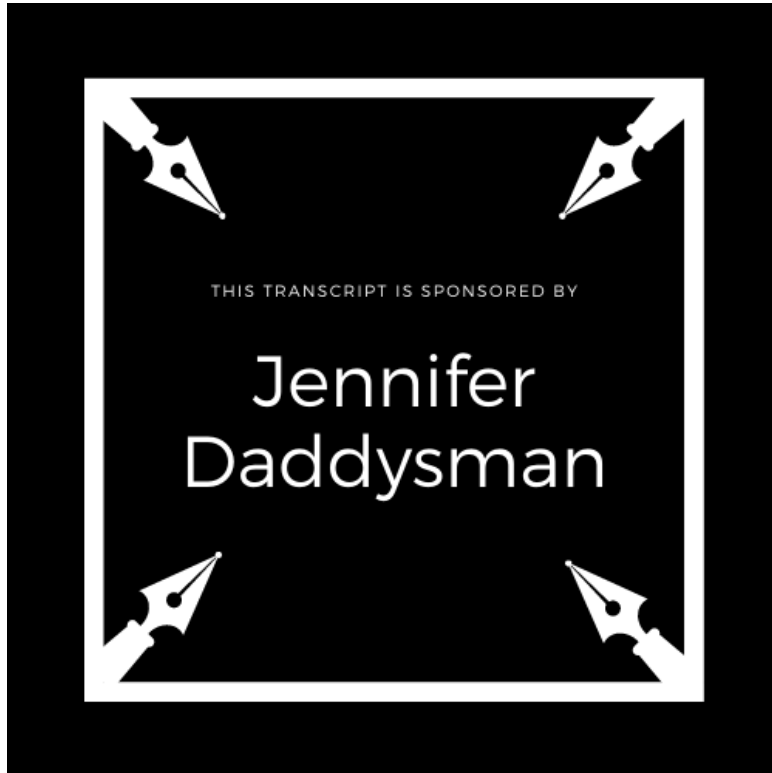




Episode 160 – “Love Geometry”

Release Date: April 26, 2021

Running Time: 43 Minutes

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]

SALLY: Um, anyway, this is Everybody Hates Rand, your friendly neighborhood *Wheel of Time* podcast. I am Sally Goodger.

EMILY: I’m Emily Juchau.

SALLY: We are once again recording on a Friday afternoon, so we might be a little rambling than usual.

EMILY: A little, um – [laughing] Now I don’t remember what happened in the chapters. I read them yesterday.

SALLY: I mean, they are technically super plot relevant, but they are also gag-inducing, so I don’t blame you.

EMILY: Well, one of them was basically a montage chapter.

SALLY: Yeah, of Perrin being sexually – of Perrin and Rand being sexually harassed by the women in their lives.

EMILY: Yeah, yeah. But it's different because one of them wants it, secretly. BLEH. Everyone in *Wheel of Time* needs to go to a fucking workshop on setting and responding to boundaries. Just be like, "Here's what it's like to be a healthy, functioning adult. Sometimes, you shouldn't touch other people."

SALLY: What?!

EMILY: Shocking, I know.

SALLY: Berelain should be the first one in line to attend that workshop.

EMILY: Berelain makes no sense to me as a character.

SALLY: I know! It's because she just is, like, whatever floosy Robert Jordan needs her to be at any given moment.

EMILY: Yeah. It's bizarre. She is presented, most of the time, as a really incredibly smart woman, who's politically savvy, a really great leader, not afraid to, like, get her hands dirty when it comes to battle and scary political stuff. She's very – she's just very intriguing in all of those ways. She's not, like, a weird ambitious freak the way Elayne is. She's like, "I don't need the throne of Cairhien. I'm good with my little, tiny city state. As long as my little, tiny city state is happy, I'm happy." And I'm like, "That's a great quality."

SALLY: Yeah!

EMILY: But then, Robert Jordan is like, "But she is *obsessed* with sleeping with men who are not into her. The very few men who are not into her." Because, presumably, Berelain could be having a vibrant sex life with any number of men if she chose, but she's so hung up on Perrin in this instance that it's, like, what's happening?

SALLY: I don't know. It really doesn't make any sense. And I also just, like, really can't wrap my head around the purpose of the plot between Perrin and Berelain and Faile. Like, why did that need to be – ? Like, I don't think it, like, elevates those relationships in any way. I don't think it is illuminating in any way. It doesn't make sense with Berelain's character. All it really does is make, like, highlight that Faile is extremely jealous.

EMILY: Yeah, and insecure.

SALLY: Yeah! And it's, like, we already know that.

EMILY: Yeah, we've pretty much grasped that from day one.

SALLY: Yeah. Um, so it's just, like, a really frustrating plot and it's one of those things that I feel like Robert Jordan meant to be a little funny. Like, look Berelain's super competent at everything except her sexual relationships, because that's where she's corrupt or whatever. I don't know.

EMILY: That's where she's criminally insane.

SALLY: Yeah [laughs].

EMILY: Like, she's really, legitimately displaying stalking behaviors here.

SALLY: Yeah! That's true.

EMILY: Much in the style of Tylin and of course those two – I don't want to call them relationships, but those two dynamics have very different outcomes. But I'm like, what is it with Robert Jordan and, like, we were talking about last time, his, like, paranoia of women who have any modicum of power. It's exactly like that book we read. *The Power*.

SALLY: *The Power* by Naomi...Ackerman?¹

EMILY: Which was so fucking reductive of saying, like, if women or, it is implied, any oppressed group of people suddenly gains the upper hand, then they will use it in the exact same way that the historically dominant caste has used it. And I'm like, what the fuck kind of thesis is that?

SALLY: Yeah, it's just the –

EMILY: It's insulting to literally everyone.

SALLY: Yeah! I mean, no. It is literally as reductive as possible to just be like A) “power” the way that we understand it only exists with a dominant group oppressing multiple secondary groups, you know? It cannot physically imagine another form of quote unquote power existing. And that B) whoever has power in that way is just going to be ruthless and merciless and just, like, kill whoever they want, assault whoever they want, steal from whoever they want. And it's just like hmmm!

EMILY: It just feels –

SALLY: I feel like – the things that you're drawing from are, like, very particular to, like, white, Western, male, colonizer type states. Patriarchal, not necessarily just male.

EMILY: Well, but yeah. It just feels like a really – it just feels like an extended excuse for being like, “It's not my fault that white people have committed atrocities. Or that men have committed atrocities against women. That's just what power does.” And I'm like, it's a little bit more

¹ It's Naomi Alderman

complicated than that, Naomi. This has become a [laughs] slam of *The Power* by Naomi Alderman.

SALLY: I mean, I keep seeing that book. It's, like, come up on my TikTok a few times on these, like, lists of, like, feminist books to read. And I'm like, I will throw my phone in the ocean if one more person tries to tell me this is a feminist text."

EMILY: I have literally never read anything besides *Wheel of Time* that was less feminist [laughs].

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah! It's basically like, "Women, if given the ability, will just rape and pillage as much as...America has."

EMILY: So why give women power? Is the underlying subtext! [laughs]

SALLY: Yeah! It's like, ma'am! Madame? [laughs] What is wrong with you?

EMILY: Anyway, that's a stupid book. And *Wheel of Time* is a stupid [laughs] series, but particularly, yeah, in the love – what I would call a love chevron between Perrin, Faile, and –

SALLY: Love chevron!

EMILY: Um, Devin Wakefield, my best friend, is very obsessed with what he calls "love geometry" [laughs].

SALLY: Can Devin guest and give us a whole presentation on love geometry?

EMILY: He got really passionate about it the last time I saw him. He was like, "There are no love triangles. Love triangles like the advertise them are not really love triangles. They're love chevrons."

SALLY: He's right.

EMILY: And I'm like, "So a love triangle would be polyamory?" And he's like, "No, that would be a love triangle filled in. A real love triangle would be someone in love with – Person A is in love with Person B who is in love with Person C who is in love with Person A. So just a whole lot of unrequited love."

SALLY: Um, okay. I mean, I guess he's right.

EMILY: And I'm like, "Sure, but, I mean [laughs]."

SALLY: I would like a whole PowerPoint presentation on this, Devin Wakefield. Please, thank you.

EMILY: Yeah, I think he'd do a great job.

SALLY: Yeah, but I mean, I think *The Power* is, um, relevant, because ultimately, I think the thesis of *The Wheel of Time* is very similar.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: In that power – again, it's not a matriarchal world, but the most powerful people are the Aes Sedai and they basically just function like every other group of corrupt politicians that we see in every HBO show, you know? Robert Jordan's basically just saying, "Women will also do the same thing with power that men will do, so they shouldn't have power." So, anyway. Back to the love chevron.

EMILY: Gotta circle back to the beginning, because I've gotta keep it straight.

SALLY: Oh, sorry. Whatever.

EMILY: No, I'm good. It's just confusing. These are two very long chapters, first of all. Um, the first one deals with Rand and company being driven out of Caemlyn, finally, by the arrival of the last two Aes Sedai, bringing up their number to thirteen. Um, first, though, he and Perrin are, like, chatting in a courtyard, smoking their pipes.

SALLY: They're, like, smoking. Happy 4/20.

EMILY: And then Loial arrives. And it's a very, you know, cute, tender scene between the three of them. Very briefly before Rand is like, "Hey, Loial. Actually, I really need someone who can help me not just locate all of the Waygates so I can have them guarded, but I need someone to talk to, um, the Ogier who are guarding certain Waygates to, you know, get them on board." Dah, dah, dah, dah, dah. It's actually a very, um, like Rand is, of course, being selfish with how he uses his friends. But he is thinking, specifically, of Loial in this scenario. He is, I think, concerned about the idea that Loial, according to Loial's mother and Elder... whatever his name is.

SALLY: Haram?

EMILY: Have been too far – has been away from the *stedding* too far. Too long. Too far? Yeah, Rand's concerned about Loial and is like, "This is a task that will help him in the long run with his health."

SALLY: Mmhmm. Mmhmm. Mmhmm.

EMILY: But Perrin's like, "For – I mean, how dare you? Loial's been here all of ten minutes and you already want to put him on the road again just like you're trying to convince me to go to Tear. You sent Mat off to face a –"

SALLY: To fuck knows where.

EMILY: “Hundred Aes Sedai or whatever. What are you doing?” And Rand’s like, “I’m doing what I have to do! [mumbling noises]. Man. Power.”

SALLY: Disgusting.

EMILY: “Anger. Rage.” And Loial’s like, “Can you both shut up? And also apologize to each other. And hug.” [laughs]

SALLY: Yeah. Everyone is gonna sit on Loial’s lap and we’re gonna have a sharing circle.

EMILY: It’s like, did you ever fight with your siblings and your mom forced you to apologize to each other?

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: The fucking worst.

SALLY: Like, “Ugh. Sorry.”

EMILY: “Sorry.” Uh, what was that?

SALLY: What was that? Say it like you mean it [laughs].

EMILY: “Sorry. UGH.” [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah. If I heard ‘say it like you mean it’ once as a child.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: God.

EMILY: Triggered. Um.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: But they’re kind of like, “Sorry. Sorry, friend. Whatever.”

SALLY: “Sorry, Perrin. I’m just an asshole.”

EMILY: Yeah, Rand still obviously wants Perrin to go to Tear. And Perrin’s like, “Well, what about Min’s viewing?” And Rand’s like, “I mean.”

SALLY: “What about it?”

EMILY: [laughs] “What about it, bud?”

SALLY: [laughs] “Like, I don’t give a shit. I’m sending you away.”

EMILY: “I don’t care. Whatever.”

SALLY: [yawns]

EMILY: Then Min arrives, extremely breathless because she has galloped all the way from the inn. And is like [in a breathless voice], “A bunch of Aes Sedai are coming. Right now. Seven of them.” [laughs] And Rand’s like, “Oh, no. That’s bad. Because that’s, you know, not – I can’t handle seven Aes Sedai and I’m the only one in this dang place who can channel.” Um, and he’s like, “Alright, well. I’ll go meet them, I guess. Have – can you,” to Nandera, who’s the Maiden in charge now, he’s like, “Can you go get Sulin, get my coat, and have some people go to the great hall or whatever.” And she’s like, “Done and done.” He’s like, “Fine, could you bring my horse in, then?” [laughs] And she’s like – which I think is a, kind of a sly reference to Caligula, who made his horse a senator.

SALLY: Oh, that’s right.

EMILY: Um, and she’s like, “I don’t – I don’t comprehend.”

SALLY: Yeah, like Perrin and Loial chuckle.

EMILY: Perrin and Loial are like, “Haha. Our good friend Rand, always a jokester.”

SALLY: And she’s like, “Is this about the water again?”

EMILY: She’s like, “Is it the water?”

SALLY: “Is there a horse in the water now?”

EMILY: “Is this a – is this a comeback? Or circle around?”

SALLY: She’s just muttering to herself the entire time. She’s like, “I don’t understand this man.” That makes two of us, Nandera.

EMILY: Yeah, seriously. But Rand goes to the, like, throne room and sits down. There’s a whole big assembly of Aiel there, which, to be fair, I mean, in a bet between Rand and five hundred Aiel versus seven Aes Sedai, I’d bet on the Aiel.

SALLY: Yeah! Seriously!

EMILY: I mean, Aes Sedai all you need is one stab.

SALLY: That’s true. Aiel you need, like, five hundred stabs.

EMILY: Yeah, they'll just keep fighting. Like, the difference between – it's like the difference in HP, you know, between the wizard class and fucking barbarian classes.

SALLY: Yeah, when you start at the beginning of your D&D campaign and you have six HP points – you have six health points.

EMILY: Yeah, exactly [laughs].

SALLY: And then later you're like, "How did I *ever* make it?"

EMILY: How did I function? You didn't. You fainted every three hours [laughs].

SALLY: Yeah. Like, this is criminal. I was literally a newborn babe with a sword.

EMILY: But a babe!

SALLY: Wandering around, fighting wolves or whatever.

EMILY: The Aes Sedai arrive, briefly heralded by that main housekeeper lady who's like, "Uh, seven Aes Sedai are here," and then they storm in. She's like, "[groans]."

SALLY: Goodbye.

EMILY: Goodbye. And leaves. And they come in and are like, "We're gonna do big Gandalf magic." And everyone's like, "What does that mean?" And they're like, well, according to Rand it's called the Mirror of Mists.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But it's just an illusion where we make ourselves seem bigger and scarier than we really are, but in reality, we are but fragile women. Fragile women, with the complexion of newborn babes.

SALLY: [laughs] If the men find out we can shapeshift –

EMILY: [bad British accent] They're going to tell the church! [laughs] They're like, "We have to be intimidating by being big." And Rand's like, "Okay." I mean, it works sort of. All the Aiel are like, "Hello? Exsqueeze me?"

SALLY: Bon-jour?

EMILY: Now they're all seven feet tall? Which is Rhuarc's size!

SALLY: Yeah, I mean, it's not that impressive, we're all seven feet tall, but –

EMILY: [laughs] Oh, god. They've grown to match us! Perhaps this will be a challenge.

SALLY: [laughing] Yeah.

EMILY: But there's these seven with the woman who was shanked in the street as the spokesperson, who's like, "Hello. We are no longer going to be abiding by your rules, because it is clear that you do not respect Aes Sedai. So, that's that. We're gonna come and go as we please. Here are our rules...you meanie" [laughs].

SALLY: [laughs] This is their assembly against bullying. That is just bullying [laughs].

EMILY: And Rand's like, "Um, it takes a bully to know a bully, ladies. We're all bullies here. [laughs] Hashtag all bullies."

SALLY: [laughs] Bully lives matter.

EMILY: That's basically what blue lives matter means.

SALLY: Yeah! It is.

EMILY: It's the height of what Robert Jordan thinks is dramatic irony.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um, but the thing about dramatic irony is that it only functions if people are acting like normal human beings with reasoning skills and brains. *Oedipus Rex* works as an example of dramatic irony because the characters in *Oedipus Rex*, while doing things a little bit exaggeratedly, are essentially acting in ways that make sense for normal human people.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Oedipus kills a guy because he's been insulted, you know? Or whatever happens with his dad.

SALLY: Yeah, that's what it is. He's insulted.

EMILY: There's not, like, some elaborate misunderstanding. His dad was genuinely a dick to him, not knowing it was his son. There was a fight, he killed him. He marries his mother, not knowing she's his mother, because he met a hot lady.

SALLY: Well, yeah, and also she's, like, in the ancient Greek city state structure, she was married to the old king so she's still a very important woman in the city state. And Oedipus becoming the new king is like, "Yeah she's great and she's also powerful. This is a good match."

EMILY: Yeah, politically.

SALLY: It's not just, like –

EMILY: This is a good match and of course we're going to have children together because we want to propagate the bloodline. No –

SALLY: Again, it's not just an elaborate thing where he's like, "I will marry *this* random lady."

EMILY: Yeah, but here in *Wheel of Time*, we're operating on sitcom logic, where no one just comes out and says, "Well, here's what I mean. Here's what *I* mean. Here's what I'm referring to. Here is what has changed for me." They're just sort of overreacting. Tybalt is just sort of climbing on the printer.

SALLY: Tybalt went from hating the printer to being like –

EMILY: Maybe that's my lover.

SALLY: [laughing] Obsessed with the printer. And every time I print something, he tries to stick his paw into the printing drawer, like, where the paper is coming out, and I have to stop him before he ends up, I don't know, getting his foot torn off?

EMILY: The printer – in fairness, the printer is the only thing in the house that makes approximately Tybalt-esque noises.

SALLY: [laughing] Papa!

EMILY: [laughs] So he's like, "This is a romanceable NPC" in Tybalt's universe.

SALLY: [laughing loudly, coughs] This a romanceable – [laughs]. The printer, romanceable NPC [laughing]. Tybalt is the weirdest animal.

EMILY: Um, anyway. So, yeah, the Aes Sedai don't come out and say, "One of us was stabbed by an Aiel and we know that has to be on your orders." So Rand doesn't have the opportunity to say, "Legitimately never ordered that. Don't know what you're talking about."

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Similarly, Rand doesn't say, in response to their weird accusations, "Why is this happening? I don't know why you have suddenly changed tracks. You have been reasonable up until this point. What is going on?"

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Just, no one is doing that.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So, um, you know, that relationship just can't be salvaged now.

SALLY: Yeah, everyone, particularly in the, like, Aes Sedai versus the rest of the world battle, is just, like, presuming an insult has already happened against them.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Which is frustrating.

EMILY: So that happens and then Min, who has watched secretly to see if she could see anything, goes back to the inn to try and find out what happened, because she at least has a brain to be like –

SALLY: Something's going on.

EMILY: Something's going on. But she doesn't find out, because she gets to the inn and is chatting with her Warder informant, who just sort of says some weird, ambiguous shit about how the Dragon Reborn needs to show some respect. Which is exactly what the Aes Sedai said, so, who knows? When two unfamiliar Aes Sedai walk in. Their names are, uh, Kiruna?

SALLY: And Bera.

EMILY: And Bera. And we're told over and over again that they are equally powerful both in the magical sense and in the, you know, power of presence sense, despite the fact that one of them is, like, a farmer and one of them is actual nobility. And it's, like, Robert Jordan ease up on the classism. It's all good.

SALLY: I know. What is up with you, dude?

EMILY: Um, but Min's like, "Oh, shit. That's thirteen Aes Sedai." So she – and these two women, the snippet of conversation she overhears is them being very, like, "That dang Dragon Reborn. He's such a nuisance. We need to put him in line." Because, I mean, that's how some of the Aes Sedai are.

SALLY: Yeah, that's how a lot of them are.

EMILY: So, Min, which god bless her, has now – this is – she's just zooming back and forth.

SALLY: Yeah [laughs].

EMILY: She runs back to the palace and is like, "Oh my god. There are now thirteen Aes Sedai." Rand is like, "Red alert. Sound the alarms. We're out of here" [laughs]. He's like, "Everyone assemble in Perrin and Faile's room. If you see Perrin and Faile, tell them to go to their rooms." It's hilarious, because they show up and Perrin and Faile are there, of course, and are like, "What the – ?"

SALLY: There's also, like, five hundred Maidens in the hallway. Loial's there. Gaul's there. [laughs].

EMILY: Yeah, Perrin's – they're basically with their, their fucking hangouts. This is their version of the friends gang [laughs]. We've got Perrin with Gaul and Loial, his best friends. Oh, there was a cute aside. He's like, "Gaul has corrupted Loial. He's teaching him how to gamble on horses" [laughs]. And I'm like, love their friendship.

SALLY: Why can't I see this?

EMILY: They're so cute. And Faile's hanging out with Bain and Chiad, and they're all just doing domestic things.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Rand barges in and is like, "We're going to Cairhien, people." And they're like, "I mean, okay. Thirteen Aes Sedai sounds scary. We'll go with you." Rand's like, "Min's coming, all the Maidens are coming. Sulin's coming. You guys. Whatever the hell. Now we all have to send letters."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: They spend like an hour – Loial, like, leaves, comes back with his fucking backpack, and is like, "I'm good to go." Rand's like, "Oh, you didn't need to move that fast, because we're now going to spend two hours writing letters." And I'm like, "Are you guys not on a timetable?"

SALLY: Yeah, like, it's time to *go* [laughs]. You can leave verbal messages with Bashere or something.

EMILY: Yeah, you can also – because teleportation exists, you can also send back messages pretty quickly. But whatever. Robert Jordan can't commit to his teleportation magic. So, they all write letters. Perrin sends one to the Two Rivers guys and is like, "We're going to Cairhien. Catch up when you can." Faile's like, "Hi mom, hi dad. I'm going to Cairhien with the Dragon Reborn [laughs]. Goodbye!" And Rand is like – oh, he sends one to Mazrim Taim that's like, "Please don't go killing any Aes Sedai [laughs]. Again. Begging you to not kill any Aes Sedai."

SALLY: He's like, "Red alert. There are thirteen, but...also red alert you can't kill any of them [laughs]."

EMILY: But also, stay in your lane and maybe everything will be good.

SALLY: Stay at the farm.

EMILY: Protect the boys.

SALLY: With your boys.

EMILY: Protect our boys. Yeah, right. Like Rand thinks of them as “their boys.” Rand’s like, “I hate these men.

SALLY: Protect my weapons that I *despise*.

EMILY: Protect my arsenal. Blech. And he writes another letter to Merana, which is like, “Hey, you fucked up. If you want to join me in Cairhien, I will allow a Maximum of seven Aes Sedai. You and six others to match the embassy from the White Tower.” And I’m like, “Doesn’t that mean that – ”

SALLY: Doesn’t that mean there would be fourteen Aes Sedai in –

EMILY: Or does he think there are five in Cairhien? So that would bring it up to thirt –

SALLY: Oh maybe. To twelve.

EMILY: To twelve. I don’t remember.

SALLY: It just seems like I would not allow them to bring that many.

EMILY: Yeah, I’m just having a hard time keeping track of Aes Sedai math. The intricate math that is going on with who – how many he can handle and whatnot. I just want him to go to Mazrim Taim and be like, “Hey, can you spare three guys who are moderately good, and I’ll just keep them with me. Three guys who can link with me, you know? And then I don’t have to worry about it.”

SALLY: Like, the Asha’man are just right there, Rand.

EMILY: Yeah, you could. There are so many solutions to this problem.

SALLY: But no, it’s time to just put on – pull the fire alarm in the Palace of Caemlyn.

EMILY: Zoom. Yeah, he’s literally like, “Goodbye! We’re going! This is not a drill! We’ve been training for this!” So, then, once everyone has successfully evacuated to Cairhien we – [laughs] evacuated. For god’s sake.

SALLY: I mean, it’s what Rand makes it sound like.

EMILY: Yeah, we then switch back over to Merana’s point of view, who’s like, “Well, this whole thing has gone to shit. Like, ah dang.” Because, apparently, now with Kiruna and Bera there, everything about the power structure no longer makes sense, so duh duh duh duh. She’s like, “The control of the embassy is slipping through my fingers.” And I’m like, “Well, that’s because it was based on, like, a weird societal bullshit, so of course it is this unstable.

SALLY: Yeah, also you did a bad job.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: You've been demoted, and you deserve it.

EMILY: It's got the structural integrity of a Utah elementary school.

SALLY: Exactly.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Exactly. The children should just go to school in open fields.

EMILY: Yeah. Might as well. It would be safer.

SALLY: Tear down all the elementary schools and just make them open fields.

EMILY: Communes [laughs]. Um, so the Aes Sedai decide on their seven, I think, that they're going to send to Cairhien. The others they send to escort the Two Rivers girls, who are still hanging around in the city, back to Salidar. Which, I assume, there's going to be an awkward moment when they get to Salidar and realize it has been vacated and they're going to have to catch up. But the people going to Caemlyn, excuse me, Cairhien, include Kiruna and Bera, Merana herself, Verin, Alanna, I'm pretty sure Seonid and Masuri go. And I want to say there's another name dropped, so I don't even know if they're following Rand's rules, but whatever. Those are the ones that I remember being around, so they're important in Aes Sedai terms, because their names are said more than three times.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: It's like the Bloody Mary rule. Um, we then flip over to the Cairhien montage, where we're informed that, after making the gateway, Rand basically fainted like a Victorian lady who had been overburdened by all the excitement [laughs].

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: I don't even know if he fainted, or I don't know –

SALLY: He just sort of collapses.

EMILY: Had to sit down for a second or something, but now everyone is doting on him. Um, and Rand's basic update is that ten days pass from when they arrive from Caemlyn and when the next big shit happens. In that time, um, he mostly hangs out with Min, uh, which we've already mentioned the sexual harassment. Rand does tell us that at one point he resorts to begging her to stop, thinking, well that's her game. She said she'd make me beg. But, even then she's like, "Nope." And he's like, "Ah, cool. Well, I don't know what's going on." But he also talks a great deal about how comfortable it is being with Min and how much he enjoys her being around and

how much she soothes him. Which is, like, it's never a sign of healthy man when he is like, "I need this particular woman around to soothe my violent tendencies."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Like, that's some weird werewolf shit going on. Um, but in *Wheel of Time* terms it's about as romantic as it gets that he's like, "Well, at least I'm more at peace with my general angst when Min is around." And it's like, "Okay, whatever." Just gonna skim right over that.

SALLY: Rand, work on your relationship with yourself.

EMILY: Go to a therapist.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Please, I'm begging you. He spends time – he does go to the little Cairhien school that he visited at the beginning of this book. He talks to that guy again, the little, little bookish man. Who can't focus for very long because Min's there and he keeps getting distracted by her. He sends Rand a note later that's like, "I've had some thoughts." He says something about to build something new, you have to clear away the rubble. And we know Rand has been asking him about the seals to the Dark One's prison, so, you know, this train of thought is going to lead to Rand thinking, "In order to restructure the prison, I need to break all the seals." So, foreshadow there, I guess. Rand also spends – Oh, but then he goes fishing. He's like, "Goodbye, I've gone fishing." Like, literally. Gone fishin'. Rand's like, "But I need to talk to you about the important seals on the Dark One's prison."

SALLY: He's like, "Nope, I have gone fishing."

EMILY: I don't know if he's actually gone fishin' or if at this point, he's been murdered, because I do know this guy gets murdered at some point.

SALLY: [whispers] He does get murdered, that's right.

EMILY: Um, Rand talks about meeting with the various Cairhienin nobility. He arranges for, like, Min to be able to watch through a crack in the door or whatever so she can see viewings. Her viewings are all incredibly grim. She's like, "That woman's going to die by hanging. That person is going to die by a gruesome death in battle. Blah blah. Like, they're all going to die essentially." And Rand's like, "Great. I mean, I don't like any of them so that's fine I guess, but neat?"

SALLY: Yeah. Well, I mean, they are so grim. She's like, "This lady's face is all covered in blood every time I see her." And it's like, "Ew."

EMILY: Yeah. It's, like, when she walked into the White Tower right before the papal schism and she was like, "Everyone's fucked."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Yikes.

SALLY: Horrifying.

EMILY: At one point – she’s also with Rand all the time when Aes Sedai come visit or when Berelain comes to visit. Um, which Rand has to be like, “Berelain, get your job done. Rhuarc says you’re slacking off or something.” And I’m like, what is up with the inter – I don’t know if it’s supposed to be an implied thing that Berelain, like, made a pass at Rhuarc or something.

SALLY: Yeah, their relationship is hard for me to figure out.

EMILY: Yeah. I just – the inconsistencies of Berelain’s character, we’ve kind of already referenced, but this whole thing is like, “Who is Berelain?” Because according to Robert Jordan she’s six different women. She might as well be the twins in *The Prestige*, you know. [laughs] Christian Bale. Sorry if that’s a spoiler, if you somehow haven’t seen *The Prestige*.

SALLY: I haven’t seen *The Prestige*, but I know that’s what happens.

EMILY: Okay, well, twins is the thing. There’s also a cloning machine.

SALLY: What the fu – ?

EMILY: Yeah, we should watch it sometime.

SALLY: Maybe that’s what happening. I’ll watch *The Prestige*. We can watch it tonight.

EMILY: It’s pretty wild.

SALLY: Maybe Berelain’s being cloned.

EMILY: That would be funny.

SALLY: And there’s, like, eight Berelains.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Just running around. And that’s why everyone’s like, “What?”

EMILY: “What’s happening with her?”

SALLY: One of them’s just always off flirting.

EMILY: One of them’s off with Perrin. One of them’s off doing – running the country. Whatever.

SALLY: Another one's bothering Rand.

EMILY: Uh, Min at some point, during all this, Rand talks about how she'll pick up a book to look like she's doing something other than sexually harassing them. But at one point she picks up a book and actually, like, gets into it. Which just sort of leads to this weird subplot in Min's character where she's actually doing, like, research librarian shit to help Rand.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And, like, find out what he needs to do. Like, okay. It doesn't go too many places, just gonna put that out there, but Robert Jordan clearly was like, "Hmm, maybe Min is becoming too much of a floosy."

SALLY: [snorts]

EMILY: "So I need to have her – I need to prove that she's literate."

SALLY: "I need to prove that she can read. That's it." You already have one floosy, Berelain.

EMILY: Um, Rand is working out. He talks about working out with either Rhuarc or Gaul, which is the funniest thing ever. And he specifically references that they try to kick each other's heads.

SALLY: Yeah!

EMILY: And I'm like, "Aiel fighting is so funny."

SALLY: I know.

EMILY: But we also never see Rand kick anyone's head and I'm pretty upset about that.

SALLY: Maybe he can't anyone's head. Maybe he never learned how, because Gaul and Rhuarc are just kicking him in the head!

EMILY: Gaul's like, "I love this. I get off on this."

SALLY: I mean, how could you not?

EMILY: Um, overall, Rand says, it's a happy little ten days. He isn't being harassed by the Aes Sedai. Like, every three days or whatever, the Aes Sedai embassy sends a polite note that's like, "Hey, we're still here. Do you want us to visit?" And he's just like, "No."

SALLY: And they're like, "Okay. Biding our time."

EMILY: “Okay, bye.” Yeah, they get it. If you’re going to manipulate someone you’ve got to be nice about it. Or whatever. Perrin, meanwhile, is having a hellish time.

SALLY: I know.

EMILY: Because Berelain is being so fucking weird, and so is Faile.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And these are all – this whole situation is meant to put Perrin in this, like, victim situation. Because, Perrin is, of course, acting the way a good, um, husband should, more or less, if a woman keeps making passes at him. Obviously, it’s not in Perrin’s purview to get a restraining order. Although, I would say he could go to someone about it. Like, “This is legitimately becoming a problem. Is this woman getting any work done? She’s too busy hanging out outside my door.”

SALLY: Yeah, literally, he’s like, “She stands in front of the door to my bedroom like half the night.”

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: What a creep!

EMILY: So creepy. Um, but he’s done everything in his power to get it to stop, including blatantly telling her to stop. And Faile, the one person who should be his ally, is not. She is being angry at him for reasons he doesn’t understand.

SALLY: Well, she’s being angry at him for no reason! Except she’s...like mad with jealousy.

EMILY: It makes no sense, because whenever we get Pe – Faile’s points of view, she seems perfectly cognizant of the fact that Perrin has not and will not cheat on her. She’s like, “I don’t believe that Perrin would be unfaithful.” And I’m like, is she an unreliable narrator or is she angry because Perrin’s not reacting to the situation in a way a good Saldaean man would.

SALLY: Oh, that’s true. I always forget that aspect of their relationship.

EMILY: Yeah, like, Perrin is very tentative and apologetic about the whole situation to Faile, which, again in our, like, I don’t know Westerner point of view about it, is kind of what a guy would normally do. But Faile is set up in this othering situation, where men are supposed to throw their women on the beds and claim them, or whatever the hell, to prove that they’re in love.

SALLY: Does she want Perrin to murder Berelain? [laughing] What does she want?

EMILY: I don’t know. Does she want Perrin to be like, “Hey, will you assassinate Berelain?” Does he want her – does she want him to make passionate love to her to prove that she and she

alone ignites the spark of his arousal? That got romantic I should write [laughing] I should write romance novels.

SALLY: You should. You should write romance novels.

EMILY: Gross. I feel gross.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Um, so. Like, I don't even understand why Faile's acting the way she does, and I don't even know if Robert Jordan understands why she's acting the way he does – she does. It's absurd.

SALLY: It is absurd.

EMILY: It's just a circus. Send in the clowns. [sighs] And it's frustrating because this is going to go on and on and on for the next six or seven books. So, great, we have that to look forward to. At the end of the chapter, we switch back over to Rand, basically as he tells us, "Okay, I've put the Aes Sedai off for ten days. I'll finally take them up on their offer." And is like, "Come on down." And basically, you know, the ominous music starts playing because we all know – oh, he does also mention that he wrote saying, "Hey, will you have Gawyn come and talk to me?"

SALLY: Oh, yeah. And Gawyn just doesn't respond.

EMILY: Well, I'm like, unless you send it directly to Gawyn, we don't even know if it got to him.

SALLY: Yeah, that's a good point.

EMILY: Um, not that I believe that Gawyn would have come and visited Rand.

SALLY: Maybe he would have tried to assassinate him.

EMILY: I know. Would have been kind of funny [laughs].

SALLY: Then Rand would have to hang him or something [laughs].

EMILY: "Sorry, Elayne."

SALLY: "Sorry I killed your brother. He tried to kill me."

EMILY: Um, but Rand is, like, "Ah dang. I liked Gawyn the one time I talked to him." And accurately assumes that Gawyn believes that Rand killed his mother. But then makes no further efforts to be like, "Here's a letter directly to Gawyn being like, "Hi, I didn't kill your mom. I'm sorry that that is a rumor that has happened. Here's what actually happened. I think Rahvin killed your mom. If you don't believe me, here are my witnesses." Whatever, you know? Like, you

could make an effort here. But Rand is like, “He just wouldn’t believe anything I said to him.” And I’m like, yeah, he wouldn’t, the Gawyn that Robert Jordan has rendered, but an accurate – a reasonable person would.

SALLY: Yeah, or you could at least try, you know? Like, that is the decent thing to do in general, but, like, you’re in love with his sister.

EMILY: That’s gonna be an awkward fucking wedding if her brother is like, “You killed our mother!”

SALLY: Yeah, and you also should try and make ally – of, I don’t know, the First Sword of Andor or whatever the fuck his title is. I don’t know. It’s just ridiculous.

EMILY: But, again, no one acts like human beings.

SALLY: [yawns]

EMILY: So, yeah, Rand is like, “Bring on the Aes Sedai.” [signing] Send in the clooowns! And those are those two chapters.

SALLY: They are all clowns.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: How’s that bath, Tybalt?

EMILY: The next chapter is very short. It involves Rand getting kidnapped [laughs]. Then we get our last, uh, point of view, not just – it’s like a long, one of those chapters made of many snippets, and we’ll get the last we hear from Mat, Nynaeve, Elayne, and Egwene for the rest of the book. Um, so that’s what’s on the horizon and we have no covered what’s in the past. So.

SALLY: All done.

EMILY: Thanks for listening. My voice cracked quite a bit there. Thanks for listening. Thanks to Glynna Mackenzie for our theme song.

SALLY: [yawns]

EMILY: Thanks to our Patreon – patrons on Patreon. God, I do it every time.

SALLY: It’s hard.

EMILY: Thanks to our patrons on Patreon and our followers on social media, and anyone who has left a nice review of the podcast.

SALLY: Yeah!

EMILY: That was nice of you.

SALLY: That was nice of you.

EMILY: Um, what's that one that's, like, our Twitter header?

SALLY: Oh! "A very good podcast."

EMILY: A very good podcast. Yeah, guys. It takes so little effort to leave a nice review. A very good podcast.

SALLY: I love that review.

EMILY: Four words. It says it all.

SALLY: It's so funny.

EMILY: I don't need specifics. I just want you to say "good."

SALLY: Good, or yeah. Good job.

EMILY: Thumbs up emoji.

SALLY: Yeah. Your favorite emoji.

EMILY: If you're satisfied with the content, that is.

SALLY: Yeah, if you don't like it, don't leave a review.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Yeah, that will skew the statistics.

SALLY: Yeah, "a very good podcast" was the funniest review of all time.

EMILY: Um, but that's that. Do you have anything to add?

SALLY: No.

EMILY: That's great. Do you have a signoff?

SALLY: Um, I'm thinking.

EMILY: We watched the world's most upsetting anime this week. Title redacted, even though we've probably said it in other podcasts, because I don't want to spoil it for you. But, like, the main character just died at the end.

SALLY: Oh yeah.

EMILY: It was like some sort of –

SALLY: It was extremely upsetting, and I haven't seen Emily that angry in a really long time.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs] Which was upsetting in its own way. Just because I felt...bad.

EMILY: Why?

SALLY: It was my suggestion originally to watch the anime.

EMILY: No, I wanted to watch it to. And once we were in, I was in, but, like, boy howdy.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: I'm still pretty angry.

SALLY: Boy howdy is right. And then she's aggressively texting Devin.

EMILY: Yeah, that was the funny part. I was like, DEVIN, *I have to tell you about this*. And Sally was like, "Are you texting Devin?" And I was like, "Yyess."

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: I'm just *bothering* him with my weird things. The very next day, Devin sent me, like, four texts in a row – not even in a row. Like, twenty minutes apart, and my phone was in another room so I didn't see them. But then he sent he a text that was like, "I promise I'm not needy. I just have a lot of things to say right now about different things."

SALLY: Awww.

EMILY: And I was like, "I'm the one who sent you a fucking diatribe about an anime that you will never watch. We all have our little issues, okay?"

SALLY: I think it's very sweet that Devin will listen to anime. Whenever I try and talk about anime with my friends I get super nervous.

EMILY: Oh, I'm sorry.

SALLY: That they are like, “You are a freak. And we don’t want to listen to this.” But that might just be me, my own insecurities.

EMILY: I don’t – I wouldn’t do it to anyone other than Devin, probably. It’s only because it’s an equal relationship of us just sort of saying weird things to each other.

SALLY: Yeah, equal opportunity ranting.

EMILY: Yeah. Yeah, that’s true. [laughing] A lot of Devin and mine’s relationship is built on ranting.

SALLY: I think that’s great.

EMILY: Okay, that was the world’s weirdest sign off, but it was in there. Somewhere. Thanks for listening, y’all.

SALLY: Bye bye!

EMILY: Goodbye!