



Episode 220: What, Like It's Hard?

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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)

Sally: Ugh. We have also reached the part of the season where I want Emily to punch me in the shoulders every single day to just sort of realign them. And she won't. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah, for – some reason, I'm not okay with this plan.

Sally: (laugh) For some reason, she's averse to hitting me.

Emily: Yeah. I don't know – I don't know where that comes from. Morality who? (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. (to Ed) Will you punch me in the shoulders?

Emily: I mean, he probably would, if he could. If he had fists.

Sally: If Ed had fists, he would be hitting me.

Emily: He'd be punching us all the time. "Give me food!"

Sally: Okay – okay –

Emily: Ed's – Ed's power would increase exponentially if he had fists.

Sally: If he had fists. Oh, man, you'd be unstoppable –

Emily: It's terrifying.

Sally: With opposable thumbs. We'd never get you out of the garage.

Emily: Rocky seven over here. How many Rocky movies are there?

Sally: I have – I've never seen a single Rocky movie.

Emily: Okay, okay. This is Everybody Hates Rand, your friendly neighborhood Wheel of Time podcast. I'm Emily Juchau.

Sally: I'm Sally Goodger.

Emily: And this here book is Knife of Dreams.

Sally: Also, if you can hear that outrageously loud purring, that's Ed.

Emily: Yeah, he's – he's like a little lawn mower.

Sally: We are here with Knife of Dreams, book eleven in the Wheel of Time by Robert Jordan, season ten in hit podcast Everybody Hates Rand. Um.

Emily: I don't like this picture. I know it's of Grady or Neald 'cause of the black coat –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But it's not hot enough. Okay.

Sally: Yeah, it does not capture the raw sex appeal of the unionized Asha'man. He also looks like a major creep behind this curtain.

Emily: Yeah, I'd say Grady because he doesn't have his fancy mustaches, but then again, it's not like Darrell K. Sweet pays attention to –

Sally: Yeah, like, who the fuck is this?

Emily: Book descriptions.

Sally: Is that Gaul?

Emily: I think it's Gaul.

Sally: He looks like an old man.

Emily: Darrell K. Sweet continues to, um, have a real inability to figure out human proportions, particularly in the arm zone. Arms are –

Sally: Yeah. (laugh) Look at how he – I didn't even notice Perrin's arms.

Emily: Arms are quite short. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Um.

Emily: And Perrin's head is about the size of, like – I – I can't – I can't even contain it.

Sally: Perrin looks like Chuck Norris on the cover of this book. (laugh)

Emily: He does, really. He does. Gaul is also breaking the fourth wall to stare at us.

Sally: Oh, yeah, he's like, "Please free me."

Emily: It's really fucking creepy.

Sally: I'm assuming this is Berelain.

Emily: It's Galina.

Sally: Oh, it's Galina?

Emily: Yeah, you can just see her fancy red –

Sally: Oh.

Emily: Sash thing that she has to wear.

Sally: Oh, makes sense.

Emily: 'Cause in the prologue, Galina –

Sally: That's right, that's right.

Emily: Gets, um, in with the enemy. And I guess she's wearing white.

Sally: I didn't even notice.

Emily: But, um, she has a fucking huge rack, also. Also characteristic of Darrell K. Sweet –

Sally: Oh, yeah.

Emily: Who is just really wasted in these covers. He should've been drawing for Marvel in the 1970s.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um. Curtains. Why do they have curtains?

Sally: Inside a tent.

Emily: I guess – yeah, to indicate they're in a tent, but that's the world's tallest tent.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's like two of Gaul. Which is quite tall.

Sally: Yeah, and Gaul's like nine feet tall or whatever.

Emily: Yeah, Gaul is so – okay. Moving onward, ever onward. Um, this book's ... epigraph – (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Nailed it.

Emily: Is: "The sweetness of victory and the bitterness of defeat are alike a knife of dreams." No clue what that means.

Sally: Which means nothing.

Emily: It's literally just, like, some words slapped together.

Sally: Yeah. Like –

Emily: “Knife of dreams” doesn’t make any – like, that’s not, like, a phrase, you know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: No one’s ever like, “You know what? In my dreams –” Actually, I do have dreams that feature knives. They’re very upsetting.

Sally: Same. I got stabbed in my dreams last night.

Emily: I do the stabbing. (laugh)

Sally: Oh, nice. This is why we’re so compatible. (laugh)

Emily: We’re compatible! (laugh) I’m resisting my urges when Sally asks me to – to punch her in the shoulders.

Sally: To punch me in the shoulders.

Emily: I only have dreams where I’m wielding a knife in self-defense, and it’s always very –

Sally: That’s fine.

Emily: Upsetting that I have to stab someone –

Sally: Yeah, that is very upsetting.

Emily: With it. Um.

Sally: But, like, what would knife – like, your – the knife is made of dreams? Does that mean it’s nothing?

Emily: Yeah. And that –

Sally: Like, I have – I spent so many years of my life analyzing poetry to death in English classes, and I just feel like I don’t even have anything to work with.

Emily: Yeah, there’s no clues in this metaphor. I feel like Robert Jordan just dropped a shit-ton of acid.

Sally: And was like, “It’s like a – a – a knife of dreams.”

Emily: “It’s like a knife of dreams.”

Sally: “The bitterness of defeat.”

Emily: The – I mean, like, “the sweetness of victory and the bitterness of defeat,” okay, okay, you got me.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: This is – will be a book about warfare in some way.

Sally: Yeah, totally.

Emily: Victory, defeat. Got it, got it. “Are alike,” okay, there are similar things about victory and defeat, I suppose. “The knife of dreams.” What’s that?

Sally: Yeah, I – also, like, um –

Emily: It feels so much like he’s trying to say something really profound but had a stroke midway through.

Sally: (laugh) I feel like we’ve had this conversation before, like in one of the early books. The problem with these references to prophecies and other books that are written inside –

Emily: Yeah, this is from “Fog and Steel” by some dude named Madoc Comadrin.

Sally: I mean, “Fog and Steel” is a sick title. Good job, Mad – Madric.

Emily: I know. But, like, we don’t know anything about Fog and Steel by Madoc Comadrin. For all we know, it’s, like, a bodice-ripper romance novel.

Sally: Seriously. (laugh) Um, the problem is that they are – they are presented to us as if we have the appropriate paratext or as if I could open “Fog and Steel” and know what this means. You know, that’s how they’re presented to us. But we don’t have access to those. So what is supposed to be world-building just leaves me confused and frustrated.

Emily: Yeah, we’ve said this eleven times – ten times now, since we skipped Path of Daggers – (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: But Robert Jordan, you can’t give me the title of the book in an epigraph just to justify the title of the book.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: The epigraph also has to mean something.

Sally: Yeah, and it’s like –

Emily: You’re not connecting the dots.

Sally: There are also other – I don’t know, if the title really mattered to you so much, like, weave it into the text itself. Rand is reading “Fog and Steel,” the bodice-ripping novel –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: With some surprisingly profound things to say about warfare. (laugh)

Emily: Surprisingly? Who knows. I feel like romance novelists probably have more astute –

Sally: You’re right.

Emily: Things to say about humanity than –

Sally: You're right, you're so right.

Emily: Robert Jordan of all people.

Sally: I apologize to all bodice-ripping writers. I don't say "bodice-ripping" in any sort of – I mean that very fondly. And I – I think it's very impressive.

Emily: Yeah, I fucking love the idea of bodice ripping. Yeah.

Sally: Also, if you're strong enough to rip a bodice –

Emily: Strength – the strength it takes.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: The boobs –

Sally: The – (laugh)

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: The strength it takes. The boobs it takes.

Emily: Well, just to, like, fill the bodice, you know? (laugh)

Sally: Oh, yeah, totally.

Emily: And then to be free when the bodice is off. I just – that's something I think about a lot.

Sally: It's very nice.

Emily: Um –

Sally: Anyway, we open with Galad.

Emily: Yeah, this book isn't about my sexual fantasies, it's about Galad. A different – Robert Jordan's sexual fantasy. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, Robert Jordan's sexual fantasy. And then we get to Ituralde, which –

Emily: Is also my – our sexual fantasy, yeah. We're sort of vascillating wildly between – 'cause, like, I'd fuck Pevara, but not Suroth.

Sally: No, you're right. We kinda – 'cause it's like, Galad, Ituralde, Suroth, Pevara – Galina? And then Egg? In the prologue?

Emily: 'Cause there's some – Galina, Alviarin, and Egg. And I would neither fuck Galina nor Alviarian.

Sally: Yeah. So we're – we're mostly alternating, yeah.

Emily: Mostly, yeah. I'd, like, fuck Galad if, like, we were in a – in a – on an island. (laugh)

Sally: On an island. I feel like –

Emily: And I was really bored. (laugh)

Sally: Okay. Those are Emily's parameters. "I'm just, like, bored." I feel like Galad would just need to get rid of some of his hang-ups about a lot of things in order for that to be enjoyable.

Emily: I don't think Galad would be good at sex. I know we've probably said this before, but I just think he's too attractive. (laugh)

Sally: He's too attractive; he's never had to try.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: He's also just –

Emily: I also don't believe he's ever had sex, so.

Sally: Um, no, that would be immoral.

Emily: Yeah, he'd have to – have to –

Sally: He'd have to get married first.

Emily: He wears a CTR ring, so. That's, like, in Mormon culture, a purity ring, just so you know.

Sally: God, I haven't seen one of those in –

Emily: Yeah, they've kind of gone out of – gone out of fashion.

Sally: They used to be that very intense green color.

Emily: Yeah, I don't know where that came from. It might've been symbolic of something, but I don't know of what. Okay. Here we are. We – we're doing the first four points of view. The first one is Galad, as he, accompanied by three, uh, Whitecloaks ... (laugh) The first one is Galad, who, as you'll recall, is a Whitecloak, and he has been – not been in the narrative for a few books.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Quite a few books, actually, I think. I'm not sure we've seen him since, uh, book five?

Sally: Yeah, I think you're right.

Emily: Um, when Elayne and Nynaeve crossed paths with him when they were sort of fleeing from Tarabon to Salidar, um, and we had the whole incident where he and Masema's sort of combined efforts completely destroyed a village, um, which is fun – a great memory for all involved. Um, but we know Galad's just been with the Whitecloaks, and so we've mostly been hearing about him via Morgase, who is herself hearing about him –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: So reports have been second- and third-hand.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And you have to appreciate the fact that Robert Jordan was just like, “Ah, Galad doesn’t have anything to do, so I will not keep him in the narrative.”

Sally: Revolutionary.

Emily: It’s Robert Jordan, so you would totally expect him to just be sort of checking in with Galad every five minutes the way he does with other characters that we don’t need to hear from.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, I would have expected Galad – like, us to see the scene where Galad finds out about Morgase, but we don’t. He just tells us about it in retrospect, which was maybe Robert Jordan’s first best writing decision.

Sally: (laugh) We should make him a trophy.

Emily: “You did a good writing job. It only took you eleven books to get there.”

Sally: Hey, we’ve all gotta practice.

Emily: Yeah. (laugh)

Sally: It doesn’t – (laugh)

Emily: You’re right. Most people practice and don’t publish their first attempts, but Robert Jordan just really had the hook-up.

Sally: Yeah, I should pull up the novel I wrote in middle school and be like, “I think the public should see this.” (laugh)

Emily: Well, marry a publisher, and maybe you’ll do it.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: Um, nepotism? Robert Jordan?

Sally: No.

Emily: Never. So Galad is riding up to this, like, base camp of the Whitecloaks and he just give us – we also haven’t checked in with any of the other Whitecloaks –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Which, again, is a breath of fresh air and –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Happily enough, oddly, we can just figure out what’s going on with them by Galad telling us. He tells us that the Whitecloaks have indeed been allying with the Seanchan –



Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Per Balwer's reports to Perrin.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, this is a reduced number of the Whitecloaks since there was a big battle between the Whitecloaks and the Seanchan when they were invading this part of the country.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, but now they're on the Seanchan's side and there's still sort of an ongoing power play between Valda, who's the Lord Commander now, and Asunawa, who is the main Questioner guy.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Mr. Spanish Inquisition. Um, and Galad rides up accompanied by a guy named Trom –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: I always wanna call him Tron, you know –

Sally: Tron.

Emily: Like Tron: Legacy?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, who seems to be, like, Galad's commanding officer.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He has a higher rank than Galad, anyway. And oddly enough, Galad is also with young Bornhald – Bornhald junior, Dain Bornhald –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Who is struggling with alcoholism, um, and has no other character traits –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, and Byar –

Sally: Uh-huh.

Emily: The worst man you know.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Who insists unironically in this chapter that, like, "I've done some terrible things, but I would never rape a woman." (laugh) It's such a wild, like –

Sally: I know.

Emily: That's where you draw the line, dude?

Sally: I know. It's so bizarre. 'Cause Robert Jordan really is presenting, like, the worst men you know in this scenario.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: It's like – I know we make that joke a lot of the time, but these are, like, religious extremists who routinely hunt, kill, and torture women – and other people.

Emily: Yeah, just whoever they sort of lay their hands on.

Sally: Just whoever they want. Um, we've actively seen Byar and young Bornhald both do, like, atrocious things on the battlefield or just, like –

Emily: To prisoners.

Sally: On the side of the road. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah. Just in a ditch somewhere.

Sally: And Robert Jordan is like, "But I – I need you to know that this is where they draw the line." It's like some – like, obviously it's a bad thing to commit rape –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Nobody's saying that it isn't.

Emily: But Robert Jordan is presenting such a, like, odd scale of crimes.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He's like, "Okay, it's like everyone knows: the worst crime there is is murder, then it's rape, and then just, you know, then there's a line, and then it's atrocities against humanity," you know?

Sally: Yeah, like, those are fine. And also, like, are you trying to, like, redeem them in this situation and be like, "Don't worry, they've done some bad things, but they would never rape somebody." It's like –

Emily: It's such a bizarre –

Sally: That does not make them good people.

Emily: Like, I just don't believe Byar would care.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Especially because, like, Morgase went to the White Tower.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: If Byar cared, something I believe he might do, it would be because he doesn't think people should, like, dirty themselves –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: By sleeping with Aes Sedai, you know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It'd be more like a purity thing than anything.

Sally: Totally.

Emily: So it's just like Robert Jordan fundamentally not understanding his own characters –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which is, of course, a great way to start the eleventh book in the series.

Sally: Yeah, it's also just, like, a – I – like, I – Valda, as a person in power, with, like, religious authority, who is a rapist himself, makes much more sense than characters who we've seen commit war crimes being like, "No, that's where I draw the line." You know, there's –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Just some sort of, like, logical fallacy going on there. And, like, maybe that's just me being a little too unfair, but like you said, it just doesn't seem to make a lot of sense.

Emily: No, I think Robert Jordan has a vested interest in the project of continually insisting that people can do really bad things because they're part of really bad systems but they're still good people.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Sort of a Confederate general type thing.

Sally: Mm, yeah.

Emily: You know, we should honor Robert E. Lee 'cause he was, like, a good guy, a gentleman, you know. It's not his fault he was born in the South, owning a plantation, and fought in the Civil War, blah blah blah blah.

Sally: (whisper) On the wrong side.

Emily: Yeah. So just, like, the usual. Anyway, they all ride up as, uh, Valda and his crew are about to leave to go on some campaign – oh, they're about to go to a meeting with the Seanchan. And Trom's like, "Yeah, sorry to delay you, but I have a guy who wants to do a trial by combat," and Valda's like, "Okay," and, "Yeah, let's do it." And Trom's like, "Okay, Galad, step up and make up your accusation." (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Galad's like, "Okay, I accuse you of assaulting my mom and also murdering her."

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Galad, like Gawyn, believes Morgase is dead, although the timelines there are different.

Sally: And the responses are –

Emily: Yeah, it's pretty interesting.

Sally: Different.

Emily: Um, and long story short, Valda gets kind of cornered into agreeing to this, and, um, they do their trial by combat. We are told that Valda is, like, a swordmaster, and he's very good, so of course we have to build him up, you know, in order to give Galad an actual challenge.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, Galad wins, obviously –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Uh, RIP to Valda except not, 'cause he's a gross piece of shit.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, and as soon as he's dead, basically, the Questioners leave, and all the other Whitecloaks just, like, throw their lot in with Galad.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You know? They're kind of just like, "Yeah, we love watching a dude kill another dude. That's really sexy – and he's super –"

Sally: "And he's, like, so hot."

Emily: "And he's, like, hot, so what are we supposed to do, not follow him?"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Not elect him president?" You know –

Sally: "Yeah, that – that simply does not work for me." It also has very, like, werewolf pack mentality.

Emily: Yeah. (laugh)

Sally: Like, "You've killed the alpha, so you're the alpha now; there's nothing I can do." (laugh)

Emily: "I'm the alpha now."

Sally: They're just like, "Yeah, this is Galad; he's our hot president, and so we go."

Emily: Yeah. But it's, like, a trial by combat already –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: There's not a whole lot of logic here.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: The only – and, like, Robert Jordan clearly needs to get Galad in charge –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Of the Whitecloaks. I would have believed that Galad just, like, worked his way up in the ranks –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Pretty quickly because he's such a goody two-shoes, and –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That's what the Whitecloaks like, but whatever. Now Galad's in charge, and Galad's whole platform is that he wants to fight on the right side in the Last Battle, which he's like, "That means we're going to be fighting alongside Aes Sedai, so fucking deal with it. Get on board or get lost."

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: "And I do not want to be allied with the Seanchan."

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Which is a bold stance, obviously, for the Whitecloaks to, once again, be taking the moral high ground.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But, like, at least someone is.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's pretty pathetic that it's Galad, the leader of the Whitecloaks –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And not Perrin Aybara –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Or Mat Cauthon.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So just sort of humiliating for everyone involved.

Sally: I agree.

Emily: Um, there is sort of the usual ring of sexism here –

Sally: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Emily: Galad – you know, we’re doing – we’re doing this patriarchal thing of defending a woman’s honor.

Sally: Yep.

Emily: That’s already kind of bad enough, but it’s sort of emphasized by the fact that Galad is mourning Morgase when he gets there, he gets really angry when Valda says some gross thing about her, and then he kills Valda, and then it’s, like, no emotions about Morgase. I don’t think he even mentions her after that.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It’s not like he’s like, “Okay, Mother, you can rest in peace now,” or whatever, “‘cause I know you would have wanted me to kill your –”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “Rapist/murderer.” He just sort of like, “Well, on to the next thing.”

Sally: Yeah, that’s done. Check.

Emily: And it’s like, I don’t doubt you, Galad, that, like, you loved Morgase, you know? And that she was your family and important to you. But, like, the way you’re behaving is so unhinged right now. Like –

Sally: Yeah, I think it’s also a very, like, masculine portrayal of grief and vengeance, this idea that once you complete a task, the feeling is done.

Emily: Yeah, it’s why John Wick is a great series of films.

Sally: Yes.

Emily: Because the trial does not end once you have killed the person responsible – you’ve deemed responsible.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It’s a compounding –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, cycle of violence and grief.

Sally: Yes, absolutely.

Emily: That’s how it works. But no, this is – we’re just really simplifying it right here.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Woman gets raped – regardless of her feelings on the matter and how she’s doing – and notably, Morgase is still alive; no one has bothered to figure that out yet –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: None of her living children.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which I guess is all of them. Um, regardless of that, what matters is that Galad did what he decided was the correct course of action, and now it’s done and we can move on.

Sally: Yeah. Um, yes to everything you said. I also wanted to do, like, a quick ask to you who is more familiar with Arthurian legend because so much of – like, Galad is very much occupying a, quote unquote, white – a literal white knight in this, um –

Emily: Yeah, Galad is, like –

Sally: Scenario.

Emily: Has the same – he’s Galahad, who is the guy –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Who gets the Holy Grail, actually, or sometimes it’s Percival, but sometimes it’s Galahad, basically because he’s a big virgin.

Sally: (laugh) I mean.

Emily: That’s it. (laugh)

Sally: Good for him.

Emily: Um, Morgase’s namesake is more frequently this sort of, like – she’s sometimes conflated with Morgana –

Sally: Mm.

Emily: Who’s this evil witch, or she’s Arthur’s sister or his mom or something like that –

Sally: Mm.

Emily: But she doesn’t really – I don’t know, I don’t remember, there’s a very weird family tree there, much like Rand and Elayne and stuff. But, um, I don’t know of any, like, trials by combat or things like that.

Sally: I was just curious.

Emily: A big part of Arthurian legend is, like, the subject of women’s honor –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: You know, there's Guinevere's whole affair with Lancelot, but I don't recall if, um – you know, it – it depends on the source and it's sort of taken as a matter of course. Like, in some myths, Arthur's mom is literally raped by his dad –

Sally: Mm.

Emily: As sort of just, like, a –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Par for the course conquest type of thing.

Sally: Right.

Emily: So I don't know. I do think it sort of lends itself to Galad's ongoing knight, chivalry –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Mythological stereotype, you're right.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Very much white knight.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Interesting. Interesting. Okay, thank you for the context.

Emily: Um, we then move on to Ituralde, the hottie.

Sally: Beloved!

Emily: He's, like, hiding in a tree or something. I don't know what he's doing. He's, like, looking through a telescope. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Who's just watching as, like, this town gets attacked, um, or rather, like, there's a – there's a little town in Tarabon next to a Seanchan camp, a big Seanchan camp, which is mostly Taraboner soldiers themselves, who have been conscripted, but there's a few Seanchan people in charge and at least one damane. Um, and some Dragonsworn Taraboners, like, approach clumsily –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: To draw them out of their camp, you know, like –

Sally: Right.

Emily: Make up battle lines.



Sally: Right.

Emily: And then, uh, Ituralde's guys just fucking snipe 'em from the treeline or whatever.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's a very, you know, sick little scene. We get very little from Ituralde, you know, just these little snippets –

Sally: Totally.

Emily: Throughout these, uh, last few books, and it's fun to just see him, like – he decided on a course of action, which was that he was going to fucking wreck the Seanchan's entire day –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And he's doing it.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's just really nice to watch that happen.

Sally: It's excellent.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Um. Yeah, it's – it plays into this just, like, A, very satisfying thing of seeing one single character in the Wheel of Time series follow through on a task. (laugh)

Emily: Ituralde and Galad – (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: Are somehow the moral epicenters of this –

Sally: It's like, okay, I had – didn't have that on my Bingo card at the beginning of the Eye of the World –

Emily: Like, okay. (laugh) Whatever.

Sally: It's also very satisfying to watch him do, like, a good job of it. So much of what we see against the Seanchan, unless you are Rand al'Thor, creating human meat grinder two-point-oh –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: It's all of us just getting our ass kicked by the Seanchan, you know, so Ituralde being like –

Emily: “What, like it's hard?”

Sally: Yeah. “How about we just, like, sprinkle a little guerilla warfare across Tarabon –”

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: “And fuck you.”

Emily: He’s like, “I’ll sneak into Tarabon –”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “Using their very easily replicated uniforms. It’s literally just paint on armor.”

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: “Fuck you.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “I’ll just sneak –”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “And, um, I’ll just kill you from a distance.”

Sally: “I’m just going to destroy all your supply lines –”

Emily: “Targeting your damane first –”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “And, just, bam, that’s it. Goodbye.”

Sally: “Booyah.”

Emily: Exactly. It’s just –

Sally: And we’re just like –

Emily: “What, like it’s hard?”

Sally: “What, like it’s hard?” With his little velvet beauty mark –

Emily: I know, with his little – just short king energy.

Sally: Exactly. Short king of my heart.

Emily: Bashere’s like, “We had this horrific, horrific campaign against the Seanchan,” and Ituralde’s like, “Oh, you – you mean you lost it?”

Sally: (laugh) “Oh. That’s really embarrassing, Davram.”

Emily: “That’s humiliating for you.”

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: “I found it incredibly easy to beat their asses.”

Sally: Um. Yeah, and Ituralde notes that he's got little bands of, like, two to three hundred people, all across Tarabon, doing very similar sort of raids.

Emily: Yeah, and we get to hear about that in the next –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Point of view. Um, Suroth, who is lying in bed in the palace of, um, Ebou Dar, thinking about how Tuon is missing and how it's gonna totally fuck her up, she'll probably get executed for it if she can't find Tuon or if Tuon's dead, and she just, like, gives us her logic about this, and it's just, like, it's all wrong. You know? (laugh)

Sally: I know.

Emily: It's, like, sort of embarrassingly all wrong, but granted – like – like, I don't know, she's like, um, “And some damane escaped, which would definitely require sul'dam,” and I'm like, do you guys think only sul'dam can take their collars off?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Any – like, anyone can do that.

Sally: Like – yeah. Mat figured it out in, like, three seconds flat.

Emily: Three – like, literally. They – it's just super easy to do, so how is that, you know, your go-to?

Sally: Yeah, I don't – I don't know.

Emily: So, she's just, like, listing off the reasons she's in for it, and we're just like, wrong, wrong wrong, wrong wrong wrong.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: When, um, her door opens and Liandrin, who we also haven't seen in six books or so, um, sneaks in. She has been basically shafted, I guess, from Moghedien to Semirhage –

Sally: Mm.

Emily: I mean, I know Semirhage isn't, like, literally in charge of her here; it's just, like, you know, spheres of power –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's kind of funny to be like – Moghedien like, “I can't handle this bitch anymore. You take her.” Um, we last saw Liandrin getting punished by Moghedien by getting wrapped in this shield that basically means she'll never be able to channel again. And she was sold into slavery in Seanchan, so as usual, the Forsaken are just really holding the line.

Sally: Yeah, what a bunch of fun people.

Emily: Anyway, Liandrin's just there to tell, um, Suroth that a general wants to talk to her, but it's a great opportunity for her to grovel and be humiliated and Suroth to be sadistic and mean, like all evil ladies in the Wheel of Time.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: So just sort of our usual dynamic there.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: But Suroth goes out to meet this general, who's got, like, people running around, scurrying, and she's like, "What's the deal?" and he's like, "Yeah, we have a big problem over in Tarabon, which is that, like, on the same day, like, a ton of our supply chains just got fucked."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And she's like, "Wot?" And he's like, "Yeah, I'm, like, hearing rumors about this Ituralde guy, but really it's just a total mess over there. Oh, also the Whitecloaks have deserted." (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) By the way.

Emily: Except for Asunawa and his little band of misfits.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, and Suroth is like, "Okay, well, I don't care about the Whitecloaks; they're just deserters," and he's like, "Seven thousand deserters, okay," and she's like, "And just, like, send more people to Tarabon and get me Ituralde's head on a platter."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And this fucking general dude, bless his heart, is just like – (deep breath) "Yeah, okay."

Sally: "Sure."

Emily: "Sure." Not –

Sally: "Can't really say no."

Emily: Yeah, okay. He comes pretty close to saying no, which is pretty funny –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: If he'd just been like, "No, we can't do that." I would've been like, alright.

Sally: That's not really how war works.

Emily: Yeah, what is Suroth gonna do? Execute him? I don't really feel like she could.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: At this point. Um, anyway, Suroth's all pissed about having – you know, not being able to stomp around and throw a tantrum the way she wanted to –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: So she goes back to her room and is immediately assailed by Semirhage – (laugh)

Sally: With the most bonkers news you've ever heard in your entire life. (laugh)

Emily: Semirhage is like, "How would you like to be the Empress?" and Suroth is like, "I can't be the – " Like –

Sally: "How would I like to be Barbie on the moon?" Like – (laugh)

Emily: "Even – even thinking about that is ludicrous –"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Semirhage is like, "Well, the Empress is dead, so, like, you could." And Suroth is like, "If the Empress is dead, that means, like, her whole family is out there, it's gonna be some real Game of Thrones shit, not to mention Tuon –"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Who may or may not be alive over here, and I'm just gonna be executed horribly," and Suroth's like, "Ha ha, my bad, I did not explain fully: everyone is dead. The entire Seanchan, like, imperial family is dead, dead, dead, and now the entire continent is in shambles," and I'm like, God, it was that easy? (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, why, though? Also, is my question.

Emily: She's like, "Let the lord of chaos rule," and I'm like, over there, though?

Sally: Yeah, I think you missed the target. I –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: It makes no sense to me.

Emily: I can't – I can't comprehend Semirhage's motivations. I do appreciate the efficiency with which she carried it out.

Sally: I know, it's pretty amazing.

Emily: It's kind of baller that she –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Just was like, "I see an empire, I kill the entire imperial family, boom, empire dead."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's just like, oh.

Sally: Oh.

Emily: So – I mean, that’s a pretty efficient approach to fascism, I guess, so.

Sally: Yeah, there is also just sort of, like, a – I know it’s very, um, horrific to have committed a massacre, but there is also something sort of gleeful in seeing one of the Forsaken actually do –

Emily: Something.

Sally: Something – some big, evil things –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: In sort of just a way that’s like, “I’m a bad person who does bad things, and I don’t necessarily need to have some sort of complicated Demandred-esque plan.”

Emily: Yeah, Semirhage is like, “What, like killing twenty people is hard? I can just do that.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “Like, literally any time. I can just show up, kill them, and then bam, the entire continent is in disarray. You know, it’s a real Europe post-WWII situation.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it’s like, oh, you’re right. Like, that is evil. But it is also efficient. And we don’t usually see those two things together in the Wheel of Time.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um. And, you know, like, it’s the Seanchan. I don’t really care.

Sally: Yeah, I don’t really care. It’s being – it’s like being told a bunch of Hitler’s inner circle got murdered. You want me to be upset about that?

Emily: Yeah, you’d be like, “Sweet.”

Sally: “Sick.”

Emily: “Okay.”

Sally: “Kill more of them while you’re at it.”

Emily: “Bye.” You know? Anyway, so Suroth’s like, “Oh. Oh.” And Semirhage is like, “Yeah, so, like, find Tuon, ‘cause she’s the last princess or whatever,” because of course we have to make Tuon not just the, like, heir apparent to the imperial throne –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But, like, as soon as she gets back, she’s gonna be the Empress.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Gotta just totally eliminate all possible delays. So Suroth's like, "Okay, yeah, I'll do that. Sweet."

Sally: And it's like, whatever.

Emily: Boom, baby. We then move over to Pevara, who's in a meeting with the head of the Red Ajah and another of, like, the sitters, and they're basically just talking about how they've received all this news from Cairhien and from the Aes Sedai who went to the Black Tower and got bonded, and they're basically like, "Yup, Aes Sedai got bonded at the Black Tower, and here we have a bunch of Aes Sedai who are, um, apparently now sworn to Rand al'Thor and also have been healed from stilling."

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And they're like, "That can't be right. That's crazy." And this lady's like, "I mean, Sashalle told me herself. I don't know why –"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "What – why would she lie about that?"

Sally: Yeah. It's also just like, I feel like we get this news every 300 pages.

Emily: Yeah. It's so – it's so true.

Sally: (laugh) Like –

Emily: Happened four books ago, and everyone's just, like –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: The slow trickle-down of information is not exciting at all.

Sally: No.

Emily: Um, so we're just like, yeah – and they're just like, "Yeah, it's only been twelve days since the cleansing of saidin," and I'm like, Christ. It felt like so much longer than that.

Sally: Yeah. It's been, like, three whole books or whatever the fuck.

Emily: Yeah. God.

Sally: Two whole books.

Emily: Um, but this lady – I can't remember her name – is like, "So anyway, I just think you should move forward with the plan to make – to go to the Black Tower and bond them as Warders, so get on that, Pevara." Pevara's like, "Okay." She's, like, assigned to a gnarly group project with this other lady, and Pevara's like, "I'm gonna have to do all the work."

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And I'm like, yeah, that's what group projects are, bestie.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But, um, Pevara then goes to meet Yukiri, one of the other Black Ajah hunters, who tells her, like, “Yeah, the latest Black Ajah lady we found is another dead end,” ‘cause they all –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Only know a couple of others –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And blah blah blah blah and, “We’ve had to find Talene,” who’s the first lady they found, “‘cause she’s been summoned by the imperial death march or whatever –”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “And they wanna – they’re probably gonna interrogate her, so we hid her in the basement.” (laugh) Like these people aren’t magic. Like they can’t find people in the basement.

Sally: Yeah. Hmm.

Emily: Um, but they’re like, “Okay, yeah, well, that’s that.” And, um, Pevara’s like, “Why don’t we just go to this big meeting and just, like, kick some ass?” and Yukiri’s like, “‘Cause we’d die,” and Pevara’s like, “Yeah, okay, fair point.”

Sally: “This sign can’t stop me because I can’t read.”

Emily: “I can’t read.” Pevara just really wants to, like, do some violence, so I’m – I’m sad that she’s just sort of trapped here in the bureaucracy for now.

Sally: Yeah, I think she’d be another Wheel of Time character I would nominate to have a gun.

Emily: Yeah. Give Pevara a gun –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: See what she does with it.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Alright. Um, they are then met by either Seaine or Saerin; I can’t keep track of them – one of the “S” names – the girl who was originally given this task by Elaida – who comes up to them and is like – (laugh) “Guys, Elaida just asked me how – how it was going with my, like, looking for proof that Alviarin is a traitor,” and they’re like, “What?” and she’s like, “I swear to God, she was not specific in the beginning.” (laugh) So –

Sally: (laugh) So –

Emily: They’re like, “Okay. Well. I mean, that means Elaida could be Black Ajah. We’ve been operating under the illusion that she couldn’t be, ‘cause she was the one who assigned us this –”

Sally: Yeah.



Emily: “But, oh, actually, she really could be.” So they’re just, like, in this awkward position now. Um.

Sally: They’re like, “Well, we thought the one thing that would protect us from torturing and imprisoning women in the basement was the fact that the Amyrlin ordered us to torture and imprison women in the basement.”

Emily: “And now it turns out we’ve just been doing that.” (laugh)

Sally: “We’ve just been, like, doing that. Oh, no.”

Emily: Get everything in writing, people.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Instructions from your boss? Have them write them down.

Sally: Yes.

Emily: Be like, “I can’t possibly remember unless you write them down for me.”

Sally: That’s the EHR hot tip.

Emily: God.

Sally: Everything in writing, as my – bring it back to my mother, as she says, “If you didn’t document it, it didn’t happen.”

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: So.

Emily: Elaida’s – (laugh) Oh, you dummies.

Sally: What do you think her face was, Serene or Saerin or whatever, as she got that news? Do you think she just was like, “Keep a straight face, keep a straight face, keep a straight face.” (laugh)

Emily: I think she was holding a glass, and it shattered. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: She just was like, “What the fuck?”

Sally: Ah, the Wheel of Time TV show really should be a comedy.

Emily: I know. I could make it a comedy so easily.

Sally: I know. There are some pretty –

Emily: Just have, like, one character who’s constantly breaking the fourth wall –

Sally: Yeah. Gaul, apparently. (laugh)

Emily: And just do it documentary-style.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Just constant – (laugh)

Sally: What We Do in the Shadows-esque. Constantly.

Emily: Yeah. Have people being interviewed constantly.

Sally: Yeah. Confessional time. (laugh)

Emily: Exactly. That's when all of the – all of the Darkfriend things would be.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You know, it would be like, confessional – confessional time – Valda would be like, “I did not do anything to your mother,” and then we'd switch to confessional time, and he'd be like, “I totally fucking did.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “I did crimes.”

Sally: “I did crimes.”

Emily: So anyway, guys, that's the first four action-packed scenes of Knife of Dreams. I mean, two of them actually were action-packed.

Sally: Yeah, two of them were very good.

Emily: The other two were just kind of like, “Aren't women stupid?” You know, the usual.

Sally: Yeah. I mean, three out of four were pretty solid. I like –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Being with Pevara; I think she's a fun character, even though her plot becomes increasingly more convoluted and ridiculous.

Emily: I know. Who knows what's going on?

Sally: Um, and I like being with Ituralde, and I like watching rapists die, so.

Emily: Yeah, we can at least get behind that.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You go, Galad.

Sally: You go, Galad.

Emily: You go.

Sally: Galahad.

Emmily: Let's go, lesbians.

Sally: Let's go, lesbians.

Emily: Um, so that's that.

Sally: That is that. Welcome to Knife of Dreams.

Emily: Welcome to Knife of Dreams. Next time, as previously stated, we will be with Galina; um, Alviarin, briefly; and Egg. Okay, everyone. Thanks for listening. Thanks to Glynna MacKenzie for our theme song. Thanks to our patrons on Patreon and our followers on social media. Um.

Sally: Um, at this point, um, all of the Knife of Dreams stuff is up on our website, so if you want to read along with us, our reading schedule is up there. Um, hello? As well as – that is always a great resource to listen to the podcast if you're having any trouble on your, um, podcast listening apps or whatever.

Emily: Aw.

Sally: Um, you can find all of our transcripts over there – oh, did you finally realize that that's quite warm?

Emily: It's the heating pad.

Sally: It's the heating pad. IT's why –

Emily: That's what it does.

Sally: I put it out specifically for you. Uh, yeah, so there's lots of stuff you can find on our website; it can be a good resource for you.

Emily: Yeah, check it out. Do you have a sign-off?

Sally: Oh, gosh. Do I? So many bad things happened yesterday.

Emily: Oh, jeez.

Sally: Um, this is a cute one from my nephew, Declan.

Emily: Oof.

Sally: Um, my mother called me earlier this week to say, "I have something to relay to you from Declan." And I was like, "Oh, boy howdy, what's this?"

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: She's like, "Declan would like to invite you to a pumpkin-carving extravaganza." (laugh) I was like, "Ooh, an extravaganza. What does that entail?" And she said, "Well, according to

Declan, we will carve a pumpkin,” and I was like, “One pumpkin?” and she’s like, “Unclear.” (laugh)

Emily: A single pumpkin. Extravaganza. (laugh)

Sally: Unclear how many pumpkins. She –

Emily: It’s a big pumpkin.

Sally: She’s like, “Also, we will be baking cupcakes.” And I was like, “Okay, that sounds – anything else?” and she’s like, “No. End of extravaganza.” (laugh)

Emily: That’s my idea of an extravaganza. Jeez.

Sally: Yeah. It was pretty funny. (laugh)

Emily: Alright, everyone. Have a good week!

Sally: Go carve a pumpkin.

Emily: Bye!

Sally: Happy Halloween.