



Episode 130: Sisters or Coworkers, No In Between

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Sally: Everybody Hates Rand is a Wheel of Time podcast that will contain spoilers for all 14 books. So if you're anti-spoiler, pause this, read all 14 books, and come back. We'll be here. Waiting.

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

(theme song by Glynna MacKenzie plays)

Sally: Guess what time it is, people.

Emily: Guess what time it is. Cronch time.

Sally: Um --

Emily: Cookie cronch.

Sally: This is Everybody Hates Rand.

Emily: (laugh) I was gonna get there.

Sally: Your friendly neighborhood Wheel of Time podcast. I wasn't entirely positive Emily was going to remember to do it. (laugh) So anyway.

Emily: It was on my -- my -- ahh!

Sally: Your mental to-do list?

Emily: Yeah, my mental to-do list. Yeah, I'm Emily. That's Sally. (laugh)

Sally: I'm Sally. (laugh)

Emily: We -- can -- do -- it. Yes, we can. OK. Like we already complained about, two very long chapters. Picking up right where we left off. The first one is titled "To Boan -- Boannda"?

Sally: Sure. Yeah, I was calling it Boannda, but it's probably, like, Boan'nda.

Emily: Boan'nda.

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: With a, like, an apostrophe in there somewhere. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Yeah.

Emily: Robert Jordan, you stupid asshole.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Um, yeah, it's -- uh, I think almost the entire chapter takes place on the ship, and it's a rare, uh, montage chapter, I guess is the best way to put it. Usually in chapters where -- usually Robert Jordan's chapters revolve around -- here's an event that happens --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Or a discussion that takes place. Whereas this one is just kind of like, they're on the boat for five -- to seven days?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Something like that.

Sally: Week-ish.

Emily: And it's just, like, sort of a rundown of everyone's feelings and what's going on and the various small activities they're doing. They're --

Sally: Mm-hmm. Everyone has a lot of feelings.

Emily: Everyone has so many feelings.

Sally: Especially Nynaeve.

Emily: And it's not great to have feelings on a boat.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Because it's a small space.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And most of the time when you're on a boat, you already want to throw up. I'm reading *Death on the Nile*, a Poirot mystery. Um, because I'm a sucker for those Kenneth Branagh --

Sally: Yeah ...

Emily: Poirot movies. I don't know why. I just --

Sally: I like them too.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Kenneth Branagh's a good Poirot casting. Is it coming out soon?

Emily: I don't remember when exactly it's coming out. But yeah. Soon -- I think, also, things have been pushed around and back.

Sally: Oh, I mean, yeah, of course.

Emily: Whatever.

Sally: I mean, like Emily and I were talking about yesterday, I know Agatha Christie is a slightly problematic character because she was writing books in the, what, early 1900s?

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: So she is a little racist. (laugh)

Emily: I wouldn't say a little. (laugh)

Sally: She's a lot racist.

Emily: She's a lot racist. And everyone's kind of sexist, so it's all just sort of --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You know.

Sally: But there is something just, like, that hits right in the serotonin receptors about Poirot just solving mysteries.

Emily: I like Poirot as a detective because he's quirky and he's not, um, sexualized in the way that most, quote unquote, famous detective figures are.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, it was so weird watching "Sherlock" on BBC and them trying to make him sexy in some way.

Sally: Oh. (laugh) Yeah.

Emily: And I'm not saying, like, Sherlock Holmes can't have a vibrant and exciting sex life --

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: And himself -- himself be sexually attractive to people. I'm just saying the BBC intentionally was like, "We're going to make him sexyTM."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it was like, "Eugh. No." I just want Poirot, a, like, Belgian man in his sixties or whatever --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: With infamously terrible mustaches --

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: Just, like, no one's gonna wanna fuck this gentleman.

Sally: Everyone's like, OK, no.

Emily: He's so delightful.

Sally: No, I am currently working my way through the complete Sherlock Holmes -- we're having a very, like, famous detective period in the EHR headquarters. Um, and just, like, I find Sherlock Holmes, as presented by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, like, very charming and funny and delightful.

Emily: He's great. He's just an eccentric --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Little man.

Sally: Just, like, an odd little man who's like, "This is my friend, John Watson. I'm in love with him. Nobody talk about it."

Emily: Wheee.

Sally: “But I’m just going to be, like, delightful and do my thing.” And then in every adaptation, they’re like, “Don’t you want to bone Sherlock Holmes?” And I’m like, not particularly.

Emily: Not really. I feel like --

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: The -- I mean, the man sees everything, right?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That’s, like, the whole point.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Imagine being, like, and now I’m gonna get naked in front of this dude.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You’d be like, don’t look at me.

Sally: (laugh) Yeah.

Emily: Don’t speak to me. I don’t want to know your weird perceptions --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Of me. Already, the mortifying ordeal of being known is present.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And with Sherlock Holmes it’s just so much more present.

Sally: Yeah. They’ll be like -- like, every story starts out basically with him being like, “Oh, Watson, I know exactly what you’re thinking,” and Watson’s like, “How the fuck do you know exactly what I’m thinking?” (laugh)

Emily: Watson’s like, “Wot?” It’s like magic every time for Watson.

Sally: Yeah, it’s like, wot? I know. They’re very charming.

Emily: You have to love him for that.

Sally: Yeah. Watson’s just a little bit of a himbo. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) We veered off the topic. The point is that most of Death on the Nile takes place on, like, a boat --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That's going up and down the Nile, obviously. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Shock -- what?

Emily: And all of my visual references for the inside of the boat are, like, the cruise ship that we were on.

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: So it's, like, really bizarre. 'Cause it's just like, "Here's the smoking room," and I'm like, "Ah, yes, the theater, where we watched Hobbs and Shaw."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So they're on the boat. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) They are indeed on a boat because Nynaeve does not let us forget that they are on a boat.

Emily: Nynaeve's like, "We're on a boat," constantly. Every other word is like, "We are on a boat."

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: It's mostly to do with, like, the various dynamics taking place. Nynaeve is like, "This boat is full of refugees. There's no room for the refugees, so we do force Captain Neres --" Neres, whatever. Neres? Neres is what I'm gonna go with. (laugh) They force Captain Neres, who is very transparently a smuggler, to dispose of a lot of his cargo to make room for the people. Nynaeve thinks this is totally reasonable because smuggling is against the law anyway. Other various characters are like, "I mean, we don't really have a right to just revoke this dude's livelihood."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Smuggling is probably not a totally victimless crime, but I mean, he's not, like, a serial murderer transporting --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Bodies.

Sally: Also, like, I feel like smuggling in the time of monarchy just means stealing things from kings and queens and selling them to other people, so.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Like, so many of the Robin Hood stories involve Robin Hood and his outlaws, like, shooting, quote unquote, the king's deer --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Because just swathes of land were, like, owned by the king --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So the king could come and hunt on them wherever.

Sally: Yeah, so I feel like smuggling -- but also, it's very annoying 'cause Nyaneve is like, "Elayne is so obsessed with the law," and then she's like, "Who cares about this man because he's a criminal." It's like, what's your --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Position here, Nynaeve?

Emily: It's -- I mean, it's classic Nynaeve. There is no position. It's whatever --

Sally: That's true. Whatever she needs at the moment.

Emily: Or what Robert Jordan needs from her at the moment. Um, we are also told that the captain hates women.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) This is not explained to us, like, what his vendetta is --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He's just a really sexist, I guess, misogynist dude. And Nyaneve is, like, bewildered by this. She's like, "I have never met a man who truly did not like women." And I'm like, every man you have ever spoken to in this series, Nynaeve, has exhibited either subliminal, um, misogyny, or Robert Jordan just, like, did not know how to write -- I mean, we already know this. We've trod this ground before. Robert Jordan did not know how to write people who have genuine, any type of admiration or respect for each other, so everyone comes across as disliking each other.

Sally: Yeah. Well, in this thing, when she's describing the captain's, like, hatred of women, she's like, "He's always talking about how women get in the way, and they're, like, all the source of all his problems," and I'm like, Thom has literally said that to you, like, no fewer than, like, twenty times, at least. So, like, what are you talking about? (laugh)

Emily: Yeah, it's bizarre.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Every time. Nynaeve is constantly like, "Men," and men are constantly like, "Women."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And they usually do this -- not usually -- they often do this in front of the opposite gender, so it's like --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: What behaviors exactly is he exhibiting that --

Sally: Yeah, is he, like, out here spitting in your face? Like, what are you talking about? It's very strange.

Emily: To me, it sounds like he's just an unpleasant dude.

Sally: Yeah. Just, like, an unpleasant bastard.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: But also, like, you barged your way onto his ship, demanded that he take you and all of your passengers for whatever you were going to pay him, threw all his shit in the river, kicked him out of his room and then bully him on the daily. So if he's unpleasant to you, perhaps there is a reason.

Emily: I know. It's so buck wild.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um. And -- oh, there was something else I was going to say about ...

Sally: Captain Nero?

Emily: Yeah, Nero. Ha ha ha ha ha. A thousand leagues under the sea ... Oh, Nynaeve, like, mentions that he's married and has kids at home as though that is some sort of, like, contradiction --

Sally: (laugh) Yeah.

Emily: To men being huge misogynists. Guys. It's not.

Sally: Every married man I know is a huge -- he'll be like, "Ugh, the old ball and chain, right?"

Emily: Mwa ha.

Sally: But, to me, there's a way in this -- which this feels like this is supposed to be, like, he's a closeted gay man kind of joke.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Like, there's kind of that undertone, where, like, he hates women because he doesn't want to fuck women.

Emily: Right.

Sally: And he's, like -- been forced to get married and have children. And so, like, there's nothing in the text to support that reading necessarily other than just, like, a vibe that I get.

Emily: I mean, I think what supports the reading is that this was written in the nineties, when the understanding -- not the understanding -- the straight people's understanding because they did not bother to educate themselves or actually talk to gay people -- was, oh, well, lesbian women hate men, and gay men hate women.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And it's like, that's obviously not the case. And also, straight men hate women more than any gay man I've ever met.

Sally: Yeah. Nobody hates women more than straight men.

Emily: Seriously.

Sally: Straight white men in particular.

Emily: But the whole, like, set-up for this is that then Nynaeve and Elayne and Birgitte, rather than enforce this guy's beliefs about the weaknesses and foibles of women, have to mock get along, which is -- like, there's so many layers there to parse, and they're all bad.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: It's like Robert Jordan saying, "See, men can influence women to behave a certain way," and "Women are exactly as the sexist men believe them to be; they only ever act differently to prove men wrong." And it's like, what?

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: Oh my God.

Sally: Yeah. It's extremely toxic.

Emily: Like -- (laugh) Nynaeve, Elayne, and Birgitte are only acting this way because you wrote them to act this way, Robert Jordan.

Sally: Yeah. It's --

Emily: As we've already discussed, no human person would ever act like this.

Sally: Like, I just can't stress enough -- like, probably 95 percent of my relationships in my life, either professional or personal, are with women.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: And I'm literally never like, "I'm going to pretend to get along with this woman so that a man doesn't see us fighting." It is that I genuinely get along with most of the women in my social circles.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Otherwise they wouldn't be in my social circles.

Emily: Yeah. (sigh)

Sally: It's just -- it's just a very strange -- like, we just keep harping on, like, Nynaeve and Elayne very obviously do not get along.

Emily: Yeah, we see them in this chapter -- they start going to Tel'aran'rhiod. First, in the only at all touching moment of the entire chapter, Nynaeve goes in by herself and is extremely frightened and traumatized the entire time, and when she gets back, she kind of has a breakdown.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And, um, the women -- Elayne and Birgitte comfort her and encourage her, and then Elayne's like, "Why don't I go in with you?" Which is, in fact, a very good representation of how women actually behave. How people, I hope, actually behave with their friends.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um. But so Elayne and Nynaeve start going into Tel'aran'rhiod together, because they do, in fact, have multiple ter'angreal. I'm not quite sure why they haven't been doing this the whole time.

Sally: I know; it's very odd.

Emily: Um, and they start, like -- Elayne's like, "Let's go look at the Royal Palace," and Nynaeve's like, "Let's go look at the Two Rivers," and Nynaeve talks about how, "Oh, I begin to understand Elayne a little bit better now." And it's like, how has it taken you guys this long to reach this level of understanding?

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Like, they have been together for literally, like, months at this point. And it's like, pretty much the first thing you do when you're forced to be with someone for long periods of time is really fight to establish common ground.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And that's like, let's get into -- not like, let's get into each other's tragic backstories, but, like, where are you from? It's like the classic first date scenario. Do you have siblings? Oh, I have siblings; I know what that's like.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Common ground. You know? So. Just -- what?

Sally: Yeah, it's just very odd. Especially -- Nynaeve says, when they're walking through the palace in Camelyn, she's like, "Of course Elayne believes that the world should revolve around her because she grew up in a place where the world literally did revolve around her, and it's like, Nynaeve, how did it take you this long to come to that understanding of a princess? Like, that's - - like, Elayne is literally going to be the leader of this country. Of course everything was, like, catered to her every whim. Like, what? Like, I'm --

Emily: Yeah, one assumes the reverse is happening in Elayne's point of view -- when they visit the Two Rivers, is like, "Oh, of course Nynaeve is stingy with money. This place has no money." Like --

Sally: Yeah, and like, of course Nynaeve is bossy; she was basically, like, the spiritual leader of this --

Emily: The boss.

Sally: City. Or, this little town. So it's just like -- it's just this, like, very confusing -- like, I could see it from Elayne's perspective, being like, "I don't understand how poor people work," but the fact that Nynaeve is just like -- this isn't an excuse for Elayne's behavior, of course, but that Nynaeve just can't fathom how rich people work. Very odd.

Emily: Yeah, especially because she's spent time in the Stone of Tear. She's spent time with a huge variety of different people in the White Tower.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: She's spent time in Shienar. Like, in the -- not, I think, the royal household, but in a nobleman's house.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So, yeah, it's sort of, like, the break in empathy here is bizarre, especially considering that pages earlier, we had Nynaeve set up as this, like, weird Khaleesi figure with all the dirty refugees trying to grab her hem --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Because oh, man, she paid their passage.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which -- ugh. I hate when that happens.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That's such a horrible image. Of course Nynaeve is, like, embarrassed by it and like, "Get away from me," but I'm like, why does this have to be part of the -- it just feels like female characters are often positioned where they get to save masses of people.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And this whole chapter honestly feels like Robert Jordan backtracking from how terrible everything was in the last chapter in terms of violence and them starting a literal -- literal civil war.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: He's like, "OK, now that made them look bad. But hey, look, they do help poor people. They're very generous. Like, come on. They're the good guys."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I'm like, buddy, I wasn't doubting that they are the, quote unquote, good guys.

Sally: Yeah. But that doesn't mean they're actually good people.

Emily: Yeah. I certainly did not think that you handled that situation with any sort of nuance.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: But, you know, at this point in my life I'm more willing to blame the authors than the characters.

Sally: Yeah, I mean, like -- it's just -- I think the situation would have been so drastically different if, like, any of our male leads were in that situation, where there, like, would not be the narrative compulsion --

Emily: Mm.

Sally: Like, maybe for, like -- I could see it for, like, Rand and Perrin, being, like, guilt-ridden, but I feel like there would not be the literal narrative compulsion for them to, like, gather masses of children onto a boat. Like, there's very much, like, Nynaeve as mother figure --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Where this has to happen.

Emily: Yeah, we see almost a parallel of this scene with, like, Mat yeeting himself onto a riverboat in the dead of night in Tar Valon and then, like, he exits a few days later with Thom and immediately runs into a bunch of refugees, and Mat's just, like, throwing gold at them.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: In, like, a, "Don't look at me," type gruff way.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's like, yeah, the, just, framing of heroism as gendered in very specific ways is troubling.

Sally: Yeah. And I also, like, recently had a really good conversation with one of my friends about, like, how we don't, as a society, I think -- no, this isn't what I'm trying to say. It's just like the ways in which pity is actually a much more destructive emotion than we give it credit for.

Emily: Mm.

Sally: Where people are like, "Oh, I don't want you to pity me," and everyone's like, "Wow, they're just, like, too proud and stuff," and it's like, I can understand not wanting to be pitied, but it's because when you look at people who have, quote unquote, come down in the world, who are poor or homeless or a refugee, you're like, "Ooh, I have to feel pity for that person so I recognize that I am not that person."

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And so it's just this, like, very gross scenario in which Nynaeve and Elayne have just been fighting about money, have just been fighting about politics, and then it's like, oh, don't worry, they're gonna feel bad for a lot of women and children, and it'll be okay.

Emily: Yeah, pity is essentially a psychological distancing technique.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: It's not really a creation of empathy. Certainly you feel pity when you have empathy, but it doesn't actually constitute action.

Sally: Yeah, like, 'cause having actual empathy for this situation would've been Nynaeve being like, "Maybe I shouldn't put myself at the mercy of a man who is holding this entire country hostage."

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Like, maybe I should not insert myself into this political hotspot. That would've been empathy for the people of, um, Samara.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Y'know, like, having an intelligent holistic response to the political situation as opposed to being like, "Ooh, we did a bad, why don't we help these twenty people in particular?"

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And, like, I'm not saying it was bad of them to help them.

Emily: Yeah, of course.

Sally: Just, like, narratively, is a really clunky and unsuccessful redemption for Nynaeve and Elayne.

Emily: Yeah. Um, they meet three women on the boat. Uhh. One is Marigan, who we will find out is Moghedien in disguise and is probably indicative by the fact that she's like, "These are my two sons," and they are silent.

Sally: They are horrified of her.

Emily: Yeah, they're terrified of her, children.

Sally: Like, who are these children?

Emily: Yeah, where -- where'd she find them?

Sally: Yeah, did she just literally steal someone's two children?

Emily: I mean, I wouldn't put it past her.

Sally: I mean, I'm sure there was a lot of orphans created in this civil war that we started.

Emily: And she was like, "Come with me."

Sally: And these kids are like, "No-o-o-o."

Emily: "No. What? I hate you."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, we meet Nicola, who -- I've got her Wiki up because for some reason Nicola and Areina -- Areina -- come back constantly to do nothing.

Sally: What?!

Emily: I know. Classic Robert Jordan characters. The way they're built up when we -- when the girls are finally reunited with Min -- Min's like, "I've seen a bunch of auras around these three women that you brought with you and that they are, quote unquote, trouble." Of course, Moghedien slash Marigan manifests this immediately by the end of the book.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: But as with many of Min's viewings, all we see with Nicola and Areina is two random girls who kind of don't have a great moral center who are just sort of running around causing very minor amounts of trouble, and it's like, you keep waiting for the other shoe to drop.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: And, like, is one of these girls gonna be a Darkfriend? Is one of these girls gonna do something so stupid that it actually endangers someone? No.

Sally: Hmm.

Emily: Just sort of there. They're mostly in cahoots. Nicola and Areina -- uh, Nicola is the one who can channel. She also has, uh, the Talent to do Foretelling.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: Which, I think, she does in the next book, maybe.

Sally: I can't remember.

Emily: I feel like Mat witnesses it or something. I dunno. Um. But, she -- they both are, like, "Let's do blackmail." They try and blackmail Egg for something. I can't even remember what. Um, then they run away from the Aes Sedai rebel camp to the White Tower, where they give some information, um -- I guess they do give up the plan that Egwene -- Egwene? -- Egg. Help.

Sally: Egwene.

Emily: Egwene.

Sally: Egg-wayne?

Emily: They give up the plan that the rebel Aes Sedai have, uh, to infiltrate the Tower, and so that sort of, you know, ends up with Egg getting captured. But again, it's like, that's not quite enough for them to justify their position in the plot this early on, I guess.

Sally: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Emily: There's just, as we've said many times with the various Aes Sedai, there are too many characters, so that you're left feeling dissatisfied by all of them --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: In a weird way.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Uh, but, yeah. Nicola will eventually die in book ... twelve, I wanna say?

Sally: RIP.

Emily: In, just, some battle. Areina -- I shouldn't be calling her Arenia because it turns out the "i" is before the "n" --

Sally: What?

Emily: I was thinking it was A-r-e-n-i-a.

Sally: Oh.

Emily: But it's A-r-e-i-n-a.

Sally: That's too many vowels.

Emily: Areina. Whatever. She is not a channeler. She ends up sort of mirroring Birgitte and being like, I can be a bossy female lady Warder. She doesn't actually become a Warder, but she hangs out enough with Nicola. She does essentially the same things and, um -- what? According to the Wiki, Nicola did bond Areina as a Warder, though illegally. This is according to the Wheel of Time Companion.

Sally: Oh.

Emily: Which is, I know, technically canon, but my opinion is that if it's not in the text, it's irrelevant.

Sally: I would concur.

Emily: But presumably because Nicola dies, Areina also dies, since -- if she is, in fact, bonded as her Warder. But again, her place in the plot is so incredibly unjustified that we don't -- it's like those noble guys that we talked about.

Sally: (laugh) Yeah.

Emily: They don't -- their deaths aren't even mentioned.

Sally: I've already forgot about those guys.

Emily: Exactly!

Sally: Where they're like, "Eh, maybe he died."

Emily: Who's to say? So anyway, these three women, uh, develop an attachment to our ladies and eventually, when they disembark to get to Salidar, are like, "We're coming with you." And there's kind of, like, a cut scene where they're like, "What's the worst that can happen?" and then cut to --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Being interrogated by a bunch of Aes Sedai who are like, "What the fuck have you been doing?"

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And Elayne and Nynaeve are like, "Our best?" (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) They haven't.

Emily: They haven't, though. Trust me.

Sally: Sheriam hands them a little "You Tried" sticker.

Emily: "You Tried." Gold star. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Yeah.

Emily: Uh, the Aes Sedai are, as usual, sort of opaquely angry about everything.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: It's hard to identify what, exactly, the problem is. It is, in fact, all Siuan's fault.

Sally: As a lot of things are.

Emily: I mean, yeah. Siuan gets off pretty, uh, scott-free here. Though the Aes Sedai are like, "How dare you send a bunch of children out?" and you're like, ah, finally.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: She's finally gonna get it.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And then they're like -- Siuan's like, "First of all, I had the authority at that point in my life. Second of all, I just felt like I had to." And they're like, "Good argument. Reasonable enough." And I'm like, what?!

Sally: Yeah. Well, and it, like -- you get so close, because Siuan's like, "When the boat is sinking, you use whatever to plug the hole," and someone's like, "Would you use a baby to plug the hole?"

Emily: Yeah.

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

Emily: She's like --

Sally: And they're like, "OK, well, you feel bad enough or whatever."

Emily: "Well, we can't really punish you 'cause you've already been punished enough by being stilled." And it's like, you could kick her out.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Or something.

Sally: You could -- like, you should punish her for using children. She basically was like, "Child soldiers?"

Emily: Yeah, or just be like, "Maybe this isn't the type of woman we want with our organization" -- like, I mean, this is an unethical organization. That is very obvious.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: There's -- nobody cares about the lives of children or anyone else, despite the fact that they're ladies. And children matter to ladies. Even to Nynaeve, who purportedly doesn't care for children.

Sally: Oh, yeah, and she's like, "I was caring for a boy 'cause his eyes look like Lan's eyes," and I'm like, this is nasty.

Emily: I know. It is so nasty. Like, the -- it just, like, propagates the idea that, like, children as extensions of their parents. That's their only value.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: It's like, children are valuable in and of themselves because they're people. Just like you're a people. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Shocking.

Sally: It's so gross.

Emily: Blegh. Um. But the long and short of it is that Elayne and Nynaeve tell the whole story, except what actually happened with Birgitte and, like, I dunno, a couple other things.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: But they get all of their money confiscated, which seems pretty rude.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Considering, like, I don't know, they earned it.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But the Aes Sedai are like, "This will help us fund our civil war. Our papal schism." And it's like, OK, great. Whatever.

Sally: Yeah, sure. Just confiscate -- just steal my money for your war. And they're like, "It will also feed people," and I'm like, I don't believe that.

Emily: I don't really think it will. I think it will, like, make weapons or something.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And all their, like, ter'angreal and things get confiscated. The Aes Sedai, of course, are like, "You immediately have to start teaching us how to use ter'angreal," which, predictably, the Wise Ones will not be thrilled about. It's like, couldn't you have kept that one back?

Sally: Tel'aran'rhiod, you mean?

Emily: Yeah. What did I say?

Sally: Ter'angreal.

Emily: Ter'angreal. Yeah, they're like, "Teach us to do Tel'aran'rhiod." And I'm like, if you could keep Birgitte back -- like, the lack of foresight here is astounding --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: In a weird way. It's like, wouldn't you have, like, nailed out your story ahead of time? Been like, "These are the things we are absolutely not bringing up because we can see where they will go."

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Such as, for example, Tel'aran'rhiod. You just hand that ring ter'angreal to Thom and be like, "Hold this for me."

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: "I'll see you on the other side."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And then be like, "We don't know what these other ones do."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Boo. Boom.

Sally: Yeah. It's -- like, they're so stupid. 'Cause they're like, "we have to tell the Aes Sedai what we know about Elaida's study." And it's like, "You don't learn fuck all from Elaida's study. Why do you need to tell them?"

Emily: You learned how to get to Salidar. You could've made shit up.

Sally: Yeah, I heard something from --

Emily: That lady who drugged us.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Who was like, "I have to get you back to Elaida." That could be where you figured it out. Y'know?

Sally: Yeah. Yeah, it's just -- (laugh) very silly.

Emily: Astounding. But, uh, so the Aes Sedai are now like, "We want to learn how to do Tel'aran'rhiod. Also, what's up with this seal on the Dark One's prison that is now broken?" And they're like, "Oh, no, how many are left?" And someone's like, "Three, apparently." And I'm, like, can't keep track of them. I did Wiki --

Sally: Oh, OK.

Emily: Where they all are, what they're doing, when they actually come up in the plot.

Sally: OK. I know one's on Bayle Domon's ship for a minute.

Emily: One was on Bayle Domon's ship. OK. First, number one, is found in the Eye of the World, and it was broken when they found it.

Sally: OK. (yawn)

Emily: Then there are two floating around in, uh, the Great Hunt, which is confusing. There's the one that Bayle Domon has --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Which immediately gets confiscated by High Lord Turak.

Sally: Oh, that's right.

Emily: Then Turak already had another one.

Sally: OK.

Emily: Both of them are found by -- by Moiraine, and both of them are broken at that point.

Sally: OK.

Emily: Um, then -- pfft. Moiraine finds another one that is whole in the Stone of Tear --

Sally: OK.

Emily: And she just has that one on her person, I assume. She finds another one in Rhuidean, also has that one on her person.

Sally: OK.

Emily: There's this one that Nynaeve found at the Panarch's Palace, which, as we know now, is broken. And there is one that is given to Rand al'Thor by Mazrim Taim, presumably at the end of this book, who says a Saldaean crofter gave it to him. That one is whole. And I assume that Moiraine passed those two off to Rand before dying or that we'll see that on-screen. So then Rand is carrying around the three whole ones for the next, uhh, nine books?

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Which is pretty buck wild -- like, it's just such an -- a weird conceit to introduce this early on in the series and not drag it on a lot farther, I guess?

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Like, I guess there was a point where Robert Jordan did not realize, somehow, that he would be writing tons of books --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: In this series because the man had no head for plot or whatever. So he must have been like, "Oh, introducing all seven of them by book five and having four of them broken by book five is a reasonable pace."

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: But then of course there are nine books after this.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: In which nothing happens with the seals and then, by book fourteen, when we are told, "The seals are very, very important," we're like --

Sally: "What seals?"

Emily: What? Who?

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) And also, evidence, please?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Because I haven't really seen any, like, effects tied to the seals being broken, I guess. Like, the world seems to be getting shittier, but I haven't seen that, like, in direct correlation to the seals getting broken. There's not, like, a crisis -- there's not an earthquake every time the seals get broken.

Sally: That would be pretty funny, though.

Emily: It would be pretty funny! If they're like, "Oh, earthquake. Ah! Check the seals!"

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: "Shit." Y'know? That's just, like, a little complaint I have about that.

Sally: Yeah, it is just one of those things where you can tell that -- it's one of the very obvious things where you're like, this book series wasn't supposed to be fourteen books. 'Cause for, like, a three-book series, like, originally, or five books or six books or whatever, like, the plot point of having seven seals getting broken functions.

Emily: Yep.

Sally: Um, if you're doing it on a fourteen-book scale, you're losing a book -- a seal roughly every two books.

Emily: Which, we've already lost four by this book, so.

Sally: Yeah, so, like -- we're just -- it's too ahead of the game.

Emily: We're waaay too ahead of the curve.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Anyway. Um, so basically Nynaeve and Elayne are, like, you're going to be Accepted again. And they're both like, "What?" Like, for some reason, again, this was not conceptualized by them ahead of time.

Sally: Like, "Obviously we'll be promoted to full Aes Sedai."

Emily: Well, I mean, first of all, you frankly do not have the equipment to promote anyone to Aes Sedai --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Here in this random camp, ladies.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And second of all, have you ever had a good experience where Aes Sedai actually promoted people based on merit?

Sally: No.

Emily: No. They're the fucking worst types of bureaucrats.

Sally: Yeah, we find out Faolain or whatever her name is has been Accepted for, like, eight years.

Emily: Yeah, she was a novice for a crazy number of years and Accepted for a crazy number of years, and it's just like, becoming an Aes Sedai is based purely, it would seem, upon brown-nosing.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Like, how good are you at inserting yourself into --

Sally: Yeah, it's very deeply political.

Emily: Yeah, so it's just like, ladies, you're so stupid. But, uh, they eventually are freed, and the men are like, "Do we want to get out of here?" and they're like, "No, we have to stay, but you can take this money and go." Which, I think it would've been hilarious if they were just like, "Well, OK. See ya." (laugh)

Sally: "Bye."

Emily: "Goodbye. Have fun." Instead, they're like, "No, we can't leave you with people who are going to attempt to attack the White Tower."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “That seems like it will surely end with your deaths.” And they’re like, “No, don’t worry about it, we will be peacing out once again on another road trip one book from now.” (laugh) It’s all good. And Gareth Bryne is like, “Hey, Uno and Shienarans, do you want to, like, help train my army?” and they’re like, “Yes. Would be fab.”

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: And he’s like, “Thom, do you want to play fantasy chess with me, slash, this is code for, do you want to help me, like, unpack all the politics going on here?” and Thom’s like, “I would love nothing more.”

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: “Ex-lover of the same woman that I --”

Sally: I know.

Emily: “Am an ex-lover --” Ew. Nasty. I do think it’s hilarious that Bryne is, like, really curt with Elayne.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Elayne’s like, “Oh my God, Gareth Bryne!” and he’s like, “Hi, Elayne.” Moves on. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. (laugh) And she’s like --

Emily: “Ugh! Oh my God!”

Sally: She’s like, “We’ll deal with that later.”

Emily: She’s like, “My mom couldn’t possibly have hurt him that badly,” and I’m like, I mean, first of all, he’s simply not in a position -- you’re not in your mother’s palace anymore. He doesn’t owe you anything.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Perhaps he disliked you the entire time. Has that ever occurred to you?

Sally: ‘Cause you’re a brat.

Emily: He was just like, “I hate this girl. And I hate Gawyn. Galad, I can get on board with.”

Sally: “Yeah, Galad I can get on board with. He, unfortunately, did join a domestic terrorist organization. That’s a conversation he and I need to have next week when we get lunch.”

Emily: You win some, you lose some. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) But we're figuring it out.

Emily: I mean, Gareth Bryne is as shitty a father figure as they come. You should see when he reunites with Gawyn. Gawyn's like, "I did a bad," and Gareth Bryne is like, "Yes. But I will enable you to keep doing bads." (laugh)

Sally: All the men in this series are literal garbage except for Davram Bashere. (laugh)

Emily: I know! It's so funny when the ladies keep infiltrating the White Tower and being like, "Who is Davram Bashere --"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "And why is Elaida so upset that she cannot find him?"

Sally: And his ENTIRE army.

Emily: And Davram Bashere is like --

Sally: They're just, like, gone. (laugh)

Emily: "Ayyyyy."

Sally: (laugh) It's just, like, a whole army he's managing to hide.

Emily: I know, I love him.

Sally: It's so funny.

Emily: He's such an icon. So that's taken care of. Then Min goes off with Elayne. And Nynaeve gets pulled aside by Suan, who's like, "I want you to teach me how to use the ter -- the Tel'aran'rhiod ring," and Nynaeve's like, "OK, well, in exchange, I want to study you and Leane and Logain to, like, see if I can figure out how to Heal you guys." And Suan's like, "No, I don't wanna do that and, um, if you try and make me, then I will tell them that you've been masquerading as full Aes Sedai," and Suan -- and Nynaeve's like, "Cool, well, I will take your blackmail and return your blackmail and be like, I'll tell them that you and Leane aren't really upset with each other and are actually scheming --"

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: "Behind their backs," and they're like, "Oh, what a net we've woven." It's so boring.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Why don't you guys just help each other? Whatever. So yes, now Sivan, uh, will be learning Tel'aran'rhiod while Nynaeve learns how to Heal stilling. Great.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Meanwhile Elayne catches up with Min, is like, "What's going on with you and Rand?" I dunno. They have a stupid conversation, but Min's like, "I need to come out to you about this. I am also in love with Rand. And there's some other random women -- woman out there, and it's the three of us," and Elayne's like, "Don't worry about it because I have my good friend Aviendha watching his back." (laugh)

Sally: Meanwhile.

Emily: The dramatic irony. And Aviendha's like, "Dun dun." Um, and they're like, "You know what? At least we all feel like sisters." And I'm like --

Sally: Ew.

Emily: Feeling like sisters is the opposite of the feeling I want to have when it comes to, quote unquote, sharing a man.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I would hate that.

Sally: Yeah, it's just, like, this gets so -- sometimes so close to being, like, a healthy example of what it can be like to have multiple partners.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Like, it gets so close when they're all just, like, grappling with their jealousy and ultimately, like, coming to terms with it and, like, being like, "Yes, we can do this." So, like, it gets really close to the type of emotional maturity you need to, like, have multiple partners. And then at other times, it's just like, the emotion -- the way we're going to become emotionally mature is by pretending that we're all family. And it's like, how the fuck did you miss the mark?

Emily: I truly think that Robert Jordan cannot conceptualize of relationships between people that aren't either sexual or familial.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Or hate -- hatred-based.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: He, like, doesn't know that the friendship tier exists.

Sally: He just missed that. It's not on his Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

Emily: He's like, "OK, two girls are moderately close? They must be like sisters." And I'm like, did you know people can have intimate friendships?

Sally: No.

Emily: (laugh) Have you heard of friends?

Sally: No. Friends? (laugh) He's like Asmodean.

Emily: Asmodean: "Friends? Friends?" Has anyone ever used the word "friend" in the Wheel of Time series?

Sally: (laugh) I don't know.

Emily: Does it not exist? 'Cause come on. Oh my God.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You're either sisters or you're co-workers. There's no in between.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: I'm like, this is nuts.

Sally: It's why the men can't be friends with each other.

Emily: Exactly!

Sally: They're like, "Well, we're not sisters, and we're not coworkers."

Emily: Ahh!

Sally: "There's simply nothing left for us."

Emily: Mat's like, "I thought we were sisters, Perrin." (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Perrin's like, "Eugh. Sticky situation."

Sally: Yeah, it's just, like, very frustrating, the fact that they can't navigate this situation without having to, like, define it in these very -- pretty -- like, kind of infantilizing terms.

Emily: Yeah. Just like, "Well, sisters." And I'm like, "Icky."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: No, you're not.

Sally: You're all just fucking the same dude.

Emily: Especially because it's Elayne and Aviendha, who end up going through this, like, weird ritual, "Now we are sisters," thing --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And not Elayne and Min. Min is sort of outside of that.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's like, you all haven't spent that much time together. So stop. Anyway. That's those two chapters.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Anything else?

Sally: A lot sure does happen in these two chapters.

Emily: Yeah, I mean, it's a lot, and the sad thing is that it is setting up -- again, we're coming back to Salidar as a setting that we're going to be in for all of book six with all of the female characters and, uh, parts of book seven with Egg. But. Salidar just feels like it is dragged on for forever, because every time we visit it, we're in an insufferable character's head. Like. Nynaeve, as much as I love her, doesn't have a lot of redeeming qualities when she's surrounded by the Aes Sedai.

Sally: No.

Emily: It's like, here's the worst possible sides of Nynaeve.

Sally: Yep.

Emily: Same with Elayne. And everyone.

Sally: Does Elayne have a good side?

Emily: No.

Sally: (laugh) Hi, Elayne.

Emily: I mean, Elayne does have a pretty funny line here, where that bully lady comes up to them --

Sally: Oh, yeah.

Emily: And Elayne is like, “Are you still souring milk for a hobby?” (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. (laugh) That was pretty good.

Emily: I was like, that is a good one-liner.

Sally: Yeah, Elayne is great as, like, the background character. Like, in book two when the, um -
- (laugh) Seanchan woman, like -- the, um --

Emily: Oh.

Sally: Oh my God, I can’t think of the terms.

Emily: Yeah. When the damane gets freed --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Elayne’s like --

Sally: Punches the lady.

Emily: “Good for you!”

Sally: And she’s like, “Good for you!” Like, she’s -- can be very funny. But --

Emily: But most of the time, we just hate her.

Sally: Only when she’s just, like, gassing other people up.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Like, she’s basically just supporting Nynaeve in this conversation.

Emily: She’s, like, the hype -- the hype man.

Sally: Yeah, she’s just a hype beast.

Emily: Hype beast. What?

Sally: That’s Elayne. She just exists to hype other people up.

Emily: OK.

Sally: At least, I think that’s what “hype beast” means.

Emily: I assume. I’ve just never heard --

Sally: Now I have to look it up!

Emily: "Hype beast."

Sally: Oh, "Hype beast generally refers to a person who is devoted to acquiring fashionable items, especially clothing and shoes." I feel like that does also describe Elayne. I feel like, yes, this -- Elayne is a hype beast. Not in the way that I meant, but.

Emily: Well, good for her.

Sally: Obsessed with acquiring clothes and shoes.

Emily: I mean, yeah, that's true. (laugh) "Obsessed with acquiring clothes and shoes."

Sally: According to Merriam-Webster.

Emily: That's good. OK, anything else?

Sally: Nope.

Emily: OK --

Sally: I think I have said all the words in my brain.

Emily: Um, next week we would have two chapters, but I'm actually not sure of that. I think I'm probably going to go through and edit the reading schedule a bit, because I made a very weird choice, and I have the epilogue all on its own, when the epilogue is, like, two pages.

Sally: (laugh) I mean --

Emily: So I dunno --

Sally: I wouldn't put it past us to talk about it for 30 minutes.

Emily: What I was doing there, but I'm assuming there will be the same amount of episodes; we will just splice it up a little differently, because we are now entering, air horn noises, climax zone. Um, but next chapter specifically involves everyone in Cairhien, um, and Rand receiving the news that Morgase is, quote unquote, dead, and also Mat's girlfriend trying to kill her -- him. So that'll be fun.

Sally: The troubles.

Emily: The troubles. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Quote unquote. Uh, but thank you for listening. Thanks for, um, our theme song, Glynna Mackenzie.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) Thanks for supporting us on Patreon. This week, at the time of recording, which means last week as you're listening to this, we released our -- one of our "In an Hour or Less" series. Sally talked about Aristotle's Poetics, which is one of the foundational literary theory texts because it's the oldest in Western literature --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Slash history, which I did not know. Um, and, you know, all the usual stuff.

Sally: We're still watching "Watchmen," much to Devin's chagrin.

Emily: Poor Devin.

Sally: We are slowly going through it. Um, Emily is still, much to her chagrin, I am sure, blogging about A Memory of Light.

Emily: I'm speeding it up, 'cause I don't -- I don't -- I don't want to end 2020 still reading A Memory of Light. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: That'd be the worst. I feel that 2020 was cursed by me, reading A Memory of Light.

Sally: Yeah, it's Emily's fault.

Emily: It's my fault that it's so bad.

Sally: Um, and, uh, ten -- you can get graffitied books at the ten dollar level, so.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Lots of good stuff over on our Patreon if you want to check it out.

Emily: It's all fun. You can tune in on Tues-Fridays to the livestream, where I am playing -- (laugh) Final Fantasy Fifteen, which I am told is a very long game, so we might be taking some breaks every now and then. It is also an incredibly difficult game system, uh, to parse, so there's a learning curve there for sure, so if you really want peak incompetence on my part, then now is the time to tune in. Um, but that is it. Thank you all for listening. Do you have a sign-off?

Sally: Yeah. It's stupid, but there's, like, a problem at my work right now where certain members of the staff, who are a little bit older, simply cannot grasp the concept that Google Docs is the same thing as Google Drive -- that it's sort of, like, a nested system.

Emily: (sigh)

Sally: And, like, I literally -- like, I -- we're -- me and my, like, younger coworkers have been, like, desperately trying to explain this to people. Like, someone today was like, "How do I download the Google Docs software?" And I was like, that does not exist.

Emily: It's not software.

Sally: It exists in -- on the internet. (laugh)

Emily: You sweet summer child.

Sally: But it's like, there is simply, like, no vocabulary, apparently, to communicate to people that it's the same thing. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah, like, what're you gonna do, be like --

Sally: "We're all saying the same thing." (laugh)

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: But, like, one of my coworkers today called our tech support company to ask how she downloaded the Google Doc software --

Emily: Oh, no.

Sally: Even after we were all like, "That doesn't exist." So it's just been a very frustrating, uh, technological generational divide today.

Emily: I was gonna say, you can explain it like, Microsoft Word is part of the Office suite, but then, like, the Office suite is software you have to download --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So that doesn't parse. Damn. Old people.

Sally: Well, then they all started feeding off of each other, and one of them was like, "Yeah, Docs is really frustrating because you cannot organize your files," and I'm like, what are you talking about?

Emily: It's there.

Sally: Yes, you can.

Emily: The system is there.

Sally: You make folders, and you can label things.

Emily: You should see how many folders I have in my Google Drive. It's extensive.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I love folders.

Sally: Yeah, I do too. I'm building -- I'm rebuilding the development drive, 'cause we just switched from Microsoft to Google -- whatever -- but it's like, I have so many goddamn folders in that motherfucker.

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: Like, what are you talking about? (laugh)

Emily: Folders are how the world works!

Sally: So anyway, old people just are struggling a little bit today. (laugh)

Emily: And every day, I think --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: We can safely say. Alright --

Sally: Bye!

Emily: Goodbye!