



Episode 142: Enchanted by the Pringles

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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 Glynn MacKenzie plays)

Sally: Anyway, guess this house is on a really big anime kick. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah ... (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: If I ended up deleting that, we did just talk for about ten minutes about, like -- like a clickbait article, Top Five Sexiest Anime Men. (laugh)

Sally: Listen.

Emily: And we did some self-discovery in that time, so, um. Yeah, that was that. Onto -- onto Lord of Chaos. (laugh)

Sally: Oh, yeah. This is Everybody Hates Rand, your friendly neighborhood Wheel of Time podcast. I'm Sally Goodger.

Emily: I'm Emily Juchau.

Sally: Uhh. Here we are.

Emily: We're recording pretty late at night --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So the energy's a little wack. Um. These are actually two pretty, like, short, easy breezy chapters.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: I mean, not easy breezy in that the content was bad -- I mean, good -- we are dealing with the aftermath of Rand being magically raped.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, but, like, you know, there's a -- quite a bit less, I think, to talk about.

Sally: Yeah. I also just think any chapter that comes to us through Verin's point of view is a little easier on the soul. You know? I think she's really interesting.

Emily: Yeah --

Sally: I know we get Rand there a little bit at the end.

Emily: I think Verin just tends to be one of those, um, narrators who mediates really with, uh, very little bias --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: If that is making sense. Like, with Rand, we have to sort of dig through his misogyny and all his mental illnesses to get what, you know, is actually going on.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, with Mat, we have to deal with all his, like, side commentary and talking to himself, and while that can be entertaining in and of itself --

Sally: Yeah, it does make following what's going on a little difficult sometimes.

Emily: Yeah. Verin is just, you know, pretty straight with --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: What's going on.

Sally: She's just sort of like, cut to the feeling, you know?

Emily: And -- (laugh, sings a note) She tends to be less, um, up in Aes Sedai politics than other Aes Sedai --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which makes her a lot more bearable.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, but yeah, we pick up right where the last chapter left off, right after Rand has left the inn. All the Two Rivers girls and all of the maids are in various states of hysteria, and Verin is just sort of going around trying to get everyone --

Sally: I know. She's, like, patting young women on the head.

Emily: She's, like, patting them. She tells one of the maids, she's like, "Go make everyone some tea and just put, like, a shit-ton of brandy in it." (laugh)

Sally: And I'm like, some of these girls are, like, 14.

Emily: Fantasy land, baby. Everyone's drinking alcohol since --

Sally: That's -- yeah. Brandy on the binky, I guess.

Emily: Yeah. Eww. (laugh)

Sally: Or whiskey on the binky, I think it's --

Emily: Is that a thing?

Sally: Yeah. I guess, like, -- probably in the, like, forties or fifties, which was a time in America -
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Emily: Yeah.

Sally: They would, like, put -- like, dip the baby's binky in whiskey, and it would make them go to sleep.

Emily: Wow. I mean, it would make them go to sleep, I bet. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Yeah. I mean, that was, like, the thing. Like, if your baby wouldn't sleep, you'd, like, dip their baby -- or, like, put a little bit of whiskey on their lip or something?

Emily: God.

Sally: Maybe this is just, like, a Southern thing --

Emily: No, I feel -- I --

Sally: Or, like, my family thing.

Emily: I've heard about that. It's just, like, sort of vibes with how the state of medicine for a long time was just, like, opium.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: 'Cause, you know, it has a -- a noticeable effect.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That, or they were like, "Does it make you poop? Or does it make you puke? That's medicine. Because it's doing something."

Sally: It's pure -- purging your humors.

Emily: "It's doing something --"

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: "Visible that we can see. So."

Sally: Anyway, I'm surprised humanity is alive. I'm surprised all these girls survived Verin just giving them buckets full of brandy. But they seem to be fine. (laugh)

Emily: They're all like, "Oh my God, we have to leave. We have to get out of here." Mat's sister is like, "We have to find Mat!"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And one girl is like, "I want to see Caemlyn!" (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Yeah. It's very chaotic.

Emily: (inaudible) ... Um, and Verin is just like, "Oh my God." Finally Alanna is like, "Mm," snaps, does her whole, like, trick -- Gandalf trick of appearing bigger --

Sally: Mm.

Emily: Than she is, and is like, "Everyone get into your rooms, or I will literally kill you." And Verin's like, "What a great way to handle children."

Sally: Yeah. And Verin's like, "I fucking hate you."

Emily: Yeah. And Alanna's just like, "La dee da dee da." So all the girls run away, and Verin's like, "Mm. Why don't we talk in private?" And Alanna's like, "Fine." They go back to their little private room. Um. There kept being typos of "Alanna" to "Manna"?

Sally: I know!

Emily: What was with that?

Sally: I don't know, it's --

Emily: Was that just our copy of Lord of Chaos?

Sally: It might've just been, like, a weird thing, but I was so confused for so long, 'cause I was like, surely I'm going crazy reading Lord of Chaos. (laugh)

Emily: I know, I just stared at it for the --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I was like, What? Who's Manna? Manna?

Sally: Yeah. It's like, what's happening?

Emily: Alanna.

Sally: Ah! It was really wacky.

Emily: Um. But they have a brief conversation, sort of side-stepping, initially, around the, you know, actual question. But, um, Verin's like, "OK, so, seems like there actually are rebel Aes Sedai." Apparently they had not known that. How would they, really?

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: I mean, they have been away from the White Tower.

Sally: They've been in the Two Rivers with Perrin.

Emily: Yeah. But similar to the way that, uh, last book, Nynaeve saw a signal in an Aes Sedai agent's window and that was how they found out that the Tower had been broken, I guess here in Caemlyn or somewhere along the road, Alanna saw something similar, and so they've received this message that, like, everyone should return to the White Tower, and if you do, then everything will be forgiven. And they're like, "What the shit does that mean?"

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: It's terrifying.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And they're like, "Well, what are we gonna do?" And Alanna's like, "Well --"

Sally: Is he playing with his doorstep again?

Emily: No, he got into my trash can.

Sally: UGGGGGHHH.

Emily: He --

Sally: Listen. Our cat is a monster.

Emily: (distant) Get out!

Sally: He's a demon straight from hell. All he wants is the trash in Emily's trash can for reasons no one can comprehend. Like, Tybalt has seen garbage cans before. But this --

Emily: Here's what happened.

(door shutting)

Emily: Pretty much every morning -- and this might disgust some of you -- but I eat a little snack pack of Pringles and a granola bar, and that's my breakfast and it's just 'cause, like, that's what I can eat in the morning.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: I cannot handle heavier food.

Sally: Fair.

Emily: Um, and Tybalt -- one time, I think, I, like, dropped a Pringles crumb --

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: And he got a taste of it and has been enchanted ever since by the idea of Pringles. So my little wastepaper basket under my desk is just, like, granola bar wrappers and Pringles --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Empty Pringles containers -- and, you know, some paper and tissues. And I think Tybalt is just obsessed with getting into those Pringles.

Sally: He's like, "There WILL be a small chip in here for Tybalt."

Emily: Yeah. And, I mean, there will be, Tybalt, 'cause crumbs. But Tybalt, you can't eat that stuff.

Sally: Yeah. Tybalt literally has the most delicate constitution. Emily's adorable mother bought him an advent calendar that -- from Trader Joe's that has, like, a few little cat treats in it every day that's supposed to, like, count down to Christmas, and they're, like, seaweed, salmon cat treats or whatever. We gave them to Tybalt for two days, and they made him vomit because they weren't the treats he was used to. Um. Whenever we try and give him wet food, he has violent diarrhea. (laugh) So. He's got a very, very delicate constitution. He can eat only very few things, and yet every time there is a Pringle, apparently --

Emily: He just desires the Pringle.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Give me the Pringle.

Sally: (laugh) He's like Gollum.

Emily: (Gollum voice) My Pringle ...

Sally: OK, this episode is so cursed. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) OK, so, um. Verin and Alanna are like, "What the fuck are we gonna do about this whole situation?" Alanna's like, "I can't believe that he locked us -- he's telling us we -- he's limiting our movements," or whatever. And Verin's like, "Well, we can probably get past that." Unspoken, though, is the idea that they could get out of Caemlyn, but that would mean ditching all of the Two Rivers girls --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Who Verin basically considers, like, a cash cow in that they are just, like, so fucking powerful --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And there are so many of them.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: She's like, "This will fucking double the Tower's novice count," because that's how few people are coming to learn to channel these days. Finally, though, Verin is like, "Um, so what the fuck were you doing, um, bonding him like that?" And Alanna replies that it was the rational thing to do and that someone should have bonded all three of the ta'veren boys, um, you know, long ago. Her idea --

Sally: (whisper) Sorry.

Emily: I mean, the -- the language she uses is just, like, indicative of the fact -- and this has always been subtext, but here it is made more explicit -- that the Warder bond can act as a leash.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And so, um, Alanna has frequently been one of the most aggressive ones about it, and Verin brings that up, that Alanna was kind of aggressive about wanting to bond Perrin in the Two Rivers and the only reason she didn't was basically 'cause Faile was like, "I will kill you."

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Which, like, good for Faile, I guess --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Saving her husband from that fate. Tybalt. (sigh)

Tybalt: (meows)

Sally: (laugh) What if you came and sat with us?

Emily: So it's like -- Alanna is like, "OK, I'm through implying that I am about to bond someone as my Warder. I am just going to surprise attack them with the bond."

Sally: Yeah. Healthy.

Emily: Also is the idea that Alanna recently lost one of her Warders and so now she is emotionally distraught. This is, um, not great because it allows, uh, this book, I guess, to make an argument that women -- this is, like, a common argument, especially in the sphere of politics and whether women should have power --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That idea that women are more emotional and more, uh, unstable than men are.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Which is a -- an old, old, old idea, going back to BCE, essentially. Um. And so it's no particular surprise that Robert Jordan fell victim to this little brand of misogyny because anytime he caught a whiff of it from any sort of historical or literary, um, inspiration, he was like, "I'll just pepper that in --"

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: "To my story." So Alanna is very emotional; she is, as far as I really remember, the only Aes Sedai to ever really go through this on-screen for us. Actually, that's not true, because both Siuan and Leane lost their Warders.

Sally: Oh, yeah.

Emily: And that was just sort of skimmed right over in the wake of their also being stilled.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which is not to say that, like -- I mean, trauma responses are very differently, but if this is how Alanna is reacting to the loss of a Warder, then we would expect Siuan and Leane to similarly be or have been very -- more visibly, um, upset.

Sally: Yeah, Siuan mentions it in passing -- mentions it in passing, like, two times.

Emily: I don't even know Siuan's Warder's name.

Sally: Yeah, I don't know his name. I don't know --

Emily: He's never brought up again.

Sally: Leane's Warder's name. I don't -- yeah. And, like, Verin mentions here, she's like, "I lost one Warder, and it took me ten years to bond a new one." Like --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: It's a big deal, and, um, yeah. So it's -- it's very frustrating and troubling that it's, like, put on Alanna in this instance to, like, justify the text's "Rand can't trust Aes Sedai; women shouldn't have power; the White Tower shouldn't be a thing."

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Kind of --

Emily: The whole --

Sally: It adds to that bag.

Emily: The whole "Aes Sedai react poorly to their Warders' death" thing is used as a plot point here and in A Memory of Light -- spoiler alert -- when, uh, Gawyn kicks the bucket --

Sally: (laugh) RIP.

Emily: Egwene goes a little bit crazy too.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: And just sort of, you know, dies a martyr because she's like, "I have nothing left to live for without the Warder." Essentially -- that's, you know, simplifying it a little bit --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It is also the apocalyptic last battle.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And there's a lot going on. But it is, yeah, putting a lot of -- it's just very indicative that when Warders lose their Aes Sedai, they go into a suicidal battle rage, which is, you know, very masculine --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Whereas when Aes Sedai lose their Warders, they just become weepy and unstable. Which is just, like --

Sally: Yeah, it's just the hysteria.

Emily: Yeah, Alanna is a little bit hysterical here. Um, just doing shit that doesn't make sense. Um. Verin does not pass a lot of judgment on Alanna --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which is a little disappointing --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You know, Verin isn't like, "Well, that was fucking stupid, and you should not have done it." She is more focused on the idea that, like, Alanna is so upset and sort of aware that she may have just fucked up that it is now making Alanna more willing to go along with --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Whatever Verin wants them to do.

Sally: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Emily: So they're just sort of reverting back to "all Aes Sedai care about is power dynamics."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Uh, there's not really much to say about that other than it's all bad.

Sally: Yeah. It's just very frustrating. It does make you wonder what type of man is like, "I'm going to be a Warder."

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Like, I was -- like, Verin talks about her Warder, Tomas? Tomas?

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Whatever his name is -- seems just, like, a lovely dude. Verin's like, "Go cheer up the innkeeper," so he starts drinking with the innkeeper.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Seems like a very nice and reasonable guy, and it's like, what happened in your life that led you to being like, "Sure, this woman can bond me as her leashed bodyguard."

Emily: Yeah, we get very few, like, actual Warder perspectives. The only one, really, is Lan's --

Sally: And he doesn't count.

Emily: And Lan is, you know, sort of on the far end of the spectrum in terms of --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He's, like, the distillation of everything that is bad and terrible about the Warder bond.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He's already semi-suicidal. He, you know, is really obsessed with honor and with violence-based honor. Um. So, yeah, we get very few just, like, normal dudes.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Or, at least, we don't get to see inside their heads. A lot of the Warders who we see just seem like normal guys, but --

Sally: Yeah. Just are like, "This is my Aes Sedai lady." I dunno. It's just a very odd system. Sometimes -- like, it's one of those things, like, a fish can't see the water it's swimming in. When you read Wheel of Time for long enough, it's like, yeah, Aes Sedai and their Warders, and sometimes it -- so it'll just, like, go under the radar -- radar -- I'm having a hard time tonight -- but other times I'll be like, this is so weird. This is such an odd system.

Emily: Yeah, how do they come to this?

Sally: Like, where do they meet these men? What's going on? I dunno.

Emily: Rand, meanwhile, leaves the inn on a -- his horse at a gallop and --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Immediately outpaces everyone else, so --

Sally: All ninety-seven thousand of his bodyguards.

Emily: Yeah, his -- his honor guard of one million people --

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Just left behind in the dust. Um, so he gets back to the royal palace and pretty quickly Travels, uh, not to the Black Tower directly but the, like, woods outside the Black Tower.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: We don't even know where he's gone, initially.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He's very, um, in his head and upset and, um, he talks about how he can feel Alanna, like, inside him, which is upsetting, and his need to create distance between them. Um. And -- uh, I feel like I might be -- it's a pretty, like, textbook, I would say, uh, example of a, you know, trauma response in fantasy. It is, um, there very blatantly, and it is pretty quickly pushed out of the way for the plot. Which is not necessarily a bad thing, because books have to be paced and move forward --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Especially if their primary objective is not to discuss trauma. Um. But in a book series like Wheel of Time, when we aren't allowed to linger on it or go back to it in, really, any meaningful capacity, um, then it sort of gets buried under everything else.

Sally: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Emily: So, like, the fact that Rand has just been bonded as a Warder against his will is, um, sort of secondary to the fact that he's at the Black Tower and Mazrim Taim is teaching guys how to blow up rocks, you know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which is great. Like, Rand walks in on this lesson and is like, "Don't worry; the only guys who actually, you know, stayed -- who actually passed Mazrim Taim's test to channel and stayed are the ones that I named last time --"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Of course and, um, a couple of other guys --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Unnamed --

Sally: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Emily: Who have -- who he -- who Taim has since accumulated. There's, like, seven of them total. And, uh, yeah, they're all just sitting there learning how to blow up rocks with the Power. Very, uh, rudimentary and, like, if they don't remember to put a shield in front of themselves, then they could, you know, get blown up -- get their faces blown up.

Sally: Yeah. Flinn gets, like, hit with a rock shard --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: That, like, cuts his face.

Emily: And Taim's just like, "Mm. That's how they're going to learn." And -- sorry. Taim makes this argument that's like, "I need to be allowed to start going out further and recruiting," because, as it is, they're getting, uh, men who can channel and they're, like, going out, I dunno, every few days --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: But it's just, like, four or five dudes at a time, and most of them won't be able to channel.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Rand's like, "OK, well, how would you do it?" And Taim lays out this, like, elaborate plan where he'll go to -- it's all about -- (laugh) for Taim, it's all about getting some guys to come with him to the Black Tower before the -- they realize what they have signed up for.

Sally: Yeah, it's kidnapping. (laugh)

Emily: He's like, "I just intend to, like, fully con a bunch of dudes into following me to a second location." (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. "Not getting me to no second location!" John Mulaney.

Emily: "And once they're there, once they're there, then I will, you know, spring it on them that they're actually going to be channeling."

Sally: "And then if they can't channel, I'll just send them to Caemlyn as part of your army."

Emily: Yeah. So, uh --

Sally: It's like, are these men -- just, Mazrim Taim doesn't believe in the value of human life, but we knew that.

Emily: I mean, obviously.

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: And Rand's -- he's like, "You have to do this because you have to increase your numbers because at any moment, you know, you have no idea whether Bashere's men will stay loyal to you." He also says something about the, quote unquote, "so-called Aiel," which is another Robert Jordan indicator that, oh, this is actually Demandred. Why would Mazrim Taim call them the so-called Aiel?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's Demandred who has preconceptions of what the Aiel are.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: So again, it's not Demandred, so -- (laugh)

Sally: It's just --

Emily: That's just sort of a wack thing for him to say.

Sally: Yeah. It's like, what?

Emily: Um, and Rand, you know, doesn't pick up on it. But Rand finally is like, "OK, yeah, go ahead and do it."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You have the OK to kidnap men en masse.

Sally: In my name.

Emily: In my name, 'cause Taim's like, "I will match the White Tower within a year," and Rand's like, "I mean, that sounds -- that sounds pretty -- pretty good." And I'm like, at what cost, Rand? (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. Just gonna go kidnap some boys?

Emily: Boys being kidnapped! So many boys.

Sally: Christ.

Emily: CSI: Caemlyn.

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: Where are -- where are the missing boys? Mazrim Taim has them.

Sally: Mazrim Taim has all of the missing boys.

Emily: In his boarding school from hell.

Sally: Yeah. Seriously. He's like, "People have to do -- they have to do all their chores with the Power, and if they can't heat their food, they eat cold." And, like --

Emily: Hogwarts School for Witchcraft and War Crimes.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: This is what he's doing.

Sally: Correct.

Emily: Um. We then hop over to Nynaeve and Elayne. I mean, Nynaeve, primarily. We have another, uh, sort of useless day of Nynaeve walking around.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) We find out that the Hall of the Tower, the important Aes Sedai, have been meeting with this embassy from the White Tower, Tarna Feir -- or Feir.

Sally: Tarna Fear.

Emily: Tarna Fear.

Sally: A tarn of fear.

Emily: Tarnation. What in tarnation?

Sally: Wot in tarnation?

Emily: Um, and so far no one knows what the result of this meeting will be -- whether the, um, Sitters will just be like, "Well, yeah, might as well go back to the Tower. Y'know?"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Crisis averted."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And of course Nynaeve and Elayne are not thrilled by that concept and are trying to eavesdrop, so far unsuccessfully, using weaves that Moghedien is teaching them. Um. Elayne leaves to go do her many duties, leaving Nynaeve alone with Moghedien. But Nynaeve is not wearing the bracelet -- a'dam bracelet -- so Moghedien is like, "I will just take this opportunity to remind you that I do not have Stockholm Syndrome." (laugh)

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: "And I hate you."

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: "And literally the second I can, I am going to stab you in the back."

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And Nynaeve's like, "Oooh, I don't like this," and leaves the room, and it's like, Nynaeve, you fucking nitwit.

Sally: Well, then, maybe don't, like, mm, enslave people. Mm?

Emily: Yeah, like --

Sally: Mm? Your actions have consequences. Mm?

Emily: She's like, "I thought she was, like, cowed," and I'm like, she's the Forsaken?

Sally: Yeah. It's like -- also, why would you want that? Why -- it just is such a -- this whole thing is so frustrating. The girls are like, "We are going to psychologically and physically torture this person and get really upset when they are not tortured into submission."

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: It's like, it's not a good look, ladies. It's actually a really bad look. I know we keep harping on this book's propagation of war crimes -- (laugh) and crimes against --

Emily: Is torturing people bad if those people are bad? Yes.

Sally: (simultaneously) Yes.

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: Let's just get that on the table. Yes.

Emily: We've said it before.

Sally: Human rights violations are bad.

Emily: Um. (laugh)

Sally: Full -- stop.

Emily: But Moghedien is like, "You guys should go to Caemlyn. Like, who fuckin' knows what's going on here? And you guys aren't getting anything done." I mean --

Sally: She's right.

Emily: And Moghedien -- she is one hundred percent right, but Moghedien also, no doubt, believes she will have more opportunities to escape once they are out of Salidar. Which is also true. But Nynaeve, of course, has already been thinking about leaving, so as soon as she departs, she goes and finds Birgitte, who is just sort of watching some little boys play with rocks --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: In the way that little boys do.

Sally: (laugh) They're just, like, pelting each other with rocks.

Emily: Just like, "Rocks! We love rocks. We're boys, and we love rocks."

Sally: They're very charming.

Emily: Yeah. Um. It's not just, like, rocks, it's like they have a bag that they filled with rocks --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: To throw at each other.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's like, you couldn't think of something -- you couldn't find a -- a less harmful -- (laugh) --

Sally: No, man, that tracks.

Emily: Thing to be throwing?

Sally: Little boys -- boys, little or big, love throwing shit at each other.

Emily: That's true, yeah. It's like how -- it's like how whenever we're playing Minecraft and we go to a snowy area --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Devin will find snowballs and throw them at me.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's like some sort of instinct that's triggered.

Sally: Yeah. Literally, every -- like, every winter -- my brother Ian is 31, and I am 25 -- every winter of my life, I will walk outside, and Ian will just be there. He'll, like, have returned from something.

Emily: (laugh) Dun dun.

Sally: And then he'll just be like, "I have to throw a snowball at Sally, or I will die," and I'm like, Ian. We're adults. (laugh)

Emily: You don't have to throw things.

Sally: It's like he will literally die. So.

Emily: They just love throwing things.

Sally: Boys just love --

Emily: To throw rocks. Um, we do get an exciting update on Moghedien's kidnapped, um, fake children: that they are doing well.

Sally: (laugh) They're -- they're healing.

Emily: Which is good to know. Although Nynaeve is like, "OK, but the problem with them getting better is that now they might tell some people that, uh, that's not my mom."

Sally: (laugh) Yeah.

Emily: You're not my dad!

Sally: Boogie woogie woogie.

Emily: Have I told you -- I've told you about Anne and Adam's, um -- (laugh) Have I not told you about this? I yell this all the time. "Pepper to the eyes, yell, 'No, no, no!'" (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Everyone -- uh, most people had, like, a D.A.R.E. program --

Sally: Oh, yeah.

Emily: Y'know, uh, in the American school system. You, like, had some, like, fake police officer show up and be like, "Don't do drugs, kids."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Sign this pledge that you'll never do drugs."

Sally: Yeah, and the mascot was a lion, for some reason?

Emily: I dunno, but that was phased out around the time I was in elementary school --

Sally: Mm.

Emily: And slowly, after I left elementary school, that was -- what replaced it was this program that was meant to teach kids self-defense.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: And I don't remember if there was, like, an acronym or anything. But it was like -- literally, like, taught kids self-defense moves.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: And, like, you had, like, a little graduation ceremony where you just fought a man.

Sally: What the -- shit? What. The. Shit?

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: This -- I -- I am only a year younger than you in school, and I did D.A.R.E.

Emily: I'm -- I don't -- it was my --

Sally: Utah County was like --

Emily: I'm sure it was a school district by school district-based thing.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But, um, yeah, I didn't do D.A.R.E. that I remember. I do remember that Sarah did, 'cause she had a shirt. No one ever told ME not to do drugs. (laugh)

Sally: Everyone was like, "This kid's DEFINITELY gonna do drugs."

Emily: Look at me now. I mean, a big facet of my personality is making people think that I'm high accidentally.

Sally: Yeah. It's pretty funny. It's 'cause she's --

Emily: Like that fraud analyst --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That time I bought, you know, a snow cone machine and an Xbox and a vibrator all the same day. (laugh)

Sally: And they're like, "This can't be right." (laugh)

Emily: "This -- someone just smoked a whole lot of weed." Um, no, so Anne and Adam had to -- my younger brother and sister -- like, did this whole program about -- where they would learn

self-defense moves, but they -- of course, the -- part of the lessons were like, you also have to be yelling things to, like, get attention and get help.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: So Adam would just suddenly yell, "YOU'RE NOT MY DAD!" and attack one of us.
(laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: And it -- they had this whole thing that was like, "Pepper to the eyes, yell, 'No, no, no!' No, no, no!" (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) what is happening?

Emily: It was wild. So.

Sally: The Juchau family -- guys, I cannot stress this enough. The Juchau family is so inherently chaotic in the way that they interact with each other. Just, like, wild beasts.

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: Constantly just, like, attacking each other and yelling things -- (laugh) And their mom is always like, "Everyone has to bet on something." And, like, what am I -- I don't know what's happening. (laugh)

Emily: My mom's a gambling addict --

Sally: (laugh) Yeah.

Emily: And she attacks people. Like, she'll sit on us if --

Sally: Yeah, it's --

Emily: We don't move fast enough. (laugh)

Sally: It's --

Emily: Anne's usually peeing her pants.

Sally: (laugh) Yeah, there's also that.

Emily: Sarah's usually crying.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Adam's just sort of wrestling on the ground.

Sally: Yeah. They're always fighting. Emily's dad is always just confused in the distance.

Emily: My dad is always, like, eating something.

Sally: Yeah. With his glasses on the end of his nose.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Anyway, I love them dearly. They're just, like -- (laugh)

Emily: We're a lot.

Sally: So chaotic.

Emily: We're, like, a lot to handle all at once when we're together.

Sally: That wasn't to say that I don't love your family. I just, like --

Emily: It's just one of those weird things where I don't -- like, my family has a very specific language --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That is a lot for other people.

Sally: No, I get that. My family does too. It's usually Biker Mice from Mars. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah, I experienced that one time --

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: When I was in the car with Sally and her brothers on the way to the MBMBaM live show.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: And they just start talking about Biker Mice from Mars, and I'm like, what the fuck? So you're telling me this isn't a Sally-specific thing?

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: I was so angry. (laugh)

Sally: So anyway, families are fun. Right, guys? (laugh)

Emily: OK. Anyway, Nynaeve's like, "Birgitte, should -- maybe we should go to Caemlyn," and Birgitte's like, "I mean, yeah, I can get Uno in on that. We can be ready to go in a couple days." And Nynaeve's like, "Mmm. I don't wanna take Uno." And Birgitte's like, "... Why?"

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: She's like, "It would be a lot fucking easier," and Nynaeve's like, "We don't need men to protect us," and Birgitte's like, "We don't NEED them, but it'll make things a shit-ton easier."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "You want to be, like, fighting people every other day?"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "If we just have dudes around, we're gonna avoid that."

Sally: Yeah, she's like, "If we have twelve Shienaran soldiers, armed to the teeth, nobody's gonna bother us."

Emily: And Nynaeve's like, "Mmm." Birgitte's like, "Get -- if you and Elayne both agree on it, then get Elayne to tell me that, and then, yeah, maybe I'll leave Uno out," knowing, of course, that Nynaeve is just saying this, that Elayne doesn't know.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's just weird posturing bullshit.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: We're reintroduced to, um, Arenia, who is now Birgitte's hanger-on --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Is mimicking her in a lot of ways. Nynaeve's like, "She seems really jealous whenever Birgitte interacts with anyone else because, I dunno, it's like she's never heard of having more than one friend," and I'm like, she's a lesbian.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's fine. She has a crush on Birgitte. Moving on. We're also reintroduced to Nicola and the fact that she can channel -- she can channel quite a bit, apparently; she's a tier, you know, below, our main three girls but still much higher than --

Sally: Most, yeah.

Emily: Most -- most other novices. And both of these women were not pleased to find out that Nynaeve and Elayne were not actually Aes Sedai and resent them quite a bit now. Which, like, lends itself to, you know, just more sort of hateful dynamics between Nynaeve and Elayne and literally everyone they meet.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, it would be nice if Nynaeve and Elayne had a support system.

Sally: Yeah. Friends.

Emily: Friends. But instead, they're just like, "Everyone we meet hates us." And I'm like, well, I mean, you were very condescending to these women when they were refugees --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: On the, um, foundation of a lie that you were Aes Sedai, so --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Yeah, no wonder they aren't like, "Thank you guys so much."

Sally: Yeah. "Thank you for lying to me and being a huge asshole."

Emily: Um, and now treating the other woman that we arrived with -- who they don't know is one of the Forsaken --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: They're just like, "Marigan is just their servant now?"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's very weird.

Sally: Yeah. I would also be like, "Fuck these people, am I right?"

Emily: Yeah, so Arenia and Nicola are annoying characters, but their behavior toward Nynaeve and Elayne is pretty justified.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, but Nicola arrives and is like, "You need to go take notes for these two Aes Sedai." Um, so Nynaeve goes off to them, only to find out that they don't actually want her to take notes; they just want to interrogate her about Rand, which Nynaeve puts up with for as long as they have questions for her. But, you know, it's pretty unproductive. It's just like, this is Nynaeve's whole day, is just being bombarded by questions about Rand.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I would never want to see Rand again --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: If I were Nynaeve. It's remarkable that she can still stand him after --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: This.

Sally: I mean, it's remarkable anyone can stand him.

Emily: I mean, yeah. It was remarkable that she would stand him before this but especially after this. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: Um.

Sally: A mother's love.

Emily: A mother's love. Yeah. There's no, like, indication -- I mean, obviously, Nynaeve is probably withholding some information, but she is being pretty, like, honest and clear about what Rand was like as a child because she knows, of course, that Rand as a child has -- doesn't matter, really.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And that Rand has changed a lot. But, like, she's not being like, "Well, and he's in love with Elayne."

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Y'know? And, um, la da da dad da. So. She's withholding information, but that is not, like, part of the text in a major way. We're never like, concerned that she's going to slip up and reveal something --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which sort of eliminates any tension that there might have been.

Sally: Yeah, it's just one of these, like, setting the stage for the Aes Sedai fighting over Rand at the end of this book.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Or the whole series, I guess. (laugh)

Emily: Anyway, Nynaeve then has, uh, an appointment with Theodrin, which she goes to keep, but on the way, she passes, like, the main building where everyone is still meeting with --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: This, uh, ambassador lady. And she just sort of goes and physically eavesdrops, which she is really scared to do, because of course if any Aes Sedai finds her, she will get, like, murdered.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But all she overhears -- I mean, she overhears the significant parts because that's always what happens when characters --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: In fantasy eavesdrop. But she basically overhears that the message that, uh, this woman is being sent back to the White Tower with is that "We need more time to think about it."

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Which, like, yeah, that's about as, um, non-committal as you can get.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, and then when that woman's gone, she overhears the six women once again referring to how they need to get "her," and they need to have "her" in place so that they can manipulate "her," otherwise they're gonna have to leave everything to the Tower.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And Nynaeve's just like, "What the fuck are they talking about?"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: (whisper) It's Egg.

Sally: It's Eggy!

Emily: Eggy! But Nynaeve then gets up from physically eavesdropping -- like, kneeling next to a window -- and is like, "Oh, hi, Theodrin."

Sally: Yeah, Theodrin's just standing there.

Emily: Theodrin's like -- I don't know what Theodrin was doing there.

Sally: Creepin'.

Emily: Came looking for Nynaeve, I guess? But Theodrin's just like --

Sally: Yeah. 'Cause Nynaeve, at this point, is, like, two hours late --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: So.

Emily: Theodrin's just like, "Well, let's go."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Theodrin's such a real one.

Sally: I know. Theodrin just is like, "I'm gonna stay in my lane."

Emily: "I -- this is my lane. I don't give a shit what happens outside of it."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Nynaeve and Elayne being total psychos? Whatever."

Sally: "Not my problem."

Emily: "If it doesn't have to do with Nynaeve's block, then who gives a fuck?"

Sally: Yeah. She's like, "I've been given an assignment. I will complete it."

Emily: Yep. She's great.

Sally: Anyway.

Emily: Real one.

Sally: (laugh) It's like that post about Noah in the Raven Cycle.

Emily: Yeah. He's great. (laugh) He's king --

Sally: (simultaneously) Of staying in his lane.

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: Anyway, what a good character.

Emily: I love characters like that. So anyway, that was those two chapters.

Sally: Yeah. Oh, and at the end of the chapter, it's like, "Neither Nynaeve nor Theodrin saw the woman in the window watching them."

Emily: Oh, yeah. I was like, who? I don't fuckin' know.

Sally: I don't know either.

Emily: Tarna, maybe? I don't remember. We're mostly gonna be stuck with the girls for the next few chapters, although Egg, I think, gets thrown into the mix there, but, you know, it's essentially just Nynaeve and Elayne being stuck in Salidar and doing nothing.

Sally: It's a great use of page space.

Emily: It's a great, great use of page space.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: I mean, it's sad that Nynaeve is this frustrated and feels this lonely and afraid, but it's also like, you're sort of in this situation 'cause you chose to be in this situation.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's hard to feel a lot of sympathy for her when she was given lots of outs --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, and has -- is still being given a lot of outs and is just like, "No." And, like, it's made more complicated by the fact that they are enslaving a person, which, again, hard to be on their side for that.

Sally: Yeah. It's like, I'm sorry that you're feeling a little depressed, but, um, you're a slaver, so.

Emily: Eeeeeee.

Sally: Not really -- can't really feel anything but disdain for you at the moment.

Emily: Yeah. It's gonna be tough.

Sally: Ow.

Emily: Sorry.

Sally: It's just my knees. Popping.

Emily: My knees.

Sally: Yeah, like I'm 97.

Emily: Um --

Sally: I'm basically 97.

Emily: So that's that. Do you have anything else?

Sally: ... No.

Emily: Cool. It's like nine p.m. I have to go play with Tybalt now.

Sally: Yeah, gotta go play with Tybalt.

Emily: Um. Thank you for listening. Thank you to Glynna MacKenzie for our theme song. Check us out on social media, uh, or on Patreon. You now have two and a half years worth of Wheel of Time blogs to catch up on if you want to do that. I don't know that I recommend it, entirely -- (laugh) But if you want to watch a person descend into madness in real time --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, then yeah, that's an option for you. Along with a lot of other, uh, really more fun content, such as our, um, secondary podcast, We Don't Watch Outlander, where we are covering our -- one of our favorite books, Finnikin of the Rock, and our In an Hour or Less series, where we just sort of cover a literary or historical topic, uh, once a month in -- in a video.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And that's it. Do you have a sign-off?

Sally: Yeah. Um. (laugh) So it's the holiday season, and I've been buying Christmas presents for people.

Emily: Oh. Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

Sally: Um, and -- (laugh) My friend Nathan's Christmas present that I'm going to give him came in and -- (laugh) included in the packaging was just, like, a slip of paper that had about eight Bible verses on it.

Emily: (gasp)

Sally: (laugh) Just, like -- just had, like, eight different Bible verses that were like -- you know, like, "Salvation can only be found through Jesus," and John 3:16 and stuff like that, but I was just like, what is happening? (laugh) Super random.

Emily: What was -- did you get him that --

Sally: I mean, I can't be totally sure --

Emily: Oh, do they listen? Yeah.

Sally: I don't know if Nathan listens to this, but there's, like --

Emily: How, like --

Sally: Like, it was -- it's, like, a joke gift.

Emily: Oh, OK.

Sally: Like, it's a dumb, silly thing. It's not, like -- like, based -- like, there's a possibility that they're like, "This person is doing some sort of weird Satan thing."

Emily: Yeahhhh. Yeah.

Sallyy: And so they, like, are like, “We’ll put a little Jesus in there.” Um. (laugh)

Emily: To cancel it out. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. To just, like, cancel it out. (laugh) But I opened it and I was just, like, crying. I was like, this is the funniest thing that’s ever happened. And I was like, Nathan, I’m no longer giving you this present. I’m just giving -- (laugh)

Emily: You just frame it. (inaudible)

Sally: These Bible verses. And Nathan was like, “No-o-o!”

Emily: That’s so good.

Sally: It was so weird. Yeah.

Emily: Imagine being, you know, some Etsy seller --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Just like, “I’m just gonna sprinkle in some Bible.”

Sally: Yeah. “Just gonna give them a little Jesus.”

Emily: (laugh) OK. Thanks, everyone, for listening.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Have a good ... week? Day?

Sally: Life?

Emily: Goodbye!