



Episode 198: It's Been ... ONE WEEK

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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: And boy, what's worse than Cadsuane? (laugh) It's Elayne.

Sally: Oh, boy.

Emily: God, she's such a nightmare. Um. Hmm. The first chapter is titled "Expectation." Get it? (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) I –

Emily: Because Elayne is one week pregnant.

Sally: (sing-song) "It's been ... one week –"

Emily: (simultaneously, sing-song) "One week since you looked at me."

Sally: (laugh) I am, like, truly shocked that she knows at this point that she is pregnant. Is she like, "I was due to get my period the day after Rand and I had sex, and I didn't"?

Emily: No, Min had a viewing and told everyone.

Sally: Oh, that's right. I thought she was saying she was going to get pregnant. I misunderstood.

Emily: Oh, ho, ho, ho. No, she is literally one week pregnant. And Min was like, "She'll have babies because of Rand sticking his dick in her right now," and everyone was like, "That's some hot goss."

Sally: Just didn't pick that up. I'm sorry I'm stupid, you guys.

Emily: And immediately told Elayne – no, you’re not. Um, no, I mean, either way, it is kind of like the scene in “Breaking Dawn: Part One” where Bella’s like, “Oh my God, I’m pregnant,” after throwing up once.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And, like, staring in the mirror at her –

Sally: At her –

Emily: Completely flat stomach.

Sally: Breaking Dawn is an atrocity. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) I know. Um, the Breaking Dawn pregnancy and the Elayne pregnancy have some startling similarities, I will say. (laugh) I say it’s like that either way because I feel like if I had just had sex for the first time and someone was like, “You’re gonna get pregnant,” I’d be like, “That’s not real.”

Sally: Be like, “No.”

Emily: I’d be like, “Just – let me – I’m just not gonna freak out about that until the pregnancy actually starts affecting my life –”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Or appearing, you know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, it’s just some – everyone has some truly wack-a-doodle behavior about Elayne’s pregnancy. Like, Robert Jordan’s thesis here seems to be that everyone around Elayne has an opinion about her pregnancy and wants to tell her how to be pregnant and how to be an expecting mother and then how to be a mother and what she needs to do to take care of herself and da da da da. Which, I don’t know, I’ve never been pregnant. Um, from what I understand of having a sister who’s been pregnant and knowing other people who have had children, that is in some ways true to real life. Pregnant women, by being pregnant – I mean, already, by being a woman in public, you seem to be inviting everyone to comment on your appearance, your behavior, everything. By being a pregnant woman, that is, like, trebled, you know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Pregnant women cannot catch a break. But, um, it just feels like – I really don’t like Robert Jordan of all people writing about that. It is such a uniquely – you know, it’s such a unique experience to pregnant people –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And as far as I know, he has never been pregnant.

Sally: Yeah, it is similar to the discussion we had either earlier in this book or in *Crown of Swords* where Robert Jordan was talking about Elayne's eating habits.

Emily: Yeah, that's in this book too.

Sally: Yeah, in *Winter's Heart*. I could not – everything just starts to roll together when books are this long, you know?

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Um, and he seems to sort of be, like, taking the female – he's like, "I've witnessed the female experience."

Emily: "I've perhaps spoken to a woman or two about it."

Sally: "And therefore I am qualified to write about it from a women's perspective," and everyone around Elayne, pretty much, at this point, with the exception of a few people, is also female, and it's just like, that is not the case, Robert. Um, you are not – like, you could perhaps make, like, a gesture toward the fact that Elayne is being told what to do, but to make it such, like, an integral part of her pregnancy plotline does not feel like his place.

Emily: Yeah, if you're annoyed by what's going on now, well, wait for the next five books, because you're still going to be annoyed by it five books from now because it's still going on. It's actually ridiculous that Elayne never – like, it would be one thing if, you know, after a few chapters of this, Elayne was like, "Listen."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "It's my body and, um, no one gets to talk to me like this; I'm the queen." You know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, this is ridiculous. This is already micromanaging my behavior and my body to an unreasonable level from people who are supposedly my friends but do not at all act like my friends ever.

Sally: Um, and she – if I'm recalling the plot from *Crossroads of Twilight* and *Knife of Dreams* well enough, which – who knows? She does tell Birgitte and Aviendha that they cannot speak to her about this, so Birgitte and Aviendha just talk about her behind her back –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Extensively and continue to try and micromanage her, and when Elayne catches them, she calls them out on it, but everyone continues to do this behavior. So, like, to Elayne's credit, in this one instance, she is just being like, "You actually cannot do this; this is ridiculous," but nobody around her is listening to her.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: So.

Emily: So I'm just like, I don't feel great about Robert Jordan tackling this particular topic, and I don't feel like he did it in a good way, and I don't feel like, at the end of it, you know, he has said anything productive about it.

Sally: No.

Emily: It's like he just used it as another set piece the same way he uses, like, women's clothing, you know, to make comments about them. He can't just be like – he – he doesn't come out on the other side of this being like, "And everyone learned a lesson about how Elayne is – Elayne's body is not for public consumption," you know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Or public control. He's just kind of like, "Well, and yeah, Elayne sure does get threatened a whole lot during her pregnancy and, you know, violent things happen to her, and she's not very smart about it, and so really, it makes sense that everyone is this insane about her."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So it doesn't feel great.

Sally: It doesn't feel great. And I just have also – like, I should preface all of this by saying that I, as a person who never wants to have children, never wants to be pregnant, am still working through my, um, various feminist awakenings when it comes to childhood – um, uh, to child-bearing and child-rearing – I have automatically very negative reactions whenever pregnancy is brought up. Um, again, this comes a lot from me not being a person who wants to have children; I think it also comes a lot from being based in Utah where I was asked for the first time at six or seven years old what type of mother I wanted to be or, like, how many children I wanted to have. Like, it's very – I know that happens everywhere, but it feels particularly egregious here in Utah. So, these are all my sort of, like, "The author has this to disclaim." Um, so I – I already have, like, a very knee-jerk negative reaction to pregnancy plots. Um, particularly as handled by male authors. Um, it is – or, um, people who have not been pregnant. Um, it feels like, um, cis men and cis men fantasy writers in particular have this, like, compulsion, like they've been possessed by a demon, to impregnate at least one of their female characters throughout the series. Like, it feels impossible to them that multiple women can exist in the space without – not bearing children. I dunno. I just feel like it is never handled in a way that is, like, the child adds value to the person's life and, like, being a mother or a parent adds value. It's always, like, framed in some, like, weird – like, even if it's not framed this way, the narrative goes in the direction of, like, having children essentially ends that woman's life. Which is just, like, super not fun to read about, I think.

Emily: Yeah. I get the sense from male fantasy writers that they can only think of, like, three things that can happen to women –

Sally: Mm.

Emily: In order to further their character arcs.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: You know, she's probably going to get sexually assaulted –

Sally: Mm.

Emily: She's probably going to become pregnant at some point. She might miscarry.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: These are all things that happen exclusively, in these men's minds, to women and so –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: What should my female characters do? Surely not the complex and nuanced things that are happening to the male characters –

Sally: No way.

Emily: When it comes to questions of, I don't know, leadership, confidence –

Sally: Self-discovery.

Emily: Self-discovery, world discovery –

Sally: Self-empowerment. Yeah.

Emily: Solving mysteries.

Sally: Having a career.

Emily: Yeah. No, it's just: get pregnant. And it's just frustrating because we see – that's something that we typically see, um, you know, even in – just, like, on television.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: If there's any long-running television show that's primarily focused on women, then one or more of those women is going to become pregnant at some point. You know, it's a – it's the Sex and the City syndrome.

Sally: Yeah, and I also – this is a little bit tangential to the point, but the point I was initially getting at when I was, like, making my disclaimer about being a person who doesn't want to get pregnant: so much of, like, reading fantasy or, like, watching television, like, a big portion of that is, like, escapism and, like, wish fulfillment and, like, fantasy. And I think for a lot of people who can get pregnant, the ability to, like, have a sexual life without having to be concerned about getting pregnant or, like, how much that kind of can – how much that fear can take away from your experience of your sexuality. And it is always – to me, it feels really, like, defeating when it's like – well, like, it's great that Elayne and Rand – I mean, the sex scene itself has its issues, but, like, ultimately, it's, like, two young people who just, like, really want to have sex and, like, explore their sexuality with one another, and it's like, oh, but big bummer, a week later, Elayne knows that she is pregnant and, like, the one time she had sex resulted in pregnancy. And it's just like, who is this fun for? Not for me.

Emily: No. I mean, nothing about Elayne is fun for anyone. I don't –

Sally: Fair. (laugh)

Emily: Know who Elayne is for, like, that character.

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: I think she's just a – a – a hologram onto which Robert Jordan projects his various fetishes.

Sally: But it –

Emily: But, like – yeah.

Sally: No, it just feels – it just feels very frustrating. One of the things that I find very exhausting about reading or watching television that is scripted or written by predominantly cis, usually white men, is, like, yes, inevitably their female character will sort of stumble into a pregnancy plot, because again, as Emily pointed out, apparently men can only think of a handful of things that happens to women in their lifetime. And it's just like, God. This is so exhausting. It's so exhausting.

Emily: Yeah, it makes your female readers or viewers or whatever feel like that's one of the only few things that can happen to them.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: If you've made it to, you know, your thirties without getting pregnant, without being sexually assaulted, then you're some sort of miracle woman.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You know?

Sally: A magical unicorn.

Emily: You're just – yeah. (laugh) You're – and you're bisexual? You're a unicorn.

Sally: What? Oh my gosh. It's just – I – anyway, that's my, like, little rant about how actually your female characters don't need to become pregnant, and if you are a person who is creating something, who is like, "One of my female characters gets pregnant," I challenge you to really question why you made that decision.

Emily: Yeah. Why is it happening?

Sally: Yeah. Is it something that she wants? That she has been pursuing? Is it something that she's going to be excited about? Or did you just run out of plot points?

Emily: Yeah. This chapter opens with Elayne and Egg in Tel'aran'rhiod, having met in the dream version of the Two Rivers. Uh, anyway, Egwene is going through the five stages of grief

as she is disillusioned with, uh, the progress, if you want to call it that, that Emond's Field has gone through since she left like two years ago.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It is swiftly becoming no longer a little hamlet but a bustling city

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, Elayne is more concerned about the, like, banners flying. That she's like, "This indicates rebellion, and I'm going to have to deal with that," which is, like, such a boring plotline that I barely even want to address it. It's just, like – Elayne and Morgase, every time they get on their high horse about Emond's Field and the Two Rivers region, I guess, trying to claim independence or whatever?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's so stupid, because it's like, why is this even a conflict that's happening? You guys haven't done – I mean, maybe that's the American in me talking.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Being like, maybe the monarchy should keep its nose out of my business.

Sally: (laugh) Um, yeah, I think – I think there's – there's two, perhaps, American – quote unquote American – as much as that country actually exists – ideologies of, like, yes monarchy keeping it out of its business, but also, like, there's an idea of, like, land sovereignty going on here where, like, Caemlyn has come in and claimed multiple of these, like, really outlying villages who have – in this case, their ancestry traces – traces to Manetheren, not necessarily to Andor, both of which I believe were countries simultaneously. So for Emond's Field to be like, "We want to govern ourselves," that is an entirely valid claim. It's always a valid claim when you want to govern yourself, because borders are fake, but different conversation. So.

Emily: Yeah. It's not like – surprisingly, it's not like the Two Rivers is like, "We want to become independent because we endorse slavery." You know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Robert Jordan really could've gone that way.

Sally: Ugh. (laugh) Then we would've really had to get into American history.

Emily: But instead the Two Rivers – the Two Rivers is kind of like, "You guys haven't really done anything for us in the first place."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "I don't even think we pay taxes. We don't have an accurate map. Do you even know who we are?"

Sally: No.

Emily: And I don't think Elayne did, up until she met Rand and then was like, "I'm going to suddenly research – I'm going to go on Bing dot com and look up my crush's hometown," you know?

Sally: Emond's Field. Spelled incorrectly. And Bing is like, "Did you mean –?" (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) So that's just all I'm going to say about it. The monarchy should keep its nose out of –

Sally: The monarchy should –

Emily: The Two Rivers' business.

Sally: Cease to exist.

Emily: Do I think Perrin should be in charge? Absolutely not. But – (laugh)

Sally: No.

Emily: I don't – I want Elayne to be in charge even less.

Sally: No, I want the Two Rivers to elect a democratic body to govern itself and then destroy Andor.

Emily: Anyway, they're just walking around. We are told that it is the day before Egwene is going to travel to Tar Valon, apparently. Um, and Elayne – Egwene is like, "Are you sure I shouldn't send some of my guys to you?" despite the fact that she needs every guy she can keep her hands on. And Elayne's like, "Yeah, no, they won't – no one's gonna attack me until the spring." Which is so funny, because wouldn't you know it, twelve hours later, who's attacking Andor?

Sally: Multiple people, actually.

Emily: Multiple armies, yeah.

Sally: Like three or four.

Emily: Go – go figure. Um, but Egg – Egg's like, "Yeah, okay, well, then that's great. I'm just gonna go on and do my siege or whatever. Good luck." And Elayne's like, "Yeah, bestie, good luck to you," and they exchange their little best friend forever heart necklaces –

Sally: Just two girl bosses, out here, conquering nations.

Emily: Yeah. And Egg's like, "Please don't – if you see Rand again, please send him to me, or, like, do something; I need to know where he is." And Elayne's like, "Mm. I'm not gonna do that." And they go about their way. You know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's like, girl, you could be like, "I can pass on a message. Egg wants to see you. End of message."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Simple as that, baby.

Sally: Only Elayne gets to know where Rand is. She's just gonna keep him in a room for the rest of his life, apparently.

Emily: Stupid. (sigh) Anyway. Egg then wakes up next to Aviendha 'cause apparently they're sharing their bed now. Which, again, Robert Jordan – most straight women don't just do that. (laugh)

Sally: They could just have been lovers.

Emily: It's just – just so – you just know –

Sally: Yeah, what does Robert Jordan think happens?

Emily: Well, Robert Jordan is one of those guys who reads any history about two women who lived together for forty years and was like, "They were just such good friends."

Sally: And they were roommates. (laugh)

Emily: And they were roommates. They had a bond like unto sisters.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Robert Jordan watched Brokeback Mountain and was like, "The brotherly love in this."

Sally: "The brotherly love between these two men." Yeah, they wake up in their frilly nightdresses or whatever they're wearing.

Emily: Yeah, and they start bouncing femininely around their day –

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) Ah! I forgot to turn the heat off. Goddamnit. Okay, um. They go to get dressed; Elayne gets put in her fancy dress; Aviendha's making fun of her the entire time. At the end, Elayne is like, "Oh, and by the way, your fancy dresses are done," and Aviendha's like, "... Fine. I won't – I will not keep mocking you about it. But you can't take a joke." And I'm like, this is about as friendly an interaction as we get between two characters –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And look at it.

Sally: And it's heavily queer-coded. So.

Emily: Yep. Um.

Sally: Which is fine; you can be friends with your partner. But.

Emily: Elayne then goes to have her bland breakfast because all of the women around her believe that pregnant women should only eat porridge. (pause) No comment. (laugh)

Sally: No comment.

Emily: Um, and while she's breakfasting, she visits with multiple people. Halwin Norry comes in to give her a report about, like, the financial situation; he's like, "It's looking good. I got some banker support." Reese Harfor comes in to be like, "yep, I found more spies." Elayne's like, "Great, keep them on, but we're going to be careful about what information they get." They meet with some merchants, blah blah blah. Um, and then – I've forgotten what happens after that – oh, and then Elayne and Aviendha go for a walk outside because pregnant women are supposed to have fresh air. Again, no comment. Uh, while they're outside they see that ... Merilille?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Is that the one that we're dealing –

Sally: Merilille.

Emily: Boy, there are so many – I know we've said this many times before, but there are so many "Muh" Aes Sedai names.

Sally: It's really untenable.

Emily: Yeah. I can't – can't do it. Um, they see Merilille returning from some undisclosed location. They go down to meet her. She has been gone for a little while, it appears. Um, everyone's been taking it in turns to do the Sea Folk lessons. Everyone hates it, but, um, it doesn't seem to be as big of a deal as fucking Nynaeve and Elayne were making it the last time we were here, so. Maybe everyone just needs to chill out.

Sally: Just make a schedule, Elayne. It's just you being a bad manager, actually.

Emily: Yeah. Um, and Merilille's like, "Yeah, I just came from the Borderlanders' camp; it seems to be all of the monarchs of the Borderlands, plus, like, um, there's a bunch of Aes Sedai that, of course, are being kept secret," and Merilille's like, "Yeah, and there's a whole ton of, like, people, but, you know, I don't know what's ..."

Sally: It's just, like, a huge-ass army north of your city, but.

Emily: "But they don't seem to be going anywhere. And they seem to be looking for Rand." And it's like, okay, great. "Oh, and they want to talk to you." And Elayne's like, "Great, let's go talk to them right now," because she's had an idea that she doesn't tell us about until it's happening, because this is the only way that Robert Jordan can scavenge some suspense into his plotlines.

Sally: (laugh) It's just, like, not even – that's – like, it's not a thing that needs to be suspenseful.

Emily: Yeah, I also just don't care about this situation.

Sally: Well, especially –

Emily: This goddamn bitch of a situation. (laugh)

Sally: This goddamn – this is a goddamn son of a bitch of a situation. Goddamn bitch of a situation. Um, especially ‘cause it’s just Elayne, like, bullying foreign dignitaries to do her bidding.

Emily: Oh, yeah, this whole, like – we get so many scenes of Elayne doing this. Of her, like, walking into situations and everyone around her being like, “Wow, she’s an absolute goddess of leadership, of negotiation, of playing the Game of Houses, of doing all this stuff,” and it’s just like – (laugh)

Sally: She’s not.

Emily: Yeah, you’re sort of, like – it just becomes hard to tell, like – it seems like Robert Jordan is making Elayne OP in the most feminine way possible, you know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He’s like, “She’s just good at all the, like, female stuff,” which, because this is a “feminist” text, includes leadership.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But it’s like, all evidence to the contrary, literal – literally.

Sally: Yeah, it’s one of those, uh, show don’t tell instances, Robert. If you – like, you just keep telling us she’s good at power, good at being in leadership, but everything you show us is not correct.

Emily: Everything you’re showing us is that Elayne can’t even keep a handle on her own – on control of her own body.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So.

Sally: Which, again, is not always in your control.

Emily: Yeah, that’s not to, like –

Sally: But that’s not what Robert is – that’s not the narrative he’s –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: He’s playing it as a joke. He’s like, “Elayne can’t even tell people to leave her alone.”

Emily: Yeah, “Elayne can’t even tell the cooks to give her the food she wants.”

Sally: Yeah, versus being like, “Everyone believes they are entitled to Elayne’s body, and this is actually the problem.”

Emily: Mm.

Sally: You know? It’s just framed badly. So. Yes.

Emily: Um, so yeah, Elayne goes charging off to meet with the Borderlanders with just Birgitte and Aviendha in tow. They send Merilille ahead. Um, and they go to have this meeting with the big army. Um, I guess it is worth mentioning all of the Borderland rulers because our last introduction to them was at the beginning of Path of Daggers, which, of course, we skipped.

Sally: Oh, yeah.

Emily: Uh, that was when they were all getting together and deciding on this course of action. Um –

Sally: It was almost two full books ago, and now we're expected to remember these clowns.

Emily: It was – it was quite a while ago. Um, Elayne is specifically dressed as an Aes Sedai, rather than, you know, in her full queen of Andor regalia.

Sally: Regalia.

Emily: Because she's like, "I want them to see me as an Aes Sedai, not a queen," even though what she's asking them to do specifically benefits her as the queen.

Sally: It's so annoying.

Emily: She's like – and she's like, "That's my big – you know, 3-D chess move, is that I'm not dressed like the queen, but I'm asking them to do shit for me as the queen," and I'm like –

Sally: Actually, Robert –

Emily: That's nothing.

Sally: Your clothes do not give you an identity, like, at – like, they can help, but they don't actually give it to you, so she's, like, still the queen no matter what she's wearing.

Emily: Whatever the hell. Anyway, she goes to this tent where the four rulers are congregated, um, and we meet them. The ruler of Shienar is a man named Easar. He is just a guy.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: There's nothing – nothing too special about him. Uh, Kandor is Ethenielle. She was the point of view character, um, for the big Borderlander meeting, and she is incredibly bland. She's unmarried; that's her main, um – she's in her middle age, but she's unmarried, and that's Robert Jordan's big –

Sally: Which is such a sin.

Emily: Character point.

Sally: Against god.

Emily: Um, then there's this guy named Paitar – or perhaps Peter (laugh) – whose one character trait is that he's incredibly hot, but he's kind of old. But he's super hot.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Which I find refreshing because he has the same effect on people that Galad has –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But he's, like, in his fifties. And I'm like, good, you can still get it.

Sally: Good for him. You can still get it when you're fifty.

Emily: My guy. I can't remember if one of these guys is gay or –

Sally: One of, um, Ethenielle – I believe if I'm remembering it correctly – one of Ethenielle's, like, liegemen is heavily implied to be gay –

Emily: Oh, okay.

Sally: In the Path of Daggers – I don't remember his name, though, so it – it could be one of the people that are – is in this tent, but I can't remember.

Emily: I just don't remember either. I just vaguely remember a scene in A Memory of Light where Brandon Sanderson was like, "Look at my gay representation," and had Lan have a two-sentence conversation with another guy, and Lan, in his head, was like, "He prefers men," and I was like, what if you – (laugh)

Sally: Which actually isn't an appropriate way to talk about someone's sexuality, but.

Emily: What if you were quiet?

Sally: What – (laugh) what if?

Emily: Uh, number four is Tenobia of Saldaea, whose main character trait is that she's rude as hell. The first thing she does is say a racial slur to Aviendha. And Aviendha, because of course this is the way Robert Jordan wants to handle it, is like, "What's a racial slur? I've never been victimized in my entire life." (laugh) "What does that mean? It doesn't even make sense," and it's like, yeah, no, racial slurs don't make sense.

Sally: They – they don't.

Emily: That's a great point, Aviendha.

Sally: Good –

Emily: You're really breaking some ground here.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Aviendha should've just stabbed Tenobia.

Sally: (laugh) That would've been so iconic. Tenobia is an insufferable character. It's like, what if she was exactly like Faile, who is her cousin, except worse?

Emily: But worse. She – yeah, she's Faile but worse.

Sally: But just, like, worse in every way possible.

Emily: She really makes you think, “Wow, maybe Faile isn’t such a bad character.”

Sally: (laugh) “Maybe Faile’s really lovely.”

Emily: (laugh) “Maybe Faile is super nice, actually.” Um, so she’s Faile’s cousin. Uh, Davram Bashere’s niece. And she keeps being like, “Um, where’s my uncle? I want to talk to him,” and Elayne’s like, “Oh, that’s nice that she wants to talk to Davram Bashere. Yeah, he’s somewhere outside the city; I dunno; I can tell him you want to see him.” And I’m pretty sure, from what I recall, Tenobia wants to see Bashere because she’s super mad at him for fucking ditching Saldaea and being like, “I’m going to –” (laugh) “I’m going to take up with the Dragon Reborn.”

Sally: Yeah, like, his literal job is to be, like, the number one military man in Saldaea.

Emily: He’s the Marshal-General of Saldaea –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And he was like, “Peace out; there aren’t any wars in Saldaea. I’m going to go follow the Dragon Reborn around.”

Sally: I also – lest we forget – remember that Davram Bashere initially left Saldaea to chase down Mazrim Taim and kill him. So. (laugh)

Emily: Mazrim Taim ain’t dead, so technically job ain’t done, Tenobia.

Sally: Yeah, he’s like, “I’m still out here, the man is slippery.” (laugh)

Emily: I know – (laugh) God, Davram Bashere. Such a baller move, just being like, “Yeah, I’m not going back.”

Sally: “I’m not going back.”

Emily: “It’s just me, my army, and the Dragon Reborn.”

Sally: Two little peace signs. He’s got his leg thrown over the chair.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He’s like, “Hello.”

Sally: “It’s me.” I mean, if – if it was my job to do what Tenobia told me to do, I would also leave and go somewhere else, so.

Emily: I mean, yeah. She is insufferable. Bashere seems to be aware of that. Anyway. Um. So yeah, Tenobia’s a huge asshole. Um, and the meat of this meeting is Elayne being like, “Here’s what I want you to do. I want you to advance further into Andor and then just stay there.” And they’re like, “But then you’d attack us.” And she’s like, “But I pinky-promise I won’t.” And they’re like, “Oh. That would really benefit you, I guess, because it would get some people to

join your side, to, like, rebuff the giant army that is going on.” And she’s like, “Yes, exactly.” And they’re like, “Okay, well, in exchange, will you tell us where the Dragon Reborn is?” and she’s like, “For sure.” And then she tells them he’s in Murandy, which he’s not, so I don’t know what the whole big deal of her being like, “Now, I need to keep to the Three Oaths like Egg told us to, so I’m not going to tell a lie.” Then she’s like, “A search in Murandy would be profitable,” which I’m pretty sure is a lie because –

Sally: What’s in Murandy?

Emily: What’s in Murandy? Well, Talmanes, I think, right now.

Sally: (gasp) It would be profitable, then.

Emily: Yeah. (laugh)

Sally: Go get a slice of that French cake.

Emily: But not for long! He’s leaving soon.

Sally: That’s true. He is peacing out.

Emily: And – just – Rand is not in Murandy. And also, this is just Elayne – it makes me so angry. Elayne is just doing all this, like, secretarial work for Rand without passing on any of his messages. She’s, like, picking up the phone constantly, being like, “Oh, you want to talk to the Dragon Reborn? Sure, I’ll pass that on,” click. Doesn’t tell Rand any of it.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Because, I dunno, she has no actual method of getting in contact with Rand. Which, like, fair enough; if you were just to tell these people, “Listen, he was here a week ago; occasionally he visits because Andor is the way that it is. I will do my best to pass on a message to him, but honestly, he’s fucking nowhere right now.”

Sally: Yeah, “I don’t know – I don’t know where he is.” How hard is that to say?

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: “I don’t actually know where he is. You could try these couple places, where he’s been seen recently.”

Emily: Yeah. Like – Elayne, it’s not your problem – it’s not your responsibility to manage who goes after Rand.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Sorry? I know you’re, like, protective of him, but if this giant army of Borderlanders is like, “Where’s the Dragon Reborn?” and you meet with them, and honestly, they don’t seem particularly threatening, they’re just – seem to want to talk to him, you’re like, “Okay, great. Here’s some places he’s been seen.” That is Rand’s problem, not yours.

Sally: Yeah, also, Rand has a big giant army of his own.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And a bunch of men who can create explosions.

Emily: Also, the Borderlanders make a valid point. The Borderlanders are like, “Why the fuck is the Dragon Reborn spending all his time in fantasy Europe, rather than over here in fantasy Asia, which is where all the real, like, conflict is gonna happen with the Dark One?”

Sally: Yeah. They do make –

Emily: He can’t even be bothered – what?

Sally: Sorry, I was just agreeing with you. They’re very valid.

Emily: Yeah, he just can’t be fucking bothered to go, like, say hello?

Sally: Yeah. Like – yeah, like – that’s – they do make such a good point. What the fuck is Rand still doing in Cairhien? Get out of there.

Emily: What is he doing on his little Far Madding vacation, hunting down some random people, when he could be doing important diplomatic work? I’m sorry, I know everyone’s like, “Rand is so busy, he doesn’t have time to –” Teleporting! He can teleport!

Sally: Also, is Rand that busy? It feels like Rand continues to collect more and more people who are doing all the work for him.

Emily: Yes. He has, now, at this point, like a whole army of Aes Sedai who he can send to people and be like, “Hello, diplomacy.”

Sally: Yeah, you’ve got Merana right there. She – that’s her whole –

Emily: I know.

Sally: Thing.

Emily: He has only just now discovered that he can use Merana because Alanna was like, “Hey, did you know that actually some of us have skill sets?”

Sally: (laugh) No.

Emily: “Not just fantasy rape, like mine.”

Sally: (sigh) Um, no, Emily, women can only get pregnant. We’ve already been over this.

Emily: (sigh)

Sally: Their only skill set is having a womb.

Emily: And lying.

Sally: (laugh) And – and lying.

Emily: Those are the two things women are good for. Didn’t you know?

Sally: No, it's very – very exhausting, especially 'cause, yeah, the Borderlanders will be integral.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Obviously.

Emily: But no, they – I mean, they are integral. By all logic, they should be integral.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But they're not.

Sally: Rand is too busy, um, killing random people, ignoring the Seanchan invasion, not talking to any of his girlfriends except Min, and, uh, not bothering to rule – actually rule any of the countries he's in charge of. So.

Emily: What's he doing?

Sally: He literally does not have time to go up to the Borderlands. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) He's so stupid. I hate him.

Sally: He's so busy.

Emily: Okay, so –

Sally: At least we –

Emily: The Borderlands – what?

Sally: At least when he cleanses saidin, like, finally he has done something.

Emily: I know, but it's just so frustrating, because this whole book is like, yeah, he's gonna cleanse saidin, and I'm like, that could've been done – it's done in a single chapter.

Sally: Yeah, why wasn't that the first chapter of this book?

Emily: Just been like, "Well, done. Done-zo."

Sally: No, he had to go murder people for no reason.

Emily: (sigh)

Sally: I don't even think he even kills any of them.

Emily: No, he doesn't. We discussed that last time.

Sally: Oh, that's right. We did, sorry. Come on, Ed. Come say hi. Come tell us your thoughts. You, unlike Tybalt, seem to have some.

Emily: So the Borderlanders agree to this sketchy plan for some godforsaken reason. And then Elayne leaves with Birgitte and Aviendha, and at some point, she is so overcome by exhaustion

that she just, like, falls asleep. And Birgitte has to carry away from – her arms. And it's like, I've seen Elayne and other characters have some, like, incredibly busy days –

(cats fighting in the background)

Emily: where it would make sense for them to just, like, fall asleep, you know, and be very tired. This is not one of them.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: The most Elayne has done today is, like, go riding a little bit. And she had one meeting, and I get that that might be – have been, like, mentally and emotionally exhausting – I hate meetings –

Sally: Me too.

Emily: But, like, you're trying to tell me that Elayne is so exhausted that she's just, like, swooning into her Warder's arms? Which, like, baller move on Birgitte's part, by the way, being able to carry a fully grown person.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: She's so cool. Bridal style.

Sally: Birgitte's so sexy. Yeah.

Emily: Um, but yeah, that – that's really stretching my disbelief a little bit. And I really just think it's Robert Jordan just being like, "Now that she's pregnant, look at how vulnerable she is."

Sally: Yeah, I was gonna say, it definitely seems to him to be like, "I know a couple things about pregnancy. One of those is that women tend to get more tired because they are growing a human being inside of them." My understanding is that exhaustion doesn't hit one week after you become pregnant. (laugh)

Emily: (sing-song) It's been ... one week since you looked at me. It's been one week since you put your dick in me. (laugh)

Sally: Blegh. Blegh.

Emily: Come on.

Sally: "And now I'm so tired. I just fall asleep in Birgitte's arms." I would fall asleep in Birgitte's arms but because I wanted to.

Emily: Yeah, but because it was sexy, not because – (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, because I'd be like, "Ah, I'm so delicate. Oh, look at me falling." (laugh)

Emily: "Oh my God."

Sally: "I hope somebody catches me." Birgitte wouldn't catch me; she'd be like, "You're annoying." (laugh)

Emily: No, she would. She's very chivalrous. God, she's so sexy.

Sally: I think Birgitte should have a girlfriend. I think Gaidal Cain should be reincarnated as a woman in this cycle.

Emily: Gaidal Cain should've been a woman to begin with.

Sally: You're so right.

Emily: Birgitte should've been like, "Look at my incredibly ugly girlfriend." (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) "I love my ugly wife." (laugh)

Emily: That way she could – (laugh) That way we could've had peak comedy scenes where she and Mat are, like, looking at women, and Birgitte's like, "That woman is incredibly hot, but look at that one."

Sally: And Mat's like –

Emily: And Mat's like, "what the fuck?" (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Mat's like, "Uh, she – I mean, she's not my cup of tea." Birgitte's like, "Every woman is a queen, Mat. If she breathes, she's a thot." (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Ugh.

Emily: So anyway, new Birgitte headcanon.

Sally: You're so right. Ugh.

Emily: As they're, like, walking up to the palace, Halwin Norry is, like, fluttering around. He's like, "I need to talk to Elayne," and everyone's like, "It's not that urgent, Norry, can't you see her? She's so delicate and beautiful while she's asleep. Real fantasy princess here," and Halwin Norry's like, "THERE ARE ARMIES." (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: "Can you guys be less nuts for one second?"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "There's an invading army." And Elayne is like, "Okay, everyone. Let's get in formation. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Barf.

Emily: And immediately starts doing war preparations. Which is where we'll catch up with her next book, when – with Caemlyn under siege. With, um, you know –

Sally: That one asshole leading the other army.

Emily: Yeah, some other of the bad houses of Andor. I dunno.

Sally: A bad house, a monster house.

Emily: A bad house – ugh, I hated that movie.

Sally: Me too. It's haunting.

Emily: God. So creepy. Um. (sigh) Let's see. Favorite character, least favorite character. Can't say Elayne. I feel like we –

Sally: Oh, you're right.

Emily: That's too obvious.

Sally: Okay. Gonna say my least favorite character is Tenobia for the racism.

Emily: Oh, yeah, that's pretty bad.

Sally: Um, and I will say my favorite character – I feel like I also shouldn't say Halwin Norry because that's just, like, a home run immediately, you know?

Emily: Yeah, he's just always there. But, like, if he's the only thing keeping you going, if he's your shining light at the end of the tunnel, then –

Sally: He – he is my shining light, fluttering around like a nervous hummingbird, just –

Emily: Yeah. That's really powerful for him.

Sally: Yeah. Okay, I'll say Halwin Norry, then. I love that man.

Emily: Okay, I'll say my favorite character is, um, Paitar.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: Of Arafel, I guess is who he's from. Yeah. I just think – he's nice. I just think he's neat. (laugh)

Sally: I – I just think he's neat.

Emily: He's just representing a really powerful demographic, which is hot older men. You know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And, like, I would like to look at him.

Sally: Me too.

Emily: I want to know what he's about –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And looks like. Apparently he also writes poetry. Or maybe that was the other guy.

Sally: I hope both of – I hope they write poems to each other. I hope Paitar is also gay.

Emily: Yeah, I wish everyone in the Borderlands is gay. Um, and so I guess my least favorite character is ... gosh, Tenobia is such a gimme.

Sally: I know.

Emily: Um. Who's left, even? Oh, what's his name? We didn't even talk about him 'cause he's not worth talking about.

Sally: Oh, blegh, Mellar or whatever his name is.

Emily: Mellar, Doilin Mellar, who I just actually am not going to give any airtime to him from now on or the various subplots regarding him, so just doo ba doo ba do, all you need to know is he's no good and I hate him. Obviously, 'cause he's a fucking rapist.

Sally: Yeah, he's a no-good piece of shit. And I think Birgitte should get to kill him.

Emily: I think Birgitte should get to kill a lot of people. I think Aviendha should've got to kill Tenobia –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Just, like, one hit kill, right away.

Sally: Nat twenty. (laugh)

Emily: Do it, regicide, immediately. Yeah. And I think Birgitte should be able to kill Mellar every day.

Sally: Yeah, like Prometheus getting his liver eaten out every day.

Emily: Yeah, every day Birgitte's like, "Rise and shine, bitch."

Sally: (laugh) And beheads him.

Emily: "Time for an arrow in your fucking skull." (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Yeah.

Emily: "And beheads him." Yeah.

Sally: I think that would be nice.

Emily: I think that would be nice. It would be really, really nice for me.

Sally: That's Birgitte's version of heaven, when she goes back into the – when she's woven back into the Wheel or whatever. (laugh)

Emily: She's like, "Oh, hello, Gaidal. Be right back. I just have to go behead a man." And he's like, "That's my hot wife."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Okay, so those are those two chapters.

Sally: Those are those two chapters.

Emily: Terrible as they are. Good news is we're back with Mat next time for a little bit as the escape plan from hell comes together.

Sally: Hell, yeah.

Emily: There's some real, you know, ups and downs, topsy turvy. It's a real fun one.

Sally: Yeah, Mat is just being thrown into a Shakespearean comedy there at the end.

Emily: Yeah, he's really living.

Sally: Where he's like, "HOW many women do I have to get out of the city?"

Emily: "HOW many people am I just caravan-ing out through the circus?" and it's quite a ludicrous number. Um, so thanks, everyone, for listening.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Thanks to Glynna MacKenzie for our theme song and to our followers on social media and our patrons on Patreon. Do you have anything to add?

Sally: Yeah, I wanted to give a special social media shoutout to Julie McCormick, who is julie_tattoos on Instagram, who answered my call from last week and drew me the Mona Sheep-a.

Emily: Oh, yeah.

Sally: (laugh) So thank you, Julie.

Emily: It's very, very, very good.

Sally: I just –

Emily: Extremely good to look at.

Sally: Yeah, it is very fun. So.

Emily: Check it out, it's on our Twitter. And Insta, I think.

Sally: It's on our Twitter and our Instagram. Yeah. Um, so I just love it. I know I am very selfish when I ask for fanart because I know you guys are busy, but I do always love it. (laugh) So thank you for giving your limited time on this planet to making something like that. So.

Emily: Do you have a sign-off?

Sally: I do. While we were recording, we received the following email at the EHR email. The title is, all capitals – (laugh) “MANSCAPED x Everybody Hates Rand podcast.” And, you know what, this seems to be a lovely email –

Emily: Is it from Tumblr?

Sally: No, uh, it is someone offering to advertise on the podcast. So I am delighted to go see what type of manscaping they think our audience would be interested in. (laugh) Um, this person seems lovely. I just was not expecting to receive an email titled MANSCAPED, all caps, so.

Emily: It’s just really funny because ironically, at the same time, Tumblr, right now – the, like, only ad on Tumblr is for a ball hair trimmer.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: You’ll just be, like, scrolling along innocently, and suddenly it’ll be like – I think it’s probably the same – it’s almost certainly the same company.

Sally: (wheeze) Are we about to enter our, um – what is the McElroy –? Extreme Restraints? Is that it?

Emily: Extreme Restraints! (laugh)

Sally: Are we going to enter our Extreme Restraints era?

Emily: I would love that. If they pay me enough money, I’ll do it. I’ll talk all about getting an electric razor –

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: To shave your junk, you know? To get nice and smooth down there.

Sally: Yeah, I bet it is. Look, right here, you can get your fifteen percent off – we’re already giving them free advertising. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) Stop.

Sally: Wait, no, don’t listen! (laugh)

Emily: Goodbye, everyone.

Sally: Goodbye!