



Episode 245: Lying Greg

Release Date: May 15, 2023

Running Time: 38 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.

EMILY: [singing] If you like pina coladas.

SALLY: [singing] And getting caught –

BOTH: [singing] In the rain.

SALLY: [signing] If you're not into health food. If you have half a brain.

EMILY: I'll be honest, I don't know any lyrics besides [laughing] "if you like pina coladas."

SALLY: I mean, that's what I *think* the lyrics are. I could be wrong.

EMILY: No, that sounds right.

SALLY: Thank you.

EMILY: I don't know if I've ever heard that song, like, in real life. It's one of those that you – no, [laughing] it's on the *Shrek* soundtrack.

SALLY: [laughs] And as you know, we are the number one *Shrek* stans in the world, so.

EMILY: Call us Everybody Hates [mimicking the Shrek voice] Donkey.

SALLY: [laughs] Donkey!

EMILY: Donkey!

SALLY: [mimicking Shrek] That'll do, Donkey. We say that a lot in this house.

EMILY: What are you doing in my swamp?!

SALLY: [laughs] God, the *Shrek* soundtracks really are so good. I know that's not, like, a ground – groundbreaking statement, but someone really popped off with those.

EMILY: In these trying times, you have to cling to the *Shrek* soundtrack in order to get through one of the world's top ten worst books.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: The other [laughs] nine [laughing] are also in the *Wheel of Time*.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Um, this is Everybody Hates Rand, your friendly neighborhood Wheely Time podcast.

SALLY: You bet.

EMILY: I'm Emily Juchau.

SALLY: And I'm Sally Goodger.

EMILY: You bet [laughs].

SALLY: Sorry I interrupted you.

EMILY: How *dare you*?!

SALLY: I interrupted the flow. Some people are so good and professional on their podcasts. And then there's us.

EMILY: Some people have scripts. Can you believe that?

[someone unscrewing a plastic bottle]

SALLY: Could not be me.

EMILY: Could you imagine the amount of work that would go into that? No, this is a ding dong podcast for ding dongs.

SALLY: Correct.

EMILY: Case in point.

SALLY: This is live analysis. That's what you guys are getting. I don't think I moved the bookmark back.

EMILY: Uh!

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Did you get to read the first line?

SALLY: I did. And I almost started crying, so.

EMILY: It's pretty upsetting.

SALLY: Let's not talk about it.

EMILY: I mean, we'll talk about it at the end. So, yeah, case in point. In terms of ding dongs – hi, Ed!

SALLY: Hi, Ed man! Ed.

EMILY: Speaking of ding dongs.

SALLY: Hey, Ed is standing directly in front of the microphone, so everyone be quiet while he speaks.

[silence]

SALLY: That was groundbreaking, thank you.

EMILY: Thanks, Ed. One small step for man, one giant leap for kitty kind.

SALLY: Ed's got a PhD in literature.

EMILY: Damn, that would be one in this house.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Okay, [clears throat]. Three chapters this time.

SALLY: Ugh. I had already forgotten what happens in the first chapter and now I'm mad [laughs].

EMILY: Yeah, so first chapter is a split Cadsuane and Perrin point of view.

SALLY: Dynamic duo.

EMILY: [laughs] Yeah, dynamic duo. Yeah.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: World's worst duo. Cadsuane is sitting in on yet another quote interrogation unquote of Semirhage. I'm putting it in quotes not because it's, like, code for torture, but because it's, like, the most mild questioning anyone's every been subjected to and this book seems to think that there's no in between outright torture and...mild social [laughs] chatting.

SALLY: Mild questioning. Yeah. Get to know you questions.

EMILY: Um, and that sort of, that sort of false dichotomy is fuel for what is to come.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Which is that Cadswan – [pitching her voice] Cadswan.

SALLY: Cadswan.

EMILY: Cadswan. Cadsuane finally figures out how to quote solve her problem. And I know this is going to shock, like, hold on to your butts. But from the stellar mind of Robert Jordan combined with Brandon Sanderson's unwilling hands.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Comes the revolutionary technique –

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: [laughing] That will leave you speechless. For solving problems involving difficult women. What is it? What could it be? [laughs] It's spanking! I'll pause here for gasps of surprise.

SALLY: Yeah, it's like instead of a laugh track it's a gasp track

EMILY: [laughs, exaggerated gasp]

SALLY: [exaggerated gasp]

EMILY: Oh my god!

SALLY: Everyone gasp now.

EMILY: How could it be!

SALLY: Are you kidding? What?

EMILY: There hasn't been a bigger twist since fucking *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* by Agatha Christie.

SALLY: Yeah! That's a good pull, I was gonna say *The Sixth Sense*.

EMILY: [laughs] There hasn't been a bigger twist since *The Sixth Sense*!

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: My favorite film.

SALLY: It's a good film.

EMILY: Yeah, I mean, I know, you guys. How – what...how did we get here?

SALLY: How could – like, I just need to track the path through these...twelve books.

EMILY: That will be your PhD thesis.

SALLY: Yeah, that will be my thesis.

EMILY: Tracking spanking in *The Wheel of Time*. Into the depths of hell of one man's...

SALLY: Yeah. Poorly disguised fetish.

EMILY: Yes [laughs]. Thank you.

SALLY: Um [laughs]. It is, like, yeah, and to just, like, I don't know if we want to do, like, a really brief summary before we, like, crack this egg, but, um.

EMILY: I don't know. There's nothing to summarize in my mind. Cadsuane is just, like, "Oh, Semirhage will never be able to – Semirhage is able to intimidate us so thoroughly that the only way to reduce her in any way or, you know, throw her off her game is to humiliate her."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And humiliation involves, you know, the corporal punishment you would give to a child. I don't know why it took Cadsuane this long to get to it, because, um, it's not, like, this is groundbreaking. This is how every problem involving difficult women has been solved up until this point. Granted it's usually the men who are doing the spanking, so maybe....

SALLY: Maybe she needed to get over her womanly tendencies.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Um, yeah, so Cadsuane is like, “Everyone is too in awe of Semirhage and that’s why we can’t have any type of productive interrogation.” And what she proceeds to do is walk into the room and engage in a series of torture behaviors.

EMILY: Yeah, like, Semirhage’s food has been knocked to the ground, so she knocks Semirhage down.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Holding her up by her hair and then forces her toward the food and is like, “You have to eat the food off the ground.”

SALLY: Off the ground. Um, so one, that’s physical violence, [laughs] which they have been told not to do. Um, and yeah. So, she forces her to eat the food and then she picks her up and spansks her in front of an audience. Like she makes –

EMILY: Calls a bunch of people into the room.

SALLY: Yeah, there’s, like, ten other people in the room and she’s just spanking her for an unknown number of minutes, hours, days, who knows. And this quote unquote breaks Semirhage because it’s so humiliating. She just starts crying, um, and then Cadsuane forces her to then literally eat the food off the floor. She’s not given an opportunity to eat the new food that has been brought to her. So, again, these are all torture behaviors. It’s, like, Rand, I guess, is only like, “Torture is only physical. I just don’t want you to, like, physically hurt a woman. It’s totally fine to, like, psychologically torture her, humiliate her.”

EMILY: Spanking is also physical punishment.

SALLY: You’re right. You got me there.

EMILY: I don’t know why that’s for some, whatever reason, Cadsuane gets that through the gaps. I guess it’s because Rand is not supervising this in any way, so he has no way of knowing besides asking directly whether people are following his orders.

SALLY: Yeah, and, like, I – I am not an expert, obviously, on, um, the kind of rhetoric or even techniques that people use to quote unquote torture people, but, like, from my limited understanding of it, dehumanization is a huge part of that. Like, you are dehumanizing a person, stripping them of everything that makes them feel...empowered, and it’s just awful, obviously. So, I know I get hung – I feel like I’ve been really hung up on this, but this whole like, “We’re not going to torture Cadsuane” thing is – or “we’re not gonna – ” I wish, maybe.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: “We’re not gonna torture Semirhage” thing is silly. It’s exactly what’s happening. It’s disgusting. Like, this whole scene is horrible. And I feel like there are a series of, like, point of views of women doing just, like, absolutely heinous things in this section. Um, I guess Siuan is, like, fine or whatever, it’s just Cadsuane and Tuon. And it’s like, “What am I supposed to get out of this?” Am I supposed to be like, “Wow, look at them solving problems?”

EMILY: Yeah, we’re supposed to feel some aspect of, like, triumph, because a problem that has been lingering has now been solved, or progress has been made forward in terms of Tuon’s point of view. I wouldn’t – I don’t know if she really solves any problems. Um, so, yeah, it’s a real like – again, so sorry we keep using this word, but it’s a real girlboss framing in terms of a woman making an accomplishment and the accomplishment is not held on any sort of moral or ethical framework in terms of whether this should have even been accomplished.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: We’re just supposed to feel impressed because it’s a woman who’s done it.

SALLY: Yeah, like, can you believe that Cadsuane finally broke Semirhage, the most imposing Forsaken in the whole world?

EMILY: Yeah. And it’s, like, bestie I’ve only known Semirhage for half a book. I don’t actually feel that way about her [laughs].

SALLY: Yeah. I also –

EMILY: For one thing.

SALLY: Don’t believe Semirhage has anything important to tell you.

EMILY: No!

SALLY: I’m, like, not invested in this plot of, like, what are we going to learn from Semirhage at all. How to desanguinate somebody in nine hundred different ways?

EMILY: Yeah. What?

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Who cares?

SALLY: How to make friends and desanguinate people [laughs].

EMILY: By Semirhage!

SALLY: [laughing] Like, what’s happening?

EMILY: Like, we do know Semirhage has some information. Maybe she knows what Demandred is up to. Maybe she can give them intel on Greandal. Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Like, maybe she knows stuff about the other Forsaken, but quote unquote breaking her and leading that to any actual sort of, like, information is just – it's gonna take a lot longer and I know that this book – we're not on that framework anymore. We're not on that timeline anymore.

SALLY: Yeah, so, um. Zero stars. A hundred thousand notes on this chapter.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: And on Cadsuane as a character.

EMILY: Oof.

SALLY: Cadsuane is also very concerned about the way the other Aes Sedai perceive her. She's like, "I have to be the one who does this, because that will keep my standing."

EMILY: Yeah, she's like, "I haven't engaged with Semirhage thus far, because I'm happy to sit back and watch the other ones fail, because they can fail without losing any face."

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: If I were to go in there and use some technique that doesn't work, then I would lose standing."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And it's like, "Ugh, god." And it's, like, at least she's self-aware of this enough to link it to Semirhage's own behavior and be like, "Oh, there's something there." But I don't know.

SALLY: Horrid. The whole thing is horrid and despicable and very, very *The Wheel of Time* TM. So.

EMILY: The rest of this chapter is Perrin's point of view. And Perrin goes from – I have no idea how this [laughs], I have no idea how this logic train happens. He goes from getting information from Grady that it is going to be physically impossible to move the amount of refugees that Perrin wants to move through gateways in, you know, a condensed timeline to he's decided he needs to re-enter *tel'aran'rhiod* and get some training. I really don't know how we got from point A to point B, and I don't want to re-read it to figure it out, *but, but*, those are the two important things. Grady is like, "I physically cannot maintain a gateway long enough or big enough for large groups of people to go through. You have a hundred thousand people, so simply maneuvering them through the gateways would take an unbelievable amount of time. Balwer's done the math. It ain't happening."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Perrin's like, "Fine, I guess we'll just move as many as we can every day and call it good." And then at the end of this chapter Perrin's like, "You know, the last time I was in *tel'aran'rhiod*, I tried to kill Hopper, which was bad, obviously." And I literally cannot even remember when that happened.

SALLY: Yeah, I was reading that too and I was like, "*What?*"

EMILY: It can't have been *Knife of Dreams*. It can't have been –

SALLY: Yeah, I feel like it was many, *many* books ago.

EMILY: Maybe it was like *Winter's Heart*. Maybe?

SALLY: I truly don't remember.

EMILY: At the beginning? It would have been – maybe it was right after Faile got kidnapped, but dunno.

SALLY: I don't – yeah, I don't remember the last time we saw Hopper.

EMILY: Yeah, but apparently Brandon is like, "This is – we've gotta wrap this plot up somehow. Perrin's relationship with Hopper, with *tel'aran'rhiod*, et cetera, et cetera." And, um, this is the part of, like, this is the beginning of our newest Perrin subplot. Thankfully it does not involve rescuing a woman, so it's going to be more bearable in that way, um, but it's just going to be Perrin doing shenanigans in *tel'aran'rhiod* with Hopper, which, as these things go, isn't terribly offensive.

SALLY: No.

EMILY: But it will have a lot of Brandon Sanderson flavor training montage to it.

SALLY: Nice.

EMILY: But most of that will be in the next book. Our next chapter is Siaun while she discovers, while she is in the Aes Sedai camp, um, that Elaida has Traveling. Which everyone, of course, is up in arms about. Siuan pieces together the important bits. That it was probably Beonin who told Elaida, which, I guess this is the first – this is the first I remember of hearing of the rebel Aes Sedai knowing that Beonin left, so that was a little confusing to me. Um, Siuan sends word to Gareth Bryne to be like, "Hey, watch out, you know, now this is a tactic that might be used against us." hilariously, it isn't, because Elaida doesn't use this for her armed forces, which is another example of a ludicrous Elaida idiocy.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Like, the second she got Traveling should have been like, “Cool, sweet. Surprise attack. All my forces against this little army.”

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But whatever. Um, and Siuan’s all proud of herself for considering Gareth Bryne unlike all the other Aes Sedai. [in a whimsical voice] She’s not like the other girls.

SALLY: No, she’s –

EMILY: She’s dating a military man.

SALLY: [gagging noises]

EMILY: What’s that song about army wives or whatever?

SALLY: I don’t know.

EMILY: Whatever. Siuan is an army wife.

SALLY: Siuan is an army wife. Salute.

EMILY: [laughs] Salute.

SALLY: Um.

EMILY: [laughs] Um, and then, uh, Siuan has an encounter with Sharina, who’s one of the Novices that we keep hearing about and is sort of considered the, like, pinnacle of what other Aes Sedai consider the Novice problem. You know, the problem with Egg just opening the books for anyone to join. Which is that Sharina’s old. End of...

SALLY: Yeah, Sharina’s old and is, like, able to be manipulated.

EMILY: [laughs] Yeah, Sharina’s old, has some fucking self-confidence.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Isn’t an adolescent.

SALLY: Yeah [laughs].

EMILY: So, [laughing] it isn’t going to, like, you know [angelic singing].

SALLY: Isn’t going to just be, like, “Yeah, okay. I’m eighteen years old. Why don’t I go hunt a domestic terrorist cell moving around the continent.”

EMILY: Yeah, Sharina has some fucking, like, know how about the rest of the world. The real world and about other people, so, yeah, she's a little harder to manipulate than a bunch of seventeen-year-olds.

SALLY: Yeah, I also think it's –

EMILY: Which really pisses off the Aes Sedai.

SALLY: Yeah, it's funny to me. Siuan points out at one time, she's like, "Sharina knows how to be humble and knows how to interface with people." And she's basically like, "Other Aes Sedai don't know how to do that," and I'm like, "Yeah, because none of you are properly socialized."

EMILY: Yeah, you were all raised in the Tower at the age of seventeen by other freaks.

SALLY: Yeah, so [laughing] it's like yeah, maybe Sharina intimidates you because she's a functional person.

EMILY: Yeah, everyone else is like, "Hey, it's us. The cult besties!"

SALLY: [laughing] Yeah. Stupid.

EMILY: We're here to tell you about how Aes Sedai are the absolute best.

SALLY: Yeah, because Sharina, like, immediately – Siuan's big deal is that, like, the Hall of the Tower let everyone in the camp know that Elaida discovered Traveling, which is inducing mass panic. They, like, didn't quote unquote "Seal it to the Flame," which means anyone could listen in on their conversation. So, now everyone's, like, panicked and up in arms and Sharina pieces together that Lelaine did this on purpose.

EMILY: In order to seize power eventually.

SALLY: Yeah, so, Siuan's like, "Oh, yeah. She's got a brain in her head."

EMILY: The Aes Sedai are legitimately like if Mormons had superpowers.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Like, suddenly the rest of the world would have to, like, acknowledge that.

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: But they'd still be Mormons, you know?

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: With their freak behavior and – I can say all this [laughing] because I'm an ex-Mormon.

SALLY: Yeah, yeah.

EMILY: They'd still be, like, the worst people to have at parties.

SALLY: Yeah. Yeah! Horrible.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: They're just, like, so I don't know. Unsocialized is really the only word I can think of these days. Because it's like do you people not know how to behave in the world?

EMILY: Yeah, including this girlboss moment where Siuan, um, there's uh – womansplains to a messenger how to do his job.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Siuan's like, "Repeat back this message to me." And this guy's like, "Literally all I do is pass messages, guaranteed I will get the correct message to him." And she's like [in a valley girl type voice], "I don't give a fuck what you do. Oh my god. Just do what I say!" And he's like "Oh-kay!"

SALLY: Here's your message.

EMILY: I mean, like, yeah. You're a soldier. You should probably just follow orders and repeat it back if that's what they request, but, like, girl.

SALLY: Like why would –

EMILY: Not good behavior on either end.

SALLY: He be employed as a messenger if he was bad at it?

EMILY: [giggles] Yeah.

SALLY: Like, the army, for all its faults, the military is –

EMILY: This is our top messenger, Lying Greg.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: He's just so charismatic! How could we fire him?

EMILY: He's very handsome [laughing], but he tells so many lies.

SALLY: He just likes to fiddle with the messages for fun.

EMILY: We can't tell if he's doing it on purpose [laughs], as deliberate sabotage, or if he just forgets.

SALLY: Yeah, God bless him.

EMILY: [laughs] God. I wish Lying Greg was in charge of this book.

SALLY: Yeah, that would be really funny. If he was just like, "I'm in it for the plot! LOL." [laughs]

EMILY: Unreliable narrator TM.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Okay, last chapter is called "Gambits," in homage to our gambler Mat, I would assume.

SALLY: Or Gambit from X-Men, who's gonna come in and start blowing people up.

EMILY: [laughs] Oh my god. Tuon's like [card throwing noises].

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Um, so, yeah. Tuon. Here she is. We get a very heavy-handed reminder that Tuon [sighs] represents order and balance and stuff like that.

SALLY: Booo! Tomato, tomato!

EMILY: As opposed to Mat, who represents chaos and is a trickster, I suppose.

SALLY: Laugh track, applause.

EMILY: [laughs] For now.

SALLY: [laughs] For now. For about twelve more pages.

EMILY: Um, and in this scene we see Tuon interfacing with her court, for lack of a better word. Um, it's unclear how much time has passed since she returned to Ebou Dar. We know that, like, Suroth is still being punished somewhere. Like, her hair needs to grow out before she can become da – *da'cavole*, you know, one of the naked servants.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um, so not like *weeks* or months, but also, like, maybe a brief amount of time, because this is one of the first things Tuon does and it's announced that Selucia, who has been her sort of undercover bodyguard, is now her Truthspeaker, which basically means that she can talk to Tuon and also talk for Tuon. In these public settings.

SALLY: I know that these roles are, like, allegedly important when everyone has, like, you know, emperor worship or whatever.

EMILY: Mm-hmm.

SALLY: But I think it would be a lot funnier if Tuon had a jester [laughs].

EMILY: Oh my god. A court jester.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Makes silly jokes in the background.

SALLY: Yeah, about what Tuon is doing.

EMILY: I think one of the ways we could have resuscitated the Ebou Dar plot is if, instead of having Mat be her sex slave, Tylin had Mat be her court jester [laughs].

SALLY: [laughing] Yeah, that would be really good.

EMILY: And he was just [laughs] the silly court jester.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: When Tuon arrived.

SALLY: He was like, "It's me! Court jester boy."

EMILY: Yeah, Mat should have been a court jester. What happens in this scene: Tuon announces that Selucia is her new Truthspeaker, Tuon calls up Beslan and is like, "I know that you are plotting rebellion," and Beslan's like, "Sure am, bitch!" And we're like, "Cool, Beslan."

SALLY: Beslan redemption arc for forty-five seconds.

EMILY: For literally forty-five seconds.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: And then Tuon is like, "Okay, two options. I execute you here and your people will know that it's because you resisted the Seanchan invasion, or I'll allow you to still be king. Look

at these sweet statistics showing how much the crime rate has dropped in Ebou Dar, [whispering] because we punish criminals.”

SALLY: Because we kill them.

EMILY: Yeah, we literally have, like, a hanging wall.

SALLY: Yeah, like, she’s like, “I can’t put his head on a spike outside like I do with the rest of the criminals.”

EMILY: The rest of the riffraff. God. He’s fucking noble born, or whatever the hell.

SALLY: Yeah. So, um, yeah.

EMILY: And you guys don’t care what we do to Aes Sedai, because...you hate Aes Sedai, too. So, [mumbling]. Or she’s like, “Or you can live and be incorporated into my court.” Beslan goes for the latter and himself is like, “Are you a *ta’veren*? Because I was not planning on doing that.” And there are, like, heavy implications throughout that Tuon is *ta’veren*. I don’t know if it’s ever, like, confirmed or denied or whatever. Um, but, again, this is a missed opportunity, if that is the intention, to make Tuon *ta’veren*, to talk about agency in terms of like –

SALLY: Yeah!

EMILY: How you deal with fate. Like, it would be an incredibly tragic turn of events if Beslan was forced to incorporate into the Seanchan Empire because *ta’veren* didn’t give him a choice.

SALLY: Yeah, I also think it would add an interesting layer to the discourse of empire, because ultimately she is not providing him a choice.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: His choice is to die or live and try and help his people. And if you are a ruler who is committed to your people, which Beslan, for all his faults, is, then that’s not a choice. It’s like do you want to make sure Tuon doesn’t put a member of the Seanchan nobility in charge of your country or do you want to do it? So, sorry I just said the same thing twice. So, she’s not giving him a choice. She’s not giving anybody a choice when she’s like – this idea that, like, crime statistics have dropped, exactly like Emily said, it’s a choice to either obey the law or literally be hanged. Of course you’re going to be more cautious.

EMILY: Yeah, everyone’s terrified of the Seanchan.

SALLY: So, Tuon is not providing people with choices. We talk extensively about Empire and the lack of agency therein in our *We Don’t Watch Outlander* when we talked about *Ancillary Justice* by Ann Leckie, so not [laughs] to keep referring you to a paratext, but if you’re interested in that, we talk more about it there. So, the idea that Tuon is *ta’veren*, you know, influencing

everybody to do whatever she wants to do, I just think would be a really interesting plot mechanic.

EMILY: Yeah, especially in terms of Rand's dark arc.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: In terms of how he uses his *ta'veren* powers, versus sort of Mat and Perrin, who are a little loser and less scary with it.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um, yeah. But Tuon makes all these, what she considers to be these wild concessions, like, she's like, "Well, we still don't know how your mom died, but if it was someone, if it was our people, then I'll [laughs] apologize." And it's like –

SALLY: Everyone's like, "Oh my god!"

EMILY: What?! And Beslan's like [sarcastically], "Wow."

SALLY: "Wow. Thank you so much."

EMILY: "Wow, bestie. For holding your criminals to the same standards that you hold my people."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Maybe. Ugh. Anyway, Beslan, whether he's being manipulated by fate TM or whether he's just a fucking spinless coward or because he literally doesn't have a choice.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Although, you know, honestly, if we were being true to Beslan's character, I think he would have opted to die.

SALLY: Yeah. Beslan was literally ready to just, like, start throwing Molotov cocktails [laughing] the second the Seanchan showed up in his city.

EMILY: Yeah, he seemed to believe that there was great power in symbolic resistance.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And so, like, it's a little wild that he would be like, "Sure, I'll live." You know? I'm, I'm not disagreeing that there is no real choice.

SALLY: Sure, yeah. No.

EMILY: But I do believe Beslan would have made the more symbolic, less logical choice there.

SALLY: Yeah, no. That's a good point. It's not, like, a functional choice.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: It's not a choice in that you have two, um, options that would take you down different paths. It's either, like, you have an option to go down one path or your life ends. But it is *a* choice, and, like, you can choose to die. And I agree that I think Belsan probably would. And it is especially said because, like, as we've talked about, Ituralde is the only one who seems to think that, like, there is value in resisting the Seanchan no matter what. So, it would have been, like, nice to see somebody else do that even though it'd be like RIP Beslan.

EMILY: Yeah. Not that you served much it terms of plot.

SALLY: Not that – this would actually make you the most iconic character in *The Wheel of Time*, instead you're just another flop.

EMILY: Yeah, flop era.

SALLY: Flop era.

EMILY: Um, Belsan swears fealty to Tuon using his own terms and Tuon is like, "Great, one of the things I learned from Mat is that...letting people actually make oaths in terms of their own belief system is more functional than forcing them to use a random set of words." Go figure.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um, but Beslan [laughs] retires or, you know, moves back, so that we can get some of Tuon's military people to step forward and propose, um, plans. First they're like, "The Dragon Reborn wants to set up another meeting." Tuon's like, "Yeah, I believe that this is the Dragon reborn and since we need to stay here, we do need to, like, interface with him in some way." Um, they're like, "Great. Well, we have this sick ass plan to, uh, go attack the White Tower. What a surprise! We're just going to use our, like, flyers. Go and capture as many of these Aes Sedai as we possibly can. It'll be a real, you know, get in, get out. A raid, as it were." Um, Tuon asks some questions about whether this is feasible, but they're like, "Yeah, we think it's totally – we're really committed to it." And Tuon's pretty impressed with all of this and sort of before she can make a...a decision one way or another, um, Tylee suddenly arrives and is like, "Hewwo. I have brought with me some grisly trophies involving Trollocs' heads."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um, and, uh, she's like, "Warning, I think they're probably coming here." Tuon's like, "Okay, well. This is not great, but we already knew the Last Battle was coming, this just makes our interfacing with the Dragon Reborn even more important." And for like a second she's like,

“Do you think raiding the White Tower will piss off the Dragon Reborn?” and everyone’s like, “Eh, we don’t really know.” And she clearly doesn’t consider that to be too much of an issue, because, spoiler, she does move ahead with this plan while also moving forward with this meeting with Rand.” Um, but Tylee is like, “We should make allies of these people rather than enemies.” Um, and Tuon is just like, Yeah, you’re probably right. So, let’s meet with the Dragon Reborn.” It’s, like, a really, like, you would think that Tylee arriving with this news would prompt Tuon and the rest of the Seanchan to, like, maybe put a hold on hostilities. But, um, I guess they do. Yeah, I guess that will be important. Sorry. Tuon does not give the official go ahead for this plan yet. She says, “Basically we’re on hold until we can talk to the Dragon Reborn.”

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: So it will be Rand’s fuck up with his actual meeting with Tuon which is to come – we have not gotten there yet – that will then, um, cause Tuon to be like, “Whatever, we’re not with the Dragon Reborn anymore, so we can move ahead with attacking the White Tower.”

SALLY: That’s nice.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Nice to see Rand fail, I guess.

EMILY: Isn’t it?

SALLY: At this one moment where he no longer, apparently, in charge of the universe.

EMILY: Well, she’s *ta’veren*, too, so...

SALLY: I’m gonna fucking kill myself [laughs].

EMILY: [laughs] Stop.

SALLY: [laughs] Um, this chapter also really bothers me because, like, I, like we’ve talked about before, the Seanchan omen culture is very interesting. And the way that they make decisions based on omens is very interesting. I think it’s just that Tuon bothers me, so every decision that she makes pisses me off.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: But the fact that she’s just, like, thinking almost more about the omens that she saw then the actual, like...geopolitical decisions ahead of her made me...just so mad.

EMILY: Yeah, it makes her seem incompetent, when everything we’ve been given thus far to understand is that she’s hypercompetent.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Like, that's what the narrative has been insisting up until this point.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But then it's like, oh maybe she's just winging it thus far on the power of being *ta'veren*.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Like, she just seems very, like, yeah. We don't want to, like, discount the cultural use of omens in, like, a Western framework.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But I don't believe using omens alone to make geopolitical decisions is anything that any culture has ever, um, like, endorsed as a strategy.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: They certainly impact decision making, but.

SALLY: Yeah, but it's just, like, her decision to turn off hostilities against the Dragon Reborn is, like, immediate, because she's like, "Well, I was told I would have a difficult decision to make today, so I guess this is it."

EMILY: Mm-hmm.

SALLY: She makes me so angry.

EMILY: Yeah, the Seanchan – I don't know what there is.

SALLY: The whole chapter is, like, so rancid. It's just, like, Seanchan culture aggressively thrown in your face. All these hierarchies and elitism and fascism and self-importance. Horrible.

EMILY: Yeah. And, like, there's just, like, an element of racism there.

SALLY: Yes.

EMILY: There are more Seanchan who are canonically Black than in any other group besides the Sea Folk, and we've already talked about how the treatment of the Sea Folk betrays racism on the parts of the authors.

SALLY: Yes.

EMILY: So.

SALLY: Yeah, absolutely. I think it is, uh, quite telling that Tuon is our main Black character in this series.

EMILY: But, like, every other – Tylee’s Black, apparently. A couple of these other military guys are Black. It’s just, like, so...you know, like the attempt there is to be like, “The Seanchan are multi-cultural,” but it’s, like, Randland isn’t multicultural.

SALLY: Yeah, Randland is white.

EMILY: White TM.

SALLY: White TM. Mostly. Or, at least the majority of our main characters are. Um, yeah, so it’s this weird dichotomy of, like, these really rough people, um, really difficult people, um, in the Seanchan and the racism that comes with Tuon being a quote unquote difficult woman, but also this upholding of the narrative, like we’ve talked about so much, that, like, the Seanchan are correct.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: [laughs] And that, like, look at all these reports we have. Um, newflash, an increase of military presence does not actually impact crime one way or the other.

EMILY: It’s so great!

SALLY: Actually, it probably increases crime because people get *criminalized*.

EMILY: Mm-hmm.

SALLY: By the police. Anyway, rancid. And next week we have to read a Mat chapter, so. Rancid.

EMILY: Well, not next week, actually.

SALLY: Oh, right. Sorry.

EMILY: In terms of actual timeline, uh, this brings us to housekeeping. Dear listeners, we are about to go on vacation. When you hear this, um, episode, our vacation will have more or less begun. Um, our episodes of the podcast regular are going to be delayed by a couple of weeks. So, the next time you hear from us will be – the next time you hear from us will be on June fifth, that’s when our next episode will be dropped. As a result of us going on vacation, our transcript for this episode might be a little bit delayed.

SALLY: Yes.

EMILY: Because we'll be gone, you know, and will not be wanting to type up a transcript in that time. So, just as an FYI. It is still coming, but it will be delayed.

SALLY: It will be. Yes, indeed.

EMILY: Um, in terms of how this impacts our Patreon content, everything is going to be pushed back by a week.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: So normally you would expect to see a blog on the thirty-first. Instead, you're going to get that on the seventh of June. Our We Don't Watch Outlander, our next episode, would be delayed by a week. But, um, I don't think that will bother most of you.

SALLY: I hope not.

EMILY: You're all very gracious in allowing us to take breaks, so.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Shouldn't be a big deal. Um, but, yeah, you won't hear from us on social for a couple of weeks, but when we come back we will be ready to talk about the character assassination of Mat Cauthon, which begins literally in the first sentence of the next chapter.

SALLY: [singing] Who can say?

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: We should hold a funeral.

EMILY: Yeah. A Viking funeral.

SALLY: [making the noise of a bow firing an arrow]

EMILY: Set an arrow on fire and goodbye.

SALLY: Goodbye, Matrim.

EMILY: Goodbye, Mat. RIP.

SALLY: RIP, court jester. You were good once upon a time.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: But you've been corrupted.

EMILY: Um, but that's it, I think.

SALLY: Yeah, that's all that we've got. A rough couple of chapters in terms of, like, crimes against humanity, but.

EMILY: [laughs] Yeah.

SALLY: But we'll keep shoving along.

EMILY: It's always a rough episode when you cite Nuremburg [laughs].

SALLY: [laughs] Really keeps it chipper, you know?

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Um, but Grady was there, so.

EMILY: [laughs] Grady was there briefly just to be like, "I'm tired!"

SALLY: Grady was there begging for labor rights [laughs]. Perrin was like, "Wow, Grady looks pretty sick. Did I almost kill Grady?"

EMILY: And Grady's like [in a strained voice, "Yes."

SALLY: [laughs] Fucking –

EMILY: Lying Greg is like, "No, he's doing great."

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Okay, thanks everyone for listening. [laughs] Thanks to Glynna MacKenzie for our theme song. Thanks to our patrons on Patreon and our followers on social media.

SALLY: Did you also name the kraken Greg? [laughs]

EMILY: I might have, yeah. There's multiple. His name isn't really Greg. That's a lie, too.

SALLY: No one knows what his real name is.

EMILY: Yeah, it's a mystery. I just love the name Greg.

SALLY: It's a funny name.

EMILY: It's just, like, a guy name, you know?

SALLY: Yeah. Greg is just a guy. Greg is that guy.

EMILY: It's either a kraken or he's just a liar, a pathological liar.

SALLY: [laughs] Um, no I don't have anything to add, except that we will be excited when we come back. Fresh, revitalized. A little jetlagged probably.

EMILY: Sick of my family, undoubtedly.

SALLY: I have to get a CT scan like the day we come back.

EMILY: Oof, yeah. That will be fun. Do you have a sign off?

SALLY: Um, yeah. Guys, horribly, my job has decided to participate in rainbow capitalism.

EMILY: [laughing]

SALLY: [laughs] By having a float at the local paride parade – pa-ride parade.

EMILY: Paride parade. Pariah parade [laughs].

SALLY: [laughs] That's what it feels like sometimes.

EMILY: Hehe! LGBT rights.

SALLY: At the local paride parade and I – *pride parade!* What is going on? [laughs]

EMILY: It's a tough phrase.

SALLY: Words don't feel real! And I keep getting emails about it and it's just like – I've been asked multiple times to be on the DEI committee.

EMILY: Mm-hmm.

SALLY: And I just, like, refuse.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: One, because I think there are more quote unquote diverse voices at my agency that should be on the committee, but also because I will – I refuse to walk in a pride parade with my corporation.

EMILY: Yeah, ick.

SALLY: I would be in the meeting where they decided this just foaming at the mouth.

EMILY: [gagging noises]

SALLY: Anyway, that's what I've been dealing with.

EMILY: Homophobia!

SALLY: Hi, gay!

EMILY: Happy pride! What?

SALLY: [laughing] Do you remember that video? Where she's like, "Hi, gay. Happy pride month."

EMILY: No?

SALLY: She's making fun of corporations. She's, like, pretending to be a butter shop. It's really good. I'll send it to you.

EMILY: I can't wait.

SALLY: Hi, gay [laughs].

EMILY: Goodbye, everyone.

SALLY: Goodbye, gay!