



Episode 165: Would You Sacrifice the Hottest Man in the World?

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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 Glynna Mackenzie plays]

EMILY: This is Everybody Hates Rand, your friendly neighborhood *Wheel of Time* podcast. Stop laughing at me [laughs]. I'm Emily Juchau.

SALLY: And I'm Sally Goodger.

EMILY: [sighs] I almost said, "I'm Sally Goodger."

SALLY: You could be me. That's fine.

EMILY: No, I – that was the next thing in my head so that's what I had to say.

SALLY: You can do my job tomorrow, how about that?

EMILY: No.

SALLY: Oh. Rude.

EMILY: So, we read the first 56 pages.

SALLY: [gagging noises]

EMILY: AKA the prologue. And, you know, just as a fun reminder, prologues should never be 56 pages. This isn't even the longest prologue in the Wheely Time series.

SALLY: [sighs]

EMILY: Which is disheartening.

SALLY: Robert Jordan is a criminal.

EMILY: Yeah, my dad's a ranch dressing criminal. Robert Jordan is a prologue criminal. They should all be sent to middle-aged man jail. Okay, so, in the prologue we get quite a few bad points of view [laughs]. In fact, I would say they are all bad.

SALLY: They are all, like, four of my least favorite characters.

EMILY: Yeah, we get –

SALLY: Four? Five?

EMILY: There are, I believe, six points of view.

SALLY: Oh. See. Counting.

EMILY: Uh, we get Elaida, Sevanna Alviarin, uh, Pedron Niall.

SALLY: [whispers] Oh, I forgot about him.

EMILY: Valda and Gawyn.

SALLY: I completely forgot about the Whitecloaks. So it's, like, six of my, literally, least favorite characters.

EMILY: Yeah, so we are technically bouncing between three settings. The White Tower. Um, Dumai's Wells, like, immediately after slash during the battle. We're kind of doing, like, a retro, or a retcon there. And the Whitecloak place, which I can never remember. Amador? Is the city? I don't – I don't care.

SALLY: They're in the Whitecloak shithole.

EMILY: Yeah, we're in the Whitecloak, um –

SALLY: The Fortress of Light.

EMILY: Fortress of Solitude.

SALLY: Ugh.

EMILY: I wish. I wish they would just stay there [pages crinkling].

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: If you hear a lot of page crinkling that's because these are the Diet Coke pages.

SALLY: [singsong] I'mmm sorry [laughs].

EMILY: [laughs] The prologue is called *Lighnings*. I don't know why and I don't care why. Moving right along.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: So, rather than go point of view by point of view, because they'll all kind of separated, we'll go place by place kinda.

SALLY: Sounds good.

EMILY: So, the White Tower...[sighs].

SALLY: Mmm correct.

EMILY: It's pretty, pretty grim.

SALLY: I just – we'll get into it, but reading Elaida points of view are, like, physically painful because her incompetence is just staggering.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: And, like – much like Chris Juchau her decision making is impaired. She is ridiculous.

EMILY: There is a part – it goes from Elaida to Alviarin and there's a part where Alviarin is like, "Anyone who's spent any time with Elaida knows she's very intelligent." And I was like, "What?! I've spent six books with her, and I didn't know that."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: I would have said she's the world's biggest dummy, you know? Like, just because a person has power, and knows how to get power, doesn't mean that they're smart. Look at Donald Trump.

SALLY: Exactly.

EMILY: And I think that's part of the reason why reading Elaida is so insufferable. I think as a child reading her points of view I was like, "Ha, this would never happen." Because, you know, I had an idealized view of government. Because I was 12. And all you're taught is that George Washington is perfect.

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah.

EMILY: Jesus, basically. But now I'm like, "Oh, yeah. This truly does just happen."

SALLY: Yeah, people just –

EMILY: The miracle is that it doesn't happen *more*.

SALLY: Yeah! People just fail upwards all the time.

EMILY: Yeah. Just by being big bullies.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: It's so sad.

SALLY: It's hard to read for sure.

EMILY: Um, so setting the time, Elaida tells us that the Feast of Lights has gone past. You might remember the Feast of Lights, Perrin and, like, Gaul, walked through the Feast of Lights when they were crossing the river to go find Rand.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And Elaida, at the beginning of this, has just received a message from Galina, I think, that was, like, a special code to be like, "We got the Dragon Reborn, lady."

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: So, Elaida is obviously behind the times. We – we, the reader, know that either Dumai's Wells is, like, literally happening right now or has just happened, based on timelines.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But Elaida does not yet know that it has been a disaster, so she is triumphant because she thinks Rand is on his way to the White Tower. Speaking of the White Tower itself, Elaida now spends all her time in her rooms, so she is self-isolating like every good ruler does. Um, she doesn't like to leave, and no one likes it when she comes down.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So that tells you a lot. She has also ordered the construction of the Amyrlin's Tower, which is just going to be an even bigger tower than the White Tower, but only for the Amyrlin. And I'm like, "The White Tower houses hundreds upon hundreds of rooms. If not thousands. Every Aes Sedai has a fancy suite. There are all these kitchens. All the novices and accepted, I assume there are classrooms, studies, libraries. Why – and you want to put one lady in something that big?" But again, Trump Tower. That's all she's doing is – that's what she wants.

SALLY: Yeah [sighs].

EMILY: Obviously she's deluded. The – [laughs] the chief mason is basically like, "You can't – that can't happen with our current technology." And she's just like, "It will happen." And I'm like, "Okay, have fun."

SALLY: Yeah, like, RIP to this guy who has to figure out how to build a literal skyscraper.

EMILY: Now, Elaida who is implied slash canonically a lesbian is also described variously as 'handsome' and is given many quote unquote masculine qualities, so her fixation on phallic symbols is a pretty obvious little [laughs] thing there. I wrote in the margins, "The higher he builds his tower." Uh, just like in – this is – some of you may have seen the seminal work [laughs].

SALLY: Seminal.

EMILY: By Guy Ritchie, *King Arthur: Legend of the Sword*. And my friend Devin's favorite line to quote from that is, "The higher he builds his tower, the more his power grows." Because it's, like, obviously a phallic thing.

SALLY: Oh, so much so!

EMILY: It's, like, nothing has ever been more obviously a phallic thing.

SALLY: Yeah. The bigger your dick is the more...power you have.

EMILY: Yeah, but that is also – what's funny about it when it happens in *King Arthur: Legend of the Sword*, they are really just putting – taking a trope that has been subtextual in most works and kind of making it – shoving it a little more out into the spotlight.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: It's funny, because this is in everything. Any time there's an evil character, or even a good character, they sort of end up in a tower. Every wizard has a tower, you know? You've got Saruman's big tower. Sauron's big tower. It's just sort of a thing for evil people. They want to be in towers.

SALLY: I wonder where that comes from.

EMILY: I don't know. I could have looked it up on tvtropes.org, I supposed, but, um. I think it might be – towers are classically symbols of, what's the word I'm looking for? Hubris. A la the Tower of Babel from the, uh, Old Testament.

SALLY: Mm. There you go.

EMILY: And probably a lot of other things.

SALLY: No, you're so smart.

EMILY: But, yeah, towers are just supposed to be, like, pride cometh before the fall, yo. So, Elaida spending all her time at the tippy top of the tower is meant to indicate that to us.

SALLY: Yeah, I also, like – this is just sort of a fleeting thought. But I find it really interesting in, um, this series when people are, like, building things. Um, because it's juxtaposed so frequently with ruins.

EMILY: Yes.

SALLY: And so, of course, that's, like, a, a manifestation of this theme of the wheel of time turns and ages come and pass. Where it's, like, you build – things are created and destroyed and created and destroyed and that's just the cycle of nature and civilization. Um, so it's just, it's just interesting, I think.

EMILY: Yeah. Elaida has a whole lot of symbolism meant to indicate her sort of place in world history. There's the fact that she is keeping flowers alive forcibly by magic. I also highlighted something at the very beginning of the book, which is the epitaph that we didn't cover in our last episode, although we may have – we probably should have. Here's the epitaph: "There can be no health in us, nor any good thing grow, for the land is one with the Dragon Reborn and he one with the land. Soul of fire, heart of stone, in pride he conquers, forcing the proud to yield. He calls upon the mountains to kneel and the seas to give way and the very skies to bow. Pray that the heart of stone remembers tears and the soul of fire, love."

SALLY: Barf.

EMILY: Which, barf, but it does have a, uh, the line in there, "The land is one with the Dragon Reborn and he one with the land." We've referenced Rand's Fisher King wounds quite a few times.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: But if you're not familiar with Arthurian myth, the Fisher King, or the Grail King sometimes, is a guy who has some sort of, you know, unhealable injury and the grail quest is

about helping him to die in some instances or heal him. Whatever, whatever, and you get the grail.

SALLY: Yep.

EMILY: But the reason he's wounded, um, slash he's wounded in conjunction with the land he has ruled over being damaged or destroyed. Kings are always connected to their lands. That's in both myth and, like, Shakespeare. I just read *Richard II* and there's quite a bit about Richard II being deposed because he neglects the land.

SALLY: Hmm. Interesting.

EMILY: And a lot of literary parallels to that. So, the fact that the world, not just the political situation but the weather, all of the whack stuff that happens is not just like – obviously we're like, "The long last summer is because of the Dark One," but it is also a trope that Robert Jordan is playing out in having, like, food is going to be decomposing at a serious rate. Rats are going to be everywhere, it's going to be unbearably hot and unbearably cold, all because stuff is messed up with Rand. Things are a reflection of that. When Rand has his epiphany moment in Book 13 – 12? At the end of Book 12 [laughs].

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Sorry. I don't remember how this series goes. Like, the next thing he does is walk into a dying apple orchard and immediately all the apples, like, come to life or whatever.

SALLY: Okay.

EMILY: And he does that –

SALLY: That is a hilarious image.

EMILY: It is.

SALLY: Of Rand "Johnny Appleseed" al'Thor [laughs].

EMILY: Yes. Like apples of all things, you know? But then, after that, wherever Rand goes things miraculously come back to life.

SALLY: Okay.

EMILY: So. Uhhh, duh duh. I just wanted to mention that.

SALLY: No, that was brilliant.

EMILY: As opposed to Elaida, who is notably doing nothing about the weather. And that's quite a funny thing. Is that there are so many people in positions of power – it's quite a lot like climate change.

SALLY: Ha!

EMILY: There are a lot of people in positions of power who are like, "This definitely is fucked up and this is definitely an omen or a sign or some sort." But for some reason only Nynaeve and Elayne, two dummies, two absolutely dim-witted idiots.

SALLY: [giggles] Yeah.

EMILY: Were like, "Maybe we could fix this."

SALLY: I could fix the weather.

EMILY: Yeah, only [laughs]. Elaida's got her giant tower, but her pride is outmatched by Elayne "I can fix anything" Trakand [laughs].

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: I can fix anything, including Rand al'Thor.

SALLY: Girl, you can't!

EMILY: No, you can't. She's so dumb.

SALLY: No, yeah, but that is very interesting. Like, obviously Elaida and Rand function as foils for each other. The way also Elaida and Egwene function as foils for each other.

EMILY: Everybody's foils with each other in a cast of characters this big.

SALLY: Gosh, it's just a massive web of...

EMILY: Yep.

SALLY: Lies. Um, yeah, but it's interesting bringing up your Fisher King thing that Elaida artificially keeping the land together.

EMILY: Yes. Elaida's not actually doing anything to sustain the land.

SALLY: There's no mythological, spiritual connection between Elaida and the land that she rules over. It is all just sort of pulled into her grip. And it's also very interesting the way she is building a tower versus Rand who is building things like the school, the –

EMILY: Libraries.

SALLY: Yeah. Libraries and stuff like that.

EMILY: The Black Tower, which everyone views as sort of – I mean, it's not actually a Tower.

SALLY: No, I was literally just about to – that's what I was thinking of. The Black Tower is currently just kind of, like, a sprawling thing.

EMILY: Yeah, and the Black Tower is also very intentionally something Rand does to – I mean, as we've seen it immediately turn into a school for war criminals.

SALLY: Yeah [snorts].

EMILY: But Rand did have an interesting intent, sort of parallel to his need to create weapons, which is that he really did want to create a refuge for men who could channel.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Because Rand has this ultimate goal of cleansing *saidin*. So, duh duh duh duh. We'll talk about that again in a minute. This scene is basically Alviarin coming in to give some reports. A huge chunk of the scene is just talking about the weird power dynamics between them. It is obvious that Alviarin is holding back information from Elaida, trying to make Elaida look like an idiot, does not respect Elaida. And, of course, all of this makes Elaida irate, but she's incompetent so she can't put Alviarin in her place. You know, she just kind of has to deal with it.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um, among other things, Alviarin reports that Elaune and Nynaeve have been seen in Ebou Dar. Elaida dismisses this until Alviarin, like, produces a sketch from a sketch artists [laughs]. Which is hilarious. They also mention Teslyn and Joline, the two representatives from the White Tower who are in Ebou Dar. And there's this line that's just chock full of foreshadowing.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: It says, "Nobody cared what happened in Ebou Dar, Elaida least of all. The capital of Altara could fall into the sea and, except for the merchants, not even the rest of Altara would notice." And boy is that pretty true.

SALLY: [cackles]

EMILY: The Seanchan invade Ebou Dar and everyone does fucking nothing.

SALLY: Seriously.

EMILY: It's not like Rand is like [laughing], "Oh no! Ebou Dar has fallen! I must avenge them." He's like, "What? Who?"

SALLY: "Who? Who's Ebou Dar?"

EMILY: The only one who cares is Mat and it's because he's there.

SALLY: It's very true. Um.

EMILY: We're given a little bit of background on Teslyn and Joline. Teslyn's a Red Sitter, uh, who has been a Sitter for quite a while. Joline is a Green Sitter, who was made a sitter recently. Exiling them to Ebou Dar was a power play on Elaida's part, which, since all of her power plays are petty and meaningless, has done nothing but infuriate women.

SALLY: Yeah, I mean –

EMILY: She's just bullying people.

SALLY: Yeah. She's a *horrible* person.

EMILY: Uh-huh.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: *Yup*. Alviarin's like, "You really want Elayne back, though, because of this prophecy about how the royal house of Andor held the key to winning the Last Battle." Now, what I find very funny about that is that it said Elaida had the foretelling sometimes, "a talent many thought lost before her," and "long ago, she had foretold that the royal house of Andor held the key to winning the last battle." Um, and it sounds like she made that prophecy before Morgase was on the throne, in which case the royal house of Andor was not [laughs] Morgase's house.

SALLY: Was not the Trakand family.

EMILY: But was, in fact, obviously Rand's mother, who ran away to the Aiel waste.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: [sighs] I could be wrong about that. Maybe she did prophesy that the Trakands specifically hold the key, in which case I think Robert Jordan tries to fulfill that by, you know, making Elayne a main character. Although I wouldn't say she holds the key to winning the Last Battle.

SALLY: No.

EMILY: Like, in the slightest.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: They have the cannons at one point? I dunno. I dunno. I would need more explanation

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Yeah. Yeah.

EMILY: I would rather that it was made clear to us, though. This was just a reference to Rand, because that it is an interesting commentary about, um, you know, the inability of prophets to interpret their own prophecies.

SALLY: Yeah, absolutely.

EMILY: For example, Elaida then has another foretelling that is something about, “The White Tower will be whole again and everyone will kneel to the Amyrlin Seat.” Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And to anyone reading the book series, there are no names mentioned, Elaida.

SALLY: Yeah, like, girl.

EMILY: It’s not like, “Me, the Amyrlin Seat, I will remain triumphant.” It’s like the Amyrlin Seat could be anyone. There’s also no timeline given, girl.

SALLY: No timeline.

EMILY: “Sisters will walk the grounds of the Black Tower.” Sure, that could happen in two hundred years, you know?

SALLY: Yeah. Yeah, the White Tower could be at war for five hundred years.

EMILY: Yeah, but Elaida immediately interprets this as, “I am going to be triumphant no matter what happens, so I don’t have to do anything.” So when Alviarin reports, “Hey, it turns out the Salidar Aes Sedai are on their way here with a big army led by Gareth Bryne. Maybe we should increase our army.” Elaida’s like, “No. That’s a joke. There’s just – everyone’s going to desert. Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.”

SALLY: Yeah, it’s this spin on a self-fulfilling prophecy, where usually people try to avoid the prophecy and therefore fulfill it. But Elaida is just like, “I don’t need to do anything at all, because the prophecy exists. Whatever I do, the prophecy will be fulfilled.”

EMILY: Yeah, and Elaida has this reasoning that they won’t be successful, because not even, they, the Salidar Aes Sedai will be successful. If they did believe that they had the right cause then they would have, you know, actually taken a risk with electing a full Sister to be the Amyrlin Seat. Because apparently falsely being the Amyrlin Seat is a crime worthy of stilling,

which I don't think anyone told Egg before sticking her on the Amyrlin Seat. Although she is a smart gal and has a tutor, so I'm sure she knows by now. Uh, there's also some subtext here that, if you're me, you could read this book six times and skim right over it. But it is referenced several – Elaida and Alviarin both reference several times and incident in the past that led to a few Red Sisters being exiled, including Toveine, the woman they are now sending to the Black Tower in front of a contingent of Aes Sedai. Um, and, like, Alviarin talks about the – about a former Amyrlin being murdered.

SALLY: Mm.

EMILY: And now, all of that is connected, which I did not find until I read the Wikipedia page on it.

SALLY: Okay.

EMILY: this is pretty important, and I'm pretty mad at Robert Jordan for not really talking about it in the series proper. I think a little bit of it is delved into in *New Spring*.

SALLY: Okay.

EMILY: But if you, like Sally, have not read *New Spring*. Or, like me, have only read it once and that was 10 years ago – bad luck.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So, uh, the woman who prophesied that the Dragon had been reborn dropped dead as soon as she gave the prophecy. She gave the prophecy in front of Siuan, Moiraine, and the current Amyrlin Seat. Uh, somehow or another, rumors began to spread about the Dragon being reborn, and all the members of Black Ajah in the Tower immediately overreacted and were like, “Okay, well obviously we have to kill him, but we don't know who he is. Or what – we don't have any more context.” So, they, uh, tortured the Amyrlin Seat. She didn't give them anything except that the Dragon had been reborn. Didn't say, “He was born literally that minute when the prophecy came out.” So, as far as the Black Ajah know, he's a grown man wandering around. Uh, and then she dies and the Black Ajah made it look like an accident. And, you know, new Amyrlin Seat is elected. Duh duh duh duh. Stuff goes on. Uh, but their way of dealing with it was to, um, weaponize the Red Ajah and get them to start gentling men on the spot. As soon as they found men who could channel. They were, like, doing bad things like discreetly assassinating men who could channel who they thought might be the Dragon Reborn. Or doing assassination by mob, by being like gentle a man and then proclaim to his, you know, sad prejudice village, “This guy could channel!” and then they all either kick him out of the village to die of exposure or kill him.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Really brutal, sad stuff.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Uh, most of the Aes Sedai just don't know about this period, because it was so under wraps. It was, like, the Red Ajah doing stuff all sort of helmed by the Black Ajah under cover. And the hilarious part is that [laughs] when Ishamael found out what they were doing he flipped his fucking lid [laughs].

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Which Alviarin references as, she says, "My predecessor," and references her predecessor interacting with Ishamael and dying horrible due to an incident with a *ter'angreal*, which is what, you know, Ishamael made it look like, but really he was just killing her.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So he killed the former head of the Black Ajah and appointed Alviarin to take her place. Which is how Alviarin is now in that position.

SALLY: Dun dun!

EMILY: Um, all of it I find really interesting in terms of – oh, that's not even the last bit. This only ended when, who should be gentled and cast out of his village, but Owyn, Thom Merrilin's nephew, and Thom Merrilin was like, "That ain't kosher." Went to the court of Caemlyn, where he was, you know, Morgase's live-in mistress, and yelled at Elaida and called, basically, all of the Aes Sedai out for doing this shit. So, basically he, you know, Martin Luther, 40 – 97 theses. 96 theses?

SALLY: I don't know. Many theses.

EMILY: I can't remember. Basically he *Spotlight*'d it.

SALLY: Good for you, Thom Merrilin.

EMILY: Yeah. Which – *all of which* is way more interesting in terms of Thom's character.

SALLY: Yeah!

EMILY: Pretty much everything going on in the White Tower. That contextualizes, like, a lot of what the Black Ajah is doing.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: It also tells us that, oh, Moiraine and Siuan have actually had some competition in terms of finding the Dragon Reborn. To them this was a really risky thing.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: They were the only two people in the world, at the moment, who knew that he'd been born as a baby.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So they knew to look in the right age group.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So, it's just, like, [sighs]. Sorry, that was a really long-winded history lesson of the White Tower that I'm like, "Wow! That was fascinating. If only Robert Jordan had told me about it rather than making oblique references to it in his Aes Sedai points of view."

SALLY: No, that was very interesting. Especially, like [dull feedback] – Tybalt, don't rub your face on the microphone. I would, am currently, I mean Thom's still on thin ice most the time – but that's a fascinating thing about Thom's character.

EMILY: Yeah!

SALLY: And, like, you also get these oblique references to Thom being thrown out of Caemlyn.

EMILY: Yeah, apparently it was because he yelled at Elaida's face. That's fascinating!

SALLY: That's fascinating and very sexy of him. More people should yell at Elaida.

EMILY: Yeah! For his nephew. I relate, man.

SALLY: Yeah. Are you kidding me? If someone had done that to my nephew, I'd be like garotte on sight.

EMILY: I'd be like *Kill Bill* sirens, you know?

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah.

EMILY: And I'm like that is fascinating that this movement in the White Tower, this underground Black Ajah thing, was taken down by one, you know, [laughs] random court bard, who's nephew got murdered. I'd be –

SALLY: I love that.

EMILY: Yeah, it's really interesting.

SALLY: And Robert Jordan's like, "You know what matters more?"

EMILY: Women dying and that affecting Thom to kill kings.

SALLY: Exactly.

EMILY: And I'm like, women dying and then Thom immediately being like, "Well, I'll kill a king," makes a lot more sense when you find out, oh, his nephew died, he tried to do something about it, Morgase didn't do anything about it, and, to his point of view, there was no visible change.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: It was all happening in such secret that –

SALLY: So he's like, "Now it's time to murder monarchs."

EMILY: Yeah. In order to get things done, I've just got to do murder. Like, okay. Valid.

SALLY: Yeah, I mean, sometimes you've got to take extreme measures.

EMILY: Anyway, so if you want to read that Wikipedia article, I recommend it. And then re-read these points of view. Um, then, Alviarin leaves [pages crinkling] and is like, "Ah dang, that wasn't as productive as I would have liked." Um, she also is sort of, uh, thrown off by Elaida's foretelling. Though, one wants to believe that Alviarin's smarter than that.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: She hasn't proved it, so...guess not. Uh, Alviarin goes back to her rooms and is immediately confronted by Mesanna, who disguises herself and even disguises her ability to channel. Which, Alviarin has reasoned, means she is a woman in the White Tower.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Presumably one of the Sisters. And, actually, we see her alias. Her alias is mentioned. Alviarin passes her. A woman named Danelle, "A dreamy Brown Sister who had been part of bringing down Siuan Sanche and raising Elaida."

SALLY: There you go.

EMILY: So, there you go. Um, but Alviarin repeats everything that happened to Messana. She sort of references, "Uh, I'm in a bad situation because any of the Forsaken could come at any time to the White Tower, give me conflicting orders."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: "Then I'm stuck you know." Ishamael's been in here, Lanfear and Graendal. I don't know what Graendal is doing, that's just kind of thrown in there. We know Lanfear was there, but whatever, whatever. Alviarin does also tell us that, uh, she's not going to send any Black

Sisters with Toveine to the Black Tower. Which is mostly just, like, sort of a, sort of a little tidbit for those of you who, you know, are familiar with the series and know what happens at the Black Tower later.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: It's just, like, huh. A fascinating – it's a, like, the percentages of women who can channel on which side of the war becomes very important later in the book. Later in the series, excuse me. Uh, Messana rounds out her little lecture by teaching Alviarin how to Travel, but also making her promise that she won't teach anyone else and won't use it unless Messana gives her the okay.

SALLY: [crosstalk] Yeah.

EMILY: So, that's there. Uh, Sevanna.

SALLY: BLEGH.

EMILY: Brings us through the – brings us through Dumai's Wells from the Shaido point of view. Uh, some tidbits there. Um, we found out that the Shaido, uh, defeat was as bad as it was because Sevanna took the reins entirely and was like, "No scouts, no screens, we're all just gonna attack at the same time." And all the experienced battle people were like, "That's a dumb idea." And she was like, "Too bad."

SALLY: "I'm in charge."

EMILY: "I'm in charge. Like Elaida I'm a power-hungry woman who wants a penis."

SALLY: [groans softly]

EMILY: That's, in Robert Jordan's world women really do have penis envy. I know! So bad.

SALLY: Ahhhhhhhhhhh.

EMILY: Sevanna also is using, as motivation for the Shaido to attack the Aes Sedai, the death of a Wise One name Desaine, who Sevanna and some Wise Ones did in fact murder.

SALLY: Yeah [laughs].

EMILY: This leads one to the question of how did Sevanna convince these Wise Ones to murder her. I don't know!

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: It seems to me very obviously a way for her to have leverage over them. Like, why would they just kill a Wise One? Especially when we find out it's a huge taboo.

SALLY: Yeah. I don't know. It is wild.

EMILY: Mind boggling. But she keeps being like, "We're doing it for Desaine," and then making awkward eye contact with Therava who's like [whispers], "I murdered Desaine in front of you."

SALLY: [whispers] "We killed that bitch."

EMILY: "We killed that bitch! And you're just blatantly using that?"

SALLY: Yeah. Not only did you kill her, but you are just pulling her name out whenever you need to.

EMILY: Yeah! Whatever. Um, Sevanna tells us that she wants to rape Rand so that she can have daughters and sons to lead the Aiel, because she wants to adopt the quote Wetlander unquote notion of patrilineal, patrilineage. Um, we then flip over to Gawyn.

SALLY: Blegh.

EMILY: After the battle. Lots of his guys are dead. He's so sad. He's like, "I wish I'd killed Rand, but I couldn't because I promised Egg." [laughs] And it's like okay. What a dumb reason.

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah. Like maybe be quiet.

EMILY: He's, like, looking through his telescope that is touchingly inscribed by his mother. "From Her Highness Morgase to her beloved son, Gawyn."

SALLY: No, it's like, if my mom gave me this I'd be like, "You don't actually love me."

EMILY: "Did you have to look my name up? Did you have to ask your secretary what my name is?"

SALLY: "Do you know my birthday?"

EMILY: "Your highness?" God.

SALLY: [laughs] Shut up!

EMILY: Anyway, he's looking through his little tele – his little spyglass and he sees an Aes Sedai fleeing the battle. This is implied to be Galina, although no determining characteristics are given, but we know that Galina gets captured by the Shaido like this woman. And she's pretty much the only Aes Sedai who does from Dumai's Wells. Uh, but that leaves Gawyn off on his own with a bunch of boys. Last and certainly least –

SALLY: [snorts]

EMILY: We have the Whitecloaks. Uh, Pedron Niall is playing fantasy chess with Morgase when his fake spymaster, not the real one, comes in and is like, “I’ve got a special message for you, and Pedron Niall’s like, “Okay, Morgase, you’ve got to go. You young whippersnapper.” And she’s like [in a mocking voice], “Please, sir, may I see my son Galad?” And he’s like, “No, you witch!”

SALLY: “You’re a witch!”

EMILY: “You’re a witch! And also I’m – we’re just two smart people playing this dumb game of politics where you have no power and I have all the power and you’re just trying to, like, flirt with me and have, like, you know do whatever it takes to get out of this situation that you voluntarily put yourself in.” Like, not to victim blame, but Morgase did one hundred percent say, several books ago, “Let’s know go to any of my lords and allies in Andor. I would like to go to the Whitecloaks, the worst possible place.”

SALLY: Yeah, like, literally Morgase chose going to the Whitecloaks over just becoming a normal person.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: It’s like maybe – what?

EMILY: I don’t have a lot of sympathy for her. I’ll just say that.

SALLY: It’s hard in that plotline when she’s like, “This sucks. I’ve been trapped by the Whitecloaks.” And it’s like yeah no shit, Sherlock. What did you think was gonna happen?

EMILY: Yeah. So Morgase leaves, Pedron Niall is opening his little message when his secretary stabs him. [laughs] He’s like, “Ah, fuck.” He collapses. Then Valda comes in and kills the secretary.

SALLY: The spymaster.

EMILY: I’m sorry. I’m talking about a guy who’s name I can’t remember. Not Balwer.

SALLY: Yeah. Anti-Balwer.

EMILY: Yeah, Anti-Balwer. A very handsome man, we’re told. So, despite Valda being the one who no doubt put this guy up to it.

SALLY: Valda still murders him.

EMILY: Valda kills him. So he can be like, “Ah, I’ve killed the murderer of the Lord Captain Commander, or whatever, so now I’m obviously the next Whitecloak commander.” Pedron Niall’s last attempts in this life are to get the message that he has received read. The message is

from yet another person in Tarabon who's like, "The Seanchan are coming! The Seanchan are coming!"

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Because Pedron Niall didn't believe the last guy who tried to tell him this for two months.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Like, this has been a subplot for, like, a book and a half.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And Pedron's like, "Someone needs to know the Seanchan are coming." But of course it gets all stained because of wine and blood or whatever so Valda can't read it, so no one knows the Seanchan are coming. So, yeah, Seanchan is very easily going to take over Amadicia. Which doesn't decimate the Whitecloaks as much as you'd like it to, huh?

SALLY: Yeah, what if, like, if the Seanchan did one thing for me, personally, it would be to get rid of the Whitecloaks?

EMILY: If the Seanchan just ate the Whitecloaks –

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: Midway through the series, and were like, "Bye no more Whitecloaks." I would be like fuck yeah. I mean you guys still suck but thanks for that one.

SALLY: Yeah, that was a real one.

EMILY: If Galad was the sole survivor of the Whitecloak massacre and was like, "Oh my god! It was so scary!"

SALLY: "It was so scary."

EMILY: "I need to find comfort in the arms of my lover, Mat."

SALLY: Mat. Yeah, but if the Seanchan just fed all the Whitecloaks to their weird pterodactyl things.

EMILY: Yeah, that would be nice I think.

SALLY: And it was just like chomp chomp, motherfucker. Bye.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Galad could get eaten too.

EMILY: I'm – Galad is a sacrifice I'm willing [laughing] to make.

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: For the eradication of the Whitecloaks, you know? Like, at this point I'll pay – I will pay the Piper, man.

SALLY: I mean, what's he really doing besides being hot, you know?

EMILY: Take this incredibly sexy man.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: In order to get rid of all of the incels.

SALLY: This is our sacrificial lamb, the hottest man in the world.

EMILY: Who's the hottest man in the world right now? Like, Idris Elba? Is that generally the consensus?

SALLY: Uh...sure.

EMILY: That's just who I hear most often.

SALLY: Yeah, I feel like everyone is mad horny for him. There's some Olympians that people are mad horny for right now.

EMILY: I just feel like, if everyone was like, "Would you give up Idris Elba [laughs] in order to solve the various problems of toxic masculinity?"

SALLY: Yeah, I'm sorry, Idris but –

EMILY: "Bye." I'd be like that gif [laughing] holding the gun and crying, you know? Pull the trigger, piglet.

SALLY: Yeah [laughs]. I'm sorry, Idris, you're so sexy but –

EMILY: I know, he really is.

SALLY: We have to take toxic masculinity out of the world.

EMILY: I'd definitely give up a white Chris.

SALLY: Yeah. For sure.

EMILY: Like easy.

SALLY: Chris Evans? Gone.

EMILY: Yeah. Sorry.

SALLY: Chris Hemsworth? Gone.

EMILY: Bye. Chris Pine? Blech. Don't even talk about it.

SALLY: Gone.

EMILY: Chris Pratt? Already dead. Chris Pratt dies when the other Chris is sacrificed because he's one of the bad ones.

SALLY: [laughs] That's a good point. He's one of the Whitecloak incels. Nazi, fascist, horrible garbage people.

EMILY: Yep. So Pedron Niall dies in his own blood. Gross.

SALLY: Nasty.

EMILY: Then Valda's like, "Mwahaha. I'm the Lord Captain Commander." Well, first Asunawa, the High Inquisitor, or whatever, comes in and is like [in a weaselly voice], "Actually, you're not going to be the Lord Captain Commander unless you give Morgase to me." And Valda's like, "Ha ha! I've already outmaneuvered you and gotten the votes." The Vatican, whatever those are.

SALLY: Oh yeah, like, the Little Popes.

EMILY: The Cardinal Votes.

SALLY: [laughs] The Little Popes.

EMILY: [laughs] The Little Popes! It's the squeakquel to *The Young Pope*. The new Pope, the Little Pope. And it's an eight-year-old boy.

SALLY: [laughing] The Little Pope.

EMILY: [laughing] Or someone who's, like, five feet tall. Just a very short Pope.

SALLY: [laughs] Um, but yeah. Valda's got all the people to, like, light the red smoke or whatever.

EMILY: [laughs] And so Asunawa's like, "Ah, dang. I guess I can't have Morgase." And Valda's like, "Yeah, that was never going to be an option, because I want to sexually assault her," etc. etc. And it's like wow [laughs] what a horrible plotline.

SALLY: Yeah, just gonna...

EMILY: So, anyway, there's a new mean Whitecloak at the helm and it doesn't matter at all. Literally nothing changed.

SALLY: Yeah, I was gonna say. Valda's, like, slightly more rapey than Pedron Niall and that's about the only difference.

EMILY: Yeah. Pedron Niall hasn't done shit. He keeps telling us that he's done shit, but it sure doesn't seem like the Whitecloaks had any influence on what went on.

SALLY: No.

EMILY: So either he's extremely god at, you know, removing himself from the equation.

SALLY: Mm.

EMILY: Or he's not actually doing anything, which is what I'm inclined to believe.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Okay, anyway, sorry that was super long. I guess I'll cut out my dad's ranch dressing story.

SALLY: It will be such a good one for the patrons, though.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Or we can just have an hour long episode.

EMILY: No. That was the prologue. Thanks for tuning in. Um, check out the blooper reel [laughs].

SALLY: To learn about Chris and ranch dressing.

EMILY: Um.

SALLY: Horrifying.

EMILY: I don't know what chapters we're reading next week. I can't remember, but our reading schedule is on our website. Everybodyhatesrand.com. You can find it there and read along with

us, or just find out what we're reading next. Thanks to everybody – thanks again. Thanks to Glynna Mackenzie for our theme song. Also, sorry I forgot it last week. Also sorry –

SALLY: You didn't forget it last week.

EMILY: I didn't?

SALLY: No, it was in the podcast. I listened to a little bit of it.

EMILY: No, no, no. I mean sorry I forgot to thank her.

SALLY: Oh! I thought you meant the whole theme song.

EMILY: No, I remembered the intro. I feel like if I forgot the intro in our first episode back that would have been –

SALLY: [snorts]

EMILY: I would have heard about it immediately.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: No, sorry I forgot to thank you last week, Glynna. [clears throat] Thanks to our supporters on Patreon, reminder that our Patreon – oh, fuck. I didn't change that [laughs].

SALLY: Never mind [laughs].

EMILY: Okay, our Patreon tiers haven't changed yet, [laughing] but I'm going to. They *will* have changed by the time this episode comes out.

SALLY: Yeah. I did select the appropriate tiers for my blogs, so that's the only thing that's changed.

EMILY: [laughing] Stupid. I'm sorry, everyone.

SALLY: No, it's okay. It's hard! It's hard when we haven't been doing this for several months to be like, "Actually there are five million pieces to juggle in order to keep this ding dong podcast alive." And it's a little unbelievable, actually.

EMILY: I just have to add it to my to do list real quick. Edit EHR Patreon. My bad. Okay, anyway. Thaaaanks. Do you have a sign off?

SALLY: Oh yeah. Oh boy. My life has been a fucking nightmare, so I've got tons.

EMILY: Oh, give us one.

SALLY: Um, I'm currently watching one of my coworker's cats and her house. And she has these really whack curtains. There's, like, the green curtain that's like the nice thick fabric and then behind it, closest to the window, for some reason, is, like, these meshy type curtains. I don't really understand what the point of it is. She has, like, a ton of plants so it might be, like, a plant thing. But I was – I'm supposed to open them in the morning and close them at night. And this morning I went to open the mesh curtains and I ripped one.

EMILY: [gasps loudly]

SALLY: So there's just a little hole in it.

EMILY: Oh no! Sorry!

SALLY: About yay big. And I don't know what to do. Like, do I tell her. I assume she'll see [laughs].

EMILY: Just don't mention it.

SALLY: Guys, what is wrong with me?

EMILY: [laughs] I feel like if they're that easily rip-able, then –

SALLY: I just don't know what happened.

EMILY: That's a liability issue, you know?

SALLY: I was just like [ripping noises]. And then her seventeen year old ancient cat was just watching me break the house.

EMILY: Sometime I'll tell the story of how I watched our neighbor's dog, overnight because they had anxiety or something, after my Blockbuster shift and then they tried to pay me in Zupa's gift cards.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Anyway, goodbye!!