



Episode 197: The Mona Sheep-a  
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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: Um, this is Everybody Hates Rand, your friendly neighborhood Wheel of Time podcast. I'm Emily Juchau.

Sally: And I'm Sally Goodger.

Emily: Um, and I can't tell whether Verin is my favorite or least favorite –

Sally:Mm.

Emily: Character this go-around. Favorite because she almost poisoned Cadsuane?

Sally: So close.

Emily: Least favorite 'cause she didn't go through with it.

Sally: Yeah, I know. It's like, commit to the bit, Verin.

Emily: Verin.

Sally: We could've been free.

Emily: Verin, you could have killed her.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: You were so close to greatness. Okay, so, seriously, I have nothing, really, to say about this. Um, we have a second chapter from – the first chapter that we read; the second chapter of – Shalon's point of view, um, the Sea Folk Windfinder, basically as she and the rest of Cadsuane's party pull up to, uh, what is more or less the government, um, building –

Sally: Yeah, it's like –

Emily: Sort of the Capitol Building.

Sally: Yeah. Yeah, that's a good way to put it.

Emily: Of, um, Far Madding, which – I don't know if I, like, clarified this last week or said it explicitly, but Far Madding is a city-state. It is independent –

Sally: Right.

Emily: Of all of the countries that surround it.

Sally: Right.

Emily: And seems to hold that power, um – I – I mean, for one thing, it's in the middle of, like, a lake on the river, so it is quite an advantageous position for trade.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Uh, but also, sort of the nature of its ter'angreal, I guess, means that they have resisted some, uh, invasions in the past, which we'll get into a little bit more. So they pull up to, uh, the Capitol Building, for lack of a better word. Far Madding is governed by a council of, I think, a dozen women –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: One of whom is the First Among Equals, so sort of the Speaker of the House, as it were. Cadsuane asks for her specifically and makes a, you know, a – a sideways comment about, "I hope I won't have to discipline her again," or something like that. Cadsuane is from Far Madding; I don't think I have said that either, which does explain some of Cadsuane's more, uh, militant matriarchal habits. And just her general rudeness.

Sally: Yeah, her general –

Emily: Since every other woman we meet in Far Madding is a dick, also.

Sally: Yes.

Emily: Um. Which, we don't meet too many people in Far Madding; I don't know how fair that is to say.

Sally: I know, it's so weird.

Emily: In Far Madding is just, like, a set piece.

Sally: Yeah, there's, like, one innkeeper and –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: People on the street. It's so ridiculous.

Emily: Yeah, just random NPCs.

Sally: Like, again, we don't need this; we could just have this whole plot happen somewhere else. (laugh) In a city we've already been to.

Emily: Um, Shalon – everyone’s, like, getting off their horses, handing off their horses; Cadsuane tells the guy who comes to greet them, like, “I want to see this woman,” and she says, “I’ll meet her in such and such place,” and says – says she’s going to bring Verin, another Aes Sedai, and Shalon and Harine. And everyone – she, like, snaps at Alanna. She’s like, “Alanna. Don’t wander off.” (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Alanna’s, like, trying to make a beeline –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: for Rand and Cadsuane basically yanks on her leash. Uh, Shalon notes that Narishma has disappeared. Doo doo.

Sally: God, one hopes Narishma would just keep going.

Emily: Yeah, Narishma – they, like, send him out of the city to do, like a covert thing and then he’s just, “You know what?”

Sally: “I’m done.”

Emily: “Peace out.”

Sally: “That’s enough out of Jahar.”

Emily: “That’s enough out of Narishma. I’m gonna go seek my fortunes elsewhere.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Then he runs into the Band of the Red Hand. Then he joins the polycule.

Sally: (gasp) That’s the best –

Emily: I know.

Sally: Plot for him. Everyone would be like, “He’s so pretty and nice.”

Emily: The only thing that the Band of Red Hand is lacking is an Asha’man representative.

Sally: You’re so right.

Emily: Even Perrin gets two, Grady and Neald.

Sally: You’re so right; Mat doesn’t get any.

Emily: Mat doesn’t get any. Where are the Asha’man? (laugh)

Sally: I also feel like the Band of the Red Hand polycule is missing some twink energy. Like, I don’t think any of them really qualify. (inaudible)

Emily: I mean, sure, yeah.

Sally: So we need, like, a – a very pretty sort of man to –

Emily: Yeah. Yes, I agree. We just sort of have ...

Sally: So anyway, in my improved Wheel of Time, Narishma just –

Emily: Peaces the fuck out.

Sally: (laugh) He's just like, "Bye," and then he's gone, but Narishma is actually sent to, like, channel so that he could –

Emily: Activate the ter'angreal. Yeah, we'll –

Sally: Activate the ter'angreal that are in the big dome.

Emily: We'll see, I guess. It's so stupid. Um, so everyone walks in to this big, like, dome; like, a big rotunda.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And they're on kind of a balcony level, a mezzanine level, looking down at, uh – this is where we get to see at least one of the ter'angreal. It's unclear whether the effects of the ter'angreal – which are preventing women from channeling, preventing men from channeling, and also being able to sense channeling outside of those anti-channeling boundaries – um, it's unclear whether those are all coming from the same ter'angreal or three separate ones.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But we see one of them here. It's, like, this big mechanism that is hard to describe. It's all glass, and it turns and points at things, and crystal ...

Sally: Yeah, it made me think of, like – in my head, it looks kind of like a compass rose? And –

Emily: Yeah, sure, on, like – on, like, three points.

Sally: Yeah. On three points. And then it, like – it'll turn black when men channel, I think.

Emily: And red –

Sally: And red when women channel.

Emily: Yeah. Um, and Sharine, who is a seafaring character – Sea Folk – also makes the comparison to, like, um, navigation and triangulation.

Sally: That must be where I got it from. And then it – the, yeah – they kind of, like, point generally towards where the person is channeling.

Emily: Yeah, and there are a few – people, like, monitoring it.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Who, once Narishma channels, um, outside of the city walls, just to sort of spark this conversation and this manipulation that happens, um, the – the monitors, like, run off to mark it on a map. So while they're all standing around, uh, they are met by the governing body of Far Madding, led by this one woman who, uh, first greets Harine and Shalon, basically honoring them as representatives of the Sea Folk –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And clearly wants to ignore Cadsuane and the other Aes Sedai, but Cadsuane, uh, puts her foot – just sticks herself into the conversation –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And is like, “Hi, do you remember me?” And this woman's like, “How – you're in my worst nightmares.”

Sally: “I wish I didn't.” (laugh)

Emily: “You're my sleep paralysis demon, Cadsuane, you bitch.”

Sally: “I could never forget you, much as I wish I could.”

Emily: “I could never forget you. For some reason you think you're justified in correcting other people. Other people's behavior.”

Sally: Imagine having that kind of god complex.

Emily: I know. Imagine having the gall to be, like –

Sally: Yeah. “You're really out of line. And I don't even know you, so I'm going to yell at you.” (laugh) That's basically how she introduces herself to Rand. She's like, “You're such an impolite little boy.”

Emily: And I'm like, what the – and it's like, since – it's frustrating 'cause – I hate talking about Cadsuane. But, um, it's frustrating because there is potential for Cadsuane's behavior to be explained.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: If we were ever given any kind of backstory, especially in the context of Far Madding, where Cadsuane grew up. Maybe she, I don't know, was a very unimportant person in the city and suddenly having all this power and being able to actually, like, change things and change people and changes events, like, really went to her head, and maybe she's, like, dealing with, I don't know, really low self-esteem, and the only way she can rectify that is by yelling at other people, berating other people.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, there is a psychology there that could function, but we are given no Cadsuane backstory except that she's a fucking serial killer for men who can channel.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You know? Um, and that she has always been an asshole as far as anyone is concerned.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So, I don't know, it's frustrating. I don't think every character needs to have an elaborate, tragic backstory, and, you know, what I referenced just wasn't exactly tragic; that's just sort of how people are, and everyone's psychology is different.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You can explain all of it. But, um, I don't know, I just feel like we are given a lot less grace to deal with these women who act like total assholes in situations. Like, Cadsuane. And I'm also thinking of Siuan –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Who was given – one of the things I really liked about the Wheel of Time show was that we just got this sweet little flashback to Siuan living in her, you know, riverboat days with her –

Sally: Yeah, her cute dad.

Emily: With her cute dad. Um, and sort of contextualizing Siuan, like, where she's coming from. And so the contrast between her and her position of power –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: In the modern day is a little more compelling. And interesting, I think. Um, and make – and humanizes her a lot more.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um.

Sally: And, I mean, even – it – it's done a lot – it's done really well in the show, but you even get a little bit of that in Siuan – with Siuan in the books. Like, one of the first things you learn about her is that she's a fisherman's daughter.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: And you're like, well, now she's literally the most powerful woman in the world. So, like, yeah –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: That is gonna explain – you, like, don't even need to go into it any more than that. I'm just like, yeah, then she makes sense as a character.

Emily: Yeah, a lot of that does make sense.

Sally: Um. I mean, it makes sense. She's still insufferable. But, like, at least there's an explanation –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: For what's going on.

Emily: What – what I need Robert Jordan to lean into is the idea that, you know, context will explain these characters' behaviors –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Without excusing their behaviors.

Sally: Yeah, absolutely.

Emily: Siuan is still an asshole, but at least we kind of can guess at why she's a little bit of an asshole, you know?

Sally: Yeah, and I think – I – I just – like you said, not every character needs to have this, like – not every character needs to be really fleshed out. But Cadsuane is on-screen so frequently in the latter half of the series, and she is such a big personality that, like, I want to understand. Like, if she was a different type of person, I would be like, okay, that's just one of the other Aes Sedai, but –

Emily: Yeah, she's given so much importance.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, everyone is constantly like, "What would Cadsuane do? What will Cadsuane think? How can I talk to Cadsuane about this?"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Blah blah blah blah. It's not like Verin, who skates by with having very little backstory –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And that's intentional.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Verin is meant to be this sort of, like, shadowy figure –

Sally: I know.

Emily: So that big secrets about her can be revealed. But she only pulls that off by not being this uber confrontational asshole of a character.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So anyway.

Sally: No, it – it – I agree. It's very frustrating, 'cause as it is, Cadsuane just exists as this asshole, and that's it. There's nothing about her that's likable. And again, not every character needs to be likable, particularly female characters. We've had this discussion at length about Cadsuane. But, like, you gotta give me something. Otherwise I'm just going to be, like, ripping my hair out every time she's on screen.

Emily: Well, it's different to have – there's a difference between having a character be unlikable, I think –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And having a character be confusing.

Sally: Yeah. Fair.

Emily: Cadsuane could be unlikable if she were just an asshole with an explanation, I guess.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But as it is, she's just sort of – we're sort of constantly like, why is she behaving this way? Because most of us don't really know people who would behave this way, at least not this –

Sally: At least not – yeah –

Emily: Transparently, I guess.

Sally: No, I agree with you. Like, most people – even, like – I'm trying to think of the, like, rudest, most confrontational people I've met in my life, and they are not that way one hundred percent of the time.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And Cadsuane is. She never –

Emily: Even in her own head.

Sally: Yeah! Even in her own head, you're like, God, I hate being in this woman's head.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Get me out of here. Anyway, you're right. She's very confusing, and, because we are in Far Madding, where she was born, this is a perfect opportunity for us to get – even if it's just a comment about, like – she's like, “This is where I lived, and this is what my family –” Blah.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Blah blah blah blah blah. I'd be like, “Okay.

Emily: But no. Far Madding is the city of lost opportunities. Just missed connections.



Sally: (laugh) Yeah, a bunch of trains not getting to the station.

Emily: Yeah. Jesus, Robert. Um.

Sally: Um. Speaking of Verin, Verin is going by an alias in Far Madding – (laugh)

Emily: Yeah, because it turns out that she’s been exiled from Far Madding. (laugh) She –

Sally: (laugh) For reasons undisclosed.

Emily: Yeah, she just casually, like – the governor lady is like, “Oh, and who’s this?” and Verin’s like, “You may call me Eadwina,” or something like that –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Shalon’s like, “May she?”

Sally: “What the fuck are you saying?”

Emily: “Where the fuck did that come from?” But obviously no one comments, and it isn’t until we get this very brief Verin point of view where she just sort of casually references that she can’t go by her own name in this city because Verin has been exiled, and obviously the lifespan of Aes Sedai means she’s not likely to meet anyone she actually knows, but, you know, it’s still on the record.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: What did she do? (laugh)

Sally: What did you do in Far Madding, Verin? Again, I –

Emily: (inaudible)

Sally: I like that Verin is shadowy and, like, we’re able to get these kind of bits and pieces of her, but I would love the – the Verin Mathwin Far Madding story.

Emily: I know.

Sally: 2 Far 2 Madding.

Emily: (laugh) 2 Far 2 Madding.

Sally: (laugh) Um, like, give it to me. Verin should’ve been the Dragon Reborn. I love Verin.

Emily: Ah, she’s so –

Sally: Even – even though – speaking of characters who can be compelling and unlikable – we still have the lobotomy tent to get around.

Emily: Oh, man, the lobotomy tent. But then again, she does almost give poison –

Sally: I know!

Emily: If she'd poisoned Cadsuane, that would have redeemed her from the lobotomy tent.

Sally: Yeah, I'd've been like, "Favorite character."

Emily: I'd be like, you can get away with anything.

Sally: Do whatever you want, babe.

Emily: Literally, murder.

Sally: Yeah. Love you.

Emily: Um, yeah, so they – Verin, primarily – uh, manipulates this governor lady into, um – I don't know; we're not really in any of – we're not in any of the Aes Sedai's heads, so we're not given explicitly what is being accomplished here. Obviously Narishma was sent outside of the city to channel outside of the boundary, thus triggering that ter'angreal in front of everyone and sort of leading Verin into this conversation about how Far Madding is actually really vulnerable because, um, historically – I guess a couple of those false Dragons back in the day were from Far Madding, and at least one of them, whose name Shalon doesn't recognize but, uh, we do or might, um, at least one of them besieged the city and, uh, despite not being able to channel, wrecked the city, essentially.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Verin, like, brings that up and evokes that and is basically like, "Oh, aren't you nervous? What with the Dragon Reborn running rampant around these parts?"

Sally: He's literally down the street.

Emily: Yeah. I mean – (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: "What would you do if I told you ..."

Sally: "What would your response be if, just maybe, the Dragon Reborn was at the Holiday Inn on the corner?"

Emily: (laugh) He's not even at a nice hotel.

Sally: No. He can't afford it. (laugh)

Emily: He – he's slumming it. Um, so yeah, this, you know, just gets Verin in with this woman to talk about – we don't know what. Presumably Verin is doing something to propagate Rand's cause. I don't know. Um –

Sally: Who knows what Verin is up to.

Emily: It might come back into play next time we're in Far Madding. These are our last couple chapters here for a bit. Meanwhile, this same woman offers Harine and Shalon, uh, lodging, to

stay at her house, her big governor's mansion, more or less, and Cadsuane is just like, "Oh, thanks. I'll stay there too." And – (laugh)

Sally: You guys know when that, like, family member just keeps inviting themselves over.

Emily: Yeah. Everyone has that aunt. Fuckin' –

Sally: It's just like, yeah, Cadsuane is everyone's mean great-aunt.

Emily: Yeah, unpleasant family member. Um, and we just get a sweet moment at the end between Harine and Shalon where Harine is basically like, "Oh, I can tell that you're really upset about the effect of the ter'angreal and not being able to channel, so I won't leave you alone."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And you're like, oh, how nice to see the Sea Folk humanized once. Robert Jordan was like, "You will get one – parentheses, one –"

Sally: One.

Emily: "Humanization of the Sea Folk."

Sally: Blegh.

Emily: Shut up. We then switch over to Rand, who's in his hotel inn.

Sally: Playing the flute.

Emily: Playing the flute. Playing songs he doesn't even know; Lews Therin knows. We're told, by the way, that Rand now has an intense ability to sketch caricatures or whatever –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Because Lews Therin had a talent as a budding artist –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Back in the Age of Legends. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, so now Rand can draw real good.

Emily: I guess?

Sally: That would freak me out.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: That would be one of the things that would, like, really unsettle me if my – in – I guess if we're thinking about Min, if my boyfriend just started immediately being able to draw really well.

Emily: Yeah, you, like, have seen his doodles before this.

Sally: Yeah, and you're like, "Ugh."

Emily: And he's like – oh my God, he doesn't even know how to draw sheep, and he's been around so many sheep.

Sally: Sheep are so easy, you just do a little – doo doo doo –

Emily: Yeah, you just draw a little cloud and then a couple sticks for legs –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And he can't even do that.

Sally: No.

Emily: But then suddenly he's drawing, like, the Mona Sheep-a.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Can you imagine the Mona Lisa with a sheep's face?

Sally: Emily, that was such a slam dunk. (laugh) Okay, my next fanart request is someone should draw the Mona Sheepa. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) No.

Sally: Then we can make T-shirts. That'll be our next merch.

Emily: Yeah, if I – well, if I were Min, to be fair, I'd be pretty unsettled –

Sally: Yeah, fair.

Emily: Before this, and I would've peaced the fuck out, but Min doesn't have any self-preservation instincts, and Robert Jordan has led us to believe that women think with their vaginas, so here we are.

Sally: But anyway, Rand is playing the flute. Doo ba doo ba doo.

Emily: Rand's playing with the flute. Min and Rand – Min keeps being like, "I don't trust Alivia because I had a vision that she would help you die," and Rand is like, "Okay, well, that's obviously different than, you know, her killing me," and Min's like, "She's still involved with your death," and Rand's like, "I hate to break this to you, but everyone dies."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Min is like, "Yeah, but –"

Sally: "But I don't want you to die."

Emily: And he's like, "Well, I'm not planning on it anytime fucking soon."

Sally: Yeah, but also, like, I do have to fight –

Emily: The Dark One.

Sally: The Dark One, and, I mean, the chances of us both getting out of that alive are –

Emily: And in his head, Rand is having some suicide ideation, which is of course, um, troubling, but he kind of has since, I think, book three.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He has been more or less – um – and it's hard to find the line between being equipped, I guess, and being emotionally prepared for death –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Which Rand, I think, wants to be because he has been aware since book two that he has this destiny that might be, you know, fatal.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, but then, also, he clearly is struggling with depression, so, like, where's the line?

Sally: Yeah, and, I mean – sorry to keep harping on this, but, like, Rand is not helped at all by Lan –

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Who gives him, uh –

Emily: The worst advice of all time.

Sally: The worst advice, and basically gives Rand, like, a framework for justifying self-harm.

Emily: Yes.

Sally: Um, which is really unsettling. Rather than Lan, as a good mentor would, helping Rand get some actual help? (laugh) So for sure. It's a very – it's a very troubling headspace that he's in right now, and you do really feel for him in these moments.

Emily: Yeah. I wish Lan died.

Sally: Me too, man.

Emily: I – like, I wish Lan had just had – and they give him this – and Brandon or Robert or whoever gives him this at the end of A Memory of Light – they give him, like, this epic, suicidal charge moment –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Where he just runs – actually, it happens, like, six times in A Memory of Light.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: It's so fucking stupid. And it would've been so satisfying for me, as a person, if one of those, you know, he was just, like, charging out to fight Demandred, and Demandred just smacked his head off.

Sally: Yeah, just –

Emily: And it was like, well. That was stupid. And death is meaningless, Lan, and you just died.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Because you didn't actually care about your own life even though many people love and care for you. You just went right for it even though other people were better equipped to do it. (sigh) We're getting into my biggest beef from A Memory of Light, which is that Mat didn't fight Demandred, so. (laugh)

Sally: Ugh, that would've been such a fun, sexually charged fight. (laugh)

Emily: You're telling me! You're telling me.

Sally: I just got to the part in Knife of Dreams where Moridin, like, makes, like, a hologram of Mat and Perrin and is like, "These are who they are," and Semirhage – (laugh)

Emily: The fucking Forsaken are always like, "Here's a – here's a hologram –"

Sally: And Semirhage is like, "If you'd showed me this earlier, I could have killed him." (laugh)

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: It's like, "I was in the same room with that guy like three weeks ago." (laugh)

Emily: And Moridin's like, "Oh, my bad." (laugh)

Sally: It's SO funny to me. I was, like, actually laughing out loud.

Emily: Like, the level of incompetence –

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: They have a – Ishamael has had little holograms of Mat and Perrin floating around since the man who called himself Bors.

Sally: I know, it's so funny. I was like, "Semirhage, you are a fucked-up character, but this is, like, top tier comedy out of you." (laugh)

Emily: It's – okay, let's just dissect this for a minute. This means that Moridin, who was Ishamael, fully showed holograms of all three of the boys to a room full of random Darkfriends but did not at the Forsaken staff meeting? (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) For months, he was just like, "There's other things to talk about. Like, I didn't get to my hologram slide of the PowerPoint."

Emily: "We'll get to that part of the agenda next time," and then they didn't.

Sally: And then they didn't.

Emily: And Semirhage is like – (laugh)

Sally: She's like, "I'm not kidding; I was three feet away from that man." (laugh) "I could've taken him out."

Emily: Just – phew. Bolt of lightning.

Sally: Ugh. It's, like, the funniest thing in the entire world.

Emily: God, I love –

Sally: I was – yeah, the incompetence out of Ishamael is astounding.

Emily: I know. He's so funny. He's my favorite Forsaken.

Sally: Ugh. Just a complete bumbling idiot.

Emily: Just a complete idiot who's – has illusions of grandeur.

Sally: Yeah. And I love all those Forsaken things 'cause everyone is like, "Wow, Moridin –" who is Ishamael –

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: "Is an idiot."

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And Moridin, who is like, "I'm so smart."

Emily: Moridin's actually a himbo? (laugh) That's a pretty bold thing to say, but –

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: He's canonically very handsome.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And he's just like, "Doo ba doo ba doo," has two brain cells.

Sally: Two brain cells.

Emily: And one of – and, you know, is partly insane.

Sally: Yep.

Emily: So.

Sally: Anyway, that was just maybe one of my top five Wheel of Time moments of all time.

Emily: (laugh) It was pretty good.

Sally: Um. Sorry to digress. Anyway.

Emily: Anyway, uh, Min doesn't like Alivia. Mean – meanwhile, um, Rand is like, “Alanna's here,” and, like, points through the door, you know –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Dramatically, with his flute.

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: There's a knock on the door, and Min is like, “Is that her?” and Rand's like, “Fuck yeah it is,” and Min, like, flings herself on him and, like, arranges them –

Sally: I know.

Emily: To be a portrait of –

Sally: Disgusting.

Emily: Indolent sexual energy or something like that. You have to imagine Rand is just sitting there, stiff as a board.

Sally: Yeah, and Min is like –

Emily: Yeah, Min's like, “Paint me like one of your French girls.”

Sally: Yeah. (laugh) And Rand's –

Emily: And Rand is holding a flute. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: It's not even, like, phallic; he just has a flute.

Sally: No, he just has a flute.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And he's like, “Min, could you be an adult for once in your life?”

Emily: And he's like, “What's the – what the fuck's going on?” Um, then Cadsuane and Alanna enter. Cadsuane's like, “How wude,” when she sees Rand, and Rand is like, “How did you even get here? How did you learn Traveling? And also, how did you find me?” Which brings up some excellent points, Rand. I had to Google both of these things. Apparently Cadsuane learned how to Travel from the Aiel Wise Ones, who were taught Traveling by Egg –

Sally: Okay.

Emily: As a sort of, uh, trade-off for all her Tel'aran'rhiod, um –

Sally: Gotcha.



Emily: Training. Which, I mean, fine, nice, whatever.

Sally: Good – it’s a good trade-off.

Emily: Yeah. Um. And apparently they did not find Rand on purpose? It seems to be sort of coincidental because Alanna tells Rand, “Oh, I didn’t know you were in this city, specifically,” like, apparently she can’t point to him directly on a map; she’s just got a vague sense of direction. She didn’t realize he was in the city until they teleported outside of the city. So apparently what Cadsuane was doing – maybe their, like, main goal here – was to do whatever happened, you know, in the – in the Capitol Building –

Sally: Mm.

Emily: With Narishma and Verin’s whole –

Sally: Mm.

Emily: Thing. Perhaps they were just on a mission of conquest to get Far Madding behind Rand. I don’t know. That might be something that we come back to later; or it might not. The internet seemed equally confused. I – I found, like, a Reddit thread –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: About this arc specifically where everyone was like, “What the fuck is going on here?”

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: It was pretty validating.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Everyone’s just like, “It really feels like Robert Jordan just threw this in here to give Rand something to do.”

Sally: Yeah. It is really validating when, like, Wheel of Time fan spaces are also confused.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Because those are the type of smart people who know what’s going on.

Emily: Yeah, no, they were all like, “I don’t know.”

Sally: “Beg pardon?”

Emily: Apparently it was a fucking coincidence that Cadsuane showed up here.

Sally: The worst of all coincidences.

Emily: Yeah, very – very terrible. (clears throat) Um, anyway, Rand – she’s like – Cadsuane’s like, “Yeah, I’m here with, like, a fuck-ton of Aes Sedai, plus your three Asha’man, who are Warders now, plus Harine and Shalon,” and Rand’s like, “Okay, well, could you not tell them where the fuck I am? I don’t want to – they’re gonna interfere with my mish. My mission.”

Sally: “My mish imposs.”

Emily: “My mish imposs.”

Sally: What was I gonna say? Oh, yeah, they’re like, “We’re here with a bunch of people.”  
Rand’s like, “Please don’t tell them that I’m here.”

Emily: Cadsuane’s like, “Ask nicely,” and Rand’s like ...

Sally: “Uh ... please don’t tell them that I’m here.” (laugh)

Emily: Rand, in his head, is all like, “Min told me that Cadsuane will be important and that she’s gonna teach me something and it has never worked for me to be rude to Cadsuane so I guess I have no choice but to, like, meet her on her terms,” which, um, I don’t know, I guess is a lot more mature and patient than I would be. If I had to deal with this woman constantly, and Min, my girlfriend, was like, “She’s going to teach you something important,” I’d be like, “Remote learning, bitch. I’m sending her the fuck out.” Like –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “She can get fucked. If she has something to teach me that’s so important, she’ll figure out a way to be nicer to me.” It is not on Rand to, I don’t know –

Sally: No, I agree.

Emily: I’m betraying my bias toward Rand in this instance, but I don’t think Cadsuane is in a position to be making demands of the Dragon Reborn.

Sally: Yeah, no, I think – this is not a fully, like, formed thought, so just kind of bear with me. When we were talking about how Cadsuane is such an unlikable character, Cadsuane veer – is, like, going in the direction of being the type of person who is able to, like, call people out on their bad behavior and be like, “I’m not going to take this shit from you,” which is a good – is a good character trait in moderation, you know?

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: So she veers towards being that type of character, who – we don’t necessarily have similar character type, really. I – maybe we do; I’m just not thinking of them. So Cadsuane veers towards that. But she really, um –

Emily: It’s like – sorry; hold that thought – but it’s like in Path of Daggers when, um, Merana, one of the Aes Sedai, comes back to Rand and is like, “Here’s what we managed to do with the Sea Folk bargain,” and he’s like, “That sucks,” and she’s like, “Well, you left us; what did you expect?”

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: That’s a really satisfying moment because Merana is calling Rand out on his bullshit –

Sally: Right.

Emily: Even though she's a perfectly polite person –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Under normal circumstances. And it's like, yeah, of course we want someone like that around Rand. It would be great if everyone around Rand was occasionally just calling him out on his bullshit.

Sally: Right.

Emily: It's like Sulin, you know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It sucks that Rand shut her down all the time. But –

Sally: But it's, like, good for everyone to have those types of people around them but particularly people in –

Emily: Power, yeah.

Sally: Power. So Cadsuane, like, veers towards that. Merana is such a good example; Merana is probably one of my faves.

Emily: Yeah, I love Merana.

Sally: But Cadsuane really bastardizes this type of behavior in a way that I'm actually seeing a lot of, like – kind of, like, people who are, like, emphasizing, like, self-care type of, like, bad bad bitch boundary behavior, for lack of a better term – I just completely made that up – people who are like, "People are just gonna have to treat you the way that you want to be treated," and, like, of course you want people to treat you the way you want to be treated, but it's this – it's this idea, like, that you can control other people's behavior, which you cannot.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: You can only control your own behavior. So, like, when you're setting boundaries, it's not like, "You have to be kind to me." You set a boundary being like, "I'm not going to speak to you if you aren't kind to me." You know? So Cadsuane is out here trying to be like, "I'm establishing all these rules for our relationship that you have to meet," rather than being like, I'm establishing rules for myself in the relationship –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And Rand will establish rules for himself in the relationship. So, like, in Merana's instance, she's like, "You don't get to talk to me – I'm not going to accept you talking to me this way, so I'm going to tell you about it," where Cadsuane's just like, "I don't accept what you're doing, and so you need to change." Like, she has no impetus – it's no impetus on Cadsuane, is what I'm trying to say.

Emily: Yeah, it would be one thing if –

Sally: Explaining it very badly.

Emily: It would be one thing if Cadsuane came in and Rand was rude to her like he's rude to everyone and she's like, "Okay, I had things to tell you, but –"

Sally: "Not going to."

Sally: "If you're going to behave like this, then goodbye."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And, like, that's fine. That's – that's all under Cadsuane's control.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But Cadsuane saying, "You have to debase yourself on some level in order to have a civil conversation with me"? Like, that's not fair.

Sally: It's not fair, and it's not acceptable, and it's not, like – I don't know.

Emily: But you're right. Robert Jordan's idea with Cadsuane seems to have been, like, there's this whole – there's this sort of, like, legend in Roman history, um, that when Pompey the Great, the guy who preceded Julius Caesar, was going through one of his triumphs in Rome – which is a big-ass parade where they got to dress up like an emperor and everyone cheered, you know, to celebrate their military victory – supposedly there was a guy, standing next to Pompey, constantly whispering in his ear, "You are a man," to remind him that he's not a god.

Sally: Nice.

Emily: You know, and that seems to be what Cadsuane is meant to be there for. It's just, it doesn't work for Cadsuane because Cadsuane is constantly calling people out on their bullshit, but no one gets to call out Cadsuane on her bullshit. She doesn't have to correct any of her behavior.

Sally: Yeah, and also, like – I would say, like, mm, two out of five times, Cadsuane is actually calling someone on their bullshit; three out of five times, she's just being like, "I don't like the way you're behaving, so change it."

Emily: Yeah, you're right.

Sally: And it's just like, that isn't – like, you try – having someone around to keep Rand humble – and, like, you can compare with, like, what Egg did in the early half of the series, when she would be like – like when she tackles Rand at the beginning of the Great Hunt. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And, like, when she constantly is like, "You're just, like, a boy from the Two Rivers, like I'm just a girl from the Two Rivers." Like, that was actually helpful for him, I think. So I just don't think Cadsuane functions in this way Robert Jordan wants her to. She's, like, got a lot of really rancid girlboss energy about her. So.

Emily: Yeah, it's just frustrating because you can sort of tell what Robert Jordan is trying to do, and you're just like, I can see so many ways you could've done it better.

Sally: Yeah, and I also – I just don't know why Cadsuane is what you settled on. Like, she just becomes a character that everyone hates. No one's like, "Cadsuane's my favorite character."

Emily: Yeah, no one, like – yeah.

Sally: Who would say that?

Emily: It just feels like he was trying to fill this void that Moiraine left –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But he was like, "Oh, Moiraine was so demure and politically savvy and she didn't work, so I better just –"

Sally: "I'm going to bring in a woman who yells a lot and has no idea what she's doing."

Emily: Yeah, and I'm like, you actually didn't have to bring in just, like, another Aes Sedai replacement. You could've done so many different things. There are already so many different characters that you had established who could have, like, stepped in to fill Moiraine's shoes as this advisor character.

Sally: Yeah. And, like, also – yeah, 'cause Rand already has so many advisors. He's got advisors everywhere he goes. He's got Dobraine, he's got the Wise Ones, he's got – now I'm running out of them, but you know what I mean.

Emily: Also, just, like, if you just replace Moiraine two books after she's gone, then there's no impact of her death.

Sally: Yeah, as we talked about, I think in the episode that Cambria guested on, when – the reason the mentor dies is because the hero needs to stand on his own two feet and make his own decisions, so, like, why would you – that's not a fun way to break that trope. You know?

Emily: Yeah. And, in fact, the trope is, like, sort of meant to be broken; the idea is supposed to be, like, Rand doesn't function very well without Moiraine, although it's not just Moiraine's absence – it's everything else that's going on his life – but the idea of Moiraine coming back, of Mat and Thom and, um, Noal rescuing her, bringing her back from the underworld –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Is, like, meant to change things for Rand in a significant way. But –

Sally: Yeah. So – sorry, go ahead.

Emily: No, just, the problem is that Rand has already changed things for himself –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: By that point, so it doesn't have as much weight.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But we are, I mean, no longer talking about Winter's Heart; now we're just talking about –

Sally: Yeah, sorry, we're – we're getting into a lot of different books, but –

Emily: The weeds.

Sally: Um, some other points of – not interest – some points of disgust is they ask what Rand did to make Alanna –

Emily: Oh, Cadsuane leaves with Min, yeah –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And then Rand is just talking to Alanna, and Alanna's like, "What did you do to make me unconscious for three days?" and he's like, "I bonded some people who asked," which is generous; I don't think Elayne and Aviendha and Min were all about consent in that conversation either.

Sally: No, I think – isn't it in this chapter where Rand's like, "What would you have done if I said no?" and Min's like, "We would've tied you up and done it anyway"?

Emily: No, it's not in this chapter –

Sally: I don't know if it's in this chapter. 'Kay.

Emily: That I remember. And Alanna's like, "What? How dare – how dare they? Who is it?" And Rand's like, "I'm not telling you that."

Sally: Yeah. Get fucked.

Emily: Alanna's behavior – there's no other way to put it – is nonsensical. It doesn't help – we constantly get this problem with Perrin, too, I think; Perrin and his mood ring of a nose. When you're interpreting emotions that aren't being shown visibly, that just gives Robert Jordan too many opportunities to make every character, especially female characters, seem a little bit, for lack of a better word, schizophrenic in the way that they're behaving. They're saying – I mean, it's deceptive to be – they're saying something about how they're feeling and apparently feeling something else. But also whatever they're feeling doesn't match at all with what they're saying and the way that they're externally behaving.

Sally: Yeah. No, I talked about this in my blog a little bit, so I'm glad you brought it up. Um, Robert Jordan creates, like, multiple mechanisms for people to understand how another person is feeling: the Warder bond, Perrin's super sniffer nose.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Um, and because of that – because of these things, like, he's also setting up instances where characters feel they do not have to actually communicate with one another, because it's like, Perrin is, I think, perhaps the worst offender of this. He'll be like, "Faile is just angry."

Emily: Yeah. And doesn't want to talk about it.

Sally: And he's not going to, like, investigate why because Faile is generally an angry person; she might be angry about any number of things; it doesn't necessarily mean it's about you.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: So, like, it sets up this – this device for people to not have to communicate, and it just, like, really contributes to, like, the miscommunication that is rampant throughout this series. And it's really frustrating, because – I mean, you're right to – I mean, you're right. Like, if you're feeling something, and you say you're feeling something differently, that is, of course, deceptive, but there's lots of reasons a person would do that. It's like, if you're feeling one way and maybe you don't feel safe expressing the way you're feeling, or maybe you're like, the way I'm feeling is not very mature, so I'm going to, like, repress that and say what is the actual mature adult thing to say. Like, there's lots of different reasons to not rely on what people are feeling. Our feelings are not exactly the most, like, logical aspects of us. So it's just very annoying that we get this constantly. And a lot of times it's really, um, one-sided. Like, I don't know if Perrin ever tells Faile that he can smell her emotions.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Um, and with the Warder bond, it goes both ways, but, like, the Warder bond is so complicated at this point in the series because it's being done so non-consensually all the time that it's like, "Now this person knows all of my intimate feelings." We see this a lot with, um, the women that Logain bonds. I can't remember their names; I apologize.

Emily: Gabrelle and –

Sally: Gabrelle and Toveine.

Emily: Toveine, yeah.

Sally: And they're just like, "This person has such intimate access to what I'm feeling." Um, which they say makes it difficult for them to lie. So, like, there's an interesting – not interesting – a troubling thing going on there. I don't know, it's just this, like, frustrating part of the series. Like, there's already such deep lack of communication going on; we don't need to add this sort of magical empathy.

Emily: Yeah, it just muddies the water rather than clarifying it.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um. (clears throat) But Alanna gives Rand the important information that all of the Aes Sedai have now sworn fealty to Rand, because Damer Flinn figured out how to still – how to – (clears throat) heal stilling, so even the women who were stilled have sworn fealty. Um, she tells him that the Asha'man have been bonded as Warders. Rand is like, "Exsqueeze me? Did they consent to that?" and Alanna's like, "Well, I mean, I saw Merise ask Narishma, and she didn't pressure him that I saw, and he took a while to think about it," which is a really convoluted way of saying, like, they weren't directly blackmailed, but they were pretty well blackmailed because that was their only recourse.

Sally: Yep.

Emily: To have protection. They are on, um, Mazrim Taim's most wanted list.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So.

Sally: Yeah, and Rand, you just left them. Let's not forget that.

Emily: Yeah, and Rand doesn't take any responsibility for that. He's just like, "Those darn Aes Sedai; they're so gross." And it's like, dude, you also left them in the lurch. Um, sort of side-stepping Alanna's grossness as a character, and she's pretty – pretty rancid, particularly in this one, she's like, "Listen, why are you, like, having all of these Aes Sedai around you if you're not going to have them do anything? Like, what's the point?" Which is a good point.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Rand, at least, is mature enough to accept it as such. He's like, "Yeah, okay. Here, I want you and Merana and a couple of others to go try and take care of the situation in Haddon Mirk, where there are still rebels emerging." And we'll see this a little more: Rand, like, sending out people to actually do errands for him –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: That are, you know, important, politically. Stuff he should've been doing since book four, probably, but has not been. And that's sort of it. Alanna – he, you know, dismisses Alanna; she's all mad at being sent off again. She's like, "I just want to be with you," and it's like, you sound like a woman speaking to her lover, when that is not at all what's happening. So, you know, is Alanna just stupid or –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Is she some sort of – is this some sort of manipulation tactic? And we don't know. Alanna is a character, like Cadsuane, who is never given an explanation or contextualized. She's just sort of Robert Jordan's sock puppet for bad female behavior.

Sally: Correct.

Emily: Um, so anyway. Uh, the Aes Sedai leave after agreeing to Rand's, you know, terms to keep everyone else away. Smash cut to Verin, who is arriving back at the governor's mansion at night, I think the night after; apparently Alanna and some of them had already left. Um, and she just walks in while Cadsuane is doing some needlework, and Cadsuane's like, "Oh, could you pour me some tea? Let's talk about how I'm really worried and upset because Rand is being so emotionally shut-down, and I just need to fix him," and da da da da da. And that's when Verin's like, "Hmm, she seems to be on my side, so I shan't poison her." Chapter ends. Um, so I'm gonna stick with my favorite character/least favorite character are both Verin. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Okay, I will say my least favorite character is Cadsuane. I know that's low-hanging fruit, but she's –



Emily: She's quite bad.

Sally: Really insufferable. And I would say my favorite character is Narishma, because I love –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: I know he's only – oh, he's only mentioned. Can I say Narishma?

Emily: He's only mentioned – yeah, if – yeah, I think that's fine.

Sally: Okay, I just love him so much, and I think he's really –

Emily: And we've really constructed an elaborate –

Sally: Yeah, an elaborate –

Emily: Hypothetical for him.

Sally: Yeah, where he joins the Band of the Red Hand and everyone is like, "This is Narishma, and we'd literally commit murder for him." So.

Emily: "This is Narishma, and if anything happens to him –" (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) "I'll kill everyone in this room."

Emily: That's what Mat says.

Sally: Yeah. "I've only had Narishma for two hours." (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) "But if anything happens to him ..." Ah, so good.

Sally: I just think he's so cute with the little bells on the end of his braids, and he's, like, just a little baby, and everyone keeps trying to kill him by sending him on dangerous missions. (laugh)

Emily: (wheeze) Yeah, we really missed that part of Path of Daggers.

Sally: (laugh) I know.

Emily: When Narishma's like, "I almost died getting Callandor for you."

Sally: Yeah. And Rand's like –

Emily: And Rand's like, "Aw."

Sally: "What's your name again?" (laugh)

Emily: "Too bad." And Narishma's like, "What the fuck, dude?" (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. (laugh) Rand's like, "Ah, that's – that really sucks. Major bummer."

Emily: Major bummer, man. Cowabummer.

Sally: Cowabummer. Narishma's like –

Emily: Narishma's like –

Sally: His clothes are on – like, smoking and singed.

Emily: Yeah. He's, like, got blood on his face.

Sally: Yeah, hasn't slept in six days.

Emily: And he's like, "And that's when treason awoke in my heart. If Mazrim Taim had approached me then, perhaps –"

Sally: "I would have killed Rand."

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And he would be justified, I think.

Emily: He would. Narishma – of all the Asha'man who attack Rand, only Narishma has a good reason to do so.

Sally: I know. Be like, "Rand almost killed me with his dumb sword that then he just used to commit mass murder in Tear." So.

Emily: Yeah. Pfft.

Sally: And Davram Bashere had to tackle him off a horse.

Emily: That was top ten Davram Bashere –

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: Sexiest moments compilation.

Sally: Yeah. Him just – Davram Bashere, five foot flat –

Emily: I know.

Sally: Tackling Rand al'Thor off a horse.

Emily: God.

Sally: Um, there are some good moments in Path of Daggers.

Emily: Yeah, there are. (laugh) Most of them are about Bashere.

Sally: Yeah, that's true.

Emily: Arguably. Okay, so those are those two very confusing chapters in a very confusing subplot –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That we are thankfully departing for the moment. Tragically, we're going back to Elayne and Aviendha, uh, for just a bit, uh, and then we're back with Mat.

Sally: Mat.

Emily: Then back to Far Madding. That's on the docket. Um. Anything to add?

Sally: No. As always, I've said enough.

Emily: Uh, thanks everyone. Thanks to Glynna MacKenzie for our theme song. Thanks to our patrons on Patreon and our followers on social media.

Sally: You guys rock.

Emily: Yeah. You do.

Sally: I hope you enjoyed Emily – the Emily show.

Emily: Oh, boy.

Sally: On social media.

Emily: Oh, boy. It was gnarly.

Sally: No, it was very charming. But yes, I do have a sign-off.

Emily: Oh, do you?

Sally: Um, this morning – (laugh)

Emily: Oh, boy.

Sally: This morning I had to go to a very early doctor's appointment. And a fun fact about me is that I cannot wake up literally ever at all.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: I have – I don't – I have, like, really bad sleep habits. I don't know what's wrong with my body. My sleep study said I had ninety-two percent sleep efficiency, and I was like, "No, I don't." (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) That seems wrong.

Sally: That is absolute – I don't know what type of fake equipment you've got up there –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: But I have to set, like, eight alarms in the morning, and apologies to Emily for living with that forever.

Emily: I didn't hear them at all this morning. I was very confused when I woke up and you were gone. I was like, "I didn't hear her go at all."

Sally: You didn't hear any of her twelve alarms?

Emily: No, but last night I did also wake up and was so bleary, stumbling to the bathroom, that I, like, fully, like, U-turned on my way to the door and just, like, slammed into my desk, stubbed my toe super bad.

Sally: (laugh) Oh, no.

Emily: It was so stupid. (laugh) Anyway. Carry on.

Sally: No, I sort of blearily woke up – blearily is a good word – at four a.m. And I also have a knee injury – you guys, I'm really struggling – (laugh) So I had my knee, like, propped up on a body pillow –

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: And Tybalt had sort of, like, settled into the cave that was created by my knee, and I was like, "What is this?" and I look up, and Tybalt is in his pirate shirt, which he has to wear when he's being bad. (laugh) And I was like, "I don't know what's happening." And then, when I actually woke up to my appointment – so, like, Tybalt is on my left side, and Ed – I woke up and Ed is, like, right by my left hip.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Which is weird; Ed never really, like, gets on my bed. But I, like – they would not move. (laugh) I was, like, trapped in my own bed after I had to move the cats. And I was trying to get Ed out because I was like, "I will roll out of bed this way," but Ed is, um, a little large. (laugh)

Emily: Dense. (laugh)

Sally: He was like, "I'm not moving, bitch." So anyway, I was trapped in my own bed this morning by our cats.

Emily: That was hour four of Tybalt's pirate shirt penance.

Sally: (laugh) Yeah. God.

Emily: So annoying. Alright. Okay, everyone –

Sally: Goodbye, everyone. Have a good week.

Emily: Goodbye.

Sally: Byeee.