



Episode 138 – Recreational Horse Stunts

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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 Glynnna Mackenzie plays]

EMILY: *Lord of Chaos*.

SALLY: That's me right now, Lord of Chaos.

EMILY: Yeah, that's all of us right now. That's Tybalt, Lord of Chaos.

SALLY: Tybalt is wearing his pirate shirt. He looks very dashing.

EMILY: Who *is* the Lord of Chaos? Is it the Dark One?

SALLY: That's what I thought.

EMILY: Or is it Rand?

SALLY: Oooh.

EMILY: It's hard to, um, unpick that association when you have– [mumbling] association [laughs] when you have Rand in his Fabio get up on the cover, right under the words Lord of Chaos. And you're just like, "Well, yeah, he looks pretty chaotic if you're asking me." But yeah, I guess it is supposed to be the Dark One, because it's not like Demandred would be like, "Let Rand al'Thor rule," you know?

SALLY: I mean, yeah.

EMILY: Well, no he wouldn't. He hates him too much, I guess. So.

SALLY: Well, Demandred and I have that in common. Rand's a real *bitch* in these two chapters.

EMILY: Rand can't do anything right. Will you say this is every – ?

SALLY: Oh, yeah. Sorry. Forgot that was my job now.

EMILY: [laughing]

SALLY: [laughs] This is Everybody Hates Rand. It is your friendly neighborhood *Wheel of Time* podcast. I'm Sally Goodger.

EMILY: I'm Emily Juchau. I'm sorry. My whole family is roasting my dad about – I mean, not about the things we should be roasting him for. It's about the particular design of one of the Thermapens at ThermoWorks.

SALLY: [laughs, snorts] Excellent.

EMILY: It looks like, um, it's got, like, a flame decal on it.

SALLY: Oh, horrible.

EMILY: Yeah, my mom was like, "Who needs a Thermapen and what color do you want?" And I was like – we were all – "I need a Thermampen" Because for some reason we have ThermoWorks lord Chris Juchau, but we don't have Thermapens. We just have our miniature Thermapens on our keychains. I guess Anne and Jake have one, because my dad gave it to them as a wedding gift [laughs]. Moving right along. I was like, "I need one and I don't care what color." And Sarah was like, "I don't – I need one and I don't care what color." And Adam was like, "I need one, but I'm really upset that this flame decal one is sold out." And Sarah was like, "That's horrible. Dad, how'd you let that happen?"

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: And I was like, "That looks like [laughing] Guy Fieri threw up on it."

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: And my mom was like, “It does look like it was meant for rednecks, but to be fair a lot of rednecks like ThermoWorks.” And I was like...so anyway.

SALLY: Well, they’re grilling a lot.

EMILY: Whenever my dad gets out of his numerous Tuesday night church meetings, he’s going to cry victim like he usually does.

SALLY: Yeah, no we were – in my family group chat we were all making – I was like, “Mom please atone for your sins. Why is the thermostat at 63 degrees?” And so the whole family was roasting her for being like, “You cannot keep the house at 63 degrees.” She got out of her work meetings and she was like, “All you guys do is bully me” [laughs].

EMILY: Moms – my mom today sent a picture of her feet clad in Crocs.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: And said – they’re, like, special Crocs. They have, like, a liner.

SALLY: What? [laughing]

EMILY: I don’t know. But she goes, she goes, “These are my Crocs and I don’t want to hear anyone say anything mean about them because they make my feet feel nice.” Or something like that. And, like, I don’t really recall – frequently my mom will say, “Don’t say anything mean about Crocs,” when I have not even noticed that she was wearing Crocs.

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah.

EMILY: And then of course I’m like, “Why are you [laughing] wearing Crocs?”

SALLY: What are thoosoose? [laughs]

EMILY: [laughing] What are those! Um, it was a pretty hilarious preemptive strike against potential bullying.

SALLY: Moms, man, they just can’t take the heat.

EMILY: Yeah, anyway, um. These chapters pick up with Rand and Mazrim Taim going to quote unquote [laughs] the farm. The animal farm. I’ve never read that book, have you?

SALLY: Neither have I, no.

EMILY: I don’t know what it’s about. I assume the dangers of capitalism.

SALLY: It's – yeah I think the family – [laughs] the family – the animals are, like, um – I think it's supposed to be, like, an allegory for communism or something?

EMILY: Oh, the dangers of communism, rather than capitalism. I guess Orwell we're talking about.

SALLY: I don't even know. I just – I think the animals are, like, unionizing or some shit.

EMILY: [chuckles]

SALLY: [laughing] Holding some type of revolution. I think that's – that's always been my understanding. I don't particularly care for Orwell, so I never sought out any of his things after being forced to read *1984*.

EMILY: I don't – I think I even got away without reading *1984*.

SALLY: I mean, I think I probably could have, too, but I'm a loser so I did.

EMILY: What – ? When did you read it?

SALLY: Uh, I read it my sophomore year of high school. 10th grade.

EMILY: Gotcha. I can usually –

SALLY: With the *worst* teacher.

EMILY: I can usually pinpoint – my 11th grade English teacher was supposed to teach us a lot of books and just didn't. So – including, we were supposed to read *Frankenstein*, and I didn't really in that one, which is why my first study of it was in London. Anyway, um.

SALLY: That's a bad time to first study *Frankenstein*.

EMILY: Well, I was sleeping most of the time, but otherwise it was a good experience. It was nice to be with people who actually felt things about *Frankenstein* and had intellectual thoughts about *Frankenstein* as opposed to an 11th grade classroom where everyone is like, "Just let me out."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: They actually don't go directly to the farm. They go to, like, a clearly a little bit outside the farm so they can walk over. This is, of course, Rand Traveling consciously for the I guess first time. He's previously used skimming, mostly. Um, and he points it out to Taim as like, "This is Traveling. If – I can show you how to do it if you didn't catch that."

SALLY: Yeah, which is like, "Okay. Drama queen."

EMILY: Yeah, a little, um, a little petty.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um, but Mazrim Taim's like, "Fine, whatever. Teleportation. You can do that, I guess." And as they're walking to the farm Rand is just like, "Here's what you need to know. Everyone in the world is out to kill me [laughs]."

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: "By association, they will also be out to kill you." And Mazrim Taim is like, "This isn't new to me."

SALLY: Yeah. Like, "Everyone wants to kill me, baby. I'm the fucking worst."

EMILY: "I'm –" [laughs] "People have wanted to kill me since I was, you know, fifteen."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Ever since my douchebaggery –

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: started manifesting.

SALLY: [laughs] Ever since my douchebag birthday.

EMILY: "I joined a frat and ever since then."

SALLY: Joined a frat at fifteen!

EMILY: [laughing] I can't –

SALLY: [laughs] I mean you would be rather douchey if you did join a frat –

EMILY: I know, but Mazrim Taim is not frat guy. He's more of a, like, um uh, what's that word? Cricket! He's more of a cricket –

SALLY: Mm he's a prep.

EMILY: He's more of a guy who's in a cricket club. Yeah.

SALLY: I mean, he's got, like, real rich bitch energy in this chapter where he's like, "These fucking dirty peasants."

EMILY: Oh, yeah. He is so mean to all of the little farmers

SALLY: He's definitely, like, he plays cricket and polo wears white at the country club.

EMILY: He wears his polo shirts with the collars popped, unironically.

SALLY: Two polo shirts. Over each other.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs] Both collars popped.

EMILY: He's like, I can never remember, have you seen that movie about cricket in India?

SALLY: Yeah. Good movie. *Lagaan*.

EMILY: Yeah, *Lagaan*. Oh, because Alf Seegert had everyone watch it. He's, like, specifically one of the British imperialists living in India who gets their ass kicked by the Indian cricket team.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: At least, that's what I wish. I wish that was the arc that Mazrim Taim went on. Instead of like it's boring, I'm doing evil and Rand doesn't care. I wish it was this, um, how does Wikipedia describe *Lagaan*? It's, like, every genre rolled into one. They're like, "It is a romance, musical, sports, comedy drama movie."

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: And I'm like, "Well, there you go."

SALLY: It's a very fun movie!

EMILY: Yeah, I highly recommend.

SALLY: It's also, like, four hours [laughs]. So, like, buckle in. Um, but yeah. Mazrim Taim is like, "LOL, everyone wants to kill me. Nbd. Forsaken are walking – " Which, again, Rand's like [mumbling], "He's not surprised the Forsaken are back." Mazrim Taim is not Demandred. Can we just stop with this dumb game? [laughs]

EMILY: I know. It's so silly. And Rand is also, like, mentioning monsters he's never heard of, such as the *gholam*, which will be a major monster coming up in the next book. Some nice groundwork RJ's laying there. Uh, but they roll up to this farm, which is literally just a farmhouse. And this – the Black Tower is several miles outside of Caemlyn. I couldn't even tell you which direction outside of Caemlyn it is. My guess is to the, like, northwest? Um, in this wooded area. And it does have interesting implications because as the series goes on we see the –

this farm house become the Black Tower proper with a lot more buildings and a lot more of a infrastructure and, uh, some architecture. There's some indication that an actual tower might one day be built. And so I'm just, like, intrigued by how Rand chose Andor specifically for this place?

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: It doesn't seem – he doesn't seem to have put a lot of thought into it, except maybe the idea that Andor is a fairly central location if this amnesty is ever going to extend to the entire continent. Uh, but what he's ruling right now is way more to the east, so you think he would put it in, like, Tear.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Although Tear has some major issues with channelers, so I don't know maybe he was like, "Andor's least likely to run them out with torches and pitchforks." Although, imagine a mob of angry villagers trying to run out the Black Tower with torches and pitchforks [laughs].

SALLY: It would be pretty funny.

EMILY: Ash'aman, kill [laughing].

SALLY: Nooooo, I'm not ready. I'm not ready [laughs].

EMILY: It's just, like, instead of that cutesy, fun scene in *Shrek* where Shrek, like, blows out the torches. It's, like, the horrible war crime version of that. Um, we're immediately introduced to a few of our key Ash'aman right off the bat. We meet the two young lads, Eben Hopwil, I think is his name, and Fedwin Morr.

SALLY: Like what kind of name is Fedwin?

EMILY: I know they're – Fedwin.

SALLY: And Eben.

EMILY: [in a grandma voice] Fedwin!

SALLY: Fedwin! Then we meet our dad.

EMILY: We do meet our dad, Damer Flinn.

SALLY: Who's just bald and old.

EMILY: Yeah, has a wound. And is teaching people how to fight with swords.

SALLY: But, like, not super well [laughs].

EMILY: Yeah, Rand's like –

SALLY: At least, according to Rand.

EMILY: Rand's like, "He's not a swordmaster."

SALLY: "Like *me*."

EMILY: "Like me."

SALLY: "But at least they didn't stab themselves."

EMILY: "He didn't just fight five dudes, but they're – they at least know the right end of the sword." And I'm like, "Everyone knows the right end of a sword."

SALLY: Yeah. Listen, Tybalt would know the right end of a sword.

EMILY: Well.

SALLY: At least he'd learn.

EMILY: [laughs] I don't know if I can extend – well yeah [laughs]. After some trial and error.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Um, and we're also introduced to Jur – Jur.

SALLY: [laughs] Jur.

EMILY: Jur Grady. I can't believe that's his first name.

SALLY: Jur Grady! [laughs]

EMILY: Grady. Um.

SALLY: [laughs] Jur.

EMILY: Jur. Grady. Um, and, uh, Eben, Fedwin, I guess, I think he's more referred to as Morr, and – what's his name?

SALLY: Eben, Fedwin?

EMILY: And Flinn. They all sort of join Rand's coterie at the end of this book. And, um, stick around with him – most of them – for the rest of the series essentially. A lot of them will end up being bonded to Aes Sedai. Um, that's not all of them. There are a couple more that join up, but

they're a lot of, like, the key players. Eben is around a lot. Flinn, like, develops a healing talent, so he's around a lot. And Grady is not in Rand's coterie, but he is in Perrin's coterie. And I do love Grady. I think he's a delight.

SALLY: Yeah. So in classic Robert Jordan style, we're being introduced to a handful of characters who will be extremely important...in like three or four books from now [laughs].

EMILY: Yeah, for now they are just, like, names sort of floating on the surface of the water here. Um, and it is a little bit frustrating that – it's not a little bit frustrating. I don't know how, I don't know how to put this into words. These are important Ash'aman, but they are not, in terms of the Black Tower's entire *arc*, the most important Ash'aman. Um, people who have read the entire series will probably recognize – what's his name? – Androl.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Who, very well could be a totally Brandon Sanderson figment, you know? Like, Brandon Sanderson saw a gap in the Black Tower, was like, "I don't really have any touchstone characters here, besides Logain who sucks ass."

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: And Taim who –

SALLY: [laughs] Brandon's exact words.

EMILY: Yeah, Brandon, known Mormon.

SALLY: [laughs] He's like, "Logain sucks *ass*."

EMILY: "Sucks!" Um, Logain, who's terrible, and Taim, who's also terrible, but in a more morally evil [laughs] way than Logain. Um, and so he invented this guy who's just sort of a jack of all trades who can just cover his bases there. Like, that's a totally believable, plausible thing. But either way it comes back to a failing on Jordan's part, because if Jordan did want this character to be a thing, he should have introduced him a lot earlier on.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: And if he, uh, didn't, then he's the one who manufactured that gap in the Black Tower. Of having all the important characters be, like, outside of the Tower itself.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: When so much of the later series involves the Black Tower sort of crumbling, because Mazrim Taim is evil!

SALLY: Yeah! Fucking big shock.

EMILY: Um.

SALLY: God dammit, Rand.

EMILY: God dammit, Rand!

SALLY: Stupid motherfucker.

EMILY: But, regardless, Taim is like, “These are all peasants and probably none of them are going to be able to actually channel, although since you’re *ta’veren*, God knows all 27 of them might be able to channel.” These are men who have just sort of shown up here. Um, heard about the amnesty – these aren’t guys who know they can channel. These are guys who are coming here to be tested, which is a fascinating little thing, especially because many of them – not many of them, but some of them have come with wives and even children in tow.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Which, just, like, speaks to, um, I don’t know. A level of, I guess, masculinity, some sort of cultural, like, thing that we have heretofore totally missed in *The Wheel of Time*. It feels to me. Like, the channeling men have been so othered by this continent as a whole. Like, the Aiel literally just send them off to fight the Dark One. They’re like –

SALLY: Until they die.

EMILY: Until you die, go away. I think the Sea Folk just abandon them on an island.

SALLY: Jack Sparrow style.

EMILY: Like, “See ya.” So that any men at all, “You know what sounds [laughs] good? Doing, doing this for a hobby.”

SALLY: Yeah, like I think when I first read it I missed that, like, they were coming to be tested, specifically.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: And I was like, “Oh, all these dudes who have shown signs of channeling.” But it’s, like, the fact that they need to be tested and Taim was like, “Yeah, you can be taught to channel.” It’s like, well, has something weird happened to you in your past, like, for some of the older ones? Who are like, “Eh, maybe I just want to make sure that weird thing that happened when I was 25 wasn’t actually channeling.” But for, like, the younger ones who are, like, sixteen, seventeen, twenty – yeah, it’s so wild and it makes me wonder if, like, is it Rand’s influence. That they’re like, “Yeah, we want some of the Dragon Reborn’s glory.” Like it’s not *as bad* to be a man who can channel – it’s very odd.

EMILY: Yeah, I think it's supposed to be – I think the only explanation is that, like, um, you know, Rand's *ta'veren* so these are literally strings of fate being pulled or whatever. And that is apparent in the fact that all of the named men – well, most of them. I don't know about that one guy. Like, the second guy Taim, uh, tests – but most of them do end up being able to channel and are, like, major players. Um, but, you know, the excuse of *ta'veren* pull only extends so far, as we've pointed out many times, I think. Like, there has to be some groundwork for it to work, I guess.

SALLY: Yeah, like I don't know. It would just be interesting if this person, this young man comes in who's – or older man who's like, "I have been channeling and I don't know what I'm doing and..." But we don't really see that, except with Mazrim Taim.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Satan.

EMILY: Um. He's so bad. He's like, "Fine, watch me carefully while I test them." Rand, like, picks it up.

SALLY: Like immediately, basically.

EMILY: Immediately. Probably because he's done it before [laughs] in a past life. Um, and Taim tests Flinn, who can channel, and is sort of, like, moving on – oh, Grady pulls Rand aside and is like, "Hey, listen. I'm thinking of leaving." And Rand's like, "Well, if you want to be a wuss about it" [laughs].

SALLY: Pretty much. Grady's like, "Oh, well. O – fucking – kay."

EMILY: Grady's like [laughing], "Great!"

SALLY: Rand's like, "We're just gonna need, like, all the people we can get to stop the apocalypse, but if you want to just hide out on your farm like a little piss baby that's fine with me, I guess."

EMILY: And Grady's like, "...thank you?"

SALLY: Yeah [laughs].

EMILY: "What the fuck?" So yeah.

SALLY: So Grady should have left.

EMILY: I know, it would have been iconic if he did.

SALLY: With his wife and his four-year-old child.

EMILY: If he just was like, “kay bye.”

SALLY: “You’re a bitch.”

EMILY: “I’ll, like, carry a sword or whatever.” But, yeah, there’s this idea – Rand talks about the Aes Sedai being manipulative, and he talks about himself being manipulative in that moment, but he’s specifically manipulating Grady via a trajectory of masculinity.

SALLY: Yep.

EMILY: He’s like, “You’re not a man unless you do this, essentially.” And man is – manhood is all about being equipped to go to war.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: In whatever capacity. Um, and so that is sort of just, like, the foundation on which the Black Tower is built, is toxic masculinity.

SALLY: Yeah, well, literally in their parting conversation Rand is basically like, “Yes, Mazrim Taim train all these men into literal walking weapons.” Which is the basis of, like, every military. You are not a man unless you are also a weapon, um, which is fucked on so many levels.

EMILY: Yeah, and it’s just fascinating because I think in the same way that the Black Tower is built on toxic masculinity, the White Tower is built on toxic femininity.

SALLY: Correct.

EMILY: Though that’s a less familiar, or even...I don’t even know if that’s a thing in our lexicon.

SALLY: Yeah, I feel like divine femininity to the White Tower, which I actually think is very toxic.

EMILY: Yeah, specifically you have Robert Jordan, a man from the American south, and his conceptions about femininity coloring the White Tower wherein femininity, white femininity is, uh, the, like, the pinnacle, the pedestal on which, yeah, women are pure, which is why so many of the Aes Sedai aren’t sleeping around. They’re so closed off. They’re in this literal pure white tower, untouchable.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Essentially. Yet, they are also exerting incredible intellectual, manipulative power.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Which, Robert Jordan, and a lot of men have conceptualized as the only power that women can wield.

SALLY: Yes.

EMILY: Um, but yeah, here in the Black Tower it's like, "No, we just want you to blow shit up." Um.

SALLY: I'm so worried about these boys [laughs].

EMILY: Yeah, Rand's like, "Okay, well good luck. Test them all and start teaching them, specifically I want you to teach you to how to do weapon shit." And Taim is like, "You're just, like, leaving me here? And Rand's like, "Yes." And Taim's like, "...Great." And I'm like, "Taim, you did walk into this."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Given, I think this would have worked better and it would have made a little more sense, if there was some form of negotiation here.

SALLY: Yep.

EMILY: Like, if Rand was like, "Hey, I'm gonna arrest you for war crimes and turn you over to Bashere unless you agree to be, like, the new creepy school headmaster of my school for deranged war criminals" [laughs].

SALLY: It's just so much.

EMILY: Because [laughs] at least that would, like, I still wouldn't love it. But at least it would make more sense as to why Mazrim Taim chooses to – like, if I was Mazrim Taim I would be like, "What? See ya."

SALLY: Yeah. Yeah. So it's just dumb. It's just another like, "Of course Mazrim Taim is staying because he's Demandred and he wants to do foiling of plans." But, yeah, it also is just not a good look for Rand, to just be like, "I am just telling you what you are doing and you have no option because you quote unquote swore obedience to me." It's just, like, another huge step on Rand's rise to empire dictator.

EMILY: Yeah, he's not great [coughs].

SALLY: But all the Maidens are like, "Oh, Rand."

EMILY: [coughs] Um, yeah as they're leaving Rand is like – oh, I didn't even mention when the first, when Rand first made the gateway to the Black Tower. He heard Aviendha being like, "Hey, wait up!" And he was just like, "See ya!" Closed the gateway on her.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Well, not on her because that would have bisected her.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: But [laughs], closed the gateway before she could come after him. So now we're introduced to the concept that Rand is avoiding Aviendha. And later he says it's because he wants to spend time with Aviendha that he's avoiding her. That's so boring. I'm just gonna skim right over it. But this is his motivation for not keeping his appointment with Bashere, um, and instead going to visit the giant army that is amassing in Tear, kind of on the border between Tear and Illian. Um, in a show of power that Rand is basically using as a big set piece to trick Sammael, while Mat and Bashere have some other plan, which I'm sure is made a little more clear to us later in the text, but I can't remember.

SALLY: I can't remember what it is, either.

EMILY: And it doesn't matter! Because it gets abandoned. Because Rand is like, "Hey, Mat, actually I need you to go pick up my girlfriend."

SALLY: And Mat's like, "Again, I have a very specific set of skills [laughs]."

EMILY: *So* specific.

SALLY: "Please don't send me on your bodyguard errands."

EMILY: "I'm not your chauffeur."

SALLY: "Yeah, let me do battle."

EMILY: "I'm not the guy who stands in an airport with the person's name."

SALLY: Yeah [laughs]. "Elayne."

EMILY: "Elayne. Rand, I'm literally, like, a military genius." And Rand's just like, "Fuck off. You're the only person I could trust with this."

SALLY: And it's like, "You could trust Elayne with herself."

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: There's a new thought.

EMILY: [laughing] I mean, given, Elayne should not be let out of doors.

SALLY: I mean.

EMILY: She's terrible.

SALLY: Elayne should probably just be murdered for the betterment of the continent.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: [laughing] But that's another issue.

EMILY: Um, but so, Rand goes with the Maidens to this place. Um, and.

SALLY: Oh lord.

EMILY: What?

SALLY: Just, I already forgot this was the joke chapter. That I read, like, 15 minutes ago.

EMILY: Yeah, this is the joke chapter. We're, like, kind of, um, Rand is like, "Here's the Maidens. They all seem to think of me as a brother type figure." Although, now suddenly, he gives us, like, a rational explanation for that.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Which he did not provide at all in the last book. Which is this idea that in Aiel society, like, the children of Maidens are considered lucky, but most people don't have any way of identifying who children of Maidens are because, you know, Maidens presumably want to keep being Maidens, and so they give their babies to be adopted by other women in Aiel society. And so, they're like...this sort of talisman that Rand is this actual known biological son of a Maiden, even a Maiden who was not technically Aiel, that they're just kind of, like, feel a sort of, like, possessiveness toward him as representative of all these other children. And you have to imagine that some of the Maidens, themselves, in Rand's bodyguard have maybe gotten pregnant and given away their own children.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Which, because, of course, Robert Jordan doesn't believe in fleshed out female characters, none of those are ever, like, signified to us. But reading between the lines, there's an idea.

SALLY: Yeah, and I mean just, like, statistically.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: [laughs] The amount of Maidens in his.

EMILY: Most of these women are sexually active, we know, because they're all usually flirting with men and getting it on with men, which is great. But, um, and, you know, magic tea aside, birth control in a fantasyland has got to not be 100% effective, so. Yeah, statistically one or two of them.

SALLY: At least.

EMILY: Um, so that's a reasonable enough explanation, but Rand is like, "I'm sick of it. I hate them [laughs]." Just, like, okay. Quiet. But they, uh, get to this other, uh, camp and the Maidens and Rand run into Rand's other honor guard who, you know, waits for him, I guess, here. Thunder Walkers.

SALLY: Yeah, the Thunder Walkers.

EMILY: The Thunder Walkers. And immediately one of the Maidens starts bantering with some of the Thunder Walkers. It's just shit about, like, "You're not stealthy."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: "You'd stab yourself," or whatever.

SALLY: They're like, "Maidens never stop talking." It's just...Aiel stuff.

EMILY: Yeah, and as they leave it's, like, clearly flirtation on some level, because Enaila, the Maiden who instigated it was like, "He was cute" [laughs].

SALLY: "He was really cute!"

EMILY: "Who is he?"

SALLY: "I'm gonna go get his number."

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: [laughs] Good for her.

EMILY: And Sulin's like, "Rand, do you not have a sense of humor? That was hilarious."

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: And Rand, rather than being like, "Well here's a joke from my culture," just, like, whips around [laughing] and launches into this extended story joke.

SALLY: Which, like, I don't even understand. I was trying to get the punchline, and maybe I'm just an idiot.

EMILY: The punchline is that there's this grumpy farmer who, uh, falls past his neighbor. And then when – like into a puddle – and then when the neighbor climbs down to help him out, he won't even, like, accept his help. And someone else is like, "Well, why not?" And he was like, "I went past him in broad daylight right now, falling past him, and he didn't, he didn't extend his hand then so.

SALLY: Okay. That's what I thought.

EMILY: It's *stupid!*

SALLY: But it's not funny [laughs].

EMILY: What is hilarious is the Maidens' response to it. They're like, "Is it about the water?

SALLY: "I don't – no, it's definitely about the rooster."

EMILY: "I think the rooster has something to – [laughs]."

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: And Sulin's like [whispering], "I think it was supposed to be a joke."

SALLY: They're all like, "No."

EMILY: "How can it be funny if I don't know what happened to the water?"

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah. They're like, "There's simply no way it's a joke, Sulin."

EMILY: [laughs] And Rand is just like, "Ugh!" And keeps going.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um, later he has an extended conversation with the Aiel clan chiefs about Aiel humor.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So, you think at some point someone would be like, "Well, what do you guys think is funny?"

SALLY: No. They Aiel are like, "We're hilarious. We're the peak of comedy."

EMILY: I know they –

SALLY: "No other form of comedy matters."

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Literally don't give a shit about Rand's dumb water jokes.

EMILY: I mean, Rand clearly does not have the greatest sense of humor to begin with.

SALLY: Yeah. Like, they might have better luck with, like, Mat [laughs].

EMILY: Yeah, Mat's humor has some crossover with Aiel humor, as Rand has noted in the past. Like, Aviendha makes a joke and he's like, "I'd expect that from Mat."

SALLY: Mat, yeah [laughs].

EMILY: So, like, Mat gets a kick out of other people's suffering [laughs].

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: [laughing] Just like the Aiel do. It is pretty funny. We only see that one moment with Mat, you know, drunkenly singing.

SALLY: Oh yeah.

EMILY: In front of the Aiel. You'd think – I'm sad that we don't get to see...um, our characters' reputations with the common folk, I guess. We don't get to see people being like, "Have you met Mat, though? He is hilarious."

SALLY: The Aiel being like, "There's one funny Wetlander and it's Mat Cauthon."

EMILY: [laughs] "And it's Mat Cauthon. He's hilarious. He's always drunk. He looks filthy."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: "But very funny."

SALLY: "Very funny. Very good a knife stuff."

EMILY: "He gets it." Yeah. Um, but Rand goes to talk to his various, uh, lords, I guess? Tairen and Cairhienin lords.

SALLY: Bastards.

EMILY: Again, as I referenced last season, these are men who we have been introduced to previously, but few of them actually matter. This is where we're introduced to the idea that some of them, who were supposed to come south to join this army, peeled off into this swamp, essentially.

SALLY: [snorts]

EMILY: To join this revolution that is being led by a guy named Darlin, who, Rand credits for at least being straightforward about his rebellion. He's like, "Unlike these other guys, who bowed one minute and the next are joining a revolution. He was just like, 'See ya!' and started a revolution right off the bat." Which is an honest enough move for Rand to eventually make him King of Tear.

SALLY: [snorts]

EMILY: So I guess.

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: These things happen [laughs]. Um, Darlin. I love that that's his name. *Darlin*.

SALLY: Darlin'.

EMILY: But, so we have this brewing revolution taking place in Haddon Mirk.

SALLY: Hmm.

EMILY: Which Rand, for the moment is like, "I don't have time to do anything about this. Nor do I particularly care. I've got to focus on Illian and Sammael." But in the next couple of books, probably...did they visit Haddon Mirk in Book 7?

SALLY: I don't think so? I don't remember Book sev – other than Ebou Dar I don't remember Book 7 very well.

EMILY: Do you remember a sequence – do you remember Rand getting a second wound? Okay.

SALLY: [giggles] I don't!

EMILY: I think it's in Book 7, but it might be in Book 8 that Rand goes to these revolutionaries, finally, and is like, "Hey, what the fuck is going on?"

SALLY: Is Min with him?

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Then yes, that happened in Book 7.

EMILY: Cadsuane is there too.

SALLY: Cadsuaaaaaane.

EMILY: Cadsuane. Okay.

SALLY: Cadsuane's also insane.

EMILY: I mean, yeah, she is. But we'll talk about her when we get to her.

SALLY: We'll get there when we get there.

EMILY: We'll get there when we get there!

SALLY: [baby voice] Huh, Tybalt?

EMILY: But this whole thing is pointless anyway, as Rand keeps pointing out, because he's given this plan to these guys, which is to hold their position and just keep allowing the army to grow until Mat gets there. Now, Rand, known teleporter, for some reason is like, "Mat has to travel to you guys on foot." And all of these people are like, "Yeah, sure."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: I'm not sure – of course, all these people also think that he's a little bit crazy because he keeps referencing fighting the Forsaken, which is the only time that – uh, not the only time, but one of the few times – that the text has been like, "Here's something that Rand's doing that makes him look crazy to common people," that I'm actually like, "Oh, yeah. I get that."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Because it's, like, I don't know. If people were like, uh, god I can't think of any mythical bad guys. I guess if someone was like, "Well, I have to go fight Satan."

SALLY: [snorts]

EMILY: I'd be like, "You good?"

SALLY: Just me and the four horsemen of the apocalypse, baby!

EMILY: Oh, yeah. Pestilence. Famine. Whatnot.

SALLY: Famine has control of...Boston [laughs].

EMILY: I'd be like, "Oh!"

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: "Do tell." Um, but, yeah, Rand is like, "All of this is an elaborate cover for some plot that I've concocted with Bashere and Mat," which presumably is going to be something about sending Bashere and Mat to, um, I don't know, flank Sammael or something like that. Here's, um, the issue. Obviously Rand is going to just send Mat off so the army that he is accumulating

here is the army that he is actually going to take into Illian to fight. And it is, more or less, still going to be a full-frontal assault, except not against Sammael, now it's against the Seanchan. Which is just, like, what? Wha – ? You have a perfectly good military boy right.

SALLY: Yeah, he's just literally right there for the taking.

EMILY: Mat is so underutilized that it makes me red with rage.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: That all of Book 5, essentially, was about Rand realizing, "Oh, Mat's a genius" and now he's like, "Ah, I can do it myself. It's cool."

SALLY: He's a bastard boy. He's a bastard, garbage can man.

EMILY: He's like, "You know what I need right now? Mat." And Mat, in Ebou Dar under house arrest, is like, "You know where I would rather be right now? Fighting in a battle. That's how bad things are here." Um, so I don't know.

SALLY: So you done fucked up, Rand.

EMILY: But, uh, Rand, you know, has this boring conversation with them. Also talks to the Aiel clan chiefs. There's the usual. Cairhienins hate Tairens, Tairens hate Cairhienins, but they all hate the Aiel way more than each other. So, it's a moot point. And finally, Rand heads back to Caemlyn, um, at night. Didn't even send word to Bashere, I guess.

SALLY: I know. I bet Bashere is so pissed.

EMILY: I bet Bashere is just like, "I ask Rand and I ask Rand if he's going to keep the appointment this time." And Rand's like, "Oh, sure," And Davram's like, "Nope." Like, you know how you have those people who are, like, they will say they will be there, but they will not. Or they say they will be on time, but they will not. That's just Rand. There's a star next to Rand's name in Bashere's mental planner.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: He's like, "This bastard does *not* keep his appointments."

SALLY: I just feel sad for all his, like, horsemen.

EMILY: I know!

SALLY: Who just –

EMILY: They're all just waiting to do their horse stunts.

SALLY: Like, have to do the horse stunts to cover up that Rand is going to talk to Bashere about whatever.

EMILY: Maybe they like it. Maybe it's their only form of recreation.

SALLY: But, I mean, are they allowed to do their horse stunts if Rand isn't there? Is Bashere like, "Pack it up, boys!"

EMILY: "Alright! [claps twice]."

SALLY: "He's not showing again. No more horse stunts."

EMILY: "No more – " I don't know.

SALLY: They're like, "Ah, beans."

EMILY: I've gotta assume, since they're the Mongolian equivalents, known for their horse stunts [laughs].

SALLY: That's how they intimidate the others in battle.

EMILY: Exactly.

SALLY: I meant, if someone started, like, flipping off of their horse and shit I'd be like, "No way am I fighting that person."

EMILY: I know. I'd be like, "Goodbye!"

SALLY: Yeah, way too powerful.

EMILY: I surrender. White flag – put the white flag up, commander.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: They can do horse stunts!

SALLY: [laughing] Yeah, exactly. It's fucking – that's so scary.

EMILY: Um, so Rand sneaks back, past Aviendha who's still sleeping in his room, and he's, like, just trying to avoid her. All Aviendha has to do is wait until he wakes up.

SALLY: Yeah, be like –

EMILY: "Hey, yo!"

SALLY: "Why are you avoiding me?"

EMILY: “What the fuck?”

SALLY: There’s a very awkward conversation where Sulin tries to give him sex advice [laughs].

EMILY: Oh yeah, that is funny.

SALLY: She’s like, “Ask her to wash your back.”

EMILY: She’s like, “Can you blush?” And Rand’s like, “I’m a ginger, so yes.”

SALLY: She’s like, “Well, do more of that.”

EMILY: “Do more.” She’s like, “I need you to be more demure [laughs] and maidenly.” And Rand’s like, “What?”

SALLY: She’s like, “Trust me. It’ll work.”

EMILY: “It will work. Aviendha’s a top, so.”

SALLY: “We got this.”

EMILY: “We got this. I just need to train you.” And Rand’s like –

SALLY: [laughs] “Need to train you in the art of [laughs] submission.” Rand’s like, “What if I was dead? This is the worst conversation I’ve ever had” [laughs].

EMILY: Um, so that is where we leave Rand, having done a day of bad things. Um, such as giving a war criminal blanket permission to teach other men how to be war criminals. And gathering an army, um, that is not going to do the thing they are told they are going to do, but will still, don’t worry, do some war later on. But for now Rand will just leave them languishing and infighting on the border of Illian. Rand’s like, “I still have stuff to do in Andor.” And they’re like, “Like what?” And he’s like, “Like find out if Elayne’s my cousin!” God!”

SALLY: Oh, barf. Barf.

EMILY: I know. Uh, but that’s that. The next chapter will be Mat’s point of view.

SALLY: Blessed be.

EMILY: Which might illuminate the situation a little bit better for us, but either way it will be a breath of fresh air. Although, it is immediately followed by one of the classic bad guys doing bad things chapters. So.

SALLY: Robert Jordan loves one of those.

EMILY: Might just skim over that. Um, do you anything to add?

SALLY: Not about the chapters. Nope.

EMILY: Okay. Um, thank you for listening. Hope the audio is a little better than it was, uh, last week. Sorry about that. Still getting used to shit here in the new space. Um, thank you to Glynna Mackenzie for our theme song. Thank you to our supporters on Patreon. Um, you can catch all of the tiers that we've referenced before if you choose to sign up for that. Follow us on social media. You can catch our Friday night livestreams. It's usually 5:30pm Mountain Standard Time if you're at all interested in that, need some levity to brighten your week.

SALLY: It's usually pretty bonkers.

EMILY: It's usually just pretty whack. Um, but that's it.

SALLY: That's it.

EMILY: Do you have a sign off?

SALLY: I mean, this is more something that happened to Emily [laughs] than happened to me.

EMILY: What?

SALLY: But a few days ago, Emily, like we were talking in the morning the first time we saw each other, and she was like, "The neighbors across from us decided to move in at, like, midnight" [laughs].

EMILY: Oh yeah. That did happen. Imagine my shock and surprise when I looked through my window. Our townhomes are, like, in a typical – right across little roads from each other, so our garage faces our neighbor across the way's garage. And so my window looks down on that sort of alley, and I just heard all this noise and, like, people talking right below me. And I looked down, and there's a whole ass U-Haul truck.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Like, backing up. And I'm like, "What the?" And then, I don't know, they just – they, like, moved in three things and then left. They're very mysterious. I've been trying to keep an eye on them. Most of their activities seem to be nocturnal.

SALLY: [laughing] I've been trying to keep an eye on them.

EMILY: [laughs] I just am curious! I'm like, "What motivates someone to move in at midnight?"

SALLY: Yeah, like, of all the activities to do moving is one you have to do in the morning.

EMILY: Yeah, you'd think. I assume they have, like, some whack work schedules. It seems to be just, like, some young men. Um.

SALLY: Wild, though.

EMILY: And I'm not necessarily like, "I have to keep an eye on them," like *Rear Window*, but I do hear them at night sometimes. They're frequently coming and going, so I'm just like, "What's up with them?"

SALLY: Hello?

EMILY: It's a fun sensation that I haven't had since I was in New York. And it's even slightly more intimate than it was in New York, because now I have a pinpoint focus, whereas in New York it was just whoever chose to walk beneath my window at night, which was everyone all the time.

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah.

EMILY: Especially on the Fourth of July.

SALLY: Oh boy. Yeah.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: I don't know how it was in your Queens apartment, but Brooklyn was *loud*.

EMILY: Queens was a lot better because I was, um, way farther away from the front. The street facing view.

SALLY: Oh, that's right. That's right. I forgot about your cute little apartment.

EMILY: Um, although, yeah. And Queens was just sort of quieter. Even though we were, like, right next to two major roadways. I don't know. Anyway.

SALLY: There's your fun New York update.

EMILY: Fun reminiscences. But, thanks for listening! Be slutty. Don't do war crimes.

SALLY: Please. Just don't do them.

EMILY: Especially as we're talking about these boys. Please don't do war crimes. Goodbye!

SALLY: Bye!