



Episode 107: **Elite Forsaken Kill Squad**

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Generously Transcribed by Lauren Livesey

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

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

[Theme song by Glynna Mackenzie plays]

S: Erm, yeah. So, here we are, self-isolating for social distance in a time of the coronavirus. It's OK, a little rough, you know, it's a little weird.

E: Yeah.

S: How are you hanging in there?

E: I'm fine. How are you?

S: I'm OK. Had a couple bad days this week, for sure.

E: The earthquake didn't help.

S: Yeah, yesterday was bad. There was a 5.7 earthquake in Utah along the Wasatch front in – at like, seven in the morning. And then there were aftershocks all day, the worst of which got up to like, 4 point something magnitude.

E: Was that the one at lunchtime?

S: Yeah, I think so, that one was pretty wacky. Erm, so that was a really ... That was yesterday, in EHR timeline, in your timeline it'll be about a week ago, so, yeah, hanging in there. Earthquake was bad, very scary, Tybalt was just like a little – He was fine, for a bit –

E: He was fine initially, and then it really set in.

S: He like, had a delayed reaction where he would just trot between our rooms as we were trying to work from home, just being like, what's going on?

E: You good?

S: Everyone here? Is everyone safe?

E: Is everyone – are we all good? Like, nothing fell down or anything, to put it into perspective. It wasn't bad enough to make furniture fall over or pictures fall down. You could just feel it.

S: Yeah, it was just spooky,

E: Yeah, it was very spooky.

S: It's all good.

E: It's all good in the hood!

S: Sort of.

E: I mean, yeah, it's terrible.

S: Everything's awful, all the time.

E: The world is terrible, everyone's upset, as they should be. The government – the American government – should be doing more than sending everyone a check for a \$1000 or whatever the fuck it is they're gonna do.

S: [laughs]

E: Like, perhaps, freezing rent?

S: You know, basic things.

E: Normal things.

S: We got the most upsetting text from our apartment complex today, that was like, *If you pay your rent before the 31st you'll be entered to win a bunny wreath!*

E: The like, tone-deafness inherent in that is so upsetting.

S: I didn't – they have an Instagram apparently where they have the bunny wreath pictured. I didn't look at it, but I feel like now I have to.

E: The bunny wreath.

S: Oh my god. It is *not* cute. [laughs]

E: I wasn't expecting it to be fucking cute.

S: But it's just like – it is *very* Utah. Like, aggressively.

E: Oh boy.

S: Like, my mom's friend Tamara would have this on her front door. Hundred percent.

E: We'll try not to talk endlessly about the coronavirus because it's annoying when people talk endlessly about the coronavirus, but we'll just say: wash your hands, maintain social distance, don't think you're the exception to the rule, because you're not. Petition the government to give us more aid, especially the people who might be in a less privileged position than you, and who are going to lose their jobs because of this. If that is you, I'm sorry. This sucks. [pause] Let's talk about *Wheely Time*! [awkward laughter]

S: There was no good way to break that silence.

E: Yeah, sorry.

S: It was, like, weighing very heavy. This is *Everybody Hates Rand*, your friendly neighborhood *Wheely Time* podcast. Hosted by Emily Juchau, who's texting, and me, who was texting a minute ago, so I'm not gonna roast her for it.

E: My sister sent me a link to chocolate donut holes, so I don't know how I'm not supposed to respond.

S: OK, I get it.

E: Also, like –

S: Oh, I'm Sally, I didn't say that, I just said "me."

E: That's Sally Goodger, I'm Emily Juchau. We're here to talk about *The Fires of Heavens*, chapters two and three. See, I know chapter numbers, too.

S: I'm proud of you.

E: When we're in the single digits. And I can keep track of how many chapters we've read preceding this.

S: Shredical.

E: Shredical? What the fuck does that mean?

S: [laughs] I don't know, it's just – it's shredical!

E: Where'd you get it? Where'd you pick it up?

S: I don't know.

E: From the teens down at the skate park?

S: Yeah, I guess.

E: Shredical moves?

S: I don't know, I say it sometimes. I guess never to you.

E: I guess not. Anyway, this chapter – chapters?

S: These chapters.

E: These chapters are bringing us back to the main plot. We have left Siuan Sanche back in the – on the side of the road where she belongs, along with Min and Leane, who –

S: I wish they stayed there.

E: At least one of those people deserves better, but, alas, Robert Jordan doesn't know how to separate his finely-tuned groups of women away from each other.

S: Nope. Gotta have a mixed bag.

E: Yes. So, we're back in, uh, Rhuidean, hanging out with Rand, who is doing the most emo shit that a person could possibly do. It's like, when the chapter starts, he's like, standing in front of the window leaning his forearm up against the top of the windows, he looks like the cover of a Chuck Tingle book, you know?

S: Who's Chuck Tingle?

E: He's a guy who writes all the hilarious porn, very specific –

S: [speaking over] Oh my God.

E: - porn books [laughing]. Have I not – hold on. Hold onnnn. It's like, very specific. It's just like, the ongoing joke.

S: What?

E: Or this one, *The Fear of the Unknown Gives My Butt Pause But Then I Realize How Powerful And Unique I Am And We Pound Enthusiastically*.

S: No ... What are these? Help.

E: He's just like, a weird, funny, ps00- ... ps000- How in the fuck do you –

S: Pseudonym?

E: Pseudonymous – pseudonymous author of primarily gay niche erotica.

S: I mean hey, what a way to make a life. I shouldn't be judging. I'm sorry, Chuck Tingle.

E: Yeah. "Tingle began his career by writing dinosaur erotica and expanded to stories based on unicorns, Bigfoot, and various anthropomorphized objects and even concepts."

S: Objects?

E: I guess.

S: Like, what concepts? Like, democracy?

E: I think so. "He claims to have been born in Home of Truth, Utah."

S: I'm sorry, What of What, Utah?

E: "Home of Truth, a small isolated southern Utah town, established in 1933 as a religious commune."

S: But – but also you just said "he *claims* to be born"?

E: Yeah.

S: Does he – are they [laughs] – are they not sure? Is there no way to confirm where he was born?

E: It's his pseudonym! It says, "Little has been confirmed about Tingle's identity other than the name 'Chuck Tingle' is a pseudonym."

S: [laughing]

E: He claims to have been born in Utah, he describes himself as bisexual, he says "he's a taekwondo grandmaster from Billings, Montana ... who acquired a PhD in holistic massage at DeVry University (which does not offer such a degree)."

S: [laughing]

E: So –

S: What a fascinating man. I'm now Team Chuck Tingle.

E: Yeah, it's kind of hard not to be once you've seen him –

S: Yeah.

E: - just, like, do his thing on the Tumblr. Anyway, my point, long ago, is that Rand looks like he's on the cover of one of those books, where he's just like, *Gotta show off my muscles* –

S: Uh-huh.

E: - *to best emphasize my, like, strong points*. His coat's undone, his shirt is half unlaced, because we're in the Aiel Waste, where sweaty chic –

S: It's sweaty – ooh, sweaty chic.

E: Sweaty chic.

S: That was Emily in New York.

E: Oh, it was *not*.

S: Yes, she always looked very cute.

E: I did not.

S: You – OK.

E: I did look very sweaty all the time, though, that's true.

S: I thought you looked very cute.

E: Aw, thank you.

S: When you had your, like, cute little shorts [inaudible].

E: I wore a lot – “I *wored* a lot of shorts”?

S: “I wore a lot of shorts.” [S & E laugh] “I wore so many damn shorts.” [laughing]

E: [strong Southern accent] “Oh George, not the livestock!”

S: [strong Southern accent] “Oh George, not the livestock!” [normal accent] This is going to be just like the *Cats* episode.

E: This is going to be like the *Cats* episode. Same energy: self-isolated; and the *Cats* movie.

S: Yeah.

E: The only way we could make this worse is if we watched the *Cats* movie, which I refuse to do.

S: It's only day four.

E: I don't like – [Sally laughing] I don't like the way you're, *It's only day four, give me another six days, and she'll break.*

S: She will.

E: Horrifying.

S: She will.

E: I mean, we did just start watching *Castlevania*, if that tells you –

S: And I have a lot of questions.

E: I do, too! I'm anxious for you to get home from lunch – from dinner with your mother so we can –

S: OK, we can probably – Well, my roller skates apparently aren't in yet.

E: What the fuck?

S: I know, I'm really sad. I just wanna roller skate really badly.

E: I want you to roller skate, too.

S: OK, Rand is being emo, and he's like, *Wow, I'm so hot*, even though Robert Jordan would never say Rand thinks he's hot, but Rand totally thinks he's hot.

E: Literally. And metaphorically.

S: Yeah.

E: He's got, like, a nice little ombient – ombient – I was trying to say “ambience”, but then I, you know – He's got nice little ambient harp music playing in the background, this is just sorta nicely written in so as not to call attention to it until later in the chapter when it becomes convenient to Robert Jordan. But Rand's just chilling, looking down at the courtyard below. Rhuidean – looking fine as hell. Fresh. They've got like, shit growing in the dirt.

S: There's a lake.

E: There's a lake now. People are hanging out, there's tons of people there packing up all the *ter'angreal* and *sa'angreal* and *angreal* in the, erm, big courtyard, at Moiraine's direction. Rand is like, *She's wearing a cloth around her eyeballs so that she does not die of the sun* [Sally laughing] *but she is not sweating*. Which really makes me wonder what Robert Jordan understands about the biological process. Because he's like, *It's just a mind trick to not sweat*. And I'm like, I don't think you can control the sweat mentally.

S: Yeah, I wish I had a mind trick to not sweat.

E: Yeah, Aes Sedai mind tricks. It's just like, really telling that jedi mind tricks are, like, controlling people, you know? And Aes Sedai women tricks are not getting sweaty, so as, I assume, to maintain their, um, ice-queen –

S: Mm-hm.

E: - fuckable-ness.

S: [gags] Yeah, because it's disgusting when women are sweaty.

E: Yeah.

S: Mat, however, can just sweat as much as he fucking wants.

E: And I'd like to submit that Mat is the sexiest character –

S: Yeah!

E: - for it.

S: Yeah, he's just like, *I'm sweaty, Imma take my shirt off*.

E: *I'm just sweaty constantly, because this is the summer from hell, and I'm a normal human being who sweats*, and it's like, thank you, Mat, for showing us –

S: Such an everyman.

E: You're such an everyman character. Thank you, Robin Hood. I love you.

S: We love you. Mat is very sexy in these chapters.

E: He's [growling, frustrated noise] – It makes me really angry; I think I had an awakening in these chapters, specifically.

S: He's very sexy in these chapters. But unfortunately, you have to get through Rand being extremely *un*-sexy before we get there.

E: Yeah, Rand's like, *Ugh, can't believe I have to go back to governing a nation, my least favorite* [laughing] *activity*. He's in, like, a little meeting with some of the Aiel clan chiefs. There are six of them, representing the six clans that have joined up with Rand. There are – I think he says there's thirteen clans total.

S: I think he says there's twelve.

E: OK.

S: Because he was like, *I should end up with eleven, because the Shaido – the Shaydo*, whatever.

E: So, there are five holdouts that Rand is like, *What's the update, men? Where are they at?* And all the Aiel chiefs are basically like, *They'll come eventually*.

S: They just have to process.

E: They just have to, like, process it. And we get this whole thing about how a lot of Aiel in the wake of Rand's big-time revelations about, uh, the Aiel origin story, are just sort of falling into a depression, a melancholy [pronounced here as "mel-unk-lee"] as it were, and then leaving.

S: A mel-unk-lee?

E: A mel-unk-a-lee.

S: Oh, melancholy.

E: It's from *Megamind*.

S: Oh, I didn't see that movie in so long. I think you're right, there are thirteen clans of the Aiel, but the Jenn Aiel are one of them and they are no longer –

E: Oh, you're right. You're so right. You're so smart.

S: Thanks.

E: Yeah, this whole chapter is written – it's kinda funny – it's written like, do you remember reading the first few Harry Potter books, and the first chapter of, like, each of the first four books really takes its time to really ease you back into the world and remind you of important plot events, and people and things like that? This is the same as that, and it's a little bit condescending, but like, I do get it.

S: Yeah.

E: If you're reading these books as they come out, I'm assuming it's been years since you read book four, so you might need an update. But it is also funny that we're on book five and I'm interested to see when it drops, when he no longer does that, when he's like –

S: People are sitting in a room, talking about the events of the last chapter of the last book.

E: Yeah.

S: Da da da-da!

E: Da da da-da da-da! Yeah, but ... the Shaido are gone. Gone? They're not gone yet.

S: No, I think they're going, though. [both laughing] They're going, but not gone.

E: Unclear.

S: I don't fucking know where the Shaido are. But apparently Rand has like, sent messengers to them and Couladin is skinning them alive, so.

E: So that's, like –

S: Disgusting.

E: As if you weren't sure that Couladin was, like, a villain, Robert Jordan is like, *I'm just going to make sure – extra, extra sure – that you know and you won't feel bad when Mat decapitates him later in this book.*

S: Which is also pretty sexy.

E: I know.

S: When Mat's like, *Oops, I accidentally decapitated Couladin.*

E: I love that it happens off screen, you know.

S: Yeah, and they're like, *Mat did* what?

E: I just find it very sexy that we just get, pre-decapitation of Couladin, Mat, post-decapitation of Couladin, drinking heavily.

S: With his tiny French new boyfriend.

E: With his tiny new French boyfriend. Love him.

S: Is Talmanes short?

E: I think he is, because Cairhienin are typically really short. But I'm not quite sure why that was the defining physical characteristic that Robert Jordan chose for that specific nation, but ...

S: Yeah, I also think it's really funny that he, like, gives physical characteristics to nation states as opposed to, like, ethnic groups?

E: Yeah, especially in a continent where, as we've pointed out before, there is a lot of land not covered by the borders of nations.

S: Yeah, it's very confusing. But he's just, like, *All the French are tiny*. And I'm like, OK.

E: I think Robert Jordan was just, like, *I have a dream, and it is to make a fantasy world without ethnic groups or anything like that, that could constitute the possibility of racism, and look, all of the women are shiny magical users. Isn't that so fascinating?* And it's, like, Robert Jordan – you did a bad.

S: Yeah.

E: You can't just pretend the problems don't exist, even if you are writing fantasy. You're not writing in a vacuum.

S: Yeah, you can't – it's just like, it's different when you're writing against the tradition of using racism in fantasy as a convenient plot point, but you can't just pretend it doesn't exist and then be like, all the French people are short.

E: It just feels like too much of a white guy being like, *I don't see color*, you know?

S: Yeah, for sure.

E: A white girl, I should say. I feel like white girls say that more. Erm, anyway, clan chief meeting pretty much gets adjourned after a little bit of complaining on the part of the clan chiefs.

S: Good for them.

E: Yeah, good for them. We're introduced to all of them, but it's like ...

S: Lots of names.

E: Lots of names, most of them are insignificant. Obviously, Rhuarc's there, he's our –

S: Papa.

E: - yeah, papa. And some other randos. But they eventually leave right as Moiraine and Egwene show up to lecture Rand. Moiraine's like, *Will you please tell me what the fuck you're doing?* And Rand is like, *[whispers] I will not*. Moiraine's like, *Great, I love where our relationship is at these days. I feel really safe and secure around you. I'm pretty confident that you won't like, fuck up the entire world*. And Rand's like, *Thank you. I know. I'm doing great*.

S: But yeah, it's just in like their classic Rand-and-Moiraine ego match regarding who's controlling who, and they're both in the wrong and they're both in the right and it's, like, so exhausting.

E: Yeah, and there's, like – Moiraine resorts to corporeal, like, I don't know, discipline when she whacks Rand and he's like, *I don't know who fucking did it, Moiraine or Egwene, so I can't really react*. And at the end he finds out it was Moiraine, and he's like, *What the hell, she must be super frustrated, maybe I should apologize to her*. And then he's like, *No. Because she makes me so mad*. [pause] Yeah, I can't remember anything of substance from –

S: Yeah, it's just like, Rand tells them a bit of his plan, which is just to take the Aiel across the Dragonwall or whatever, and then just conquer every country, and Moiraine is like, *What?*

E: Moiraine is like, *You need to, like, maybe do something about the Forsaken. Because otherwise you're going to be fighting all of them at the Last Battle. And that would mega suck.* And he's like, *OK, well, where are the Forsaken? We know where Sammael is but we don't know where any of the rest of them are.* Pointedly not looking at the one who's sitting over his shoulder. [both laugh]

S: No idea.

E: And it's like, come on, man. Just pick a country. There's probably one there. It's fine.

S: Yeah.

E: And also, like ... I'm not on either of their sides, really, I think it's a dumb argument for them to be having.

S: Yeah, it's just like, again, a thing where Robert Jordan needs to remind us of some key information that Rand and Moiraine are at this, like, really awkward point in their relationship, and also, oh, remember that Rand has a big magic sword stuck in a rock somewhere, and this is, like, happening with all the other countries, and oh, remember the Forsaken? [laughs]

E: Oh, remember the Forsaken?

S: Yeah, it's just like a very frustrating argument because I'm just, like, what if you two shut up?

E: Yeah, Rand's like, *I don't know what you want, because I left Tear better than it was when I came to it,* which I'm – I was about to say I'm not sure if that's true, but he did, in fact, start doing laws like, noblemen can't rape peasant girls, so, I mean yeah, he did do a good there. And he's like, *And I've sent food to Cairhien, like, I don't really know what you want me to be doing.* And she's like, *Getting rid of the fucking Forsaken,* and he's like, *Moiraine, why don't I send you and an elite kill squad to take care of the Forsaken, because, honestly, our "Forsaken killed" count is pretty much even right now.* In fact, Moiraine's on top, because she at least got rid of one of them permanently. I can't remember how the other ones died.

S: Aginor and Balthamel –

E: Aginor and Balthamel ...

S: - kick the bucket.

E: Oh, one gets, like, killed by the Green Man at the end and I think Rand kills the other one.

S: Yeah, he, like, burns him up or something.

E: Yeah, and then there's Ishamael slash Ba'alzamon, who sort of dies of melancholy, I feel.

S: Yeah, it's like ... I mean, *when* does he die? The first three books are so ridiculous.

E: Yeah. I seriously just, in the book I'm reading, book fourteen, there was *just* a conversation between Rand and Ishamael, or Moridin as he is then called, where Rand is like, *So, did the Dark One punish you for impersonating him when, you know, you did that for three books at the beginning of this series?* And Moridin says something how about since he wasn't, you know, totally sealed, *he* was insane, and he legitimately thought he was the Dark One. And I'm like, hey, do you know when that information would have been good to have?

S: Mmmmmm, eleven books ago?

E: Eleven full books ago! [both laughing] Because at this point –

S: It just seems a little silly.

E: - it just is like, I've moved on. I've made my peace with the fact that I had no idea what the fuck was going on for the first three books. And *now* you wanna tell me? You can't just do that!

S: That is silly.

E: [frustrated noise] And anyway, by the end of this book – Ah, no, I guess Rand kills Rahvin and Moiraine tackles Lanfear into –

S: God.

E: - space, so they're still technically even.

S: Yeah, but I really like the alternative plot, where like, Moiraine and Lan – and Mat? – go off and start killing Forsaken.

E: Who would our elite [clap] kill [clap] squad [clap] be?

S: Yeah, exactly, it's a fun game.

E: This is a fun game – who are all the characters whose plots I *don't* like –

S: Yeah.

E: - yeah, like, Moiraine and Lan, and then Lan wouldn't have to be dead. I think we made the argument recently that Lan could have –

S: [speaking over] could have died in the first book, yeah.

E: - died. Yeah, but no, he could still be alive, just a badass bodyguard. Hmm. Basically, what we need to do is construct a Dungeons and Dragons adventuring party, so we need some healing powers, so I submit Nynaeve.

S: Yeah, that's a better plot for them than getting trapped in the circus.

E: Yeah, plus then she's like, actually around Lan so maybe I can justify them having a relationship.

S: Plus, Nynaeve is our, like, most powerful character?

E: Yeah, and then she could, like, learn how to actually channel from Moiraine and then they could have a fulfilling mentor-mentee relationship and get over all their various things. OK.

S: I would like for Galad to be there so he didn't join the Whitecloaks like a fascist. [laughing]

E: I like that, too. And I submit Mat is in and out of the Forsaken murder squad.

S: Yeah. And they keep losing him.

E: Like, he just keeps disappearing. But he's around long enough for Galad to fall in love with him.

S: Of course.

E: We need an Aiel.

S: Gaul. Because then he wouldn't be with Perrin. That's my only reasoning. Or Aviendha.

E: Yeah, or Aviendha so then she's not with Rand.

S: Or both.

E: Or both, yeah.

S: This kill squad's getting very big.

E: Yeah, we should, like, put a cap on it.

S: OK, so then like, with Moiraine we've got like, a magic user.

E: So, Nynaeve's got cleric powers.

S: Yeah, she's our healer.

E: Moiraine's got wizard powers. Lan's got fighter powers. Galad has paladin powers. Mat's our –

E & S: Rogue.

E: And – what else do you need in a fucking ... You don't really need a bard, if you have a cleric.

S: No, but it would be funny.

E: It would be ... Are there any bar– I guess we could have Thom, but I wouldn't want him to be around Moiraine.

S: Yeah, I just want Thom to go away, with Elayne. Just go away.

E: Just go, do his thing. Um, you don't need a barbarian if you have a fighter. [mumbles] Yeah, it's pretty good.

S: It's good.

E: What are the classes?

S: A ranger?

E: Sorcerer, druid ...

E & S: A druid!

S: Loial.

E: [laughing] Loial.

S: Loial would not wanna be part of the elite kill squad.

E: I know! Loial doesn't have the bloodlust.

S: But it would be cute if he was there. Can we bring back the Green Man?

E: Ohh! I mean he has already killed one.

S: It's like, we gotta get everybody who has killed a Forsaken in the past five books. Gotta get Someshta.

E: I think it would be great if Mat was there, especially because he has no encounters with any of the Forsaken in the fourteen-book series.

S: And they're still like, *We can't catch him*.

E: We just can't catch him. And it's like, he's right over there. He's right – right over there.

S: Right. I also would like Birgitte to be a part of it.

E: You're right, Birgitte should be a part of it. Ranger.

S: Ranger. So now we've got everybody.

E: We've got – we've got the best [claps] party [claps] on [claps] the [claps] planet!

S: Elite kill squad.

E: Elite kill squad. Nynaeve bonds Birgitte instead of Elayne.

S: Aw, sexy.

E: It's great, because then it's like, *I already have a Warder, but I want Lan to be my Warder, but now I will come to realize that the Warder bond is an insufficient form of intimacy and cannot replace a romantic form of intimacy*.

S: Correct.

E: Magic intimacy is not real intimacy. Jot that down, Robert Jordan. And Birgitte can be like, *I'm just here with my best friend, Mat, and my other best friend Galad, who I also kind of hate and I prank him constantly*. And Galad's like, *I'm just here*.

S: *I'm just here doing a good by fighting the evil*.

E: Yeah. I feel like everyone's like, *Galad would do anything to be the good guy*, and if someone was like, *Galad, you could just literally kill Forsaken*, he would be like, *There's –*

S: That's perfect!

E: - *there's no shades of grey there* –

S: Yes!

E: - *if I just kill a person who did genocide in the past.*

S: Yeah, that sounds lit.

E: Sounds lit as hell.

S: Yeah, and then Mat's popping in and out.

E: This fan-fiction is really fleshing itself out in my head –

S: Yeah, it's really becoming ...

E: - who kills who? I'm so excited.

S: Yeah, we could have so many fun, like, sitting-in-taverns scenes planning our next assassination.

E: [sighs] I find it really fulfilling. I wish – alas ...

S: But alas, that is not the reality that we inhabit.

E: Alas, that is not the timeline that we've been given. Instead we're here with Rand, in Rhuidean –

S: [retching sounds]

E: - as he gazes sadly at his former love, Egwene, and she's like, *I wish you wouldn't be such an A-hole.*

S: And he's like, *Oh, Egwene.*

E: He's like, *Oh, Egwene. You fool. You absolute ninny.*

S: *I haven't even gone. I'm just getting started.*

E: *I have not yet reached the peak of A-hole yet!*

S: *There's so much more this bad boy can do.*

E: *You don't know! How bastardly I can be.*

S: [laughing]

E: Argh, he's such a dick.

S: Mm-hm. And then they're like, fighting or whatever, and Asmodean like, magics a cup up to Rand.

E: Right as Egwene is turning to leave, so she doesn't really see it. Just Rand suddenly holding this cup. He's like, *OK, bye!* And she's like, *OK, see you later, pal,* leaves, and then Rand is like, *What the fuck? Asmodean! We've talked about this! You cannot levitate things in other people's presence!* And Asmodean is like, *It was just a cup. And I thought it was kinda funny. Did it for the laughs, you know. I'm super drunk.*

S: Probably.

E: Asmod- [laughs] Asmodean had so much potential.

S: I know. To be the funniest character of all time.

E: I know – it's just like, this is one of the few chapters where he and Rand have an honest conversation that isn't around – isn't totally around Mat – I mean, Rand – being, like *Please teach me more of the Power*. It's about him being, like ... I don't know, they're just like, talking - Rand's just like, *Why are you even agreeing to this? You know you're gonna get killed for it regardless*. And Asmodean's just like, *It's just reflex, essentially, to hold on to the last bit of hope that you have*. And it's just, like, Asmodean could have been a really cool, like, Barbossa figure. Barbossa's like, my peak for that kind of shape-shifter character who's on one side then the other. I just think Asmodean – like, imagine if Asmodean survived all of the books? And got to the Last Battle as like, Rand's cool mentor, who's also kind of an A-hole, and definitely was a shithead in the past. And he will receive justice for that, but he's come to accept that, and he's on the path of reformation.

S: That would be amazing.

E: That would be amazing! He could join the Forsaken kill squad for, like, one round, you know?

S: He's like, *What I would love more than anything? Killing Lanfear*. [laughs]

E: *I'm here to kill Lanfear. After that I am going back to Rand. But I do want Lanfear to be dead on my hands*.

S: And Moiraine's like, *That is a respectable sentiment. Please join the party*.

E: Moiraine's like, *You're welcome*.

S: *Come, you've passed the test*.

E: *You've passed the test; you must have a specific one that we really wanna kill*.

S: Everyone's is Lanfear.

E: Everyone's is Lanfear.

S: She's the most annoying character. In the world!

E: Maybe Birgitte's would be Moghedien.

S: Yeah, probably.

E: OK, yeah –

S: Galad's would probably be Rahvin.

E: Yeah. See, and now you just start thinking about who would kill who. Who would Lan kill?

S: None of them. That's my dream scenarios.

E: That's true.

S: Lan doesn't do any of the killing. [laughs]

E: Nynaeve kills Semirhage because she is like, you know, opposite.

S: Mm-hmm.

E: Semirhage is mean-torture-lady and Nynaeve is good-heal-lady. Mat kills Demandred, *as he should have*, in *A fucking Memory of Light*.

S: Rip.

E: Lan can kill Sammael, because Sammael doesn't matter.

S: That's true. He does it, like, almost accidentally.

E: He's like, *Fuck, I just killed him*.

S: *Goddamn, he's dead. That wasn't dramatic at all.*

E: *He literally just tripped and, like, broke his neck.*

S: [laughing]

E: Didn't even do it.

S: So good. Fuck.

E: Someone get on it! Write the fan fiction. We're all stuck inside. Might as well.

S: I want you to do it.

E: I don't wanna do it.

S: I feel like you're the only person alive who understands how funny Mat truly is. [Emily laughs] The only person who could bring it to fruition.

E: I could not. I don't think so. I think it's really hard to write with other people's characters.

S: Oh, I agree completely.

E: I don't know how fan-fiction writers do it.

S: Yeah, I can't even write with my own characters.

E: That's – yeah – big fat mood.

S: I hate them. They're the fucking worst.

E: Ugh! This asshole again?

S: Don't like them.

E: Don't even like talking to you. What are you doing? You're such a disappointment.

S: Exactly.

E: Um, so Rand and Asmodean shout it out, and then Rand is like, *OK, I'm leaving now*. He tucks Asmodean in –

S: Basically.

E: - tells him a bedtime story, and then does a magic door so that no one – no man who can channel – can enter or exit the room, so Asmodean's stuck there, which I think is a fire hazard.

S: Yeah – oh, shit.

E: Yeah.

S: Well, Rand doesn't think about fire safety.

E: Yeah, Rand's not exactly –

S: Doesn't even have a fire marshal in his army.

E: What the! Who would he make the fire marshal? Davram Bashere?

S: Davram Bashere would be so good at that job.

E: Davram Bashere would be good at anything, because he's a perfect man.

S: That's true.

E: And then Rand is like, *Aw hey, it's the Aiel Maidens, my personal entourage of bodyguards. Just chilling. Hey ladies, let's go to my apartment complex that I have adopted*. And they're like, *Cool, let's get a fucking move on*. And then we get to Mat!

S: He's so sexy in these chapters.

E: I'm so horny for him.

S: I know.

E: As we cut to Mat, he is balanced on the edge of a fountain, I imagine with his arms –

S: Yeah, like, out wide.

E: - out wide, he's super drunk, and he's singing, and it's like, ugh, wow, get you a man who is just like, *I will do karaoke*.

E & S: [laughing]

E: Drunkenly in front of everyone.

S: Yeah, oh, I just love everything about it.

E: I wanna know the scenario leading up to this –

S: I know.

E: - was someone, like, *Mat, you have a really good singing voice, you should sing*, and he was like, [fake modesty] *No, I don't. OK.* [sings a few notes]

S: [sings] Don't want a lot for Christmas. [laughs]

E: Was Mat just like, *You know what sounds great right about now? Me singing.*

S: I feel like it's probably the latter.

E: Did he lose a bet? Like, what the fuck, it's never explained.

S: He's just a happy singing boy.

E: There's just a crowd of people around him.

S: Because of course he's playing gambling games.

E: Yeah, he's like, *No one will dice with me anymore, so we've resorted to more primitive methods, so just throwing knives at sticks.*

S: [laughing] Yeah.

E: And he's super drunk. Drunk? Super drunk on –

S: He called himself juicy! Which I love.

E: I know, I can't. Get him a –

[E & S laugh]

S: Juicy Couture sweatpants! That says "Juice", but I want it to be, like, shorts. Sweat shorts.

E: Yeah, I want Mat in booty shorts that say "Juicy" on the ass.

S: Juicy.

E: And that's how he kills –

[both laughing]

S: He's in, like, a deep V crop-top and Juicy short shorts.

E: Mat canonically has a great ass –

S: It's true.

E: - that is established later in this book.

S: But, yeah, so they're playing this knife-throwing game, and he's singing "Dance with Jak o' the Shadows."

E: And someone's like, *That's a sad song about death*. And he's like, *That's not about death, I for-*

S: *I wasn't paying attention, I'm drunk as fuck!*

E: *I wasn't really paying attention, and also, it's one of my weird, dead-person memories, so, that's not morbid at all to begin with*. Erm, switches to a different song, and then someone's like – I don't know, they're just doing their drunk dude thing, and Mat's like, *I bet I could hit the target blindfolded*. And they're like, *No, you could not*. He's like, *Fucking watch me!*

S: Yeah.

E: And blindfolds himself with his own scarf, tells them to say, like, *Now! Pull!* And then he throws the knife, and it's so fascinating how conscious he is of, like, the way he is manipulating fate. [whispers] I just think it's so cool.

S: I know, he can, like – his luck is like a physical thing that he feels.

E: Yeah.

S: He's like, *I feel it surging*.

E: He like, feels it surge and throws the knife and you just hear, like, this *thunk*.

S: And everyone's like, *Oh my God*.

E: Dead silence.

S: And then Mat's like – says something in the Old Tongue?

E: And everyone's like, *What was that?* And he's like, *Nothing*.

S: Don't worry about it.

E: Don't worry about it.

S: Also, the empty fountain is just, like, full of all the jewels that he's won gambling. [laughs] It's just, like, stuff looted from various countries -

E: I love it.

S: - that's, like, in the fountain.

E: He's got all his weird treasure – it's very much the, uh, Mat image. Every – like all of his images are combining here. He's got this, like, entertainment thing going on, he's got this wealth hoarding thing going on. Of course, his luck thing. Even the fact that when he's blindfolded, that's like, a foreshadowing, and also evokes certain images. Mat will eventually marry the incarnation of the Justice – which is not great considering she's the perpetrator of terrible things, *but* –

S: We'll get there.

E: - that's the archetype the book has chosen. So, it's just really, like, interesting.

S: Yeah, it's very good. Very good.

E: I think it would be cool – Later in the books, there's like, a very slow, good build of Mat's understanding of his luck. He eventually reaches a point where he can lose on purpose, because that's, like, better for him? And I just think it would be a really cool superpower to, like, *see*? And if he was conscious of it one hundred percent of the time, going into, like, fights and being able to manipulate other people's luck?

S: So cool.

E: I just think it would be really cool.

S: [to Tybalt] Oh, hello. The kraken is awake.

E: [sings] Da-da-da!

S: Scratching.

E: Anyway, Mat's sitting there on the edge of the fountain having a little think, and then a lady comes up to him and is like, *Hey*.

S: *I would like to do fucking.*

E: *I would like to do the fuck.*

S: And Mat's like, *Cool*.

E: Mat's like, *You're ten years older than me, but, I ain't got a problem with that.*

S: *Never stopped me before!*

E: *Never stopped me before!* This chapter does also canonically establish the boys' age as twenty, he says. And Egwene's as eighteen, because he states that she's two years younger than him. Which is a fascinating thing to get five books into the series, but, again –

S: Whatever.

E: - here we are. Erm, so Melindhra is like, thirty, Mat kind of deduces that she must be one of the Shaido. As we learned earlier in the last chapter, all of the Shaido stayed with Couladin, except some of the Maidens have come back to join their Maidens who are protecting Rand. Which is interesting and does make me kind of mad that she then is a Darkfriend. That sort of like, puts these really thick lines on who's good and who's bad. [in a deep, sanctimonious voice] *Well, she's Shaido, so of course ...*

S: Yeah, everyone should have known better. Mat should have known better.

E: Yeah. When, like, it could've been cool to have a Shaido lady be like, *The guy leading the clan is a dickhead, so –*

S: *I'm coming over here.*

E: *I'm gonna go back to where Rhuarc is.*

S: *Where this cutie is.*

E: *Yeah, I'm gonna fuck this cutie with a nice ass.*

S: Good for her!

E: *And the pretty eyes.*

S: She does really like his eyes.

E: She's like, *You have good eyes.* –

S: Hello, Tybalt.

E: - *and you look like you're about to do mischief.* And Mat's like, *I am.*

S: *I'm always about to do mischief.* [scuffle] Ow.

E: Oh no! [laughs] Stabbed. The Ides of March. Et tu, Brute?

S: [laughing] That was so mean! [frustrated noise]

E: Why are you like this? Mat also sees Rand walking by with his entourage of Maidens, and like, runs up to him and is like, *Rand – hey, Rand?* Nothing. Goes, *Lews Therin?* Rand immediately turns around.

S: So creepy.

E: Which is horrifying.

S: And Mat's like, [gibbers].

E: Mat's like, *Ew, it's like I just said Bloody Mary three times. I hate it.*

S: He's like, *Why am I talking to him? I hate him.*

E: Mat's like, *Why am I even do-ing that? He's the worst! And he responded!*

S: Gah!

E: But they're just talking, and Mat's like, *Hey, I think I'm gonna leave, with like, the merchants when they head out.* And Rand's like, *OK.* And Mat's like, *You're not gonna, like, stop me?* And Rand's like, *I have literally never constrained you to do anything before, Mat. This is all fate.*

S: *All you, bubba.*

E: *All the Pattern, as it were.* And Mat has a little interesting aside about being *ta'veren*, and what it means to be like, pulled into another *ta'veren*'s wake, and being like, *I cannot get away from you.* He's like, *I'm leaving, I'm really gonna do it this time.* And Rand's like, *OK, just don't trust the main peddler guy, because he's a major creep.* And Mat's like, *Yeah, I'm not fucking stupid.*

S: Contrary to popular belief.

E: *Contrary to popular belief, I know whomst to trust,* he says, as his evil girlfriend comes up behind him. [both laugh]

S: We all want an evil girlfriend, though, once in our lives, right?

E: I know. Yeah, But, uh, he and Rand part ways – they’ll be seeing each other again this night, do not worry. Yeah, *wink*.

S: In a truly horrifying scene.

E: In a truly horrifying scene, where Mat has been interrupted from his post-coital sleep by a Darkhound.

S: Yeah, gross. He’s naked-y.

E: He’s super naked.

S: Good for him.

E: Yeah. Which – great.

S: Naked-y boy!

E: Rand leaves, and then Melindhra, Mat’s new girlfriend, comes up literally with a sack of all his looted treasure and is like, *I thought this bag would work to hold all of your shit* and he’s like, *OK, great*. And she’s like, *Wanna go fuck?* And he’s like, *Yeah*.

S: [whispers] *Hell, yeah, I do*.

E: And thus ends that chapter.

S: Ugh, Mat. I love him.

E: Yeah, so we’ve caught up on most of our main characters now. I guess not Nynaeve and Elayne, and Perrin isn’t in this book, but –

S: Thank God!

E: - so many people are in Rhuidean and we’ve now pretty much seen all of them. And from Mat’s point of view if not Rand’s himself, we now understand that Rand is not going great.

S: Yeah.

E: He’s answering to Lews Therin, which – yeah, you’re right, is legitimately the creepiest scene of all time.

S: It’s seriously, like – just reading it a while ago, my skin was crawling.

E: Mat’s just like, [Imitates sound effect from *Psycho* shower stabbing]

S: Horrifying.

E: And, yeah, Mat is peak sexy in this book.

S: So hot. Mat really is so hot in *The Fires of Heaven*. Like, literally?

E: I know.

S: But also –

E: Just like, everything he does. I really wanna fuck him.

S: He's such a hot boy. Ugh. And then he gets an army, and then he gets Talmanes, which somehow makes him even hotter.

E: Yeah, well, Talmanes: hot, too.

S: It's true.

E: They're all just – it's the first weird haircut, which I try not to think about. I try not to think about the Cairhienin haircuts.

S: I don't even remember what their hair –

E: It's like the front of their –

S: Oh, yeah. Yeah, no.

E: - their forehead is shaved? So their hairline starts way back there?

S: Nope, I don't like that. Talmanes –

E: [speaking over] It's like, I'd prefer not to think about that.

S: - does not have that haircut. Talmanes has, like, a nice undercut.

E: Yeah, I think of Talmanes as stylish.

S: Yeah, he's like, a nice, very well-trimmed undercut, very well-kept beard.

E: And's he just like, *I'm dressed fly as hell, and here's my raggedy boyfriend*.

S: He has all these well-tailored suits, and then Mat rolls in, so nasty, just like, so gross.

E: Just a dirty, rowdy boy.

S: Just an absolutely grungy, disgusting monster.

E: Talmanes is like, *You need to shower. Please*.

S: Mat's like, *No*.

E: *I will not*.

S: *Never*. Anyway – that's Mat, he's grungy and beautiful and we love him.

E: And Rand's emo and terrible and we hate him. And Asmodean's there. Just strumming his harp.

S: And like, ten *million* Aiel are just hanging out in Rhuidean.

E: So many Aiel. And some, like, peddlers. And Moiraine and Lan. And that's it. It's all good.

S: And Egg.

E: Uh-huh.

S: And Eggy.

E: Ah, Eggy. Next chapter I think we'll get some really boring Rand-Aviendha antics, erm, and then I think we might flip over to Egwene. There's like, a chapter called *Among the Wise Ones*, and it's just like, her chilling in a sweat tent with Aviendha.

S: Gay.

E: Which is, yeah – gay. Consider. And then the chapter after that, I think, is where we get the Darkhound, etc., etc. And find out the function of Mat's cool foxhead amulet.

S: Yee.

E: We haven't known it until then.

S: Which is – mostly it's just stylish.

E: Yeah, for now, it's just fashion.

S: Just hanging between his pecs.

E: Uh-huh.

S: I know, he's so *hot*. It's so RUDE!

E: So that's this week's energy: horny for Mat. Horny. Number four. Mat.

S: Yeah.

E: OK, do we have any housekeeping?

S: Erm, not really. The housekeeping is just: take care of yourself during these wild times.

E: Take care of yourself. We're still living together in our social isolation, so we're lucky enough to still be recording.

S: That's true.

E: Producing all of our normal content. If you are a Patron and this month the money that you give to us would be better served taking care of your other needs, please feel free to redistribute funds as needed. And everything will be waiting for you whenever you can make it back.

S: Yeah, no hard feelings, for sure.

E: That is fine.

S: Gotta take care of number one.

E: We are both in pretty good positions with our jobs and being able to work from home, so, we know everyone is not as lucky.

S: Yeah. Alternately if you're feeling really, like, just down and agitated and you could use some more EHR content, our Patreon is fairly cheap. Like, even for \$1 a month you can read a backlog of three years of Emily's blog and three years of our blooper reel, and if you just wanna be a Patron for a couple of months to boost your morale during these trying times, with our – like, if you think this podcast is ridiculous –

E: You should listen to *We Don't Watch Outlander*.

S: - you should listen to *We Don't Watch Outlander*.

E: It's so shitty.

S: There's quite an interesting energy there. So just – yeah. There's lots – whatever you need to do, just know that EHR will try and support you in whatever way we can. Mostly just keep producing content and try to bring a little joy into all of our increasingly gloomy lives.

E: Yeah. Yep.

S: But Tybalt's doing great.

E: Tybalt's doing great. He's – I believe – currently chewing on my headphones in my room, so –

S: You should [laughing] probably go stop him from doing that.

E: Do you have a sign off?

S: Yeah, we've got a couple of listener-submitted ones, but this one is just so timely and was, like, the perfect beginning to this last week, but – [laughing] We had an event at the aviary last Thursday, and it was just like, right on the – right – it was the day that everything in Utah really started to break bad, so everyone was just like, in this horrible energy and no one was paying attention, and I picked up one of the chairs for the event the wrong way. Like, usually you pick them up so they fold outwards, so that this doesn't happen, but I picked it up and I went to move it and it just unfolded right onto my orbital bone.

E: Noo!

S: And it hurt [laughing] so bad! And I, of course, just felt so dumb, because any idiot child knows not to pick up a chair so it can unfold on top of your face.

E: That sounds like something I would do.

S: And so I was just, like, cradling my eyeball, and my sweet friends, everyone was like, *Are you OK? What's happening?* So, I had like, this tiniest little bruise – I think it's mostly gone – but it was very funny, it was this tiny little bruise.

E: *Give him the chair! Give him the chair!*

S: Yeah. So, anyway. I'm a disaster, as usual.

E: We all are. Have a good week.

S: We love you!

E: Bye.

ENDS