



Episode 250: Comrade T*****s
Release Date: July 3, 2023
Running Time: 46 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: You'll never believe this, guys. It's another bummer. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, it's just sort of, like, bummer after bummer after bummer.

Emily: Yeah, the Ls just keep on hitting us.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: When I saw there was a Gawyn chapter –

Sally: I know.

Emily: In this series of chapters, I needed to lay on my back with my arms crossed across my chest and think of England. (laugh) Because, God almighty, I hate that man.

Sally: He is really rancid in these chapters, too. Like, I feel like I'm gonna say that every chapter, like every Gawyn chapter, just be like, "Wow, he's getting so much worse," but, like, this one really is giving, like, "I don't believe women have agency."

Emily: Yeah, I mean, they're all – like, all the narrators in this particular section are quite bad –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Rand, Gawyn, and Cadsuane. But the levels of just, like, casual misogyny are un-fucking-believable.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which is really saying something, given that this is a series built upon casual misogyny.

Sally: Casual – yeah. Like, I just – I don't know what was happening over at Wheel of Time HQ with the sort of concocting of Gawyn Trakand as a character, but it was absolute bottom of the barrel. Or maybe they really do think he's, like, cream of the crop.

Emily: Yeah, it's impossible to really tell the – the reasoning there.

Sally: Yeah, there's also a lot of, like – this particular chapter, particular set of chapters, really dials on the whole, like, really interesting – interesting in a bad way – flavor of misogyny that's directed towards women who are, um, traditionally – like, considered beautiful in the most, like

–

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Culturally –

Emily: With the Arad Domon stuff.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Just, real quick, this is Everybody Hates Rand. I know 250 episodes in – woo!

Sally: Yay!

Emily: Hurrah.

Sally: Huzzah.

Emily: It's difficult to – to pull a “huzzah” out of the –

Sally: I know.

Emily: Out of the ether these days, but it's there for you. Huzzah, we've done 250 episodes, by some –

Sally: We sure have.

Emily: Some miracle.

Sally: Yeah. Um.

Emily: Two hundred and fifty episodes worth of content in these bad boys. And at least another 50 more to come. How crazy, that we'll probably end with a 300-episode –

Sally: Yeah, that's pretty wild.

Emily: I hope we end with three hundred and three, so it's like – three-oh-three, the band. (laugh)

Sally: Three-oh-three. “Don't trust a ho.”

Emily: Which is – speaking of the theme of these chapters –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But anyway, uh, uh, I'm Emily Juchau.

Sally: And I'm Sally Goodger.

Emily: Yeah, we're hos. We're both hos.

Sally: Yeah, don't trust us.

Emily: Don't trust women who are pretty.

Sally: All they're gonna do is lie –

Emily: Because –

Sally: And fuck someone who's not you.

Emily: Yeah, and they're just manipulative, by very –

Sally: They're so –

Emily: The very nature of being beautiful.

Sally: Yeah, all they're doing with their beauty, which is something they absolutely cannot control – it is just part of the, like, genetic lottery, to be someone who is just, like –

Emily: Conventionally attractive.

Sally: Conventionally attractive. It's literally nothing that they have done to themselves in any way, shape, or form – that is something they're just, like, constantly using to make men do things they don't want to do, rather than just something that sits on their accident of a body.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: (laugh) It makes me so mad.

Emily: It's just, like, mind-boggling. Here we have the Arad Domani culture, which we're getting into –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which we've had little, mm, not-great flavors of throughout the series.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Most of what we hear about the Domani – Arad Domani culture is that the women are merchants – it's a merchant-based society –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: The women are the merchants, generally – that they're all very good at negotiating, and that a lot of that negotiating is built on their, like, sex appeal.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Our main Domani character, I think, is probably Leane.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Who, famously, as soon as she's done being the, you know, former Keeper of the Chronicles, is like, "I'm going to go back to my roots, which is ... make-up." (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, which – what we're seeing here is this, like, conflation between, um, you know, women – women choosing to modify their appearance or even just to wear certain things for pure enjoyment, which is, on some level, what Leane seems to be doing –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: A lot of the time, um, and women who are doing this for, like, purely mercenary reasons –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: As in, to, um, manipulate men.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And of course there is – you know, the Venn diagram there has a lot of overlap; Leane's not just doing it because she enjoys it; it's also because she's manipulating men with it –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: She uses it to manipulate men. But by sort of having that Venn diagram be as embedded as it is, we're, um, losing the plot here a little bit, I think, and losing the reality that women can just choose to modify their appearance, and that's a totally separate thing from any form of manipulation.

Sally: Yeah. Um – yeah, there's, like, absolutely no belief by any of the narrators; we even get a little bit of this from Cadsuane.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Um, so it's not necessarily just, like, the male characters; it's just sort of the narrative as a whole, like, refusing any sort of acknowledgment that women might dress a certain way, or wear make-up, or jewelry, or whatever, for their own enjoyment, regardless of whoever might look at them, male or otherwise.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: It's always like, "Everything that women are doing to their appearance and their behavior is somehow for, um, the benefit of men." Um, whether that benefit be, like, so men can enjoy them with their, um, male gaze – leaning towards the sexual gaze – or for men to enjoy that and then ultimately be manipulated by their enjoyment of that. Like, there's no – there's no just, like, women doing things because they like them.

Emily: Yeah, it's all centric around men.

Sally: Yeah, and there's also just the belief that, um – what am I trying to say here? Just going back to the idea that, like, Gawyn has this just, like, rancid little monologue about Lelaine –

Emily: Oh, Christ.

Sally: And how Lelaine –

Emily: She's the type of pretty that is set – he, like, goes into this delineation of different types of beautiful.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He's like, "Egwene –" Basically what he's saying is, like, Egwene is that girl-next-door sort of beautiful –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: All wholesome and, you know –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You really just want to spend time with her, whereas Lelaine is the sort of beautiful that you have to be wary of because blah blah blah blah.

Sally: Yeah. So, like, not only is there, like – like I was joking about at the beginning – no acknowledgment that women will do – you know, dress up for their own benefit, it's also just, like, a refusal to acknowledge that women just exist in the world and that sometimes women just look a certain way.

Emily: Yeah, and that, crucially, looks and personality have little to do with each other.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Lelaine is a conniving bitch because she's a conniving bitch –

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: Not because she looks pretty.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And she isn't, frankly, able to be a conniving bitch because she looks pretty. Lelaine is from – has built herself up in a political spectrum that is based mostly on women.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: It's not like Lelaine has been manipulating men to get where she's going.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It seems she doesn't really have much experience talking to men, even.

Sally: Yeah, or anyone who's not an Aes Sedai.

Emily: Yeah. Seriously.

Sally: Like, she's not – yeah, she's not out here femme fatale-ing her way across the continent, you know.

Emily: Yeah. Um, I think this – really, Arad Doman and sort of our examination of it, or, rather, lack of examination of it, really gets down to the crucial point of the Wheel of Time, which is that a – for a purportedly feminist text, a lot of the – we've talked about this before – but just to rephrase it, a lot of the argument about Wheel of Time being a feminist text is that you have a lot of women characters and a lot of, like, women-run societies.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And as we have said before, like, it's not feminism if the women in the series are still, um – all of their power and all of their everything, all of their agency, is still centered around men.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: That still puts men in the position of power.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, sooo.

Sally: Yeah, one more thing about Arad Domon specifically is there are, um, to my understanding, the Arad Domani people are, um, people of color.

Emily: Yeah, they are darker-skinned, we are told.

Sally: Darker-skinned.

Emily: The phrase “exotic” is frequently used, or phrases like that, with the Arad Domani. So definitely some tropes we're playing into there.

Sally: Yeah. Specifically this idea of, like, the Arad Domani women wearing very, like, revealing, sort of gauzy gowns. Really plays into, wow, our good old friend, Orientalism. (laugh)

Emily: Tee hee. There she is.

Sally: It's – episode 250; we're hitting all the greatest hits. Misogyny –

Emily: That's my bestie, Orientalism.

Sally: (laugh) Orientalism. Sort of this idea that, like, um, darker-skinned women, particularly – again, with Orientalism – in sort of, like, the Middle East, North Africa, the Far East, are somehow just, like, extremely sexually available and just sort of, like, walking around in revealing clothing, ripe for the taking. Just sort of, like, oozing a sort of slutty nature about them.

Emily: Right.

Sally: Um, which is, of course, a disgusting trope that we have placed on women of these cultures, um, that they're just sort of peppering in here for – just to reiterate that this text hates women.

Emily: Yeah. It really comes back from Orientalism, from colonialism. It's just really gross. Um, especially because Rand, our white savior, literally –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Is coming in here as an invading force.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, but with the Arad Domani – so clearly the goal here was to make a, like, society of femme fatales –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: As it were.

Sally: Just a whole country of them.

Emily: So here are some things that our society of femme fatales, um, does not examine: Um, what happens if you're not conventionally attractive?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: What happens when you get older?

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, what happens to the disabled?

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, what is the cultural pressure upon these women to look and behave a certain way like? We're given an allusion, in a paragraph, that "it was said that very young Domani girls practiced the art of manipulating men, preparing for the day when they would be of age." So, children.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Presumably, are then learning how to, quote, "manipulate men," which basically means, you know, sexualize themselves.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which is grooming.

Sally: Yeah, which is grooming, which is disgusting.

Emily: Yeah, so, like, how does a culture that apparently is built upon grooming its entire female populace – how are we still like, “But it’s feminist”?

Sally: Yeah. Um, and I think, just to, like, extra flag that, I think the idea that, like, particularly, like, young female children are also sexually available has a very interesting position within the Orientalist framework as well.

Emily: Yes.

Sally: Just to, like, flag the way that, like, young women of color are often sexualized and the way that young white women are not.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: So – ew.

Emily: There’s also – it plays a lot into our modern-day culture, which affects, um, pretty much all regions. In America, the phrase you hear is “jail bait.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which is, um, women who are legally minors but are sexually appealing to men –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Which, excuse me, children who are legally minors –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But who are sexually appealing to men. Uh, totally gross phrase, totally gross concept –

Sally: Yes.

Emily: Um, and that’s exactly what we’re playing into here, is that this is something that women are choosing to do, again, not just, like, a roll of the genetic lottery to maybe, when you are still in adolescence, have developed the secondary sexual characteristics –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Large breasts, or whatever the fuck.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So.

Sally: Soooo.

Emily: Soooooooo.

Sally: Hmm.

Emily: Hmmm.

Sally: Hmmmmmmmm. Yeah.

Emily: Yeah. Hmmm.

Sally: Hmmm.

Emily: Hmm. What do you guys think hell is like? Because that's where Robert Jordan is.
(laugh)

Sally: Probably a lot like this. (laugh)

Emily: Ahhhh –

Sally: I don't know, Hozier's new album seeks to explore that, so perhaps stop listening to this and go listen to the new EP.

Emily: Yeah, you might as well. You might as well spend your time doing something –

Sally: Useful.

Emily: Useful.

Sally: Culturally enriching.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Entertaining.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Pleasant.

Emily: (sigh)

Sally: None of – none of those things apply here. Um.

Emily: Then there's just all the misogyny that isn't in the background as Arad Doman –

Sally: It's just, like, straight-up. Everyone being like, "Women – women be bitches."

Emily: "Women be shopping." No, like, "Women be dead. Women be dying, and it's my fault."

Sally: Oh, I – I – you guys.

Emily: Can women not do fucking anything?

Sally: Yeah, women can't even die these days.

Emily: Women can't even die in peace without a man being like, "That's for me."

Sally: Yeah, "What if I just mull over her death in graphic detail constantly?"

Emily: Yeah, like, the level to which – it's almost like – it feels like corpse desecration at this point.

Sally: Yeah, it really does. It really –

Emily: There's no actual corpse involved, but it's, like, the soul – the memory of these women. Like, if you believe in ghosts – and I do – then this would be a much more interesting text if these dead women were haunting Rand not because he killed them or let them die or whatever but because he literally isn't letting them rest.

Sally: Yeah. Like, it – yeah. Truly.

Emily: Yeah, this is how we get women in white, you know.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: The sort of lady ghosts.

Sally: They're like, "Would you fucking let me be?"

Emily: Yeah, "Would you fucking let me die? Can I do anything?"

Sally: Yeah, this is, of course, in reference to Rand opening this chapter with the line, like, "Moiraine – Moiraine, who died because of me," or some shit.

Emily: "Because I was too fucking weak to just kill Lanfear myself." And I'm like, that wasn't the takeaway from that little scene –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: In my opinion. But my opinion doesn't matter.

Sally: And just for, like, pages, Brandon has Rand come back to this list as just, like, a – a grounding mechanic as he moves through, um, Bandar Eban. We've arrived at the Arad Domani capital; he is moving into his new seat of power, and as he walks through the city, commenting things like, "Wow, there's a lot of poor people here" –

Emily: (laugh) "Wow, the women sure are sluts." (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Yeah, just – you know.

Emily: "Even the twelve-year-olds. Sluts everywhere."

Sally: Just these really nice –

Emily: "Anyway, dead women."

Sally: Commentaries. He's just constantly like, "And this woman died because of me, and this woman died because of me," and as we've referenced multiple times, all of these things are just, like – it's not like Rand is some sort of serial killer going around, actively killing women. He just happens to exist in a world where, oh my God, sometimes women die.

Emily: Yeah, these are just incidental deaths around him.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Rand has, by his own hand, killed a couple of these women, and they were for very justifiable reasons.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Self-defense, primarily.

Sally: So it's just, like, seriously, pages – like, three or four pages of this list, and we finally get to the end, and Lews Therin – Lutheran (laugh) – is like, “Don't forget about the woman I killed.”

Emily: Lews Therin's like, “Ilyena,” and Rand's like, “Alright, fine, I'll just slide that one in.”

Sally: Ilyena. God. Speaking of people who should get to come back as revenants.

Emily: Oh, yeah, Ilyena should be actively haunting the narrative.

Sally: Yeah. I think –

Emily: In a way that is more interesting.

Sally: Yeah. Like, if her ghost was actually there, constantly being like, “You suck.” (laugh)

Emily: Yeah, let women haunt the narrative.

Sally: Yes.

Emily: I believe in that.

Sally: That would be very sexy.

Emily: Um, at the end, Lews Therin is also like, “And Min,” and Rand's like, “She's still alive”? (laugh)

Sally: And Lews Therin is like, “Or is she?” (laugh)

Emily: Lews Therin's like, “Not for long, bestie.”

Sally: (sigh) And Rand's like, “Well, I didn't kill her. Yet.”

Emily: “Well, I didn't kill her yet. That was Semirhage. That was – it was –” It's so fascinating how Rand is able to, like, jump through this hoop and come to the sort of, like, correct conclusion that although he was the person – his were the hands that hurt Min –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: He is not technically to blame for that. Um, but he is not able to apply that logic to any of the other people who have died.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And also, like, yes, that logic is true; but again, we have not – we have still not had any sort of check-in with Min.

Sally: No.

Emily: And Rand is like, “I haven’t seen Min lately. God, I hope she’s not avoiding me.” And I’m like, well, there’s a pretty easy way to find out how she’s feeling about this whole situation, which is to ask.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And not just be like, “Mm, I hope she’s not avoiding me. Hope she’s not scared of me.”

Sally: Why don’t you communicate with your partner?

Emily: She might be scared of you. And you’re just gonna have to live with that.

Sally: Yeah, sorry.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Also, you’re not exactly –

Emily: That’s something you guys have to get past as a couple.

Sally: You’re not exactly acting not-scary lately. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah, this is also the chapter when Rand is taking every opportunity to scare women with his cold, dead eyes. His shark eyes.

Sally: Yeah, his dead fish eyes.

Emily: Yeah. (laugh) A woman will come up and be like – say something moderately rude, and Rand will be like, “Look at my nuclear winter eyes,” and they’ll be like, “Never mind.”

Sally: They’ll be like – and Rand’s like, “Ah, another successful interaction.”

Emily: (laugh) Another success. Check.

Sally: Check. How to make friends and influence people. Check.

Emily: Check. (laugh)

Sally: “Gosh, look at me, Rand al’Thor, going about my business in such an efficient and professional way.”

Emily: He’s like, “I’m the best at ruling.”

Sally: Like, “I’m the best. At everything. Including killing women.”

Emily: (laugh) He’s so insufferable. Yeah, and killing women. He’s got such a high body count, according to himself. The only thing that happens is Rand enters Bandar Eban, the capital city of Arad Doman, is like, “Wow, look at all the poor people, look at all the sluts, look at all the slutty poor people. What a shame.”

Sally: (laugh) Raise your hand if you’re a slutty poor person.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: I would like to unionize. (laugh)

Emily: Um. (laugh) And he's like, "Dobraine, you suck. You should've brought peace to more than this entire city. Um, have you thought about doing the entire country?" And Dobraine's like, "It's been three days."

Sally: Dobraine's like, "Listen. I'm just one little guy."

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: "And I did a really good job, and maybe you should recognize that," and Rand's like, "Mm, no, I don't trust you; I think you're a – a conniving little French bastard –"

Emily: I know, he's like, "Dobraine. Can I trust him?"

Sally: "So I'm sending you away."

Emily: And I'm like, not for long at this rate. Like, the best way to turn a loyal man disloyal is to treat them like this.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: He's like, "Rhuarc, you suck. Every woman, you also suck. Cadsuane's an idiot; she's still following around –"

Sally: Yeah, in a –

Emily: "Because of this dumb loophole, and I'm just not gonna do anything about it."

Sally: Yeah, she's wearing, like, a hooded cloak. I think it'd be way funnier if she was wearing a mask all the time. Just, like, a carnival mask.

Emily: A clown mask.

Sally: (laugh) Well, that's what she is.

Emily: Because that's what she is.

Sally: The Wise Ones should make her wear a clown mask as punishment.

Emily: (laugh, sing) "Send in the clowns."

Sally: (laugh) It's just Cadsuane.

Emily: It's just Cadsuane and every other idiot in this series. Um, Rand invades a woman's home because she's the last member of the council who, uh, still is in Bandar Eban. Has her brought to him and is like, "Where the fuck is the king?" And she's like, "Bestie, literally no clue. No idea." And she's like – he's like, "Do you have, like, the last messenger of the king?" She tries to get out of that, and he's like, "No, I really want this guy, so bring him to me."

Sally: He does also comment on the fact that she's a dumb slut too. Just don't forget that.

Emily: Yeah, he lets us know – he lets us know that she has – oh, this is a fascinating line: “It covered her body from –” She's wearing a – a Domani dress – “It covered her body from neck to toe but was barely opaque and clung to every curve, of which she had more than her fair share.”

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Now, there are several interpretations possible here. One: the most obvious to me, fatphobia.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Two: This is just a super, you know, bodacious woman.

Sally: (laugh) It's Jessica Rabbit.

Emily: And Rand is just saying, “Leave some for the rest of us. You don't need D-cups.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “Someone else out there has an – has A-cups. You could –”

Sally: Share some of your titties.

Emily: (laugh) Redistribute the wealth.

Sally: Tax the big –

Emily: Comrade.

Sally: Tax the big titty ladies.

Emily: Comrade Titties. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Or, interpretation three: This woman has six breasts.

Sally: (laugh) She's just a strange woman.

Emily: She has an extra ass, you know.

Sally: She's got a lot of hips. Just sort of coming off. (laugh)

Emily: She's some sort of eldritch monstrosity, and Rand is like, “Damn, that dress is slutty, though.” (laugh)

Sally: “I'm not even gonna comment on the sort of, like, extra bones and –”

Emily: That really is how men –

Sally: “Organs.”

Emily: In Wheel of Time would behave, though. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: If they saw, like, an insane monster woman, they'd be like, "Pretty good tits, though. There are seven of them, but more to go around, I guess."

Sally: Oh my God. Of more – "Of which she had more than her fair share."

Emily: Episode 250: Comrade Titties.

Sally: Comrade Titties. Exclamation point, all capitals.

Emily: I'm joining the war on titties on the side of the titties.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Um, Rand is like, "Bring me this dumb messenger," and she's like, "Okay," spooked. And then we have the weirdest time skip of all time. Skipping Gawyn's chapter here for a minute –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: We skip Gawyn's chapter, then we get a Cadsuane point of view, followed by a Rand point of view in the same chapter. And I seriously cannot tell if it has been, like, a day or weeks in –

Sally: Yeah, it's impossible to tell.

Emily: In Bandar Eban; it's super weird. Um, Cadsuane kind of acts as though she's only been there for, like, a little while.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: 'Cause she's like, "Here I'm just visiting this – um, one of my informants here in the city," which is a guy who's super rich and owns a – an inn as a hobby.

Sally: Yeah. But it's, like, a fancy boy inn.

Emily: Yeah. It's a fancy boy inn for fancy boys.

Sally: For fancy boys.

Emily: It's, like, the opposite of the Master of the House in – in Les Miserables.

Sally: Yeah. Yeah. She's like, "There are white tablecloths, and he's wearing a silk vest, and ..."

Emily: This man invented three-star Michelin dining.

Sally: Yeah. He's like, "Listen. I'm not one of those basic bitch innkeepers."

Emily: "This is not Chili's."

Sally: This is – (laugh) This is not Chili's.

Emily: (laugh) "Welcome to Not-Chili's."

Sally: (laugh) Welcome to Not-Chili's.

Emily: I'm sorry this is the most unhinged episode we've done in a while. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Um –

Sally: It's not Chili's; it's the Cheesecake Factory, thank you very much.

Emily: Ooh. (laugh) Upscale. Upscale. Um, Cadsuane goes to visit this man, which, you know, it's so nice to have representation of rich men with hobbies.

Sally: Sure. It's nice to –

Emily: RIP to those guys who died trying to see the *Titanic*. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Oh, did you hear another billionaire died trying to do, like, racing?

Sally: Oh my God. Good.

Emily: Like, car racing? I know, I was like, damn, that's so funny.

Sally: I saw a video today where it was like, "Orca attacks another boat," and I'm like, good.

Emily: Yeah, they should.

Sally: I don't even – at this point, I don't even care if it really – it should mostly be rich people boats, which it seems to be, but, like –

Emily: Yeah, like yachts.

Sally: Maybe we should just stay out of the ocean for a while.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Maybe the orcas have finally just, like, had fucking enough and we should respect that.

Emily: Listen, I think orcas are God's most terrifying creatures.

Sally: I agree.

Emily: They're horrendous. But if they want to take mastery of the ocean, I say give it to them.

Sally: Yeah, like, the ocean –

Emily: That's fine. I'm in a landlocked state, baby. I'm not going near the ocean anyway.

Sally: Yeah, the ocean has been abused enough. And if I was the sort of, like, ecosystem that had some sort of just, like, terrifying powerhouse at my disposal, I too would send the orcas to our defense against rich people specifically.

Emily: To kill the yachts.

Sally: Bite 'em.

Emily: Bite them. Chomp them – okay, anyway. Cadsuane visits this inn, and this guy's like – the only interesting information she gets from him is that, unlike what usually happens when Rand enters a city, instead of there being, like, an insane amount of bad, weird things happening and also good weird things happening, it's just bad weird things happening.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So that's, like, mildly upsetting –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: From a structural standpoint. Cadsuane then leaves; she sort of, like, runs into Rand, riding along, and just has to, like – Rand says she “scuttled away,” which I think is so funny: I'm imagining her crab-walking in her clogs.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And she finally is like, “Let's face it, Cadsuane: you done fucked up.” So she goes to the Wise Ones and is like, “I have a plan.”

Sally: And they're all like, “Well, your plans always work out really well, so.”

Emily: Yeah, “Your plans are great.” If I was Sorilea, I'd just be like, “Listen. You had your chance.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “And we're not here for it anymore.” And I think that would've been not only fitting but also a hilarious power move of the Wise Ones.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: To just be like, “We're sick of it.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “Aes Sedai, you guys have not done any good shit since you've been here. We liked Egg, and that was it.”

Sally: Yeah. “Egg's the only one we respect.”

Emily: “And even she's on thin ice now that she's the Amyrlin Seat, so, like –”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “Maybe just stay out of our business.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “Do your thing.” Anyway. Um, we’ll find out more about Cadsuane’s plan later. Rand, meanwhile, is walking around, scaring women – oh, he also has the nuclear codes with him, a.k.a. the, um, access key to the Choedan Kal, of which only the male one is left, remember, because God forbid women do anything, including have nukes.

Sally: He’s just, like, legitimately carrying it around in a fanny pack.

Emily: Yeah, it’s –

Sally: Everywhere he goes.

Emily: “This is my nuclear fanny pack.”

Sally: (laugh) He’s just like, “This is my little guy.”

Emily: Yeah. Rand is riding around and is talking to one of these Asha’man, who’s sort of, like, on the mission team to make, uh, to form a – a meeting with the Seanchan. And this guy’s like, “Listen, they are just not agreeing to meet on any neutral ground.” And Rand, like a fucking coward, is like, “Okay, well, let’s just meet them on their ground.”

Sally: Bootlicker.

Emily: And it’s like, what? Everyone’s like, “Well, that’s stupid, ‘cause then, you know, they could just kill you or whatever,” and Rand’s like, “No, it’ll be fine,” blah blah blah blah, and Nynaeve’s like, “This sounds suspiciously like what you said before you got your arm blasted off –”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “And into smithereens, so noted.” Um, also, Flinn, Damer Flinn, DILF of the century, like, dares to speak up and be like, “I don’t think what the – the problem between –” Like, Rand says, “We have to make peace with the Seanchan, differences notwithstanding,” and Flinn’s like, “I don’t think those are just differences; I think those are, like, serious ideological rifts.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “They are trying to enslave all of us.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “You can’t just really get past us.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Rand does his little, um, nuclear winter gaze on Flinn, and Flinn also is spooked. So I guess it’s equal opportunity glaring –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: At anyone who dares to speak out against him.

Sally: Yeah, but, like, good for Flinn. We now have dissension against the Seanchan at, like, two people.

Emily: Yeah, it's Flinn and one of these Maidens.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So maybe they should band together, kill Rand, and form a Weekend at Bernie's-style –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “This is actually the Dragon Reborn. We're puppeting his dead body.”

Sally: That would be amazing.

Emily: I think we've proposed that before, actually.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: We've been like, this would be such a better narrative if Rand just died.

Sally: If Rand just ate it. If he just –

Emily: And everyone had to be like, “Ooh, Dragon Reborn's still alive.”

Sally: Beefed it.

Emily: “Still totally gonna win.”

Sally: Beefed it.

Emily: Um, Rand talks to Nynaeve, generally, at least at the start, more civilly than anyone else he has spoken to. He kind of just is like, “Hey, Rand – hey, Nynaeve: how's Lan?” She's like, “Well, he's on his dumb suicide mission, but I'm trying to make it as un-suicidal as possible, and it would be a real big favor if you would help me out and lend one of your one million armies to the cause,” and Rand goes, “No, I don't think I will.” (laugh) And Nynaeve's like, “Why?” And Rand's literally like, “Because I think Lan's death, suicidal charge, could be a really nice distraction for me, for the – you know, distract the bad guys while I go do something else.” And Nynaeve's like, “Somehow I don't kill you right now.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Rand's like, “I'm super impressed at Nynaeve keeping her temper.” And I'm like, I'm super impressed at Nynaeve keeping her temper. If someone said to me, “I'm deliberately not going to send aid to your husband because his death would be pretty convenient for me,” I'd be like, well, that's it.

Sally: Any last words?

Emily: Any last words, friendo?

Sally: You're talking about the numbers. (laugh)

Emily: You're talking 'bout da numbers. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Sorry. That was such a weird associative leap in my brain.

Emily: Okay, required reading for this episode –

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: You have to go on YouTube and search “Mike’s Mic: Recap of Lost Season One.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That was what we were – been into for the last few days. “You’re talkin’ bout da numbers.”

Sally: (simultaneously) “You’re talkin’ bout da numbers.” (laugh)

Emily: Anyway, yeah, if I was Nynaeve, I would either kill Rand or just be like, “I’m leaving.”

Sally: Yeah, fuck you, you stupid bitch.

Emily: There aren’t enough people in this story being like, “Fuck it, we ball.”

Sally: Yeah, I have – literally, like, nothing is keeping most people here except very, like, loose ideological strings.

Emily: Yeah, it is only Mat – Mat is the only one who has ever been like, “You know what? I don’t want to be here anymore. So see ya.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Except then the narrative keeps being like, shove back into place, and he keeps being like, “Boy, am I having some problems with this narrative.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But that at least is interesting.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Rand goes – this is where it gets confusing about how much time has passed. Rand gets back to the house that he’s staying in and – like, during that whole ride, it seemed like it had been weeks or something –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: ‘Cause he gets back, talks to Rhuarc, and is like, “How many council members have we found now? Seems like it’s taking a while,” and Rhuarc’s like, “We’ve got four now, and we have, like, confirmed deaths of some others.” I’m like, okay, so they must have been here for weeks. But then the original, um, six-breasted woman comes in and is like, “Sorry, that

messenger you sent me to get is dead, actually,” and I’m like, he sent her off to do that in the last chapter. Has it been an hour? Like –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That task couldn’t have taken weeks –

Sally: Yeah, and this woman is wearing –

Emily: Or even days, frankly.

Sally: The same dress. Which, I know people repeat outfits, but it’s, like – seems to indicate –

Emily: That it’s only been a little while.

Sally: That she hasn’t changed, yeah.

Emily: It’s so weird.

Sally: So who fucking knows how long we’ve been here.

Emily: Anyway, Rand concludes that, like, this messenger was imprisoned by this woman and more or less just, like, left to die. And he’s like, “Well, you should receive the same treatment.” This is Rand, champion of women’s health and safety, being like, “Goodbye, drag away screaming.”

Sally: “Enjoy the dungeon. We won’t kill you, though.”

Emily: “We – I’ll make sure you don’t die so you don’t – so I don’t have to deal with your ghost, but into the dungeon you go.” Um, and Nynaeve is like, “Well, this is pretty bad.” And then brings up Lan again, which is so – it’s just, like, weird narrative writing. It’s like, we shouldn’t be coming back to this conversation –

Sally: Yeah, we’ve already covered it.

Emily: We should’ve just had the conversation when it happened.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But it’s just so, like, Rand can blow up at her and everyone can just, like, scatter and leave him to his solitary throne. That sort of imagery. Anyway.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Meanwhile Gawyn’s like, “Hey, everyone? Listen. I think we should rescue Egg.” And everyone’s like, “She told us not to, and it’s fine.” And he’s like, “But have you considered that I have a penis, and I said so.”

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: And they're all like ... "I did consider that, and it makes me less inclined to listen to you."

Emily: They're like, "We did consider that, because you won't let us forget it, because you're swinging your little, you know, phallic instrument around –"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "At anyone who will listen. Look. Yeah, we're pretty – we're pretty confident in the knowledge that you have a dick and want us to know about it."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "You're that type of guy." So Gawyn's like, "These stupid idiots just can't do anything."

Sally: (laugh) Sorry, this chapter opens with Gawyn, like, flashing back to his dad –

Emily: Oh.

Sally: Who we – or, like, at some point, he's like, "I don't really remember my dad, this dumb Cairhienin asshole, except for this one memory where he's telling young Galad not to trust women."

Emily: "Don't trust pretty women or Aes Sedai. And especially don't trust pretty Aes Sedai." So that goes back to our whole, you know –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Women. They just be manipulating men.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Um, it's so random.

Emily: Then Gawyn gives all this, like, insider information about Elayne's likely policy decisions.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Which is ridiculous, considering Gawyn hasn't seen Elayne in about two years.

Sally: Yeah, I think a really funny outcome of this plot is everyone being like, "Well, surely the First Sword of Andor knows everything," and he's just giving absolutely nonsensical information.

Emily: Yeah, it might've redeemed Gawyn slightly if he was doing it intentionally.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: If he was just like, "I'm not going to tell you –"

Sally: "I don't know what she's fucking doing with the fucking cherry orchards."

Emily: Yeah, but he's just like, "Well, genuinely I think that she'll do this," and it's like, you're so boring.

Sally: Yeah, what if you were, like – do you think –

Emily: Don't you even want to have fun?

Sally: Don't you want to, like, lie a little bit? Don't you even want to get, like, a little bit silly?

Emily: Don't you want to be a little slutty, like the Domani – Arad Domani?

Sally: Just, like, do a little bit of lying –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And manipulating. And girlbossing and gatekeeping and gaslighting.

Emily: Gawyn goes to meet Gareth Bryne, who's like, "Hey, I need you to tell me about your group of soldiers that you were leading in raids against me," which – frankly I don't think Gareth Bryne would ask this.

Sally: I don't know, it made sense to me. Like, I don't – I don't know.

Emily: It makes sense from, like, a military standpoint. But Bryne being our most honorable man –

Sally: Yeah, that's true.

Emily: I feel like would understand that, like, Gawyn's not about to even broach the topic. Um, I don't know; it just seemed kind of, like, skeezy to me for some reason. But Gawyn is also the idiot who came to Gareth Bryne's camp fully with all this knowledge in his head about an enemy's movements, so really this is his fault. Anyway, Gawyn's like, "I'm not going to tell you shit about them, and you can torture me if you want to," and Bryne's like, "Obviously I'm not going to do that, because unlike everyone else in this series, I have a moral compass, skewed though it may be." (laugh)

Sally: It does occasionally point north.

Emily: He's like, "But if they keep being a problem, then, like, this is going to come up again," and Gawyn's like, "Don't worry; it won't be a problem because they're nothing without me." And Gareth Bryne's like, "It's so refreshing to see your ego unfazed from the last eleven books of failure that you've experienced."

Sally: Yeah. Gawyn's never failed in his life.

Emily: Truly – truly remarkable.

Sally: Everything Gawyn done – has done has been correct and successful. He has an EGOT. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) Then Bryne and Gawyn have a frankly insulting conversation about how only military leaders ever question, like, the morality of what they're doing.

Sally: Oh my God, I know.

Emily: Bryne's like, "Yeah, if you're just, like, a soldier, then of course you never think about these sorts of things, because soldiers are dirty and uneducated and they just don't worry about questions of morality." And I'm like, those are absolutely the guys thinking about what they're doing because they're the ones who actually have to face the consequences of what is going on.

Sally: Yeah, they're the ones who are actually killing people for you, most of the time.

Emily: Yeah. This is, like – what Bryne's doing here is, like, big Vietnam military leader thinking, which – I read a book pretty recently about how, like, a lot of the problems with Vietnam and a lot of what led to such high levels of PTSD amongst the soldier population was that, like, the leaders themselves were just not facing the same levels of threats.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It was such a bureaucratic operation.

Sally: Yeah, and it's, like – yeah. Bureaucracy at its finest. Like, there's no – there's, like, a total dehumanization of people who are actually doing the grunt work.

Emily: Yeah, if you're just moving around numbers on a battlefield, then of course –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You're not gonna be thinking about that as much, because you're able to distance yourself from that.

Sally: Yeah, so Bryne is being a piece of shit.

Emily: Yeah, it's just completely backwards thinking. And him just being like, "Gawyn, you're just having this existential crisis because you're educated and rich, and that's the type of person who has an existential crisis." And it's like, first of all, this is so fucking stupid and mean.

Sally: Yeah, it's also, like – I cannot stress enough how fucking boring this plot is to me. Bryne is constantly like, "You have to decide, like, what you're fighting for," and Gawyn opens, like we talked about many episodes ago, with his dumb fucking metaphor about how he can't see the stars and he doesn't know where he's going, and he just feels so lost, and he has no cause. And it's like, I don't care. Like, I do not care about sad little rich boys who feel like they don't have a purpose. That could not be a more boring character to me.

Emily: Yeah, why don't you go try and look at the *Titanic* and see how you feel then. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: You stupid –

Sally: Like –

Emily: Like – it’s also – just doesn’t make sense, because at this point, Gawyn does seem to have a purpose. It is obviously a misguided, silly one that we don’t agree with, but he does seem very committed to, like, being on Egg’s side.

Sally: Yeah. Bryne continues to swing wildly from saying just, like, the most out-of-pocket, out-of-character shit to actually good things when he’s like, “Well, why aren’t you and Elayne – why aren’t you in Andor with Elayne?” and Gawyn’s like, “I will be once I rescue Egg,” and Bryne is like, “Egg does not want to go to Andor,” and Gawyn is like, “Well, I’ll make her,” and he’s like, “You’ll MAKE her?”

Emily: “You’ll make her? Ohh.”

Sally: “You’ll force her to go somewhere she doesn’t want to go? Will you basically just throw her over your shoulder and carry her off like a bully?”

Emily: He’s like, “That’s great. Good luck on the marriage.”

Sally: Yeah. And Gawyn’s like, “Well, no.” And it’s like, well, yes.

Emily: Well, yes, that’s just what you said.

Sally: Sorry, guys, I’m getting heated because I hate him so much.

Emily: Yeah, he’s really, really tough to deal with.

Sally: Just a –

Emily: And Gawyn’s like, “God, wow, really, for the first time, I’m really thinking, ‘What if Egwene doesn’t want to go with me?’” And I’m like, I am so bored of you think – even thinking about this.

Sally: Listen. If you can’t handle being the First Man of Tar Valon – (laugh) Step aside. ‘Cause I will.

Emily: (laugh) There are any number of people lining up for that position.

Sally: Yeah. (laugh) Yeah. It –

Emily: It would be an honor to marry Egg, you know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And if you can’t handle it because you need to be the man in charge – I hate to break it to you guys, but this is going to be an ongoing issue for the next three books. Like, literally just Gawyn being like, “How do I be less politically important than my girlfriend and have less power than her? Oh my God, this is the worst thing that’s ever happened to a man.”

Sally: Yeah, uhh. (laugh) Like, if you can’t handle having a powerful girlfriend, leave.

Emily: Don’t have a powerful girlfriend, then. I’m pretty sure she can do fine without you. Is that what scares you?

Sally: Yeah. Mm.

Emily: That she can do fine without you? That she's not dependent upon your whims and your muscles?

Sally: Wow, it must be really hard to be a man in a society that empowers women instead of telling you that you're the most important thing in the world. I just can't even imagine how hard that must be.

Emily: And it must be so hard to be a man in a world where even a hint of cleavage is a sign that that woman is out to get you. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, is out to kill you – I mean, there are a lot of men in our world who behave like this.

Emily: Yeah, what's troubling about the whole thing – what – Gawyn wouldn't hit such a nerve –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: If he wasn't such an accurate portrayal of a certain type of man in our world.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He's annoying because on some level he is true.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And that's just not what I want in my fantasy books. I want to escape from those men.

Sally: I don't want – yeah, I – I see enough of that, thank you. I have experienced those men in real life.

Emily: Yeah, it's okay. I don't – I don't need them. Okay, guys. Well, it was a bummer, but we had some laughs. (sing) Send in the clowns.

Sally: "You're talkin' 'bout da numbers." (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) Okay, next up we have another, um, three-chapter section, I believe. A couple of those will be from Nynaeve's point of view, I believe the first Nynaeve point of view –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: We've had in this book.

Sally: Is it Nynaeve assassinating Rand? Because that's what I want.

Emily: It sure should be. Then we'll get another bad Mat chapter.

Sally: (sigh)

Emily: Um, but we'll start to unravel the Verin mystery.

Sally: Oh. Perrin – or, Rand did have a little spirit vision of Mat and Perrin –

Emily: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sally: And he's like, "Why is Perrin with Galad?" So maybe we'll catch up with that plot at some point.

Emily: Not in this book.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: That is yet another timeline discrepancy. He has visions of them as they are distant into Towers of Midnight.

Sally: Yeah. He's like, "Mat's in Caemlyn, and Rand is standing next to Galad, a Whitecloak?"

Emily: "I don't know what's happening." And it's like, me neither, bestie.

Sally: Can you see the future?

Emily: Perrin – Brando, you're just giving us these little plot hints or something?

Sally: Brandon doesn't believe in timelines.

Emily: Yeah, I guess not. Uh, thanks to Glynna MacKenzie for our theme song –

Sally: Yes.

Emily: Thanks to our Patrons on Patreon, our followers on social media. Thank you, dear listeners, for 250 episodes.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Booyah.

Sally: Booyah. Should we end with a favorite character so far, least character so far in the whole series?

Emily: Well, it's pretty obvious. In the series?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Well, Rand –

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Is definitely my least favorite character of the series so far.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, and I don't know, Damer Flinn's pretty up there right now.

Sally: Yeah, Damer Flinn's really being an A-grade hottie.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Being like, “Maybe we don’t collaborate, you fucking bootlicker bitch.”

Emily: That was pure sex appeal.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He was the sexiest person in that chapter, but only because the woman with eight breasts was in the chapter before that, so.

Sally: Yeah, good – I mean, good for her. Imagine getting dressed every day. Good thing she only has to wear see-through gowns.

Emily: Yeah, no bras.

Sally: Yeah. Just –

Emily: Imagine the bill. The VS bill.

Sally: (laugh) The Victoria’s Secret bill. She’s in Victoria’s Secret like, “I need nineteen triple-F cup bras –”

Emily: Now, here’s where it gets complicated. (laugh) Some of them are D-cups, and some of them are – goodbye, everyone.

Sally: (laugh) Goodbye!