



Episode 254: Still Got Two Wives

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

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

(theme song by Glynna MacKenzie plays)

Emily: Why can I not eat a single thing without getting it on my clothes?

Sally: Oh, I know, I've got something on these jeans too.

Emily: I'm like a toddler. (sigh)

Sally: And I was like, hello? Ma'am?

Emily: Yeah, like –

Sally: "Ma'am" being me.

Emily: Ma'am. Girl.

Sally: (laugh) Hey, friend –

Emily: Girl, wash your face. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Oh, you guys. Well, here we are. Hey, it's Everybody Hates Rand, your friendly neighborhood Wheel of Time podcast. I'm Emily Juchau.

Sally: And I'm Sally Goodger.

Emily: And it's begun.

Sally: Yeah, or something.

Emily: Or something has begun.

Sally: These chapters were so confusing.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Everyone had led me to believe that Verin's reveal that she was Black Ajah was, like, a galactic-level slay. And I was like, this is continental at best. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: I found it – like, it's obviously very cool – maybe it's 'cause I already knew, I dunno —

Emily: Yeah, I did spoil it for you, but I too was disappointed reading this and being like – like, it's pretty annoying that Verin is like, "I have an hour to reveal my secrets to you," and then they have a conversation that lasts, maximum, ten minutes.

Sally: I know, was Verin in there like, "Ooh, this tea just looks so tasty, I guess I'll drink the poison before Egg gets here."

Emily: "I better just drink the poison early." It was very weird. And I get that it's, like – if you were – okay, I mean, listen: we record a conversation that lasts approximately 45 minutes every week –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And the transcripts for those are, like, double-digits pages.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So accurately portraying an hour-long conversation is somewhat ridiculous.

Sally: Not possible, sure.

Emily: But it is, like, not even an attempt to be –

Sally: Yeah, it isn't even like, "And then Verin explained her cipher to me over the next —"

Emily: Twenty minutes.

Sally: Twenty minutes, or, like, "We talked about this," or some sort of, like, sleight of – you know, like, Egg knows a bunch of stuff we don't that Verin told her, or anything like that.

Emily: Yeah. Yeah, it's just like, "We have the exact ten-minute conversation, and then that's it." We're not even given a very good – I was thinking, after last week, or the week before that – whenever we talked about Verin's letter that she left with Mat – I was like, maybe Verin gives, like, a good reason for why she doesn't, you know, why her plan doesn't work through. But it turns out her entire plan was: go to the White Tower, get the Oath Rod, see if she can undo being Black Ajah, and then okay? It's okay?

Sally: Yeah, that plan doesn't – she's like, "I don't even know if I could do it," so I'm like, at least it was something to try, but then she is immediately like, "And the Oath Rod was gone, so my next plan was suicide."

Emily: "Was to kill myself," and I'm like, Egg could've told you where it was, given ten minutes.

Sally: Yeah, and I know that's supposed to be, like, tragic or whatever, you know –

Emily: It doesn't read as tragic, though; it reads as stupid.

Sally: Yeah, it's like, Verin is supposed to be one of our most clever characters. Like, she didn't exercise any additional thought into figuring out how she could get the Oath Rod?

Emily: Yeah, she wasn't like, "Uhh, hmm, seems like it's missing. What's going on that's weird in the Tower? Hmm, well –"

Sally: "Mainly Egg."

Emily: Yeah, or even if she was just like, "I'm back, bitches," and did some, like, undercover work for a week — she has at least 30 days before Mat opens her letter.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which, I guess the reason he's not allowed to open her letter is 'cause she's only allowed to reveal her secrets in the, quote, hour of her death, unquote. But it's just ...

Sally: Yeah, I also found that loophole less –

Emily: Compelling.

Sally: Compelling than I want it to be. Like, she did a good job figuring it out, but it's also like – Verin herself points out the huge plot hole in this, which is like, why would the oaths be constructed that way if the Dark One's supposed to be this, like, intelligent, intimidating force?

Emily: Yeah, and the, like, whole – whole reasoning that they've come up with, which ties to their analysis of the Forsaken, is that, well, every evil person is too selfish and also very stupid to ever exploit that loophole. And I'm just like, do you guys know how much you've just – like, granted, we've had eleven books of it so far, but you have just, like, decimated the threat level –

Sally: I know.

Emily: Of all of your bad guys.

Sally: I know. Like, it is, on one hand, very funny when Verin is like, "The Forsaken are just a bunch of squabbling toddlers," you know –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And that's kind of their whole purpose.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Which I'm like, that isn't very, like, intimidating for the Dark One to purposefully pick his most powerful followers based on who is the most selfish and who is constantly going to be trying to get a leg up on the other one. Like –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: It's – like, my issue with that is, like, everyone keeps saying, you know, like, "Let the Lord of Chaos rule," and the Dark One is presented in very contradictory ways. Like, it is – is it a force of chaos, specifically a sort of, like, chaos itself against the structure and the integrity –

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Of the universe? Or is it an evil force, which is different than just being simply a chaotic force? Like, evil has intentionality to it.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: You know? And I never know. It seems like it's mainly just chaos, because everyone who's bad in this series is completely incompetent rather than having any sort of, like, intelligence or intentionality.

Emily: Yeah, like, the best we can say about the Dark One is that, yeah, it is pretty chaotic in here.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But, like, in terms of actually successful evil plans – (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's sort of like a Saturday morning cartoon.

Sally: Sure. And, like, if that's your whole plan, dude, that's fine, but I have always had the assumption that – I know Rand keeps saying, like, if the Dark One wins, there will be no more universe, like it'll just be destroyed or whatever, so like –

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Maybe his whole vibe is just, like, ha ha, I'm going to blow it up because I can. But I don't know, it's – he's always been – it, he, they – have always been presented more scary. I don't know. Maybe I just am off today and don't find the idea of the universe being driven apart by chaos as scary as – but I'm not eating weevils or whatever, so.

Emily: Pfft. No, I think even, like – even, like, just the speculation of the characters, being like, "Why would the Dark One do this? Why would the Dark One do that?" sort of, like, lessens his power.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: Um, because one thing that is pretty, like, well-done about these books is that the Dark One as a presence is really, like, good – scary-good –

Sally: Sure.

Emily: In the first few books.

Sally: Sure.

Emily: And almost – and you can pretty much track this along the same path as when the Forsaken start to become less scary.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: As soon as you're like, "These are his top dogs, and they're all a bunch of idiots," you're like, eugh. And what this section reads like is almost like Brandon Sanderson kind of being like – trying to make excuses for Robert Jordan writing a bunch of the biggest idiots –

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: On the planet –

Sally: Brandon was like, "Mm."

Emily: And being like, "They're scary," and Brandon was like, "They're not, though, so ..."

Sally: I'm gonna make that intentional.

Emily: I'm just going to have to nerf the Dark One.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Yeah, by making it seem like it's his evil plan all along. And we're like, whether it's his evil plan or just stupid – you know, regardless, it's stupid.

Sally: Yeah, like it just – I don't know. I guess I'm just struggling with the idea that, like, this – this argument that the Dark One's – the most important thing he can find in his followers is selfishness, I think, presents evil itself as selfishness rather than, like – any – any number of other qualities we could put under the umbrella of evil, like the desire to hurt other people, for instance.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: And I think there's – on one hand, it's a compelling argument. Like, under selfishness falls so many things, including the willingness to hurt other people, you know. But I just – it felt strange to me. I was like, this – I don't know. Like, your big bad is just selfish? Like, he doesn't have any master plan for the universe?

Emily: I find it just very, like, childish.

Sally: Hmm.

Emily: And maybe I'm just saying that because selfishness is kind of, um, parallel to childishness.

Sally: Sure.

Emily: But I know plenty of selfish people who I wouldn't classify as evil.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You know, annoying at best.

Sally: Sure.

Emily: In fact, most people are some degree of selfish.

Sally: It's a biological mechanism in many ways.

Emily: Yes. And, like, being like, "The height of evil is selfishness" is just, like, a little bit ridiculous. Like, the – because it sort of – it almost puts some, like, ignorance in there as well.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, selfishness doesn't really care about other people, obviously –

Sally: Sure.

Emily: Like, that's the whole thing. But true evil is knowing what is happening to other people and choosing –

Sally: Yeah, to keep going with it or ignore it or continue it or –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Um.

Emily: I dunno. It's like – we don't need to, like, wax poetic about the nature of good and evil –

Sally: Sure. I'm not qualified.

Emily: On this podcast, and I'm not particularly interested. Like –

Sally: Sure.

Emily: It's just what I consider to be sort of a silly thought exercise, and I guess, um, I think the – the series works better when it doesn't over –

Sally: Yeah, when it's playing on the archetypical level of, like, it's evil.

Emily: Yeah, and isn't trying to be like, "And here's what evil is defined as," but Brandon Sanderson kind of can't stop himself because he's such a philosophy guy.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which can work pretty well in some of his other books. He uses philosophy and, like, sort of the mechanisms of theology and magic systems and blah blah blah blah to make some compelling narratives in his other books. But it doesn't work when he's trying to now transpose that onto a book that wasn't using that same mechanism as its foundation.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Anyway, Egwene wastes the entire, like, first two pages of this conversation with Verin – or, rather, Verin wastes it – they both waste it with just Verin not being like, “Okay, so, number one, I might be Black Ajah but I did it because I, you know –”

Sally: Yeah, “I was playing double agent, basically.”

Emily: “I was doing a double – I’m a double agent,” you know, da da.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: We just have to have this whole, like – like, song and dance where Verin’s, like, trying to have a little normal, casual conversation with Egg, and Egg the entire time is like, “Do I jump out the window?” (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: “What are my options here? I gotta run.” And it’s – when it – when Egg finally starts – stops thinking along those lines, it’s not because Verin does anything particularly, like, compelling to earn her trust. It’s just sort of ‘cause she’s, like, run out of steam.

Sally: Yeah, Egg’s like, “Well, this might as well happen.”

Emily: Yeah. Okay. Anyway, Verin is like, “So, I became a Darkfriend because I was sort of, like – I sort of stumbled into it. Like, I was researching them, in an attempt – like, I’ve made myself seem like a –”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: This is all – this is sort of subtext, but it sounds like Verin made herself seem like a would-be Black Ajah member in order to kind of, like, go undercover and then –

Sally: Sure.

Emily: Went way undercover when she realized –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: She had to, like, give some oaths.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And just decided to go along with that. Probably the most interesting part about the whole thing is that, uh, Verin’s Darkfriend is – Verin’s Warder, Tomas –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Is also a Darkfriend.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And that he just wanted out.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which is the most compelling narrative we've gotten for a Darkfriend thus far.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, speaking of not really giving evil many facets, most of –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: The Darkfriends we've met are cartoonishly evil.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And so to have someone like Tomas, who maybe, like, had a weird phase or something –

Sally: Yeah. Yeah, or just, like –

Emily: People do stupid shit.

Sally: People do stupid shit, and people change. You know, I think it's very compelling –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: To think of someone who was like, "Absolute – I'm absolutely willing to engage in, quote unquote, evil," and then being like, "You know what, actually, I'm not."

Emily: "I'm not anymore, and there's not really a way for me to back out, so I'm going to get bonded to this other – to this lady who also –"

Sally: Yeah, who's on a sort of kamikaze mission –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Into the Black Ajah itself.

Emily: Yeah. Pretty funny.

Sally: Yeah, Tomas, you are – RIP to a real one, the only Warder I've really cared for so far.

Emily: Yeah, salute.

Sally: (singing) Who can say where the – (laugh)

Emily: (simultaneously) Who can say where the road – (normal voice) So RIP Tomas. Um, meanwhile, uh – not meanwhile. Pfft. Verin gives Egg these books. One of them is, like, the key to the code, and the other one is the coded book, and it is just, like, names.

Sally: Yeah. Verin's like, "This is all my research about the Black Ajah," and in the back, immediately, Egg is like, "I just need to know the names," and this was, like –

Emily: Yeah.



Sally: I understand if you're like, what if these books get taken away from me, the most important thing I need to know is, like, the names of who's in the Black Ajah –

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: But I was like, bestie, you're not gonna read – there's like – at one point, she's like, "There's a footnote explaining something, but I don't have time for that."

Emily: "But I don't care about that."

Sally: I was like – (laugh)

Emily: Yeah, she's like – and I'm like, this is Verin's PhD we're talking about.

Sally: Yeah. And also, like, what if there was vital information in there and you were just like, "I don't have time for it"?

Emily: I know, it's wild.

Sally: But also Verin constructs this extremely complicated cipher, and it's so, like – I would be so intimidated if someone came up to me with, like, a ciphered piece of writing. Like, my understanding of ciphers is that they're very complicated and, like – on, like, the – even the simplest ones get really complicated. And I just feel like Verin's taking a huge jump being like, "Egg can absolutely decode this."

Emily: Yeah, she's the Amyrlin Seat, duh. (laugh)

Sally: Sorry.

Emily: Of course she can do literally everything.

Sally: Ugh. I was reading it and I was like, this would stress me the fuck out if someone's like, "Here are all the names of the biggest bads in your little society, and you have to decode them." I was like, fuck, what if I can't?

Emily: I'd be like, wait, no –

Sally: And the only person who could just died.

Emily: Don't die yet, you have to tell me –

Sally: In my bed.

Emily: How to do it.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's also a little ludicrous considering Verin also has a magic bookmark that makes the books invisible. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. (laugh) I was like, why are they –

Emily: So it's, like, maybe a little overcautious.

Sally: Fort Knox up in here.

Emily: Yeah. Also, like, in your weeks of waiting for Mat Cauthon in the town, couldn't you have found some time to just, like, write things in plain English?

Sally: Yeah, been like, "Here's a letter, Egg, that has everybody's name."

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Burn upon reading.

Emily: I mean, you wrote letters to everyone else, so.

Sally: But Egg is Smart Girl™.

Emily: Yeah, we have to remember that Egg is good at everything. Anyway, Verin dies – (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, Verin just –

Emily: On Egg's bed.

Sally: Dies. (laugh) And then Egg leaves her corpse there for the better part of twelve hours.

Emily: Oh, we stumble into some racial insensitivity when, um, Verin's like, "My soul might be Black, but –"

Sally: Oh my God.

Emily: Or, "Everyone might call me Black, but my soul was Brown." And obviously this book is, like, Black Ajah equals evil.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But the problem is that they have a White Ajah, and the White Ajah isn't, like, good.

Sally: Good, yeah.

Emily: So there's these weird false dichotomies going on here, and Egg is like, "Don't worry, Verin, your soul is pure white," and I was like, eugh. (laugh)

Sally: Ugh. Eugh.

Emily: She's like, "It's like the light itself," and I'm like, ohh.

Sally: Let's stop color-coding good and evil.

Emily: Yeah, let's just stop color-coding good and evil, why don't we? Seems like a great idea for everyone.

Sally: Yeah. I – yeah.

Emily: Anyway, Egg is just sort of locked in this room, decoding Verin's books. She's being standed guard – like, one lady is standing guard over her. Um. And pokes her head in at one point, and Egg pretends that Verin's asleep. (laugh)

Sally: She's like, "Isn't it weird that Verin came and slept in my bed?"

Emily: "Came to my room and just went to sleep?" And this lady's like, "Yeah, I'm the biggest idiot that's ever –"

Sally: (laugh) "I don't see anything wrong with this weird Goldilocks situation."

Emily: "I'm a woman in Robert Jordan world –"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "So I have never put two logical thoughts together in my life."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: At some point, Nicola comes in with, like, a secret message for Egg hidden in the soup, and the secret message is just, like, "Sit tight." (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Was the only way they could think to get a message to Egg to write a tiny little note –

Emily: A tiny little note.

Sally: Roll it up in a tiny little bottle –

Emily: A tiny little vial.

Sally: And – (laugh)

Emily: Put it in the soup.

Sally: At this point, too, we learn that the Tower has not, um, deposed Elaida, or we learn this eventually.

Emily: Meidani comes in after Nicola –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That's who Egg has been told to wait for. Yeah, Meidani's like, "Elaida is still in power, but it took some, like, negotiation, and she got formally censured."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, and she has to do penance. What's-her-name, Silviana –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Is fine, but she also has to do some, like –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Penance and whatnot. Um, Egg's like, "Well, this is Verin's dead body; will you dispose of it for me?" (laugh)

Sally: And Meidani's like – (laugh) "What?"

Emily: Meidani's like, "Um, okay."

Sally: "Excuse me?"

Emily: Egg in her, like, little decoding phase, just was, like, telling us all of the names immediately of people who we pretty much already knew were all Black Ajah, so there aren't very many surprises –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And, like, the surprises are people who are kind of irrelevant to us, like some lady named Moira.

Sally: Yeah, who Egg's like, "I really liked her."

Emily: Yeah, and it's like, she's a familiar name from inside the Salidar Aes Sedai, but there are so many Aes Sedai that when Egg just lists them all, it's just like, fuck, everyone's Black Ajah. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, I'm like, okay.

Emily: Egg's like, "Good news, though: Nynaeve and Elayne aren't Darkfriends."

Sally: (laugh) How incredibly iconic of Robert Jordan to be like, "At this moment, I am revealing that Elayne Trakand has been a deep – a deep-state missile –"

Emily: Deep – man, it would've been iconic. That would've been serious.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, galactic-level slay from Verin.

Sally: That would've – yeah.

Emily: To be like, "Big news. Elayne Trakand is a Darkfriend." I would've been like, yooo. It would've made no sense, but – (laugh)

Sally: Sick. But it would've been so good. Iconic.

Emily: Ahh.

Sally: Yeah, you're right, that would've been the galactic-level slay.

Emily: Yeah, 'cause then she would've been, like, a big bad that we had to kill, and then we would've killed her.

Sally: Yeah, and then Rand's like, "My girlfriend – my wife!"

Emily: "My wife. Oh, no." Then he actually has to kill one of his wives.

Sally: (gasp) Lews Therin-style, baby.

Emily: Oh, no. Lews Therin-style, but she's evil, so.

Sally: The Wheel of Time turns.

Emily: Don't worry, man, you still got two wives. (laugh)

Sally: You still got two wives.

Emily: You're two for three. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. (laugh) Ugh. So, anyway.

Emily: What a stupid – but yeah, Egg's like, "Alviarín's bad –"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "And so is fuckin' Sheriam and Moira and Katherine and every other lesbian."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Turns out they're evil. What a surprise."

Sally: Moira – uh, Verin also tells Egg that Mesaana is in the Tower but very annoyingly was like, "I couldn't figure out who she's posing as." I'm like, then what's the –

Emily: Well, then – for the love of fuck. Because Mesaana has to still be a bad guy in the next book for reasons that are stupid. Anyway, after sending Meidani off with Verin's corpse, Elayne goes – Egg goes to bed on her dead – on Verin's literal deathbed.

Sally: On the – (laugh) She's like, "I'm just trying not to think about it," and I was like, bestie.

Emily: How could you not think about it?

Sally: I would burn that bed. Like, not to get in the whole – like, I know, like, dead bodies aren't necessarily, like, you know, bad, but at some point, it's like –

Emily: Dead bodies are not bad. There's nothing, like – like, we have a culture, especially Western culture, that is, like, afraid of bodies –

Sally: Sure.

Emily: And death, and it's like – you all should read, um, Caitlin Doughty's book –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: She's "Ask a Mortician" on YouTube, and she has a few books that are really good if you want, like, to learn about death practices in different cultures around the world and sort of, like,

demystify the whole process of death. But, like, yeah, it's obviously not bad, but I'm more caught up on, like, the biological reality that Verin's body has been in this bed for multiple hours, it seems like –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, and, like, things happen to bodies immediately after dying that aren't particularly pleasant.

Sally: Yeah. Like, gross, potentially.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Um, and also just, like – to me, I was like, the – it just feels really disrespectful –

Emily: Yeah, it's weird.

Sally: To be like, "Now I have to go to sleep, something I could just do on the floor."

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: (laugh) "After this woman who risked a lot and died – literally died to bring me information."

Emily: It's so wild.

Sally: It is very funny, though, of Verin, to be like, "I'm just gonna die on your bed real quick." (laugh)

Emily: So – I know, she's just like, "I don't give a fuck. I've got five minutes to live."

Sally: "I'm gonna get comfy."

Emily: "Some – yeah, might as well." Yeah, she's not like, "I'll just die in this chair, I guess. Make it as easy for you as possible."

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: I mean, thank God she did get in the bed. It's not like Egg would've been able to be like, "She's been asleep in this chair for six hours."

Sally: Yeah, Verin's just going into full rigor mortis. (laugh)

Emily: Very Weekend at Bernie's. Egg just has to put some sunglasses on her. (laugh)

Sally: Weekend at Verin's.

Emily: Christ. (laugh)

Sally: Um, the idea of Meidani being like – Egg – Egg is also like, "Just take her body away," and I'm like, where does she –

Emily: Where, though?

Sally: Meidani asks the very reasonable question, “What do I do with it? Where do I take it?” and Egg’s like, “Can’t you do anything for yourself?” (laugh)

Emily: “For the love of God, Meidani, think for yourself.” Meidani’s like, “We don’t own a fucking crematorium in the basement of the White Tower.”

Sally: She’s like, “I apologize for not being a mortician.” (laugh)

Emily: Like, for the love. “People have to take care of – this is people’s job.”

Sally: Oh, it was so funny.

Emily: “Not like my job, which is Slut.” (laugh)

Sally: (Laugh) Yeah, she’s like, “Yeah, my whole job is to just be, like, a little honey trap for –”

Emily: A very – a failed honey trap for Elaida.

Sally: Yeah, “I’m not even good at my real job. What do you expect me to do with this body?” (laugh)

Emily: “But God, I have a great rack.”

Sally: Yeah, Brandon did not fail to remind us that Meidani’s got great tits, so.

Emily: Yeah. Don’t worry.

Sally: Um.

Emily: Then Egg goes to sleep – like, goes to Tel’aran’rhiod and is like, “Siuana, big news: Sheriam’s a Darkfriend. So’s Moira. You gotta, like, keep a watch on them.” And Siuana’s like, “Uh, worm? That’s pretty big news.” Um, and Egg’s like, “Yeah, tons of stuff is going down.” Siuana’s like, “Well, are you still a captive?” and Egg’s like, “Uh, well, it’s complicated.” Um, but before she can get any farther, she gets pulled out of Tel’aran’rhiod. Nicola is shaking her awake and, like, the Tower is now being attacked and is, like, shaking.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So very big, violent attack.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Egg tells us that, um – she’s like, “Oh, man, this is bad because we’re being attacked and I can’t channel at all because of the forkroot.” Which just, like – this was – this could totally have been an easy fix. But it really annoys me that, like, she has had this forkroot in her system for, it seems like, six hours –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, and now is like, “I can only channel a little bit,” when in our experience, it’s like, people who get dosed with enough forkroot to pass out, a la Nynaeve and Elayne when they were first exposed to it, like, they started working through it within a few hours.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So it seems – someone should've just come in and, you know, given her more forkroot or something. But.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's annoying.

Sally: Yeah. Um, it also is just like, it doesn't need to happen. Like, the whole point – like, I know it made sense in the moment, but again, like, it could've been resolved before this happened in order for Egg to just be able to fight. Like, I don't really know why it – the – next chapter, like when we get back to the Tower, Egg's, like, teaching the novices how to link, and she goes into the ter'angreal storeroom and gets some big fucking literal magic wand –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And it's like, what? Egg is already, like, a nuclear bomb.

Emily: Yeah, I don't really – I don't know what the point is, except that they were, like, trying to add higher stakes to it.

Sally: Yeah, I guess.

Emily: But it's like, we've seen Egg captured before, you know, when she was fully capable of channeling.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Given, she was less well-trained, but, like, it's just silly. Yeah, we're just gonna, like, nerf our main character so that it is even cooler, quote, when she comes out wielding her magic wand at her – at the head of her army of novices. Bunch of thirteen-year-old girls.

Sally: She's got a bunch of thirteen-year-old girls in white dresses –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Lest we forget.

Emily: My virgin procession.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Stupid.

Sally: Ah, but first we have to talk to Gareth Bryne.

Emily: Ugh. Guys, it's so bad.

Sally: It's so gross.



Emily: Siuan wakes up and is like, “Oh, shit. I gotta go get Egg. She’s in danger.” And Gareth Bryne’s like, “Okay, what kind of danger?” and they leave the tent and find out that the White Tower is being attacked. Um, Siuan’s like, “It must be the Seanchan since Ed – Egg had this whole prophecy about it.” Um, and Bryne’s like, “Ooh, well, that’s bad.” And Siuan’s like, “Well, let’s go rescue her,” and Bryne’s like, “You promised that you wouldn’t do that.” And Siuan’s like, “I don’t give a shit.” And Gareth Bryne is like, “I give a shit, because I care a lot about promises, for some reason, and I don’t like that you have now – that you are so casually breaking a second one,” and I’m like, this is the stupidest thing –

Sally: I know.

Emily: For these two people to be arguing about right now.

Sally: Like, he – Siuan also points out at one point – she’s like, “I promised I wouldn’t do it unless Egg was in danger, and I believe she is in danger,” and Gareth, like, doesn’t let the point go.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: But it’s fine, because it ultimately works out with him being like – she’s like, “Well, if you won’t help me, I’ll go get the stupid little rat bastard who will,” and Gawyn’s like –

Emily: “I’m on it. On it, boss.”

Sally: “On it, boss.”

Emily: “Yes, chef.”

Sally: Salute. Fucking –

Emily: “I’ll do anything to feel like a knight in shining armor.”

Sally: (gagging noise) And Gareth’s like, “Fine, I’ll go with you, but I have two conditions.”

Emily: “One: You have to bond me as your Warder.” Twirls his hair. His beard hair. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) His little goatee. And –

Emily: Siuan’s like, “Gladly.” And – she’s like, “What’s the second condition?” and Bryne doesn’t tell us, but I assume it’s “We fuck later,” or something.

Sally: Yeah, “We get married,” probably, ‘cause he’s a proper Christian man.

Emily: (wheeze)

Sally: (laugh) Doesn’t believe in extramarital sex.

Emily: Yeah, he’s a Southern gentleman or whatever the fuck.

Sally: Um, he’s an English gentleman, excuse you.

Emily: Yeah, I guess he’s from Andor, I forgot.

Sally: Where would the American – the American South apparently is Seanchan, so.

Emily: I don't know, because it's like, the accents are the American South, but so much of the culture of Andor – Andor –

Sally: Yeah, you're right.

Emily: Our most, like, home-coded territory –

Sally: You're right.

Emily: Is very clearly coded as the South because Robert Jordan is Southern.

Sally: You're right. So Bryne is the horrible combo of English and Southern.

Emily: So, like, Thomas Jefferson.

Sally: (gag, laugh)

Emily: Yeah. (laugh)

Sally: (gag)

Emily: Yikes.

Sally: Anyway, I hate him. And Siuan's like, "It better not be anything appropriate, bleh."

Emily: But she's, like, flirty about it, and Gareth Bryne's like, "Ooh, I can read your thoughts now, so I know you're being flirty about it," and I'm like, if you believed that she was saying those things sincerely all this time, you should've been running for the hills.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But Siuan's making it out to be, like, this titillating sort of — you know. And I'm just like, you guys are so — like, I've never met two people before whose heterosexuality is such a terminal condition.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, you guys are just heading straight for disaster because you're so stupid.

Sally: Yeah. And Gawyn for most of this is off getting the horses –

Emily: Thank God.

Sally: But you imagine he comes back and is like, "So, the vibes are a little weird. Not that I'm the most emotionally intelligent man in the world —"

Emily: Gawyn – yeah, like Gawyn would ever notice anyone else's relationship. Gawyn – (laugh) is so stupid.

Sally: I know.

Emily: Ugh.

Sally: Anyway, he comes back with a bunch of fucking horses.

Emily: Yeah, he's like, "Bela." And everyone's like, "Bela! Our favorite character."

Sally: Bela's like, "Yeah, I'm still here."

Emily: Yeah, she's like, "Bitch, I survived."

Sally: Yeah, she's like – (sings) "I'm a survivor –"

Emily: (laugh) Yeah, she just prances up.

Sally: Okay, the energy – the vibes are weird in here right now.

Emily: It's 'cause I'm tired – we're all tired here.

Sally: We're tired – we had to read about Gawyn.

Emily: Yeah, he's so gnarly.

Sally: And I hate him.

Emily: Ahhh. Anyway, Siuan's plan is to, like, go – obviously, to go through this random gap in the defenses that that one random Aes Sedai exploited to escape. So, dur dur dur, there we are. So it's just the three of them going in, for now, I assume? I think they'll end up with some more soldiers, but – stupid. Um, meanwhile we flash back to Egg, who, um, finds a bunch of novices and, like you said, teaches them how to link in a circle until she herself has enough power to Travel. She goes and gets a sa'angreal, which is like the level – not quite the level, but, um, pretty – pretty far up there in terms of power. It's not quite Rand's nuclear codes, but she's – she's operating on a, you know –

Sally: On a – a boost of – on a golden mushroom from Mario Kart.

Emily: Yeah, for sure, for sure, for sure. Um. And then we get the point of view of some random Aes Sedai, who it turns out is, like, the head of the Green Ajah, like that matters or means anything to us, who's, like, about to get captured by the Seanchan – it's a little torture porn-y –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, when Egg, of course, comes to the rescue with her little army of novices and releases this woman, Adelorna, and Adelorna's like, "Okay, well, let's get organized," and Egg is like, "Um, excuse me, I have martial power currently, so do what I say." And Adelorna's like, "Yes, chef." Um, and Egg begins to – organizing – Egg is already organizing, um, resistance. She also is kind of like, "Okay, I'm just showing people how to Travel willy-nilly because it is no longer an effective secret weapon. I know that Elaida knows how to use it already, and literally as soon as the Seanchan capture anyone who Elaida has taught this weave to, then they're going to have it too, so."

Sally: Yeah, but she is also very committed to not letting the Seanchan get away with any Aes Sedai for several reasons, obviously.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Um, but she's like, "I don't want the Seanchan to get Traveling, so if we see anybody snatched up by the pterodactyls, it's –"

Emily: Yeah, she's like, "Shoot down the – the pterodactyls," and Adelorna's like, "What if they have captives?" and Egg's like, "They're better off dead." And I'm like, okay, that's a pretty, like, mercenary decision –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Considering that you guys are also going out of your way to, like, release the damane. Not saying that, like, one of those is the right decision and the other one is the wrong decision, but it's just like, um, our moral compass is going in circles a little bit here.

Sally: Yeah, which is pretty on par for the Wheel of Time. This scene also confused me a lot, 'cause I guess I didn't realize that Tuon was sending damane. I thought she was literally just sending her little, like, night riders –

Emily: Oh, yeah, her little Bloodknives.

Sally: So I was like, what?

Emily: Yeah, there's channeling, I guess.

Sally: There's – what?

Emily: They're collaring women.

Sally: What's happening? Yeah, I also – yeah. I thought Tuon wanted to kill them, not collar them. But why would Tuon kill someone when she could enslave them?

Emily: Exactly. Yeah.

Sally: That's on me for not girlbossing hard enough.

Emily: That was on you. You didn't predict Tuon's world domination plan well enough.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: God.

Sally: So anyway.

Emily: Well, we have nothing else to talk about – (laugh) because this is stupid.

Sally: It'll just be Egg being like, you know, girl power of the universe, I guess, I assume, for the rest of the book.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Egg being like, “No one has ever been more powerful or more good at leading or politics or war than me, an eighteen-year-old girl.” Wow, we didn’t talk for very long this episode. Should we fill time? My favorite character: Tomas.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: My least favorite –

Emily: Like, inarguably.

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: The only good one. He wasn’t even on screen. (laugh)

Sally: Wasn’t even on screen. Verin’s like, “He’s off with his family.” I’m like – “In his last hour.” I’m like, did you poison Tomas too?

Emily: I know, like, what’s the – how’d they coordinate that? Did they, like, set their watches and were like –

Sally: Like in Lost, they shot up flares –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Across the island.

Emily: Pew.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: We’re watching Lost. That’s – (laugh)

Sally: We’re watching Lost. So you might hear some Lost references.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Um, so far I would say I’m not, like, enjoying it-enjoying it, but it is, like, fun to have on in the background because it’s so ridiculous.

Emily: Yeah, occasionally you’ll be, like – someone will just say some of the wackest shit, and you’ll be like, what?

Sally: You’ll be like, why – literally, why is there a polar bear?

Emily: Yeah, you’ll be like, aw, I feel like I missed that. Yeah, like when Michael was like, “The polar bear?” and Charlie was like, “You didn’t hear about the polar bear?”

Sally: (laugh) That was –

Emily: I was like, I feel like I didn’t hear about the polar bear.

Sally: Yeah, that was the funniest –

Emily: I was like, I was there for it, but.

Sally: Line of dialogue of all time, delivered perfectly by, um, the love of my life –

Emily: Dominic Monaghan.

Sally: Dominic Monaghan.

Emily: Well, it's okay, that's a short episode, I guess. I should've predicted that. That always happens with our, like, climactic sequences.

Sally: No, there's just, like, not a lot – unless you want me to go blow by blow for the way that Egg moves through the White Tower.

Emily: Yeah, not very –

Sally: There's not a lot to say.

Emily: Exciting. Um, the next couple of chapters, we're going to get sort of the, like, Egg in the White Tower, you know, everyone going in to rescue her, and then we're going to switch to Rand, um, leaving Arad Doman and going to – going back to Tear.

Sally: Um, Siuan does have a very funny line, though, when she's – she's like, "We better not die doing this, Gawyn, 'cause if we get to Egg, she's gonna want the right to kill us herself," and I was like – (laugh)

Emily: Yeah, at least you guys know.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: She's gonna be pissed off.

Sally: She's gonna whoop your ass.

Emily: Yeah, jeez.

Sally: With her magic wand.

Emily: But then, like, why do it, you know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I – I think I'd be too scared of Egg to go rescue her. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, I'd be like, listen, she said don't, so.

Emily: She said don't, so I guess –

Sally: I am listening.

Emily: If she dies, she dies.

Sally: That was her choice.

Emily: That was her choice, and she won't go to her grave cursing me, because I followed orders –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You know? Um, okay.

Sally: Okay.

Emily: Thanks, everyone, for listening to this silly podcast.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, thanks, 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: Yeah, do you have anything to add – a sign-off?

Sally: Uh, nothing to add, I don't think. Um, as always, check out our Patreon if you're interested in that, or don't. Whatever feels right for you. And yeah, in terms of sign-offs, um, my company had a party, like a summer – we have a fun and activities committee, which feels like a hate crime. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) Fun and activities.

Sally: Literally what it's called. (laugh)

Emily: Stupid.

Sally: Um, and I know I'm, like, a cynical antisocial asshole, I'm sure some people really love it, but I'm – every time they send out an email, I'm like, dear God, what's the next form of torture? Anyway, yesterday they went to basically, like, a big arcade that includes, like, laser tag and mini golf and stuff. And I did not go, in large part 'cause I just, like, haven't been feeling well this week and didn't really want to, like, use my limited energy of the day to go, like, to an arcade.

Emily: Hang out with coworkers –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And today I had a meeting where someone was like, "Sally, I heard you were sick, I'm sorry you couldn't come," and I'm like, "Oh, yeah, what a bummer," and she's like, "You could've joined our game of laser tag. There was, like, thirty of us playing laser tag." And I was – you know, am a good, professional liar, and I was like, "That sounds so great. I haven't played laser tag in forever, I wish I could've been there –"

Emily: Sure.

Sally: But in my head, I was like, why would I play laser tag with thirty of my coworkers? I just couldn't – personally, for me personally, I can't think of anything worse.

Emily: I don't even know thirty of my coworkers.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I was in the office yesterday and was seeing people I'd never seen before.

Sally: You're like –

Emily: I was like, well, okay.

Sally: Who are you? (laugh)

Emily: Guess you work here. Oh, guys. Don't play laser tag with your coworkers.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Play it with your friends.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Who are not your coworkers.

Sally: Laser tag scares me.

Emily: It's weird. I have only played it for, like, my brother's birthday.

Sally: Yeah, we used to go a lot when I was younger.

Emily: I bet.

Sally: I don't like being in the dark and shooting at other people with lasers. But –

Emily: Yeah, it's sort of a – a boy thing, to my mind.

Sally: Maybe I just lack the niche interest for the lasers and the tagging.

Emily: "I don't love lasers enough. It's the – that's my fatal flaw."

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Okay, everyone, have a good week.

Sally: Bye.

Emily: Bye.