



Episode 195: Suroth in Falme with a Candlestick
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Sally: Everybody Hates Rand is a Wheel of Time podcast that will contain spoilers for all 14 books. So if you're anti-spoiler, 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)

Emily: I'd like to begin by apologizing for any upsetting mouth noises that I might make during this podcast. I'm recovering from an illness.

Sally: Emily had – was sick this week.

Emily: Um, but before we get too far into that, this is Everybody Hates Rand, a friendly neighborhood Wheel of Time podcast. I'm Emily Juchau.

Sally: And I am Sally Goodger.

Emily: We read three chapters this week because we hate ourselves. So we pick up with Mat, who has got it into his little head that he needs to check up on his money –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Because – I dunno – he's just a little guy who loves money. Anyway, so Mat goes to the Wandering Woman, um, and Setalle Anan is not there at the moment, so after some brief senseless interactions with her daughter, who is in charge of the inn while she's gone, and, um, like, the maid, Caira, who, um, Mat was flirting with quite a bit and maybe having sex with back in Crown of Swords, but, like, when Nynaeve and Elayne came to see Mat, she assumed he was seeing other women, so she's been cold-shouldering him since then. Which brings up probably the main point of these three chapters is that you would have no recollection of Caira, probably, if you had read Path of Daggers – Path – is Path of Daggers the one between?

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: If you'd read Path of Daggers, then that's quite a chunk of time to forget about that very minute subplot between Mat and Caira.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Or Caira – however you say her name. Um, and that's what's going on with a lot –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: In – of these three chapters.

Sally: Yes.

Emily: We're picking up plots that were abandoned – not abandoned – that were left behind in ... book four?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: In the worst instances, or book seven, which is –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Still, um, quite a while ago and which, since Sally and I didn't read Path of Daggers, is a little fresher in the brain for us, but, you know, that's still a solid thousand pages ago.

Sally: Yeah, and in several instances, they're not, like, main plots. Like, we pick up with Egeanin, who meets Bethamin – I always want to call her Bethany –

Emily: (laugh) Her name should be Bethany.

Sally: Who – and, like, their interaction in Tanchico, I guess, would be considered not exactly a minute plot. But, like, we still don't get a ton of – like, it's – it's big in Egeanin's plot to be like, "Oh my God, they can channel."

Emily: Yeah, but we only get, like, two points of view from Egeanin –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: In Tanchico, and it's not like she tells anyone else about it.

Sally: Yeah. Like – so it's just like, we're expected to remember these small details or medium-sized details, I guess, if you have a better memory – to me, they're all small details, 'cause I have no mind for plot –

Emily: Yeah, it feels ridiculous to say that Egeanin having kept a woman locked in her basement is a minute detail, but in the scheme of things in book four, it really was.

Sally: But it – in the – you're so right, bestie. You're so right. Um, it is not a medium-sized detail; it is small, especially because it was ... three thousand pages ago?

Emily: So long.

Sally: So it's – it's – the worst part of these doorstep fantasy books that sprawl, even four, five, six, seven books –

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Much less fourteen books plus a prequel is just like, how am I supposed to remember these characters? How am I supposed to remember these plots? I barely remember our main – what our

main cast of characters is doing, because they're all doing such very different things at different points, so this – these couple chapters felt particularly frustrating 'cause it's like, I don't even remember who Teslyn and Joline are most of the time, and they're, like, significant drivers of the plot in Ebou Dar at this point.

Emily: Yeah, they're um – I think it's – it – it's definitely a hallmark of the doorstep fantasy novels. I think it's also a – a detriment of this narration style. And I don't generally have any problem with, um, third person point of view narrators; I think that's fine; there's – I'm not trying to equivocate on that. Um, it's just that when you are going through third point – third person point of view narrators and you're really committing to just using their point of view, then it seems ridiculous to be, like, in their head, like, "Oh, and this brings to mind what happened four – you know, six months ago," and just to, like, refresh the reader's memory. Whereas when you have more of an omniscient narrator, which I more typically see in, like, children's fantasy –

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

Emily: Where you get this kind of, like, overarching person who can just sort of chime in every once in a while and be like, "This is because: da da da da da."

Sally: Yeah. Um, if you are less familiar with narration styles, with – when you have third person points of view, so typically narrated he or she, you can have third person omniscient – and you can have omniscient narrators in lots of ways, but you can have third person omniscient, which means it would be like, "Mat was doing da da da da da," and then it will, like Emily said, kind of float away and give you, like, a much bigger person, calling to mind the past or what someone else is doing, et cetera, et cetera.

Emily: Yeah, it's like Series of Unfortunate Events.

Sally: Yes.

Emily: "Mat was doing this. What he didn't know was that the gholam was actually just –" you know, da da da da da.

Sally: Yeah, exactly. Or you can have third person close points of view – I think that – that's the correct term – um –

Emily: Close or limited, I think.

Sally: Yeah, I think limited is actually what I was looking for, but. Close or limited. Emily is probably correct.

Emily: (makes "I don't know" noise)

Sally: Um, which stays very closely to the point of view character. It's the – it – it's like having a first person narrator because you're not slipping out of their point of view, but you are maintaining the third person pronouns. So.

Emily: Yeah, so, like, the way Robert Jordan tries to maintain any sense of omniscience – hi, Ed. Robert Jordan tries to have an omniscient narrator beyond his whole little wind things at the beginning, um, by having so many points of view –

Sally: Yep.

Emily: That it seems difficult that we would miss anything. But we're still seeing the drawbacks of that here when, like, there's been no reason for Egeanin to be in, um –

Sally: Yes.

Emily: The plot for the last five books, so she hasn't been, of course.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: But now when we're just picking up right where we left off with her, five books later, of course we have forgotten literally everything about her.

Sally: Yeah, I think – not to fall into my bad habit of correcting Wheel of Time – but I actually think having more of an omniscient third point of view would have been more productive for this series than having so many points of view. Um. But.

Emily: And it's, like – it's thematic. Robert Jordan is trying to have, like, each individual person represent, like, a thread –

Sally: Yep.

Emily: And all of those threads are coming together, being woven into a tapestry, like unto all the weaving and patterns and –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And nonsense that's going on in Wheel of Time. But that's just – you know, there's pros and cons to that. The pros is I guess you get some neat symbolism. The cons is I'm confused. I'm con-fused.

Sally: Haha, I've been conned by Robert Jordan.

Emily: Yeah. I sure feel that way.

Sally: No, I think the symbolism – the – the thematic nature of having many different points of view and many different things happening is really interesting. Um, I think it could have been accomplished with fewer points of view than we were given.

Emily: Definitely.

Sally: Um, like, I honestly – I think the same thing could have been accomplished if you kept to mainly our main cast of characters, with enough sort of, like, different emphasis on things. But the con, mainly, for me, an idiot, is that I have no idea what's going on half or more of the time. So.

Emily: I don't think you're an idiot. I just don't know how anyone can be expected to remember who the fuck Bethamin is.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So – Mat, even, is like, “Why is Caira so mad at me?” And it's – Robert Jordan is like, “It's 'cause men don't understand women,” and it's like, no, legitimately, Robert Jordan, why is she mad at Mat? It's so stupid.

Sally: Yeah, no, it – even if other women come to visit him – what?

Emily: No, whatever.

Sally: Stupid.

Emily: It's not like they had a conversation where they were like, “We're exclusively dating.” WhatEVER. So he's at this win, and Mat's like, “It's fine, I'll wait for Setalle Anan,” and the – the daughter, Setalle's daughter, is, like, sufficiently distracted to let that slide. We get a name drop here to Air Captain Yulan, which I only mention because I feel like he's one of the, you know, half-dozen or so Seanchan who we frequently get points of view with whenever we're dealing with the Seanchan. Yulan, um, like, Karede. Other people like that.

Sally: Ugh, Karede.

Emily: Yeah, Furyk Karede.

Sally: Imagine being named Furyk.

Emily: I don't want to. I have the last name “Juchau” and that's been –

Sally: You could be Furyk Juchau.

Emily: A burden enough. Yeah. Woof. (laugh) Um.

Sally: Um, yes. Mat slips into the kitchens, basically.

Emily: To – to wait for Setalle Anan. He banters a little bit with Enid, who is the cook at the Wandering Woman. He's like, “Yeah, the food at the palace doesn't match up to yours,” and she's like, “Aw, how sweet –”

Sally: I know.

Emily: And immediately gives him some food, and he's like, “Mat Cauthon, charming women everywhere I go.”

Sally: I know, your mom – wherever you are, know that your mom would love Mat Cauthon –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: If you brought this man home. As a friend or a lover.

Emily: He is just so – he is just so – such a good little scamp.

Sally: I know, everyone would be like, “That Mat Cauthon.”

Emily: (laugh) That Mat Cauthon. Such a little mischief maker. But so polite. Sometimes.

Sally: But so polite and just – he’s just such a nice guy.

Emily: (New Jersey accent) He’s a nice guy.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: A really nice guy. What is that from?

Sally: I don’t know.

Emily: It’s gonna bother me. Whatever. Um.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Mat’s finishing up his fish or whatever when Setalle Anan comes in through the back door, followed by a woman in a hood. And Setalle Anan tells, um, Enid to, like, leave the kitchen and make sure no one else comes in. The woman in the hood takes her hood off and reveals herself to be Joline, who, uh, Mat recognizes as one of the two White Tower Aes Sedai who was in the palace when, uh, the Seanchan attacked, and he has – he, along with everyone, I think, had just assumed she’d escaped somehow.

Sally: (sing-song) Jolene ... Jolene, Jolene ...

Emily: (simultaneously) Jolene, Jolene.

Sally: (sing-song) Jole-e-e-e-ene.

Emily: I don’t like this Joline.

Sally: I don’t like this Joline either.

Emily: Yeah. Where are the good Jolines? (sing-song) Where are all the good Jolines?

Sally: (sing-song) And where are all the gods?

Emily: Um –

Sally: (sing-song) Where’s the streetwise Hercules to fight the rising odds? (laugh)

Emily: Joline starts saying something to Mat; she’s being pretty incautious, um, when suddenly there are voices outside the kitchen, Seanchan-accented voices, and everyone is like, “Oh my God.” Enid can’t stop them, so Mat does the only thing he can think of, which is to – I think he mentions that Seanchan are really weird about PDA – so he grabs Joline and pretends to kiss her. Does not actually kiss her, notably. Um, so that her face, you know, is turned right toward his and her back is to the room, because she has the Aes Sedai face, which of course has been sort of, like, the main thing about the Aes Sedai getting caught by the Seanchan. Um, so anyway, the Seanchan who do enter are Egeanin, followed by – or maybe not followed by – Egeanin and

Bayle Domon, who has shaved his head and his beard in the Seanchan style, so, like, his – he has his beard, but it ends in the middle of his ears, I think?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So – or something. I can't remember. I don't like to picture the Seanchan haircuts; they upset me too much. Um. And they're just like – Egeanin's like, "Yeah, I – I just need a room; I have a commission; I'm high up in the Seanchan," or whatever, and we're all – if you remember, which most people don't, but if you do remember, you'd be like, um, Egeanin was kind of on the outs with the Seanchan at the end of book four, and she had –

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Sorry, Tyblat just yawned so loudly.

Sally: He also paused in the middle of a yawn, which I've never seen a cat do.

Emily: He just, like, thought about it for a minute.

Sally: Tybalt, you're funny.

Emily: You're a little dummy.

Sally: Look how many whiskers he has.

Emily: He's gotta use those to sense the world. It's a big world out there.

Sally: A big world in this townhome.

Emily: And he's a little cat.

Sally: You're just a little baby.

Emily: Um, yeah, the last time we saw Egeanin, she was, like, agreeing to take the male a'dam, the bracelet and – and necklace thing that could be used on men who can channel – she was just gonna go with Bayle Domon and dump that in the middle of the ocean, which is decidedly an un-Seanchan thing to do.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And, like, she knew that – she knew the big secret, that all sul'dam can channel, and just, like, da da da – she was really losing the faith, coming out of her sort of empire brainwashing.

Sally: Yeah. Deprogrammed™.

Emily: Yeah, deprogrammed™. But here, she's back, and she appears to have been promoted, and Bayle Domon is acting as, like, a servant. Um, so we, the readers, might be a little confused by that, or we, the readers, might be confused because – Egeanin? Surely I know that name?

Sally: Hmm.

Emily: Is she a character? (laugh)

Sally: Hmm.

Emily: Oh, Bayle Domon. I don't think Bayle Domon is referenced by name. He – we just get the big guy with the Illianer accent and Mat is like, "That guy looks familiar."

Sally: "Where have I seen that guy before?"

Emily: Yeah. Poor little Mat with the holes in his memories.

Sally: Yeah. Don't worry, though. Bayle Domon –

Emily: Bayle Domon clocked Mat, though.

Sally: He was like, "I know that man."

Emily: "I know that – that little weirdo."

Sally: "I know him."

Emily: Um, anyway, Setalle Anan is like, "Yeah, you can have a room in the inn, but I have tons of Seanchan staying in the inn, so you're – you're not the highest ranked among them, so deal with it," and Egeanin's like, "Fine," um, and leaves. Joline is in hysterics when they leave because – uh, Setalle Anan puts it that her nerve has been broken, and it's just like, she's very traumatized from having to be in hiding from the Seanchan who would enslave her.

Sally: Yeah, obviously.

Emily: And it seems like there have been several near-misses; this isn't the only one. Of course, Robert Jordan is saying, then, that there have been near-misses and yet Joline is still uncautious; therefore Joline is an idiot.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Because all women are idiots.

Sally: Didn't you know?

Emily: Don't you know? Mat has to carry Joline down into the cellar, where she is presumably going to be hiding for the next little while. Setalle Anan gives Enid instructions that no one is allowed to go into the cellar except herself, Setalle, and Enid, um, and Enid is just like, thumbs up. So what we're seeing here is Setalle Anan, with assistance from Enid, and perhaps others who we aren't seeing, operating a sort of underground railroad –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And – or – I don't believe that there is an official name for this, but the system of, um, civilians hiding Jews and other people who were at risk under Nazi occupation or in Germany during World War II.

Sally: Yeah, there's also, um – I mean, what we're seeing with this is, um – it very much calls to mind, uh, the Anne Frank sort of story of being hidden from the Nazis by, yes, a civilian who is also not Jewish.

Emily: Right.

Sally: Um, or – yeah, I mean, typically, they would not be Jewish if they were hiding Jewish people. What am I saying? So we are seeing the Anne Frank type story of someone being hidden by the Nazis by a civilian, someone who is not Jewish. Um, and so that's very much what is being called to mind because that is, um, I think the most famous and well-known example of this, but this is something, like Emily referenced, that you see very frequently in, um, genocides, basically. Um, I I think, um – or other sort of large systems of persecution against one particular group. Emily referenced the Underground Railroad; um, there was also, um, examples of this happening during the Rwandan genocide; I read a book where a woman and, like, twelve other people were hidden in the second bathroom of someone's home for, like, months on end. Um, so it's something that you see, um, in stories like this. So Robert Jordan is hitting on kind of a hallmark of persecution, I guess. I think this – I don't know exactly – I want to say "genocide," but I don't know if that's quite, like, sort of a – a – on the, quote unquote, menu of genocide, um, hallmarks, is the only word I can think of. And I find it really interesting because I don't entirely see the purpose of doing this other than the fact that it is kind of expected in situations like this. Um. Yeah, I don't know. I just find it a really interesting plot. It – to me, it feels like it happens simply because it is expected that something like this would happen. I don't know if it teaches us anything about Seanchan that we don't already know or teaches us anything about our main cast of characters that we don't already know. Anyway.

Emily: Yeah, it's difficult because, um, as you alluded to, as long there has been genocide and groups of people targeting other groups of people for, uh, murder or enslavement, um, there have been third parties who have been trying to help the oppressed and persecuted, which is, um, sort of a – a – a nice thing to think about, I think, generally, a sort of spark of – of hope that – in resistance and just the idea of humanity helping each other. Um, and it's a little tough because I think if the Wheel of Time was committed to the project of portraying the Seanchan as the bad guys, then this would make a lot more sense.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: There would be a lot more, um, to say about, like, resistance and oppression – and, like, um, hope in the face of oppression –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And the idea that people, even in these occupied territories, are still helping each other, so, you know, maybe there's something to be done in the future.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: But what happens in the Wheel of Time is just that these Seanchan-occupied territories are left to the Seanchan, more or less.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So then, yeah, I agree, I don't – I don't really know what the point Robert Jordan is trying to make here.

Sally: No, that is such a – a good point because, um – the argument I made in my thesis and an argument I will continue to make is that, um, very often in literature, at least Western literature, and I also kind of think this is the case in fantasy in particular, um, we'll sort of fall back on these – not necessarily fall back on – we'll rely on the kind of the vocabulary of the Holocaust in particular in order to equate to an insurmountable evil or, like, the worst – literal hell on Earth. We'll call back to things like concentration camps; hiding people in basements, attics, second rooms. Um.

Emily: Yeah, it's shorthand for the unspeakable.

Sally: Yeah. Look at you.

Emily: I read your thesis.

Sally: Ah, hey, thanks, man. Um, and – so it – it's become this, like, really – and I don't say "easy" in a bad way – like, a really easy vocabulary for people to try and convey these types of things. Easy maybe in a bad way in that it's called on perhaps a little bit too frequently without intent, of just sort of being like, "Well, if I do this, then they'll know just how bad it is, without really investigating what any of that means."

Emily: Especially in, like, political rhetoric.

Sally: Yes, exactly. "This – this is just – he's just like Hitler. This is just like the Holocaust." Blah blah blah blah blah. Like, there's – it also is frustrating because, like, the Holocaust is not the only genocide that has ever happened and so this, like, hyper-focus on it is a detriment, I think. But.

Emily: Yeah, and the idea is that with hyper-focus, you eventually render things meaningless.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which I think we see especially in political rhetoric.

Sally: Yes.

Emily: In literature, I think, to your – to your point that you made in your thesis, there is still some power to be had in making comparisons.

Sally: Yeah, there is, because you – you are participating in sort of a larger conversation around it. Um. And so – I'm struggling to make my point, much like I did in my thesis – but, um, I think there is power in it because, like – let's jump to one of our favorite books, *Finnikin of the Rock*. *Finnikin of the Rock* relies very heavily on images of genocide and the Holocaust in particular. You are set up to think this way by the foreword, which is by Theodor Adorno, who is a survivor of the Holocaust who wrote very extensively about it. So you're sort of put in this framework, and using this framework, you get a lot of meaning and value out of that book regarding persecution. In *Wheel of Time*, you are playing with the same vocabulary, but the meaning hits very badly because it's not very obvious that the Seanchan are the bad guys.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: So that was a very long-winded way to say that you are smart.

Emily: No, you're smart. You wrote the thesis. Yeah, I don't – I – I – I like this, um, little subplot of Mat's where he is sort of getting a bunch of people together to get people out of Ebou Dar, including himself. He is, um – I mean, we can't play victim Olympics here, but Mat is equally someone who is being victimized here in Ebou Dar, even if it's not by the Seanchan specifically.

Sally: Yeah, for sure.

Emily: Um, so, like, I like that subplot, but it's hard, because then I start wondering, like, do I like it because it's just, like, sort of fun, you know, to watch Mat do his thing?

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Or do I like it because I'm a sucker and I'm falling for the whole hope in the face of oppression, um, stuff that Robert Jordan is clearly relying on a lot here for pathos.

Sally: Yeah, no, it's hard because of course it hits very deeply, and you – you look at it and you think, "Well, if this ever happened in real life, I would definitely be Setalle Anan –"

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: "And I would help hide someone," you know? And I think it's very hard not to respond to that call to pathos because you want to see the best in the characters that you're reading about, and it also helps you imagine, at the very least, that you could be the best in that situation too. So I agree; I really like it. And it also is, to Robert Jordan's credit, I think, one of the more interesting groups of people, this group of very victimized people in very different ways who are subject to a lot of, um, powers that be that are causing various traumas and problems in their lives, sort of coming together and getting out. Like, there's – there's something really powerful about that, even if I – even if I know a trick is being played on me a little bit.

Emily: Yeah. Um, so Setalle Anan is like, "Here's Joline. She's in a lot of trouble." (laugh) "I was hoping that you would help her get out of the city, since you are planning to leave." And Mat has already referenced that he believes he owes Joline a debt, but here he, uh, like, tests her a little bit by referencing the note that was left in his pocket in Crown of Swords, which, again, if you have not read Crown of Swords recently, you probably would have totally forgotten because it was such a one-off. But he's like, "Oh, yeah, you left it in my – on my pillow," knowing that it was left in his pocket, and Joline is just like, "Oh, yeah, that note." So clearly lying and Mat is kind of like, "Ugh, well, that means that Teslyn was the one who left the note." Process of elimination. He's not just gonna leave Joline 'cause she failed the test; he is already committed to helping her, because Mat, at his heart, wants to help people.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Uh, but then he's like – that leads to the much more complicated situation of getting Teslyn out of the, um, out of Seanchan, and she's a damane, so she's much more closely – it's going to be much more complicated.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So he leaves the inn and goes to the damane kennels –

Sally: (sigh)

Emily: Which is such a horrific –

Sally: It makes me want to vomit every time.

Emily: Yeah. Way to refer to them. This is, like, the – the Tarasin Palace's attic has been repurposed to make these little dorm-style rooms for all of the damane. And he knows that people, random people, aren't allowed up in there, but he's just, like, kind of going through, poking his head in at doors. He's seeing a lot of Sea Folk Windfinders. Um, and this is, again, another very, like, pathos-evoking scene because, of course, we're seeing it through Mat's point of view, but it's also like – um, they're called the kennels; there's a woman just sobbing in the background the entire time; it's very disturbing.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And Mat, the whole time, is just like, “Oh my God, I want to help everyone here, but I simply cannot.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, but eventually he finds Teslyn, um, and – I enjoy Mat and Teslyn's relationship; I think they have one of the more interesting relationships between Mat and any of the Aes Sedai –

Sally: I agree.

Emily: Uh, but he's just like, “You left me a note; why?” and she's like, “I basically just wanted to piss Elaida off. I wanted to piss Elaida off so badly that I drugged Joline on the day of the Seanchan invasion with forkroot so that she couldn't, like, stop Elayne and Nynaeve from leaving,” which explains why Joline was drugged and why the Seanchan then didn't find her immediately.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Blah blah blah. So Teslyn is like, “There's some irony there, in that, um, Joline then got out and I – I didn't.” And Mat doesn't correct her by saying, “Oh, Joline's still stuck in the city,” but he's just like, “Okay, well, I'm going to try and get you out.” And Teslyn's like, “I'll do you one better. You're gonna get me out, and you're gonna get another Aes Sedai who's still in here; uh, Edesina.” And Mat's like – (groan)

Sally: It's like, the list is already, like, nineteen people.

Emily: I know, Mat's like, “Oh my God, I've got so many –”

Sally: He's got a sticky note and there's, like, eighty names on it.

Emily: Ugh. (laugh) And he's just like, "Okay. God. Well. Alright." And she's just like – I mean, I don't know –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That's basically the extent of their conversation.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, Mat leaves, very caught up in his thoughts about this, and kind of thinking, "Okay, I've really gotta get Thom and Juilin on board, and we've really gotta start planning." And he runs into Tuon on his way out, and she's like, "What are you doing, you pervert? Why are you up in the damane kennels? Because, yeah, some men are creeps and would like to sexually assault the damane," and I'm like, girl, you do not have the moral high ground here.

Sally: Yeah, it's also like, what an intuitive leap, Tuon. I dunno, it just feels –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: For her to just, yeah, start slinging accusations, I'm like, you are keeping them in prison, so.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: In what way are you enabling the men who sexually assault the damane? By making these women unable to move freely? I dunno, maybe think about how complicit you are in the – the crimes against humanity happening all around you.

Emily: Ugh. Anyway, Mat immediately comes up with a decent lie that gets him out of the situation.

Sally: Classic.

Emily: I know; he's so quick on his little feet. And Tuon's like, "Oh my God, that's so sweet, that you're nice to damane," and he's like, "Okay, you creep." Get lost.

Sally: Yeah. Um, one quick thought that I had while reading – sorry – that I want to note before we jump over to Egeanin's points of view. I have been flapping my mouth quite a bit this podcast. Mat's sort of, like, as he's going to, like, places and starts collecting this task, which leads to this task, which leads to this task, also feels very mythological and trickster-y. Like, when you go through – sort of, like, the fairy tale vibe of being like, "We'll go see this person, then they'll give you something," and then you get it, but you also have to do this in order to achieve it. So it's kind of getting – Seanchan – the whole Ebou Dar escape starts to feel more and more trickster-y and more and more mythological, almost, as we sort of attach people to Mat. I'm really into it. That's my thought.

Emily: Yeah, I think that's another good reason to really be into it.

Sally: Yeah, no, it's fun. And it's – it does have its little comedic value of Mat seriously having, like, twenty-five people that leave Ebou Dar with him.

Emily: Yeah. In a circus.

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: It cannot be overstated that his escape plan is a literal circus.

Sally: Run away and join the circus.

Emily: You know, but pretty good.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: We then swap over to Bethamin's point of view –

Sally: That's right.

Emily: Pretty close – pretty soon, we imagine, after or before Mat himself has been up in the attics. She and another sul'dam are inspecting the kennels, and there is just as much disgusting rhetoric as you would imagine there to be in this, so we'll just kind of –

Sally: Skip it.

Emily: Skip over that. The main points to hit are that Bethamin, um, is ... okay, so – (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Okay, so let's rewind all the way back to back two.

Sally: (laugh) Jesus Christ.

Emily: Bethamin – what?

Sally: Book two.

Emily: I know. Book two!

Sally: Book two!

Emily: In book two –

Sally: God.

Emily: When Nynaeve, Elayne, and Min got Egg out of Falme, where Egg was collared by the Seanchan, they did this by leaving two sul'dam collared in her place.

Sally: That's right.

Emily: This is Seta – ooh – and Renna? I might be mixing those up. It might be Reta and Senna. I don't know.

Sally: Some ladies.

Emily: Two gals. Bethamin came upon them and therefore found out the big secret. Those two don't know that Bethamin saw them –

Sally: Mm.

Emily: But Bethamin is aware. Bethamin, then, somehow got caught by Egeanin and revealed the big secret. So we have three sul'dam who are aware of the big secret; two of them – those two, Seta and Renna – uh, only got out of it because apparently Suroth was the one who, like – I dunno – she didn't literally find them, we can imagine, but Suroth is in on it, and Suroth is suppressing that secret by just, like, not changing anything with them. She's just like, "You'll continue being sul'dam." Bethamin's like, "She could have them killed, but it's kind of a big deal when sul'dam get murdered."

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: Obviously.

Sally: Jeez.

Emily: So then Bethamin is sort of this, like, carrier of this secret and the only one without an – and somehow the only person who knows the secret without anyone else knowing that she knows the secret, except Egeanin.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: But she hasn't really considered Egeanin to be a big problem. Um, so, like, these two other sul'dam are kind of, like, not given any responsibility; they have kind of, like, been demoted.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Whereas Bethamin is just sort of skating by. Uh, Bethamin, uh, leaves 'cause she – it's basically her day off.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, and her plan is to go shopping, but when she gets back to, like, the inn that she's staying at, the innkeeper is like, "Oh, there's a guy here to see you," and Bethamin's like, "Oh, that's weird," goes upstairs, and it is, um, the – they're called Seekers. And again, this guy hasn't been around since book four, when he interrogated Egeanin very briefly in, like, her kitchen.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He never knew that Bethamin was locked in the basement, I believe.

Sally: Hmm.

Emily: He just associates Bethamin with Egeanin because, like, I don't know, they have some sort of association.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: This guy's basically a PI who answers to the government, and boy, has he come up with the wackest conspiracy theory of all time.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He – Bethamin walks in, and he's basically got his, like, Pepe Silvia board all laid out –

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: And he's like, "You're connected to Egeanin; Egeanin's connected to Bayle Domon; Bayle Domon's connected to Turak; Turak died under mysterious circumstances. I think Suroth had something to do with it." And it's all just, like, a guy – it's pretty comedic, actually, when you think of it as, like, a guy who is so far outside of the main plot –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You know, just trying wildly to piece it together.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Like, of course he doesn't know that Turak died because the Dragon Reborn and his group of misfits broke into this house looking for the Horn of Valere and dueled Turak to the death.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: How could he possibly know that? He's just like, "Yeah, so probably Suroth did it, 'cause now she's in charge; she's clearly the only one who gained."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um. And so therefore he's sort of stumbling into a sort of greater truth, which is that Suroth is evil.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And he's just like – you know, it's insane.

Sally: Yeah, it's pretty funny. It feels like me trying to watch a crime procedural, being like –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: "I know what's happening."

Emily: "I know what's – I – I put the pieces together."

Sally: "I put – you haven't put anything together."

Emily: "You haven't put it – you haven't put shit together. I put the pieces together."

Sally: (simultaneously) "I put the pieces together." It's very much how it feels like, of being like, "I know who did it. I'm making my guess. I'm making my guess."

Emily: Yeah, he is just, like, sliding his little – he’s, like, putting in his guess in a game of Clue.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And everyone’s like, “You’re so wrong, bestie.”

Sally: “What are you saying?” Yeah, they’re – he’s like –

Emily: “But good effort.”

Sally: “Suroth at Falme with the candlestick.” (laugh)

Emily: And everyone’s like, “No. It was the Dragon Reborn at Falme with a sword.”

Sally: With a sword. And he’s like, “That’s impossible.”

Emily: “Why would the Dragon Reborn be there?” And you’re like, your guess is as good as mine, bud.

Sally: Aren’t you a PI? You’re not very good at it.

Emily: He was chasing the Horn of Valere.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: What?

Sally: Yeah. Yeah.

Emily: Anyway. (laugh)

Sally: So he’s missing some vital pieces of information.

Emily: But – and – and, you know, if you can’t, like, piece that together ‘cause his explanation is so long-winded and weird –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That you’re like, “Wait, is this what happened?”

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Or, at least, I am, ‘cause, like –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Book two is so long ago, you know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I’m like, did Suroth have something to do with – you know.

Sally: Yeah, I’m like, I don’t fucking remember. I don’t even remember that guy’s name.

Emily: Yeah. I don't think he has a name yet.

Sally: No, um, Turak.

Emily: Oh, Turak, yeah.

Sally: I was like, I don't know who that is.

Emily: That weirdo who was only there for, like, two pages. Yeah, it's very confusing. So – and because we're not in an omniscient, um, narration, we don't – you know, there's no one saying, like, "Okay, well, this was what actually happened."

Sally: Yeah, no one's like, "And he was wrong."

Emily: "And he was super duper wrong."

Sally: "Let me tell you what actually happened."

Emily: Yeah, you just sort of have to get there on your own. Um, but he tells Bethamin that he wants her to, um, rekindle her friendship with Egeanin and then report back to him because he thinks Egeanin will somehow lead back into this conspiracy theory. And she's like, "Okay?" Obviously like, "Egeanin's the woman who chained me in a basement."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "I am not friends with her, but."

Sally: "I don't really want to rekindle anything there."

Emily: You know, "I can't really tell this guy that because if he knew the actual truth, then that would be bad too." Smash cut to Egeanin and Bayle Domon, who are like, "Woe is us; the situation is so bad." Um, apparently what happened – and we really have to piece this together from Egeanin's perspective – is that they were fully planning on dropping the male a'dam into the ocean when, wouldn't you know it, they got stopped by a Seanchan ship, who – the only way they could get out of it that Egeanin could find was to present the a'dam to them. You know, they couldn't just, like, lie their way out; Egeanin had to be like, "Oh, here's this special gift."

Sally: I know, I do not understand how this went down.

Emily: "For the Empress." Yeah, Egeanin did a big bad here.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Just a big stupid fuck-up here.

Sally: Just been like, "I'm sailing to look for back-up." Like, literally, any solution could have been better than –

Emily: I know.

Sally: Giving the worst possible tool to the worst possible person.

Emily: Yeah, and this is all, like, setting up further how the male a'dam is going to end up in suroth's hands, which is how it will end up in Semirhage's hands, which is how – da da da da da. You know. Sorry you have to follow it like a red string across the puzzle board. Um, Egeanin and Domon are – seem to be lovers. Um, and Egeanin is like – also to save Domon's life, like, basically put him up for sale and then bought him, so he's now her servant, I guess.

Sally: Blegh.

Emily: But anyway, she got a big promotion from giving the male a'dam, and now she has Domon, and now they're just, like, both right back into the Seanchan system and they're both like, "Oh, we want to get out of the city," 'cause Egeanin's like, "I don't really believe in any of this shit anymore." Um, she's not very concerned about the male a'dam, though, which is troubling. I don't – I feel like no one impressed upon her enough how bad that could be.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But she's like, "How could it get back to the Dragon Reborn?" and I'm like, girl, teleporting is a thing now.

Sally: Teleporting is a thing. Seanchan has already conquered, like, half the continent or whatever at this point.

Emily: Yeah, and also, he's, like, the main homie who can channel the male half of the Power, so, like, don't you think it would come up?

Sally: Yeah, don't you think they'd be like, "You know who we could use this –" It wouldn't be like, "You know who we could use this on? Narishma."

Emily: Narishma – oh, that guy over – that random guy over there. No, they're gonna be like, "The Dragon Reborn, let's get him."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Stupid. Anyway, so they're all sort of, like, bemoaning their fates when Bethamin comes in and is like, "You'll never believe this."

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: And Egeanin's like, "You're right, I would never have believed that." But she's like, "Okay, what the fuck ever –"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Yeah, just do what he says, and I'll take care of it." And Bayle Domon's like, "Should we kill him?" and she's like, "Nooo."

Sally: It's bad to kill the Seekers.

Emily: Yeah, you wouldn't find him, first of all.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Bayle Domon's like, "Dang it."

Sally: He's like, "You don't know what I'm capable of."

Emily: He's like, "Well, luckily, I have a back-up plan, which is that we rely on the world's best escape artist, Mat Cauthon."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And she's like, "Who the fuck is Mat Cauthon?" And then, you know, smash cut to –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Mat Cauthon doing something ridiculous. No, Bayle Domon's like, "Yeah, that weird guy in the kitchens? I recognized him. I picked him up –" (laugh) Da da da da da, his whole – his story with Mat.

Sally: Yeah. And Thom.

Emily: And Thom. Yeah, he's like, "And he hangs out with Thom."

Sally: "Killed Two Kings Merrillin."

Emily: "Killed Two Kings Merrillin, who we definitely know is good in a fight." And it's like – I think, arguably, Mat is a better escape artist than Thom at this point –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But they are of the same mold.

Sally: Yeah, no, I – I agree. Bayle Domon is definitely like, "No, Mat is who we need; Thom is just a welcome addition to the crew."

Emily: Yeah. Bayle Domon's like, "When I first met Mat, he had just escaped Shadar Logoth –"

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: "The worst place in the world, and then I thought he died in Whitebridge, where there was – basically a bomb went off, but he's here, so clearly he escaped that, so let's go for round three, baby, what else can he escape?"

Sally: Yeah. Doesn't even know about all the escapes in between.

Emily: I know. God.

Sally: The Tar Valon escape.

Emily: And the breaking into things.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: The Stone of Tear. Mat's a real cat burglar.

Sally: Mat can get in and out of anywhere, and he will.

Emily: So that sort of, like, brings our little – you know, these are two people who Mat isn't collecting; they are collecting Mat, which is an interesting –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But it's also very, like, mythological, is we're having these people all sort of start to –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Intertwine together. Because, um, Domon and Egeanin will bring this sort of, like, Seanchan legitimacy to the table. Like, Egeanin can get the papers they need –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Da da da da da, and they'll bring with them the sul'dam who need to escape as well.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: So that's how we can get the Aes Sedai out, disguised as damane. You know.

Sally: Yeah. The plan's coming together.

Emily: It's all coming together. It hasn't yet, but it is starting to, which is where we leave.

Sally: Sorry if you can hear Ed purring into the microphone.

Emily: He's a loud little guy. Um, so that's those chapters.

Sally: That's those chapters.

Emily: I almost just said, "Any questions?" like – (laugh)

Sally: Any questions?

Emily: Any questions?

Sally: I mean, you can Tweet us questions, I guess. No guarantee it'll be a good answer. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah, I'll just be like, "I dunno, bestie. I'm sick."

Sally: (fake cough) I'm sick.

Emily: (fake cough) I'm sick. Boo, you whore.

Sally: Why are you so loud?

Emily: Oh, Ed. Do you have anything to add?

Sally: No. Once again, I truly believe I have said more than enough.

Emily: No, you've said so many nice things. Oh, wait. Rapid-fire round –

Sally: Oh.

Emily: Favorite character, least favorite character. Umm.

Sally: My favorite character is Enid the cook.

Emily: Ah, she's good, she was gonna be mine.

Sally: Oh, sorry.

Emily: I'll say Teslyn, though, 'cause Teslyn's also very cool, I think.

Sally: Yeah, I like –

Emily: And I really admire that her whole, um –

Sally: Yes.

Emily: Motivation – (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: To pass Mat a secret mysterious note was to piss off Elaida. I think that's very powerful of her.

Sally: Yeah, it's very admirable of her.

Emily: Least favorite character. There are so many to choose from, but I truly did not enjoy being in Bethamin's head.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: She is really rancid, and I just hated it all.

Sally: Yeah. I'm gonna say Tuon.

Emily: Mm, yeah, I mean, she was there.

Sally: Our brief interaction with her is very rancid.

Emily: Was pretty bad, yeah.

Sally: So. I mean, there's just like – you could really just line up any of the Seanchan. Like, even Egeanin, I'm like –

Emily: Girl, you're on thin ice.

Sally: You're on thin ice, like, you are really, uh – as much as you claim to be like, “Oh, I hate the Seanchan,” like, you are really using that privilege to get rooms at inns and buy your boyfriend and give up weapons of mass destruction, basically.

Emily: Yeah, that was a big bad, Egeanin.

Sally: Actually, I'm going to change. I mean, Tuon is bad, but I am gonna change to Egeanin officially for giving the sul'dam – the a'dam to Suroth; that was –

Emily: Ugh. So stupid.

Sally: Seems very avoidable.

Emily: The world's biggest fuck-up.

Sally: Yeah. (laugh) Like, you could've just dropped it into the ocean anyway.

Emily: Yeah, been like – been like –

Sally: Oh – (cartoonish fumbling noises)

Emily: Oh, oops. What was that?

Sally: Yeah. Real Jack Sparrow moment.

Emily: Yeah. Dang it. Okay. Well, everyone, thanks. Thanks to Glynna Mackenzie for our theme song and to our patrons on Patreon and our followers on social media.

Sally: We love you.

Emily: I like you. I dunno, love's a pretty strong word. (laugh)

Sally: We – we like you, and I love you.

Emily: Um –

Sally: And Ed loves you.

Emily: Ed does love you; he has lots of love in his heart.

Sally: Look at him. He's just a – I was gonna say "a little guy," but he's quite –

Emily: No, he's – he's got the shape of a bowling ball.

Sally: He's quite a big guy. (laugh)

Emily: And the heft of one.

Sally: You a big man?

Emily: Do you have a sign-off?

Sally: Trying to think. I feel like I should. Oh. Here's – this is pretty random, but yesterday, I had to get a HIDA scan, which is a scan of your gallbladder, so I was in a weird little tube. And they had a TV above me, so I was, like, in the tube, looking at this TV –

Emily: Like at the dentist's office.

Sally: Like at the – exactly like at the dentist's office.

Emily: Ooh.

Sally: And they gave me the remote, which I could barely push 'cause I had an IV in my right arm, so I could only really flip between HGTV and the cooking network.

Emily: Gah.

Sally: And HGTV worked for most of the time, so that was really nice, but then it cut off, so I had to watch the cooking network. And I spent, like, thirty minutes watching the Pioneer Woman make the most atrocious-looking pasta salad – (laugh)

Emily: I didn't know the Pioneer Woman was real. (laugh)

Sally: I was like, what is this show? And it was called the Pioneer Woman; I don't know what her actual name is. But she was making food for a ranch cook-out.

Emily: Ew.

Sally: And, like, I have nothing, like, necessarily against pasta salad, but the, like, dressing for this starts with, like, one cup of mayonnaise –

Emily: (gagging noise)

Sally: And, like, one cup of sour cream or something, and I was like, what is this? (laugh)

Emily: If she's the Pioneer Woman, she's probably Mormon, and that sounds like most Mormon cuisine that I've experienced. Starts with a lot of mayonnaise and goes there.

Sally: And then –

Emily: She's probably holding the cooking network hostage. Got a gun to their heads.

Sally: And then she put, like, red, orange, and yellow bell peppers, and then banana peppers, and then she put, like, lemon – slices of lemon on top, and I was like, bestie? Who's eating this? Anyway. Nothing against pasta salad, nothing necessarily against the Pioneer Woman, but I was like – he kept being like, "Do you feel sick to your stomach?" and I was like –

Emily: "Do I?"

Sally: "Are you seeing this, Justin?" (laugh)

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: "Do you feel sick to your stomach?"

Emily: "Did you SEE how much mayonnaise she put in?" (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Anyway, goodbye.

Emily: Okay, goodbye, everyone.