



Episode 229: Tee Hee, Women Are Mean  
Release Date: January 16, 2023  
Running Time: 45 Minutes

SALLY: Everybody Hates Rand is a Wheel of Time podcast that will contain spoilers for all 14 books. So, if you're anti-spoiler, stop this, read all 14 books, and come back. We'll be here. Waiting.

EMILY: Our title is a joke and is meant to be taken as such. "Everybody," in this context, refers to us and our cats. You are free to feel however you want about Rand. He's a fictional character. Please don't DM us.

[theme song by Glynna MacKenzie plays]

EMILY: Okay, listeners. Let's see if we can finish this episode before the light fades from the sky.

SALLY: Oh my god.

EMILY: And the hope fades from our hearts.

SALLY: Mm.

[cat purring in the background]

EMILY: [laughs] This is Everybody Hates Rand, your friendly neighborhood *Wheel of Time* podcast. I'm Emily Juchau. [muffled noise, like something hit the microphone]

SALLY: And I'm Sally Goodger.

[cat purring]

EMILY: And Ed is also here.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Your favorite co-host of course. Purring up a storm.

SALLY: Yeah, Ed is – I don't know why he's, of late, decided that, like, recording hour is just Ed's hour to also be on the couch.

EMILY: Speaking of neurotic cats, here's Rand al'Thor.

SALLY: Mm.

EMILY: I feel like dragons and cats are sort of adjacent.

SALLY: Yeah, that's fair.

EMILY: Or at least the way they're often characterized.

SALLY: I think –

EMILY: Love shiny things. Greedy.

SALLY: Mm.

EMILY: Need to be entertained 24/7.

SALLY: Kind of lazy.

EMILY: Yeah. Kind of lazy.

SALLY: That's so interesting. If we were going to put the animal kingdom into a false binary of cat and dog [more noises like something's hitting the microphone].

EMILY: Yeah, dragons would be on the cat scale, I feel.

SALLY: Yeah, yeah. That's so interesting.

EMILY: What's a mythological creature that would be a dog? Um...

SALLY: I suddenly cannot think of a single mythological creature.

EMILY: Like a chimera or something? I can't –

SALLY: Mm, yeah. A chimera.

EMILY: What – What's sort of cheerful?

SALLY: Um, yeah. What is sort of cheerful?

EMILY: What animals are not cheer – are cheerful?

[cat purring]

EMILY: I feel like a lot of bird-based animals end up being sort of dog like.

SALLY: Yeah, kind of like griffin status.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: They're often cast as –

EMILY: Even though griffins are literally like – aren't griffins lions and birds?

SALLY: Yeah, I think – isn't it like an animal, like a bird head, horse-ish body, lion kind of end?

EMILY: Can't remember. All I know is that there's a lion involved.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So, you'd think it would be cat, but no it's dog.

SALLY: But it's often, I feel, cast like – with dog-like behavior, which is really interesting.

EMILY: Yeah. [cat purring] Okay, um.

SALLY: What a fun sidebar.

EMILY: Yeah, someone should hire us to write a, a, a bestiary. Is that what it's called?

SALLY: Yeah, we'd be great at writing a bestiary.

EMILY: That was an extremely good joke in *Teen Wolf*, by the way.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: The original – not the original [laughs] movie, but the, you know, the tv series.

SALLY: Sure.

EMILY: When a bestiary got involved and Stiles Stilinski, smart character, was like, “You know a bestiary.” And everyone was like, “[laughs] Is that sex thing?”

SALLY: Bestiality? [laughs]

EMILY: He was like, “Oh my god!”

SALLY: “No! You dumb bitches.”

EMILY: “Dumb fucks.”

SALLY: We're talking about an encyclopedia of mythological beings.

EMILY: Which, surprisingly, wasn't very helpful throughout the rest of the show.

SALLY: Yeah, I don't really know why.

EMILY: In identifying the various magical beings that appeared.

SALLY: I also don't know why they need a bestiary when, like, Google exists. But I –

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: I like the vibes of having a book of magical creatures.

EMILY: Yeah, they're ancient book that only Lydia can read, because she reads Latin for some reason. Because she's smart. She's like their...

SALLY: She's, like, their savant.

EMILY: She's, like, their min-maxed intelligence character.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Okay. Enough about [laughs] *Teen Wolf*.

SALLY: Enough about *Teen Wolf*. About MTV's *Teen Wolf*.

EMILY: So, we're with Rand and everyone else, except for Lord Algarin, who has gone off to the Black Tower, apparently, and now they're just, like, occupying in his empty house. Which feels like squatting.

SALLY: They are squatting.

EMILY: But no one's going –

SALLY: But squatter's rights.

EMILY: Yeah, I guess? Or whatever. Anyway, um, [laughs] Loial is apparently mid interview of Rand for his little book and is complaining, because Rand isn't giving him very many heroic sounding details. And Rand's like, "Honestly, I don't have anything else to say." And Loial's like, "God, well I hope Mat and Perrin are more helpful." And I'm like, "Mat probably will be extremely helpful, that little bastard loves talking about himself."

SALLY: Yeah, he's got a dramatic flare.

EMILY: Yeah. Or at least Thom will be helpful in talking about Mat, because Thom was there for most of it. What's hilarious is that this scene slowly expands and more and more people turn out to be in the room.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Like, you're like, "Oh, yeah. Just a normal conversation between Rand and Loial, interviewing about the most intimate details of Rand's life." And then it's like, "Um, no, Min is also there. And so are their Maiden bodyguards and so are Cadsuane and Verin and, like, six other Aes Sedai." [laughs]

SALLY: Yeah. So you're like, "Loial, do you maybe think there might be a reason Rand's not giving you a lot of, like juicy deets?"

EMILY: Loail's like, "I just can't imagine why Rand, who has an extremely combative relationship with half these people, wouldn't be like, 'And then, Loial, I got sent into prison and had a whole panic attack about it, and now I'm mentally unwell.'" Instead, we just have Rand being like, "I'm fine," every five minutes.

SALLY: Yeah, Rand's giving this sort of PowerPoint outline of what happened.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: I was here. I went there. This happened.

EMILY: Other people did shit, etc, etc.

SALLY: Loial does have this funny line where he's like, "Um, even Nynaeve gave a better account than you," which I think is pretty brutal.

EMILY: [laughing] Nynaeve, who of course we must take with a grain of salt.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Nynaeve is also there, by the way. Um, and everyone's mad at each other, as usual. Um, we sort of slowly find out that they're just waiting on various things. The whole Seanchan situation, apparently Bashere is still negotiating off somewhere to arrange this meeting with the Daughter of the Nine Moons. As they're sitting there, Logain comes in and is like, "I'm back, bitches. I have done what you asked me and sent a lot of the Asha'man to, um, Arad Doman." I think that's where he sent them.

SALLY: Yeah, that sounds right.

EMILY: Yeah, he's like, "I sent, like, half the Black Tower to Arad Doman" and he's kind of like, "The situation there is really bad, because they don't know where the king is. They think

he's dead. Everything's really chaotic." Um, and now also apparently Rhuarc and Dobraine are there?

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So this is, like, the *first* indication we've been given that Rand is now trying to do something about the Arad Doman situation.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Like, this has not been indicated – I don't even know if I knew that Rand knew that Arad Doman was a country [laughs].

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: At this point.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So, while I'm not asking Robert Jordan to, like, hold my hand through every single one of Ro – Rand's decisions, generally that's what we're arguing against in this series.

SALLY: Sure.

EMILY: It is a little wild that all of the sudden we're like, "So, he's also doing something about Arad Doman?" [cat purring]

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Like, I thought he was very focused on the Seanchan, you know?

SALLY: Yeah, it's – like, we need a sort of happy medium of actually being able to follow the plot and being trusted to be smart enough to figure out what's going on.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Which is a hard balance to strike, I'll admit, but you'd think by Book –

BOTH: Eleven.

EMILY: Yeah. As it is, it feels like everyone – it feels like Robert Jordan went on Reddit and all the Redditors were like, "So, is Rand just ignoring everything about the entire rest of the world while he focuses on the Seanchan?" And Robert Jordan was like, "Hmm, I must answer that challenge somehow."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: You know, the way that *Game of Thrones* writers and *Westworld* writers were like, “If Reddit figures it out, then...”

SALLY: Then the writing was *bad*.

EMILY: [laughs] Then the writing was – we have to change it.

SALLY: Then we have to change it and make it worse. Your writing wasn’t bad.

EMILY: [laughing] It’s not like people picked up on foreshadowing or anything like that.

SALLY: It makes me nuts. But, you guys, themes are for eight grade book reports, so.

EMILY: Yeah, themes are for eighth grade book reports, so it – it – you don’t need them in your work.

SALLY: Just say whatever you want.

EMILY: Real men don’t need *themes*.

SALLY: [laughs] Real men don’t actually write, they just, like, let the actors say whatever they want.

EMILY: Yeah. It’s just improv constantly.

SALLY: Yeah, *Game of Thrones* improv.

EMILY: *Game of* – I would kill for a *Game of Thrones* improv.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Where it’s just, like, everyone being in character and, like, Peter Dinklage being forced to, like, come up with [laughs] –

SALLY: With plot.

EMILY: [laughing] With plot.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: I want to know what he’d come up with.

SALLY: Yeah, I bet it would be better.

EMILY: I think it would be better.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: One hundred percent. Logain, or someone else, also brings news that a bunch of Ogier – not a bunch of Ogier – three Ogier have arrived. Finally, after, like, six books, Loial's mother, fiancé, and random mentor guy have caught up to him. After literally globe trekking.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And Loial's all panicky and upset about that, but everyone's like, "Eh, you gotta face it sooner or later. And he's like, "[mumbles]" and goes up to get married, like, within thirty seconds.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: It is astounding how quickly it happens. Um, Logain is like, "Rand, you're still not taking me seriously. Mazrim Taim, like, took your Asha'man off the traitor list and claimed it was a big mistake, but he is, like, one hundo p gathering and making his little cult within the little Black Tower cult bigger and scarier." And Rand's like, "Come on, man! Like, what does he have to gain?"

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: "Why would he possibly? If he wanted to undermine me why would he get so many Asha'man and stuff like that?" And Logain's like, "I mean, at a certain point he couldn't stop you from getting more Asha'man." Like, he couldn't be, like, in control of literally everything, so things just, like, happened. But also, like, it is in Mazrim Taim's benefit to make the Black Tower as big as possible. I don't know why everyone is like, "It isn't." Because, Rand, you're not doing anything with the Black Tower.

SALLY: Yeah, like, like it's...pretty standard logic that if you're building a, a force, and army, you want it to be as big as possible in order to handle any future threat.

EMILY: Yeah, like, there's no guarantee, Rand, that the men in the Black Tower are going to be loyal to you, specifically, because you haven't been there.

SALLY: Yeah, like, you are –

EMILY: You've like – you've just perfectly set up this little experiment for Mazrim Taim to [laughs] see how well he – you've just set up the Stanford Prison Experiment.

SALLY: Sure!

EMILY: With Mazrim Taim and been like, "Okay, go for it." And Mazrim Taim's been like, "Great. An entire situation where I am the sole person in power and I can exert that power



however I see fit, including the oft forgotten once I have thirteen channelers and a Myrddraal, or whatever the fuck it is, I can turn people evil.”

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: [sighs]

SALLY: Oh yeah! That’s a deep cut of *Wheel of Time* lore.

EMILY: It’s because I was looking through, I was doing a graffitied book of, um, *The Dragon Reborn* yesterday.

SALLY: Yeah, yeah.

EMILY: And I was sitting there and I was like, “Oh yeah, this is a thing.” And it’s sort of, like, spoiler alert, we found out that’s happening at the Black Tower. And then it was like, and then I was, like, also doing a transcript where we were complaining about how there are Black Ajah in every square foot of this continent.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: And I was like, “Oh my god, wouldn’t it have been so interesting if Robert Jordan brought it back around and was like, ‘Yeah, there were, like, two Black Ajah to begin with, or thirteen I guess, and they just slowly have been brainwashing people into becoming evil.’ And that’s why there’s so fucking many of them.”

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But no! That didn’t happen. Robert Jordan just said, “All ladies are evil” or something like that.

SALLY: Yeah, it’s the deep seeded misogyny.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Rather than the commitment to narrative integrity.

EMILY: [sighs] Once you’ve gone to a religious coded school and [sing song] had lesbian coded adventures with your schoolmates, you just become more susceptible to evil [laughs].

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: I think.

SALLY: I think that’s just, you know, human nature.

EMILY: It's Newton's Third Law or whatever [laughs].

SALLY: [laughs] Newton's Four Law – Fourth Law is about evil lesbians! [laughs]

EMILY: Women who do lesbian stuff more evil.

SALLY: More evil.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: It's actually a theorem.

EMILY: I'm joking, but I think that, you know, right wing nuts genuinely think that, so.

SALLY: Sure!

EMILY: How upsetting.

SALLY: Um, I also love the idea that there's just, like, a Myrddraal hanging around the Black Tower or whatever.

EMILY: I know, who's just, like, on brainwashing duty.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Like is he just in –

SALLY: Does he get breaks?

EMILY: Mazrim Taim's, like, basement or whatever? Yeah! [laughs] Does he need to unionize?

SALLY: [laughs] A one Myrddraal union!

EMILY: [laughs] Him and the White Tower Myrddraal are just gonna –

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Gonna – it's a two man union.

SALLY: Two man union.

EMILY: Along with Grady and Neald. Or is he having an affair with Mazrim Taim?

SALLY: Oooh.

EMILY: A lot of people – not a lot of people have suggesting that maybe Myrddraal could do sex stuff, but.

SALLY: I thought – don't the Myrddraals do lots of rape stuff?

EMILY: Oh, actually, yeah. They do a lot of rape stuff, so that feels more gross now that I've said that, but someone could fall in Mazrim Taim. I can't imagine who, but someone.

SALLY: Charlz Guybon.

EMILY: [laughing] Charlz Guybon and Mazrim Taim. Charlz Guybon, the honeypot spy.

SALLY: Yeah. Is like, "Actually, I love him."

EMILY: I will seduce this man, this evil man. He, like, yeah takes the hairnet off his hair, like in *Shrek 2* with Prince Charming.

SALLY: Yeah. Oh, Charlz Guybon as a Prince Charming-esque Shrek figure is pretty funny.

EMILY: Oh Charlz Guybon, my beloved. Um, while all this is going on and everyone's talking, Rand's getting a lot of interactions with Lews Therin in his head, like Lews Therin seems to be becoming a more vocal presence. Of course, that's been sort of building up for the last eleven books, but it's going to come to a head here in a minute. Um, Logain also gives news from Andor. He's like, "Yeah, it's going [laughs] fine, I guess." Um, and then Cadsuane is like, "Stop yelling at each other, Logain and Rand," but of course she says it in, like, the rudest way possible. And Verin pipes up and is like, "Well, even if Taim's evil, you probably just can't deal with him right now. You'll just have to wait until after the Last Battle, because the Last Battle is very clearly coming, because of all of the ghosts." And everyone's like, "Thanks, Verin, for that cheery reminder." But, like, yeah. Someone's gotta say it.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Someone should. Might as well be Verin. Um, and Rand's like, "Well, Cadsuane, you're my advisor, so what do you think of my plan to have a treaty with the Seanchan?" And Cadsuane's like, "Oh, man. The very first time he has ever asked me for advice. I better not fuck this up." And then she proceeds to just say, like, vague shit and not really be any – not be very helpful. She's like, "It will be unpopular." And it's, like, if Rand couldn't figure that out on his own, then, yeah, I guess he does need the world's most useless advisor [laughs].

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Something's better than nothing.

SALLY: Yeah, seriously. It will be unpopular. Okay?

EMILY: Yeah, it's not exactly breaking news, Cadsuane. She's like, "Yeah, the people who got conquered aren't going to love that you're just like, 'Sure keep those, keep those lands.'" And Rand's like, "Here's the – here's the deal, Cadsuane, after the Last Battle [laughing] I'm gonna be dead, so it won't be my problem. So I'm just limping this world over the fucking finish line. And it's, like, patently, if you in, it will not be a finish line."

SALLY: Yeah, like, world's keep going.

EMILY: It will keep – things will keep happening. The Seanchan will keep being there.

SALLY: Yeah, it's also just such a telling attitude to be like, "Nah, I'm gonna be gone, so it's not gonna be my problem."

EMILY: I know. He's just like, "Whatever." The apathy.

SALLY: Yeah, the apathy. Exactly. And just, like, foisting of – ultimately he's just foisting responsibility for his own decisions onto the people of the future, which is very sort of, like, 80s/90s businessmen blowing up the ozone layer.

EMILY: Yeah, American Psycho over here.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um, [laughs] he also, finally, we get the big reveal that the reason he's all gung ho for this – these talks with the Seanchan are that way back in Book 4, when he went to talk to the Aelfinn, along with [laughs] Ran – along with Mat and Moiraine, who also talked to the Aelfinn, um, one of the questions he asked was like, "How can I win the Last Battle?" Or something like that. I don't remember. And they told him, "The north and the south must be one, and the east and the west must be one. And that's your only chance." And Rand's like, "First, I thought that meant 'you just need to conquer the whole world,' but then the Seanchan came back around and, what do you know, they sort of conquered the east and the southern portions of the map. So, now I'm convinced that I have to – I have to make nice with them and together we will all fight the Last Battle. And unfortunately, that is what happens. Spoilers. But it's, like, it didn't have to be, Robert Jordan. You had eleven books – well, you had eight books to decide to do something different with that prophecy. Like, he has very purposefully withheld that information from us."

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: About Rand's answers from the Aelfinn and only dropped it now, so it sort of – it – it just sort of feels, um, cheap, I guess?

SALLY: Sure! I agree. I think it is a bizarre – I mean, it is kind of interesting to have like – we got all of Mat's prophecies because we were in Mat's point of view when he was with the Eelfinn and the Aelfinn. We get none of Moiraine and Rand's unless they choose to tell us.

EMILY: Mm-hmm.

SALLY: That's kind of an interesting narrative device. But it also feels like the Eelfinn and the Aelfinn are so far removed, so for Rand to not be kind of, maybe in his own head at least, referencing the prophecies, which he doesn't really do a whole bunch. It feels very strange as a plot device, to just throw this back in there. But I also think it really aligns with Robert Jordan's project, as we talked about, of making the Seanchan integral to this world. Um, say – like, having a prophecy from our magic fox and snake people that the only way to win the Last Battle is with the Seanchan's help is just, like, the most cosmic underscoring of the fact that the Seanchan are good, and they should exist in this world, because that's the only way we're going to win. It's, like you said, it's cheap and it's gross.

EMILY: Yeah, and it just feels like he wrote himself a loophole by not telling us what Rand's prophecies are. And I agree. Like, it would totally have worked in other circumstances for him to not have given us that information right away.

SALLY: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

EMILY: But, like, the fact that he's waited literally eight books.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Until we're on the precipice of meeting that prophecy in some way or, you know, it's now being directly incorporated into Rand's plan, um, but it's, like, um. Yeah. It just feels like Robert Jordan was like, "Okay, I know that I have these characters who get three prophecies that have to come true. I'm not gonna tell you Rand's so that the next time that Rand makes a seemingly irrational decision, I can just be like, 'Oh, it was prophesied, so he's doing that.'"

SALLY: Yeah. Yeah.

EMILY: And it's, like, you could technically justify a lot of Rand's actions that way, by having this Prophecies of the Dragon thing also. That we don't know the details of, generally speaking. But, um, where – whereas sometimes the prophecies and Rand's interactions with them are very rewarding, as in Book 3 – 3 when Rand decides to go directly to the Stone of Tear to get *callandor*, because it's one of the very few prophecies that, like, is sort of like a how-to guide.

SALLY: Sure!

EMILY: As opposed to just being vague and sort of upsetting. Like, that's kind of interesting and it's fun to see the, the sort of self-fulfilling prophecy be, um, made manifest in that way.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: But then, when, um – that also was an instance where we got the prophecy and then got to sort of think about it on our own and then Rand acted on it.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And here we're getting Rand's actions followed by the prophecy.

SALLY: Yeah, I think there's, like with *callandor* in particular, I think *The Dragon Reborn* is such a good book for so many reasons. But also the, like, very clear decision of Rand to be like, "This is a prophecy and this is what I think it means, so I'm going to act upon it," and we get that groundwork laid upfront and we get to see how that plays out. And we still get to be sort of, like, surprised and delighted by how that prophecy plays out is, like, very good writing to, like, give you the story beforehand and still make it interesting. I think that's also the case with Mat's. Yes, there's some, like, room to interpretation with his that he figures out throughout the story, which is also really interesting. For him to be like – the mechanic of him asking every woman he meets if the Daughter of the Nine Moons means anything to them, is, like, really interesting.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Because this is, like, a prophecy that he's figuring out. But it's the same thing with Mat sort of giving all the details beforehand and still being able to surprise and delight us with them, is, like, I think, better writing and more engaging than just having the prophecies floating around for eight books, and then being like, "I'm just going to use them for the most benefit right now."

EMILY: Yeah, like, Mat's prophecy like 'half the light of the world to save the world.'

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: The moment that comes to fruition is so satisfying.

SALLY: Yeah!

EMILY: Because you're like, "This is the one that Mat hasn't really thought about very much." And now here he is, and it is very obvious to him all of the sudden. It just, like, clicks into place.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: I don't know. Just, yeah, Rand continues to not have the best luck [laughs] with Robert Jordan's prophecies.

SALLY: Yeah, Rand is just a victim of his own prophecies.

EMILY: Yeah, that's – that's true. Um, Loial goes to meet his mom and them. He's super worried about it. Um, Loial is a lovely character. I think he's more lovely when we're outside of his own head.

SALLY: Sure.

EMILY: I find that Robert Jordan's – this might be the only Loial point of view we've ever had. I can't –

SALLY: I can't remember either.

EMILY: I can't recall. But it feels very clumsily written to me.

SALLY: Mm.

EMILY: It feels like Robert Jordan is, um, in the ways that when he's in an Aiel person's head or a Sea Folk person's head, he's, like, constantly underscoring the differences between them and the majority group.

SALLY: Mm.

EMILY: The racially coded white people.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Um, so being in Loial's head is kind of like [laughs] being in an alien's head.

SALLY: Mm.

EMILY: In a – in a strange way. Not because Loial is speaking in a different language or something, but because Robert Jordan, nonstop, is like, "Look how weird Ogier culture is."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And look how bizarro this whole thing is. And look how they find each other's ears sexy instead of tits or asses or whatever the fuck. Um [sighs], so that's just my two cents on – two, two.

SALLY: Two salts.

EMILY: [laughs] Two salts.

SALLY: Um [laughs].

EMILY: [laughing] I don't even know what I'm trying to say.

SALLY: Your two cents!

EMILY: My two cents! God! What is salt? Grain of salt.

SALLY: Um, no I agree completely. Like, it's pretty obvious throughout reading now multiple different cultural groups, uh, that Robert Jordan does not respect the differences he wrote into his own series. I would say with the exception of the Seanchan. They are the only one given, like, an actual level of humanity in their own points of view. Um, and even them, there's a lot of the

same sort of thing of them being, like, isn't it weird how different they do things? It's just, I think, a little bit more human in their points of view. Um, and it's just, like we've talked about, it's very upsetting and bigoted, especially for the racially coded groups. Um, the Ogier are, like, a weird facet of this world in general. Um, our sort of Entish figures, as we've talked about, that are, um, meant to be a totally different species rather than a totally different race and culture, so I don't really know why it ends up feeling like Robert Jordan just wants to be like, "Look at how different they are." What am I trying to say here? It just feels weird and clumsy, like you said. And also, um, I feel like the technique he's trying for is, like, a defamiliarization thing to, like, be in the point of view of someone who is a different species. And instead of just, like, letting it be, like, very natural that Loial – Loial experiences the world differently or, like, Aviendha experiences the world differently, it always has to be like, "Look at how they experience the world differently." It's this level of mediation between us and the experience of this minority group that makes it feel like you're looking at them through a glass window at a zoo.

EMILY: Yeah, I think this particularly comes out a lot when he's talking about gender dynamics.

SALLY: Mm.

EMILY: Because of course that's his whole schtick.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: And here with Loial what we're getting is that the Ogier are a very matriarchal culture.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And so Loial comes in and it's, like, this whole decision about his marriage is not being made by him, it's being made over his head. It was arranged between his wife and his mother.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: He doesn't really have a say in it, and it just happens regardless of what he wants. And he explicitly tells us that he doesn't want to get married right now. He would like to in the future, but this is not the ideal time for him.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Um, and Robert Jordan is, uh, he has done similar things to this in the past, but again I think he's using a sort of defamiliarization technique and, if we're being really generous with him, what he's trying to do is flip traditional gender dynamics just to be like, "Look, this is how, in a patriarchy, men treat women and isn't that weird?"

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And unsettling and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.



SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um, if we're being less generous it's just Robert Jordan being like, "Look how much it sucks for women to be in charge!"

SALLY: Yeah, absolutely!

EMILY: And I think there's a grain of both in there and I think that pervades the entire series. Robert Jordan clearly thinks he's a bit of a feminist, but, um...

SALLY: But the –

EMILY: Can't ever resist making women in power a complete disaster.

SALLY: Yeah, absolutely. Some real implicit bias is coming out there.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: So, you know, that's such a good point about – "poor Loial!" is what we're supposed to think the entire time.

EMILY: Yeah, look he's just getting total – the old ball and chain [laughs] is over here.

SALLY: And it's just, like, so silly. For someone to, like, really commit to the defamiliarization of, like, an entirely new species...why do they have to get married?

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: In a way that makes sense to us at all?

EMILY: And it's just, like, better writers have done the defamiliarization of gender dynamics. *The Left Hand of Darkness* is right there.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: On our shelf, looking at us.

SALLY: Yeah, yeah. Exactly. Absolutely.

EMILY: Ursula's covered this ground.

SALLY: Listen, if Ursula's already done it, there's no reason for us to keep doing it.

EMILY: [laughing] There's no reason to re-hash it.

SALLY: Like, she did not put in all that work, she did not grind morning, noon, and night [laughs].

EMILY: And she did not fucking pull her punches.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: What the fuck are you talking about, Robert?

SALLY: For you to just sit here and be like, “Wow these –

EMILY: Tee hee, women are mean.

SALLY: Yeah [laughs].

EMILY: Anyway, Loial and Erith are now married.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um, Erith immediately starts asserting her dominance [laughs] as wife to, you know, Loial. As opposed to – now she’s in charge instead of his mother. Um, Loial’s mom and also the mentor figure, Elder Haman? I think? Both want to get back to the *stedding* real quick because there’s a big –

SALLY: The Great Stump.

EMILY: The Great Stump! Which is very familiar to the Entmoot.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: In which these more or less peaceful, long-winded creatures are going to, um, congregate and decide what they’re going to do about the looming world ending, uh, by talking about it. Really long winded.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So very clearly just lifted right out of *Two Towers*. And Loial is like, “I want to talk at the Great Stump.” And his mom, like, negs him about it and then Erith’s like, “Well, he can talk if he wants, because I grant him permission.” Because, again, [laughing] look at how mean women are.

SALLY: [laughs] Look at what a, a –

EMILY: It’s me *The Handmaid’s Tale* rearing its ugly head [laughs].

SALLY: Oh my god. Barf, barf, barf.

EMILY: And Loial's like, "Okay" and starts giving this little oration that is just, like, yeah we have to be involved in the Last Battle, because it's the whole world and it affects us. We live here [laughs].

SALLY: Yeah, like a super interesting thing that I hate is one of those things that you have to be, like, on the *Wheel of Time* wiki to fully understand, is that Loial's mom is like, "It's time to open the Book of Translation" and get the fuck out of here. And you're like, "What does this mean?" And it means if they open this book they go to a different dimension [laughs] and that they –

EMILY: It literally is rapture.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: I'm not joking. Like, it – in the Bible there is such a thing as translation, you know?

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: There is, in the Old Testament, an entire city was so perfect.

SALLY: Mm.

EMILY: So sinless that it got translated.

SALLY: Mm.

EMILY: Meaning that it was lifted straight up into heaven.

SALLY: Mm.

EMILY: And that is the theory by which we get the rapture.

SALLY: Mm.

EMILY: The good people will be [laughs] summoned.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: [laughing] Back to heaven. And so, yeah, we're now being told, "Okay, so [laughing] the Ogier can just do that." And not only can they do that, but it's their own fingers on the lever, you know?

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: It's not like God is up there, like, time for the Ogier to join me. It's the Ogier like, "Time to join God. Hope you're ready, bitch." That's insane!

SALLY: Yeah. Maybe I'm misunderstanding, but my understanding was not necessarily that they're just, like, going to a better place.

EMILY: Yeah, you're right. That's my –

SALLY: They're just going to – no, I mean it very much has that idea of, like, okay so they just have this, like, crazy, god-like magic to transport themselves away from a bad situation. To translate themselves into a different reality where hopefully the apocalypse is not happening. And they're just totally in control of that, and the Creator is not like, "Hey, besties..." Or – I don't know. Were the Ogier given this because they are such sinless, perfect creatures. It's very strange and bizarre and I did not – I'm obviously not well enough versed in the Bible to know that, but that is so interesting to, like, think about it in context of the rapture.

EMILY: Yeah, like, it sounds like here what's being presented, in Biblical language, the D&D spell "plane shift."

SALLY: Sure.

EMILY: You know, they're just moving to the left or whatever. To a place where the Last Battle can't hurt them.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Wherever that is. But, again, that's buck wild and I think they're – if we lingered on it a little more we would be able to explore, like, the implications of that.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Like, what it means that the culture could have peaced out at any time.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Like, could they have peaced out back when the world was broken?

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Is this a newly discovered thing?

SALLY: Yeah, the little snippet I read on the *Wheel of Time* wiki was, like, the Ogier had translated themselves to this plane.

EMILY: Oh, that's how they got here.

SALLY: That's how they got here. And I can't remember the timeline. It was obviously, like, a long ass time ago. Something, something Trolloc something. I don't know. And it's like *what?*

EMILY: So, at least they know it works. Because my first thought was, “What if it’s just a book?”

SALLY: CULT! [laughs]

EMILY: [laughs] Yeah, that’s some cult shit, man.

SALLY: You open a book and it’s just, like, blank.

EMILY: [laughs] It’s just, like, the *Mean Girls* burn book.

SALLY: [laughs] Haha, you guys are so stupid. Heart, the Creator [laughs].

EMILY: [laughing ] It’s like – what’s the entry about Regina Di – Regina George?

SALLY: Oh, I don’t know.

EMILY: Um.

SALLY: Yeah, it’s so – it’s so wild. So, Loial’s argument is, “No, we can’t – ” Loial’s mom wants to open the Book of Translation and Loial’s like, “No! We’re a part of this world.”

EMILY: Yeah, we gotta fight.

SALLY: “Let’s fight for it. How do we know if they lose the Last Battle here that it won’t fuck up a bunch of other dimensions?”

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: And I just like [laughs] cannot understands this series’ – sure – *Wheel of Time*’s peppering in of multiple dimensions.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Just, like, occasionally. For flavor.

EMILY: Just occasionally to be like, “[laughs] Oh no, no, no. Don’t get it twisted. The multiverse is real.” [laughs]

SALLY: Yeah, and you’re just like –

EMILY: Okay.

SALLY: I mean, it adds, like, a very interesting – interesting depth to the series, I just feel like it's really strange to add in such a fascinating, like, thing and just be like, "We just hint on that a little bit."

EMILY: Yeah, they, like, really went hard on it in Book 2 and after that we've just been, like, the occasional reminder that Rand didn't just hallucinate that entire experience [laughs].

SALLY: It was just some sick shrooms.

EMILY: Which, honestly, might have been more interesting. Uh, while he's talking, Loial's looking out the window and he sees a whole army of Trollocs advancing on the manor house, so he and Elder Haman grab axes and raise the alarm. Uh, back down with Rand and everyone else, they look out the window and see the same thing Rand actually, like, his Spidey Senses tingle from Shadowspawn coming at them. And there's, um, a – this scene is just Rand and all the other channelers just, like, from where they're standing at the windows just, like, human meat grinder, but it's Trolloc meat grinder.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And it's like, first of all, tactically hilarious that the Trollocs are like, "We will just – " Like, this is just a house, surrounded by, as far as I know, nothing.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: They're just like, "We'll just run out into the open. In this house inhabited by, like, fifteen of the most powerful channelers."

SALLY: Yeah, it also seems like they are only approaching from, like, one direction.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Rather than, like, you know, surrounding the house, dividing your forces.

EMILY: So, like, what's the game plan here, yo? No idea. The point of this scene is that Rand is channeling, doing his thing. As he starts channeling, he's, like, doing weaves that Lews Therin is sort of telling him to do. And then Lews Therin takes over and is channeling for Rand, which is, of course, a very scary experience. So, he's doing these crazy weaves that are just, like, Age of Legends war crime shit.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um, and at a certain point Rand's, like, all panicked, because the Saldaeans are out in a barn and it's on fire and he's like, "Lews Therin, we have to set out – we have to put out the fire." And Lews Therin's like, "[vocalizing] I'm just killing Trollocs." So Rand has to be like, "Logain, put out that fire." Which Logain does. And then when all the Trollocs are dead, Rand's

like [panicked voice], “Okay, Lews Therin! [laughing] We can let go of the Power now.” And Lews Therin’s like [deep voice], “No.”

SALLY: [deep voice] Never.

EMILY: [laughs, deep voice] I am evil now. No, Lews Therin’s, like, super depressed. He’s, like, mega depressed and he’s like, “Maybe [laughs] we should just blow ourselves up like we did last time.” And Rand’s like –

SALLY: No.

EMILY: “Alternatively.”

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: “We could not do that.”

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And everyone’s like – Logain’s like, “Rand, why are you holding so much of the One Power.” And everyone’s like, “Oh my god, Rand. What’s going on?” And Rand’s like, been like, “I’m fine” this entire time. And he’s still like, “I’m fine.” In Rand’s head, hes like, “I’m gonna be honest, things could be more fine [laughs].”

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um, but he’s like, “Lews Therin! Lews Therin! Please just stop it!” And finally, he, like, makes this sort of deal with Lews Therin, where he’s like, “We can die at the Last Battle.”

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Or at least that’s how Lews Therin takes it. So, Lews Therin gives up the One Power and Rand stops channeling and does not blow himself up and do –

SALLY: Good job, Rand!

EMILY: An atomic bomb. Again. So.

SALLY: It’s me, Oppenheimer.

EMILY: It’s me, Oppenheimer.

[cat purring in the background]

SALLY: Um, I find this scene really fascinating.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: And I honestly feel a little cheated that this is the first sort of scene we're getting like this. Like, we've been – similar to, uh, Loial's marriage and the prophecies, this is another thing we've been, like, teetering on for the course of the series. Like, how much is Lews Therin a) real. How much is he able to communicate with Rand? How much is he able to interact with Rand? All of these different things, and I still feel like many of the scenes we get with Lews Therin are very interesting, despite the fact that he says stuff like, "Women can only be kept in cages [blubbing]." [laughs]

EMILY: [laughs] Lews Therin sometimes is like that vine that's like, "[demonic voice] The souls of the innocent!"

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: And Rand's like, "A bagel."

SALLY: [laughs] A bagel. Like, despite the fact that he's very emo and very, uh, absurd. It's so, like, it's such an interesting concept and such an interesting plot device in this story and for this scene to finally happen where he just comes barreling into reality one way or the other.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: And even then there's a little bit of like, "Is it?"

EMILY: It still could be Rand.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Who knows? And it's so interesting to have this idea of, like, the madman in your head Pinocchio-ing you through *truly* horrific magic. Like, one of them is a gateway that's constantly opening and closing to different places. And just sending the Trollocs who knows where.

EMILY: Yeah and it's like –

SALLY: And cutting them in half and shit.

EMILY: Literally called a death gate because they can't survive going through gateways.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So it's just, like, yup. Anyone who touches it dies.

SALLY: I also think it's very interesting that shadowspawn can't go through gateways.



EMILY: I know. What the fuck? That's such a little plot device.

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah.

EMILY: That Robert Jordan wrote in for himself to be like, "And that's why they haven't been teleporting everywhere this entire time!" [laughs]

SALLY: Yeah, okay. Whatever. Anyway, it's just, like, so interesting and so well written and fascinating and horrifying and the idea of everyone at the end being like, "Why are you supercharged with –"

EMILY: Yeah. It's like his eyes are glowing.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And they're all like, "What the fuck?"

SALLY: Like, it's so good and I just wish that we got – just, again, not to lament, again, the length of this series, but the fact that we were able to drag out this conflict with Lews Therin up to halfway through Book 11, when we finally get his sort of, like, powerhouse showdown. I don't know.

EMILY: Yeah, and it's resolved quite quickly.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Not in this scene, specifically. This scene is kind of like, "Oooh. This could happen again, you know?" [cat purring] Um, but, like, Rand will, more or less, resolve his problems with Lews Therin, spoiler alert, at the end of the next book.

SALLY: Mm.

EMILY: So we're given only, like, a book and a half of this sort of, like, teetering on to physical reality of Lews Therin.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Because, while Lews Therin has affected Rand's reality up until this point –

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Very much so. He has not, like, actually been doing physical things in the real world and so that's not something we have to worry about very long. [cat purring] so yeah. I would have liked this scene to be a book or two earlier.

SALLY: Yeah, I agree.

EMILY: And then I would have liked to explore, like, the consequences of that a little bit more.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um. Just quick before we end, another thing that happened in this little section was that, while Rand was thinking of Mat and Perrin, he, too, can now [laughs] telepathically know where they are and what they're doing. Um, he also is, like – sees Morridin's face. Um, and he concludes pretty quickly, and again it's quite funny that he's just concluding this after four books of us not having any sort of indication of this, he's like, "Yeah, that's that dude I saw in Shadar Logoth when I killed Sammael, so it must be because our balefire touched. And the spookier thing is, if I can see him, he can also see me." So. DUN DUN DUN. But, Rand is also convinced that this is not one of the Forsaken.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: He's like, "He just must be a high powered Darkfriend. And it's like, "[sighs] You guys are so stupid [laughs]."

SALLY: Why won't anyone blame the Forsaken?

EMILY: [laughs] I know. Just blame the Forsaken.

SALLY: They're right there.

EMILY: It's easy. It's like how I blame Ronald Reagan every day.

SALLY: Well, you should. Ronald Reagan did a lot of bad things.

EMILY: Yeah. But those are those two chapters.

SALLY: Yes.

EMILY: Next time we will still, more or less, be with Rand with, I think, a few slight detours. Um, as he is starting to move forward with this plan, so yippee ki-yay, motherfuckers. Um, thanks for listening.

SALLY: Yeah!

EMILY: Thanks to Glynna MacKenzie for our theme song. Thanks to our patrons on Patreon and our followers on social media.

SALLY: Yeah. You guys are the best.

EMILY: Do you have anything to add?

SALLY: No [sighs].

EMILY: Do you have a sign off?

SALLY: I do. Um, this weekend I went to Barnes & Noble looking for a book that my therapist wants me to read. I was just seeing if I could pick it up rather than order it, you know? Because it's fairly popular. So, I was in the, like, self-help, wellness, personal wellness section of Barnes & Noble, where I don't usually venture. There's some good stuff in there, occasionally. And the like – I was on the, like, looking for the author by last name. So, there was this guy standing in front of the, like, bookshelf that I needed to get to, so I was a little bit off the side of him, you know, scanning. Trying to maintain a respectful distance for social reasons and Covid reasons.

EMILY: Mm-hmm.

SALLY: And he turns to me – Yeah, I know.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: And was like, “Hey can I ask you a weird question?”

EMILY: Oooh.

SALLY: No, first he was like, “I’m so sorry to bother you, but can I ask you a weird question?” And I was like...

EMILY: Oh-kay.

SALLY: “What?” Yeah. And he [laughs] points to a book called *Humble*. Something like ‘recovering from the trappings of a narcissistic world.’ And he was like, “Would you be offended if your husband gave this to you?” [laughs] And I was like, “I think I would be quite taken aback, yes. If my husband gave me a book basically calling me a narcissist.” [laughs] And he was like [defeated voice], “Yeah, that’s what I thought. Thank you.” [laughing] And just walked away.

EMILY: [laughing]

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: [laughing] I want to inhabit this guy’s reality *so bad*.

SALLY: I know!

EMILY: He’s in the fucking bookstore and [laughs] he’s like – sees the word narcissist and is like [Borat voice], “My wife!”

SALLY: [laughs] My wife!

EMILY: [laughing] Maybe I should get this for her as a gift.

SALLY: [laughing] I know. It was so wild.

EMILY: [laughing] I better ask a strange woman about this.

SALLY: [laughing] Yeah. This woman should give me advice on my marriage.

EMILY: [laughing] “Hey, stranger. Would you be offended if your partner gave you a book titled *How to Be a Better Person?*”

SALLY: [laughs] “Hey, you’re actually quite shit. Here’s how to be less shit.”

EMILY: [laughs] “Would you be offended if your partner gave you a book titled *I want a Divorce?*”

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Fuck.

SALLY: Ugh. So maybe I saved someone’s marriage this weekend, you guys.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Oh man, that one really got me. I can’t believe you didn’t tell me that.

SALLY: I know. That’s another one I was sitting on, waiting [laughs].

EMILY: Okay, everyone. [laughing] Have a good week.

SALLY: [laughing] Bye!