



Episode 135 – It's All Bad

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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: This is our last episode that we're recording here.

SALLY: Yeah, it is the last episode we'll record in this house. That makes me a little sad.

EMILY: Well, we started season two, *The Great Hunt*, in the basement of your mom's house.

SALLY: That's correct.

EMILY: So it feels appropriate that we have leveled up, [laughs] but are still...

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Not quite where we want to be, kicking off season six.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um, especially because *Lord of Chaos*, I can't emphasize this enough [laughing]: I hate this book.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Like, I think I always just thought of it as an in between kind of book that I didn't really feel anything about. But now I'm like – I genuinely do not like this book.

SALLY: Yeah. Yeah, I was reading it today, um, and we're reading – we're talking about half of the prologue because Robert Jordan has started his heinous behavior of having, like, 100 plus page long prologues. Which is, *should be* illegal. Like, he should be put in prison for that, I think. But.

EMILY: Yeah, I tried to divide them based on, like, how many points of view, only to then realize, as I was reading, of course Nynaeve and Elayne and Faile have these pages long unnecessary points of view. And was like, "I can't make us read 50 pages this week, and then, whatever, 20 pages next week where it's crammed in with all the Black Ajah..."

SALLY: How hard can I roll my eyes?

EMILY: Plotting. I know. So obnoxious. Sorry I interrupted.

SALLY: Oh, no! It's fine! Um, yeah so we're reading half of the prologue. Half of the world – not the world's longest prologue, I think that belongs to *A Memory of Light* or whatever.

EMILY: Yeah, I can't remember if *Memory of Light* has a long...

SALLY: I know one of them has a three hundred page, or something ridiculous.

EMILY: *A Memory of Light* has a two-hundred-page chapter titled *The Last Battle*, which is, like, the most upsettingly bad structure.

SALLY: It can be multiple chapters.

EMILY: They're just trying – Brandon was like – I will call Brandon by his first name [laughs].

SALLY: Yeah, that's fine [laughs].

EMILY: Brandon was like, "It's to make it epic, or whatever." And I was like [laughing sigh], "Brandon, I can't keep doing this."

SALLY: I know. I – multiple people have said to me when I’ve joked about how *The Last Battle* – I mean, I haven’t even read it, but I’ve joked about how unnecessarily long it is, and people are like, “It’s, like, form is supposed to mimic content, and by the time you finish reading it, it is – you feel as fatigued as if you just fought in *The Last Battle*.” And I guess I’m a very particular type of reader, but I would never sit down and read 200 pages if it was –

EMILY: In one sitting.

SALLY: In one sitting.

EMILY: I don’t even think I read it in – I think I had to break for dinner midway through.

SALLY: Yeah, and I’ve done, like, marathon reading sessions before, of course, when things are – when a book is really good. I just – there’s no way I would read 200 pages uninterrupted. I’d have to go to the bathroom, I would have to – I would get hungry.

EMILY: *A Memory of Light* is also...[laughing] not a very good book.

SALLY: And it’s not like I would be super engaged in Elayne leading the forces of the Light.

EMILY: EH!

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: It makes me so angry! It also just, um, Robert was like, “I’m going to have this whole...” I don’t know why we’re talking about fucking *A Memory of Light*...

SALLY: I don’t know. We’re here, though.

EMILY: Seven, eight books before we get there, but I have to. It’s because I’m *so close* to being done with it.

SALLY: She’s so close!

EMILY: EH!

SALLY: Like, six weeks or something, right?

EMILY: Yeah, not much longer. I just read...did blog 62? So, yeah, seven weeks.

SALLY: [whispers] Seven weeks.

EMILY: By the end of 2020 [phone dings in the background] we’ll be finished with *A Memory of Light*, and we’ll be caught up on transcripts.

SALLY: Whoo!

EMILY: Which is two good things to happen in 2020. Although, I don't know if I can count being done with *A Memory of Light* as a good thing for 2020, because I had to suffer through *A Memory of Light* through all of 2020.

SALLY: [whispers] Yeah, she's been reading it for so long.

EMILY: I think I cursed us [laughs].

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: By coming back to *A Memory of Light*. Anyway, Robert was like, "I am going to have the whole 200-page chapter be about The Last Battle proper. Like the battle, like what you expect for the Last Battle, you know? Actual battlefield engagements, etc. etc. But then it just, like, there's a whole other climax, and it – the, the transition from one to the other is so clumsy. It's, like, really painful. Like, Perrin just barely woke up from a coma.

SALLY: Yeah, Perrin's, like, been unconscious for 6 days or whatever, right?

EMILY: It was only one day, because that's the entire Last Battle, but it *feels* like...

SALLY: Sounds like fake news, but...

EMILY: Well, I mean, the entire Last Battle lasted weeks, yeah, but the big battle lasted one day.

SALLY: Big battle.

EMILY: Big battle, lady. Um, anyway, yeah, Perrin just woke up from his coma and now Mat's gotta, like, fast travel across the continent a la *Game of Thrones* season seven [sighs].

SALLY: I did not engage with that at all.

EMILY: I'm glad that you, at least, escaped that.

SALLY: I'm very good at having no fucking clue what's going on in pop culture.

EMILY: That's nice.

SALLY: I don't – I think it's just natural obliviousness.

EMILY: It's, um, it's, uh, it's you're just, like, dodging things that could be bad for you.

SALLY: Like Keanu Reeves in *The Matrix*.

EMILY: Like Keanu in *The Matrix*.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Just dodging the really painful pieces of pop culture.

SALLY: It's like, "Ooh, there goes *Game of Thrones*."

EMILY: There goes *Game of Thrones*.

SALLY: "There goes the Marvel Cinematic Universe."

EMILY: There go some of the biggest disappointments of our generation.

SALLY: Just, like, dodging it.

EMILY: Whoo!

SALLY: There goes *The Name of the... Wind* or whatever.

EMILY: [laughs] Still not over. It will never be over.

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: Which is the worst part to me. Like, if he would just finish the goddamn trilogy then maybe I could hold a –

SALLY: Get some closure, yeah.

EMILY: Hold a Viking funeral for the part of me that read the book.

SALLY: Uh-huh.

EMILY: Don't get angry, everyone. You all know I hate *The Name of the Wind* [laughing] and I don't want to talk about it anymore.

SALLY: No, oh my god. Al tweeted something the other day that was like, "I've never read *The Name of the Wind*, but I've heard so many people dunk on it that I just, like, hate it so much."

EMILY: Thank you! Finally, someone who trusts [laughing] my expert opinion.

SALLY: [laughing] I mean, I'm sure you are a large part of that, but I'd like to connect with the other people.

EMILY: I'm sure I'm, yeah, one voice of many.

SALLY: Who are these other people?

EMILY: Who are these unseen people? I need more support in my hatred for *Name of the Wind*. I need you to come forward if you also hated that the *Name of the Wind* had zero female characters and was all about one dude being *so good* and his dick being *so big*. UGH. Okay, anyway.

SALLY: Your bick being dig isn't even – [laughs] your dick being big.

EMILY: Your dick being dig.

SALLY: Whatever! You guys know what I'm saying. It's not even that important, men.

EMILY: I mean, yeah. I don't really know. It's his, you know, metaphorical – his dick is metaphorically huge. I know nothing about his actual.

SALLY: I feel like it would be. I feel like Rothfuss...Patrick? Is that his first name.

EMILY: Patrick, yeah.

SALLY: I never remember. Would be like, "His dick is really big."

EMILY: He does have that whole scene about pleasuring a love goddess.

SALLY: Ew.

EMILY: I don't know. I mean.

SALLY: What the shit?

EMILY: Haven't I told you about that scene?

SALLY: Yes, you have. I just...

EMILY: I haven't read it. I read it in the Wikipedia article.

SALLY: ...blocked it from my memories.

EMILY: So, I mean, for all I know Patrick was like, "He's really good at oral sex." But what I'm more inclined to believe is that it's a classic 'his dick is huge,' which doesn't guarantee pleasure for anyone.

SALLY: Yeah, it's something like between 70 and 80 percent of women can't climax without clitoral stimulation. So.

EMILY: Yeah, that scene would have been way better if he'd just, like, whipped out a vibrator [laughs].

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: If the scene was like, “Here I am with a magic love goddess. She’s like, ‘Don’t trap me or whatever’.” I don’t know. I haven’t read the scene. But then he’s like, “I’ve got a way out of this” [laughs] and invents a vibrator.

SALLY: He’s over there in the corner with, like, a screwdriver and batteries.

EMILY: I mean, yeah, he’s, uh, he’s the guy that can do anything that the plot needs him to do, so, yeah, I would believe that he invents a battery powered vibrator in fourteenth century fantasy land, or whatever.

SALLY: Yeah, I should also not be gender not inclusive, and say it’s not just women. Anybody with...

EMILY: 80% of people with...is it clitorises or clitori?

SALLY: Clitori [laughing]. 70 to 80 percent of people with clitori.

EMILY: Welcome to season six!

SALLY: [laughing] Can you tell how *desperate* we are to not talk about *Lord of Chaos*?

EMILY: Yeah, the energy is rancid.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: The only thing getting me through this is the prospect of Book 7.

SALLY: Yeah, Book 7 is really fun. But, um, this is Everybody Hates Rand. I’ll...

EMILY: I was never gonna do it.

SALLY: Introduce the podcast. Um, that’s Emily. I’m Sally. This is our final episode in this house. We have, like, no furniture left.

EMILY: Yeah, Tybalt’s really upset.

SALLY: We are...moving through it! But reading the first half of the prologue I was...it’s like, in classic Robert Jordan prologue style, it’s just like 97,000 vignettes that are somehow [laughing] supposed to tie together by the end of the book. So you’re, like, juggling a lot of stuff before you even get to, you know, the story.

EMILY: Yeah, and mostly it is like the points of view we’ve read, at least, do not need to be in the prologue.

SALLY: No! Of course not. The first points of view we read are, like, there's Demandred talking to the Dark One.

EMILY: Which, like, yeah fine prologue material.

SALLY: But then we go over to

BOTH: Nynaeve and Elayne

SALLY: Who are just, like, doing their Salidar stuff, which, like, could have just been part of the first chapter. Same with Faile.

EMILY: Mm-hm.

SALLY: Those were the three we read, right?

EMILY: The four, yeah.

SALLY: The four. Kind of Nynaeve and Elayne blur together in my head.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: But, yeah, so I was reading these, like, vignettes and I was like, "I hate all of these plots that we're talking about. Like, I don't, I really don't care about the Forsaken and they're whole like, "We're all deeply incompetent and we're just stumbling over each other and accidentally getting killed."

EMILY: Mm-hmm.

SALLY: [laughing] Like, it's not interesting to me. Like, Nynaeve learning how to heal stilling and gentling is interesting, because we love it when someone is just doing what they're competent at. But, you know, that's, like, a nugget buried in all this Salidar nonsense about picking the new Amyrlin and their machinations.

EMILY: Sending various delegates to Rand, which is, like, it's whole thing that's going to be a huge part of this book.

SALLY: Yeah, and just, like, the whole "we cannot accept the fact that the Dragon Reborn as a person who is not us has any degree of autonomy," and it's like, "I'm so bored of this. I understand that you feel that Rand is sort of a loose cannon, because...he is" [laughs].

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: But, like, you can't just control his every action. That's not how anything works. And then we just get to Faile being like, "Can't believe Perrin left me alone to hold court," and it's like, "Yeah, that's fucking shitty. Go yell at your husband."



EMILY: Yeah, but it's like I do not care about the Two Rivers people's various issues, things needing judgement. Especially because, like, the vast majority of them are so deeply irrelevant. Like, this buildup of the Two Ra – [fake Southern accent] The Two Ravers.

SALLY: The Two Ravers.

EMILY: The Two Rivers as a swiftly growing urban center, as, like, refugees come pouring in from Arad Domon and Tarabon, would only be interesting insofar as the Two Rivers continued to be a setting. But it does not. This is literally the last time we will be in the Two Rivers.

SALLY: Yeah, because we're setting up Perrin going off to –

EMILY: Join Rand

SALLY: Do his shit with Rand.

EMILY: Mm-hmm.

SALLY: But the scene with Faile is particularly upsetting because she keeps talking about the social contract between nobles and commoners.

EMILY: Oh yeah.

SALLY: And how much she –

EMILY: I wanted to guillotine her, reading it.

SALLY: She was, like, really on her rich bitch energy. So was Elayne, actually [laughs]. Elayne was like, "I'm queen now!" And it's like, "Go away!"

EMILY: AAH!

SALLY: "Send me to Caemlyn. I need to take charge and calm all my people down." It's like, "Caemlyn's doing fine. They don't need you."

EMILY: I mean, it would have changed a lot if Elayne did get sent to Caemlyn right off the bat.

SALLY: That's true.

EMILY: Because A) that would have removed her from all of the Ebou Dar nonsense, where I did not want her.

SALLY: No, she's *rancid* in Ebou Dar.

EMILY: Yeah, and B) it would have sped things along quite a bit in Caemlyn, which is what this series desperately needed. Like, I think we all know, and we have a hard time articulating it, that books 8 through, uh, roundabout 11, which is a huge chunk of the series, Robert Jordan just lost the fucking plot.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Like there are, I don't know, only five or six things that happen that are actually truly relevant to the plots in those books.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: You get, like, the cleansing of *saidin*, the bowl of the winds, um, Egwene taking over the White Tower again. Most of these things could have been compressed into, like, two, three books tops.

SALLY: Yeah, because there's just, like, these pages and pages – and this is something we've talked about before, but, like, just the fact that the prologue is 83 pages. And, like, even Nynaeve and Elayne's points of view drag on too long, because there's just pages of unnecessary content.

EMILY: Mm-hmm. And updating us on about what was going on. Like, we spend so much time, Nynaeve rehashing the fact that, "Oh, surprise Marigan is here. Marigan is Moghedien. Here's how we solved the problem of her, um, being tied to us via an *a'dam*." It's just, like, that was all pretty fucking obvious at the end of *The Fires of Heaven*.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And *no one* is picking up *Lord of Chaos* as the first book in the series.

SALLY: Yeah. I mean, god you shouldn't.

EMILY: Um, yeah I fuckin – you would read Demandred all caps encounter with the Dark One and be like, "Whelp. That's good. [laughs] Closed."

SALLY: Who is this bumblefuck Demandred.

EMILY: Put it back on the shelf.

SALLY: Who is also on his rich bitch energy. Also needs to be guillotined.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Yeah, it's just all really painful and just, like, yeah setting up these plots that I'm just like – Book 6 is so painful [laughs]. The only – like we've talked about there's only – also in Book 6 two events of importance, really, which is Egg being raised Amyrlin and Rand being put in a box. That's not even important.

EMILY: Dumai's Wells, yeah.

SALLY: That whole Rand being in a box to Dumai's Wells could be scrapped.

EMILY: Yeah, I mean, pretty much. We have in this book the central plot, as it comes to Rand, is, um, this parallel energy of Egg becoming the figurehead of the White Tower and the Aes Sedai as a whole, which eventually, you know, the series is building up to once she consolidates all the Aes Sedai. And Rand just, um, gaining a total distrust of every woman who can channel, which isn't as interesting or as productive as Robert Jordan seems to think it is, because it's not, like, Rand had a whole lot of trust for women who could channel to begin with.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: The whole, uh, you know, point of this book seems to be to just have women who can channel hurt him, so that some of his paranoia has been made manifest. And it's, like, [laughs] why?

SALLY: Yeah, no, that's a really good point, too. Especially because this is the book where we have, you know, the two White Towers running parallel to the creation of the Black Tower.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: And of course we have Mazrim Taim, the greasiest, most disgusting man alive [laughs], at the head of the Black Tower, but we're also introduced to a lot of really lovely men who can channel, who become folded into various retinues and become, like, trustworthy characters at the same time that the story is like, "Men who can do magic? Good. Every woman who can do magic? A raging bitch."

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: So it just reinforces this idea that we keep coming back to – not reinforces the idea, provides more evidence to this statement that we keep coming back to, that *The Wheel of Time* is actually a very, uh, subtly misogynistic text.

EMILY: Yep. Lady channelers: bad. Male channelers – I mean, the male channelers are obviously, um, supposed to be hit or miss. But as I've been talking about in my blog, as I've been coming to terms with Logain, who's also a – not a central figure in this book, but a pretty important figure as the one who first gets healed by Nynaeve of his gentling, I guess it's called. Um, like, the thing that Robert Jordan tried to do with the Black Tower is make just a set of good guys and a set of bad guys, and there's, like, no real sense of moral ambiguity in there, and the fact that Logain is not a Darkfriend puts him in the camp of the good guys, even though, by all accounts, Logain is not a good guy.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Logain tried to become the fucking Dragon Reborn with no evidence that he was actually the Dragon Reborn.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: As, like, literally every television show, movie, book has warned us, people who seek power should not get power. And we see that even in this series with Rand not wanting to be the Dragon Reborn, Egwene not necessarily wanting to be the Amyrlin Seat, but then making the most of it once she is.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: So, like, Logain started a war, literally, is what I'm saying.

SALLY: Yeah, well, and like [laughs] all of the Ash'aman at the end of this book commit, just like...

EMILY: Rampant war crimes.

SALLY: Yeah, they're just, like, literally just like blowing people up [laughs], and, like, throwing bombs at people.

EMILY: Yeah, you have – like, the Black Tower, even if you do produce, you know, like a handful of our favorite boys.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Narishma? Would die for him. Neald and Grady? Would die for them.

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah.

EMILY: Absolutely, one hundred percent of the time, but, like, Mazrim Taim has just, like, created a Hitler Youth camp. Like, there is no room for these men to, you know, have any sense of decency or morality toward what they're – toward their own magical powers, because he's just, like, enforcing. And that's not all on Mazrim Taim, obviously, people have agency and can choose to do their own things, but, like, [laughing] Rand just, like, handed the reigns to a sociopath and was like, "Take it from here, bud." And Mazrim Taim was like, "Violations of the Geneva Conventions coming right up, buddy."

SALLY: Yeah, he's like, "Oh my to do list today is violate every article of the Geneva Conventions." And Rand's like, "Great, thank you" [laughs].

EMILY: "See ya later."

SALLY: "You're doing good work."

EMILY: It's a nightmare!

SALLY: Yeah, and it's just very frustrating because I just feel, like, again, I haven't read very far into the Black Tower being a thing, but it just feels like there is not the narrative hatred of the Black Tower the way there is narrative hatred of the White Tower.

EMILY: Yeah, the Black – the only people we really see reacting poorly to the Black Tower are women who can channel.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Which is only reinforcing this notion that there's all this prejudice against men who can channel. Which, I get it, that's the world that we're living in, but now there is narrative prejudice against women who can channel.

SALLY: Yeah. I don't know. It's just very frustrating, because, yeah, Rand's like, "Here is this guy, who is very obviously evil."

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Like, so obviously evil [laughs].

EMILY: It's painful.

SALLY: And, like, Davram Bashere is over here like, "This man is a war criminal."

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: "And a disgusting person please give him to me for appropriate justice channels." And Rand's like, "No. This is my teacher boy."

EMILY: Like, I mean, Rand really is just the loosest cannon.

SALLY: Yeah [laughs].

EMILY: Rand's just like flying like a machine gun come off its axis. Just going everywhere. It's nuts.

SALLY: Yeah. And this is truly one of the worst instances of it, because it's just, like, I know we're sitting in our – Robert Jordan positions us as the all mighty seer of everything, but how could you not look at that person and be like – I feel like I've said this before, but if there was, like, one woman consulting Rand she would have been like, "That is the skeeziest motherfucker I've ever seen in my entire life."

EMILY: Yeah, and the sad thing is Rand does have women who are around him.

SALLY: Of course. He's not listening to them.

EMILY: He's got a literal bodyguard of Maidens.

SALLY: Oh yeah. Is Sulin not like, "GROOOSSSS!" [laughs]

EMILY: Why doesn't Sulin step into an advisory capacity here [laughs] and be like, "That man's terrible."

SALLY: "That man's disgusting!"

BOTH: UGH.

EMILY: [shuddering noises]

SALLY: Anyway, Mazrim Taim is arch nemesis.

EMILY: I mean, we're saying that this book is nuts, and that's sort of what Robert Jordan was going for. We have these bracketed points of view of Demandred at the beginning of this book and at the end of this book. At the beginning, he is receiving orders from the Dark One. We don't know what those orders are. At the end, it ends with something like him being like, "Have I done well, Great Lord?" And the Dark One's like, "Mahahaha," maniacal laughter.

SALLY: "No!"

EMILY: "Shut up, you're fired!"

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: This is, um, you know, Robert Jordan's clever ruse to try and make us feel like he's actually done something with the villains in this book.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But there's no evidence to that, at all.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: None of the Forsaken, with the exception maybe of Aran'gar, who does successfully infiltrate the White – you know, the rebel camp.

SALLY: The White Tower in exile.

EMILY: And get pretty close to, uh, Egg in the process. Most of them are doing absolutely nothing. Demandred himself we have [stumbling over her words]. Okay, okay. We know, with the benefit of hindsight – spoiler alert – that Demandred is in Shara, building up his, you know,

support camp. Which is a great reveal in the last book, but then does give us some hindsight for the rest of the series in that how could Demandred possibly be doing *anything* on this continent if he's off on...fantasy Australia.

SALLY: Different continent, yeah.

EMILY: Getting all of the people there together to prep for a fun last-minute assault.

SALLY: Surprise! It's the Sharan invasion.

EMILY: [laughs] Surprise! It's the Sharan invasion. He literally can't do anything here. It's just so Robert Jordan can be like, "Hmm maybe Mazrim Taim is Demandred deh duh deh duh duh." And it's, like, no one's fooled, because no one cares.

SALLY: [snorts]

EMILY: [laughs] Maybe Mazrim Taim is Demandred, maybe he's not. It doesn't really change the fact that he's clearly a bad guy.

SALLY: Yeah, and it's, like, also Mazrim Taim doesn't *have* to be one of the Forsaken for him to be, like, a bad dude.

EMILY: Yeah, like that should be part of the point of the series, that the Forsaken clearly can't do their fucking jobs so they need some, uh, new assistants. Like [laughs].

SALLY: Get some executive assistants that went to business school.

EMILY: [laughing] This book, I mean, does start on a hilarious note with Demandred being like [laughing], "Okay, I don't want to freak you out, but Rahvin's super dead. Lanfear and Asmodean both..."

BOTH: Disappeared?

EMILY: [laughing] "Haven't heard from Moghedien in weeks. I don't know what you want me to do about this whole situation." And apparently what the Dark One wants to do about this situation is just resurrect more Forsaken, which is absolutely, you know, the worst possible response to it considering how deeply incompetent all his people – I mean, four of them, in a single day, wiped out.

SALLY: No, there's a very good line where Nynaeve's like, "Moiraine's become, like, a legend among the Aes Sedai, because she killed not one but two Forsaken."

EMILY: Two Forsaken!

SALLY: [laughs] Which is very good. Because I always forget that she killed whatever that motherfucker's name is.

EMILY: Be'lal.

SALLY: Yeah, who's on screen for, like, a millisecond before Moiraine just balefired the fuck out of him.

EMILY: See ya.

SALLY: Yeah. The Dark One is also like, "Demandred would you use balefire?" And Demandred's like, "Huhhh."

EMILY: "I mean."

SALLY: "I really do not want to."

EMILY: "Do I have to, dad?" [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs] And he's like, "What if I just killed Rand al'Thor and we wouldn't have to worry about him?"

EMILY: And the Dark One's like, "No, I want you to use balefire."

SALLY: And he's like, "Nooooo."

EMILY: "Please don't make me." Blah blah bleh blah.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Sorry, I just lost my – I just think it's so funny how Demandred opens this scene.

SALLY: [mumbling, laughs]

EMILY: Because this is the last time a significant number of Forsaken got downed, which makes five such a good ending. After this is part of Robert Jordan's problem as he, uh, sort of kicks his heels in stasis. There is, like, absolutely – you, you can't knock off that many threats anymore.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Because

SALLY: [laughing] You're running out of Forsaken.

EMILY: Quickly losing numbers even at the resurrection rate.

SALLY: Yeah. Yeah.



EMILY: And at the resurrection rate we simply cannot keep track of them.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: I mean.

SALLY: Imagine being the Dark One though and being like, “I’m going to resurrect Lanfear,” only to find out she’s in, like, another dimension or whatever the fuck.

EMILY: He’s like, “Ah, fuck. Dammit.” Yeah, like, I mean, who is supposed to keep track of Aran’gar who was once Bathamel, who now masquerading as a woman named Halima. Like.

SALLY: People say Aran’gar to me and I’m like, “I don’t – who is she?”

EMILY: Who is she? I mean, you see her at the end of this chapt – prologue? I think? I think that’s when they get introduced.

SALLY: I think so.

EMILY: Which is just, like – but what? Do you have to?

SALLY: Yeah. Also, Dark One, maybe consider that your Forsaken are doing a really shit job.

EMILY: Yeah, it would be so much more interesting if the Dark One learned how to, like, manage his investments a little bit better and sort of gave up on the Forsaken as a bunch of incompetent ninnies.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And being like, “I’m going to start fully investing in, um, I don’t know, either new bad guys or some sort of new way to threaten people, because clearly simple bad guys aren’t cutting it.” Like, Robert Jordan, for some reason, thought it would be this groundbreaking notion to have a bunch of deeply incompetent people as bad guys, just to be like, “See, get it? They’re people, too.” But it’s, like, first of all, that’s not particularly threatening. Like, you are taking away some of the mystique.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: You know? It’s, like, basic film and literary theory. Like, Darth Vader is scary until he takes off the mask.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And because of his cool ass breathing shit that he does.

SALLY: Yeah, and his sick cape.

EMILY: I know. Darth – Darth Vader just, like, a brilliantly put together figure who, as soon as you take away any of his mystique, becomes less frightening.

SALLY: Yeah, I mean, if you were, at the beginning, like, “This is Anakin Skywalker” [laughs].

EMILY: “This is Anakin Skywalker, local narcissist.”

SALLY: [laughs] “And really bad father.”

EMILY: “Really bad – absentee father. Dropped in lava by his best friend, that’s how bad he is at being a person.”

SALLY: I mean, he, like, murderer of children [laughs].

EMILY: Murderer of children, local [laughs].

SALLY: Local dipshit.

EMILY: Yeah. We would just be like [buzzes lips].

SALLY: [laughing] Not interested in that at all.

EMILY: That’s exactly what’s happening with the Forsaken!

SALLY: Yeah. It’s like look at their string of incompetencies and I’m supposed to be like, “Lanfear’s such a good villain.”

EMILY: It was only good insofar as, like, Asmodean was around being, you know, morally gray.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And us being like, “Oh, see he is a human in that there is a capacity to change in some way.”

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: That’s human, Robert Jordan. Not failure [laughs].

SALLY: Yeah, I mean it’s fine if your villains fail, but again it’s, like, you need to have that distance.

EMILY: Yeah, people don’t like the villains to fail because the villains are bad at being villains. They want the villains to fail because the heroes are better than them. That’s, like, simply arithmetic.

SALLY: That's the Hero's Journey, baby.

EMILY: In your fantasy realm. It just was a vastly failed experiment that, for some reason, at this point in the series he didn't kick out the window and go, "Okay, time to refocus."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Because clearly he's still got the brain juice for interesting villains. This – Book 7 is where we get the *gholam*.

SALLY: Yeah, the *gholam*.

EMILY: That dude's freaky as hell. We could – you can do it, RJ.

SALLY: Yeah. You can do it.

EMILY: He just didn't want to [laughs].

SALLY: Yeah, he's like, "Whatever. I have Demandred, I guess. I'm stuck with him" [laughs].

EMILY: [laughing] "I have Demandred and I have no other options."

SALLY: [laughing] "It's all I have! Oh no!"

EMILY: Demandred, the only one who hasn't failed me yet. Ah! Wait until Book 14.

SALLY: [laughs] Stupid.

EMILY: I'm sure you'll manage something.

SALLY: It also really bothers me that his name is Demandred because I always read it as Damodred, you know?

EMILY: Yeah. Like Moiraine. Damodred.

SALLY: And Galad, I guess.

EMILY: I mean, all names turn out to be very similar. It's like the one hundred chimpanzees rule or whatever.

SALLY: [laughs] I mean, it's probably because I –

EMILY: Come with a bunch of fantasy names will end up looking the same.

SALLY: We should just put Tybalt on the laptop and see what he comes up with.

EMILY: Yeah, Tybalt, I bet you could come up with fantasy names, too. Anyway, um, we haven't really been providing a plot summary, but that's because there is no plot to [laughs] summarize.

SALLY: The plot is summarizing Book 5, [laughs] is what it's doing.

EMILY: Yeah! It's like, "Hey, Forsaken – tons of Forsaken are just out of the picture. Nynaeve and Elayne? Still in fucking Salidar."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um, Nynaeve's trying to heal Siuan and Leanne, not making a lot of progress. They do have Moghedien, not literally on a leash but, uh, metaphorically on a leash. Elayne has been told that her mother is supposedly dead, but does not believe it, or says she does not believe it. Seems to be in some form of denial. And is desperate to get back to Caemlyn, which, again, I think would have been a more productive use of page space.

SALLY: I know. They're like –

EMILY: Especially because Elayne and Nyn – Elayne and Min showing up together would have been an interesting thing, I think.

SALLY: Yeah, well the Aes Sedai are like, "You can't leave, because you're training to be an Aes Sedai." And it's like, "Okay, the apocalypse is coming. Can we make some..."

EMILY: Concessions.

SALLY: "Adjustments here."

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Like, let's get – also, I feel like it makes – like, they would get more gains by having someone who's connected to the rebel Aes Sedai Tower being literally in charge of a full ass country.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Than by keeping her. Because it's not like – especially once Egwene is lifted to Amyrlin it's not like Elayne's gonna be like, "Ah fuck the Aes Sedai rebel camp." Or, I don't know. It's a decision that doesn't make any sense. Plot wise or narrative wise.

EMILY: Elayne is clearly a competent – competent enough to be an Aes Sedai at this point.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: In terms of magic powers. There's not much she doesn't know.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And there's not much magical growth that we see from her in the next five books that she hasn't already covered.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So – I don't think she even is technically an Aes Sedai, you know, Egwene raises her, but she can't take the test because she's pregnant when they get back in the Tower. Which, whatever. But, it's like – or, yeah, use that as an excuse to send one or two Aes Sedai with her.

SALLY: Yeah!

EMILY: To be, like, her continued teachers. Mentors.

SALLY: Yeah, that's fine.

EMILY: [laughs] Like, there are so many ways around this problem.

SALLY: I know. It's so weird.

EMILY: Um.

SALLY: Also, Elayne could just, like, go [laughs]. She doesn't have to stay.

EMILY: I know. Elayne just be like, "Hey, Thom, I'm out."

SALLY: And Thom would be like, "Sick."

EMILY: "Great."

SALLY: "Let's go back to Caemlyn."

EMILY: Yeah. "You, me, and Uno."

SALLY: Your boyfriend.

EMILY: Yeah. Uno, the best man in the series.

SALLY: Yeah. And Min, I guess.

EMILY: And Min, I guess. Which, you know, Min showing up, uh, and immediately flinging herself onto Rand's dick is, like, whatever. But it would be slightly more interesting if you had Min and Elayne occupying the same space. Being like, "Hey, we're both in love with you. Deal with that now, please."

SALLY: Yeah, instead of this rotating – this revolving door of women.

EMILY: Yeah. Now Aviendha's gone. Time for Min to move in. Aviendha only came in after he'd made out with Elayne a few times. You know. Huh ugh.

SALLY: It somehow it's so much more gross that they never occupy the same space together.

EMILY: Yeah they –

SALLY: I mean, it's not like *never*, but especially in these early books.

EMILY: Yeah, they get one scene together with Rand where they're, like, bonding him as their mutual Warder or whatever.

SALLY: Even Min?

EMILY: Yeah, they, like, figure it out. I don't know. It's some dumb shit. Doesn't make sense.

SALLY: [laughs] Stupid.

EMILY: Um, it's not really a Warder bond. It's more like, uh, an empathic bond to just, like – you know, people who are having sex regularly don't need to have an empathic bond. In fact, I would argue that that would, uh, not deepen your relationship, because it would totally negate – not totally, but really fuck up your communication skills, which all four of you already do not have [laughs].

SALLY: [laughs] Are bad at! I also feel like it's very, uh, disgusting that Rand is, you know, a victim of magical violation by being bonded as a Warder against his will and Elayne is like, "I absolutely have to bond Rand as my Warder. I don't give a shit what he says about it, I will do it against his will if he doesn't want it."

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: So, anyway. It's all bad.

EMILY: [laughing] It's all bad.

SALLY: That's my tagline for this season.

EMILY: It's all bad. Um, yeah, I can't think of anything. It's just so funny, I guess. All of it. Elayne goes to find Min because Min is going with this delegation of nine Aes Sedai to Caemlyn.

SALLY: I mean they're sending nine Aes Sedai! Why can't they just keep training Elayne? The Aes Sedai are already going!

EMILY: They're so – that's like half your Aes Sedai, anyway. Your numbers are so slim.

SALLY: [laughing] I'm so upset. Elayne could just be one of those nine! She's powerful.

EMILY: Yeah. Duh. Also, it would just stop having her and Nynaeve be fucking characters together.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: I would love that. I can't emphasize enough how desperately I want them to not be near each other ever again.

SALLY: I know. They're so miserable together.

EMILY: Um.

SALLY: There are so many opportunities for them to not be together, too.

EMILY: Yeah, it's ridiculous. Like, why do they both have to go to Ebou Dar? You don't.

SALLY: Yeah, or, like, when they're leaving Ebou Dar Nynaeve is like, "I'm going to go back for Mat." And Elayne is like, "No." And Nynaeve is like, "Okay." [laughs]

EMILY: Yeah, it's just, like, borderline infantilizing how the men pretty instantly get to have their own solo adventures, and, uh, the women are generally trapped together. Or, you know, Egg's stuck with the Rand and Mat camp until Book 6.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: And even then she's still with Sivan and Leanne and the various coterie of good guys.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: So...yeah. Min and Elayne chat and are like, "This sucks." And, um, Elayne's like, "Let's not talk about it. Let's talk about something happy." And Min's like [laughs], "All I can think of is Rand." And I'm like, "You guys are so miserable."

SALLY: I know.

EMILY: If I met either of you in real life. Christ.

SALLY: I feel like I have met these people though [laughs].

EMILY: I haven't met them, but I have seen them on *The Bachelor* franchise.

SALLY: That's a good point. Elayne would be the Bachelorette in a heartbeat.

EMILY: Yeah. They seem like they're on, you know, they're in front of a bunch of cameras.

SALLY: Yeah, where they're just like, "Meh!"

EMILY: How do you feel about, you know, this one mediocre man? And they're like, "Oh my god! I love him!"

SALLY: "I want to have his babies. I would die to have his babies!"

EMILY: "I can just really see us having a family together in the future."

SALLY: [laughs] The only thing I have to say about Faile's plot is that I also would like to guillotine her. She's just like, "I'm rich, and therefore I know everything that these peasants should be doing. All their problems are beneath me. I am the best ever because I was born into nobility, and fuck everybody else."

EMILY: Yeah. She's like, "I know exactly what to do." Girl, you're eighteen years old, or whatever.

SALLY: Right? You've never lived in a farming community. How the fuck do you know what this person is supposed to do with their farmland?

EMILY: Yeah! And she's like, "Damn, these people are so resilient. They would probably do well in Saldea." And I'm like, "You've literally never spent any time away from home."

SALLY: I know.

EMILY: "Until you lived with these people. So, [laughs] who are you to say whether they're resilient or not? Maybe people are just like that. Maybe Saldea isn't that fucking special, Faile." Yeah, it's just mega immature vibes, as usual, coming from her.

SALLY: It's usual Faile shit. Yeah.

EMILY: She finds Perrin and she's like, "What's up?" And he's like, "Rand is – " [laughs] That was – that was actually a funny aside. She's like, "I thought you would be with Bob and Ted" or whatever. And he's like, "I feel him tugging on me." And she's like, "Ted?!" [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: "Like now?!"

SALLY: And he's like, "No, Faile."



EMILY: And he's like [laughing], "No! I'm not receiving a hand job from one of the servants, Faile."

SALLY: She's like, "Damn, that would have been hot."

EMILY: She's like, "It would have been at least slightly more interesting."

SALLY: [laughing] And less upsetting.

EMILY: [laughs] He's like, "No, I've gotta get to Rand." And she's like, "Okay, great." And he's like, "You should stay behind because it's too dangerous." And she's like, "Whatever you think is best, but really I'm going to bully you until you take me with you." Um, and what feels like the entire rest of the Two Rivers.

SALLY: [laughing] Yeah, seriously! They take like –

EMILY: Everyone.

SALLY: A million people.

EMILY: Yeah, just so many people.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: They're all like, "I wanna be in Perrin's army." And he's like, "Great. We're going to march all the way to Caemlyn, and it will take us about eighty percent of the book."

SALLY: And then when we get there, Rand will send us through a magical gateway almost immediately.

EMILY: Yeah, I mean it is nice that Perrin is mostly not in this book, either.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Because I couldn't stand him and Faile, but yeah. There's simply not that much to talk about, and I worry that we'll be like this a lot in *Lord of Chaos*, and I apologize in advance. But also, you know, no one hates *Wheel of Time* [laughs] like *Wheel of Time* readers.

SALLY: Exactly. Uh, yeah, I'm sorry, I guess, that I've been tweeting so much shit about *Wheel of Time* on our Twitter, but between reading *Path of Daggers* and re-reading *Lord of Chaos*, I'm not in a great place, me and Robert Jordan right now.

EMILY: RE:

SALLY: Yeah [laughs] and Emily reading *A Memory of Light*. We're not, like, doing hot. You can just stick with us to Book 7 when they get to fantasy Carnival, we'll be doing a little better.

EMILY: Fucking rad.

SALLY: But we will do our best to bring something interesting to *Lord of Chaos*. Um.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: No promises.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Nothing promised, no regrets. To quote the great Swedish pop sensation, ABBA [laughs].

EMILY: Which is pretty on brand for us.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Okay, that starts –

SALLY: [singing] Voulez-vous aha!

EMILY: *Lord of Chaos*. And that was our last episode recorded in this kitchen right next to the fridge. So.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Hopefully when you hear us next week the audio quality will be at least slightly better, but you know? Who knows? I'm sure the new house will find fun new ways to surprise us.

SALLY: I mean, Emily had to fight for like two and a half hours to figure out what the fucking Wi-Fi password is.

EMILY: I'm still mad about that.

SALLY: So, we'll see. Um. We will see.

EMILY: But, uh, that's that. Um, the usual. Social media. Follow us. Um, check out our Patreon. We just finished recording, um, our last viewing of the last episode of *Watchmen*, so that will be coming out this Thursday as you're listening.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: This Friday, as you're listening, I should be back playing Final Fantasy, because our tv and our xbox will be set up again. Uh, sorry for the absence last week. Um, and you know, all

the usual. I only have seven – I only have seven more *A Memory of Light* blogs. So if you want to watch me die slowly and painfully in real time –

SALLY: [laughs, snorts]

EMILY: You can bandwagon on for that one.

SALLY: It's at the one dollar a month level on our Patreon, so it's really quite a steal.

EMILY: Yeah, it is a steal.

SALLY: One dollar a month you'll get access to, like, 2,000 of Emily's blogs.

EMILY: You'll get access to my slowly declining mental state [laughs].

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah.

EMILY: I could sell this to fucking psych journals. Do you want to watch me go insane?

SALLY: We would love to actually, thank you [laughs].

EMILY: It's real! Um.

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah, so you can hop on to that and enjoy some weekly shenanigans, [laughing] while Emily gets through the final slog.

EMILY: Yeah, um, and late this week or early next week, Sally and I will be talking about Alexander the Great on our five dollar level tier if you're part of that. So, if you ever wanted to know about the batshit drama that is Greek and Macedonian history at that time. Hop on.

SALLY: Um, last Sunday, we were sitting on the couch and Emily kept just like – like, I was working on something and she kept just, like, laughing to herself as she was [laughing] working on her Alexander the Great presentation. And she kept just being like, "Greek History is so whack" so it should be quite – that was a fun, promising review.

EMILY: It's a lot.

SALLY: So.

EMILY: I'm pretty much not going to do a PowerPoint presentation. I'm just gonna like – I'll think we'll just film us on the couch and I'll speak from my heart about what's going on [laughs].

SALLY: Okay. I think you could!

EMILY: Like a story – I'll wear a turtleneck.

SALLY: Ooh excellent.

EMILY: And have a pipe.

SALLY: Very sexy.

EMILY: Um.

SALLY: Do you even own a turtleneck?

EMILY: No.

SALLY: Okay I own –

EMILY: They look terrible on me.

SALLY: I own several. Turtlenecks don't look terrible on anyone!

EMILY: They kind of look bad on me. You know who looks good in a turtleneck? Cambria's husband.

SALLY: Oh yeah! Congratulations to our first and number one fan, Cambria Hobbs. On your nuptials!

EMILY: Yeah! You guys are so cute.

SALLY: We love you so much. You and Dom did both look extremely hot in your wedding photos.

EMILY: Yeah, little cuties.

SALLY: But, yeah, he does look very good in a turtleneck. Very Italian model of him.

EMILY: Yeah. Um, that's that. Thank you to Glynna Mackenzie for our theme song. Do you have a sign off?

SALLY: Um, quick before we get into that. Um, another thing you can check out if you're craving EHR content is our side project, Letters to Hozier. We have now released five letters. Multiple people have said they've made them cry.

EMILY: That's troubling to me.

SALLY: [laughs] Which I don't – which, I think that's a great compliment, I just never conceive of them as something...that would make someone cry. But thank you.

EMILY: Yeah, I feel some emotion while writing them, but immediately it's gone.

SALLY: I mean [laughing], that's how Emily experiences emotion. It's, like, a fleeting flicker in the back of her head [laughs].

EMILY: It's there and then it's gone. Compartmentalized away.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: See ya.

SALLY: Um [laughs], but everyone's been very nice. So thank you to everyone who's let us know that you've enjoyed those. Um, I don't know. It's actually been a very good week [laughs]. I don't really have a bad thing.

EMILY: Yeah, that's true.

SALLY: I mean, Emily did walk in, also the same Alexander the Great Sunday and be like, "There's just a decomposing mouse on the sidewalk outside." So that was a fun –

EMILY: That was nasty.

SALLY: Coloring to what we were...

EMILY: Right when my nephew came to visit. So I had to be like, "Okay, I have to carry you. You can't walk on the sidewalk. In your bare feet, because you'll get dead mouse disease or whatever."

SALLY: And you could just hear Jack screaming. "NOOO!"

EMILY: He did not want to get in his car seat.

SALLY: [laughs] Jack was so upset about getting – and stopping bothering Tybalt, which was what he was doing.

EMILY: Yeah, but then I reached into my shirt pocket and pulled out some Reese's that I gave to his mom, my sister, who really likes Reese's. I was like, "Do you want these?" And she was like, "Yeah." And then unwrapped one and was like, "Jack, do you want this?" And he immediately stopped crying and was like, "Okay."

SALLY: I wish I was two and all my problems would go away if someone gave me a cand – a bite sized Reese's.

EMILY: Right? I mean, to him it's, like, huge.

SALLY: Yeah, to him it's the size of his sweaty little fist.

EMILY: His grubby little hands.

SALLY: He's so cute.

EMILY: He's so grubby.

SALLY: [laughs] He's a very grubby child.

EMILY: I know. Just constantly covered in filth.

SALLY: And I love that for him. Big Mat Cauthon energy there.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Sort of always dirty [laughs], and chaotic.

EMILY: [laughs] Okay. Thanks for listening. Hope you all have a good week.

SALLY: Yeah!

EMILY: Absolutely do not do, as Mazrim Taim does, war crimes.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Fuck.

SALLY: Bye!