need them.

Emily: I have to get those little ones that actually, like, clip --

Sally: Mm.

Emily: It's the only -- it's the only force that can contain my hair.

Sally: I get that. I think bobby pins are mostly useless.

Emily: Yeah, I have -- if -- it's like, if you have thin hair, then the bobby pins just kind of slide right out, and if you have --

Sally: Oh my God, yeah.

Emily: Thick hair, then the bobby pins are like, "We're too weak. We can't hold -- we can't hold the wall."

Sally: Yeah, well, and every time I've, like, had bobby pins inserted into my hair for styles, getting them out of my -- it's like World War three. I'm trying to, like, pull them out, they get tangled in my hair ...

Emily: Yeah, and you find -- you find one the next morning --

Sally: Yeah, and it's, like, stabbing the back of my skull --

Emily: And you're like, "Where did this come from?"

Sally: In my sleep --

Emily: Yeah. It's ridiculous.

Sally: And I'm bleeding.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: It's horrifying. (laugh)

Emily: God. Bobby pins.

Sally: Anyway.

Emily: Taking off all your rings?

Sally: Well, they're gonna clank against my tea.

Emily: Oh, that's smart.

Sally: And I don't want to make that nasty sound.

Emily: You ready? (laugh)

Sally: What else is going on?

Emily: Nothing.

Sally: Such a short opening.

Emily: I know, but --

Sally: We do have a lot to talk about.

Emily: We do have a lot to talk about.

Sally: I, also, am really mad about these chapters, and so I need you -- at a certain point, you will know which, to, like, counter-balance me if I am being unfair to Robert Jordan.

Emily: How will I -- how will I know which?

Sally: 'Cause it's about women.

Emily: Oh. No, yeah, there's some bad women stuff in these chapters.

Sally: (laugh) So, anyway.

Emily: I'm not gonna disagree with you on that. I think these -- OK. This is Everybody Hates Rand, your friendly neighborhood Wheel of Time podcast. Whatever. I'm Emily. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh, mimics Emily mumbling the opening) I'm Sally.

Emily: (laugh mumbling)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: We're talking now. This is -- this has never happened before. We're talking. We're only -
-

Sally: Official start of the podcast.

Emily: We're only in the single digits of minutes.

Sally: Do the, like, clicker. (makes clicking sound)

Emily: Click, yeah.

Sally: Scene.

Emily: Skippers, we're here already.

Sally: Action. Skippers?

Emily: People who skip the beginning of --

Sally: Ohhhhh. What -- I thought that thing was -- I thought you were saying that thing is called the skipper, that does the, like, (clicking noise).

Emily: Oh, no, I have no idea what that's called. It's the click-thing.

Sally: The clacky?

Emily: The clackety.

Sally: The clackety thing? (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) The clackety thing.

Sally: The clackety thing that makes movies real. (laugh)

Emily: The -- the movie -- it -- yeah, that's the magical force that makes movies real. Can you imagine?

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: You click it, and suddenly all the people who are dressed up as orcs ARE orcs. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: What the fuck. And everyone's like, "Oh, no. It's cursed." And everyone's like, "No, this is just what happens in movies."

Sally: "This is just the clackety."

Emily: "When we -- when we lift it again, you'll transform back into your real selves." It's like Night at the Museum!

Sally: (laugh) OK.

Emily: God, I love Night at the Museum.

Sally: It really is an undervalued national treasure.

Emily: You know what else I love? National Treasure. (laugh)

Sally: National Treasure is a great movie.

Emily: I love family-friendly adventure movies.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Everyone knows this about me. I love Jumanji. I love Night at the Museum. I love National Treasure. I love the Goonies.

Sally: (laugh) Remember how we were doing so good just talking about Wheel of Time?

Emily: OK, yeah! Sorry, we're talking about it now. We're talking about it now.

Sally: (laugh) "I love family-friendly adventure movies."

Emily: (laugh) I do! Fuck.

Sally: I don't --

Emily: They're all so good.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I mean, not nowadays. But. Well -- some. Some of them are good.

Sally: Jumanji was pretty good.

Emily: The new Jumanji, yeah, was very good. And to be fair, I'm not seeing as many family-friendly adventure movies as I used to.

Sally: That could be our next podcast: Family-Friendly Adventure --

Emily: Family-Friendly Adventure Movies!

Sally: This is Family-Friendly Adventure Movies, your friendly neighborhood Wheel of Time podcast. (laugh)

Emily: I can't -- (laugh) OK, this is a friendly Aiel of -- oh my God.

Sally: Friendly -- it is a friendly Aiel podcast. That's what we're gonna be talking about today.

Emily: Yeah, we're gonna be talking about the Aiel. The two chapters we read are about Rand going through the columns and, uh, going -- following the generational path back to, um, the -- basically, the start of the story, more or less.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: The -- the, uh, moment that influenced, uh, the Dark One getting out of prison or something? Which is just, like, a buck-wild thing to say. And then Lanfear did that, I guess. And then, um --

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) Or whatever.

Sally: Yeah, that part was really wild.

Emily: And then that triggered, y'know, uh, the war of -- the war between good and evil, and that triggered Lews Therin doing his shit, and that triggered the Breaking of the World, and on and on and on, and basically we are tracing the path of the Aiel's, uh, devolvment from a specific moment in history to the present moment in history.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, and then, kind of skipping over to the end, Rand gets out of that and rescues Mat, uh, from the tree. He sees Mat hanging, which is a really creepy moment, and has to do some, like, rudimentary resuscitation --

Sally: Yeah, he's, like, throwing Mat around, kind of.

Emily: Yeah, it's, like, a pretty gay moment, in a way, 'cause he literally rips Mat's shirt open.

Sally: It is like -- yeah, well, and he, like, grabs him by the waistband of his pants and, like, slams him back on the ground --

Emily: Is jerking his hips up and down?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's pretty wildly -- (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, like, it's pretty homoerotic.

Emily: It's pretty potent. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But it's also not at all homoerotic because one of them is unconscious, so.

Sally: Yeah, so, like, it is and it isn't.

Emily: It's a very weird --

Sally: It's a negative space.

Emily: It's actually the perfect description of the relationship between Rand and Mat, which is that fine line between homoeroticism and definitely-not-homoeroticism.

Sally: Yeah. It is the presence and absence of homoeroticism, a phrase I learned from the Dark Fantastic. (laugh)

Emily: Oh, I'm so excited.

Sally: Not specifically of homoeroticism --

Emily: Ah.

Sally: But presence and absence existing at the same time.

Emily: But anyway, that kind of wraps up the Mat storyline that we, uh, cliffhanger-ed last week.

Sally: Well, and Mat wakes up immediately, and he's like, "Those fuckers. They tried to kill me." (laugh)

Emily: I know. Mat wakes up and is literally just like, "FUCK."

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) "Fuck them. Fuck you, Rand."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Rand's is like, "What is happening?" Rand's, like, having a -- Rand's like, "Oh, there's another doorway? Maybe I can go through it," and Mat's like, "Don't go through it."

Sally: Yeah. It's --

Emily: "They killed me."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Those sons of bitches."

Sally: "Those sons of goats."

Emily: "I can't believe --"

Sally: "The audacity." (laugh)

Emily: (imitating the vine) "I can't believe you've done this."

Sally: "Ah, no." (simultaneously with Emily) "I can't believe you've done this. (laugh)

Emily: He's like, "At least they gave me this cool necklace and this badass spear."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And is like, "Listen, Rand, it's a hilarious joke," and then reads it, and then Rand looks at it, and it's in gibberish. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Rand's like, "I don't know -- I don't -- I just -- I can't even look at that right now."

Sally: Yeah. There are so many layers.

Emily: "I'm just gonna skim right over that." (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. We just can't even dig into that, Matrim. (laugh)

Emily: Can you imagine, though? If one of your friends was like, "Oh, that's funny," and, like, said, "This is a funny written joke," and you look at it -- looked at it, and it was, like, not even in a recognizable language.

Sally: (laugh) Yeah.

Emily: What would you do? You'd be like, "What the fuck?"

Sally: I mean, yes, but it is also Mat, y'know? (laugh)

Emily: I mean, it's also Mat. If I were Rand, I guess I'd be thinking, "Oh, I'm going crazy."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, if I were Rand, I'd be seeing every moment like that as --

Sally: That's true.

Emily: "I'm going crazy," but then you have to add in the factor that it's Mat.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And then it's like, "OK, but Mat does buck-wild shit."

Sally: Yeah. He just, like, talks to himself all the time.

Emily: Yeah. He talks to himself. Mat rolled up with a bundle of fireworks --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Was like, "Look at these things that explode," and Rand was like --

Sally: He enters the series with badger in hand.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Like --

Emily: Yeah. Growing up -- yeah.

Sally: Rand grew up with Mat, he's like, "Whatever."

Emily: Growing up with Mat must've been so weird.

Sally: Buck wild.

Emily: OK, but, that's that. We can now kind of focus on --

Sally: Well, and then on the way out, they fight, like, a bunch of dust monsters.

Emily: Yeah, there's another bubble of evil.

Sally: Whatever.

Emily: And then they get out and realize, uh -- well, they think that they've spent all night in there, and, uh --

Sally: But isn't it, like, seven days or something?

Emily: Yeah, when they get back to the Aiel, we'll find out what the real time was, but basically, they're like, "Oh, there's been a time --"

Sally: There's been a time skip, even if it's -- they don't think it's as long as it was.

Emily: Yeah. But -- yeah. So they get out. They're both kinda fucked up, 'cause them dust monsters bloodied them up, and Mat is very much, uh, in pain, which Rand notes because Mat says something about, like, "Ah, maybe Moiraine will heal this."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Rand's like, "Mat has to be suffering intensely to want magic healing."

Sally: Moiraine's -- yeah.

Emily: Like, Mat is usually just -- rub some dirt in it and move on.

Sally: (laugh) Spit in it, and you're fine.

Emily: Spit in it. (laugh)

Sally: Lick your own wounds like a dog.

Emily: Yeah, Mat is very protective of his injuries.

Sally: If my saliva can't heal it, there's no point in living. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah. Exactly. (laugh)

Sally: What a little weirdo.

Emily: (laugh) Dumb boys. Um. But yeah, getting back to Rand in the columns. Uhhh. I'm not going to summarize each point of view, because that's impossible. There's too many --

Sally: (laugh) It would take a whole episode.

Emily: Too many buck-wild names, so I'm just gonna kinda, like, start talking, and you just jump in whenever.

Sally: ... OK.

Emily: Sorry, I don't -- I don't know. Do you have a structure you want?

Sally: I mean, I do, but I assume it will more or less kind of match your structure, so we'll just see what happens.

Emily: OK. Um. Here are some things about this segment. Uh, one is that it gives us, for the first time, a concrete timeline of the events up from, uh, Lanfear boring the hole in the Dark One's prison up until now because most of the men are related to each other either by, um -- most of them are grandfathers --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Or, uh, fathers. Y'know? So you have this lineage extending from the guy who was Lanfear's servant when she did this, up into, y'know, like, uh, eight or nine generations later. Which is enough time, apparently, and especially as we get, uh, back into the -- back into the very distant past, we realize people had much longer lifespans, so.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Eight or nine generations is, like -- probably not even eight or nine generations, more like fifteen or so. I dunno. A bunch of generations, and that's, like --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: A solid many centuries --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Up until the founding of Rhuidean. Uh, it's implied that this is Rand's, uh, lineage himself. I don't know -- which does lead to the question of what all the other Aiel are seeing, because it seems like all of Rand's moments are extremely ideal for understanding -- like, what if you just had, like, "Here are all my -- here's my lineage, and they mostly just --"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Survived."

Sally: I mean, I assume everybody, then, would see Rand's lineage. Or --

Emily: You think?

Sally: Something. 'Cause -- or some sort of -- someone in their lineage connected to each of these moments. 'Cause I feel like they would have to see the same moments, right? To have the same understanding that Rand has when he walks out?

Emily: Yeah, you'd think. It can't just be every man's lineage. Although, then again, you're getting -- even if you did that, you'd get a lot of crossover, because --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: They're starting at the foundation of Rhuidean.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And at that point, there are only so many Aiel, and now there are lots more, so.

Sally: Well, yeah. Especially 'cause they talk about how the Aiel at the beginning -- those who didn't go to Rhuidean -- don't they, like, die off or whatever?

Emily: Yeah, we only get the one guy --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Who agrees to go into Rhuidean. We don't know if others do it as well --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Off-screen. But, for all we know, the rest of them died off, and so it's just this one guy, and everyone has to connect back to this one guy.

Sally: He's everyone's dad.

Emily: He's every -- he's the universal Aiel dad.

Sally: Hmm.

Emily: Like a universal remote. (laugh)

Sally: Mm. I like that analogy. (laugh) Do you want me to jump in?

Emily: You can jump in whenever. It's just hard to, like, pick a starting point. This chapter -- these -- these two chapters are so confusing, I think, for the first time. I'm interested in what your experience was reading them this time.

Sally: Um, I mean, they were less confusing this time. Which kind of frustrates me, 'cause I feel like so much of Wheel of Time, you need context of Wheel of Time to understand. And that's, like, a whole thing with these, like, large immersive fantasies. But I feel like not understanding this moment the first time you reads it -- read it leads to, like, a crucial disconnect for a large portion of the series afterwards.

Emily: Yeah, because this fills in so many contextual blanks.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Not just with the Aiel, but also with, like, y'know, the context of the Forsaken and --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Lews Therin and all that stuff that was in the past and these really important moments, um --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: In the world's history. But yeah, also with the Aiel, who are going to be pretty much the most important minority group, uh, that we come in contact with and interact with throughout the series. Um. And yeah, there are all these just, like, throwaway lines that totally answer questions. Like, someone says something about how they met an Aes Sedai who was kinda muttering about how Ishamael wasn't fully --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Sealed. And it's like, the first we've heard of this --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: More or less, so it's, like --

(clattering noise)

Emily: Oh, God.

Sally: Sorry.

Emily: You're fine. So it's like, if you're so overwhelmed the first time you're reading this trying to figure out what's going on, of course you're going to miss stuff like that --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Or you're not going to understand it, because why would you?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So yeah, it's a little frustrating that this is such, like, a crux in the series itself, but it's also the most buck-wild shit.

Sally: Yeah. And, like, there's a lot -- like, again, I understood it better this time, and I think I was more poised to read it critically as opposed to -- at least, my experience with Wheel of Time books is that I get to a certain point and I have to just read them quickly, otherwise I will never finish them.

Emily: Yeah, of course.

Sally: 'Cause you get to a point where you're like, "I just have to marathon this." And I think this was probably around that point for me in the Shadow Rising, 'cause you're like 300 pages in and nothing has fucking happened.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: So. (laugh) I think I read this a little more quickly than I probably should have. But, um, like, the structure of it, while confusing, I think is, uh, valuable. There's this, um, phrase in literary theory where -- that's like, "form is content, and content is form." Y'know? And so the form of this -- the form being, like, how the story is told and the content being what is told --

Emily: Right.

Sally: So the form of this is, like you mentioned last night when we were talking about it, is that, um, you -- instead of starting back with the person who was Lanfear's servant at the beginning of the Breaking of the World and moving upward, getting like a -- sort of a stacked understanding, we start at the most recent one and go backwards, doing this sort of, like, peeling back of layers.

It's like an excavation of the past that is taking place. But also, there is a, um, refrain running through the chapters, which is Rand's talking about going forward and back.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And of course that mimics the actual movements that he's making where every time he takes a step forward, he goes further back in time.

Emily: Yes.

Sally: But there's actually, like, when you're weaving on a loom, you do a forward and backward motion --

Emily: Dude. Cool.

Sally: Um, you do, like, this forward motion, and then you slide a thread through, and then you pull it back. Um, so you have that sort of, um, nod to the actual, like, construction of the universe and the way that we're supposed to -- not the way that we're supposed to -- the way that the text, um, puts forth that the universe has been created. And -- 'cause what we're actually seeing here -- and there's a term for that, the, um, "deus faber believers compare the creation to some crafts such as weaving and carpentry." That comes from *The Oxford Companion to World Mythology* by David Leeming. Cite my sources. Because what Robert Jordan is giving us here is, um, a cosmogony or a creation myth. And myth, of course, is a loose term because this is actual history, not myth, though in the Wheel of Time world, there's -- that's a lot of a thinner divide than it is in our world.

Emily: Yeah, there's a conflation between myth --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And history in Wheel World.

Sally: Yeah. So there's, like -- which is interesting, 'cause, like, myth, in our context, doesn't really exist --

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: In that myth is, in our world, considered to be, um, fantastic in some ways, and it's not necessarily real but contains metaphorical truths. Whereas in, like, the Wheel of Time, they don't necessarily have those -- I mean, they have, like, tales or whatever --

Emily: Yeah. Of course.

Sally: But all of their, like -- because we've talked about Wheel World only has one religion and therefore technically doesn't have a religion, and it sits at this, like, weird crux. There aren't, like, myths in that context.

Emily: Yeah, and we also get -- especially as Birgitte becomes a character within the series and is able to, like, provide context --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And verify stories, like, we're finding out so many of the myths are just straight-up history.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Birgitte's just like, "Oh, yeah. That happened."

Sally Yeah. Which is cool, 'cause then you've got -- which is one of the cooler things about Wheel of Time, is that you have, like, access to these huge myths. But if I could read a section of text --

Emily: For sure.

Sally: Brought my sources today.

Emily: I'm so excited. Are you talking more about form? 'Cause I have something to say about that.

Sally: Uh, I'm gonna skip from that, so let's go, let's --

(clanking noise)

Emily: Sorry. I just was going to say, I was reading it more this time, each point of view as more of a vignette, and so after having that discussion with you last night about how it kind of didn't make sense to me that we didn't have the, uh -- a chronological, you know, past to --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: More future, um, timeline and instead we do the, uh, reverse, and I was confused by that, but reading it now, I think I'm much more supportive of that because I saw how, like, in the most recent vignette, we're getting way more familiar vocabulary.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: I mean, I still think that we don't have enough of the vocabulary because we haven't spent enough time with the Aiel, so it's kind of coming at a weird moment --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: But especially on reread, you're pretty well-versed with the Aiel, their culture in the now. Rhuidean is also itself a setting that we're very familiar with now, because we've just walked through it --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: So, like, we're getting words that are familiar to us.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And characters and types of characters who are familiar with us, all the way up into the most distant past, where you're just getting all this buck-wild science fiction --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, sho-cars or whatever the fuck.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's just like, OK, I don't know what that means.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But I've now had enough of a -- a -- a descent into the unknown.

Sally: Yeah, no, I agree with you completely. I'm completely in support of it. It is confusing, um, and -- I'm -- I'm, like, in support of the way it's written, I'm not necessarily just, like, in support of how -- where it comes, I guess.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: I dunno, I'm both -- I'm, like, kind of ambiguous at this point, after a second reread. I just feel like Robert Jordan is so alienating to first-time readers, and that really bothers me for some reason.

Emily: He definitely is. This is such a weird thing to read --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: On the first time.

Sally: Yeah. But I'm agree -- I'm in -- again, the, like, slow descent into the unknown, I think, is a great way to put it.

Emily: Yeah. So anyway, sorry. Read your --

Sally: Oh, yeah. Um. Creation myths. So we're getting, um, a creation myth, here lose -- used loosely, not only for the Aiel but, as Emily mentioned, kind of for, like, Wheel World as we know it. It takes us back to the very beginning of our story. It isn't necessarily, like, creation of the world, going all the way back to the very beginning of time.

Emily: But there are very Judeo-Christian elements of, like, the Creation myth here in terms of Adam and Eve and leaving the Garden of Eden.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: which I can talk about now or later, but. That's a big thing. Uh, well, you have Lanfear in the position of, what's her name? Lilith.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: Lilith, who, uh, did the thing of saying -- Lilith, in Judeo-Christianity, was Adam's first wife, but had the bold statement of, "I don't want to always be the submissive one in sex --"

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: "I want to be on top sometimes," both metaphorically and physically --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: One presumes. Um, and so therefore she was kind of cast out of the Garden of Eden. And you have Lanfear in the, uh, same sense, making this transgressive, uh, move that ends up with terrible results, kind of, um, kind of an Eve thing, also, y'know.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Picking the apple.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, but also Lilith -- there's kind of a conflation there.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Uh --

Sally: I feel like there's often a conflation of Eve and -- Eve and Lilith --

Emily: Yes.

Sally: Which is interesting.

Emily: 'Cause all women are bad in Judeo-Christianity. (laugh)

Sally: (whisper) I'm gonna talk about that.

Emily: I can't wait.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: And of course, the really transgressive thing that Lanfear does is also deeply problematic because what she wants is a source of power that men and women can use, for there not to be a separation between the genders, which is like saying, "Feminism is bad." (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's so fucking funny. But anyway, you have this thing that, like, just suddenly ends the utopia, quote unquote, that everyone's living.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Suddenly war is introduced into the world. Um.

Sally: Are you saying that people saying that what Lanfear's doing is transgressive is dumb because of course there should be a power that men and women both can draw on?

Emily: Yeah, I'm saying --

Sally: Is that what you're -- OK.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: I just wanted to understand. I was like, "Wait, I'm -- I haven't followed."

Emily: That was a little confusing. No.

Sally: No.

Emily: It's very silly, just that paragraph, where he's explaining, like, "Oh, Lanfear has this great --" Well, Mierin, her name is, then. "She has this great idea. She wants to, uh -- she's found a power that both men and women can use." And we, as modern readers, are like, "Yes, that would be great. That would solve all of the problems in Wheel of Time." (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Yeehaw! Gender is fake.

Emily: But then it -- he's -- but then he's like --

Sally: Lanfear.

Emily: "Oh, no, the Dark One's loose. Because feminism is evil." (laugh)

Sally: Ah, yes, of course.

Emily: So. That's problematic. But anyway, creation myths.

Sally: Uh, creation myths. So I just want to read this little section, um, which also comes from *The Oxford Companion to World Mythology*, which was a terrible slog for me to read, but I'm -- it's been a very valuable resource.

Emily: I remember when you were reading it for a long time, but --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You also cite it quite a bit, so.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That goes to show you. Academic reading is good.

Sally: If painful. (laugh)

Emily: If -- (laugh) It's good in the long run.

Sally: (laugh) "You're gonna suffer, but you're gonna be happy about it."

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: To quote the world's best literary character, Ron Weasley.

Emily: exactly.

Sally: Um. So, creation. "As the one species --" Oh, wait. Yes. OK. "As the one species blessed or cursed by the sense of plot, of beginnings, middles, and ends, we are driven to tell the essential story of where we came from and why. Creation myths tell us how things began. All cultures have creation myths. They are our primary myths -- myths, the first stage in what might be called the psychic life of the species. As cultures, we identify ourselves through the collective dreams we call creation myths or cosmogonies. Creation myths explain in metaphorical terms our sense of who we are in the context of the world, and in doing so, they reveal our priorities as well as our real prejudices. Our images of creation say a great deal about who we are.

Cosmogonies are important for the same reason that our explorations of the personal past, including our life with our parents, are important. Creation is almost always linked to the concept of deity, and creation myths reveal our sense of our relationship with and the nature of our primal parents, the deities who created us." Is there anything else I wanted to say? No. So, um, there's one specific thing I wanted to dial in on. Hold on, I gotta change the notes page. I went too far.

(pages flipping)

Emily: Nooo.

Sally: Um. So, that's a nice little overview of creation myths, but I wanted to dial in on this sentence here, which is: "Creation myths explain in metaphorical terms ... who we are in the

context of the world and in doing so reveal our real priorities as well as our real prejudices.” Um, and so, again, terms like myth and metaphorical are not necessarily as applicable here because of course we’re dealing with the past.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: But if we take sort of, like, a metafictional view of it and view this as, like, Robert Jordan explaining the world that he’s created, we can really dial in on some of the real priorities and prejudices that are, um -- that come about in *Wheel of Time*, predominantly, like, a patriarchal attitude despite the book’s -- and its readers’ -- constant, um --

Emily: Procla--proclamations? (laugh)

Sally: Proclamations -- yeah, that’s a good word -- that it is a matriarchal or at least progressive text in terms of gender politics. Um, and Emily already talked about how, um, our story is patrilineal, going back from, um --

Emily: Fathers to sons.

Sally: Fathers to sons, and of course --

Emily: Or sons to fathers.

Sally: We have the actual, like -- it’s Rand’s biological father who was biologically Aiel, so in that context it makes sense, but also, like, there isn’t a single female point of view in any of this.

Emily: And there’s also, um -- sorry, this --

Sally: No, go ahead.

Emily: I just learned while reading the wikipedia page. Apparently there’s also an implication that, uh, really far back in this lineage, you can also find the start of the Andoran royal line.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: There’s a part where the Aiel are raided, and a bunch of their, like, people are taken away, and so it’s like, “Oh, maybe this is where --”

Sally: Mm.

Emily: The Aiel coloring now enters the Andoran royal line. So it’s like, well, then, Rand’s mother is also connected to this.

Sally: Yeah. Well, and even if going, like -- maybe it had to go eventually, like, but it could’ve easily been his grandmother or great-great-grandmother inserted into any of these pivotal moments --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: To, like provide her perspective. And so there is a -- is -- by having a patri--patrilineal line, you then have a direct correlation to a patriarchal society.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Um, because ultimately, like, power sits with perspective.

Emily: Yeah, you're prioritizing the men's point of view.

Sally: Yeah, exactly. And as Emily mentioned, we have a lot of the, like, really negative Judeo-Christian aspects of Eve and Lilith with, like, Lanfear being evil, blah blah blah blah. And, like, yes, Lanfear is annoying, but also, like, homie was just trying to provide us with a gender-neutral pronoun, you know?

Emily: Yeah. It almost makes you feel like Lanfear was misunderstood. (laugh)

Sally: She's just, like, really misunderstood.

Emily: There's also the, um ... pretty much every single man in -- (laugh) -- in the -- every vignette, has a woman dying or being brutalized in some way off-screen.

Sally: Yeah. Um, and so, perhaps even more telling than, like, perspective or even Lanfear as the evil one is we are introduced, sort of mildly, but still introduced, to the concept of wartime sexual violence, or the concept of rape as a weapon of war. And so in each of the -- these vignettes, you get, like, a further breaking down of this one sort of, um, beginning group into various different, like, ethnic groups and cultural groups --

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: And two of these major breakings happen, um, because of sexual violence or implied sexual violence against women in the male narrator's life. So, in Lewin's -- I think that's his name --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Perspective, it's his sister. His sister and one of his friend's sisters gets stolen in a raid, and it is heavily implied by the text that they have been raped, most likely gang-raped, which is a huge part of war -- um, wartime sexual violence, by the time that they, um, this group of boys gets to rescue them. Um, and then you have Lewin's father -- grandfather, Adan, I think, um, when it flashes back to his vignette, he's a little bit younger, and of course his wife is dead, because of course his wife has to die. But one of his children -- one of his youngest children, his daughter, is being taken, along with a lot of the women and children of the village, away in carts by raiders, of course with the implication that these women are going to be sexually abused, as in

forced marriages, sexual slavery, any type of thing, any way that they happen to be brutalized. Um, and so I did a little bit of reading about the concept of rape as a weapon of war. And if this is something that interests you -- I know that sounds very odd -- but it is a very fascinating and very real thing that happens, actually, more frequently in modern warfare than it ever has in historical warfare. Like, yes, it's a huge part of historical warfare because rape has been a huge part of everything, but it has been, like, a key part of a lot of the major wars of the late 20th century.

Emily: Yes.

Sally: Like the Rwandan genocide and what happened in Darfur and Bosnia and all that stuff, so it's a very important thing. But, um ... Nnedi Okorafor's *Who Fears Death* is a novel that takes its impetus out of this concept. So, um, "wartime sexual violence is --" This comes from the Wikipedia article; it's actually a very good article. All Wikipedia articles are good, I don't know why I had to say that.

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: Um. Excuse me. "Wartime sexual violence is rape or other forms of sexual violence committed by combatants during armed conflict, war, or military occupation, often as spoils of war but sometimes particularly in ethnic conflict. The phenomenon has broader sociological motives." And UNICEF did a whole study on this a couple years ago. Um, according to UNICEF, "Systematic rape is often used as a weapon of war in ethnic cleansing, having been used in various armed conflicts throughout the 20th century alone, including Bosnia, Cambodia, Uganda, and Vietnam." Um, "In 2008, the United Nations security council argued that women and girls are particularly targeted by use of sexual violence, including as a tactic of war to humiliate, dominate, instill fear, and disperse, or forcibly relocate, civilian members of a community or ethnic group." And I just have one more quote that I want to read, then we'll talk about it. Um. "In addition to the physical and socio -- *psycho* --" Oh my God, what is happening? My dyslexia is coming out so bad right now. "In addition to the physical and psychological damages resulting from rape, sexual violence in the context of war often disrupts the linkage between the rape victims and their communities. Thus the phenomenon of war rape can structurally affect entire societies, which is closely linked to the logic underlying the strategic use of rape as an instrument in armed conflicts. Raping enemy women also constitutes an act of abuse and humiliation against the men of the community and victims -- the community the victims were representative of." Um. Oh my gosh, where did it go? "This is particularly relevant in patriarchal societies, where female sexuality is linked to male honor." So those are just some quotes to give you, um, a context of how it is used. Um. So, kind of dialing this in, particularly to, like, the ethnic aspects of rape as a weapon of war. And in here, we're seeing, again, sort of the construction of various cultural and ethnic groups that are being terrorized by threats of sexual violence against their women.

Emily: You have, I think, in this -- these chapters, the constructions of some of the only minority ethnic --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Groups within the Wheel World. The, uh, Tuatha'an are pretty much the single minority -
-

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: That doesn't have a government base --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: On which to fall back on or, like, a -- a militant --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Uh, aren't centrally militant like, say, the Whitecloaks.

Sally: Yeah. Um.

Emily: So, they're also heavily compared to the Romani.

Sally: Yes. So yeah, they're heavily racialized in terms of our real-world understanding of race and ethnicity. The Tuatha'an -- Tuatha'an.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Um, but -- um. Often with rape as a weapon of war -- this particular happened in the Rwandan genocide, that women -- particular groups of women would be targeted based on the concept of ethnicity, therefore becoming, like, a form of genocide. Because what happens in patrilineal societies where, um, ethnicity and, like -- or, in kind of Wheel World rules, clans or various different groups -- like, ethnicity is passed down through the father. So, um, soldiers raping women of different groups, you then create children that technically belong to your group but are, like, existing within another group, which causes, um, this sort of cultural breakdown. But of course it is a way to terrorize entire communities, because of course you have this massive threat of violence overhanging the women and people in general.

Emily: That also makes me think of, uh, the, uh, what was done to enslaved women --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: In America, when it was proclaimed by law that children's statuses would be, uh, according to the status of mother --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Which meant that white men could rape slave women as much as they wanted, and those children they would not have to be responsible for --

Sally: Yes.

Emily: As white children.

Sally: Yeah. Um, yeah. Yeah, and Emily's right -- I was talking about all these, like, conflicts that we think of as conflicts, but of course one of the mass centers of sexual violence and violence of any kind, particularly sexual, being used as a weapon of war, was in, um, pre-Civil War America and post-Civil -- just, America. Just --

Emily: I read a lot --

Sally: America.

Emily: I read a lot about cultural memory and cultural trauma when I was thinking about this episode, so it's just interesting to think --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Where our brains, uh, went. Oh, sorry. But --

Sally: Yeah, for once I'm not thinking about cultural trauma.

Emily: No, I thought a lot about cultural trauma because this is, like, the epitome of cultural trauma, although not necessarily portrayed in a interesting -- it's patrilineal, so I just --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Don't think that you're, uh, portraying it in any way that pushes boundaries or does anything, really.

Sally: Yeah. Um, because what's happening -- kind, of, we're talking about all these various ways that rape as a weapon of war is used to, like, divide communities. But, um, in these two, like, significant instances and a lot of other instances with women just sort of, like, dying, um, to cause men to action, is that, um, what happens is that these women's bodies become the battleground where men fight out their psychological -- their philosophical differences. Um, so these men all have different philosophies about, um, pacifism and what it means to have weapons and what it means to carry different types of weapons and the way that their world should look in this kind of post-apocalyptic weird pre-civilization liminal space that we're occupying after the Breaking of the World, where, like, they've lost a lot of technology and they're trying to, like, rebuild new things.

Emily: Yeah, and, like, what it means to cling to a cultural identity and how to adapt to new, uh, surroundings, and just -- but men are thinking about these things and acting on these things, and women are just being raped and dying.

Sally: Yeah. Because -- yeah. It's just like they become these sort of, like -- again, they just become the battleground where you get to, like, fight out your violences and figure all these things out because -- whatever. Just like Emily said, like -- and so, in these particular chapters, like, the men are very much given the agency, not just via perspective but in terms of who has the right, to decide what the world is going to look like. Like, while men are making decisions whether to be a part of this group or be a part of that group, like, the women are -- their agency is being stripped, and they become objects.

Emily: Yeah. Notably, there's the one instance where a woman is like, "Well, I'm going to take agency to rescue my daughter," but it's also implied that she wouldn't be able to do that unless she was given, like, permission --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: From the men, and she's then -- she then has to be taught how to use a weapon --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And told how to dress by men.

Sally: Yeah. Um, so basically, this is a lot of talk to basically say that I'm arguing that this section highlights just how incredibly misogynistic the Wheel of Time books are. Um, where it's offering, like, the creation of the universe and the creation of this society that becomes a huge part of it, and it does so through the absolute brutalization of women, just across the board and across time and space. So.

Emily: You also really dig into Rand's particular brand of misogyny here as we're seeing a bunch of these men, uh, not necessarily seeing women, like, suffer, the way you were talking about those particular women characters, but just, like, remembering their dead wives.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And thinking of how pure and good their dead wives are and how, like, sweet and loving and --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "I just love how they looked laughing" and whatever, y'know, whatever nonsense. But it's like every single man.

Sally: Yeah. And -- yeah, it's just like -- we don't get, like, the enemies' viewpoint in this, so we don't know whether or not these are, like, intentionally thinking about breaking the spirits and communities of their enemies or if they're just, y'know, shitty. But all the, like, violence against these women just is portrayed as having a huge impact on the men instead of actually taking into account the fact that women are being brutalized.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: And it fucking sucks. So, anyway. I got really angry reading these chapters. It was something that I didn't really dial in on, my first reading, and it was just, like, these are some of, like, just the most brutal, just, like, chapters. Like when Lewin goes to rescue his sister, and it's just describing in, like, vivid detail, over and over again, how just, like, shaken up these girls are. It's just --

Emily: And he's like, "What happened?" and it's like.

Sally: Fuckin' idiot.

Emily: Yeah, you idiot.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's not -- like, just because Robert Jordan is afraid to use the word "rape" doesn't mean -

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: God. Um.

Sally: OK. Anyway. That's my little spiel. And I feel like I didn't do that justice, but.

Emily: No, you did.

Sally: I'm mad about it, so.

Emily: I think you did. It's really good and important. Oh, it's also -- of course, then you're also seeing it in the context of -- we have Rand, whose point of view is technically as an outsider, because he's not part of this culture, but then we're -- of course we're also seeing, described in visceral grotesque detail, the, like, physical effects that this is happening on someone who is actually an insider in the culture.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And of course that's a man.

Sally: Yeah. Yeah. What is it -- Muradin, or whoever, who's just like --

Emily: Yeah, Muradin --

Sally: Bleeding.

Emily: Couladin's brother. Evil Couladin's presumably evil brother. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) What if he's just, like, such a good dude?

Emily: He's just, like, such a chill guy. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, and he's just like, "I would be the best chief."

Emily: He's super cool. God. No, he, like, literally claws his own eyes out --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And does some really nasty stuff. And it's just like, that is supposed to give us, like, context into how much this affects the Aiel --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um. It's also so interesting -- I find it -- of course Rand steps out of these columns, and immediately Mat is the present concern, but it then becomes this very odd thing, where Mat -- uh, I mean Rand -- is not given the time to process at all.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: You have Rand kind of in between all these little vignettes, and basically all he's saying of substance is "What the fuck?"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Just over and over again. But after it's over, he doesn't -- it's left to the reader to project what you're thinking onto Rand, I guess.

Sally: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Emily: Rand doesn't ever really have any thoughts of substance about this.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He's just like, "Ugh. Wild." And then goes on to, like, share this revelation with, uh, all of the people. Who, if we look at this in the frame of a cultural trauma that is, uh -- it, it -- it's so weird and. There are no historical parallels in our world for --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: What Robert Jordan is presenting here. Cultural trauma, as we understand it, is something that is, uh, passed down generally -- generationally through oral and, um -- through oral history and perhaps genetic history. They're doing research into that.

Sally: Epigenetics. It's fascinating.

Emily: Yeah, it is very fascinating. Um, so look into that if you have any interest. But, um, here is a cultural trauma, a cultural history that is being blocked off.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: So that the current culture is, like, shielded from it, is the idea, but then you're also more or less, um, dictating who can and cannot --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Know these things.

Sally: Yeah. Which, in a way, like, Rand comes -- in, like, a certain spin of this -- he becomes, like, this great democratizing leader by inviting everybody --

Emily: Yeah, in a -- (laugh) In a way --

Sally: With their history.

Emily: It's positive that Rand's saying --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "OK, well, it shouldn't be just the elders of --"

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, that's never a good call.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's never a good call to hide information from people.

Sally: No. Not on a mass scale or ever, really.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Just be honest.

Emily: So it becomes this cultural trauma, the whole "Oh my God, we're descended from people who were a lot like the Tuatha'an; we're -- we used to be pacifists," etc. But the real cultural trauma, I would argue, is the fact that this has been hidden from everyone.

Sally: Yeah. Yeah, and I was thinking a lot about that too. 'Cause I remember in my first reread, being like, "I fully have no understanding of why this is so traumatic for the Aiel except, like, some weird form of racism against the Tuatha'an and their pacifism."

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Like, they don't want to be connected to that group. They take huge, like, pride and cultural understanding in their militarism and their ability to fight. And it's like, yeah, I don't fully get that, but in a way it ties into, like, the, um, hesitation aspect of the fantastic, where Todorov cites that, like, the fantastic is sustained by your, like, wondering whether or not you can believe something. Like -- anyway, I'm not super explaining this well -- but, like ... hold on. This is why I brought Ebony Elizabeth Thomas with me.

Emily: Hell yeah.

Sally: 'Cause she cited a really good quote from Todorov, where she said, um, "I nearly reached the point of believing. That is the formula which sums up the spirit of the fantastic: either total faith or total incredulity would lead us beyond the fantastic. It is hesitation which sustains its life." So, as a reader, my experience was spending a lot of time of the Shadow Rising and into the Fires of Heaven, like, grappling with why this is such a huge trauma for the Aiel and, like, whether or not it was believable to me. And ultimately, I think that lends to real world becoming more immersive because we have this completely different culture that we struggle to understand. But ultimately, I agree with you, that the real trauma is that huge portions of their -- like, it's just like, they've been lied to.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Forever.

Emily: Of course you can say, alright, there are some very serious parallels here to, um, diaspora --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Uh, to forced diaspora, to, um, a lot of really terrible things happening to minorities -- ethnic minorities. We've already drawn comparisons to, uh, the Romani, who, I read today, um - - 85 percent of Romani in Europe were killed in the Holocaust, which was a number I did not know.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: But, uh, wow.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, and then you also have really, uh, serious parallels to Judaism in the idea that there are -- there were splits within Judaism of different tribes, and uh, here with the Aiel, you are having a split into three different minorities, three different ethnic groups, uh, if you like, one of which then dies out completely. Um, and the other two become --

Sally: Polar opposites, pretty much.

Emily: Yeah, polar opposites, pretty much. Um, and so, yeah, of course that all -- if you put that into historical perspective in our world, you're like, yeah, of course that's traumatic, but then, yeah, again, it doesn't really -- it -- you hesitate to believe that it would cause this much --

Sally: Yeah. Just sort of, like, devastation.

Emily: And anguish, yeah.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Amongst the populace, yeah. But then when you start thinking, oh, all our leaders knew this and didn't tell us --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That's, like, the real -- and of course, Robert Jordan doesn't really -- Robert Jordan has this habit of creating interesting things and then picking the wrong --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Picking the wrong path to go on.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He goes on the path of "Oh, this is the terrible cultural memory that, uh, we used to be related to the Tuatha'an," when the real fascinating cultural memory is that their leaders lied to them.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Withheld the truth from them.

Sally: For a reason incomprehensible to me.

Emily: Yeah. For --

Sally: And to most people, I think.

Emily: For this extremely infantilizing reason of "We -- they couldn't handle it."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Well, here's a buck-wild thought: Maybe if they knew about it --

Sally: They would handle it.

Emily: All their lives, they'd handle it.

Sally: Yeah. I think it, like -- I think there are real-world parallels in the way that, particularly, the American school system handles, um --

Emily: Yes.

Sally: American genocide against indigenous people and, uh, the Atlantic slave trade. Um, and just the absolute -- particularly, uh, the genocide against indigenous people -- like, yes, there are huge swathes of slavery in America that just are, like, swept under the rug, but I think they are covered in at least more detail than the crimes committed against indigenous peoples in America. Um. So as you get older and hopefully educate yourself a little better than your history books do, you realize that, like, yeah, there are just, like, horrible things that our government and our society has done that we just, like, aren't talking about. So there are some parallels, and I think -- but not quite. It's very weird.

Emily: That's something I struggle with on a personal basis as someone who works for a company that creates educational materials --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: For children, because they do cover those historical things, and I'm always like, "Is this enough?"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I always wonder that. I was reading an article recently that we were putting out in our product that I think was targeted to fourth or fifth graders, um, that was literally -- showed a graph of indigenous populations in America, like, before colonial times and after colonial times -
-

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And it was meant to be, like, Jesus Christ.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Y'know, just the sheer drop. And so it was all about, like, the drop-off in the population, but I was like, are we explaining well enough to children that white people are responsible for that?

Sally: Yeah. And I was definitely drawing on my own experiences then. I think curriculum, hopefully, has come farther than when I was in fourth grade, and it was like, “Ba duh duh, Trail of Tears, nobody needs to know what that is.”

Emily: Ha. Ha ha ha.

Sally: But also, I came across a lot of the same things when I was writing my thesis, which was about Holocaust education --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And I discovered that the state of Utah doesn't technically, legally require teach -- like, education about the Holocaust. We just have to talk about America's involvement in World War II. Whether or not schools cover the Holocaust is kind of up to them. Um, which is just, like, ridiculous, and there are these arguments that it's, like, too brutal, and children can't handle it, which, a) I think is infantilizing --

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Because children are a lot smarter than you think you are, and ultimately, I've, like, thought a lot about this, and I think the only thing -- the only people you actually protect through those types of, like, educational decisions are cisgendered white men, because children of various minorities, be that gender, race, ethnicity, religion, like, on the very basis of existing in this world, even from the time they are old enough to talk and understand, are, like, having violence done against them.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Like, I remember being six years old in kindergarten. My mother would let my brothers walk home from school, but she's -- would never let me walk home from school. And I remember being like, “Why? Why? Why is it different?” and she's like, “Well, you're a girl.” And that was, like, my first understanding that there was something dangerous about living in this body that my brothers don't have to deal with.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: And you hear the same thing about Black parents having to tell their six- and seven-year-old children to be afraid of the police.

Emily: Yep.

Sally: Like, there's nothing -- you are not actually protecting the people who are harmed by this. You're protecting the people who harm people.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: And it's just this, like, vicious cycle. Anyway, that's just my soap box about educating children about, uh, cultural trauma.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And violence.

Emily: So, takeaways from this week's episode: Uh, Wheel of Time is misogynist -- (laugh) obviously.

Sally: In case you missed it. (laugh)

Emily: In case you missed it, but if you want an example, here are two great chapters for it.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And, um --

Sally: Just, like, don't lie about history.

Emily: The -- the -- yeah, the -- the Aiel leaders aren't the victims, necessarily.

Sally: Yeah. Come on, Rhuarc. I expected better of you.

Emily: Yeah. Rhuarc, you failed us.

Sally: Come on, Dad. I feel like I've really dominated the conversation this --

Emily: No, you had such great points.

Sally: Episode.

Emily: I was like, "La dee da dee da," Googling cultural trauma, and I was like, "I don't really know what I'm gonna say about this," so you had great points. That was a really good -- that really nailed something I was thinking about --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But wasn't able to put into words.

Sally: They're just, like, really hard chapters to wrap your head around.

Emily: Because it's always bothered me, that particular point of view where the little boy goes to, like, rescue his sister --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's clear to us, the reader, that she's been --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Sexually assaulted. Like, I, as a thirteen-year-old, reading these books, was like, “Oh, yeah. I know -- I know what happened.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But then you have this sixteen- or seventeen-year-old boy who’s like, “I have no clue, and I refuse to --”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “Give you the word for it. I refuse to put it into words, because --”

Sally: It doesn’t --

Emily: “It’s too horrible to be named, but it’s not too horrible to happen to a character.”

Sally: Yeah, “it’s too horrible to be named, but it also isn’t significant enough for me to give it attention.”

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: It’s like -- and that, I think, is the weird dichotomy about sexual violence --

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Is it’s like, “Oh, we can’t talk about it, but also, who cares that it happened to, like, 30 percent of women in Rwanda?” Like, there --

Emily: Yeah, who cares that it -- oh my God, I can’t even --

Sally: That it happens to, like, one in five women. Literally --

Emily: In the Congo, it happens, like, every three seconds --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Or something like that.

Sally: Yeah. It’s way higher out in, like, um, quote unquote developing countries. I know there’s a word for it that’s --

Emily: It’s developing countries, yeah.

Sally: Is it? OK. Um. But, like, even just this week, I found out that yet another woman that I know has been a victim of sexual violence, which brings the total in my life up to I don’t even remember anymore.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: It's just, like ... (sigh) It is an epidemic. And it isn't your fucking plot device.

Emily: Yeah. Jesus Christ. There are ways to write about rape and sexual violence. To do so in this way and in other ways that happen in the *Wheel of Time*, such as, I dunno, Mat thinking about his time in Ebou Dar fondly --

Sally: Jesus fucking Christ.

Emily: Which happens in *A Memory of Light*, is, like, authorial irresponsibility --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And ignorance. So, just jot that down. I'm gonna fight Robert Jordan in hell.

Sally: (laugh) "Where are you, Oliver? James? Oliver?"

Emily: (laugh) I'll be like, "Thanks so much for shaping so much of my life, but also fuck you."

Sally: Yeah. But also --

Emily: You did such --

Sally: You didn't drink any of your Respect Women Juice. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah. God. You thought you did.

Sally: But you didn't.

Emily: But you didn't. Just such a --

Sally: You drank your Covert Sexism Juice.

Emily: Just such an early 2000s man. Um. Sorry there weren't very many jokes in this episode. But you came for the educational aspects.

Sally: Yeah, I have a lot of simmering academic rage about these chapters, so. (laugh) Maybe we'll talk about them again.

Emily: We have chapters like this so that we can have chapters -- other chapters that are about sex ed --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Larry the Trolloc. So.

Sally: That's true.

Emily: We'll be back next week, I think with Perrin point of views?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So almost definitely, we're not gonna talk about anything significant there. We'll just make jokes.

Sally: Yeah. I will spend the entire episode creating a sexual fantasy about me and Gaul, so. (laugh) Tune in for that. I'll get to work on it.

Emily: Writing self-insert fanfiction of you and Gaul? (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I would kill --

Sally: (laugh) Could you imagine?

Emily: You write it, and I'll do a dramatic reading.

Sally: OK.

Emily: It has to be very sexually explicit. (laugh)

Sally: OK, maybe it should be a Patreon thing, then. You can -- I guess either way you can elect to listen to it, but I don't wanna, uh --

Emily: Oh, offend anyone? (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: OK, you can have a -- you can have a border -- you can have a --

Sally: I'll have a version that's PG-13 --

Emily: You can have a version that's PG-13, fade to black, and then a version that is --

Sally: I'll have a -- well, I won't fade to black like Robert Jordan does.

Emily: OK, yeah. You'll have a version that, uh, handles sex --

Sally: Palatable.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And then I'll have the --

Emily: Classy and palatable.

Sally: Real sexy one, yeah.

Emily: And then you'll have the version where you have to think of lots of words for "dick."

Sally: It's just "dick."

Emily: It's just -- that's true, that's how most fanfiction handles it too. Nope -- nope, fanfiction goes with "cock." It's really terrible.

Sally: I hate the word "cock."

Emily: I know.

Sally: I literally --

Emily: It's legitimately the worst.

Sally: (laugh) I legitimately despise it.

Emily: (laugh) It's the worst.

Sally: There's nothing sexy about it.

Emily: It's so bad. It's so bad.

Sally: It sounds really violent. Whenever I hear it, whenever I say -- particularly --

Emily: And it's usually in a violent context.

Sally: Yeah. Particularly when I hear men say it, I feel, like, triggered. Legitimately. I'm like, "Oh, God, this is an unsafe situation."

Emily: I know. I want to get off of the ride. I'm like --

Sally: Heeeey.

Emily: Nope. I can -- stop, nope. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) No, but today, um --

Emily: Like, if a man said something to me during sex about his cock, I would leave his cock and him there on the bed, and leave the room --

Sally: And I'd go take seventeen showers.

Emily: I'd take a shower, and then I'd leave the house, and I'd never speak to him again.

Sally: I just -- I really don't like that word.

Emily: It's so bad.

Sally: Cock.

Emily: Ugh.

Sally: Ugh.

Emily: *Ugh*.

Sally: Uh -- ugh. Blegh.

Emily: I know. How do we get away from this?

Sally: Um. I mean, we'll do, uh -- thank you to Glynna MacKenzie for our wonderful theme song. I'm sorry that that was our segue. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: I just -- I tried to go to my happiest place --

Emily: Panic. (laugh)

Sally: And it was our theme song. (laugh) Um --

Emily: Thank you to all of you for listening. Uh, do you have a sign-off?

Sally: Oh, I also want to thank everyone who supported us on Patreon. Um, we're in the middle of doing some fun stuff with our finances, like actually maybe being able to pay our rent with our Patreon money this month?

Emily: Yeah. Super fun.

Sally: Which is super exciting. And maybe we'll buy Tybalt, like, a new sweater or something. So. (laugh)

Emily: He'll hate it.

Sally: He'll hate it, and you'll know that your money went to a good cause. (laugh)

Emily: Yes.

Sally: Um, but it's just really amazing that you guys are willing to spend any of your hard-earned money to support our aggressively academic but mostly weirdly sexual Wheel of Time podcast. (laugh) And we just really value and love you. Um, and thanks to everybody who follows us on Twitter. Um -- uh, the Twitter user @cosmokitt made an animatic of EHR, which was really delightful. It's mostly Emily just flipping off the Dark One, which is --

Emily: It was life-changing when I saw it.

Sally: Really awesome. And so thank you, Kitt, for being so amazing, and --

Emily: I also just want to thank all fan artists for their devotion to my cowlick. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: It's really important to me. (laugh)

Sally: It -- (laugh) Even with all of the barrettes, she still has it. (laugh)

Emily: I've still -- still got some. Never stop being spiky. (laugh)

Sally: Um, yes I do have a sign-off. We do have a listener-submitted sign-off waiting, so I apologize, but I have to tell you that --

Emily: Is this about the birds having sex?

Sally: It is about the birds having sex.

Emily: Fuck you. (laugh)

Sally: Today I walked into work. And I've been having a pretty stressful few weeks. There are a few, um, really tense and scary things going on with a family member who has been hospitalized. It's very scary. Um, trying to keep it light, but I am crumbling a little bit, so I'm just like, "I need everybody at work to not talk to me." Which is impossible to convey to the people that I work with.

Emily: Right.

Sally: Because immediately, my boss was like, "Did you hear that these two birds --" and they have names -- and she said, "Did it." And I -- me, being, like,, so used to just saying the word "fuck," was like, "Did what?" (laugh)

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: And she was like ... (laugh)

Emily: Can you imagine if your first words to you had been, "Did you hear that Bird and Bird fucked?"

Sally: I would've been like, "Cool." That would've made more sense to me.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: But I was just like, “Did what?” and everybody in my little open work space was like, “Ummm ...” And then it took a second, and I was like, “Oh. That’s, like, exciting.” Because this bird is, like, critically endangered, and we’re one of the, um, only zoological organizations in the world that has the particular breeding facility that, like, really facilitates these birds being able to pair off and produce, um, offspring, helping to save the species, so, like, super exciting that these birds have paired up. So I was like, “Yay, this is great. We don’t have to have any further conversation about these two birds having sex.” (laugh) But then my other coworker was like, “Look, Shauna sent me --” Shauna’s one of our keepers -- “Sent me all of these cool, like, images and videos,” and, like, we just gave the birds of enrichment for Halloween, so I was thinking it was, like, one of the birds, like, playing with their jack o’lantern or whatever, but Toni just, like, turns up the volume on these video -- of these two birds just having sex -- (laugh) and it was, like -- (laugh) And so I was, first, caught off-guard, and then it was just, like, deeply unpleasant-looking video, ‘cause they were, like, on a perch, so there was a lot of flapping involved to keep them balanced -- (laugh)

Emily: I do not have a mental image in my library to fill in the blank that is birds fucking.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: I have no -- no concept of what that mechanically looks like, and I don’t ever want that blank to be filled in.

Sally: It looked pretty gnarly, and there were a lot of weird noises, and I was like, “I did not need to see this.” But I did also learn by informing my friends Julie and Gethin that I had to watch this video, that Gethin then immediately Googled “bird penis” on his work computer -- (laugh) that most male birds actually don’t have penises.

Emily: Good for them.

Sally: Yeah. Birds, uh, uh, couple -- (laugh) with something called the cloacal kiss, which you can, uh, Google if you want to. Ducks do have penises, and I would not recommend looking that up. It will scar you for life.

Emily: (sigh)

Sally: Don’t Google “duck penises.”

Emily: Isn’t genitalia wonderful? (laugh) Especially when applied --

Sally: To birds!

Emily: To other species.

Sally: Birds! Yeah.

Emily: Bird cock.

Sally: Noooo! OK, you laugh, but legitimately, Gethin was like, “Did you see a bird cock?” and I was like --

Emily: NOOO!

Sally: “I’m deleting you from my life!”

Emily: Gethin, why would you betray me?!

Sally: “I’m deleting you from my life!”

Emily: God. Y’all, don’t do war crimes.

Sally: Yeah. That’s really the theme of this episode. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah, seriously. Goodbye.

Sally: (laugh) Bye.