



Episode 151: Dominating Friends and Manipulating People

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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: This is Everybody Hates Rand, your friendly neighborhood Wheel of Time podcast. I am Sally Goodger.

Emily: I'm Emily Juchau.

Sally: I have a headache.

Emily: My butt hurts.

Sally: And Emily's bum hurts.

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: This is where we're at. Um. (laugh)

Emily: Just updating you.

Sally: Just updating you on the ailments.

Emily: It's seven p.m., which is a little unusual for us.

Sally: Yeah, we usually record more at, like, five.

Emily: Right after work. Um. But it's cool. It's all cool. So let's talk about -- I was gonna say Nynaeve, but it sort of veers off in the end there to, like, six other points of view.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, but these are the chapters when Nynaeve learns how to heal gentling slash stilling. Slash -- yeah, no, those are the -- those are the two. Those are the two. Couldn't -- couldn't remember. Um. We are catching back up with the girls in Salidar; the status quo has remained in effect; nothing has changed. Nynaeve and Elayne are still stuck doing dishes; Nynaeve is still trying to work through her block; her latest -- Theodrin's latest experiment to do this involved Nynaeve getting drunk. Um, so she's hungover when the chapter starts, which, frankly, I didn't catch onto until quite a bit -- until she explicitly said what had happened. I just thought she was, like, nervous and/or very hot.

Sally: Yeah, I mean, the heat is horrible.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: I feel like this whenever it's hot, period.

Emily: Yeah, she's like, "I have a headache, and I feel nauseous," and I was like, "Doesn't everyone feel like that when it's hot outside?"

Sally: Yeah. I sure do.

Emily: When you're just trapped in the heat?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Yeah, Nynaeve's hungover. She's in Salidar. I don't know what -- (laugh) else there is to say about it, really. Um, she is looking for Siuan and Leane when the chapter starts, but they are speaking to the Hall -- excuse me -- of the Tower. Um, we find out that Nynaeve -- or maybe this happened in last chapters, I can't remember -- but Nynaeve was like, "We can't keep having our discoveries, quote, unquote --"

Sally: Oh, yeah.

Emily: "From Moghedien coming from me because everyone knows I have a block, so it's getting weird." So rather than, like, taper off, they just cut off Nynaeve's quote, unquote discoveries completely.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And now all the Aes Sedai are like, "What the fuck happened?" And are like, "Nynaeve, we gotta work through your block. We gotta --"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Do whatever it takes to fix it so your achievements can continue." And Nynaeve's like, "Oh my God. There's no peace." And I'm like, I mean, that's true. Salidar sucks, and as long as you're Aes Sedai, this is going to be the situation. Um, but also, just, like, you could've been smarter about it. And what irritates me is that there are many ways, um, for the girls to be smarter than they are that are very obvious. And it feels like Robert Jordan is just like, "No, I'd rather my women characters be stupid."

Sally: Well -- yeah. I mean, as we've discussed every time we've been in Salidar in this book, it is just, like, Nynaeve and Elayne making the most incomprehensible and incompetent decisions because it's like Robert Jordan just doesn't know what to do with these two in particular. And I feel like that's been the case since the end of book three.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Um. But, yeah, Robert Jordan loves a stupid woman because they're less threatening.

Emily: Yeah. Yeah. He likes women, also, to be small and to feel cornered by men --

Sally: Oh, God, yeah.

Emily: Which is what Logain does for a hobby, is frighten women. Um.

Sally: Lit -- seriously, though.

Emily: No, literally, it's like that's how he gets his kicks.

Sally: Ugh.

Emily: You've now read Path of Daggers, so you know.

Sally: Yeah, I just read that scene where he's like, "LOL, I'm just going to bond women against their will," or whatever the fuck he's doing.

Emily: Ugh. We'll get there when we get there. The worst.

Sally: And everyone's just like -- (laugh) -- even the other Asha'man are like, "Maybe calm down."

Emily: (laugh) The other Asha'man are like, "So it's this guy or Mazrim Taim? So that's the dichotomy we have to go with?"

Sally: So it's the worst man you know or --

Emily: The second-worst man you know. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) The second-worst man you know.

Emily: Which explains a lot about how when Brandon Sanderson got there and was like, "Oh, no."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "This is the situation?" He just invented a whole-ass new character to represent Logain's faction who was, like, slightly less of an asshole.

Sally: Yeah. Just imagine Brandon Sanderson down in Utah County making a list of all the Asha'man. It's like --

Emily: "Oh, no!"

Sally: "War criminal, war criminal, rapist, war criminal." (laugh)

Emily: They're all terrible --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Except for the ones with Rand actively.

Sally: Yeah. And he's like, Robert Jordan took Narishma away from me.

Emily: Took Flynn.

Sally: Took Flynn.

Emily: Took Hopwil.

Sally: I'm just gonna have to invent a whole new boy.

Emily: I just have to, like, invent, like, four guys. Ahh! So Nynaeve's feeling very cornered by various Aes Sedai and by the situation in general; this has not changed since the beginning of the book. Um, it's pretty old news. Uh, it turns out that the two Aes Sedai sisters Vandene and

Adeleas are now in town, which is great. I guess they traveled from the Borderlands -- wherever we last saw them -- I think that's where Moiraine and Lan were visiting them in the Great Hunt?

Sally: Sounds about right.

Emily: Um, but they're being introduced because they will be going to Ebou Dar with Nynaeve and Elayne in a few chapters, or at the end of this book.

Sally: Which will be, like, ninety-seven thousand chapters at the rate --

Emily: Yeah, we're, like, barely more than halfway through. Um. Nynaeve, who has just gone into the Little Tower, they are now calling it -- this, like, former inn that is now HQ --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: For Salidar, uh, Aes Sedai -- she, like, rushes out 'cause she sees Myrelle, and as we talked about the last time we had a Nynaeve chapter, Nynaeve feels particularly targeted by Myrelle, which might be because Lan is headed toward Myrelle or even already there. I can never remember what the timeline is on that. No, I think he gets there at the end of this book.

Sally: Yeah, and he's, like, foul.

Emily: He's like, "Gahh!"

Sally: And Moiraine's like -- Moiraine. (laugh) Myrelle's like, "Sexual assault."

Emily: Great. "This is how we heal."

Sally: It's not!

Emily: (laugh) It's terrible. Oh my God.

Sally: God, this book is a toilet book. Throw it in the toilet.

Emily: I don't know, can we say at least Robert Jordan does equal opportunity sexual assault. I don't know if he was like, "It's feminist if men get raped too."

Sally: I don't know.

Emily: I hate that man. Um, so Nynaeve leaves the Little Tower and runs right into, uh, Thom and Juilin, who are now back from their little scouting mish in, um, Amadicia?

Sally: Also, Thom greets by Nynaeve -- Nynaeve by grabbing her shoulders from the -- like, behind -- like, he's standing behind her and grabs her shoulders.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And it's like, you're a creepy old man.

Emily: They're all too much -- a little too much -- like, Nynaeve doesn't even get to ask them about anything before Elayne just, like, hurtles out of nowhere --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And she and Thom are doing this little faux grandpa and grandchild, like, dance number. You know, lots of mustache-tugging and twirling, and la dee da dee da, and I just picture Nynaeve and Juilin making awkward eye contact --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, "God, why does this happen to us?" (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Yeah.

Emily: "Why are we stuck here with them?"

Sally: "With these horrible, horrible people."

Emily: With these -- this, like, epitome -- this is -- they are like Freud's wet dream.

Sally: I know.

Emily: Like, come on. The evolution from sexual tension to father-daughter relationship? It's horrific.

Sally: Blegggghhhh.

Emily: Blegh. Anyway, Thom's like, "We have to go report to the Sitters, so we just have a minute, but basically, we were in Amadicia; there aren't actually any Whitecloaks, like, guarding the river on the other side. They all seem to be congregating, um, in ... Amadicia." Uh, maybe they weren't in Amadicia. Ghealdan? Ghealdan?

Sally: What's the country next to them?

Emily: I hate having to consult the map.

Sally: (sing-song) It's the map, it's the map, it's the map, it's the map.

Emily: Oh, Amadicia is the -- no, wait. Ughhh.

Sally: Maybe they were in the Shadow Coast.

Emily: God, I wish they were in the Shadow Coast. No, I think they were in Amadicia.

Sally: OK.

Emily: I just am confused by this, um, paragraph, then. I think it's meant to be, like, they are gathering in the capital city --

Sally: Mm.

Emily: Which is in Amador. They're -- uh, Pedron Niall's basically mustering his forces, um, and not paying too much attention to the Salidar Aes Sedai. He does have a strong border presence on, uh, the Tarabon border because, of course, Tarabon is basically actively in flames, uh, with the Seanchan invasion that no one knows about yet.

Sally: (laugh) Or cares about.

Emily: Yeah, I mean, Pedron Niall did get the message about it and was just like, "Fuck this."

Sally: "Guy's obviously lost it."

Emily: "This guy's obviously stupid." Um, and then Elayne's like, "Oh, did you hear something about Mother?" Mother! And Thom's like, "Yeah, there are lots of, uh, rumors," and she's like, "Just tell me," and he's like, "Well, um, it sound -- everyone in Amadicia thinks that Morgase is in the Fortress of the Light and that she's going to lead an army of Whitecloaks back to Andor." And Elayne, taking the opposite stance of her brother Gawyn, is like, "What a foolish -- how foolish."

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: "I shall not believe a rumor about my mother -- so far-fetched." (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Ugh. Yeah. How are they related?

Emily: Like, they literally both hear a far-fetched rumor, and Gawyn is like, "This is going to impact my every decision from now on. I hate the Dragon Reborn; my mother is definitely dead." And Elayne's like -- (laugh) -- "Absolutely not."

Sally: She's like, "No."

Emily: There is a medium ground, I guess.

Sally: Yeah, just sort of, like, a healthy skepticism.

Emily: Yeah, just sort of, like, "Hmm, well, if there are a lot of rumors about something --" Like when Gawyn thought, except Gawyn only heard the one rumor -- (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: But, like, it is true that if you hear something often enough, there is a truth behind it.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Whether that is the truth that you are hoping for or the truth that you want, um, there is going to be a truth.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Like, so, I don't know. It's -- Elayne's like, "I've already mourned for her; I'm ready to accept that she's dead." And it's like, clearly not, because you are not actively trying to get back to Andor.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, there is some unprocessed grief there if you're not stepping up to replace your mother. I just don't know why that is never, like, spoken about, the fact that if Morgase is dead or missing, Elayne is needed back in Andor. She just doesn't seem to accept that as something that she needs to do.

Sally: Yeah, it's very frustrating. It's, again, one of these just, like, incomprehensible and incompetent decisions Robert Jordan's having her make by not making a decision about it, you know?

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: So the absence of a decision, where it's just, like -- it's so much more important for Elayne to obsess about how she can help Rand in Salidar than actually being a ruler. It's very odd.

Emily: Um, Thom and Juilin get called in, so Nynaeve's like, "The only place I can go now --" because apparently she has nothing to do all day but study Logain or Siuan and Leane -- is, uh, go find Logain. So Elayne's like, "I'll come with you." They start walking together. They have one of their little quasi-fight slash apologies where Nynaeve is like, "No, you're right, I was super drunk and I was -- I was a mess," basically, so, "You were right that -- to laugh at me."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Especially because Nynaeve was very, uh, brusque that time Elayne got -- not even intentionally drunk, just sort of --

Sally: Yeah. She was being pumped full of drink.

Emily: Yep.

Sally: By a creepy tavern lad.

Emily: By, like, a date rapist.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, but they are walking along; they are finally like, “Ya dee da dee da, we’re good again.” They stop at this little, like, cottage or something that Logain is in, with some Warders, uh, standing guard, and Nynaeve’s like, “Elayne, we should just, like, go.” And Elayne’s like, “No, because we can’t do anything for Rand if we’re runaways.” Like, “You promised we need to stay here if we found something.” And Nynaeve’s like, “Yeah, we found something, but we can’t do anything about it, and they’re not gonna do anything about it, so why don’t we go to Ebou Dar if you don’t want to go to Andor.” Like -- and Elayne’s like, “Well, basically, Birgitte and Uno are conspiring to keep us in Salidar now because I told them to,” and it’s just like, what?

Sally: Then tell them not to!

Emily: Ugh. What’s happening?

Sally: If you gave them an order, you can un-give them the order.

Emily: There’s also, like -- Nynaeve’s like, “Why aren’t you wearing Moghedien’s bracelet?” and Elayne’s like, “I didn’t want to because I didn’t want the inconvenience of feeling her pain from when Birgitte beat her up.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um. So, like, just a lot to unpack there. (sigh, laugh) Um. They go into Logain’s house. He’s reading a book or whatever --

Sally: His little witch cottage in the woods.

Emily: I know. He’s fucking --

Sally: Made of --

Emily: Stirring a cauldron. “Boil, boil, toil and trouble.”

Sally: (laugh) Ready to eat some kids and hurt some women.

Emily: (laugh) And, uh, he’s like, “Hi, do you want some wine?” Like, um --

Sally: It’s, like, nine in the morning, Logain. (laugh)

Emily: I know. What’s he doing? (laugh) Everyone seems to drink wine from sun-up to sun-down.

Sally: Horrible.

Emily: It’s like Robert Jordan liked the idea that in the Middle Ages, people were just drinking all the time because the water wasn’t --

Sally: Safe, yeah.

Emily: Healthy. But, like, was like, "No beer. Just wine."

Sally: Just wine.

Emily: "Because I like the idea of women sipping wine all day long, like Cersei Lannister."

Sally: Yeah. He's like, "It's much more feminine to drink wine."

Emily: "Sexual." Maybe he knew more about wine. Maybe he was, like, a wine snob.

Sally: Maybe there's something in the climate of Wheely Time country that is better for growing grapes than growing whatever the fuck beer is made of.

Emily: Yeah, we never see any fucking vineyards.

Sally: Yeah, so where the -- we see lots of fields and shit, where they could be growing --

Emily: Where are the vineyards?

Sally: Barley or whatever the fuck beer is made out of. (laugh)

Emily: Why isn't there a wine shortage after, you know, this horrific --

Sally: Oh, yeah.

Emily: Drought?

Sally: And all the grapes die.

Emily: You'd think. I guess wine -- I guess -- (laugh) That's dumb. There will be a wine shortage ten to fifteen years from now, after the --

Sally: Oh, yeah, after the --

Emily: Wine's been fermented.

Sally: Fucking drinking it all day long.

Emily: Um. I know how alcohol works. (laugh) Stupid.

Sally: I just feel like that's an over -- like, it -- like, you don't have to put forth every detail of your world-building, right. There's no reason to do that. But the amount of times we have ridden through the fucking countryside of this fucking continent, we haven't seen a single fucking vineyard, but I have seen one billion sheep farms.

Emily: I just think vineyards are neat.

Sally: They are neat. It's like the Parent Trap or whatever.

Emily: That's what I think of too when I think of vineyards!

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Dennis Quaid on that fuckin' vineyard.

Sally: Yeah, with -- with --

Emily: In California.

Sally: Little Lindsay Lohan.

Emily: Napa Valley.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Damn. So much of my childhood was influenced by the Parent Trap.

Sally: It's a good movie.

Emily: This interaction starts out politely enough, with Logain being like, "It's good to see you, can you -- do you want some wine?" and Nynaeve immediately starts patronizing him and being rude to him, which is how every interaction with Logain goes. Which is not to excuse Logain's behavior at all, but, uh, to show that this is a toxic environment generally. No one's nice to Logain either.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, but she starts doing her channeling thing. Uh, at one point, she grabs his head and tells him to shut up. And the paragraph in which she actually heals him is just interspersed with, um, italics of her thought process, which does not have anything to do with the healing itself. Uh, but just generally her worries and anxieties. Um, and then she heals him. Like, she -- Logain's eyes kind of widen, and she's like, "Ah, shit," and is like, "Elayne, run, go tell -- go tell Sheriam that I've healed Logain," and shields him. Um. And I don't feel great about the whole paragraph where Nynaeve kind of accidentally heals Logain. I appreciate the commitment if not the actual timetable of Nynaeve studying and, uh, attempting to do research as she's trying to solve this problem that she feels can be solved even though no one else has ever done -- successfully done it. Uh, it's very, uh, scientific in its way.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: But this whole Nynaeve being caught up all in her emotions, which is when she finally achieves something, um, and I think that is -- Nynaeve is such a figure of emotions, and that's what -- I don't know, I'm not -- I'm not saying that correctly.

Sally: No, I'm feeling very much the same way. Um, so I'm glad you got that conver--this conversation started. Because, like, I find it -- rereading this book again, where so much of it is about Nynaeve's block, I find the fact that Nynaeve has this block to be ultimately very patronizing to her character. Where, like, it's an interesting world-building thing, but, like, the fact that she can only channel when she's angry just kind of plays into this very weird, like, angry woman trope, that's always yelling at men or whatever. That's part of it. But just, like, I don't know. And it's just like, we've just had this thing where she's gotten all of her, like, fake accomplishments taken away from her because now Elayne gets to do everything. So it's like, one of her biggest accomplishments in terms of being a magic-user, is then only -- is not actually possible because of Nynaeve's ability; it's just, like, something she happens to do.

Emily: Mm-hmm. I just --

Sally: I dunno.

Emily: I think the gender dynamics in this, um -- the old-fashioned gender dynamics are that women are emotional and men are rational, right? And I feel like that is enforced in Nynaeve's character that, um, she's this epitome of emotion, and while simultaneous -- and she's basically at her most powerful when she is emotional, but she also has to do this thing where she finds balance in order to --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Harness her power, um, where she has to trust rationality rather than emotion to use magic. And it's just like, sort of an icky gender dynamic --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Generally. Like, we're not being taught by this book series that both emotions and, um, logic are powerful in people and that everyone needs them and uses them differently and everyone has different balances of them. We're just being taught: women are emotional and don't make sense --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And men are logical and, uh, so unemotional in Rand's case, that they become, like, literally impossible to live with.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's just ... icky.

Sally: Yeah, and putting this moment up against the many, many moments where Rand channels something that he doesn't understand -- um, or, like, doesn't understand how he does it; he just, you know, does it -- and maybe it's just, like, the rule of multiplicity; like, so far, I've only seen

Nynaeve get, like, one big moment where she does something, quote unquote, accidentally, where Rand is just constantly like, “Balefire, accident. Traveling, accident.”

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: It’s like, what is happening? And I don’t -- I don’t know. It’s just very frustrating that she -- like, Rand gets to do all of that in his, like, emotionless, rational void.

Emily: Well, and, like, he has a good reason for it, which is that he’s got this other person in his head --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Who has that knowledge that he might actually be, like, sort of unlocking.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Whenever he accidentally does something. And Nynaeve is just, like -- doesn’t.

Sally: Yeah. And so -- I just feel -- I guess what I’m ultimately getting at is this moment could be a lot more powerful and less patronizing to Nynaeve’s intelligence and ability if she was able to do it not -- if it -- even if it wasn’t an accident, just more not wrapped up in her, like, very petty, quote unquote, girlish emotions about problems that she’s having with other women and the fact that she has to do chores and, like, all of this stuff.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: And so it’s just like, she was able to be successful ‘cause she’s worried about domestic woman things.

Emily: Yes.

Sally: Not important man things.

Emily: What a good little woman.

Sally: Barf.

Emily: So, Elayne leaves at a dead run, which is --

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Kind of hilarious. Um, and Nynaeve is left alone with Logain, who -- this is, um, true enough, I think, to the experience of womanhood; as soon as she is alone with a man who she actually feels like she has to worry about in terms of being able to handle him with her magical power, she’s aware that he is a really big man --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And that he's physically imposing, um, even if he hasn't yet done anything to impose himself upon her. But, uh, when you're a woman, whatever man you're with, that's generally something you're aware of.

Sally: Mm -- Mm-hmm.

Emily: Uh, but then, of course, she behaves totally irrationally when a Warder pokes his head in and is like, "Is everything good?" and she's just like, "Yes, everything's fine."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "How dare you patronize me."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And he's like, "OK," when I think a more normal reaction would -- to be like, "Uh, well, he can channel again, so I'm a little stressed; if you could stay here --"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "And keep an eye on him, that would be great."

Sally: Just irrational decisions.

Emily: Yep.

Sally: Incomprehensible decisions.

Emily: As soon as he's gone, Logain starts monologuing about how he's not going to attack all the Aes Sedai; like, that would be dumb --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which is true. And he's like, "And anyway, I've accomplished what I want; the Red Ajah's gonna be no more soon enough." And then he says that he "once saw a man who will cause more trouble than I ever did. Maybe it was the Dragon Reborn; I don't know. It was when they took me through Caemlyn after I was captured. He was far away, but I saw a glow, and I knew he'd shake the world." So just explaining that little scene, now from Logain's point of view, and also revealing the fact that Logain can see *ta'veren*, which is bizarre -- a little bizarre addition.

Sally: (laugh) Was that what it was? I thought it was just, like, Rand's powers.

Emily: Oh. (laugh) No. Well -- eh, I dunno. I think someone else, we find out, can see *ta'veren*; Mat gets to Salidar --

Sally: Oh.

Emily: Later in this book and, like, Nicola or someone --

Sally: Oh.

Emily: Is like, "He's glowing." (laugh) And Mat's like, "Get away from me."

Sally: "It's just because I'm so full of money."

Emily: Mat's like, "It's my beauty. Fuck off."

Sally: (laugh) She's like, "It's definitely not."

Emily: "It's not. You are rancid." (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Um. (laugh) But before anything really can happen -- um, and Nynaeve's just berating herself and getting more freaked out -- a bunch of Aes Sedai barge in and are like, "You didn't really heal him," and Nynaeve's like, "I really super did. Can you please shield him?" Uh, so a couple of ladies put a shield on him and are just chatting about it, but Sheriam and Myrelle take Nynaeve out and start escorting her to the Little Tower. They have a confusing interaction where they're like, "We should have you punished for, uh, doing that, though," and -- or something?

Sally: Yeah, it's all very weird and confusing.

Emily: Eventually Nynaeve realizes -- 'cause they get back to the Little Tower and, like, a bunch of, uh, Yellow Ajah come in with Siuan and Leane, that they are intentionally trying to make Nynaeve angry enough to channel and do it again. Uh, but it's just like ... (sigh)

Sally: Again, this wouldn't be an issue if Nynaeve wasn't saddled with such a ridiculous, patronizing block.

Emily: Well, and also, like, Nynaeve lives with it. She now knows how to make herself angry enough --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: To channel. It's -- the way anyone with any sort of different ability set. She's just like, "I know how to handle it. It's inconvenient, but I can get myself ready to channel; it just takes time."

Sally: Yeah. Also, alternately, we could have just let Nynaeve keep her block --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And explored some forms of, you know, neurodivergence or disability. But Wheel of Time says, "No, fuck disabled people." I hate you, Robert Jordan.

Emily: Nynaeve heals Siuan, um, and then Leane. Both of them are very excited, of course, which is lovely. Um. But the Yellow Ajah just start chattering with each other, and Nynaeve starts to get out of there, um -- oh, before she leaves, someone's like, "Well, I guess we have to gentle Logain again." And one of the Aes Sedai is like, "Well, like, can we?" Not because of the ethical problems --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That gentling presents but because they are trying to get in a position to manipulate Rand, and so they shouldn't have, like, any gentling associated with them if they're going to approach him, a man who can channel.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: (sigh) Great people.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Um, but Nynaeve gets outside and see Elayne briefly before she is swarmed by a bunch of other, uh, Aes Sedai of the Yellow Ajah who are like, "I want to go over it with you; I want to learn, but also, I bet I could do it better; blabbity blah blah blah." We then bounce over to Siuan, who has an interaction with Gareth Bryne, which is as terrible as it always is. Uh, he threatens to beat her -- "I'll turn you upside down and smack you for being childish." Great. Uh, she in turn tries to lift him with the Power and finds that she can't because her ability has been severely diminished. Which, I think, itself is silly -- the idea that women have to heal men and men have to heal women in order to bring them back to, quote unquote, full capacity. It feels like a way to ensure that Siuan and Leane are still infantilized throughout the rest of this series and are never, like, forces to be reckoned with again.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: Um, but, you know. That's just me.

Sally: Well, yeah, and it's just more -- I didn't realize that's what happens. I didn't realize that men had to heal women and women have to heal men; I don't know if --

Emily: Oh, that might be something they talk about a little later.

Sally: I -- that's fine. Whatever. I just hadn't realized that. Um. And it's just, like, the gender essentialism is so frustrating.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Like, why? Why? Why do we have to have this constant, like, men and women are the balance in the binary. And it's like, could you shut up for one fucking second about men and women? (laugh) Robert. Like, you did not need to build it into everything. You shouldn't have built it into any part of your magic system at all, but the fact that it's, like, in every minute detail -- ugh.

Emily: (sigh) Um. Anyway, Siuan starts getting emotional, not because her ability has been diminished, but, she realizes, because the death of her Warder, whose name is Alric -- I think we complained in a recent episode that we didn't even remember what her Warder's name was -- (laugh)

Sally: Oh. (inaudible)

Emily: Because she never thought about it. Um. She is suffering because his death is now hitting her because I guess, uh, the Warder bond is so intertwined with the ability to channel or something?

Sally: (laugh) That she didn't feel sad about this man dying at all --

Emily: I know.

Sally: Before she got her magic back.

Emily: She was just like, la dee da dee da, and now it's like, "Oh my God, I'm gonna be in tears for the next six months," according to Leane or whatever.

Sally: Yeah. It's like, you -- he was still a person that you knew.

Emily: (laugh) I know. She, like, literally never thought about it.

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: What the fuck. (laugh) It's so nuts. But she and Leane are like, "OK, we've gotta go confront the Tower." Um, and Siuan is like, "If she is Aes -- if she was Aes Sedai again, was she not Amyrlin again as well?" Which is like, no. Fucking obviously not.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: How was that a question?

Sally: Yeah. The fact that she thinks it at all is a little --

Emily: Telling.

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: Siuan, power-hungry as fuck.

Sally: Yeah, and it's like, no, the Tower is broken. You fucked up real hard.

Emily: Yeah, to use, uh, an appropriate metaphor, that ship done sailed. Like, lady.

Sally: Yeah. Like, just be grateful you weren't murdered, and maybe try to --

Emily: Pfft. Gratitude from Siuan? (laugh) Ooh.

Sally: Yeah, and just try to, like, not need to be the power-hungriest bitch in Salidar. (laugh)

Emily: Which is a tough -- tough role to fill. There's so many contenders.

Sally: (laugh) The most power-hungry bitch you know and the second-most power-hungry bitch you know.

Emily: We then get back -- well, not back. We then hop over to Elayne, who's in their room when Nynaeve gets back from being bombarded with questions. Nynaeve's, of course, miserable, and like, "This sucks. They're going to have me on a schedule --"

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: "Of talking to various people who want to break through my block, which is gonna suck." Um, but they don't have much time to chat before Siuan and Leane show up. And Elayne's like, "Should we curtsy? Like, are you Aes Sedai again?" and they're like, "Yeah, they've agreed that we're Aes Sedai again, but obviously we don't have our positions back, and we actually have to apply to join Ajahs like we would have if we were brand-new Aes Sedai." Um, Leane, interestingly, is going to switch Ajahs. Um. Which I think is fun. Good for her.

Sally: She was Blue?

Emily: She was Blue; now she's like, "I'm gonna go Green." I wish the whole Green Ajah thing wasn't interspersed -- wasn't, uh, intertwined with how slutty someone is, but there you have it.

Sally: (laugh) What if there were equal opportunities to be slutty across all of the Ajahs.

Emily: Equal opportunity sluts.

Sally: What if Verin was just like, "This is all -- these are all my boyfriends and girlfriends."

Emily: That'd be great.

Sally: And everyone was like, "Cool."

Emily: But they're like, "We're actually here because we want you to try healing us again." Obviously Logain is at the same power level that he was when he was captured because six people are still needed to maintain his shield, but, uh, Siuan and Leane are very much diminished. And Nynaeve's like, "Well, I can't heal something that has already been healed."

Like, it's just not gonna work. Plus I can't channel right now." And Elayne's like, "Why does it matter?" or something, and they go on to this very long tangent -- and very, uh, not explicit -- to -- 'cause I think I -- in the past I just sort of, like, skimmed over it --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: But basically they're saying, "It is not just a matter of how much magic power we have; it is a matter of how much political and social power we have." Because there's this unspoken rule with the Aes Sedai that whoever, um, has the most power is sort of the most important person in the room. Their opinions matter the most; they're in charge. Which is why frequently Amyrlin Seats are women with lots of power at their disposal. But of course women don't necessarily know who is more powerful if two people are close --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, unless they have a duel, so other things, like whether someone was a wilder, um, how long they spent in training, whether they had a block, I assume, come into play.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which is why in the next book, I guess, Elayne will sort of end up taking charge of the group. She, uh, demands that if power is the most important thing, that she be given precedent. Uh, and of course Nynaeve doesn't really demand the same, and I don't know how much, you know --

Sally: Yeah. I mean, it's a really gross and toxic system. Uh, it's basically like who has the most firepower, who has the most guns.

Emily: Yeah, it's --

Sally: Is what it feels like to me.

Emily: Terrible.

Sally: It's very police-y.

Emily: Yeah. And it's just annoying.

Sally: (laugh) Yeah.

Emily: Just flat-out annoying that every Aes Sedai interaction is dependent upon this. Like, as if the Aes Sedai weren't fucking complicated enough.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: We also have to have this, like, weird power dynamic with every person who's on-screen.

Sally: Yeah, and it's like, don't we have enough power dynamics in this series without adding into this whole other level -- like, you could be the smartest, most competent person in the world, but if you don't channel as much as Elaida, Elaida is in charge. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah. I mean ... (sputters)

Sally: It's a bad system.

Emily: It's stupid. (laugh)

Sally: It's a bad system. (laugh)

Emily: Uh, but Elayne -- the four of them are like, "Well, even though you two are Aes Sedai now, let's be friends still," or whatever. "Let's have a friendship."

Sally: It seems very generous to call them friends --

Emily: Oh, I know.

Sally: At any point in this series.

Emily: Um. Leane's the only one making an effort. Like, Siuan says something like, "Well, if we're not friends, then we're at least four people on the same boat," and Nynaeve's like, "Well, then, who's the captain?" and Siuan's like, "I am." (laugh) And it's like, you all suck. Uggghhh.

Sally: It's all --

Emily: "I'm the captain now."

Sally: This isn't how friendships work. (laugh)

Emily: Literally, that's how Elayne -- Elayne falls asleep angelically on her pillow with her golden curls, thinking, "I will become the captain." (laugh)

Sally: I know, and it's like, girl. You are deranged.

Emily: They're all deranged. (laugh) Um, but Nynaeve and Elayne are like, "Well, if we're such good friends, why don't you give us the information you've been holding back?" and Siuan's like, "OK, well, apparently Sheriam and the others are really happy because they met with the Wise Ones last night and managed to not make fools of themselves. Also, Egwene is coming to the next meeting." Um, but anyway, we have to go." It's like, OK. Just leaving. But, uh, they go. And, yeah, Elayne goes to sleep, thinking, "How can I be in charge of this friendship?" Which is such a healthy way -- (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) That's what I think about every night -- I lay in bed, and I think, "How can I be in charge of my friends?"

Emily: "How can I dominate them?"

Sally: (laugh) "How can I dominate my friends?"

Emily: Ugh. (laugh) Dominating Friends and Manipulating People.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: By Elayne.

Sally: Ugh.

Emily: Then we skip over to a woman named Delana, who has not really been a character up until this point. But we find out that she used to be friends with Siuan; she is, of course, now more powerful than Siuan. She's like, "I have to watch out for Siuan now, the way she watched out for me. Blah blah blah." But Siuan leaves, and then -- uh, a novice comes in and is like, "Hey, there's a woman here to see you." Delana's like, "Great, send her in." And, uh, this very sexy lady walks in, making a hand signal to indicate that she is Black Ajah. But Delana's like, "What the fuck? She can't channel -- that I can sense." And she's like, "What are you doing? What do you want? Who do you think you are?" And this woman's like, "My name's Halima." (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Like, don't forget. She's very sexy.

Emily: "My tits are the first thing you see when -- I walk into every room tits-first."

Sally: (laugh) Tits-first.

Emily: "Everything I wear is low-cut. La da da da da." Uh, but she's like, "Here's the story -- the, quote unquote, story. I was a traveling companion to a woman -- an Aes Sedai named Cabriana. Um, and she fell off a horse, which is a totally normal way for an Aes Sedai to die."

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) Um, "I pushed her" is the subtext of that. "And then her Warder just died, because that's what Warders do when their Aes Sedai die, and I've been sent here to report, basically, about that." Cabriana and her Warder were actually captured and tortured horrifically by Semirhage, maybe earlier in this book? I can't remember. I can't keep straight when people are tortured. Um, I just block it right out. And Delana's like, "OK, well, I guess you want me to back you up on that, but I don't even know Cabriana, so I can't really help you there." And Halima's like, "Don't worry about it, I know her." And Delana's like, "OK, well. Uh, they'll receive you as a guest." And Halima's like, "Well, I don't want to be a guest; I want to be, like, your secretary or some shit so I can be here permanently," and Delana's like, "You can't do that." And Halima's like, "Guess what, my real name is Aran'gar," which I guess Delana has heard about in her dreams, so.

Sally: (laugh) In her dreams.

Emily: Now she's scared.

Sally: And she's like, "Ah, nooo."

Emily: And thus we embark on Robert Jordan's favorite relationship to make torture porn out of. This is, like, absolute fodder for Robert Jordan's, like, favorite kinks. Ah, it's two women who can have a domineering sexual relationship with each other, but actually one of the women is a man, so don't worry, it's still straight. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) "Just in case you were worried, there's no way it could possibly be gay; I, Robert Jordan, am a heterosexual man; please don't forget that about me. I'm straight. All my characters are straight. Halima is sexy, though." (laugh)

Emily: Halima is just walking pornography.

Sally: I didn't realize they ended up in a sexual relationship.

Emily: It's referenced a few times later on. It's just --

Sally: Consenting, I'm sure.

Emily: Super duper consensual!

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Everyone's happy in that relationship.

Sally: But Robert Jordan needed way more therapy than he ever received.

Emily: Any therapy. Any at all.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: A therapist would be like, "What the fuck's wrong with you, based on this book?" (laugh)

Sally: Ahhhh.

Emily: OK, we've been talking so long; sorry I'm gonna have to cut out so much.

Sally: I'm sorry.

Emily: I wasn't very good at summarizing these chapters.

Sally: Well, they're confusing and weird.

Emily: They're stupid.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um. Next chapter, we will have to go to yet another insufferable dynamic with Morgase and her coterie in Amador, then we'll float over to Egg as she is summoned to be the Amyrlin Seat. Goody goody. Um, so at least something will start happening in Salidar. Thank fuck.

Sally: Thank God, Egg. Please come save this place.

Emily: But that's that. Thank you for listening. Thank you to Glynna MacKenzie for our theme song. To our patrons on Patreon. And that's it. (laugh) Do you have anything to add?

Sally: Yeah, um, just real quick about our bookshop affiliate program that we're doing: uh, first of all, thank you to everyone who's bought books, um, and to everyone who will buy books. Thank you. Um, but the whole purpose of that is for us to be able to, um, kind of level -- leverage our platform. Um, you guys are buying books anyway; whatever kind of bump-back we get, that ten percent, we want to donate to mutual aid and direct aid requests, uh, prioritizing queer, Black, and Indigenous people of color. And I was thinking about it this week, um, and while we're, you know, hoping to use this as, you know, part of our social justice life ... thing ... I don't know what word I'm looking for -- it is also, um, kind of an odd dynamic for two white people to be making decisions about which people of color should receive funds. So if you are a person of color who ever has a mutual aid fund or a direct aid request that you know of that you would like to put on our radar for us to give money to, we are more than open to that, because you are part of that community, and you know where the money should be going, so.

Emily: Yeah. Or if you know people, have friends --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Who are in need.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Just hit us up. We would --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like to allocate to them.

Sally: Yeah, very -- yeah. And just -- sorry if that was really confusing, but my point was, like, I don't want us to be one hundred percent in the position of power to decide where all that money goes, 'cause that's not a very healthy relationship for -- in terms of giving aid to people.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: You know?

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Sorry if that didn't make any sense.

Emily: No, it made sense.

Sally: Uh, yeah, so just know, our -- our DMs and our emails are one hundred percent always open to that.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Um.

Emily: Thanks.

Sally: Thanks.

Emily: Do you have a sign-off?

Sally: Yes. Um, I had to go to the gynecologist yesterday, which is, like, enough of a sign-off in itself.

Emily: Yeah, end -- full stop. Goodbye. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Like, I love my gynecologist; she's lovely; she's my favorite doctor, but, like, ugh. And as I was, like, sitting in the waiting room, like, filling out my little, you know, annual "what medications are you on, blah blah blah," and me -- I had to have, like, a full page in my planner to be like, these are my medications, these are my other health conditions, these are my family health conditions. There was this other woman in the waiting room who was just having the hardest time answering any questions about her insurance.

Emily: Oh, no.

Sally: And I -- (laugh) as a chronically ill person who spends too much time at the doctor, just wanted to be like, "Give me your insurance card and your paperwork, and I will fill it out for you."

Emily: "We'll figure this out."

Sally: But obviously I didn't do that because I'm not an asshole, but it was, like, seriously making me insane. And she was with her, like, useless boyfriend or husband person, who was like, "I don't know which one is the policy number," and I was like, "Give me your insurance card. Give it to me." (laugh) It was just a very painful -- and I felt very bad for her, and I wanted to help her, but I didn't, because that's, you know.

Emily: You can help me; I don't know things about insurance, 'cause I'm -- I just don't.

Sally: Insurance is hard. That's why I wanted to be like, "Let my suffering be put to your good use."

Emily: (laugh, sigh) Where's Tybalt?

Sally: Gone.

Emily: (laugh) Alright, everyone. On that note.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Horrifying. Thanks for listening. Have a good week.

Sally: Bye.

Emily: Bye.