



Episode 111: Lugard, A Great Place to Hide a Body

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Generously Transcribed by Lauren Livesey

TW: We talk about sexual assault in this episode.

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]

E: [laughing] Crank that!

S: Crank that!

E: Crank dat! Featuring T-Pain.

S: Crankdat! In The Air by Crankdat, featuring T-Pain, streaming on Spotify. [laughing]

E: Was that part of an album? Or was it just a single?

S: I don't know if he ever had an album. I think that was just a single. I think T-Pain, like, according to what Lee said, T-Pain recorded twelve singles that day in the studio –

E: Jesus!

S: - with, like, a bunch of different DJs and Crankdat just happened to be one of them. And *allegedly* –

E: What a fascinating life it would be.

S: - T-Pain said that the one he recorded with Crankdat was his favorite.

E: I bet he said that to everyone.

S: Yeah. Yeah.

E: T-Pain. Just a polite, you know, gentleman.

S: A polite boy.

E: I was on the phone with my mom, while you were getting a cookie from your mom –

S: She sent two cookies.

E: - aw, cutie.

S: So, if you want one? Or we can split them.

E: Anyway, I was on the phone with my mom. She called me while she was on her way to Chick Fil-A, and then she was still [Sally laughing at Tybalt] – He just leapt up and bit my jacket. Rude asshole.

S: Oh, Tybalt.

E: I was still on the phone with her while she was in the drive-thru at Chick Fil-A, and she – I had to listen while she was like, *Just a second, I have to place my order*, and I hear the girl say, like, *Hi, welcome to Chick Fil-A, what can I get you?* right as my mom takes a sip of water wrong and starts coughing so badly. [laughing]

S: Aw, no, the poor Chick Fil-A girl!

E: Exactly. My mom was like, *Oh, my gosh, I feel so bad! She'll think that I'm ill and I came to Chick Fil-A anyway*. I was like – And she, like, couldn't talk, she was like, [croaky] *I swallowed wrong*, [both laughing] to the girl, who was probably just like, *Get away from me. I don't wanna be here*.

S: Yeah. *Will you just order your fucking chicken sandwich and leave?*

E: *And your chicken wrap for fucking Chris?* This is *Everybody Hates Rand*, your friendly neighborhood *Wheel of Time* podcast. I'm Emily Juchau. [background noise]

S: *That's* Tybalt.

E: Yeah, cronching, in the background

S: Eating really loudly. And I'm Sally Goodger.

E: And here we are to talk about two of the worst chapters in *The Fires of Heaven*, unfortunately.

S: [stage whispers] I didn't read them.

E: God, I wish that were me, too. So bad.

S: In my defense, it wasn't just, like, *I don't want to read them*, which I didn't.

E: I mean, yeah. Reasonable.

S: But it was [laughing] – it was like, I don't wanna stare at this tiny print when my head hurts.

E: That print really is so tiny.

S: I know, it's like, Tor.com.

E: It's like, I'll open a – I read a book meant for, you know, children or young teens or whatever, this week, *Howl's Moving Castle* – delightful book, love you, Diana Wynne Jones – but it was like, the text was so reasonably sized, and I was like, am I becoming – What's happening?

S: Am I becoming an old person?

E: Am I old? I also have heartburn.

S: Phat mood.

E: What's – what's the deal?

S: I think that's the apocalypse anxiety, the heartburn.

E: Yeah, is it?

S: The eyeballs might be just that we're getting old.

E: [small frustrated shriek]

S: But it's like, every time I open a *Wheel of Time* book, it takes me a full minute to adjust to being able to read the print. And I'm like, Tor.com – I know this is the longest book ever written, but you could have printed it on slightly bigger pages, with slightly bigger type. [laughing wryly]

E: Or, like, even – we have a couple copies of – we have *The Eye of the World* and – is it *The Great Hunt*?

S: [speaking over] Oh, yeah, *The Great Hunt*.

E: And those are, like, bigger in terms of area size of the covers, but the text is still teeny. The margins are just huge.

S: Which makes them great for graffiti purposes –

E: Yeah, that's awesome, an awesome part of it. I haven't had to cram my writing into margins like I usually do.

S: And my writing is already illegible, so RIP to anybody who gets a normal sized *Wheely* book –

E: Huge. Mood.

S: - and is like, *Who vomited ink on this page?* That's me.

E: That should be something we do in a graffitied book, just –

S: Vomit in it?

E: - not vomit! Pour ink.

S: Oh, I was like [laughing]. That'd be a fun one. Break a pen, pour ink on it.

E: Ruin the entire book?

S: Uh-huh!

E: Find a Gawyn chapter, and just [Sally laughing] – that's the real benefit of getting to the later books, when there are more Gawyn points of view.

S: Then we can just rip them out?

E: [small frustrated shriek] It's, like, on principle I don't wanna rip pages out of books, but then it's like: Gawyn. Also, on principle, I don't want Gawyn to be alive.

S: I do have just, like, some black paint somewhere, from when I painted that, so we could just paint the whole chapters.

E: [to Tybalt] Oh, I see you've dug a hole in your food dish. Little excavator.

S: [sighs] Tybalt will not eat anywhere except the center of his bowl, because he is the weirdest animal and it makes me crazy.

E: My nephew – who's obsessed with trucks, of course – knows all of the names for, like, construction vehicles, including excavator, digger, complicated words that – not digger, excavator. Bulldozer. And yesterday, my sister sent us a video of him being read his bedtime book, which is literally just a book called *101 Things That Go*.

S: Cool.

E: And his dad opened the book, and Jack immediately said, "Look at that rickshaw!" [both laughing] What? Two-year-old knows what a *rickshaw* is?

S: I love him. He's so smart.

E: Well, I mean – he's single-minded, is the real deal. Tybalt!

S: Now he's gotta do a poo. [both laugh] OK, erm –

E: Oh, I long for the sweet – This is – we didn't even say, this is the thirty-day mark?

S: Uh, yeah, I think it's thirty-one.

E: It's the one-month mark, and everyone's feeling it.

S: I've lost count.

E: Every podcast I listen to that's been published this week has been like, *Wow, so ... It's been a month, right? It's been a month, you can really, really feel it.* And it's fitting, of course, that we got an update on Siuan Sanche and Gareth Bryne, who –

S: Barf.

E: - whose romance, frankly, makes some of the relationships I've seen on *The Bachelor* look good. I mean: come on. The first chapter is a Siuan point of view – then it's a Min point of view at the end – but it involves them getting to – how do you think it's pronounced, Loo-gard, or Lugg-erd? [both laughing]

S: I've always said Loo-gard, but Lugg-erd is funnier!

E: Lugg-erd! [laughing] What rhymes with Lugg-erd?

S: Sluggard!

E: Good one.

S: Druggard. Druggard's not a word.

E: It feels like it should be, though.

S: Like drunkard?

E: Drunkard mixed with a drug addict?

S: Yeah. Druggard.

E: A druggard.

S: Sluggard ...

E: Buggered.

S: Buggered.

E: Buggered in Lugg-erd.

S: Jesus Christ. [Emily laughing] That's what happens at the Nine Horse Hitch.

E: Apparently!

S: Or a good night's ride, or whatever the fuck.

E: Man, this book sent me on, like, a spiral of trying to figure out what “Nine Horse Hitch” fucking means. Even though that’s not the one that is really implied – well, it’s a little bit implied to have a suggestive name. So, I was like, what the fuck does this mean? And apparently, Robert Jordan, when he was alive, people would ask him this question all the time – what the fuck were you talking about? The Nine Horse Hitch? – and Robert Jordan would just be like, *Oh, when you’re older, you’ll understand*. Which is a fancy way of saying that it means nothing, he made it up and reader imagination is more powerful than any explicit thing that an author can do, but some people had some interesting theories [laughing].

S: Tell me about them.

E: One thought it was just a play on words – the nine *whores’* hitch. Instead of horse, you know. So whatever that could possibly mean. Someone was like, *Let’s look at the verb “hitch” in the dictionary*, and it just compared it to intercourse, and it was all just very, very weird. Basically, it doesn’t mean anything, though. There’s also a lot of argument – this was all on a thread on Dragonmount.com people chatting with each other, and getting very angry with each other about, like the drawing and quartering execution method, which would occasionally involve horses.

S: What?

E: Did you not know about this?

S: No! Why were they fighting about the drawing and quartering method?

E: Because it’s, like, the nine horse – Someone was like, *What’s the Nine Horse Hitch?* And someone was like, *I think it’s referring to drawing and quartering*, which was in France, and someone else was like, *No, it’s in China you bastard!*

S: Oh my God ...

E: It just, like, escalated from there.

S: Yes, I do know about drawing and quartering. I’m not a total idiot.

E: Who’s the – you know Mel Gibson, that movie? “Freedom!”

S: *Braveheart*?

E: *Braveheart*, yeah. Sorry, I just went on a little thought spiral of “Braveheart equals dragonheart equals ...”

S: Sean Connery, equals wildlife conservation?

E: Yeah. All the way back to *Tiger King*. We’re back where we began. “Get away! Get away!”

S: Where is he?

E: Another text to add to that curriculum: *Jurassic Park*.

S: OK. Which I have not seen. So, we’ll watch it, and that can be –

E: [speaking over] It's a good one. I mean, you know – it's just fascinating to think about, in relation to these other texts.

S: Anyway, *EHR* is gonna start putting together curriculums. I was thinking about that today.

E: Oh, yeah?

S: Yeah, because I was thinking about the *Tiger King*, unfortunately, and then I was thinking that I've read some interesting stuff through my work at the aviary that would be an interesting –

E: It would be cool.

S: - complement. Anyway.

E: You'd be good at that.

S: Let us know if you're interested.

E: *EHR Teaches* Masterclass. Look on YouTube. [Sally laughing] It's always, like, Neil Gaiman being, *You wanna learn how to write? Fuck you.*

S: *You're terrible at it.* The only person who's good at writing, apparently, is Neil Gaiman.

E: Anyway. Siuan, Min, Leane and Logain all get to Lugg-erd, or Lugard, depending.

S: Lugg-erd.

E: Lugg-erd. This is, I believe, the single time that we are ever in this city, so the extravagant descriptions feel a little bit unnecessary because it's not like I'll ever be utilizing them in my mind's eye ever again. This actually made me think about how this is the last book that really feels like there's a lot of continental exploration. From this point on in the series, it's like – I think the only major setting that gets introduced –

S: [big sigh, starts humming – to Tybalt?]

E: - Yeah, I think the next new setting is, like, Ebou Dar. Because we've been to Cairhien before, we've been to Caemlyn before, which are the places that Rand and Perrin are hanging out in. Obviously, we'll get to see Salidar in this book, and that's kind of a setting for a while. But it's like so much of the book compresses to this, you know, this section of the continent comparable to the Midwest in the United States, which is the middle of the continent and it seems like there's not much around. There aren't... It's like wasteland, where so many things have already happened – Perrin bonded with the wolves, or whatever – and now that's gonna be where Faile gets kidnapped, and Perrin has to pursue –

S: [retches]

E: - that plot, and the girls have to travel back to Caemlyn with the Bowl of the Winds, and Mat has to wage a guerrilla warfare on the Seanchan.

S: Cool.

E: You know, not exactly – but it's like, for a book with so many possible settings, it feels like at some point in the series Robert Jordan got super bogged down with where all his characters were and, ironically – because teleporting is invented at around the same time – everyone's movements just suddenly decrease. So ... Just a weird thought. Nothing happens in Murandy, I don't know why it is here. I don't know what's the point of it. King Row-dran? Rod-dran? Whatever his name is? He comes to the Fantasy UN meeting at the end of – not the end of – the beginning of book fourteen, when all the rulers get together and are like, *What shall we do about Tarmon Gai'don?* And Rand's like, *I know, I have the perfect solution. Turn your armies over to Elayne.* And everyone's like, *Yeah, that sounds fine.*

S: Every time you say it, it's, like, my heart has cracked further.

E: Yeah, that's the source of my heartburn, actually, [Sally laughing] is thinking about Elayne in charge of all these armies. When there's a perfectly good boy, just right over there,

S: And you could just teleport and get him. [Emily lets out a frustrated scream] I know we had this conversation last week –

E: We have it every week, because I'm still screaming about it, every time I think about it.

S: It's just very stupid.

E: Anyway, Roedran's there, just to be, like, a present, talking character, and I'm like, what. Is. The point. When we have had so many other rulers introduced who are now also in the same space. Why give this guy, who's been a background character, now the room to talk? It's just like, you don't need all your characters to be fleshed out, and in fact, you should delete some of your characters.

S: There are so many, Robert Jordan.

E: You could delete entire countries and that would be fine.

S: Yeah, Murandy could go away.

E: Murandy is nothing.

S: Like, RIP to Murandy.

E: Isn't Murandy where Logain got his start?

S: Maybe. I think so.

E: I was thinking about that, because Gareth Bryne tells some story about, like, three years ago, Sivan was, like, making the rounds, bullying all the rulers in this part of the continent, and was like, *I don't want you to patrol the Murandian border any more.* Or something like that?

S: Oh, yeah.

E: And, you know, yells at Gareth Bryne about it, and that's what he remembers about it, but I was like, that would have been about the same time that Logain started cropping up, and then I started thinking about how Sivan goes to Salidar and is like, *Logain, we can* – something about propaganda by, like, convincing everyone that the Red Ajah manipulated all of the various –



Both: False Dragons.

E: I don't know if any of that means anything, or if I'm reading too much into a text that always makes me feel like I should be reading more into it, but ...

S: I don't know.

E: Yeah, I don't, either. Anyway, group gets to Lugard, they stop at an inn, Siuan immediately is like, *I have to go distract Logain*. Min and Leane are like, *We hate you*, but she goes. She makes her through the city, which – the descriptors of which are mostly that women are in skirts that are above their ankles, which, like, cool.

S: Scandalous.

E: Ankles be fly. And that men are cat-calling women relentlessly.

S: What a fun city.

E: Yeah, it's pretty terrible. And, of course, you can tell it was written by a man, because at one point Siuan realizes she's being cat-called and just, like, doesn't react to it, and in fact is like, *Huh, I should probably feel a little flattered. But, you know, I just can't apply those to myself because I'm still not used to being – looking this young and beautiful*, and then goes off on a monologue about how, hey, now that she's younger, she's actually prettier than she was when she was this age to begin with.

S: [retches] The whole – wow.

E: I know.

S: There's so much to unpack there.

E: Peel back the layers?

S: How, even?

E: How, even?

S: I have only been, luckily, catcalled a handful of times in my life – all in New York City.

E: Oh, yeah, New York –

S: Fascinating place.

E: - is where it's at.

S: And every time, I was, like, never brave enough to yell at any of the cat-callers, unlike Emily, because I am a baby.

E: I've never yelled at a cat-caller.

S: Didn't you? I'm pretty you sure yelled, like, *Fuck off* at someone one time.

E: Oh, that was a guy who called me a dyke,

S: Ohhh. Well, fuck him.

E: Like, that was hate speech. Cat-calling's never good, but it doesn't evoke the same level of ...

S: Like, so even if I don't verbally respond, I literally feel like my skin is crawling off of my body –

E: Yeah, you just wanna curl up and die.

S: - so it is not realistic for someone, even if they happen to be the once-pope, to feel –

E: The Once and Future Pope.

S: - yeah, the Once and Future Pope, to feel completely unaffected by someone commenting on your body, like, in a sexually explicit way in a public space. It's horrible.

E: Like – ugh. It all just – I hate, like ... Don't get me wrong, I hate being the person who does this constantly, accusing Robert Jordan of fetishizing really weird things, but there are such – Every time a scene has sexual undertones, the gratification of those sexual undertones is so clearly targeted at someone that is not me, or even really anyone that I know, that it feels like some weird kink. Like, you know ...

S: Yeah, and I – that's definitely – could be one thing going on here, but I also think it's just indicative of how vast the chasm is between men's understanding of the way that women experience sexuality, and walk through the world as sexual beings. Because I think that the female or – just basically anyone who's not a cis, straight, white dude – like, the way that they experience sexuality has so many different layers, and, like, so much of it is impacted by the fact that you feel safe or unsafe in the world, because your body has somehow always been targeted. And your sexuality always exists as, like, either a joke, a way to be violent, or a weapon – like, it's never just something you're allowed to have. I'm losing myself in how angry I'm getting at how Robert Jordan has no clue –

E: It's been a while since we did this.

S: Because, yeah, just like your comment, it feels like it is very much not for me. There is nothing in any sexually charged scene in *The Wheel of Time* that makes me feel like, yeah, this is a situation that I would be hella turned on by.

E: Yeah, it's not titillating.

S: Yeah, it's actually – it's very alienating for any queer person –

E: Oh, yeah.

S: - but particularly queer women, because it's like, a) that concept just doesn't exist, apparently, in *The Wheel of Time*, unless you are a villain –

E: Or someone who went to boarding school, and it's been infantilized in a particular package.

S: - yeah, we have had that particular conversation, too. So, yeah, it's just like – and also in the terms of male gratification. One of the more interesting – I might have talked about this on this podcast – one of the more interesting thought experiments posed to me by one of my professors in college was: *What do you think is happening when a woman is happy that she's been cat-called?* Because she's like, *I've had friends say to me that sometimes it's nice to be cat-called.* And she's like, *But if you really unpack that, what's happening is that you are happy to be an object. So that just means that the patriarchy is working on you on a different level. Like, you are happy to be recognized for your sexual viability rather than, like, as a human being.* She's like, *Be very cautious whenever you're, like, "Oh, I wish someone would cat-call me."* So, it's, like, I think that there's this male fantasy that – Of course there's this male fantasy, everyone's like, *Oh, I'm giving you a compliment.*

E: Yeah, there's no male fantasy that women, when they move through the world, want to be paid attention to. Which isn't necessarily the case, but it's a fantasy that men have built up, that women are – I was just transcribing an episode where we talked about how women are – how a lot of Rand's perceptions of women as manipulators comes directly from Lanfear, and how incredibly she manipulates him at the beginning, and how unclear it is in the text that he's being manipulated, because we're not able to see it from an outside perspective. But it just makes me think about how, also, men have this skewed perspective that women specifically want attention. And that that's something that women are villainized for desiring, you're an attention – quote unquote – whore, but also you're expected to want it.

S: Yeah, it's one of those classic double standards –

E: Oh, yeah, that's that.

S: - that you're – yeah.

E: I was gonna – My brother is, like, dating someone. Totally fine, someone asked – I cannot remember who, it was probably at a big family gathering – someone was like, *Oh, yeah, I met her and she seems really low-maintenance.* And I was like, that's such a [Sally laughing wryly] – that's such a terrible term to apply to someone. We're all high-maintenance in our own ways, because we're all people. And also, we're not cars, you know?

S: Yeah, it's not *maintenance*, it's just being a fucking person.

E: And having needs, yeah. And if one of your needs is attention – fine. As long as it's not toxifying your relationship, as long as you're still a good person.

S: Yeah. On this front, I would really recommend reading *The Seven Necessary Sins for Women and Girls* by Mona Eltahawy – I always feel like I'm saying her name wrong – where she unpacks this, especially about attention, in great detail. It's interesting.

E: It is interesting.

S: Yeah, just like, one of her necessary sins for women and girls is attention. She's like, *You should have every right to want attention*, and that's something she talks about, the concept of being called attention whores.

E: You should also have the right to want a specific kind of attention, and to be biased against other types of attention. Objectifying attention isn't an attention that anyone wants.

S: Yeah, so there's just this, like, incredibly skewed view here, where it's like Robert Jordan cannot imagine a situation in which you are the sexual prey in a way that isn't necessarily overt, in a way that's not aggressive. Anybody can imagine being, I don't know, raped – I mean, you hope people can imagine how horrible that would be – but it's, like, cannot grasp the concept that there are forms of attention that are still predatory, even if they're not, I don't know, across some imaginary line.

E: Yeah, and it becomes all the more upsetting when you intersect it with Mat, and Mat getting this attention he doesn't want, and how it changes because Mat is our character who has been the most sexually open, about his desires and his sexuality and his wants. And having that redirected toward him in a predatory way. I mean. I don't know – it's just so much, you get the sense that Robert Jordan is trying to go somewhere, and getting sidetracked by something shiny. Like a sex igloo, or whatever. Just veering off, forgetting what he was going to do. I mean, you at least want to give him that much credit, but it's also a Siuan and Gareth back-to-back chapter, so it's Be Mad At Robert Jordan Day here at *EHR*.

S: I feel like we beat this horse to death regarding Robert Jordan and women's sexuality, but it is just a glaring offense in the text for me.

E: Well, I think it's fair because we're two female-identifying people – hosts – so it's like, if you want to understand *Wheel of Time* through the – quote unquote – female perspective, then this is what it is: it's feeling victimized quite a bit. This whole scene where Siuan goes into the inn – called A Good Night's Ride, we find out later, it's got, like, a lady on a horse or something – like a naked lady on a horse.

S: Because that sounds really comfortable.

E: Yeah, that sounds terrible, your poor down under [laughs].

S: Your poor vagina.

E: [Australian accent] G'day, mate.

S: [laughs] I hate you. [both laughing] I just hated everything about that. Criminal behavior.

E: Sorry, just thinking about that time Daniel Radcliffe did a photoshoot naked on a horse. Do you remember that?

S: Yeah, for *Equus*, or whatever? His play?

E: What a wild ride.

S: Daniel Radcliffe is like a funky little dude.

E: I know, I really like him.

S: Yeah, he's just like, *Yes, I was Harry Potter, but I'm also gonna do all this weird shit.*

E: Be naked on a horse.

S: Yeah.

E: And it's like: you good?

S: You fine? He seems to be doing great!

E: He's like, *I'm fine, I'm very well adjusted*, and I'm like, alright.

S: Cool!

E: Good for you, my man. Anyway, Siuan goes in there, because she knows that this is where one of the Blue Ajah agents works, the innkeeper. Sees her at some apparently – as we discover based on a couple of our other inn experiences, “inn” spelled with two “n”s, excuse me – experiences in inns in Lugg-erd, this is a pretty common set-up, is having a scantily-clad women – scantily-clad *woman*, excuse me – up on a table, singing some sexually suggestive song while a bunch of dudes with – Like, what is the male population in Lugg-erd doing? Apparently, either standing on the curb cat-calling women, or sitting in inns cat-calling women.

S: It's like, what –

E: It's the nightmare city.

S: - a lovely group of men. Go find your husband there, ladies.

E: Yeah, whee! Should we make tourist posters for all the cities?

S: Ooh, that'd be fun!

E: “Lugg-erd – Go Find Your Husband.” Or don't.

S: Don't.

E: Find your husband, and then murder him. Yeah – “A Great Place to Hide a Body: Lugg-erd.”

S: [laughing] A great place to find a man to kill. Lugg-erd.

E: Anyway, Siuan goes in there, tries to find the innkeeper. And of course, this is coming directly after a scene in which Nynaeve did the exact same thing, so we know by Nynaeve's experience that when Siuan is like, *I can sing songs*, and one of those songs has the word “blue” in it, that she's speaking some sort of code. To tell this woman what she wants. But this innkeeper is like, *Oh, you wanna sing? Show us your legs*, and forces Siuan to, like, hike her skirt up to her thighs, or something, then drags her out of the room on the pretext of looking at her legs – what an odd pretense – to talk to her. The point being that the entire scene is vastly uncomfortable for Siuan, and if you are a reader who sympathizes with Siuan in any way, perhaps because you have experienced something like this, in having your body put on display, then it's terrible –

S: Yeah, of course.

E: - it's a horrible thing to live in, so thanks a lot for that, Robert Jordan. But Siuan talks to this lady, is like, *Here's what's going on: the White Tower's hell a broken, Elaida's in charge*, and this lady's like, *Heh. Too bad for Siuan Sanche*, and Siuan's like, *Yes*.

S: *In fact, it is too bad for her*.

E: *I bet, wherever she is [Sally laughing], she's unhappy at this time.*

S: *Bet she's having a really shitty day.*

E: [semi-shouting] *I bet she's having a shit day, you know? Lady?* I don't think this woman is ever even named. She's described as having red lips, and, like, dyed – bottle-dyed red hair, which I'm like, cool. I'm, like, picturing Dolly Parton, but red hair. Which I'm like –

S: Dolly Parton would never make someone show their legs against their will.

E: That's true.

S: Don't do that to Dolly.

E: But, like, the look.

S: Yeah, I can – the really, like, beehive to the gods kinda situation.

E: So good.

S: I love Dolly Parton.

E: She's great.

S: Like they do in *Derry Girls*, I'm gonna frame a portrait of Dolly to go on our wall.

E: Have I told you about game night with my cousins a few months ago, before all of this started? And my one cousin, who's very fun, and knows all about whatever games are going on currently, brought some game called – now I can't remember what it was called – but it involved these little stuffed burritos, and there were like ...It's such a complicated game. There's, like, cards, and you're all passing cards around, and there are these little stuffed burritos. And at some point, if you get a certain combination of cards, then you say something and two people pick up the burritos and throw them at each other. It becomes dodgeball very suddenly.

S: OK, what?

E: It's a super-weird game, but very fun. And, there's like one thing where you have a duel, you like stand back-to-back and you're each holding a burrito, and you walk three steps and turn around. So, we were like, *We gotta put on cowboy music or something*. So, my little brother just googled "cowboy music", and the song that came up was *9 to 5* by Dolly Parton. [laughing]

S: Oh, my God.

E: He was like, *No, I don't like this*, and I was like, [screeches] *No! Don't change it!*

S: Don't change Dolly!

E: This is the perfect cowboy music, as I'm having a stand-off with my cousin, with a stuffed burrito. I don't know. You guys.

S: [laughing] It's really funny that it was *9 to 5* and not, like, any of her other music that is more twangy.

E: [speaking over] No, it was *9 to 5*, I was like, what?

S: *9 to 5* is one of her more poppy songs. It's also a socialist anthem, so fuck capitalism.

E: We love a socialist queen. That's why we love *Tubthumping* by Chumbawumba. It's a commie song. Hell yeah. Anyway, Siuan's like, *I'm trying to deliver this message to the Aes Sedai, but I can't find them*, and this woman is like, *Well, the only hint I can give you is Sallie Dah-ra ... Sallie Dare-ah?*

S: I don't know.

E: It's a name. It looks like the name of a woman. And it will very much confuse Nynaeve and Elayne later in this book, I believe. Or someone. Someone at one point gets confused by Sallie Daera. But Siuan immediately knows what she's talking about, she's like, *Ah, yes. Salidar. The birthplace of some random Amyrlin Seat*. Whatever. She's like, *Thanks for the info*. Heads out again. Goes and meets Min and Leane and Logain who are just chilling. She's like, *Let's get out. Gotta go*, because she, like, sees some Whitecloaks on the way, and, you know, you have to police your behavior so much with the Whitecloaks. And she's like, *I don't think I acted right, so now they're gonna be after me*. Jesus. And Min, of course, is having her usual *Maybe I should have Leane teach me how to do some flirting so that I can snag Rand*. She's having the classic Sandy-from-Grease internal monologue. *Do I change for a man?*

S: [vehemently] No!

E: Because it's a man writing it, of course the eventual answer is "yes".

S: No! Never change for men!

E: Men love it when you change, so why wouldn't you? It's all about them, after all.

S; [retching] Ugh!

E: They peace out, and the next chapter is Gareth Bryne as he arrives in Lugg-erd with some random folks, and they sort of trail, you know, do some sleuthing, find out where these ladies have gone, and where they are potentially going. And also that some Whitecloaks are now after them, so, good call on that one, I guess, Siuan, but – the Whitecloaks? Do they just have nothing better to do?

S: I really don't know.

E: They're a very industrious group of men, you know.

S: I mean, yeah. It's the wrong type of industry ... ism? [laughing] Industrialism feels wrong –

E: Yeah, it does. Industrialization.

S: - because ... Anyway. Like, it's the wrong type of energy, but they really are quite zealous. Over-zealous.

E: Yeah, I just feel like when you get a bunch of lads together in any sort of military get-up, the goal is not going to be “Let’s find a witch and burn her.”

S: Maybe it’s like the police who have to meet their speeding ticket quota. Maybe you have to bring in so many women accused of witchcraft per month –

E: I bet you’re right.

S: - or you don’t get –

E: Yeah, kill X number of Darkfriends a year, or you, um, get demoted or whatever.

S: So, they’re just out there, hunting whatever weird lead they can get.

E: That would make a lot of sense. I hope Galad changes the system.

S: Where he’s like –

E: I mean, I hope Galad disbands the entire Whitecloak organization.

S: Yeah, I hope he burns it down from within. That would be a nice plot to give Galad, other than his collaboration with a fascist regime. But, you know.

E: [singing] Wouldn’t it be nice?

S: [singing] Wouldn’t it be nice if we were older? Then we wouldn’t have to wait so long.

E: What’s –

S: The Beach Boys!

E: Ah, the Beach Boys. I don’t know the Beach Boys very well. Of course, Gareth Bryne is so fucking bland that it just slid off my brain like oil on water. I don’t remember anything of what came to pass in his chapter.

S: He’s, like, talking with a bunch of old dudes, and I just read a chapter about how men are disgusting. I don’t wanna read this chapter.

E: Yeah, he’s, like, trying to decide: maybe we should just let the Whitecloaks take care of them, or maybe I could continue to drag this random force of men – retirees – with me to go look for these women who, again, did a crime, and now left. And I could just leave it at that, because –

S: It wasn’t really a crime.

E: - it wasn’t that big of a deal.

S: An accident.

E: It was, like, fine. But he’s like, *God, can’t handle oathbreakers.*



S: *So horny. For this one lady. And since I also have no healthy expression of my own sexuality, I'm going to wage a quasi-war against her!*

E: Yeah, and he's all, *Oh, I'm still all torn up about Morgase*, kicking him out. I think this is our first explicit indication of what happened, that she just was like, *You have to leave, or ... because you're a traitor, or something*. And he was like, *What the fuck? Fine. Well, I hope what happens with Gaebriel happens*. And it's like, great attitude.

S: Yeah, you fuckhead.

E: Gareth Bryne.

S: Fuckweasel.

E: I don't know. I mean, Gareth Bryne is gone already by the time Mat is in Caemlyn in book three, right?

S: I think so.

E: It's just – you'd expect Gareth Bryne, who is supposedly an intelligent man, to take one look at Gaebriel, and be like, *This is a weasel*. And when Morgase, a supposedly intelligent woman, does not also recognize that he is a weasel, he might think something's wrong with this situation.

S: Also, you would think that ... They're implied to be *involved* –

E: Lovers.

S: - in some way, and that – and that you've also been working with this woman, romantically involved with this woman, for, like, a decade, at least? If not more? Like, you should know her pretty well, and when she's acting completely not like herself, you should have more of an indication that something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

E: Yeah, and it's, like, one thing if you're like, *I can't do anything from here, because this man has somehow accumulated all the power*, but Gareth Bryne is like, *I guess I will just fuck off like she told me to*.

S: Yeah, it's like the whole – there seems to be this running theme throughout *The Fires of Heaven* that a bunch of men find out Morgase is in danger and just decide that they're not going to do anything about it.

E: Yeah, like, *Cool, guys*.

S: What the fuck?

E: What's happening? What ... what?

S: Everyone's just like, *RIP to Morgase, but I've got better things to do*.

E: Seriously, like, Gareth Bryne is like, *RIP to Morgase, but I have to fuck the former Amyrlin Seat*.

S: Yeah, *I'm busy*.

E: Rand's like, *RIP to Morgase, but I have to fuck her daughter. Eventually.* What is happening? With this dumb continent?

S: I don't know. All the men are stupid.

E: What's happening?

S: I mean, everyone's stupid. The women are stupid, too.

E: I just feel like, if someone told Mat, *Hey, Morgase is being abused by this man*, he'd be like, *Huh, I only met that lady once, but I will go set the building on fire, because I'm Mat Cauthon and it's what I do. I'll hate it, every step of the way, but I will do it.*

S: Yeah, and you like to think that Egwene would do something similar. You'd like to think.

E: It's just such an odd departure from the – what's the word? – equation that we're usually given in fantasy texts, where it is discovered that someone of some sort of importance, political or otherwise, is in danger, and everyone rushes to their aid.

S: Yeah, well, also it really deviates from the – I wanna say “ethos”, but I don't know if that's right – of the first three, or even ... at least the first three books, where there's very much, like, *Woman is in danger, boys feel like they need to rescue them*. Rand's like, *Ah! Egg is being held by the Seanchan!* Mat's like, *Ah! These three ladies are being held in the Stone of Tear!*

E: Yeah, it's just so rich for Rand, a person who hates it when women around him die, to be like, *I will fully allow this woman to be raped, abused for God knows how long*. Eventually, he thinks, murdered. This has been a downer of an episode, and I'm sorry about that, but also –

S: I also feel like we've talked about sexual assault a lot, so we should put, like, a content warning.

E: Yeah, a content warning.

S: Drop that in somewhere.

E: I'll put it in the episode description, too.

S: That's great. Anyway, it's just a downer episode because these are downer chapters.

E: Yeah, I'm hoping the next few sections will be a little more light-hearted. I mean, we are back with Nynaeve and Elayne, which carries its own set of baggage, but then Galad shows up, and then the circus!

S: Yeah, and then they're in a fucking circus!

E: Which is delightful.

S: And this is before Galad goes completely –

E: Fascist.

S: - off the rails, yeah.

E: Meh, welcome to *The Fires of Heaven*. High points, low points.

S: I was really determined that I wasn't going to not read the chapters any week. I was like, I'm going to read the chapters every week during season five.

E: I mean, these are the two chapters to not read if you're gonna take a break.

S: [laughing] I was just like, I can't! I'm too weak. I'm too weak-willed.

E: So's Gareth Bryne.

S: [retching]

E: OK, thank you so much to Glynna Mackenzie for our theme song. I've neglected to thank her for the last couple of weeks, and I keep meaning to do that – thank you, Glynna. Thank you to all of you listening, if this was a downer of an episode for you – I'm sorry. We'll have some fun-er content go on our Patreon. I'm usually just as angry on my blog, but hopefully in a funnier way. Our other podcast, *We Don't Watch Outlander*, is pretty funny. If you think it's amusing to watch me badly play a video game then I'm doing that every Friday night at 5.30pm and the stream remains on our Twitch channel for about a week afterward if you can't catch the livestream. Erm, can you think of any housekeeping?

S: No.

E: Hope you're all staying well, and staying safe, and staying inside if that's possible for you. Whoof. Hopefully, we'll soon be on the downward slope from this height of terror and horror.

S: Hopefully.

E: Yeah, hopefully this particular episode, these particular chapters, are parallel with the state of the world's terribleness. We can only hope.

S: Yeah. That this is the peak. This is our darkest hour. [singing] Always darkest before the dawn. I can't think of the tune

E: I can't either. [singing] It's always darkest ... [humming]

S: That's closer.

E: [singing] Shake it off, shake it off. [Sally laughing] Thanks, Florence. Thanks, Mom.

S: I feel like I can't sign off, because Becky coughing in the chair for the drive-in is just so funny. [laughing]

E: It was just so sad, she was like, *I'm sorry*.

S: And I just can imagine your poor mom, so embarrassed.

E: Yeah, and then as soon as she pulled away, she was like, *Emily! I scared her so bad!* [Sally laughing] I was like, it's OK, Mom, just get your chicken wrap.

S: And just go away. Make it as fast as you can.

E: End the transaction. Just get away.

S: That's all you can do.

E: She was like, *OK*. [Sally laughing] Alright.

S: Like, no matter when that happens, coughing right when someone tries to take your order would be horrifying, but, just – Becky. God bless. Have a good week, take good care.

E: Buh-bye.

ENDS