



Episode 189: There Are Rocks Everywhere

Release Date: February 14, 2022

Running Time: 49 minutes

Sally: Everybody Hates Rand is a Wheel of Time podcast that will contain spoilers for all 14 books. So if you're anti-spoiler, stop 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. "Everybody," in this context, refers to us and our cats. You are free to feel however you want about Rand. He's a fictional character. Please don't DM us.

(theme song by Glynna MacKenzie plays)

Sally: I – I think I'm prepared to say that I would rather read about Perrin staring soundlessly into the forest than anything that's going on with Elayne.

Emily: Yeah, me too, and I would argue it's because Perrin, for the most part, has a more interesting group of –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: People, um, around him. Like, as much as Masema is a terrible person, and it's like, he's just – he just represents a problem that you should kill –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: At least he's an – he's so totally insane that you're like, "What will this – what will he do next?" (laugh)

Sally: I know. Keeping me on my toes.

Emily: Yeah. Um, and Elayne just sort of, at this point especially, surrounded by a lot of women who are written with, uh, Robert Jordan's usual nuance and care with female characters, which is to say that most of them are bland and uninteresting or outright, uh, misogynistic portrayals. So.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: There's not, like, a lot of, um, you know, redeeming qualities there.

Sally: I know, somehow, Robert Jordan in – throughout the Caemlyn plot, manages to take Birgitte from a very complex and interesting and multi-faceted character –

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: And distill her into her state-sanctioned three character traits.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: That is usually angry, wears pants, and ...

Emily: Has some memory problems.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Residual trauma from being ripped out of Tel'aran'rhiod.

Sally: I'm like, Robert, what is wrong with you?

Emily: I know, it's a real tragic reduction of a female character who starts out with so much nuance. But yeah, it's the – it's like Elayne has a toxic effect on those around her. Again, like Chernobyl. (laugh)

Sally: Like Chernobyl. I also just cannot stand Elayne. Like, I do not find any redeeming qualities in her at this point at all. Um. Perrin, at least, I sometimes am –

Emily: Yeah, he can be compelling.

Sally: Have trickles of fondness for, or he's making interesting decisions. I feel like Elayne is always making the wrong choice. Anyway. We'll get into it, but first we should introduce the podcast.

Emily: Yeah, this is Everybody Hates Rand, your friendly neighborhood Wheel of Time podcast. I'm Emily Juchau.

Sally: And I am Sally Goodger.

Emily: And, as – as we've alluded to, we're with Elayne, and yes, this is – (sigh) unfortunate. However, this week, I have been spending some time listening – oh my God, I just noticed your Haikyuu –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Postcard – (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, Brianna gave that to me last Christmas. It's just, like, a collage of different pictures of, um, Bokuto from, uh, the Haikyuu manga. Um.

Emily: I could see the one with Kuroo. "Ho, ho, ho."

Sally: "Ho, ho, ho."

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: Um, it's very inspirational. I –

Emily: That is very inspirational.

Sally: Yeah, I shifted my board a little bit 'cause there's some stuff I want to frame.

Emily: Mm.

Sally: So I took that down and I put, um, up my inspirational Bokuto photo card.

Emily: That is – it’s very inspirational. I feel motivated –

Sally: (laugh) If he can do it, I can.

Emily: Yeah, I feel motivated just looking at it. I also feel motivated by – I’ve been listening to this podcast this week – um, the podcast is “The Worst Idea of All Time.” I don’t mean to, like, uh, skirt around it. But they’ve been doing a, uh, a watch-along podcast of “And Just Like That” –

Sally: (whisper) “And Just Like That.

Emily: The Sex and the City revival. These two guys have only watched Sex and the City 2: The Movie –

Sally: The movie? Not the show.

Emily: And Sex – and Sex and the City 1: The Movie.

Sally: Okay.

Emily: They do not consider the content of the show canon. (laugh) However, they have watched Sex and the City and Sex and the City 2 fifty-two times each, so arguably they know about as much about the characters as any –

Sally: Mm, I would disagree with that. I feel like the characterization in the movies are slightly different, but it’s okay, I don’t need to cross swords with these fine Australian gentlemen.

Emily: Well, I feel like the characters – the – it’s – their characterizations of them in the movie are particularly relevant to “And Just Like That.”

Sally: You right, you right, you right.

Emily: Um, that said, that’s not the point I’m making. The point I’m making is that these two gentlemen – these two New Zealand gentlemen – have really reinvigorated me with the idea of talking about media that is objectively quite bad –

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: With positive energy. So I’m going to try and – (laugh) bring that. I’d like to start out with a game that I’ve stolen from them, called “Favorite Character, Least Favorite Character.”

Sally: Okay.

Emily: Here are the rules. We have to say our favorite character and our least favorite character in that – in the section that we’ve read. That’s self-explanatory. It has to be characters who have actually appeared on screen.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: It can’t just be mentions, or otherwise we’d probably end up doing Mat all the time.

Sally: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm, mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Emily: I'm going to ban Elayne for the time being because it's like, I mean, it's just like Sex and the City. If you had to list your least favorite character, you'd choose Carrie Bradshaw –

Sally: It'd be Carrie every time.

Emily: All the time.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It would be Elayne all the time. I can go first, 'cause I'm prepared. If you want.

Sally: Yeah, go ahead. Lay it on me.

Emily: My favorite character in this section is, um, Alise.

Sally: Mm. Mm.

Emily: Who's the – mm – mm – not the main – one of the main ladies in the Kin. Um, she is – just, like, her only trait is hypercompetence.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And all she does – every time she's on-screen, she's just, like, getting things done.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: She's just, like, there, doing it. She's also taking part in what I think is one of the more intriguing aspects of the – the Caemlyn plotlines, which is the deprogramming – to use, you know, cult –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Terminology – of the sul'dam and damane that were captured as prisoners of war by Rand in Path of Daggers, and for some reason he was like, "I don't know what to do with these people; I'll send them to Elayne." (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which was such, like, a batshit decision.

Sally: I know. Completely unhinged. (laugh)

Emily: Like – (laugh) Don't – I don't even – I can't even comprehend the rationale of that. I don't even think we got the rationale of that. He was just like, "Just send them to Elayne."

Sally: Yeah, I also love that he – they – they reference the Asha'man sort of, like, delivering this like a bouquet of flowers. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Like, "This is from your boyfriend." (laugh)

Emily: The Asha'man shows up with, like, what is it? Like fifty sul'dam or something?

Sally: Yeah, like a shit-ton of people. It's, like, twenty, um –

Emily: There's only, like, five damane, I think.

Sally: Yeah, there's only five damane and yeah, there's like twenty or twenty-five sul'dam. Like thirty people just roll up.

Emily: Um, but we can get into that in a little bit. Anyway, Alise is my favorite character in this one. I would say my least favorite character, um ...

Sally: Um, while you think about it, I can throw in my wildly out-of-character choice for favorite character.

Emily: Oh, who's that?

Sally: Which is Lan in these sections.

Emily: Lan does great in this section!

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: Lan is a close follow-up –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: To mine.

Sally: Lan in – we'll get into it in the second chapter, but they're having a discussion – a discussion –

Emily: Mm.

Sally: About whether or not these women who have been collared against their will should have the collars taken off.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: They are considering this because they're like, "We do not know how they will behave."

Emily: Well, yeah, they're brainwashed, so they're like, "Is this a – a ruse of some of these women –"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "And they will just release the sul'dam, who have – whose deprogramming has not been completed."

Sally: Yes. So I logically understand what they are coming from, but Lan comes in with the correct response, which is, "You have to take the collars off."

Emily: Otherwise you're no better than the Seanchan.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Ethically, there is only one answer here.

Sally: Yes. There is only one ethical option.

Emily: Yeah. All Lan is doing in this chapter is being pretty –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, insinuating wildly that he and Nynaeve have fantastic sex –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And making correct ethical decisions.

Sally: Yeah, he's just out here being, like, malewife of the century. (laugh)

Emily: I know. He also is so, like, quick, you know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: They're like, should – here's the problem; what should we do? And Lan's like, "Release –" He's, like, not even part of the conversation.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He's a Warder, which means that he's background setting. You know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He's the set-piece, but he's like, "Oh, no, actually, here's something I do have an opinion on –"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "And will speak about." Um, I guess I'd say my least favorite character is probably, uh, whichever Aes Sedai is with Elayne at the beginning.

Sally: Oh – Sareitha.

Emily: Sareitha, I think? She's just, like – I mean, the usual Aes Sedai caricature.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Pretty wildly condescending –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, and not very productive. Also, she might be a Darkfriend who murdered Adeleas; I truly cannot ever remember –

Sally: I know. Which three –

Emily: Which of the three it is.

Sally: I know – I know Merilille is one of them, ‘cause that’s the name I recognized. Or maybe she’s not. (laugh)

Emily: I was gonna say, I’m pretty sure Merilille isn’t the Darkfriend.

Sally: Oh – okay, okay. Well I just know there’s three names –

Emily: Yeah. Okay, so –

Sally: That they’re always like, “It’s these three.”

Emily: I mean – wait, here, let’s do your least favorite character first; then I’ll do a very quick recap –

Sally: Okay.

Emily: Of Path of Daggers, because that’s pretty necessary. For these –

Sally: Yeah, the murder of Adeleas is quite a big deal, actually. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah. The murder of Adeleas, which isn’t as big a deal as I would like it to be. I love murder mysteries.

Sally: I know.

Emily: It’s the most compelling plot.

Sally: I think I would have to say Birgitte. I’m sorry, Birgitte.

Emily: No, yeah, I understand.

Sally: These are very out-of-character choices for me, but she’s just – a lot of it is Robert Jordan’s writing. He just distills her into being angry, and I also feel like a lot of my distaste for Birgitte comes from the way that she is forced to respond to Elayne’s incompetence.

Emily: Right.

Sally: She’s just very, like, angry and bossy and upset about everything, and she’s not, like – again, this is Robert Jordan writing it – but she’s not, like, really communicating why she is angry beyond the fact that Elayne is doing stupid things. She’s just sort of, like, mad.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: And it’s just, like – bad communication is no longer an interesting plot point. William Shakespeare did it in 1616 or whatever, and then I stopped being interested in it. So.

Emily: Yeah, I agree. Okay, y’all, here’s the Path of Daggers recap, because unfortunately – and this is perhaps one of the reasons we skipped Path of Daggers – a, if not majority, quite a large chunk of Path of Daggers is spent with this group that we are still with in Caemlyn.

Sally: Yes.

Emily: Um, so we've got Elayne and Nynaeve, obviously. Their warders, Birgitte and Lan. Uh, Nynaeve and Lan, newlywed, apparently having wild sex everywhere, but –

Sally: Good for them.

Emily: Uh, they're in Path of Daggers, mostly narrated by Elayne. I don't actually remember if Nynaeve ever narrates.

Sally: I don't think so.

Emily: Um, Aviendha, uh, occasionally narrates in Path of Daggers, but, um, she's there with them. Then they have the, uh, five Aes Sedai who are part of the Salidar contingent of Aes Sedai. That's Vandene and Adeleas, the two old lady sisters; Merilille, Sareitha, and Careane. I believe are the names. Uh, and there is a constant, uh, power struggle between all those Aes Sedai and Nynaeve and Elayne. Nynaeve and Elayne feel justified in having power because they are the ones who have – who are higher in the Power, capital "p," uh, but the other Aes Sedai are sort of ingrained in, like, this rut of Elayne and Nynaeve were not raised in the normal manner and therefore they are not quite actual Aes Sedai.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And so therefore their standing doesn't count.

Sally: Yep.

Emily: Uh, so that's a – going on. They have with them the single Black Ajah prisoner, Ipsan?

Sally: Ipsan, yeah. Ipsan.

Emily: Who they captured, uh, back in Crown of Swords when they had that big fight at the house where they got the Bowl of the Winds. Um, Ipsan is originally in the care of the Kin but is sort of transferred eventually to Vandene and Adeleas. There is quite, uh, a lot, or at least more than anyone wants, which is any, uh, conversation about whether or not to torture Ipsan.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, there are rules against it in the Tower, like physical torture, but it is heavily implied that Vandene and Adeleas get around this by, uh, utilizing psychological torture or emotional torture, so.

Sally: Yeah. (laugh) Yeah, which isn't any better.

Emily: No. For – for sure, for sure, for sure not.

Sally; And it's like, Vandene and Adeleas, I was rooting for you the whole time.

Emily: Yeah, we were all rooting for you!

Sally: (laugh)



Emily: You're old lady sisters.

Sally: Yeah, it's –

Emily: It's a compelling narrative.

Sally: Yeah. But it – you just – every – everywhere I go, Robert Jordan is playing the torture card.

Emily: Yeah, he loves it. No one loves it more than Robert Jordan.

Sally: What a freak.

Emily: Um, they are accompanied by a contingent of Sea Folk Windfinders, women who will, uh, more or less take the reins when they are using the Bowl of the Winds and get dragged by all these Aes Sedai inland, away from their ships, when, you know, they have to use the Bowl of the Winds.

Sally: Yes.

Emily: Um, and we'll get into them a little bit more, but there is, of course, the constant power struggle between the Sea Folk and everyone else, because the Sea Folk are bossy ladies and want to be in charge, and the Aes Sedai are also bossy ladies and want to be in charge.

Sally: And eventually, the Kin become bossy ladies who want to be in charge.

Emily: Ah, yes, the Kin, who are initially subservient, are, through Nynaeve's intervention alone, we are led to believe –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Uh, become a group with a, quote unquote, spine: women who are, you know, not afraid of the Aes Sedai, as they once were, but for the most part recognize their own value and standing in a system which has disenfranchised them.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which, I say, good for them.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But of course, uh, we're coming at it from Elayne and Nynaeve perspective, and so to them, the Kin becoming free agents is simply an annoyance –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That they must contend with constantly. (laugh) That's one of the things I like about Alise, by the way, is that she is never – she does not undergo this transformation.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: She is never awestruck by the Aes Sedai. She just sort of gets along –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: As herself, for the entirety.

Sally: She's a sick character, yeah.

Emily: Um, she's great. So, yeah, the Kin are slowly emerging as a power force, um, and they're along for the ride. Uh, this group of disparate women travel to the Farm, which is where the Kin, like, send their ladies to be rehabilitated or whatever – I don't know. Or just to, like, chill, 'cause they can't all be in Ebou Dar at once. Um, which is where they use the Bowl of the Winds. This is a sequence that takes a full chapter; most of it involves them linking. There's only like two chapters – two pages of them actually using the Bowl of the Winds.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Using the Bowl of the Winds, uh, is done with saidar but, like, is described as pulling in saidin in some way.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, and it is such a massive output of power that every other channeling character in the vicinity of Ebou Dar, as far away as Illian, feels the effects of the Bowl of the Winds being used. All of Rand's guys, when they're, um, fighting on the border of Illian, are like, "Oh my God. Saidin's weird."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Rand's like, "Oh, I thought that was just me." (laugh) And everyone's like, "No, it wasn't just you."

Sally: "No, it wasn't just you, you absolute madman."

Emily: "You dummy."

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Um, but after using the Bowl of the Winds, they realize that Ebou Dar is being attacked. And not wanting the Bowl of the Winds to fall into the hands of the Seanchan, they, uh, vacate the Farm and travel to mid-Andor somewhere –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Like, one of Elayne's estates.

Sally: (scoff)

Emily: Um, of course the Seanchan chase after them, and there's a whole sequence where they almost catch up, but Elayne unweaves the gateway and causes –

Sally: Blowing – yeah –

Emily: Causes a big explosion.

Sally: Blowing everyone up.

Emily: But erasing all traces of their passage. Then they travel through Andor, uh, where the main event of importance is that, uh, Vandene finds – goes to see her sister, who’s with Ipsan, and finds both of them dead.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And the group – Vandene, Elayne, and Nynaeve – include – uh, conclude that the killer has to be one of the three other Aes Sedai. Which, I’m not too sure on the reasoning there, that’s presented in this chapter, at least.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: They say it can’t be the Sea Folk because the Sea Folk wouldn’t know of the herb that is used to poison these women, which, okay, fair enough, Poirot. But then they say it also can’t be the Kin ‘cause we’re pretty sure none of the Kin are Darkfriends. In fact, we are sure that none of the Kin are Darkfriends.

Sally: Yeah, which is a huge logical leap.

Emily: Yeah, there’s, like, two hundred of them.

Sally: Yeah, like, they – just, like, statistically impossible. I mean, it’s not statistically impossible, but it’s very improbable.

Emily: Yeah, and it’s just, like, they’re coming at this based on information that’s been given to them by Ipsan –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Another evil woman, who is giving this information under torture.

Sally: Yeah. It just –

Emily: Not exactly reliable.

Sally: Yeah. Like, Robert Jordan, you could’ve come up with, like, a more solid reason. Like only the Aes Sedai knew –

Emily: Yeah, where they were –

Sally: Which house they were in or something like that. Like – like, I – I am an idiot – (laugh) and I’ve seen enough mysteries to come up with a plausible reason than –

Emily: I’ve seen all of “Monk” on DVD –

Sally: (laugh) Yeah.

Emily: At my Nana and Grandfather’s house. (laugh)

Sally: I – there has to be a more plausible reason than, “We are one thousand percent positive none of the Kin are Darkfriends.” Maybe a Darkfriend didn’t murder them.

Emily: Yeah, maybe they just did the murder ‘cause they wanted to. Have you thought of that?

Sally: Does it – does it – like, not only – like, Darkfriends aren’t the only people doing murder. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah. There are other motives for murder, y’know?

Sally: It is –

Emily: Maybe someone was just like, “I really don’t like Adeleas –”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which, fair enough.

Sally: I mean, yeah, torture maid over here.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: God. So one of those little plot things that you’re just like, “Robert.”

Emily: Robert, why?

Sally: Robert.

Emily: What’s happening here? Um, but if we take it at face value, we are left with this mystery that only one of these three women could have killed her.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, which is an intriguing mystery because of course, which of these women is the bad guy?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Who knows? That means we can’t trust them. Da da da da da.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That’s fun, and I wish we got to get a little more, you know, Detective Elayne or Detective Nynaeve about it.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But, uh, sadly, Elayne is busy running a country.

Sally: Yeah, and Nynaeve’s gonna fuck off here in a few chapters.

Emily: Yeah, Nynaeve is about to peace the fuck out, which – who blames her?

Sally: Yeah, I would be like, I –

Emily: Who can blame her?

Sally: Caemlyn is not pour moi.

Emily: Yeah. Meanwhile, in Caemlyn, uh, we open up with Elayne riding with a very small contingent of bodyguards, all of them women.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Which is notable because Birgitte is only recruiting women right now, for some reason. And she's with Sareitha and Sareitha's Warder Ned – (laugh)

Sally: I know, Ned.

Emily: Which, I just love that his name is Ned.

Sally: I almost chose Ned as my favorite character, just 'cause his –

Emily: I forgot Ned, or I might have.

Sally: His name is Ned, which is so charming.

Emily: He's just, like, a dude. He's like, "Boop ba doo boo boo." Um, Ned and Sareitha and a few guards. Mostly through Elayne's narration and partly through conversation, we are given the political situation: Elayne is recognized as the Daughter-Heir but is not necessarily recognized by everyone in Caemlyn as the heir to the throne. Elayne has not taken the correct next steps to become queen because she needs more backing from the royal houses of Andor.

Sally: Yep.

Emily: So she's in a sketchy position there and, um, Birgitte is angry at her for a variety of reasons but especially because she won't agree to take more guards with her into the city. Elayne, as usual – this is her – one of her top characteristics – is very cavalier about her personal safety. We find out that she and Aviendha have been – at least once, have gone out in disguise into the city at night, which is a trope –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Uh, used extensively in fantasy literature, especially fairy tales and things like that, to have royal people go out into their own city –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: In disguise. Um, that's used all the time in the Arabian Nights.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, but it's especially, like, characteristic of, I would say, like, the last twenty years of proto-feminist literature –

Sally: Yes.

Emily: To portray a spunky princess –

Sally: Yes.

Emily: In that way.

Sally: A fun version of this trope can be found in Bitterblue –

Emily: Yes.

Sally: By Kristin Cashore.

Emily: As with all tropes, there is nothing inherently good or bad about it.

Sally: No.

Emily: It all depends on the usage. And Robert Jordan is, uh – uh, making fun of it a little bit by sort of taking it in bad faith from its context. I would say the context of this trope is meant to be, um – uh, meant to be a sort of, um, threshold crossing.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, it is meant to have a person of an upper class interacting with the lower class. Disguises are, of course, a very heavy-use trope throughout literature. You can find ‘em in the Odyssey. But, like, yeah, there’s, like, a mixture of classes there. With the princess trope, it is often used as a metaphor for coming of age.

Sally: Yeah, there's also roots of this trope in the story of the Buddha. Um, when he was Prince Siddhartha, not – literally not allowed to leave the palace. We see that, sometimes, coming out in the trope; particularly with princesses, it’s not safe for you to go out because you’re a woman.

Emily: Yeah. So there’s this, uh – the – the microcosm is of emerging from a very small, cloistered safe space, much like a womb –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Out into the larger –

Sally: Yep.

Emily: Unsafe world.

Sally: Yep.

Emily: So that’s, of course, super, like, archetypical.

Sally: Yes. And we’re also, um – also relevant context, I think, coming back to the story of the Buddha: He obviously goes outside the palace walls and is like, “Ah, man, it’s shit out here.”

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: "Life is not as good as it is in the palace." And I think we often see that, um, in sort of a, like – especially in fantasy, it's like the princess goes out and she's like, "Oh my God, people are starving."

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: "And I've never starved a day in my life." It's this sort of, like –

Emily: Awakening class consciousness.

Sally: Yeah, like, you mentioned that mixing of classes, but it also, I think, is used to be like, "Our princess is a good and ethical character because she cares that people in her city are starving, and the only way she realizes this is by being in disguise and sneaking out of the palace."

Emily: Yeah, and it totally, um, relieves her of any guilt.

Sally: Yes. She's like, "I just didn't know."

Emily: Yeah, it gives her –

Sally: And, "How could I have?"

Emily: It, uh, puts her in – it frames her in ignorance and innocence, especially.

Sally: Yes.

Emily: Which, there's an argument to be made for the innocence of princesses, which is, more to the point, that they are usually children.

Sally: Yes.

Emily: Um, and so, you know, the move from innocence to knowledge of the outside world is another of those coming-of-age tropes.

Sally: Hundred percent. Hundred percent.

Emily: Now Robert Jordan is taking all of that and making fun of it by having Elayne be the reverse. She remains completely naive –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, to class consciousness throughout, both when she's, you know, out and about in disguise, one assumes, but also here. You know, she's saying things like, "Children aren't allowed to starve in Caemlyn," when it's like, patently that's untrue.

Sally: (laugh) Yeah, girl.

Emily: There are people starving everywhere. You know, she's just this hyper-idealistic – hyper-unrealistic person who doesn't seem to have any concept of how to go about fixing the problems that she's seeing in her city.

Sally: I know, she is – and this is going to be such, like, very particular nitpicking, but these are the types of things I talk about in work – at work every day. She’s like, “The palace kitchens are open every day, feeding thousands of people,” which completely ignores the many barriers it takes someone to get from the, quote unquote, slums of Caemlyn up to the palace during your time frame. Or people who, like, have to be at their job or they will lose their job that allows them to buy the little food they do have. It’s just like, that is not a solution, Elayne.

Emily: Yeah, she’s like, “There’s so much food available in the city.” We learn later on that there are food shortages encroaching –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: By the way, and you will bet – you can be willing to bet that the poor population is going to be the first to suffer.

Sally: Yes.

Emily: But she’s like, “There’s so much food available in Caemlyn, and these people just aren’t eating.” And it’s like –

Sally: (laugh) You dumb fuck.

Emily: I one hundred percent do not believe that is the case.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: There are barriers that you are unwilling or unable to see.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It’s not just simply that these are refugees who are so depressed that they can’t bring themselves to eat.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Even if, perhaps, Robert Jordan believes that too; it’s unclear.

Sally: Yeah, Robert – Robert Jordan – again, we get some cognitive dissonance, like he did not quite believe or know what the characters he was writing was about, ‘cause you – sometimes – you often get the sense that he’s picking fun at Elayne –

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Which – but you also very often get the sense that he thinks Elayne is an incredibly good person.

Emily: And an incredibly good leader.

Sally: Yeah. Oh my God, all the time, we get, “Elayne is the right person for Caemlyn,” that we have to believe in Elayne’s succession plotline because there’s nobody else who could be ruling Caemlyn, and I’m like, patently untrue.



Emily: Dyelin is right there.

Sally: Dyelin is literally right there. Halwin Norry has been ruling Andor – (laugh)

Emily: Ah! Halwin Norry. If I hadn't made the rule about –

Sally: For years. I know! (laugh)

Emily: They have to appear on-screen, he'd be my favorite.

Sally: I know, but he would be my favorite every time we were in Caemlyn, so it's a good rule.

Emily: I love Halwin Norry for two very important reasons. One is that he is literally – and Elayne herself admits to this – the backbone of Caemlyn.

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: And the other is that every time he's on-screen, he is actively boring the hell out of Elayne –

Sally: I know.

Emily: Which is what she does to me.

Sally: Uh-huh.

Emily: So I love the sweetness of that payback. (laugh)

Sally: I know, when she's just like, "Ugh, this is so boring," and I'm like, yeah, tell me about it. I have the opposite experience. I'm like, Halwin Norry is on-screen telling me very interesting details –

Emily: Oh, vital information.

Sally: Yeah. Where I'm like –

Emily: He's boring Elayne, but I'm delighted.

Sally: I'm riveted. I don't care –

Emily: He's like Balwer.

Sally: Yeah. Oh my God. I would – they should get married. (laugh)

Emily: Halwin and Balwer – yeah, the power couple of the century.

Sally: They would conquer the world.

Emily: Horry.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Their celebrity couple name. (laugh) Oh, God. God, I would love them. Okay –

Sally: Sebban Balwer.

Emily: Uh, back to the princess in disguise trope. Robert Jordan also is making fun of it by being like, “Hey, isn’t that a silly trope? Because obviously she’d be super in danger the whole time.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “She’s totally disregarding her personal safety, which is a dumb thing to do when you’re the ruler of a country.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it’s like, yes, obviously –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Duh.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: What more do you want me to say?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You don’t need to, like – but also, Elayne has never given much regard to her personal safety, so it’s pretty on-brand for her to be doing that and for Aviendha to be enabling her.

Sally: Yeah, Aviendha is the type of “yes man” friend that nobody needs.

Emily: Yeah. Just doing – (laugh) Doing the most to do the worst.

Sally: (laugh) Yeah, just chronic enabling out of her.

Emily: Yeah. Woof. So that’s sort of where we’re at in the first chapter, and the only major event is that Birgitte comes out to find Elayne to tell her that, um, Elenia and – I am so sorry, this is the only way I can think of to pronounce this name – Naeen –

Sally: Naeen! Yeah, it’s N-A-E-N, I think?

Emily: N-A-E-A-N. Elenia and Naeen, I guess –

Sally: (laugh) No, I love it, it has to be Naeen.

Emily: Are – are two of Elayne’s top contenders for the throne of Andor. They’re both, you know, um – they both meet the requirements in that they’re women and they’re the heads of noble houses and they have shown, obviously, that they want to be taking over. The reason that they were in Aringill, this other town, was because they started an uprising, which Dyelin, in the last book or two, just immediately squashed –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And got them in prison. So Elayne was having them escorted from Aringill to Caemlyn to, I don't know, stand trial or something like that, and Birgitte's news is that they were intercepted and have disappeared. So very obviously they are probably in the hands of their supporters and this is leading up to the succession war plotline.

Sally: They are actually in the hands of the main rival for Elayne, whose name I cannot remember.

Emily: Not one of them?

Sally: Not – it – yeah, it's not Elenia or Naeen. It's Aramilla, maybe?

Emily: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Sally: They are actually captive in her camp.

Emily: Oh, yes. Another reason – another way to torture women.

Sally: Yeah. It's an extremely unpleasant plotline.

Emily: Yeah, I forgot about that. But, I mean, it doesn't matter, you know? Like, thank you for correcting me but, like –

Sally: I – we are – I am reading about it in *Crossroads of Twilight*; that's the only reason I know.

Emily: And it – it's just, it doesn't matter.

Sally: It –

Emily: It's just the bad guys that Elayne has to overcome.

Sally: Yeah. It truly does not matter what is going on with her supporters. Um, I'm just proud that for once I remember something.

Emily: I know, that was good. That was awesome.

Sally: Thank you, yeah. Can you believe it, you guys? Look how far she's come. From –

Emily: Can you believe?

Sally: "I think there's a tapestry involved" –

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: To, "I actually do know where Elenia and Naeen ended up." (laugh) That's what we call growth.

Emily: Um, so Elayne immediately turns back to go to the palace – I don't know why, actually; it's not like she does anything –

Sally: I know, she's not like –

Emily: Once she's there. (laugh)

Sally: 'I'm gonna fix this problem.'

Emily: Yeah, she just scares everyone.

Sally: Yeah, she's just – thundering through the hallways or whatever.

Emily: Uh, like all the soldiers are like, "Oh my God, she's back early."

Sally: And she's also acting extremely paranoid because the assumption is someone knew where to find Elenia and Naeen –

Emily: Oh my God.

Sally: Because there were spies in the palace.

Emily: Yeah, Birgitte's like, "They found them," and Elayne's like, "That means there's a spy in the palace," like, looking into the camera, and I'm like –

Sally: Yeah, no shit.

Emily: Was that not a given? To begin with?

Sally: Like, there are spies everywhere.

Emily: Yeah, this doesn't hold the same weight as, "The killer must be one of these three people who's in our inner circle," you know?

Sally: Yeah, it's not like they were like, "These people knew, and therefore one of them –"

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: "Is the spy."

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: It's like, there are spies in this palace that employs thousands of people and is a political center.

Emily: Yeah, we're in book – nine – I just had to check – (laugh) We're in book nine of this series. We are very familiar, at this point, as Elayne herself ought to be, with the vast workings of spy networks –

Sally: Uh-huh.

Emily: Across this country. As ineffective as they sometimes are.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But all of the Aes Sedai have these eyes and ears systems. There are people like, um, Balwer out there, who even if you don't have, like, intentional spies, know how to tease out information from people.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So – yeah, I don’t know, girl. It’s just your fault for having a security problem.

Sally: Yeah, and it’s just, like –

Emily: You can teleport. At least she says this. She’s like, “I mean, I could’ve gotten them by myself.”

Sally: You could have. And Birgitte’s – Birgitte is like, “It’s not your fault. Queens can’t do everything.” And I’m like, you can do the stuff –

Emily: You probably could’ve done this, though.

Sally: You probably could’ve done that. It would’ve taken, like, five minutes.

Emily: Yeah. It’s teleporting!

Sally: But you have time to wander around the city and wave at people? She keeps trying to convince me that this is an important political activity – wandering around and waving at people – and I’m like, I do not believe it.

Emily: You know what happened to a lot of political figures who wandered around waving at people? They got shot.

Sally: They – yeah –

Emily: (laugh) RIP, JFK.

Sally: Um, yeah, in – and, like, I think Sareitha even says that. She’s like, “Someone could just throw a rock at you and kill you right now. You know that?”

Emily: And Elayne’s like, “Well, with you here, they’d need two rocks,” and I’m like, rocks are everywhere. Rocks are on the street.

Sally: (laugh) Very easy to find two rocks.

Emily: (laugh) You’re telling me there aren’t two people in Caemlyn with a fastball pitch to take out two Aes Sedai?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: This is the same city where that one random Aes Sedai was knifed in an alley and –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: We didn’t know who it was for books on end.

Sally: Yeah. (laugh) Um –

Emily: If ever.

Sally: Another random thing that Elayne mentions that I only bring up because it will be just, like, this continuous plot point, is that there are frequent arsons happening in the city of Caemlyn. (laugh)

Emily: Oh, yeah. What? (laugh)

Sally: Which you'd think would be a more fun plotline, but it's just Darkfriends –

Emily: No, it's just arsons.

Sally: Doing mischief.

Emily: I know.

Sally: I wish it was just arsons. I would be more interested if it was just, like, arsons.

Emily: Yeah, there's just some rogue arsonist?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Sign me up.

Sally: Yeah, that sounds really interesting. What's going on? But no, it's the nasty rapist who is now –

Emily: Oh, yeah, we'll – we'll get to him.

Sally: Or his – his group of people. Um.

Emily: Yeah, it's so disappointing, because what we have here is, against the backdrop of a political drama, we have the makings of a very interesting, like, mystery –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Set-up, you know? There's a – there's been a murder of a high-ranking person –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: There's all these fucking arsons.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Who's the spies, you know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: We could be do – we could be focusing on all of that, but instead, we're with Elayne.

Sally: Instead, Elayne is just like, "I have to meet with a bunch of merchants, and the Sea Folk women are just so angry and rude." And it's like, could you be a little less racist?

Emily: Yeah, could you calm the fuck down? (sigh)

Sally: Anyway, we get back to the palace, and she's like, "Blah blah blah blah blah," and then poor Reese Harfor shows up and is like –

Emily: Ugh.

Sally: "Here's your entire schedule for the day."

Emily: The most long-suffering character that anyone can imagine.

Sally: God. And Elayne is like, "We have to look out for spies," and Reese Harfor just, like – thousand-yard stare.

Emily: "What do you – what do you fucking think I've –" (laugh)

Sally: It's like, "What do you think I do all day, Elayne?"

Emily: Yeah. God.

Sally: "Sit on my hands?"

Emily: Goddamnit. Um, yeah, Birgitte goes off to do paperwork after berating Elayne for the thousandth time for doing her little escapades out in the city. Reese Harfor shows up and is like, "Hello, here's your whole schedule." Elayne's like, "Well, fuck all that for now; I'm off to do something else."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, she happens to see, while they're out and about, one of the, uh, damane –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Being escorted by two of the Kin. Um, and she goes in that direction to change her clothes or something like that, but she almost runs into Vandene, who is being followed by two of the Kin, whose approach to being reunited with, uh, members of the White Tower – they're like, "Well, we want to be novices; we want to be reintegrated into the Tower," with them taking up whatever ancillary position we're going to end up in. Um, and Vandene is approaching Elayne to be like, "I can't handle these fuckos. I'm too busy dealing with the murder of my sister or whatever. And also, they have puzzled out that it has to have been one of the Aes Sedai."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Elayne's like, "I mean, I'm running a country." (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. Elayne, to be fair, is like, "I can't deal with this."

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: So Nynaeve shows up and they're like, "Great, Nynaeve will deal with it."

Emily: And Nynaeve's like, "I can't deal with it. I'm having sex till eleven a.m."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And I'm like, I mean –

Sally: I mean, Nynaeve is more valid than Elayne, I think, in this situation.

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: Like, you could maybe squeeze in these two novices between your meetings with merchants; Nynaeve is busy. (laugh)

Emily: Nynaeve is super busy.

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: Doing bedroom stuff.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Whatever that – and boy, does Robert Jordan want to leave a mystery. Um.

Sally: And I'm like – he's like, "Do you get it?" And I'm like –

Emily: I bet it's the most vanilla sex of all time.

Sally: And I'm like, yeah, I get it. It's fine. They're newlyweds.

Emily: It's good sex. Elayne's like, I don't think it can be good sex.

Sally: I know, Elayne is such a bitch about this. It really bothers me.

Emily: She has sex envy.

Sally: Yeah. Ooh.

Emily: Not like – I don't know if that's a real phrase; it's just what I think of her.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: A lot of Elayne is motivated by envy, but right now, she is having, um, envy of Nynaeve having a sex life.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: Elayne feels really upset by anyone who has sex in front of her –

Sally: Mm.

Emily: Not literally in front of her, but in her direct vicinity – because she is not personally fucking Rand.

Sally: This is a fascinating revelation to me. I never thought about that. I thought she was just a bitch.



Emily: I mean, I do think she is just a bitch. But I do think a lot of bitchiness comes – stems from envy.

Sally: No, I think that's such a good point. Um. She's particularly – what she says is she's like, "Nynaeve is very, um, open and vocal about how happy she is in her relationship," with the implication that she loves to talk to other women about her sex life.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Very Sex and the City, sitting around the breakfast table, of her. Um, which is –

Emily: Which I think is hilarious, 'cause can you imagine Nynaeve – then who is it? Elayne, Aviendha – who would be – who would be the Samantha? (laugh)

Sally: Birgitte. (laugh) Birgitte's like, "Look at the ugly man I fucked last night."

Emily: Birgitte's like –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, and then, like, Vandene? (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: Does Vandene care about your sex life?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Come on, girl.

Sally: It's extremely – so it's – I find it to be very charming. Like, um – and just, like, a funny kind of turn of Nynaeve's character –

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Just to be like, "I'm very happily married, and I really love my husband, and I really enjoy having sex with him." And Elayne is like, "She has to be lying to compensate for the fact that her marriage bed is ice-cold and that sleeping next to Lan is like sleeping next to a hungry lion." And, like, she's –

Emily: Yeah, she's like, "Look at Lan. He's frigid."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it isn't until she witnesses Lan compliment Nynaeve that she's like, "Oh. Maybe their sex is nice."

Sally: Yeah, maybe they –

Emily: And I'm like, have you heard the difference between public relationships and private relationships?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Lan and Nynaeve are allowed to treat each other very differently in private than they do in public.

Sally: That is totally acceptable and fine. And also, like – I mean, it makes sense, now, if you think about it in the terms of, like, envy – Elayne has a huge complex about the fact that Aviendha and Min have both slept with Rand and she has not. Which is why she corners him into sex in a few chapters.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Poor Rand. You know?

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Has Rand ever willingly entered into a sexual situation?

Emily: It sure doesn't read that way.

Sally: Um. But you're just like, why are you saying these things rather than just, like, believing your friend? Nynaeve isn't typically the type of character that lies. To her friends, at least.

Emily: I mean, I would say she is a notorious, um, exaggerater –

Sally: Mm.

Emily: To portray herself in the best light.

Sally: That's fair. That's fair. You got me there.

Emily: But I do also think that she is a highly puritanical character in the early series –

Sally: Mm.

Emily: Um, and so the idea that she would willingly talk about and be excited about her sex life, I think, would be a pretty indicative sign that she is telling the truth.

Sally: Yeah. No, you got me there. You got me there. That's definitely more accurate than what I was saying. Nynaeve is – we all know this – she's a weird character. She says weird things.

Emily: I mean, they're all weird characters.

Sally: But, yeah. And it's also just, like, I – it's just such a shitty assumption of Elayne's to just be like, "I am correct about their relationship."

Emily: She's insufferable.

Sally: Um. Anyway. We don't need to spend more time on that dumb plot point. It just, like, is really insufferable to me. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah, Elayne's like, "I can't take care of these novices because I'm the queen," and Nynaeve's like, "I can't do it because I'm having a lot of sex, and also I don't want to."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Therefore, Vandene, it's your problem." And Vandene is like, "I mean, fine."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "I'll put 'em to work, anyway. Doing detective work on my sister's murder."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's like, good.

Sally: Well, I mean, you should. They obviously figured it out.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: They're very smart and paying attention.

Emily: And, like, speaking of bitchiness, Nynaeve's like, "Maybe if they help you out, it'll give you time to eat," and Vandene's like, "I do eat. It tastes like ashes."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Because she's actively mourning. Her sister died a few weeks ago.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Her sister, who we know she has been close to her entire life.

Sally: Yeah, like, very very close friends and sisters.

Emily: Show a modicum of sensitivity, Nynaeve.

Sally: I know. Ugh. I mean, speaking of bitchiness.

Emily: Ugh.

Sally: The two of them.

Emily: Dynamic duo.

Sally: I just want to slam their heads together.

Emily: Anyway, the two of them go looking for Reanne – oh, right, because –

(sound of car revving in the distance)

Sally: Nynaeve's like, "Reanne has good news."

Emily: Yeah, sorry. The motorcycle. Uh, Reese Harfor was like, “Reanne wants to talk to you.” So Elayne goes looking for her with Nynaeve in tow. They come to, uh, Reanne and Alise with one of the sul’dam, which is where we’re sort of apprised of that situation. Um, the deprogramming technique by these untrained women, who are just sort of winging it –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You know, they’re not psycho, uh – they’re not therapists. They’re just doing what they think will probably work, which is trying to convince all of the sul’dam that they can in fact channel, and then – Elayne says, “Then we should send them back to the Seanchan.”

Sally: I know, girl, what the fuck are you saying?

Emily: Which politically makes sense, if you are treating all of these people like, you know, chess pieces and not real people who, once they realize that they can channel, probably won’t want to go back to the society that enslaves women who can channel. It’s like, Elayne, you’re just going to have to figure out a way to dispense that information into Seanchan, the empire – ‘cause she’s right, that information would severely damage the empire; that’s something we’ve been playing with since book two.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, but, like, these are people’s lives.

Sally: Yeah. I – (laugh) lost all the – I’m gonna lose all the points I got for being smart earlier; I was like, “Why would you send them back?” (laugh) So that makes sense. I was like, “What are you doing? Do you just not want to deal with them?”

Emily: “And then get the fuck out of here.” (laugh)

Sally: I was like, “Why would you do this?” No, that makes sense. But it’s like – yeah. And also there’s no guarantee that they would tell them. Like, we deal with this exact plot with Mat, later in this book, I think, which was just kind of disproving Elayne’s hypothesis. One of the sul’dam that Mat and Egeanin work with in Ebou Dar in order to get out of Ebou Dar has been apprised of the fact that she can channel and it’s, like, really fucking with her, psychologically, but she’s not telling anybody because she doesn’t want to be enslaved.

Emily: Why would you? Yeah. Fuck, I forgot to turn the heater off. Oh, well.

Sally: Well, that’s our heater. Um. We have to keep it on or we’ll freeze to death. (laugh)

Emily: Anyway, this particular sul’dam, along with all the other sul’dam, is resistant to this technique because of course you would be. It would be very psychologically damaging.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And meanwhile, though, Reanne’s good news is that three of the five damane, um, are wanting to be uncollared, which is forward progress.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You know, because up until this point, they have been resistant to the very idea of that. That's how brainwashed they are. Um, and for two of these women, these are women who can channel who were taken in the recent Seanchan invasions, so they are not, like, Seanchan natives; they are people who have only been in the system, so to speak, for, at most, a year or two. Which is still quite a chunk of time –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: To be, um, under – to be enslaved. Uh, but they're like, "Yeah, that's no problem. We're fine with that." But the big problem is Alivia, who is a woman who was born and raised in Seanchan, has been a damane her entire adult life, which is a considerable time. She is, what, seven hundred years old?

Sally: I think they say, like, four hundred.

Emily: Four hundred years old, which is another indication that women who can channel age considerably slower.

Sally: Yeah, and they say she was taken when she was, like, fourteen, so it's been, like, three hundred and eighty-six years that she has been a damane and they're like – and I – again, logically, I get why they are like, "Do we want to – the tiger is out of its cage." (laugh) Yes. Yes.

Emily: (simultaneously) Yes. (laugh)

Sally: Like, that's –

Emily: Which is my whole attitude about Alivia, by the way.

Sally: Yeah, no, seriously, Alivia rocks.

Emily: She's so cool.

Sally: She's like, "I'm gonna blow stuff up." She's very angry, very, like – obviously she's angry; she's been enslaved her entire life.

Emily: Yeah. They're like, "She wants to kill the sul'dam," and I'm like, okay.

Sally: You know what? Maybe let her. I don't know. Maybe just, like, put 'em in a ring and see what happens.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Um.

Emily: They're like, Alivia – oh, here's the other kicker: Alivia is more powerful than Nynaeve –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: The most powerful channeler –

Sally: Yep.

Emily: That anyone has ever met.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So now we've got Alivia. And everyone's like, "Oh my God, yeah, can we let her out?" and Lan immediately is like, "Yes." Like – (laugh)

Sally: "You have to." Yeah.

Emily: Um – (clears throat) But there's – (cough) a pregnant pause, shall we say, while everyone thinks about it, before Nynaeve, who for some reason is the arbiter of this decision –

Sally: Yeah, Elayne says this is not a Caemlyn decision, it's an Aes Sedai decision, so it falls to Nynaeve, who is the most powerful, which is a dumb system.

Emily: Yeah. Again, you guys are all a part of this team. You can collaborate. Whatever. But Nynaeve ultimately is like, "Yeah, Lan's right, we can't just – if – when they want to be let out, obviously we have to let them out." Um, and Lan is like, "Fuckin' rad, babe."

Sally: "Good job, wife."

Emily: Yeah, I mean, he says, "Tai'shar Manetheren," but I think –

Sally: Which is, like, his version of "Fuckin' rad, babe."

Emily: Yeah. (laugh) "Fuckin' rad, babe," is so much cooler, I think.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Oh, yeah. That's –

Sally: That's my wife.

Emily: (Borat voice) My wife. (laugh) Lan does Borat voice in the background.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Elayne also approves of this decision, to Elayne's credit. Modicum of credit.

Sally: But can I say – this is – Elayne has this, like, monologue where she's like, "I'm also really proud of Nynaeve for making this decision." If Nynaeve had made a different decision, would you have just been like, "Well, Nynaeve says we've gotta keep her in prison"? Ridiculous. She's like, "Lan is so right. We can not keep people collared and enslaved," says the two women who kept –

Emily: Yes. (laugh)

Sally: Moghedien collared and enslaved – (laugh)

Emily: The irony is rich.

Sally: For the better part of three books.

Emily: And Robert Jordan is completely just – pfft. Not self-aware at all.

Sally: Yeah. (laugh) Um, so it is, an – a moment, to be sure. At least they make –

Emily: (laugh) I didn't even think about that.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: But you're so right.

Sally: She's just, like – like, it is the most impassioned couple of little paragraphs –

Emily: I know.

Sally: About how they –

Emily: And you can tell Robert Jordan was like, "I am anti-slavery." (laugh) "That is my thesis; I think people should be free."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And you're like, "Bud?"

Sally: "Point of order."

Emily: Two books ago, you sure thought differently.

Sally: Yeah. It is just absurd. But they make the right decision for Alivia, and the tiger is out of her cage.

Emily: Oh, boy.

Sally: Yes. Yes. (laugh)

Emily: My girl.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Uh, but those are those two chapters. (laugh)

Sally: Those are those two chapters, man.

Emily: Unfortunately, uh, the next two chapters are quite long and will introduce us to – not introduce – reintroduce some of the most rancid characters in the series, but hey, what're you gonna do? It's Robert Jordan.

Sally: But Hal – Halwin Norry is there, right?

Emily: But Halwin Norry does make an appearance, I believe.

Sally: Pour one out for the main man.

Emily: Yeah. Saving us. Um, thanks for listening. Thank you to Glynna MacKenzie for our theme song, uh, and to our patrons on Patreon and our followers on social media. Do you have anything to add?

Sally: Um, just a shout-out: we still have, um, a few stickers, so if you want to, um – if you’ve been considering joining our Patreon or you want to check it out, if you join, um, for – until supplies run out, you will get, um, a sticker – or we’ve run out of one of the designs, but we still have two of our designs, our juice sticker and our Tybalt sticker.

Emily: Aww.

Sally: Um, so you could get those, um, in addition to your Patreon rewards, no extra cost there. So if you’re interested in that, it’s a good time to join our Patreon. We also have a lot of cool stuff going on: Um, my read-along blogs, almost done with Crossroads of Twilight. We’re talking about “Every Heart a Doorway” by Seanan McGuire on our other podcast, We Don’t Watch Outlander. So. Lots of sick stuff going on over there.

Emily: And thanks for bearing with us through the heater, this last little while. Thanks, everyone! Have a good one. (laugh)

Sally: Thanks, everybody. (laugh)

Emily: Bye.