



Episode 158 – “Vilnar the Science Guard”

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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 Glynn Mackenzie plays]

EMILY: This is weird.

SALLY: I know. We're recording on a Friday.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: It's because I was having a full-blown meltdown yesterday. I st – I'm on the edge of another full-blown meltdown because I'm on day five of this headache. It just won't go away. So.

EMILY: So, last night we needed some self-care so we –

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: This is not a joke. Ordered Cheesecake Factory and watched *Sex and the City 2*, the movie.

SALLY: It was a great night.

EMILY: Which was fully – I can't emphasize this enough – we finish *Sex and the City*. I look up “how long is the *Sex and the City* movie,” because it's, like, seven pm. What else are we gonna do for two hours? And it's like, “It's two and a half hours. They're both two and a half hours.”

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: They're like fucking Marvel length feature films. And they're about *nothing*.

SALLY: I know. It's so funny.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: When I was – this is only my second time second the movies. I've seen the show through probably three times, but I didn't watch the movies my second watch through, because I was like, “I have no need of this.” Um, [laughs] so I was re-watching them, and I was like, “These are legitimately about nothing.” Like, there's more plot in one twenty-two episode – twenty-two-minute episode of *Sex and the City* than there is in this two-and-a-half-hour long movie. Like, they are simply about nothing. And I would say that they were just, like, you know, fan service, but they're, like, not enjoyable to watch, either. Like.

EMILY: [sighs]

SALLY: They do whack things with the characters and just, like, they are so weird.

EMILY: I've been trying to understand the type of person who would have, like, earnestly watched and enjoyed *Sex and the City* in its heyday.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: And, like, did they show up in droves at the movie theaters like, “This is what we want. Desperately.” And all I can really imagine is the women in *Sex and the City* themselves wanting to watch this movie because they're all such, you know, narcissists [laughs].

SALLY: Yeah, no. Like, I don't know if I have talked about my love for *Sex and the City* on this podcast. I'm sure I have.

EMILY: We've just sort of obliquely referenced it from time to time.

SALLY: But *Sex and the City* is a bad television show [laughs]. It's not good. It's very problematic. It is, like, very late 90s, girlboss energy. Deeply homophobic. Like, not a good show. But it is very enjoyable to watch if you are making fun of it.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: I cannot – I mean, I feel like there are some people in my life that I know who would, like, earnestly enjoy *Sex and the City*. But –

EMILY: But it's no *Black Sails*, critically acclaimed. Amazing. It's not *Haikyuu!!* that I'm filled with joy and delight every time I watch it.

SALLY: Every time I watch it it's perfect and brings me out of a deep depression.

EMILY: It's like the television equivalent of, like, a cheese quesadilla. That's just what I eat when there's –

SALLY: Nothing else.

EMILY: And, you know, sometimes it goes down real smooth, but most of the time it's just a cheese quesadilla.

SALLY: So, like, would me and my college group of friends gone to see *Sex and the City* if it came out in theaters –

EMILY: Just heard a disturbing....

SALLY: [laughing] An ominous noise.

EMILY: [laughing] Tybalt knocking something over.

SALLY: Um, yes. We would have. But we also – I am also the type of person who say all *50 Shades of Grey* movies in theaters.

EMILY: Well.

SALLY: But, like, as a joke?

EMILY: I'm saying *earnestly*. Like, boy.

SALLY: I don't know.

EMILY: You're the type of person to be like, "I'm a Carrie." Which, I mean, if you're saying you're a Carrie then you're a monster.

SALLY: I know. [laughs] I know. That's the thing. You're like, "This is which *Sex and the City* character I am." And like –

EMILY: I'm Steve. [laughing] I don't fucking know.

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: Down to earth, everyman.

SALLY: That is [laughing] a very funny answer.

EMILY: I didn't actually think about it. I don't know who I would...

SALLY: But yeah. Imagine being like, "I am a Carrie." Be like, "You're a what?"

EMILY: You're a, you're a full-blown terrorist, then.

SALLY: Yeah, you are a full blown narcissist...

EMILY: Shopping addict.

SALLY: Shopping – yeah, you've got no financial management. You are mean to your friends. You are terrible in relationships.

EMILY: Irresponsible.

SALLY: You are deeply irresponsible.

EMILY: You're not even that good at your job.

SALLY: Yeah!

EMILY: The writing is bad.

SALLY: Her writing is terrible. [laughs] I couldn't help but wonder, is the war between single – marrieds and singles like the war in Northern Ireland?" What?!

EMILY: That was a thing she said in the first season and that was when I was like, "I'm committed to this entire franchise. Seeing it through." Which is why we watched both movies. I forced Sally to –

SALLY: Oh, no! I'll watch 'em. I mean, I'm always down to watch anything *Sex and the City* related. It is like – hits the serotonin receptors in my brain.

EMILY: Sure.

SALLY: Or whatever. But it is *so* dumb. Um, this is Everybody Hates Rand, your friendly neighborhood *Wheel of Time* podcast. I'm Sally Goodger.

EMILY: I'm Emily. Okay, here's the bad news, everyone. Perrin's back [laughs].

SALLY: Here's the extra bad news. [whispers] I didn't read the chapters.

EMILY: Oooh! [laughs]

SALLY: It's because I thought we were going to record yesterday, and I didn't have the strength. And then today I ran out of time.

EMILY: Yeah, that's fine.

SALLY: Did read the Wikipedia summaries. On which –

EMILY: I think I knew that actually, because you sent me a screenshot of the Wiki-pay-ja

SALLY: Because the Book of Mormon was being advertised to me on the Wheel of Time wiki page.

EMILY: Oh yeah. What's that website called? Evidence central?

SALLY: Yeah. I was like, "What is this?"

EMILY: I was like, "Is it specifically for evidence for the Book of Mormon, or is it, like, just a place where you can go to get evidence for a variety of things?"

SALLY: I don't know.

EMILY: And Book of Mormon was just the one advertised because your IP address is in Utah.

SALLY: While I am willing to Google things on Pornhub, I am not willing to Google things about the Book of Mormon.

EMILY: No, that makes total sense to me.

SALLY: [laughing] So, there's that.

EMILY: What was I saying? The bad news is Perrin's back.

SALLY: There he is.

EMILY: There he is, baby.

SALLY: That motherfucker.

EMILY: That motherfucker. Weirdly we start this chapter not in – in just, like, in some redshirt’s point of view. Some dude named Vilnar. *Vilnar*.

BOTH, to the tune of the Bill Nye theme song: Vilnar the Science Guy.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: [laughing] The Science Gar.

SALLY: The Science Guard?

EMILY: [laughs] No, just the Science Gar.

SALLY: [laughs] I said guy.

EMILY: I know.

SALLY: I don’t know what you’re saying.

EMILY: It’s just Nye and Guy rhyme, and I wanted to give Vilnar –

SALLY: Bill Nye the Science – Vilnar the Science...Gar.

EMILY: See?

SALLY: Billy Nye –

EMILY: [laughs] Now you can’t get it out of your head.

SALLY: [laughs] Stupid. This podcast is dumb! Why do you guys listen to it?

EMILY: Um, Vilnar is just a random Saldean, like, basically a cop, because Rand is policing Caemlyn with a variety of Aielman and cops – and Saldean soldiers, because I guess Caemlyn’s own infrastructure didn’t have it? Or something?

SALLY: Yeah, no cops in fantasy England.

EMILY: I mean, there aren’t really any cops, generally. I think we’ve talked about that before. The state of policing and such in this fantasy world is very odd. Oddly, not really existent, especially considering that Robert Jordan was a southerner and police are a big part of that culture. Um, but whatever. So, Vilnar is, like, minding his own beeswax, thinking about how cool Aes Sedai are and how he wants to see one. Which is, like, okay I guess this is the type of dude who becomes a Warder. But, they’re, like, patrolling outside the city or something or, like, in the, I guess Caemlyn has kind of the outer city. I can’t remember really, and then there’s the part that is behind walls. And they’re at the wall and they find this huge contingent of, I mean,

we know that they're the Two Rivers folk. And Vilnar's like, "What the fuck?" And then we switch over to Perrin's point of view.

SALLY: Yeah. It's, like, what was the point of that, Robert?

EMILY: Why? There are lots of points of view in these two chapters. It's very confusing. But Perrin's like, "Hi, I'm here. I'm Perrin. I'm here to see Rand." And Vilnar's like, "Well, you're not allowed to bring, I mean, a whole army into Caemlyn." And Perrin's like, "Fair enough. Disperse, my – my boys."

SALLY: Begone.

EMILY: He's like, "Didn't we see a field like three miles back?" And Dannil or whoever, Dannil is like, "Yeah, yeah, my lord. M'lord. I'll [laughs]."

SALLY: Mlurd.

EMILY: "M'lord. I'll take them." And Perrin's like, "Great, Aram go with them so you're not so horny for killing." Which he totally is.

SALLY: Yeah. Aram's like, "I can't wait to blood my sword."

EMILY: Yeah, like, the guards ride up and Aram's like, "We don't even need the bowman. There are only ten. You and I can cut through them ourselves." And Perrin's like, I mean, first of all, I know in a fantasy text where everyone has plot armor that's probably true, Aram and Perrin could take care of it. In real life you couldn't.

SALLY: And, I mean, like, first of all, why would you want to cause unnecessary violence, period? But also, like, if you could bring, you know, equal to or more than your enemy, why wouldn't you?

EMILY: Yeah, just make it a lot easier. Not everything has to be a Dungeons and Dragons fight, Aram.

SALLY: It does.

EMILY: Aram's, like, living in this world where he has to gain XP by killing as many people as possible in order to reach level 20 very quickly.

SALLY: He's got to reach level 20 and get better stats to do *more killing!*

EMILY: Or something. I don't know. Yeah, he's transitioned in the last book and a half of his absence to being incredibly bloodthirsty, which, is an odd move.

SALLY: Yeah, and Perrin's like, "That's kind of weird." And it's like, "That's your fault, Perrin."

EMILY: And it's, like, I mean, he needs to go to therapy, but you're just like, "It's cool."

SALLY: "I will definitely enable these unhealthy violent coping mechanisms."

EMILY: Yeah, he's like, "I'll just ignore it. It will go away eventually."

SALLY: [laughing] All boys go through this phase. It's they're bloodthirsty phase.

EMILY: [laughs] He's just at that age. Perrin, three years younger than Aram.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Whatever. So, Perrin, uh, basically reduces it down to him and Faile. Then Gaul, Bain, and Chiad also sort of leave, because they're like, "Oh, Aiel are in the city. We've gotta go."

SALLY: "We've gotta go hang out with some normal people."

EMILY: Yeah. "We've gotta go see our pals and whatnot." Uh, and then – so they're escorted into the city. Perrin is getting progressively more nervous, because he's aware that, like, they started hearing as they got nearer to Caemlyn that the Saldeans were in town so he's like [groaning], "Okay. That means I gotta have the shovel talk with Davram Bashere." He assumes. Um, Faile's like, "My dad's not the one you have to worry about. It's my mom." And Perrin's like, "Okay."

SALLY: I mean, her mom is very frighten.

EMILY: And Perrin's just like, "I don't get it. I'm more worried about Davram Bashre, local chad."

SALLY: Local chad [laughs].

EMILY: [laughs] But they're escorted by the Aiel through the palace until they finally come to a door which, uh, like the Aiel disappear into to go alert Rand and he, like, flings the door open and is like, "Perrin! Faile! It's so good to see you."

SALLY: Like, okay.

EMILY: He, like, hugs Perrin, um, and kisses Faile, apparently. It says "kissing Faile lightly," I don't – it's hard to – I mean, I assume that because Perrin doesn't comment on it that that's not that weird, but, like, we've had so few interactions between normal adults in this series."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Is it, like, a Two Rivers custom?

SALLY: Yeah. Is it, like, you know kiss each other on both cheeks sort of thing? What are we –

EMILY: Yeah, I just want to –

SALLY: Is it, like, a gentle forehead kiss? What are we dealing with?

EMILY: Is he kissing her full on the mouth?

SALLY: [laughs] Just like [kissing noises].

EMILY: Smooch.

SALLY: Smoochin' her.

EMILY: Or is he kissing her on the hand? I don't know.

SALLY: Yeah. What does it mean, Robert Jordan?

EMILY: Robert! Elaborate on the kissing rituals.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: He's like, "Congrats on your wedding!" And Perrin's like, "What? How do you know about our wedding?" And Rand's like, "Oh, well, there's a whole bunch of Two Rivers girls here." And Perrin's like, "Oh, that's weird." And Rand's like, "Yeah, they're calling you Lord Perrin of the Two Rivers. Tell me all about it!" [laughs] And Perrin's like, "It's bad. It's terrible." Meanwhile, there's this whole other scene going on where Faile walks into the room and sees Min. And I would assume the natural assumption would be like, "This is one of – " I mean, not one of. She doesn't know Rand's romantic history. But you enter a room and you see your husband's friend and he's in a room alone with a woman, you're natural assumption, you'd think, would be "they're together."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Not Faile. She thinks, "This woman is definitely going to fuck my husband."

SALLY: Faile is...pathological about this.

EMILY: Because Min and Perrin, like, greet each other.

SALLY: Yeah, because they're, like, friends.

EMILY: Yeah, they had a totally normal friendly relationship back in the winter [laughing] between books 2 and 3, when everything and nothing happened.

SALLY: Yeah, and Faile's like, "This dirty skank is making eyes at my husband."

EMILY: “How dare she?” Finally, it, like, sinks into her that Min has zero interest in Perrin and is clearly in love with Rand. She’s like, “Oh, well that’s fine, then.” And Perrin’s like, “I have no idea what’s going on in the corner of this room.” And I’m like, “That’s because your wife fully has some mental illnesses that need to be addressed.”

SALLY: Yeah, just, like, her jealousy is...of the charts.

EMILY: Pathological, as you said.

SALLY: Yeah, and it’s just, like, troubling.

EMILY: Um, but Faile’s like, “Min and I are gonna go talk.” And Perrin’s like, “Okay, whatever. I guess Rand and I will go talk.” And Faile’s like, straightening his coat is like, “Now, remember, he can do magic and can kill us all and he’s also super powerful, so don’t do anything stupid or make any mistakes. And just remember he can kill you.” And Perrin’s like, “Great, thank you.”

SALLY: [laughs] “Thanks for the reminder.”

EMILY: “This has been awesome.”

SALLY: “This is also my childhood best friend, so maybe don’t be so mean.”

EMILY: [laughs] Yeah. “Could I have, like, a minute to reestablish our relationship?” Rand’s like, “Where’s Loial?” And Perrin’s like, “Ah, he had to go to the *stedding*, but he’ll probably be here in, like, two hours because he walks so fast.”

SALLY: Rand’s like, “Well,” [laughs].

EMILY: Rand’s like, “Well.”

SALLY: “I did, in fact, send his mother to find him.”

EMILY: He doesn’t even mention that.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: He’s so weird and dumb.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Like, you’d think he’d be like, “Ah, well, I guess his family missed you guys?” And Perrin would be like, “What? What family?” And Rand would be like, “Ah, this is a disaster.” No, that conversation does not happen.

SALLY: [laughs] It's not like he could be like, "I'll just pop over to the Two Rivers and find Loial's mean mom."

EMILY: No, yeah, they're definitely halfway out of the Two Rivers. Everyone was like, "He left." And they're like, "What the fuck?" [sighs].

SALLY: Fucking comedy of errors up in here.

EMILY: I know. Bless them. It takes them, like, three more books to find him.

SALLY: [laughs] Evade.

EMILY: Evade.

SALLY: Loial, King of Evasion.

EMILY: Evasion. Loial's got rogue stats, somehow.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Um, so, Faile and Min leave and then Perrin and [Rand] are just, more or less, chatting about – Oh, no, first they start – Perrin's like, "where's Mat?" Rand's like, "Well, he's supposed to be bringing Elayne here to get crowned. I'm hoping they'll get here in a couple months." And then he's like, "Would you go to Tear for me?" And Rand – Perrin's like, "No. I mean, first of all, literally not right now because I've just been riding a horse for, like, two months." And Rand's like, "Well, I could just Travel you there, so you wouldn't even have to travel. And you would literally just be in a tent over there." And Perrin's like, "I still don't want to do that." It's just, like, contrasting between Perrin and Mat. Perrin, able to say no. Partly because he hasn't been exposed to Rand for the last two books. And Mat just, like, "Well, I have to do whatever he tells me to do."

SALLY: Yeah, Rand also treats Perrin with a lot more, like, respect and dignity than he treats Mat. Like, for some reason there's more of, like, Perrin and I are equals. Like, not quite, but more so than Mat.

EMILY: Well, you see that a little bit even in the first two books when they're all three of them together. Rand and Perrin are kind of like, "We're the two normal, rational farm boys and whatnot and Mat's just this little weirdo who kind of hangs around us and is always getting up to his own mischief and pulling us into things." So Mat's kind of weirdly othered from them.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: In a way that I think is sort of normal in friendships, to have – everyone's just different, and of course it's normal that Rand and Perrin would have a different relationship than Rand and Mat would, or Perrin and Mat.

SALLY: For sure.

EMILY: But that is, like, so much exacerbated by Rand's new position, Rand's new power, everything that's happening with them. Where, yeah, Perrin's still getting treated with a modicum of respect and Mat's still getting treated like he's the village idiot.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: So, woof, is all I'm saying. Um, although Rand does still keep bringing it up and he is progressively more pushy about getting Perrin to do things.

SALLY: Yeah. Eventually that, I think, falls apart.

EMILY: Yeah, they're –

SALLY: And eventually their relationship is, like, transactional.

EMILY: Yes, that's a good word for it. It's –

SALLY: Like all of Rand's relationships, basically.

EMILY: Yeah. It's so sad.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But it's, like, because it's relationships between two men it's not dissected to the level that Robert Jordan dissects relationships between men and women. So, we're getting very few explanations or explorations of how anyone really feels about what's going on here.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Like, Mat isn't staying up at night thinking, "Well, Rand sure has become a bully, to me specifically."

SALLY: "Rand is a real asshole. To me."

EMILY: Yeah. "Rand's basically shoving me into lockers."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: On a daily basis.

SALLY: Throwing slushies on me like in *Glee*.

EMILY: Yeah. Ugh. And just the fact that Rand's like, "I need you to go to Tear." Or Illian, or whatever. And, it's like Mat was *almost* there.

SALLY: I know.

EMILY: Why have these things happened?

SALLY: Rand you are –

EMILY: Fully psycho.

SALLY: Making me *nuts*.

EMILY: I know.

SALLY: What's happening?

EMILY: [sighs] Um, and they talk about the Aes Sedai. Perrin finds out that Moiraine is dead. Um, sad, I guess. He mostly doesn't care. Um, he finds out – Rand tells him, "Oh, it's not just a story that the White Tower has split, there really are two factions and I'm more or less playing both of them, because it's to my advantage that the White Tower is split. If they were unified then I would be in Aes Sedai strings now, or whatever." And Perrin's like, "Okay, well that's a grim way of looking at it."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And Rand's like, "I mean, well, history speaks for itself." But he's like, "No, it's cool." He also says, "There's a third side ready to kneel to me." Which, I guess, is supposed to be Alviarin's weird letter?

SALLY: I guess.

EMILY: I have no clue why he thinks there's a third group of Aes Sedai. I guess, because he thinks within the White Tower proper there are two factions. Which is true, but one of them is the Black Ajah, so. I mean.

SALLY: [panicked laughter] One of them wants to kill you more –

EMILY: [laughing] I mean, they all want to kill you, in a way.

SALLY: That's fair. One of them definitely wants to kill you the most?

EMILY: But then they just have a nice chat about home. It's very wholesome. It's too bad it's only a paragraph. Perrin's like, "Why don't you go, like, visit the army? I brought a ton of people with me that you know." And Rand's like, "No, I have to protect them. I can't protect you and Mat, but I can protect them." And I'm like, "Why do you have to be so weird?"

SALLY: What if you just invested some time in your friendships in order to keep them? I don't know. Just a thought.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Or not even necessarily time, just effort when you do see them. Be like, "How are you doing?"

EMILY: Rand's like, "I had one normal conversation with Perrin for the first time in two years, so that gives me another two years to just abuse our relationship mercilessly. We good?" Perrin's like, "No."

SALLY: [laughs] Perrin's like, "Absolutely the fuck not."

EMILY: Exsqueeze me?

SALLY: "What are you talking about?"

EMILY: The next chapter has a great many points of view, but first Perrin leaves Rand after promising to think about going to Tear. Leaves and immediately sees Davram Bashere down the hall, who's, like, "Hewwo, we gotta chat." He's like, "We will talk," and then [laughs].

SALLY: Crooks a figner.

EMILY: Yeah. Perrin's like, "Hngh."

SALLY: This man.

EMILY: [laughing] "This man is so small, but so terrifying."

SALLY: [laughs] But so scary.

EMILY: Um, and they get into a room and have a, uh, weird chat. I don't like to summarize everything that happens with Perrin and Faile, because – and their parents, because it's more or less already been covered by us. Um, the main thing is that Bashere, after sort of disentangling the difference in, um – he still refers to Faile as Zarine and Perrin's like, "Oh, no. She's Faile now, because she was a Hunter of the Horn." And Bashere's like, "Hahaha sweet."

SALLY: He's like, "Cool!"

EMILY: "Good for her!"

SALLY: "That is very cool of my daughter."

EMILY: "I love that for her. And Faile is way cooler than Zarine, anyway."

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: And you're like okay.

SALLY: You are a lunatic.

EMILY: Yeah, Faile starts to make more sense in this context [laughs].

SALLY: Yeah [laughs]. This is my dad, and then this is my mom!

EMILY: They're both fully insane.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Anyway, Bashere's just like – wants to know that Perrin won't mistreat his daughter, that he won't be abusive or overly forceful with her. He's like, "You have to be gentle with women." And Perrin's like, "No, I'm not gonna hurt Faile. Like, that's my wife." Bashere's like, "I mean, good, because if we think that you're mistreating her or anything – or if my wife doesn't approve then we're going to take Faile away, because she's technically not old enough to be legally married."

SALLY: Yeah, which is like, "What?!"

EMILY: At least according to Saldea.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: It's different in the Two Rivers where women are just of marrying age when the Women's Circle decides they are, I guess. But they're like, "Technically we could have your marriage nullified or whatever and we can just take – kidnap Faile and take her back." And Perrin's, like, crushes the wine cup in his hand or whatever. And is like, "*Never*. You could *never* take Faile away from me."

SALLY: BEH.

EMILY: And Bashere, instead of calling the police –

SALLY: [laugh] Hello? Vilnar the Science Gar?

EMILY: Is like – [laughs] Vilnar the – stupid.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: He's like, "Hm. I don't know. I think, uh, I think you'll really be able to maintain our genetic – " What's my dad say about – ?

SALLY: Oh. You won't dilute the bloodstream [laughs] or the bloodline.

EMILY: Bashere's like, "Our gene pool's been really diluted – "

SALLY: The gene pool!

EMILY: "Over the last few generations. I think you'll add some good stock to it." And Perrin's like, "Exsqueeze me?"

SALLY: Disgusting. Blegh.

EMILY: Whatever.

SALLY: Can you spell the word cinnamon? [laughs]

EMILY: Oh yeah. No, [laughs] it's – if you can't pronounce the word cinnamon. Cinnamum.

SALLY: You don't have to know have to spell [laughs], but you do have to pronounce the word cinnamon.

EMILY: AHHH. [sighs] Crazy. Um, then they go to visit Deira, Faile's mom. Who's with Faile and as they approach, Perrin hears the sounds of two slaps and is like, "Jesus. Fuck."

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: But they open the door, and it is apparent that Faile and her mother have slapped each other. They both have marks on their face. And Perrin is like, "I have no idea what this relationship is. Terrible."

SALLY: This is why you meet the in-laws before marrying someone [laughs].

EMILY: Obviously! Oh my fucking god. But he's like, "Um, hi. I'm Perrin. I just, like, really love your daughter and I want to take her to the prom or whatever." And Deira's like, "Can you be forceful? Can you dominate my daughter? Women need to be dominated or we'll hate our husbands because they're not showing enough strength." Which, not to keep bringing up my Mormon upbringing, but legit that was like a thing.

SALLY: Ew!

EMILY: Not, like, physical domination, but, like, the idea that men are supposed to be the natural leaders in the household.

SALLY: Disgusting.

EMILY: Very patriarchal thing. So, if a man wasn't stepping up to fulfill his leadership role, then many women felt, you know, that they were having to do all the work in the household.

Which, I guess, you know, the logic makes sense. They're like, "Not only am I raising the children, cleaning the house, doing all this labor for free, but I'm also in charge of making decisions?"

SALLY: Yeah...

EMILY: I mean.

SALLY: There's a lot there.

EMILY: What I'm saying is that this whole thing with Saldaean gender dynamics is very rooted in patriarchy.

SALLY: Oh! Hundred percent, yeah.

EMILY: The idea that men and women have specific roles. I think the roles of men and women in Saldaea are a little bit different than they are in evangelical white, um, households, patriarchal households. But they are, nevertheless, that men should be the leader, men should be in charge, men should be able to dominate their wives in some sort of way. Whereas women have their own specific work.

SALLY: Yeah, like even – I think, at least according to the Wikipedia, in this section Faile's like, "It's the woman's responsibility to manage spying," or something like that.

EMILY: Yeah, later she's like, "You need to keep an eye on Rand." And Perrin's like, "I'm not going to spy on him." And she's like, "No, that's my job." And it's like hehehe.

SALLY: So, yeah, it definitely gets into a little bit of the, like, there's women's work and even though that's slightly different than what we – than what "women's work" would be considered in, like, the Two Rivers, maybe. Like, you're taking care of household.... whatever.

EMILY: Yeah, like, yeah Deira clearly has, like, military responsibilities and things like that, but she is ultimately still like, "My husband is the – should be able to take my by the scruff of my neck, or whatever, and show me who's boss." And I – you know, there's a sexual undertone to that. That men should be the domineering force in bed. Or whatever. And Perrin's like, "How does that even work with you guys? She's so tall!"

SALLY: And Bashere's like, "Don't underestimate me!"

EMILY: Bashere's like, "I love my tall wife."

SALLY: [laughs] Perrin's like, "Yes. Remember that nullification you talked about? I would like that."

EMILY: "Follow through, please."

SALLY: [laughing] “Please take your daughter back.”

EMILY: So Perrin’s like, “These people are fully psychotic, but whatever.” No one has told him he can’t marry Faile or can’t be married to Faile. So, I guess...

SALLY: That’s all he wants.

EMILY: Yeah. Then later he and Faile get to go to their room and chat. It’s a whole scene where Rand – Perrin is undoing the buttons, the little buttons on her dress and he keeps, like, [laughs] there’s actually a very cute part where he’s like, “I always hate doing this because I’m worried I’ll break the buttons.”

SALLY: Awww.

EMILY: And she, like, twists around to say something to him and he, like, a minute later, like, puts the little button in his pocket [laughs]. And is like, “Maybe she won’t notice.”

SALLY: Sometimes Perrin is so charming.

EMILY: I know, right? It’s so frustrating, because you’re like, “Oh, that’s very cute.”

SALLY: Yeah, just this big boy. Can’t handle tiny buttons.

EMILY: He’s like, “Dang it!”

SALLY: His hands are too big! And he’s just this –

EMILY: The buttons keep breaking!

SALLY: You know, gentle giant sort of archetype that we have with Perrin.

EMILY: Yeah! Who’s excited to have sex with his wife as they do enthusiastically at the end of this point of view.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But it’s, like, oh man, you guys. The rest of it is so fucked.

SALLY: Like, compare this very sweet scene where he’s like, “I’m too strong. My hands are too big. I can’t unbutton your dress.” With crushing a literal wine cup while talking to her dad.

EMILY: I mean, yeah. A fucking goblet.

SALLY: Yeah! How do you crush a goblet?

EMILY: Like, Perrin left and then Bashere, you know, put on his latex gloves and then put that in a little evidence bag and was like [laughs], “When my daughter’s murdered this will be evidence.”

SALLY: Beep beep beep beep.

EMILY: Like, what the fuck?

SALLY: How is Bashere not like, “Divorced. You are officially divorced by the power vested in me and my big army.”

EMILY: I mean, I know we’re giving Bashere a lot of credit. He is very clearly deeply entrenched in the Saldaean patriarchal system, but I just want to be like, “Oh man. Someone, put a stop to this.”

SALLY: Yeah. Like, Bashere is very much, uh, complicit in the bullshit that happens in this chapters.

EMILY: Yeah, he’s a, he’s a main character as it were.

SALLY: But it’s, like, if I had a daughter and her husband crushed a cup in front of me when I mentioned maybe they shouldn’t be married anymore.

EMILY: It’s just very, like, meet the parents sort of comedy hour that Robert Jordan is going for, because none of his other main romantic relationships have families-in-law to deal with, you know? Like, Morgase is still kicking, but neither Egwene nor Rand really has to deal with her.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Because she’s also an absentee parent assumed dead for most of the series. Mat certainly doesn’t have to deal with anything with Tuon. Just stuff like that. Perrin’s the only one who has a wife whose parents are alive and well.

SALLY: And also, you know, like, important, like central figures.

EMILY: Moderately central to the plot.

SALLY: Yeah, like, Morgase, obviously, but as you said she’s an absentee parent. But it’s not like –

EMILY: Yeah, Min technically has family, we know, but they’re not present.

SALLY: It’s not like she’s rolling in with her aunts.

EMILY: And no one ever – none of Rand’s girlfriends have to talk to Tam.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Or whatever.

SALLY: I mean, they got the long end of the stick, right? Tam is generally a very lovely guy.

EMILY: I know. Tam would be like, “Oh, hello. My husband’s three girlfriends.” My husband’s three girlfriends. My son’s three girlfriends.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Whatever.

SALLY: He’s like, “These are my daughters-in-law.”

EMILY: “As long as you’re all happy with the situation, I don’t care.”

SALLY: Whatever.

EMILY: Oh, Tam. So nice. It’s not like Tuon has to deal with Abell Cauthon.

SALLY: He’s also very nice!

EMILY: I know. He’d be like, “Oh, you’re the empress? Nice to meet you?”

SALLY: “Cool, I guess? Would you like a horse?”

EMILY: “Do you want a horse? I’m good at horses.” And she’d be like, “Fuck yeah.” She loves horses.

SALLY: Good for her. See? They’d probably have a lovely relationship.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Though he’d probably be like, “Mat, this does seem a little abusive.”

EMILY: Mat’s like, “Wheee! I’m Robert Jordan’s weird creation that has no –”

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: [laughs] Makes no sense!

SALLY: No sense of my own agency! Ahh!

EMILY: In the later books, especially. Okay.

SALLY: Oh, Tybalt. Big yawn.

EMILY: Um, I can't remember what Perrin and Faile talk about, except the spying thing. And he's basically like, "Okay, that was weird with your parents." And she's just like, "Eh."

SALLY: That's Tuesday, baby.

EMILY: C'est la vie.

SALLY: You and your mom slap each other every Tuesday? [laughs]

EMILY: Yes.

SALLY: She's like, "Yeah!"

EMILY: It's slap Tuesday [laughs].

SALLY: [laughs] Stupid.

EMILY: Um, we also flip over to Rand, who's just chilling when Min comes back from her conversation with – well, Perrin's like – I mean Rand's like, "Oh, you were talking to Faile for that long?" And she was like, "No, we talked for, like, thirty seconds wherein Faile threatened my life if I had any – if I wanted to make any moves on Perrin. Or whatever. Which I'm clearly not interested in." She's like, "That woman is crazy."

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: And Rand's like, "I mean I know. Perrin clearly doesn't, though."

SALLY: [laughs] "Like, I know. I've met her. She's nuts."

EMILY: Yeah, we've all met her. We all think Faile's crazy, but you know one of your guy friends always ends up with a crazy wife. What are you gonna do?

SALLY: Ah ha! Classic crazy wife trope. Hahahah!

EMILY: Haha! Ahahaha. But Perrin – fuck. There's so many fucking character names.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: She also just comes right in and sits on Rand's lap and he's just like, "This is just happening now. Can't stop it unless I do what she wants or, you know, beg her to." And I'm like, "Either of those is acceptable if you're uncomfortable with the situation." She shouldn't be able to sexually harass you. But you are comfortable with the situation, but the gray nature of those lines is troubling.

SALLY: Ugh.

EMILY: Um, she's like, "Well, I saw some shit while you guys were together." And he's like, "Oh, great. What's up?" And she's like, "Well, your little firefly aura thing is always stronger when you're with one of the boys." Um, she says, "I saw that Perrin is going to have to be there for you twice."

SALLY: [giggles]

EMILY: "Or something bad will happen."

SALLY: Only twice.

EMILY: Yeah, she's like, "Two times Perrin will need to be there." And he's like, "O-kay." And she's like, "And I don't even know if he's there if the bad thing will be averted. I just know he needs to be there or it will be even worse." Now, I think the first, you know, time is at the end of this book, where Perrin has to sort of rescue Rand from Dumai's Wells. The second time, I guess, is supposed to be in *A Memory of Light* when Perrin kinda goes to protect Rand when Rand is fighting the Dark One, or whatever, via ter'an – ter'angreal. Via *tel'aran'rhiod*, because there are people trying to get at Rand through *tel'aran'rhiod*, or something. It's actually, um, very bad. I mean, just, like, that narrative part of *A Memory of Light*. I don't like Perrin's plot in that book. It's mostly nonsensical, but we'll get to it when we get to it. I really don't like Min's viewings, um, the way they're set in stone like that sometimes. I think it gave – it didn't give Robert Jordan enough flexibility to make later decisions about the direction he wanted to take the books. Because basically what you're saying is, "Okay, now I have to do something where Perrin saves Rand's life or I'm not fulfilling that promise." Which, I mean, let us not forget that Robert Jordan neglected many of the promises that he foreshadowed elsewhere, but this one, it was kind of made such a big deal out of that he needed to come back to it. And it would have been, I don't know, more interesting – he would have had more options. Or, I guess, even Brandon Sanderson would have had more options if it wasn't the case.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: [sighs] Um, anyway Min's really upset by the whole thing and Rand's just like, "It's okay. Cry it out or whatever." She's like, "Okay," and then leaves. Yada yada. Um, then there's a random Aes Sedai point of view, as she's, like, trying to make contact with one of her spies. Then she's going through some alleys and she gets stabbed by a guy who's dressed by an Aielman, but he's clearly not an Aielman, given that he has dark eyes and when she wakes up and remembers what happened, he, like, said something about, "Get the witches out of Tar Valon," or whatnot. Now, if this were a normal book in a normal series – because this, this incident, when Demira, that's her name, she's like, to the other Aes Sedai, "We definitely have to change tactics of how we approach Rand, because he's the only one who could have told the Aiel to do that." Even though, to us the viewers, it was clearly not an Aielman. She's like, "He commands the Aiel, so he's clearly trying to get rid of us, so we have to be way more forceful with him and disregard his rules that make him feel safe and just do all sorts of shenanigans and whatnot." Which will ultimately lead to Rand leaving the city, blah blah blah.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: So the fact that this woman got stabbed by a random guy masquerading as Aiel is very important to the plot, so you'd think the identity of who stabbed her would be pretty important.

SALLY: [snorts, laughs]

EMILY: And might be, like, a mystery that was solved or a loose end that was tied up at some point. You'll never guess where I found the identity of her attacker. In the footnotes on Wikipedia!

SALLY: Oh nooo.

EMILY: And they're like, "It's in *The Wheel of Time Companion*." And I'm, like, bruh.

SALLY: I don't keep that with me while I read.

EMILY: I also would forget about it. I forget about it a few pages – I mean, but the time this book is over.

SALLY: Yeah, yeah!

EMILY: Oh my god. It's so frustrating. Apparently, it's supposed to be one of the Whitecloaks that Padan Fain corrupted. You know how there were also some Whitecloaks that tried to assassinate Rand earlier in this book?

SALLY: Yeah. I thought they all got killed.

EMILY: I guess there's just some guys, like, running around.

SALLY: I mean, that makes, like, sense because he said, "The witches in Tar Valon," but, like, it only – like [laughs] stupid. Okay.

EMILY: Before I looked on Wikipedia I was like, "Is it supposed to be one of the guys from the Black Tower?" Like, is it supposed to be? Like that's the only thing that made sense to me, but even that didn't make sense to me, because I couldn't see any advantage Mazrim Taim would have out of it.

SALLY: Yeah [yawns].

EMILY: But whenever a Padan Fain related person attacks someone it's basically Robert Jordan's way of saying, "There's actually no good reason for this violence to happen, but I need it to happen to move the plot along."

SALLY: So we'll bring in...

EMILY: Padan Fain, who just sort of attacks people without any rational reason. Moving the plot along. Which, I mean, first of all is bad writing. If you just need random events that are disconnected from the rest of the plot to happen in order to make things happen. Then that's bad. But it is especially bad writing that this was never brought up again.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Solved in any way. It just sort of went away.

SALLY: Yeah, like, [sighs].

EMILY: It boggles the mind.

SALLY: It's very funny, in a tragic and confusing structural sort of way, that we spent, like, that much time and attention on Perrin's ridiculous meeting the in-laws sequence, which could have just been, you know, either non-existent, or a very short conversation.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Versus an integral plot point is given to a completely random character that we either haven't met or have met and completely forgotten. And it's just, like, buried in the rest of everything that's going on. It's, like, that makes the plot quite inscrutable, Robert.

EMILY: Yeah! It's so difficult to follow. When you're at all removed from *Lord of Chaos*, it's so difficult to remember what happens.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Which is not necessarily true of the first, I'd say, three books in the series, where generally things that happen, you know, follow chronologically from one to another. Maybe less so in *Eye of the World*, because at the end of *The Eye of the World*, all of that is so weird and inscrutable. But, like, things just start falling apart in Book 4 because there are now so many characters in so many different settings holding so many different subplots together that, like, we are already gonna have a hard time keeping track of them all. Um, but if you're – if you're leveraging the entire, like, plot of your book on this one little event that happens and then how are we supposed to piece that together, you know?

SALLY: Yeah! Like, it's yeah. Robert, this is why no one ever has any idea what's going on.

EMILY: Yeah, this is why I'm always confused.

SALLY: Oh, buddy. Did you see another bug?

EMILY: I guess that's all that happened.

SALLY: That's all she wrote.

EMILY: Um, Demira's Warder is named Stevan.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: But it's spelled S-t-e-v-a-n. Fantasy.

SALLY: Stev-in.

EMILY: Yeah, I guess it could be pronounced Ste-vahn.

SALLY: Stevan!

EMILY: But I just like that there's a guy named Stephen running around.

SALLY: This is al'Lan Mandragoran, or whatever, and then this is [laughs] Stephen.

EMILY: [laughs] And Vilnar the Science Gar.

SALLY: [laughs] Vilnar. [singing] Vilnar the Science Gar. Vilnar!

EMILY: Stupid. Alright.

SALLY: The science gar! [laughs]

EMILY: That's enough out of us.

SALLY: That's too much out of us [laughs].

EMILY: Thanks for listening, everyone. Thanks to Glynn Mackenzie for our theme song. Thanks to our patrons on Patreon. Um, to our followers on social media. Etc. Etc. All the usual suspects. Um, do you have any thoughts or announcements?

SALLY: No.

EMILY: Cool. Do you have a sign off?

SALLY: No.

EMILY: Okay, let's do Egg, Elayne, Nynaeve, and um –

BOTH: Aviendha.

EMILY: *Sex and the City* characters.

SALLY: Okay.

EMILY: Obviously, Elayne's Carrie. That one's easy.

SALLY: Yeah, easy.

EMILY: Um, I guess Charlotte would be Egg?

SALLY: Oh, I was gonna say Nynaeve.

EMILY: Yeah?

SALLY: I don't know. I just feel like, or at least Nynaeve pretends to be conservative. Or, you know, puts on a conservative front, which Charlotte also does.

EMILY: Yeah, yeah. I can't figure out who's Samantha. None of them are slutty enough.

SALLY: Yeah, I mean, I feel like Aviendha comes the closest with the Aiel, um, relationship to bodies.

EMILY: Yeah, okay.

SALLY: So, that would mean that Egg is Miranda.

EMILY: Alright, I'm willing to live with that.

SALLY: Unfortunately, that puts Gawyn in the role of Steve, which I'm not comfortable with.

EMILY: I don't believe in that.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Okay, that was stupid [laughs], everyone. I hope you all have a good week.

SALLY: Bye!

EMILY: Bye!