



Episode 164: Sammael's Inglorious Death

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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 Glynna MacKenzie plays)

Emily: Back in the saddle. Yeehaw! (laugh)

Sally: Back! And worse than ever before. (laugh)

Emily: We're back and have not improved in the slightest. It's still bad here.

Sally: (laugh) It's still bad. This is the copy of A Crown of Swords --

Emily: Oh my God. What happened?

Sally: That I spilled Diet Coke on. (laugh)

Emily: (wheeze)

Sally: And then I had to blow-dry it, um, every individual Diet Coke-stained page.

Emily: Jesus.

Sally: So.

Emily: The care you took for it is really astounding.

Sally: Well, it was your copy, and I felt really bad because I'm a mess.

Emily: Why would you feel bad when we have so many other copies?

Sally: This was before we had, like, --

Emily: Oh.

Sally: Eighteen thousand copies of Wheel of -- every Wheel of Time book.

Emily: So that was -- this was one of the OGs --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Right along with the, uh, copy of The Dragon Reborn that is duct-taped --

Sally: (laugh) Yeah.

Emily: On the binding because it literally fell apart halfway through my, you know, fifth reread or whatever.

Sally: Yeah. Yeah. You can tell the original Wheel of Time books -- Emily's original Wheel of Time books -- because they are in various states of distress.

Emily: Well, um, at least, I feel like, The original Dragon Reborn and the original Crown of Swords are the most beloved --

Sally: That's true.

Emily: And you can tell because clearly, they were handled.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um. Like, I used to, when I was, you know, twelve or thirteen, I would just get out The Dragon Reborn and be like, "Hmm, time to reread some of those choice Mat scenes."

Sally: Mm.

Emily: And I wish I could do that with A Crown of Swords, but all the Mat scenes are depressing as fuck now.

Sally: Yeah, all the Mat scenes involve sexual assault.

Emily: He's okay early on, I guess.

Sally: Yeah, I just got to the point in Winter's Heart where Mat comes back -- it's very far into Winter's Heart where Mat comes back --

Emily: I know, she was like --

Sally: And It's so upsetting.

Emily: She was like, "Mat's not even here yet." Like -- she's, like, two-thirds of the way through Winter's Heart.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And I'm like, oh, yeah, I always forget that he's actually gone for almost two books.

Sally: It's so upsetting.

Emily: Because Robert Jordan is a sadist and hates us.

Sally: Yeah. And I was like, "Oh my God, the dice tile, I'm so excited."

Emily: Yes.

Sally: And then it's like, pain, suffering, pain, suffering. (laugh) So.

Emily: He has a super broken fucking leg.

Sally: Yeah. He's like, "I can't even sit because my leg hurts," and I'm like, big mood. And then he's like, every -- he's -- ugh. Whatever. We'll get there. It's just upsetting.

Emily: (laugh) Yeah, first we have to get through --

Sally: Yes.

Emily: A Crown of Swords. This says it's the acclaimed number one international bestseller. Does that mean this book specifically, do you think, or ...?

Sally: Probably the whole series.

Emily: It also has a little -- a little circle that says "The New York Times bestseller." Which just sort of boggles the mind. It's hard for me to believe that, like, at any point, a lot of people read Wheel of Time.

Sally: Yeah. It really does kind of boggle the mind, to think about, like, Wheel of Time having, like, a -- I hate saying this, but, like, a Game of Thrones moment --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: In the zeitgeist, where everyone was like, “Fuck yeah, Wheel of Time.” Or, like, I guess, these days it would be, um -- what’s the Brando Sando one? Rhythm of War? What’s that series?

Emily: Rhythm of War? What’s that?

Sally: I thought it was one of the books in his --

Emily: Oh, maybe that’s the latest one. I don’t know.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Uh, what’s it called? Fuck.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Way of Kings. That’s the first one.

Sally: That is -- yeah.

Emily: I don’t know if it’s the --

Sally: I don’t know what the actual series is called.

Emily: Don’t Tweet us and tell us. I don’t want to know.

Sally: Yeah. I feel like I should know, ‘cause that’s, like, a lot of -- obviously a lot of people who read Wheel of Time and are on Wheel of Time Twitter --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Read this, but, no, it’s just, like -- (laugh)

Emily: All I can think is the cosmere? But that’s, like, his whole little world, you ... his -- his galaxy.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: His galaxy brain of books.

Sally: Whatever, man.

Emily: Um.

Sally: But it’s, like, weird to think that people were like, “Yeah! Crown of Swords is out!” In 1995 or whatever.

Emily: When was it?

(sound of pages flipping)

Emily: Where's the copyright page in the Diet Coke -- oh, there it is.

Sally: (laugh) Stuck together.

Emily: It's peeled together -- 1996.

Sally: Oh, dang, I was one year old.

Emily: Wow. I was, well, depending, either two or three years old. Tybalt, why does this have to happen every fucking time?

Sally: You could just sit in it. Guys, it's like we never left. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah, hey, uh -- (laugh) This is Everybody Hates Rand, your friendly neighborhood Wheely Time podcast. I'm Emily Juchau.

Sally: And I'm Sally Goodger. Are we switching back to you this season?

Emily: Yeah, might as well. We can do --

Sally: 'Kay.

Emily: Um, switch back and forth. Odds and evens or something like that.

Sally: What's happening? (laugh)

Emily: I don't know. Tybalt's, like --

Sally: (laugh) OK, anyway. Back to this. A Crown of Swords.

Emily: Yeah, I was getting a kick out of the, um -- the, like, you know, the page where they -- oh. Bye.

Sally: Okay, bye.

Emily: Leaving a trail of cat hair on my yoga pants in his wake. Um.

Sally: Getting a kick out of the review page?

Emily: Yeah, the review page. Which, in some Wheely Time books, is, like, six pages.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: As though to cram in our, um -- they're like, "Trust us."

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: "This is a really good book." And they do that in, like, you know, The Shadow Rising, the worst book.

Sally: (laugh) They're like, "We will indoctrinate you."

Emily: Yeah, it's like the editor, Robert Jordan's wife, reached the end and was like, "That wasn't one of your stronger ones, babe. We'd better, you know, put in lots of praise at the very beginning." Uh, but Crown of Swords is one of the better books, so there's only one page of --

Sally: (laugh) It can stand on its own two feet.

Emily: And they are separated into praise for Robert Jordan, praise for the Wheel of Time, which, has the same, pretty much, three quotes that appear in every ...

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, and praise for A Crown of Swords. And I was -- I didn't even read the praise for Robert Jordan, I just saw that it came from a person named Brewster Milton Robertson, of Myrtle Beach Sun News. (laugh)

Sally: (alugh) The only person in the world writing praise for Robert Jordan.

Emily: Isn't Myrtle Beach just, like, a beach in North Carolina?

Sally: Yeah. Something like that.

Emily: Myrtle Beach Sun News.

Sally: I bet he's just, like, Robert Jordan's childhood friend or something. Robert Jordan was from --

Emily: Brewster.

Sally: One of the Carolinas, right? Brewster. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah. Brewster Milton Robertson.

Sally: That's gonna be our next cat.

Emily: "His writing is distinguished as literature by the richness of its fabric, with all the charm and naivety --" (laugh) -- "of the Brothers Grimm --"

Sally: What? (laugh)

Emily: "And the social/moral commentary of Huxley's Brave New World." What?

Sally: This is just full nonsense.

Emily: This is just words.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's like that headline. Did you see that headline that was all about, like, "Mexican porn star Nacho Vidal has been charged with manslaughter after a ritual where a guy died involving pig's blood," or something.

Sally: What? Yeah, that's what this feels like.

Emily: Yeah. That's just, like -- every word.

Sally: I had the same experience listening to you read that than listening to you talk about Nacho.

Emily: That's not even it. "With his well fleshed out characters --" None of that is hyphenated, even though it should be -- "dark imagery, comic relief --" Bold statement.

Sally: So Mat.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: "Vivid landscapes and a fascinating sense of timelessness ..." It's the Wheel of Time. I would --

Sally: I know, that's -- (laugh)

Emily: I wouldn't call it "timeless."

Sally: I know, it's very funny that he, like, missed the theme completely.

Emily: "Jordan has created a complex literature with a language and reality all of its own." I mean, I would say that it has a language and reality all of its own. In Robert Jordan's language and reality, women are -- what the? Is that only chapter -- okay. Thank fuck. I was flipping through the book and at page 136, which is a good chunk of the book --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It -- I saw chapter five, but I thought it was chapter two and had a panic attack.

Sally: I also thought it was chapter two, looking over your shoulder --

Emily: Oh my God.

Sally: And I was like, "Actually, Crown of Swords is bad."

Emily: Well, I do think this -- look at how long this chapter is.

Sally: Yeah, I don't know why Robert Jordan's like, "I love front-loading really long chapters at the beginning of my book -- books," and then they just sort of taper out to being reasonably-ish sized chapters.

Emily: Yeah, the prologue's a solid, uh, 50 pages, which is unfortunate. Crown of Swords. Let's talk about Crown of Swords, baby. Let's talk about you and me.

Sally: (singing) "Let's talk about sex, baby. Let's talk about you and me."

Emily: Um. Oh, God, it advertises the soundtrack for the Wheel of Time.

Sally: "Let's talk about all the good things --" (laugh)

Emily: Remember when we looked that up?

Sally: I sure do. Remember when we had the whole episode about Perrin being a furry, and we talked about ABO extensively?

Emily: Yeah, I could talk more about ABO. The omegaverse.

Sally: (gagging noise)

Emily: I could talk all about it, all day long, not 'cause I've read it extensively but because I've watched several video essays. (laugh)

Sally: Maybe I'll get into video essays this fall.

Emily: They're pretty fun.

Sally: Yeah, I think I would enjoy them.

Emily: Yeah, they're just, like -- they're very, you know, chill.

Sally: Yeah. You'll have to send me some of your faves.

Emily: OK. Alright.

Sally: I'm giving you homework.

Emily: I'll do it. Thanks.

Sally: Okay, a Crown of Swords. The title comes from Rand's dumb crown that he gets at the end of the book, when he becomes king of Illian or whatever, and he literally has a crown with little pointy swords on it.

Emily: Yeah, it's the -- it's the Laurel Crown, right? Isn't it called, like --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You know, in ancient, um, Greece, with -- when they did ... (sigh)

Sally: Good sports.

Emily: The Olympic games and good sports, naked --

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Everyone would be like, "Here, have a leaf crown."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And that was, like, super high honor, even though, like, it would probably be gross and sticky, you know? And you'd be sweaty.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I can't -- and naked. So I don't really see the appeal. But I also don't really see the appeal of being a monarch, so that might just be a personal problem. Um, yeah, this is the book in which Rand, uh, sort of fucks around and finds out, until the very, very end, when he decides to attack Sammael and does so successfully despite almost zero planning or pay-off regarding the last two books of planning to attack Sammael.

Sally: It's so frustrating. In classic Rand style, he basically just has, like, a rage attack and is like, "I will now kill Sammael."

Emily: Yeah, Rand's, like, favorite fucking thing to do is to be like, "Oh my God, the Forsaken are after me. I really have to, like, think this one through. I have to be super patient and just, like, you know, not attack -- not lose my temper and not attack them right away 'cause they're very scary and of course if I do that then they'll kill me."

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And then something happens, like Elayne's mom, quote unquote, dying, or Rand getting stabbed, and he's like, "Mm, time to do murder."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And then he just teleports straight to their house.

Sally: (laugh) Ding-dong.

Emily: And is like -- (laugh) "Ding-dong, the witch is dead. Or ABOUT TO BE, you fuckos."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And then goes on, like, this Kill Bill fuckin' murder spree.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And the Forsaken don't kill him --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: 'Cause he's the protagonist. He has plot armor. He -- they were never going to successfully kill him.

Sally: Yeah, Sammael's like, "There's absolutely no way I could kill this man, who is not thinking logically at all, who has just teleported into my house --"

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: "And has no idea of the lay of the land." (laugh)

Emily: You would think --

Sally: There's absolutely no way --

Emily: There are multiple points in this book where Rand and Lews Therin are chatting, and Lews Therin is like, "Sammael is the most dangerous --"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "When he's on the defense."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Rand's like, "I'm just gonna ignore that." Robert Jordan is just gonna ignore that. Sammael's a weak-ass pussy who can't do shit. He got killed by fog.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: How inglorious.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: "My name's Sammael, and I got taken out by mist."

Sally: He's -- again --

Emily: "I got taken out by the embodiment of Axe body spray."

Sally: Well, I bet Sammael would wear Axe body spray.

Emily: Yeah, I feel like Mashadar -- is that what it is? I always get confused between Mashadar and Machin Shin because they look the same.

Sally: Correct.

Emily: And they're both sentient wind --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Or mist or whatever.

Sally: Yeah, one's in the Ways, right, and then the other one is in, um --

Emily: Yeah, Machin Shin is in the Ways --

Sally: Shadar Logoth.

Emily: And I would argue is really cool except for the paragraphs we always have to read about tearing flesh and whatnot.

Sally: Yeah, that's disgusting.

Emily: But otherwise I think it's, like, a cool concept. The, like, corruption of, um, this travel system. I wish the Ways got utilized a little bit more in this series but then Robert Jordan does, uh, discover teleportation and is like, "No, we're never fuckin' using those again." Um, Machin Shin is the sentient mist that haunts Shadar Logoth --

Sally: Okay.

Emily: Which I think is, um ... I don't like it as much.

Sally: Hmm.

Emily: I don't know why. I just feel like with Shadar Logoth, a haunted city, you could do better than sentient mist, you know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You could do, like, a ghost army.

Sally: Ooh.

Emily: Or something.

Sally: A bunch of ghost horses.

Emily: More creepy, haunting things.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Ghost horses, the most powerful form of horses. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: I'm playing Breath of the Wild, and I spent, like, seriously an hour trying to mount a goddamn horse.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Which -- I don't know why I was struggling so much. I just, like, wanted to get a horse so I could register it at the stables and name it and then, you know, be able to call for it when I'm walking around on the road or whatever and it would be faster to have a horse. But, uh, I could not mount a fucking horse until I got attacked by skeletons -- (laugh) which happens occasionally in Breath of the Wild, when there's a blood moon --

Sally: Okay. Okay.

Emily: So I got attacked by skeletons, including one skeleton horse, and then I mounted the skeleton horse, easy as pie. I did not register it, though. I did eventually get a different horse, named it Randy.

Sally: (laugh) I love that.

Emily: (laugh) I don't know why.

Sally: Randy!

Emily: And now I have a horse named Randy, but I did briefly have a skeleton horse too.

Sally: Oh, that's nice.

Emily: I know. I would have, um, probably registered it, but it ran away from me in a fright when I tried to get it to go off a cliff.

Sally: Well --

Emily: Not, like, a big cliff, and it's a skeleton. Like, what does it have to lose, you know? (laugh)

Sally: Its bones.

Emily: Its bones wouldn't break apart on impact, I don't think. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) There's now no way for us to know.

Emily: Yeah, I mean, I would have liked to experiment.

Sally: 'Cause ghost Randy ran away.

Emily: Ghost Randy. Skele-Randy.

Sally: Skele-Randy!

Emily: Um.

Sally: We are so stupid. Um.

Emily: What were we saying? Ghost horses.

Sally: Ghost horses.

Emily: Sammael getting his ass kicked.

Sally: Yeah. So the climax of this book is really wack, but then Rand gets his titular crown of swords.

Emily: Yeah, that's what the book is named after. There are really only three plots -- plot threads in this book, which is probably one of the reasons it's one of the better books.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: We do have many of our main characters condensed into places, which is pretty nice and is not going to happen, uh, much after this point.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But we have, um, Rand at the beginning, uh, with Perrin and Min and Faile and all of them. Uh, Perrin will eventually break away because while Rand is dealing with the rebels in Cairhien -- Cairhien has, like, you know, constant uprising problems and people trying to take over 'cause they hate Rand, which, like --

Sally: Relatable.

Emily: Who can blame them? (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, and they're modeled after the -- after the French, so there's gotta be some revolutions.

Sally: Yeah, there's, like, a protest in France every day, and I respect that about them.

Emily: Yeah, what a mind-boggling realization it is that Les Mis is not about the French revolution.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You know, when you're, like, eleven, you think it's just about the French Revolution --

Sally: Yeah. They're like --

Emily: You don't know about the Terror and the guillotines and whatnot --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's like, oh, actually, it was just a sad students' revolution.

Sally: Yeah, it's a different revolution. Yeah.

Emily: Just one of the many times when college students in France were like, "This is bad, actually."

Sally: Yeah. "Actually, this sucks ass."

Emily: Yeah, it was basically the, um -- what was that -- ahh. What was that, like, sad college during, like, the war in Vietnam where they were having a protest and, like, they got, like -- the cops or whoever opened fire on them.

Sally: Oh, was it Kent State?

Emily: Yeah, Kent State. The Kent State shooting.

Sally: Yeah, the Kent State shooting.

Emily: It's basically that.

Sally: Yeah. Yeah.

Emily: Les Mis is the 1800s version of that. OK.

Sally: Fuck the police, man. Anyway.

Emily: History. The French. Uh, yeah, Perrin and Faile get sent away to go take care of Masema, uh, which obviously will not happen. They get sent with another small contingent of, uh, you know, B characters.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Berelain, uh, Bain and Chiad, Gaul.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Et cetera. Several of the Wise Ones and Aes Sedai.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: A lot of this book is about taking care of the Aes Sedai who Rand more or less took captive in the last book --

Sally: Yes.

Emily: Either directly took captive of or have sworn fealty to him.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Uh, so those are -- that's just going to be an omnipresent problem, which, uh, is not fun to deal with because there are so many of them.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: If there were, like, five, that would be one thing. But --

Sally: No, but there's, like, five thousand.

Emily: Yeah, there's quite a few, and, uh, the ones who swore fealty have to get, like, taken care of in a variety of ways whereas the ones who got taken prisoner won't really get resolved until, uh, Verin's, what do you call it? Her, uh, lobotomy tent.

Sally: Oh, yeah, her lobotomy tent.

Emily: Over in Path of Daggers, yeah, where she --

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Forces women to become loyal to Rand with mixed results, I will say.

Sally: Well. You wonder why. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah, the ones who are just Darkfriends but who get lobotomized into following Rand, it doesn't go super well, you know? (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: What a shock.

Sally: Yeah. Wow. Wowwww.

Emily: Wowww. Uh, Rand will have another encounter with Padan Fain and the Shadar Logoth dagger. He'll get his second Fisher King wound.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Uh, do he and Min consummate their relationship in this book or the next one?

Sally: I think it's in this book. Well --

Emily: At some point, they consummate their relationship. I think it might be the next book.

Sally: Yeah, I can't really remember. I know they have --

Emily: 'Cause they have some, like, weird slow burn shit for quite a while.

Sally: Yeah. Yeah, I can't remember if it's in, like, the late -- latter third of this book or the, like, kind of first third of Path of Daggers. I can't really remember.

Emily: I know the inciting incident is that Coulavere, the attempted usurper, hangs herself.

Sally: Then it --

Emily: And that's just such a super disturbing way to start a sexual relationship.

Sally: Then it must be in this book, 'cause I'm pretty sure Coulavere dies in this book.

Emily: OK, well, then --

Sally: Not that it really matters because that scene I will completely skip over.

Emily: Yeah, just --

Sally: I have nothing to say about it.

Emily: Gross. Um --

Sally: Yeah, it's super sexy when people hang themselves. What?

Emily: It's so sad.

Sally: Robert -- all the inciting incidents Robert Jordan has for Rand and his three ladies, it's, like, Elayne almost gets murdered and then bonds Rand as her Warder with Min and Aviendha.

Emily: Robert Jordan is, like, plucking tropes off of the fanfiction websites and just sort of throwing them at the wall to see which ones will stick.

Sally: Like wet spaghetti.

Emily: Yeah, like, Min and Rand is obviously an attempt at hurt/comfort. You know, that old trope.

Sally: Blegh.

Emily: But it's -- such a bad. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) It's done so poorly.

Emily: It's done so poorly, he clearly missed the point of the trope.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Um. Cadsuane will get introduced in this book, tragically, because she's going to be in the rest of the series, and she is such a shitty character.

Sally: I know.

Emily: Ugh. Such a downer.

Sally: Such a downer, really. They're like, "Would you like a worse, meaner, more psychotic version of Moiraine?"

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And I'm like, "No." (laugh)

Emily: They're like, "Hey, Moiraine did some pretty fucked-up shit. Would you like an elderly version of her?"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Who does different and meaner fucked-up shit?"

Sally: (laugh) Yeah. I'm like, absolutely not. I don't.

Emily: No, I prefer my original Lady Gandalf. They're like, "This is Lady Gandalf the White," and I'm like, no.

Sally: No.

Emily: You missed the point of Gandalf's transformation.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And also, Lady Gandalf the White comes back in book, you know, fourteen or whatever, after Mat rescues her.

Sally: Yeah, we can't have two Lady Gandalfs.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: The universe will implode.

Emily: (laugh) This is Lady Saruman.

Sally: You got me there. (laugh)

Emily: Um. Ugh. Lady Saruman. Uhhh, Egg does nothing of import, really. Um, she finds out that Lan has been transferred -- (laugh)

Sally: Jesus.

Emily: Like he's in a prison -- to Myrelle, and she ruthlessly, uh, exploits that information to make a number of women swear fealty to her.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Which is sort of the foundation for her, uh, taking over --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: In reality, the Aes Sedai, in the next book or two.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So this is foundation work, but honestly -- like, for some reason, we ended up with, like, eight copies of Path of Daggers --

Sally: (laugh) I know.

Emily: So for quite a while, that was the book we were graffitiing.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So I have, you know, sort of skimmed the Egg portions of that book quite a number of times, and so I am, like, pretty confident in saying that we could have cut out most of what happens with Egg in this book.

Sally: Yeah. Like, Path of Daggers has, like, a really good -- like, not good in, like, morally good -- but, like, a really solid and tidy arc for Egg sort of taking --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Control of her band of merry Aes Sedai, so I don't really know what the point of any of the Crown of Swords stuff is except just sort of abusing the fact that Lan belongs -- belongs, in air quotes -- to another person.

Emily: Yeah, you need, like, two Egg chapters in this one, tops. And I don't really -- we'll talk more about it when we get there, but I don't really get the concept of women swearing fealty to the Amyrlin Seat as a great way to start a government.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, then, of course, there's the Ebou Dar plot, involving Mat, Nynaeve, Elayne, Aviendha, and, uh, Birgitte, as well as Lan towards the latter half of it.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You know, I read the -- I looked up on Wikipedia Crown of Swords because while I was quite confident about knowing what happens in Ebou Dar, I wasn't so sure about the rest of it --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And it's -- was like, "Fun fact: A Crown of Swords takes place over the shortest time period in the series, in only eleven days."

Sally: Wh-what?

Emily: And I was like, that -- there is no way --

Sally: That is absurd.

Emily: That the Ebou Dar shit takes place over eleven days.

Sally: Yeah, so much happens.

Emily: Yeah. So we'll get to that, I guess. Also, I feel like there's a book later in the series that just all takes place over the same day, essentially.

Sally: I'm gonna have to make, like, one of those crazy Pepe Silvia meme boards to track the timeline of Crown of Swords --

Emily: (laugh) I mean --

Sally: Because I simply do not believe it takes place in eleven days.

Emily: I know. Like, what? That's some D&D shit, with --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Nine things happening every day --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And they're all important.

Emily: Yeah. Um.

Sally: No. (laugh)

Emily: Sadly, as is common, we won't get into Mat and Elayne and Nynaeve until, like, what feels like halfway through the book.

Sally: (sigh)

Emily: Because we just front-load the book with Rand and Egg. Um, but in Ebou Dar, there's the ongoing search for the Bowl of the Winds. Uh, Nynaeve and Elayne will end up recruiting both the Sea Folk and the Kin, uh, or the Knitting Circle, as they are sometimes called. The Kin slash the Knitting Circle are an interesting concept but are so totally overdone, um, that they swiftly lose all interest.

Sally: Yeah, they become -- I mean, once they and the Aes Sedai sort of collapse --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: They become obsolete.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Because they just get folded in to the way Aes Sedai do things instead of presenting sort of an alternate way of being.

Emily: Yeah, they start out as this very interesting, like, retirement community --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: More or less, which is an interesting concept for --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, Aes Sedai and sort of a loose thread that, if you're really invested in world-building, is something you might have wondered about. What happens to these women who can channel but kicked out of the Tower --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: For a variety of reasons? Um, and here we find out, well, they've built a community as women are wont to do.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, and, y'know, especially as people who have just left an uber-culty sort of papal --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Experience in the White Tower, of course would be looking for a community of other people like them.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So the Kin, as that, are really interesting, but as you said, they, uh, don't actually end up presenting an alternative way of doing things. They just get assimilated --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Into the Aes Sedai. And that, um, would also more or less be fine, I guess -- not the most interesting thing you could do, but it could be fine -- if all of that happened in a book.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It doesn't. It happens in about six books.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And that process is so long, so drawn-out, that it is really insufferable. Because we have to keep track of so many Kin characters.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Who -- and differentiate between them and Aes Sedai, and it's just not possible. There are hundreds of Aes Sedai and Kin and also, now, the Sea Folk --

Sally: Yeah, the Sea Folk.

Emily: And the Aes Sedai.

Sally: And the Wise Ones.

Emily: Excuse me, the, uh, Aiel.

Sally: Yeah, the Aiel, and then there's also, like, a million Asha'man at this point, and I'm like, too many magic people.

Emily: We can't -- we can -- we -- we have reached magic people saturation point.

Sally: Yeah, it's like that thing where it's like, the most number of connections a person can have is, like, 140 or something.

Emily: Whoa.

Sally: Like, once you reach that point, I think -- I don't know if that's the correct number -- but, like, once you reach that point, it, like, becomes more and more impossible for you to maintain connections or memory of people. And it's like, we reached 140 characters in the first Wheel of Time book. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah. It's like when you go through your phone contact list and you come across a name and you're just like, "Who is this person?"

Sally: (laugh) I did that the other day. I was like, I have no idea who this person is.

Emily: Yeah, like, you have the numbers of people you met on your London study abroad who you haven't spoken to in seven years.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's like, OK. That's basically an ongoing experience with all of these characters.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, Nynaeve and Lan get married after Nynaeve almost drowns but then breaks through her block. Um, Elayne is just sort of there, uh, developing her relationship with Aviendha is probably the only thing important that's going on with her. Um, and Mat, of course, in his efforts to actually help the girls and move the plot along ends up in, uh, the palace where Tylin, uh, sexually assaults him and will continue to do so for the remainder of his time there.

Sally: Yep.

Emily: Um, at the end of the book, he goes looking for Olver and gets left behind as the Seanchan attack the city.

Sally: Makes me so angry.

Emily: Yeah, it's a pretty upsetting little plot point.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's also, as I am reminded by reading the part -- the first portion of Path of Daggers, doesn't -- like, it would make more sense to me -- well, I mean, we'll talk about this more in Path of Daggers -- but it would make more sense to me if they were like, um, uh, the Seanchan start attacking while Mat is still out in the city and the girls are still in the palace.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That would be -- make for a much more exciting thing and much more reasonable, I think, reason for them to leave Mat.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: If they're just like, "We have to get out now because the Seanchan will take us captive."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That would be interesting, I think. But instead, it's, like, a really organized movement.

Sally: It's an extremely organized -- and talking about drawn-out plotlines --

Emily: Oh, yeah.

Sally: The whole, like, getting the Bowl of the Winds and all the ladies out to the farm is, like, two hundred pages of Path of Daggers. (laugh)

Emily: It seriously is. It's so bad.

Sally: Like, it doesn't -- it doesn't need to be. But, yeah, like, there's no urgency. They're just like, "Well, Mat will figure it out, and just fuck Mat, I guess." It's very annoying.

Emily: Well, I -- in looking at the summaries of various characters -- (laugh)

Sally: Oh. (laugh) Excellent. Excellent, excellent.

Emily: So -- these are -- these aren't my best. I feel like I say that every time, but these aren't my best. But here you go. These are the alternate titles --

Sally: Okay.

Emily: For Crown of Swords.

Sally: (clears throat, laughs) Um. Rand: "Heavy is the head that wears the stabby crown."

Emily: (laugh) I should've said, "Bleeding is the head that wears the stabby crown."

Sally: (laugh) It really does feel like it should just be, like, cutting his temples all the time.

Emily: I mean, yeah, the -- it's supposed to be, like, you know, a crown of thorns.

Sally: Blegh.

Emily: Christ visual ... (inaudible)

Sally: Do you get it? Rand is a Jesus figure. (laugh)

Emily: Do you understand that yet? We're in book seven. Christ.

Sally: Do you get it? (laugh) OK. Egg. In, like, a really dramatic font: "Girlboss. Gaslight. Gatekeep." (laugh)

Emily: I can really visualize the cover of this one.

Sally: Yeah?

Emily: It's pink.

Sally: (gasp) Ooh.

Emily: Obviously.

Sally: I'm gonna design an alt, uh, "Gaslight, Girlboss, Gatekeep," whatever, for --

Emily: Yeah, thank you.

Sally: Uh, Crown of Swords.

Emily: That's what Egg is doing.

Sally: I know, Egg really does have, like, a gaslight -- girl -- a girlboss, gaslight, gatekeep rise to power, and you're like, Egg, what are you doing? (laugh)

Emily: It's not great.

Sally: Nynaeve: "Say Yes to the Dress: Ebou Dar."

Emily: (laugh) Stupid.

Sally: (laugh) No, I love this. That's my favorite one. Perrin. (laugh) "Telepathic wolves can't provide marriage counseling and other surprises."

Emily: That could actually be the title of Perrin's version for the next four books.

Sally: (laugh) I mean, yeah. Perrin's like, "I don't -- what? Wife. Meh." OK. (laugh) Elayne. (laugh) "What if an Instagram influencer was next in line to be the queen of England? I feel like that's Elayne's entire character summary. Anyway, I can't think of a title for her. Hot Girl Summer? Stop, Girl, Summer. Hot Summer Girl. Girl, Stop the Hot Summer." (laugh) This is very good.

Emily: I should clarify, I was in a meeting while writing these. (laugh)

Sally: "Girl, Stop the Hot Summer" is so good. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) That's all she's doing.

Sally: Cadsuane: "Womanboss, Not Girlboss." (laugh)

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: Min: "Just the entire Cool Girl monologue from Gone Girl, verbatim." (laugh) Aviendha: "The Adventures of Gal Pal, a Girlboss Sidekick." Morgase: "I'm still in this series, somehow."

Emily: I mean, yeah, I think she has a couple points of view here.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's like, why?

Sally: Yeah, girl, why? Girl, stop. (laugh)

Emily: Girl. No.

Sally: Uh, "Sammael and the Terrible, Horrible, No-Good, Very Bad Day." (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) I really like to think about Sammael getting attacked --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: At the end of this book. He's just like, "What the fuck?"

Sally: Like, eating his dinner.

Emily: He's like, "I thought we were doing, like, a -- a -- a chess thing here."

Sally: Yeah. "I thought we were having, like, a --"

Emily: "A slowburn --"

Sally: "Yeah, a slowburn, sexy --"

Emily: "I thought this was very sexy --" Yeah.

Sally: "Yeah, I thought we were having, like, a thing, Lews Therin."

Emily: "You're gathering your armies, I'm gathering my armies, da da da da da."

Sally: "Yeah, it's like foreplay, you know?"

Emily: And Rand's like, "NO!"

Sally: What a bitch.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Finally, Mat: "I honestly don't have any jokes. His part of this book is so fucking grim."

Emily: It really is.

Sally: That's true. These are very good. Top faves.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Um. Uh, "Girl, Stop the Hot Summer." (laugh)

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: Um, and then, “Girlboss, Gaslight, Gatekeep” is very good. And, um, “Womanboss, Not Girlboss.” Those are my faves.

Emily: I just felt like “Girlboss” fit all of the female characters in this --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I mean, series, generally.

Sally: Um, no, the amount of times in writing my blogs about the latter half of the series I have talked about Elayne having her “girlboss moment --”

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Is probably becoming insufferable. (laugh)

Emily: I mean, they just all do.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It’s so upsetting. I mean, and that really just goes to tell you about, uh, girlboss as a meme is just reflective of this certain branch of feminism --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which Robert Jordan is really embodying.

Sally: For sure, for sure.

Emily: In this series. But more on that later.

Sally: It’s very feminist when women are committing the war crimes because it means they’re in a position of power.

Emily: Um, it’s difficult to not talk about Rand’s proportions on this --

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Book cover.

Sally: Look at his fucking arm.

Emily: He -- it’s like -- I mean, look at where his feet are versus his head. He’s, like, slanted so far forward. As usual, Darrell K. Sweet has never seen a human being before.

Sally: I can’t -- yeah, like, I never noticed -- (laugh) like, what is happening? There’s no way his hips could be turning like this for his spine to do that.

Emily: Yeah, his --

Sally: Like, he is --

Emily: What's happening?

Sally: Rand is being twisted apart in this. (laugh) Um.

Emily: Darrell K. Sweet was let out of his -- (laugh) sensory prison -- sensory deprivation chamber --

Sally: Like, "I think this is what humans do."

Emily: Once a year -- yeah, once a year to draw a cover for the Wheel of Time and, as usual, failed. Sorry, Darrell. Um. We appreciate the effort if not the -- result.

Sally: If not the outcome, yeah.

Emily: Um. His arms, his forearms are way too weird and short. He's doing, like, a running pose -- a running man pose --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: With his biceps having muscles that don't exist, I believe.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, I've seen, y'know, Chris Evans all CGI-ed up --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: In his muscles, and the -- it doesn't look like that.

Sally: No, I mean, there's just -- there's, like, no definition. Like, usually biceps have, like, kind of a curve, you know?

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: These are just -- it's like two tennis balls stuffed in a meat sack.

Emily: It's bizarre. And then his head looks distinctly Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Worst haircut of all time. Ugliest face of all time. How is this man having sex with anyone?

Sally: He does have those -- those Chanel boots, though, or whatever is going on down there.

Emily: Yeah, those are -- those are great knee-high boots, and his little skirt.

Sally: I know, he's wearing, like, the fun -- like, he's wearing what I --

Emily: Where'd his sleeves go?

Sally: Would have worn in middle school.

Emily: Oh, yeah.

Sally: Where'd his what?

Emily: Where'd his sleeves go? I mean, it's clear from this little rip that they just --

Sally: Yeah, they just busted off. (laugh)

Emily: He just flexed so hard they went "poof."

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Goddamn.

Sally: Ah, it's so funny.

Emily: Terrible book. OK.

Sally: The cover is so funny, though.

Emily: I know. It's --

Sally: Look at Shadar Logoth. I'm guessing that's what this is supposed to be.

Emily: Yeah, it's Shadar Logoth, but then he's standing in front of a weird pit.

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: Out of which a light post is coming, I think.

Sally: Yeah, like, is he going to Narnia? What's happening there?

Emily: I don't know, is that where he has his little, uh, Voldemort-Harry Potter connection moment with Moridin?

Sally: Must -- must be. Also, just, Shadar Logoth looks so funny. Like, it looks like a space city. Like, that is not how I would picture it.

Emily: Um, if I were -- like, there are Trollocs here, but if I were Darrell K. Sweet, I would have, like, had creepy little faces in the windows.

Sally: Ooh, yeah, that'd be way spookier than --

Emily: Yeah, RIP to Darrell, but I'm different.

Sally: This eagle back here. (laugh)

Emily: OK, you guys. This has been our first episode back.

Sally: First episode back. Um.

Emily: We will actually start talking about the Crown of Swords -- the Crown of Swords -- a Crown of Swords with the text next time.

Sally: Next week.

Emily: But wanted a little slow -- our little slowburn introduction.

Sally: Yeah, we, unlike Rand, understand what it's like to be sexy and build up a slowburn romance.

Emily: I mean, plus this prologue is 55 pages long, so I didn't really want to talk about that all at -- I need -- we need to brace ourselves -- we need to ease ourselves into --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: The scalding water that is the beginning of this book. Um. Overall, I like Crown of Swords.

Sally: Me too.

Emily: I'm looking forward to it. But, you know, just sort of taking, uh, taking it chill.

Sally: Taking a chill pill.

Emily: Speaking of taking a chill. Um. If you're one of our patrons on Patreon, you have probably already seen this announcement, but want to reiterate it here: we are restructuring Patreon a little bit to better suit our time and energy needs. Um. We had a really great year there where both of us were working remotely, more or less --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: But I am back in the office several days a week, and it's a little harder to --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Get things done. Plus, just, you know, we've had a two-month break, and that gives you some perspective on how much time you're spending on your Wheely Time podcast.

Sally: It sure does.

Emily: Um, so nothing is going to change with the weekly releases of our podcast. We might be a little more apt to taking breaks when they are needed, but if that is the case, you will know well in advance.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, on Patreon, we are deleting -- not any tiers, but on our five-dollar tier, we're no longer offering, uh, the Hour or Less feature. That was our video series. Um, it was a pretty big time commitment 'cause we were both doing, uh, extensive research on whatever topic it was.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, we really enjoyed doing it, but it was taking a big chunk of time and energy.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So we're no longer doing that. Instead, We Don't Watch Outlander is being bumped to the five-dollar tier. Um, on the three-dollar tier is going to be Sally's blog where she's reading Wheely Time. On the one-dollar tier is our blooper reel. So all of the tiers are remaining intact; just the rewards are changing. Um, that will not retroactively change any of the content, so if you were a, uh, you know, one-dollar, um -- if you're on the one-dollar tier, uh, you will not lose access to the blogs that have been previously published.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Uh, up until August 2nd, when these changes will go into effect. Um. We're sorry if that affects you negatively in any way, but our choice. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: We are grateful for your support however we get it.

Sally: Yeah, thank you so much to everyone who, um, continued to support us on Patreon during our break. Um. We just really appreciate the support, uh, the community offered us in general during our break. Um. Yeah, so just thank you for being the best. Um, and we really appreciate you.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Um. Just a head's-up -- I don't know how relevant this is to anybody, but if you are curious about what happened, about why we took a break, it's not something I really want to talk about on this podcast, um, but it is something I wrote about a little bit for our Letters to Hozier project. Um, which will be released sometime around when this, um, podcast is released. We haven't really figured that schedule out.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Um, you can listen to that. Um, I understand the, uh, curiosity people might be having; that's just a human reaction. Um, so you can listen to that, but, uh, just some trigger warnings for grief and, uh, the death of an infant. So.

Emily: Mm-hmm. Um, those will be -- usually our letters are sort of combined into one letter; these ones will be released separately --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: For fairly obvious reasons, I think.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, but thanks again for your support. We really appreciate, uh, the well wishes.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Very sweet. Um. And we're happy to be back.

Sally: Happy to be back.

Emily: Yeah. Crown of Swords -- I'm glad we're coming back to Crown of Swords. If we were coming back to, like, Lord of Chaos, I would've been like, eugh. Maybe not.

Sally: Yeah. No, like, legitimately, if we were, like, had to restart with Path of Daggers, I'd be like, "Podcast is over." It's -- we had a good run. (laugh)

Emily: We just -- we just can't.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Getting through seven books in the series would've been commendable.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That's a solid fifty percent.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But no, we are -- we are persevering.

Sally: We are persevering. Um. I guess next time, maybe we should -- or I'll touch on it here. These are our feelings about such Wheel of Time news as the Age of Legends getting a movie trilogy --

Emily: Oh, right, right, right, right, right.

Sally: And Wheel of Time season two beginning filming: Okay. (laugh)

Emily: Ah, hubris.

Sally: Yeah, that's what Emily said about the -- the Age of Legends trilogy. She was like, "Ah, the hubris of white men." (laugh)

Emily: I just don't believe it will be anything spectacular or good. I'd love to be proven wrong. But, uh, I don't actually think adaptations of the Age of Legends are necessary. But if you're excited for it, great! I'm excited for you.

Sally: Yeah, I'm excited to see how it plays out, whether it's, like, a dumpster fire --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Or, like, really pleasant. I think it will just be kind of funny either way.

Emily: Bread and circuses, baby. I'll be here on the sidelines, eating popcorn.

Sally: Yeah, so, um, that -- I guess, we did our due diligence as Wheel of Time podcasters in commenting on the news.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: There we go.

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: Check. (laugh)

Emily: I'm sure it'll come up as more things come up.

Sally: As we get more into, like, Age of Legends flashbacks or whatever happens.

Emily: Ah, yeah, Lews Therin.

Sally: I can be like, "LOL."

Emily: Nutter.

Sally: "Is this what the movie's gonna be like?"

Emily: God, I hope.

Sally: 'Kay, just one question, though: Who would you cast to play Lews Therin?

Emily: Ohhh. (laugh) Boy, I haven't thought about it.

Sally: 'Cause I feel like there has to be, like, really some comedic potential there.

Emily: Armie Hammer.

Sally: (scream, laugh)

Emily: (laugh) Final answer.

Sally: (singing) Who can say where the road goes ...

Emily: Who would you choose?

Sally: I don't know now! Now I have Armie Hammer stuck in my head.

Emily: (sing-song) You're welcome.

Sally: Oh, no.

Emily: OK, guys. Thanks for listening.

Sally: Thanks -- thanks for listening.

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: (gagging sound)

Emily: Have a good week.

Sally: (laugh)