



Episode 99 – “Air Criminal”

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

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

[Theme song by Glynna Mackenzie plays]

EMILY: Um.

SALLY: I know.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: [laughing] I can’t look at this why we record. I have to change it.

EMILY: Sally had a bunch of friends over the other night –

SALLY: Ah! I don’t fit!

EMILY: Sally had a bunch of friends over the other night and apparently they rearranged the letter magnets on our fridge. I shan’t repeat what it spelled out.

SALLY: [distantly] Yeah, it's because they're disgusting.

EMILY: Because it was horrifying.

SALLY: [clicking noises as magnets are moved around] And I don't think I'm allowing them in my house anymore.

EMILY: Oh, okay.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: I saw a vanity license plate today that said letters AN then the number 8EL, and I am sure it meant to communicate *angel*, but I could not read it anyway other than *anal*.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And I was like –

SALLY: [distantly] That was a choice that someone made [laughs].

EMILY: I saw, like, six vanity license plates on my way home. Then I found – I saw one that said, “RDO Flyer.” And I was like, “What does this mean?”

SALLY: [distantly] Radio flyer?

EMILY: Yeah, so radio flyer like the little red wagons. And I was like, “hmm, seems odd.” And then I passed the car and the driver was like a 40-year-old man with a very gross beard.

SALLY: Nope.

EMILY: And I was like, “This is unsettling.”

SALLY: Nope.

EMILY: Also the other day – I'm just talking about vanity license plates while Sally takes...

SALLY: [laughing] Shut up.

EMILY: ...two full minutes.

SALLY: [laughing] I can't find any of the letters!

EMILY: [laughing] You don't have to spell something!

SALLY: I do, though!

EMILY: [laughing] You could just fucking leave it. Oh my god.

SALLY: [laughs] Where are all our letters? This is a mess.

EMILY: Anyway, I saw a vanity license plate that literally just said *realtor*.

SALLY: [laughs loudly]

EMILY: And I was like, “Why would you advertise your white mediocrity like that?” [laughs]

SALLY: We’re missing a T.

EMILY: I have never met a realtor who wasn’t like, “I’m a realtor” in such a way that they expected me to say, “Oh my god. You’re so brave.”

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: “That’s for serving our country.” [laughs] or some shit. It’s like, yeah thanks. I’m an editor should we keep telling facts about ourselves? Now Sally’s angry at me.

SALLY: That’s correct.

EMILY: [laughing] For wanting to record the fucking podcast. So we’re in a fight, I guess. This is Everybody Hates Rand. Friendly neighborhood *Wheel of Time* podcast. Which of the *Wheel of Time* characters do you think would most likely have [laughs] a vanity license plate? Rand obviously, that’s too easy.

SALLY: But, like, Gawyn probably.

EMILY: Oh my god. His would say *realtor*.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: [laughs] Regardless of what his actual occupation was.

SALLY: Realtor.

EMILY: Which I’m convinced would be a realtor. No offense to all the realtors out there.

SALLY: No, but like a skeezy one.

EMILY: Like a gross realtor.

SALLY: I also feel like Berelain is a number one contender for that.

EMILY: Berelain would have the angel/anal but it would be on purpose [laughs].

SALLY: Yeah. Anal.

EMILY: Berelain. I can't believe Berelain was in the beginning of this book. That feels like nineteen years ago. Like, I feel like I've gone to war since then. And I guess I have. It was the Perrin chapters.

SALLY: [snickers] Anyway, you know us but that's Emily and I'm Sally.

EMILY: Oh fuck. I forgot.

SALLY: And that's Tybalt, you can hear him snuffling around in the background like a pig hunting for truffles.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: That's such a good visual. So, there's three chapters, right?

SALLY: Yep.

EMILY: Okay. There was three chapters.

SALLY: 48, 49, and 50, I believe.

EMILY: You're so good at remembering the numbers. Which is terrible, but at least they weren't Perrin chapters, but they were Rand chapters.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So, like, where's the – where's the hierarchy, ya know? In *The Shadow Rising* I feel like Perrin is worse just because.

SALLY: Rand has, like, the interesting cast of characters around him.

EMILY: Yes.

SALLY: Perrin has Gaul and Loial and Bain and Chiad, but they're given like four lines because he and Faile have to talk *constantly* or they'll die.

EMILY: That's true. And argue constantly. And abuse each other constantly.

SALLY: Yeah. And it's like I just want to go talk to Rhuarc, my dad.

EMILY: Given Rand and Aviendha aren't exactly laying the foundation for a healthy relationship in these chapters.

SALLY: Yeah. I –

EMILY: But, hey, at least Mat's there.

SALLY: That's true! Mat's there trying to seduce a married woman.

EMILY: Is she married?

SALLY: I thought she was married to that dude.

EMILY: Who? Oh, Isendre?

SALLY: The peddler?

EMILY: I think it's just implied they're together.

SALLY: Okay.

EMILY: I don't know.

SALLY: A taken woman.

EMILY: How do you signify that you're married in the *Wheel of Time* world? Like, people don't really have rings, do they?

SALLY: I don't know.

EMILY: It's not really mentioned.

SALLY: I know in Ebou Dar they wear daggers.

EMILY: Yeah!

SALLY: Which is so weird.

EMILY: I always thought it was cool. Like, I want a marriage knife!

SALLY: Okay. [laughing] I'll keep that in mind.

EMILY: Forget about a ring! Give me a fucking dagger. Um, so, the, like, first chapter is, like, um, one of the classic Robert Jordan monologues – montage monologues.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: That's like –

SALLY: Montagalogues.

EMILY: Hey it's been 11 days or whatever since the last time you were wit these characters. Let me just give you a hot update on what's going on with them. Point number one: Rand and Aviendha suck [laughs].

SALLY: [sighs]

EMILY: Point number two: Asmodean? Totally Asmodean. Obvioulsy. Can't be fuckin – more obvious about it. He's like, "Hey, can I ask you some personal questions? For my...epic poem."

SALLY: "It's for my ballad."

EMILY: And, like, that's the worst fucking lie of all time, Asmodean.

SALLY: And then he's like, "How are you gonna kill the Dark One?"

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs] "Just asking for a friend."

EMILY: Asmodean's like, "Which, and don't be alarmed by the specificity of this question, which of the Forsaken is highest on your hit list? And which is lowest?"

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: "Can I make a case for Asmodean. He's just gay and stupid, and he wants to play the harp or whatever." And Rand's like, "Fine, I guess you can teach me how to channel" [laughs].

SALLY: I know. It's a weird plot.

EMILY: Um, yeah Mat's trying to hit on a married woman or whatever, because –

SALLY: Because ethical non-monogamy is an option.

EMILY: And desert makes you horny, I guess.

SALLY: I mean, there's nothing else to do. Might as well fuck.

EMILY: That's true. There's nothing else to do. And Lan is like, "Let me teach you – continue to teach you the sword, Rand." And it's, like, I'm so bored of them learning how to use swords.

SALLY: Ooh – sorry.

EMILY: Here's my thing about Lan teaching Rand how to use swords. At the end of fucking Book 2, after Rand had like, I don't know, three one-to-one lessons, he, like, beat – he passed the final exam to get his master's degree in sword fighting.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: You know? He's already got a PhD in sword fighting. Why do we have Lan continuing to teach him? Not that I'm saying don't continue to practice your art, or whatever, but it's, like, I don't want to hear about it.

SALLY: Yeah. It's, like, after Rand – like, Robert Jordan does this. He, like, got rid of all of his stakes in books 1 through 3 it feels like.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Because he's like, "Rand beat a literal master swordsman from another continent."

EMILY: Despite having used a sword for, perhaps, two months.

SALLY: Yeah. And it's like, "Okay, well obviously he's the best at swords ever."

EMILY: Yeah, and it's like, "And he's killed, like, 16 Forsaken."

SALLY: Yeah [laughs].

EMILY: Well, he killed Ishamael three times? So, it's, like, homie.

SALLY: Yeah, so it's annoying that we just have to be like yet another lesson on swords, *another* lesson on swords.

EMILY: And it's also, like, um, oh. It's just, like, Rand has other hobbies, you know?

SALLY: I do read sometimes [laughs]

EMILY: Yeah, he reads books and shit. I'd much rather – later in the series they have Min, obviously, just hanging around Rand and literally she's just, like, an armpiece. Like, Rand – there is not a scene with Rand where Min is not literally hanging off his arm. And it's just, like, she's there to occasionally make a sassy remark and to fuck Rand, I guess. But they also give her this weird plot about really liking this scholarly museum guy who gets murdered, and she's like – so, she's constantly, like, researching and studying and looking at books at stuff to try and figure out, "Can my boyfriend survive the Last Battle or whatever?" Um, and it's, like, such an obvious attempt, kind of, to make Min more than just Rand's bedwarmer for lack of a better word.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But it's also just, like, hijacking what I want Rand to be doing. Like, I want Rand – I know he's, like, ruling continents and whatever the fuck by the time you get to Book 4. I mean, Book 5 or 6. But, like, he was interested in reading in the first few books so I would expect him to take an interest in his future and what he can do, rather than just relying on, "Oh, Min, why don't you update me – why don't you give me your..."

SALLY: Weekly report.

EMILY: Please defend your thesis to me.

SALLY: That sounds miserable.

EMILY: I know.

SALLY: I had such a vivid flashback to meeting with my thesis advisor every Tuesday in college.

EMILY: So that's my complaint about swords, among many.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Um, yeah. I also just, like, why can't we talk more about him learning how to fight spears? Or doing magic?

EMILY: Yeah. Or hand-to-hand combat, or something.

SALLY: Oh my god. What if Rhuarc was just out there kicking his ass every night?

EMILY: Oh my god I would love that.

SALLY: Fist to fist.

EMILY: Instead of Rand and Lan being like, "Oh my god it's so hard...to be in love with a woman." [laughing] or whatever the shit they're talking about. Just have Rhuarc be like, "I'm gonna fucking kick your ass until you're a black belt like I am."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Mat's like, "Cool."

SALLY: "Cool."

EMILY: "This I can get behind." Because Rand needs his ass to be kicked every now and then.

SALLY: Probably on the daily would suffice.

EMILY: Probably on the daily.

SALLY: [laughs] He's very annoying to me in these chapters.

EMILY: Yeah 'cause he's like, "Oh, don't worry I'm not culturally appropriating fully. I'm not wearing the Aiel garb, except for the, like, head turban to – and it's just to keep the sun out." But it's also, like, Rand...you're in this situation which is sort of just like...I don't know [mumbles].

SALLY: I know. It's just weird, because objectively it's, like, not a bad stance that he's taking where he's like, "I'm not fully Aiel and I feel like that would be a blight on the Aiel's honor, or something that they would get hung up on." But at the same time it's, like, the fact that you're harping so much on the fact that you aren't Aiel is, like, weird. I don't know. It just gives this weird taste.

EMILY: It starts to get less about Rand being aware of what is culturally appropriate and what is not, and more about Rand harping on his heritage issues.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Being like, "I'm not Aiel. I'm from the Two Rivers." And it's like...

SALLY: "And they just have to deal with that."

EMILY: Okay, you need to fucking process that you are biologically half-Aiel and this is part of your culture. And you can choose to learn about it or not, and clearly you're not choosing to learn about it. Like, I don't want to put Rand entirely to blame in the being – remaining totally ignorant of Aiel culture, because Aviendha is literally assigned to teach him about it and she does a [laughs] fucking shitty job.

SALLY: Yeah, because she's got her own fucking ego problems.

EMILY: Yeah, and she won't shut up about – she's like, "Oh, Rand, you saw a woman? Do you remember Elayne's titties, though?"

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: And he's like, "No! I fucking don't. I didn't see her naked! For the last time, Aviendha." And Aviendha's like, "Well I DID!"

SALLY: "IT WAS AMAZING!"

EMILY: "It was amazing! I came immediately!" [laughs]

SALLY: [laughing] It's how she talks!

EMILY: [laughing] I know!

SALLY: It's so weird.

EMILY: It's so ridiculous! Anyway, but in Rand's position if you were like, "Here, I have this, like, guide more or less who's trying to teach me about this culture. And I just don't get it." Then maybe go to someone else.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Be like, "Hey, Rhurc."

SALLY: "Will you help?"

EMILY: "Will you help me? [laughs] Will you tutor me a little bit because Aviendha sucks at it."

SALLY: "Aviendha sucks."

EMILY: Rand also does discover the fact that Aviendha can channel. Or, does he? His first time realizing Aviendha can channel?

SALLY: I think actively. I think passively he's been aware of it, but Aviendha shoots a huge fucking fireball in the middle of the day.

EMILY: Because the Wise Ones are like, "Hello. Lesson one: fireball."

SALLY: It's so random.

EMILY: Girl [laughs].

SALLY: And all the Aiel are just like, "Whatever."

EMILY: And it's like okay I get it. The Aiel. But do you need more fire? You're in the desert. You could start a fire or something.

SALLY: Why don't they teach her how to do water?

EMILY: Yeah, waterbend.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: That would be a valuable skill, is what I'm saying. Um, Rand's like, "Ah, Aviendha must be learning from the Wise Ones." And it's like, "Yeah no fucking shit. She dresses – she's in the fucking uniform. What's your?"

SALLY: He's so –

EMILY: [laughing] He's dumb as a pile of rocks. Speaking of which, they get to Cold Rocks Hold.

SALLY: A big pile of rocks.

EMILY: A big pile of rock – isn't it kind of subterranean?

SALLY: Yeah, it's kind of this hidden canyon. You basically have to go – my impression was that you kind of go through a slot canyon.

EMILY: Ah, cool.

SALLY: And then it, like, opens into. That was my impression reading it, anyway. There's definitely a – because they get somewhere and they're like, "We're here!" And Rand's like [whispers], "No, we're not. Where's the shit?"

EMILY: "Why, where's the houses?"

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: This is the first, and I think last, permanent Aiel settlement that we come to. And that we, like, spend two chapters in. Um, and it's distinctly – the vibes are both Middle Eastern and, uh, Native American. You get kind of, my impression always picturing the way the, um, the settlement was structured and built out of the rock was very much, like, adobe and the Pueblo. And, um, then we're also introduced to the idea that the Aiel eat – it's, like, listed in the chapter when they're all sitting around eating and Rand's like, "Here's this special type of food that's like tomatoes and corn." Or it's, like, maize, but spelled different. And it's, like, first of all, don't really get it. I don't think corn and tomatoes are really suited to grow in a desert environment.

SALLY: Also, why would you mix those two foods? [laughs]

EMILY: Also, whack, you know? [laughs] Super whack.

SALLY: Surely there's something better to eat.

EMILY: Especially considering they're eating like a goat stew? Or something?

SALLY: Yeah, which makes a lot more sense [laughs].

EMILY: Yeah, but uh...I don't know. Just, like, those are what the vibes are.

SALLY: Yeah, and Aviendha mentioned at one point, “You should grab the food with your right hand,” and there’s a bunch of, like, there’s no chairs. They do a lot of sitting on the floor.

EMILY: Yeah, sitting on cushions and things.

SALLY: Yeah, so there’s distinctly non-Western vibes and sort of an amalgamation of Native American, um, Middle Eastern definitely. Middle East, North Africa, far east sometimes.

EMILY: Yeah. I think it’s easy to forget, especially as we’re introduced to, and I’ve been thinking about this a lot because of where I am in *A Memory of Light*, as we’re introduced to, like, the Seanchan and the Sharans a little bit later on, how, like, the Aiel sort of start to fit into this conglomerate of, like, eurocentrism and, like, the focus on Western parallels in fantasy. And it’s, like, the Aiel are distinctly supposed to be not that.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And it’s just, like, because of, I don’t know, how they’re positioned in the plot, how they are sort of immediately part of Rand’s forces, it just is kind of like a little easy to forget that I guess. At least for me.

SALLY: No, yeah, I think that’s – even by the time you get through this book you’re like – or, when you’re into Book 5 and the Aiel are moving back with Rand across the Dragonwall or whatever, it’s just like oh yeah. They’re Aiel.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: It’s like – I really appreciate this glimpse into their culture, because it lets you just, like, sit with the fact that everything in their culture is different.

EMILY: I know. It makes me wish we spent more time amongst, uh, the, like, actual culture and the Aiel and just I don’t know. Instead of what immediately happens starting in Book 5 which is this upending of their kind of status quo, because we immediately get people who are resisting what Rand reveals at the end of this book, and that’s leading to all these sort of, like, I don’t know, weird offshoots of their culture. Like, you get just, like, a group of Cairhienin noble people just appropriating the culture relentlessly.

SALLY: I forgot about that. That’s such a weird plot.

EMILY: It’s such an odd plot. And you get, you know, the group of evil – quote unquote evil Aiel – who are just like going around [laughs] kidnapping everyone and being like, “You’re *gai’shain*.” Or however you say it. You’re *gai’shain*! And you’re *gai’shain*!

SALLY: It’s insane. [laughs] The Aiel are insane.

EMILY: Yeah, it's just, like, nuts. And they're just, like, in Murandy or wherever the hell because of that weird plot [laughing] where Sammael and Graendal are like, "You know what would be hilarious? If we just teleported them everywhere."

SALLY: Yeah [laughs].

EMILY: "How fucking wild would that be?"

SALLY: With their weird teleportation boxes, or whatever.

EMILY: Cubes.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Or whatever.

SALLY: So odd.

EMILY: So buckwild. Um, but, yeah, they get to Cold Rocks Hold. There's some whole, uh, social status drama with who goes to introduce themselves to the –

SALLY: Roofmistress.

EMILY: Roofmistress, whose name is Lian?

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Lian, who is revealed to *also* be Rhuarc's wife. And Rand's like, "What in the fuckening?" And I'm like, "I don't really care. I just want to know if Lian and Amys are, ya know?" I want to know if this is true polyamory. That's what I want it to be.

SALLY: That would be amazing.

EMILY: I know it's not, because Robert Jordan was a coward.

SALLY: True.

EMILY: And was just like, "Polygamy's liberal." And it was like what the fuck?

SALLY: [whispers] No, it isn't.

EMILY: What are you talking about?

SALLY: It is, in fact, not [laughs].

EMILY: But I like to think that Lian is more excited to see Amys than she is to see Rhuarc.
[laughing] She's like, "That's my hot wife."

SALLY: Or just excited to see them both.

EMILY: Yes.

SALLY: Because Rhuarc is a babe. Amys is a babe.

EMILY: Rhuarc – they're all just –

SALLY: It sounds like Lian is a babe. Lian.

EMILY: They're all just three – a trio of hotties.

SALLY: Yeah. So, it's like, yeah.

EMILY: Middle aged hotties.

SALLY: Hell yeah.

EMILY: Does Rhuarc have kids?

SALLY: I was literally just thinking that.

EMILY: What the fuck?

SALLY: In my mind, Gaul is his son. I know that's not true.

EMILY: [laughs] I think we've talked about this before.

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah.

EMILY: They, like, never spend time on screen together.

SALLY: Yeah, but I'm just like, "Gaul is his child."

EMILY: He has to be!

SALLY: [laughing] That's Gaul. It just makes sense in my head.

EMILY: They're just two wholesome lads. I don't think Rhuarc has canonical kids.

SALLY: I don't think he has kids.

EMILY: I mean I'm sure he does. Like, Aviendha has a biological sister.

SALLY: Oh yeah.

EMILY: And that's just kind of mentioned in passing.

SALLY: Thataway.

EMILY: I don't know why siblings are so low key in the *Wheel of Time* universe. It's very odd.

SALLY: It is odd.

EMILY: Like, everyone who has siblings is like, "I've immediately forgotten about my siblings."

SALLY: Siblings? I don't know her.

EMILY: Siblings? Bleh. Yeah, the only one who remembers his sibling is Gawyn sort of. But then he's like, "Oh, nah, I'm obsessed with Egg so."

SALLY: "EGG! And also my sister. Where are they?"

EMILY: "Yeah, actually I've forgotten Elayne."

SALLY: Elayne is honestly the only one who talks about her siblings, and not Gawyn. Just how much she hates Galad.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: [laughing] All the time.

EMILY: [laughing] She's so annoying. I know, but Mat is never like, "I wonder how my sisters are doing." [laughs] You know?

SALLY: Yeah. Perrin's whole gets murdered.

EMILY: [laughing] So!

SALLY: [laughing] So it's just like Robert Jordan, why would you give them families?

EMILY: I know. Just have everyone be a dang single child.

SALLY: It's fine.

EMILY: Because whatever.

SALLY: Just don't murder Perrin's [laughs] entire family.

EMILY: Off screen.

SALLY: Ah!

EMILY: UGH. Um, but anyway, the roofmistress is like, “Yeah, come on in, [laughs] except for you, Couladin. Fuck you. Stay outside.”

SALLY: Yeah, because Couladin does a bad and asks for...hospitality the way a clan chief is only allowed to.

EMILY: And everyone is relentlessly like, “Couladin, you’re not a fucking clan chief.”

SALLY: [laughing] Saying it does not make it so.

EMILY: Saying it does not make it so. Just because your brother died, and you did nothing about it. Is, like, does not make you the chief.

SALLY: Lian totally dunks on him and says the worst possible thing you can say to someone asking for leave. And Aviendha’s like, “Oh, shit!”

EMILY: Can you imagine if Aviendha and Rhuarc just start, like, [laughing] reacting like in that gif with the guy in the rap battle?

SALLY: Yeah and all the kids are like, “Ahhho ohhh!” Yeah, imagine just all the Aiel.

EMILY: So funny. They’re all like, “AHHHH!”

SALLY: [laughs] Because it’s honestly so brutal, and I’m obsessed with her immediately.

EMILY: Mic drop. Yeah, she’s so cool. But she’s all like, “Come on in.” The Wise Ones get there, um, and they all go to, like, Lian’s house, I guess. Kind of where they’re staying. To, like, eat and chat a bit. There’s like little nuggets of Aiel culture smattered throughout there but –

SALLY: A smattering.

EMILY: Yeah, it kind of feels irrevelant to talk about, because if they’re relevant we’ll talk about them later on, I’m sure.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Um, Mat is just there

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah. They give Lian some looted stuff from [laughing] the Stone of Tear, and she’s like, “Ooooooh!”

EMILY: [laughing] They're like, "Enjoy this treasure." And she reacts like my mom when you give her lotion for Christmas.

SALLY: Yeah, it's so pure and Rand and Mat are –

EMILY: She's like, "Oh, my god!"

SALLY: "Okay."

EMILY: And Rand and Mat are like, "Oh. I fucking watched them take that off the wall." Like, wheeee.

SALLY: Wheee! I'm obsessed with her. I think she's so cool.

EMILY: She's great. The Aiel are great. Gaul is totally Rhuarc's son.

SALLY: It makes so much sense.

EMILY: Um, [laughs] but they chat. They eat. And, uh, pretty much the meal ends.

SALLY: Yeah, meanwhile Aviendha is being insufferable and explaining to Rand what a spoon is. Because they're – this is the dynamic that I just hate so much.

EMILY: Right.

SALLY: I'm just so over *Wheel of Time* and it's repressed sexuality.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Like, I get it Aviendha. You think Elayne loves him, but you come from a culture where multiple women can have the same male object of affection.

EMILY: Yeah, and it's like, she never is like, "Oh, but they don't do that in the, um, where Rand and Elayne come from and therefore it's inappropriate." Like, that never seems to occur to her. But, given it's also just so – it's obnoxious that we're never in Aviendha's point of view for any of this. Even as we get into Book 5. I don't think we get Aviendha's point of view really until she's separated from Rand. Which is obnoxious because then we're getting it all filtered through Rand. And it's, like, no obviously Aviendha's behavior is inexcusably bad, but having her narrate to us what is going on, would maybe make it feel a little less relentlessly bad.

SALLY: Yeah. I just, like, it's very immature.

EMILY: Yeah, this is the book all about immature couples.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: It's just –

SALLY: Maybe it's a theme or whatever, but it's an annoying one.

EMILY: Well, because then you never get to the mature couples [laughs] part of the *Wheel of Time*.

SALLY: [laughs] Where are they?!

EMILY: Everyone is just shitty to each other.

SALLY: It sucks.

EMILY: I guess Moiraine and Thom are quote unquote “mature” because, I don't know, they probably have to use Viagra.

SALLY: [gagging noises]

EMILY: [laughing] Have I told you about the billboard on my way to work?

SALLY: I have seen it on my way to Provo.

EMILY: They one that literally just says, “Gone limp question mark.”

SALLY: It's disgusting.

EMILY: It's so bad!!

SALLY: There's one going up to Salt Lake, too. On the I-15 or whatever. By the Dollar Tree.

EMILY: It says the same thing?

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Ugh.

SALLY: Gone limp?

EMILY: Gone limp? Got milk?

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: Like, it's all just so terrible.

SALLY: Gone limp?

EMILY: [laughs] Um.

SALLY: Gross.

EMILY: So Rand is like, “Aviendha is being real mean. I better get her a present to buy her silence [laughs].”

SALLY: I know. It’s so weird.

EMILY: [laughing] “To bribe her to be nice to me.

SALLY: What’s going on through his head?

EMILY: I know. He’s so stupid! So, after the meal’s over he just goes for a walk and finds the Maidens and is like, “Hey, I want to give Aviendha a present.” And they’re like, “Oh, so you want to marry Aviendha?” And he’s like, “What? No?”

SALLY: [laughs] And he has to perform this, like, tea drinking ritual with, like, 75 Maidens.

EMILY: Yeah, where it’s, like, and he has no clue what’s going on the entire time, but they’re basically giving him permission to quote unquote court Aviendha. Which is sweet in terms of their relationship to Aviendha. I don’t know. It’s just, like, they still consider her part –

SALLY: Part of their –

EMILY: Yeah, one of them.

SALLY: Their gang. I like this. This is fun.

EMILY: Yeah, it’s my diabetes awareness bracelet.

SALLY: It’s very cute!

EMILY: Thanks. Um, but, yeah Rand’s like, “I don’t have any clue what’s going on.” So, of course, we, first reading this, have no clue what’s going on. But they’re all like, “Okay, sweet. Thanks. Here’s a bracelet or something that has flowers.” And Rand’s like, “I like it for Aviendha because it also has thorns, because Aviendha is beautiful, but she’s also so mean.”

SALLY: [snorts]

EMILY: And it’s, like, this metaphor for women has been around since god damn Shakespeare, if not earlier.

SALLY: Uh-huh.

EMILY: And it’s tired.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: It's so, so tired.

SALLY: I'm just like – I know we had that whole episode in season two where we talked about how we don't like the term “deflowered.”

EMILY: [gagging noises]

SALLY: Because I genuinely just want women to stop being compared to flowers.

EMILY: It's so bad.

SALLY: Like, can you think of no other god damn metaphor?

EMILY: I know. It's like the most second grade notion. Like, you know what's pretty? Flowers.

SALLY: You know what's pretty? Aviendha.

EMILY: You know what's also pretty? Women. Like, oh my god.

SALLY: I know. Again, only Hozier is allowed to write about women.

EMILY: I know, and only because he's like, “I have good metaphors about women.”

SALLY: She's just a tree and I've decomposed at her roots.

EMILY: Yes.

SALLY: And I'm like, “YEAH!”

EMILY: COOL!

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: He's like, “I'm a bog mummy and she just pulled me out of the bog.”

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: “She's a witch and now we're in love.”

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And it's like okay cool.

SALLY: Cool! Amazing!

EMILY: Cool, cool, cool.

SALLY: Only Hozier.

EMILY: He's like, "I'll be a revenant to be with her." And I'm like, "Ah damn." See, that's a profound thing to say about a woman.

SALLY: That's cool.

EMILY: And he's like, "She pegs me!" [laughs] And it's like, "Cool, Hozier! Fuck legendary."

SALLY: Hozier gets it. Let's let Hozier rewrite the *Wheel of Time* [laughs].

EMILY: Oh my god. None of it would be the same. Hozier would be like [laughs], "Toss it out."

SALLY: "First of all, burn it" [laughs].

EMILY: "First of all, it's terrible. Rewrite it."

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: "The entire thing." Um.

SALLY: [laughing] This is Hozier's *Wheel of Time*.

EMILY: Anyway, so Rand is like, "Hey Aviendha, have this bracelet." And yeets it at her head [laughs]. She's like cleaning a rug or something and is like, "Fuck you!"

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um.

SALLY: But then she's nice to him, barely, for a second. And he's like, "Nice. Victory."

EMILY: He's like, "Sweet, now I can go have a sex dream about you."

SALLY: [gagging noises]

EMILY: Because that's how his brain works!!

SALLY: I know. The sex dream is so insufferable, too.

EMILY: I know. He's like, "Ah, Min and Elayne and now Aviendha is there looking at me with disapproval."

SALLY: “And then Lanfear gets naked and bites my neck in the water.”

EMILY: Bleck.

SALLY: Which is like, what is happening?

EMILY: I know. It’s so bad, because his sexy scenes aren’t even sexy [laughs].

SALLY: They’re not.

EMILY: You know? Like, there’s a way to write about someone biting your neck in a way that is sensual.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But no. It’s like, that was unpleasant for all parties.

SALLY: Me, especially.

EMILY: Me, especially, the reader.

SALLY: I would like to file damages.

EMILY: Ugh. Anyway, so Rand wakes up and who should be in his room but Aviendha? And she’s like, “Aw, hey. Just so you know, the Wise Ones monitor your dreams.” And he’s like, “Great, thank you. Big Brother is always watching.”

SALLY: And they just saw that weird sex dream.

EMILY: Oooh. Yuck.

SALLY: “I can never dream again.”

EMILY: He’s like, “Yucko. I guess I have to stay away for the rest of my life. That’s horrifying.” Um, then there’s like – he hears something and he goes out and it’s a drag – Draghkar.

SALLY: Drag car.

EMILY: Drag car [laughs].

SALLY: It’s a drag. Car.

EMILY: Wheee! Who has already eaten one of the Wise Ones.

SALLY: One of the *gai* – oh, that’s right.

EMILY: Well, and one of the *gai’shain*, I think.

SALLY: I forgot about the Wise One.

EMILY: And the Wise One who, you know, was irrelevant because we never mentioned her because we knew she would [laughing] die in this chapter. Um, but so Rand’s like, “Hello. Alarm. We’re being attacked again. For the 19th time, because you haven’t – you can’t spend more than two weeks with me without getting attacked. That’s the pattern.”

SALLY: [laughs] It is the titular Pattern.

EMILY: Fucking literally, because he last got attacked 11 days ago. Before that he got attacked real good at the Stone of Tear. With all those Trolloc invasions. Yeah, I’m just saying. He gets attacked every two weeks.

SALLY: That sucks. What a pattern.

EMILY: Yeah, you could set your watch by it. Rhuarc’s like, “I’m ready.”

SALLY: “It’s been two weeks.”

EMILY: “It’s been two weeks.” It’s like your period. You have a – [laughing] you have an attack tracking app.

SALLY: [laughs] [singsong voice] When are the Trollocs coming?

EMILY: When are the Trollocs coming? Um.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Sounds like a terrible metaphor for your period. Like, “Oh my god are the Trollocs here.”

EMILY: [crosstalk] – The bloodshed.

SALLY: Are the Trollocs here?

EMILY: Are the Trollocs here? I’m gonna mess with my app to see –

SALLY: If it can ask you that?

EMILY: If it can ask me that literally. Anyway, but, uh, then there's an attack. It flops over to Mat's point of view for no reason, really, except that even Robert Jordan got sick of [laughing] writing Rand's point of view. He's like, "I can't do this anymore. Let's talk about Mat." And Mat's like, "Aw, dang. I got all these memories." Is this the first time he tells? No, we were with him in the last one, too. He's like, "I can see right through this attack. It's just a distraction so they can assassinate Rand." And it's like good job, Mat.

SALLY: Yeah, and then one of the Maidens is like [valley girl voice], "Are you a general?" And it's like, it doesn't take a fucking genius to –

EMILY: It doesn't take a genius to...

SALLY: There's like four Trollocs.

EMILY: I know. There's four Trollocs and like, I don't know, the goddamn president is sleeping in the other room. Yeah. Yeah, Mat. This isn't like – you're not really displaying your strategic prowess, yet.

SALLY: [laughs] Yet. It will come.

EMILY: Yet.

SALLY: Like, when you decide you need to kill Couladin [laughs].

EMILY: [laughs] Mat's like, "It was an accident! I just killed him. It just happened."

SALLY: I love Mat so much.

EMILY: Um.

SALLY: And his accidental murder of Couladin [laughs].

EMILY: Yeah, but Rand's like, "Where's Couladin?" And Rhuarc's like, "He peaced out literally fucking nine hours ago." And Rand's like, "Oh my god we have to leave now then to follow him. Because I don't want him to be in the place – or – the golden bowl before me. Because I'm competitive.

SALLY: Yeah, and there's a whole thing about how Rand can't show up before any of the chiefs, because then he'll dishonor the ones who aren't there yet.

EMILY: Yeah, so he's got to, like, according to Rhuarc, time it so that everyone can arrive and then he, um, shows up right away so that no one has to wait too long. But Rand is like, "I don't give a fuck." Which will come back to bite him, I guess, because then the clans who did not make it...I can't remember. I feel like some of them side with Couladin.

SALLY: Yeah, I think so too.

EMILY: Because they're like, "You fucking meanie. Didn't even..."

SALLY: [laughs] "You're a *bully*."

EMILY: "You didn't let us get to the party you just started..."

SALLY: "You didn't let us get to the golden bowl."

EMILY: "...eating the cake."

SALLY: So rude.

EMILY: Ugh.

SALLY: I wish we had a cake.

EMILY: Oh, I'm sorry. Do you want me to make one?

SALLY: That's okay.

EMILY: Okay, we have to go now. Sorry for the low energy. We're both tired. We promise to ramp up the energy for our –

SALLY: One hundredth episode!

EMILY: One hundred aniverse –

SALLY: Oh my god.

EMILY: One hundredth episode slash two-year anniversary. Man, can you imagine if we'd been doing this podcast for a hundred years.

SALLY: I'd be –

EMILY: We could have with the length of –

SALLY: It would explain how tired I am.

EMILY: This dang series.

SALLY: We're almost done with Book 4.

EMILY: I know, seriously.

SALLY: Then we get to do Book 5, which I love.

EMILY: Book 5 is legendary.

SALLY: It's just fun. Like, Elayne and Nynaeve are in a circus [laughs] for the whole book.

EMILY: Perrin is not there. Is fucking great.

SALLY: Mat meets Talmanes.

EMILY: Aviendha have igloo sex, which is atrocious, but also hilarious.

SALLY: But also if you take out the fact that you have to read about it, it's very funny. That they just run through a portal because A – because Rand sees her naked.

EMILY: Aviendha's like, "NO!" And invents traveling.

SALLY: [laughing] Yeah.

EMILY: Reading these early books is always so buck wild because I have to remind myself that traveling doesn't exist yet.

SALLY: And you're like, "Why am I on the road with these people for two weeks."

EMILY: I know. Oh my god, eleven days? Can't they just teleport there? And it's like, "No, they _"

SALLY: Aviendha hasn't mortified herself into inventing teleportation yet.

EMILY: It's gonna be another two weeks or whatever before – I mean another two books.

SALLY: Anyway [sighs], Book 5 is fun. Then there are fucking telescopes, which I'm very excited to talk about. Big mirrors.

EMILY: Yeah, that's a great, great battle.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Okay. Thank you to Glynna Mackenzie for our theme song. Thank you for listening. Thank you in advance for buying our stickers, which we just put in our first order for. We got the proofs already. We really like them. Sally's got them on her, um.

SALLY: [fake British accent] My water bottle.

EMILY: [fake British accent] Water bottle. I don't have a water bottle or I would have them on mine, but, as everyone knows, I don't drink water. [laughs] Um.

SALLY: You could put them on a Diet Coke bottle, you would just throw them away.

EMILY: Just leave – reuse that Diet Coke bottle every time.

SALLY: Gross!

EMILY: Just pour –

SALLY: Ugh. [laughing] Disgusting.

EMILY: Horrifying.

SALLY: We could really test the durability of the stickers, though, if that was the case.

EMILY: Yeah, I guess that's true.

SALLY: Yeah, thank you in advance for buying them.

EMILY: That's not to pressure you to buy them. It's just, we know some of you will. [laughs]
And thanks.

SALLY: Yay!

EMILY: We're excited about it.

SALLY: Um, next week is our hundredth episode. We'll figure out something fun to do.

EMILY: I know. I've been thinking about it. If you have any suggestions, this is your last chance to air them.

SALLY: You have probably today [laughs].

EMILY: Today.

SALLY: Today or tomorrow.

EMILY: And then we're recording it.

SALLY: And then – we usually record on Mondays or Tuesdays, so.

EMILY: Yep, so good luck.

SALLY: God – may God speed you.

EMILY: DM us immediately.

SALLY: Immediately. Listen to this and be like, “I have countless ideas. I have to tell them.”

EMILY: Okay. Uh, that’s the end of the episode. Oh my god. I’m so fucking tired. Do you have a sign off?

SALLY: I have some listener ones.

EMILY: Ooh.

SALLY: Let’s pull one up. Okay! This one comes from Gavin. Hi, Gavin. Um, I also need you to know that before I wrote this – before we read this, that I read this and it absolutely just sent me discovering that you were six foot three [laughs]. Because, I don’t know why, I just don’t imagine our listeners in the physical realm very often.

EMILY: Like oh my god!

SALLY: And I was like, “AHHH! So tall!” I was very excited. Okay. So, like, good for you. Six-three is an excellent height.

EMILY: [laughing] Especially to Sally.

SALLY: Okay, I knew this was going to be an issue [laughs].

EMILY: You brought it up!

SALLY: Okay, I had to. Otherwise, someone else is gonna bring it up and I had to get ahead of it.

EMILY: Yeah, just claim it for yourself.

SALLY: Okay, um. “So a couple days after New Year’s I was flying from Boston back to Salt Lake.” Hey! I forgot that you’re also in Utah. Sorry you had to go to the Salt Lake airport [laughs].

EMILY: Yeah, especially on fucking New Year’s.

SALLY: With the, like, construction of their weird new building that looks [laughing] so much nicer than the rest of the airport.

EMILY: “Hey, fuck you peasants that still have to be in this building.”

SALLY: Okay, um. “I hate flying. It’s horrible. I’m six foot three so I don’t fit on planes. I have to sit straight as a board and I’m still wedged between the seat in front of me and my own seat. Then I had a middle seat on top of that. All in all, not great. The guy to my right was really chill. He was watching *Goblet of Fire* on the little seatback thing. What do you call those by the way? [laughing] Although, I’m not the biggest supporter of *Goblet of Fire*.”

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: [laughing] I love that caveat.

SALLY: [laughs] Um. “But to my left in the aisle seat was this eight-year-old kid. Not a parent in sight. My first question is what kind of person inflicts their child on the rest of the world like this? If there’s an anti-Christ, it was this child.”

EMILY: Nooooo.

SALLY: “He started by taking off his socks and shoes, [laughing] then went cross-legged, pressing his foot against me.” [still laughing] I would have thrown the kid off the plane.

EMILY: I know. That’s disgusting. [gagging noises] I hate feet! [laughing] That’s so nasty.

SALLY: Um. “I tried to scootch away, but, like I said, middle seat. Being a person who’s not great at advocating for themselves, I tried to signal with, like, my gaze that I did not appreciate his nasty foot, but to no avail. Halfway through the flight, the kid’s still cross-legged. Um, he started watching a movie on his phone. I expected maybe [laughing hard] *Star Wars* or *Pirates of the Caribbean*, but no, he was watching the mother fucking *Wolf of Wall Street*.”

EMILY: WHAT?

SALLY: [laughing] “Once again, an eight-year-old child.”

EMILY: NO!

SALLY: [laughing hard]

EMILY: [laughing] WHAT?

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: Is this one of the *Trump children*? Snake. No social decorum.

SALLY: [laughing] “If you’ve seen the film, you probably remember the scene of DiCaprio and Robbie on a bed of money. Well, evidently this kid remembered that scene too. After watching the first twenty minutes or so, he scrubbed ahead to that scene in the movie, still cross-legged in the airplane seat. Now, comes – now comes the horrible part.”

EMILY: That’s not! Oh my god I’m so nervous.

SALLY: “Luckily not as horrible as what you’d expect, but pretty bad. After the scene ended he rewound and watched it again, then again, [laughing], then again. This went on for about twenty minutes. The guy sitting to my right noticed and we had one of those telepathic conversations on whether or not to say something. In retrospective, we probably should have. The kicker is that when I went to get my luggage, I saw the kid go out to his mom who’d been waiting for him at the airport. The guy who was sitting next to me was standing by the baggage claim, had the biggest grimace I’ve ever seen. All in all, the worst flight of my life.” Yeah, I would say so.

EMILY: I’m so overwhelmed by this.

SALLY: [laughs] I assume if –

EMILY: You can’t make any assumptions.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: What? This kid is just, like, fucking, an air criminal? Like just flying, causing chaos? He’s like, “Gotta go back to your mom. After spending Christmas with your other parent or grandparents or something.” And he’s like, “Now seems like a great time to watch soft porn in public.” [high pitch voice] Surrounded by adults?!

SALLY: Like, oh my Christ. I’m sorry that you were [laughs] emotionally abused on your flight. And physically with a child’s foot.

EMILY: [shuddering noises] Like, dirty.

SALLY: And then you had to come back to Salt Lake City.

EMILY: Partly it makes me feel dirty to thin of Leonardo DiCaprio and Margot Robbie’s simulating sex. Because he’s like, what? Ninety? And she’s, like, nineteen at the time? Leonardo DiCaprio is so fugly and nasty.

SALLY: [laughing] Okay.

EMILY: And that’s my two cents! Thanks, Gavin.

SALLY: Thanks, Gavin. You’re such a unit. I’m happy you’re so tall. That’s very exciting for you. And I’m glad you survived that flight, because I would have not been able to keep my mouth shut if a child started *Wolf of Wall Street* next to me. I think I would have just started crying.

EMILY: I don’t know what I would have done. I wouldn’t have known what to do. I probably would have just let him.

SALLY: Snatch the phone.

EMILY: I'm like, can't be responsible for some other person's parenting choices, you know?

SALLY: That's true. Well, I feel like his parents don't know, you know?

EMILY: I feel like his parents probably don't know either. But, again, that's like their problem. Like, what do you do? Come up to the mom and be like, "Hey, just so you know, your kid was watching – fully just watching sex scenes."

SALLY: "On the airplane."

EMILY: "On the airplane. On repeat. Clearly he's going through some shit." And then she's like, "Oh, yeah. That's – we let him watch a sex scene every night before bedtime."

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Like, it's his good night story.

SALLY: You can have one sex scene, as a treat.

EMILY: [laughs, shuddering noises] I'm gonna be shuddering all night. Gross.

SALLY: Thank you, Gavin, that was such a good sign off [laughing].

EMILY: Thanks. [laughing] Have a good week. Don't do war crimes.