



Episode 255: Timotheé Chalamet Vaping in the Vatican

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

SALLY: And I'm Sally Goodger.

EMILY: Um, it's threatening to be another short one today, partly because there's not much to talk about.

SALLY: And they're relatively short chapters for Wheely Time world, too.

EMILY: Also, because I have to – well, I don't live in Salt Lake, Daisy.

SALLY: We're trying to sell some stuff on Facebook Marketplace and –

EMILY: Yeah. I'm selling – we're selling some things and a girl's coming to pick them up and I have no idea when she'll be here. But that's – [laughing] so if I have to run out extremely fast, that's why. Uh, but we'll see. So.

SALLY: So.

EMILY: So, the climactic White Tower sequence be upon ye.

SALLY: Not very climactic.

EMILY: Not very climactic. It was a lot more exciting the first time I read it. This is the third time and it's, um, you know, hasn't aged well.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: In my own sort of reckoning of how things are. There he is.

SALLY: There he is. There's some very cool, like, imagery around Egg.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: I think. Or at least the image of her, like, blowing pterodactyls out of the sky.

EMILY: Like, standing, standing in a hole in the wall, blowing pterodactyls out of the sky. Which clearly inspired some other people, because that's what the cover art is in the, like, you know, the like new era, um, *Wheel of Time* covers where they commissioned, like, different artists for each one.

SALLY: Oh yeah.

EMILY: A real slap in the face to Darrell K. Sweet if you ask me.

SALLY: Yeah. Darrell K. Sweet –

EMILY: They were like, “Not only could [laughs] we find someone better than you to do your job, but we found fourteen other people [laughs].”

SALLY: [laughing] Um.

EMILY: Anyway, *The Gathering Storm* has a cool cover, and it certainly makes *The Gathering Storm*, the book, seem like a much cooler book than it ends up being.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Because of how scant the action is in this book. This is the only, like, fight scene of any kind we've had.

SALLY: Oh, you're right. This does whip.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: They really did just make this look like a dragon.

EMILY: They were like, “Let's show this, this gal slaying dragons.”

SALLY: Peek at the Seanchan in its weird insect helmet.

EMILY: Yeah, that's a very –

SALLY: Looks like Peter Pan.

EMILY: [laughs] That's a very fanciful sort of version of that.

SALLY: Well, good for her. Her dress is a real slay. It's got a high collar and a lot of cleavage.

EMILY: Ohhh. Yeah. It's just got little shoulder pads for days. They're like, "Gotta let you know that Egg's titties are out."

SALLY: Are out while she's fighting the Seanchan.

EMILY: Like they'd let the Novices walk around titties out.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Are you kidding?

SALLY: The Aes Sedai would be like, "No way, bitch."

EMILY: Novices aren't people let alone women with sexual desires. Are you kidding?

SALLY: Novices don't even have rights.

EMILY: Yeah, Novices don't have rights.

SALLY: Um, but anyway, here we are. It's time for Gawyn to ruin everything.

EMILY: [laughs] As usual.

SALLY: As fucking usual.

EMILY: It's the Gawyn ruins everything show. If you're thinking that now, then just wait for the next two books.

SALLY: I know! I was like, "I know Emily told me that Gawyn, like, really fucks up big." And I was like, "Is this just like...the smallest one of those big fuckups?" [laughs]

EMILY: Gawyn just fucks up constantly. Mostly involving Egg's agency.

SALLY: I read a little bit into the next chapter, where she's basically like, "What the fuck is wrong with you?"

EMILY: Mm-mm.

SALLY: [laughing] She's like, "We'll talk about this later." And he's like, "No, we're going to talk about it now! I've been waiting to talk to you for forever." And she's like, "Too bad, loser."

EMILY: Uh, I have a career!

SALLY: [laughing] Yeah.

EMILY: We'll talk about it *later*.

SALLY: She's like, "I have to go fix the damage that you did." And he's like, "But what about *my man feelings!*"

EMILY: She's like, "Get in your place, pissboy."

SALLY: Yeah, and he's like, "But what about my...man feelings...bleh...I'm a man."

EMILY: She's like, "Maybe Greta Gerwig will write a movie about your man feelings."

SALLY: Ugh, then will you calm down!

EMILY: That's the sort of feminist text this is. So, [laughs].

SALLY: [laughing] I hate him. There's no character on this planet's literature that I hate more.

EMILY: I know.

SALLY: He's just so hate-able!

EMILY: It's just so infuriating because he's not even designed to be hate-able.

SALLY: Yeah, everyone's like, "Hero boy."

EMILY: He just is that way.

SALLY: And I'm like, "No, he fucking sucks. I hope he gets hit by a bus."

EMILY: At least he's, like, universally hated, design or not. I've only ever seen like two people be like, "I love Gawyn" and they were incels, probably.

SALLY: Well, that's how Gawyn's really acting. Real fucking incel behavior when he's like, "But Egg, I've been fighting for you for so long." This is in the next chapter. I should stop talking about it [laughs]. "I've been fighting for you for so long and I've decided that I want this."

EMILY: And she's like, "Okay. Great unilateral decision for both of us."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: “Thank you.” Whatever.

SALLY: She should just have him executed.

EMILY: Yeah.

[cross talk]

SALLY: If my boyfriend did this and I was the Young Pope.

EMILY: [laughs] If I was the Young Pope.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Remember how the Young Pope was just Jude Law, who’s, like, fifty.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: That’s so annoying. What about a Younger Pope. What about a Pope who fucks?

SALLY: [laughing] What about Timotheé Chalamet.

EMILY: [laughing]

SALLY: Please, Hollywood, you’re under utilizing Timotheé Chalamet.

EMILY: I would actually be really down for [laughing] Timotheé Chalamet as the Young Pope because I feel like that’s a role he could really body. Just – if he just came in there like a *Euphoria* teen.

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: On his fucking vape pen.

SALLY: [laughing] Into the Vatican as a *Euphoria* teen.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: We’ve dropped the cast of *Euphoria* into the Vatican.

EMILY: That’s what I want! He’d be like, “I’m here to make chocolate!”

SALLY: I’m making chocolate a’course.

EMILY: I’m making chocolate of course.

SALLY: [laughs] This is the second week in a row, or maybe it was in the We Don't Watch Outlander.

EMILY: I'm making Catholics of course.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Holding a baptismal gun? I made a gun? [laughs]

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: Full of holy water.

SALLY: It's a squirt gun filled from a baptismal font.

EMILY: That was, like, an image, you know, from early COVID. Of people holding up their baby to be baptized because, you know, babies in Catholicism just get a sprinkling.

SALLY: Yeah, they get their head little, little...

EMILY: Which honestly? Sissies. I had to get dunked, full body.

SALLY: Yeah there are some sects of –

EMILY: And I was afraid of water, so.

SALLY: American Christianity in particular that really grab you by the back of the head and say, "Good luck in there!"

EMILY: Yeah, you don't know what – you don't know anything about what it's like to be baptized until you've been baptized twenty times in a row for dead people.

SALLY: Yeah.... You... Yeah.

EMILY: Ugh. By some random. That was always the worst part.

SALLY: Don't touch me.

EMILY: I know. It was always just some strange man, because God knows my dad could never go.

SALLY: Yikes.

EMILY: Mr. Busy! Hey, guys, guess what? We're going to Japan.

SALLY: We're going to Japan!

EMILY: JAPAN!! So, for all the shit talking we've done on Chris [laughs].

SALLY: He's taking us to Japan.

EMILY: He's taking us – not just us [laughs].

SALLY: [laughs] Me, Emily, and Chris.

EMILY: My whole family.

SALLY: The vacation trio of the century.

EMILY: Yeah, he enjoyed hanging out with us in Greece so much.

SALLY: So much.

EMILY: No, we're going with my whole family. There was an extensive voting procedure and Sally and I lobbied hard for Japan. And now –

SALLY: And we were successful.

EMILY: Um, okay, anyway. Sorry. Stay on task. We haven't even talked about the actual content of these chapters. Okay, it starts out with, uh, Gawyn, Bryne, and Siuan entering Tar Valon via this little hole in the wall that they got pointed out to. Which is, like, so very clearly deus ex machina.

SALLY: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmmm.

EMILY: Like, everyone is like – Siuan's like, "I can't believe I'm the Amyrlin Seat and I didn't know about this." And Bryne's like, "Well, Siuan" and mansplains how cities work.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: He's like, "Well, Siuan. Every wall has fucking holes in it, so maybe think about that."

SALLY: And she's like, "But the whole point of Tar Valon is that it doesn't."

EMILY: Yeah. She's like, "The whole point is that it's invulnerable." And he's like, "Well, too bad."

SALLY: [deep voice] "No city's invulnerable blah blah blah."

EMILY: "No city's invulnerable, you idiot woman."

SALLY: Gosh.

EMILY: He calls her ‘woman’ too much.

SALLY: I know. Again, if I were the ex-Amyrlin Seat –

EMILY: He sounds like Dwyane “The Rock” Johnson.

SALLY: [laughs] If I were the ex-Amyrlin Seat, I would have my boyfriend executed.

EMILY: Yeah, exactly.

SALLY: More boyfriend executions, please, *Wheel of Time*.

EMILY: [clears throat] Anyway, it’s not just the three of them going in, they are, um, with a number of soldiers. That number is unclear. Um, it seems that are several dozen at least, based on the casualty count later. But, um, Bryne has concocted this plan where he’s – each of them has, like, a fake Tower Guard uniform. He’s like, “This won’t stand up to close inspection, but it will fool other people.” And Sivan’s like, “That’s not very honorable.” And Gareth Bryne, champion of honor is like, “Fuck you. It’s modern warfare.”

SALLY: Yeah, um.

EMILY: And also it’s obviously a good plan.

SALLY: Yeah, it’s also very funny. He said he had some women in the camp make them and it’s, like, didn’t you decide to do this, mm, forty-five minutes ago?

EMILY: Yeah!

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: He’s like, he’s like, “It’s always a good idea to have a few copies of your enemy’s uniform.” And I’m like, “You’ve been telling Egg for months that you’re not getting into Tar Valon.”

SALLY: So, yeah. What’s the – just –

EMILY: What’s the truth, Gareth?

SALLY: Whatever.

EMILY: Whatever. Um, but they kind of masquerade as Sivan, an Aes Sedai going to the Tower to help, and her Warders and a bunch of Tower Guard. Um, they get to the Tower where obviously everything is very chaotic. Um, and they’re like, “Now what?” And Sivan’s like,

“We’re just gonna have to find Egg and we’ll just start in the basements and work our way up, because last I heard she was in the basements.”

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Um, and it’s obviously like, okay, well we know she’s far, far above the basements. We then switch over to Saerin’s point of view. Saerin’s one of the Black Ajah hunters, probably the – she’s the one who’s technically been in charge of them, kind of, and has been sort of a leading figure in the White Tower these days. She has sort of set up a, like, command station down at the, I think the ground floor of the Tower, um, and is trying to organize things. Um, it’s all pretty annoying. We get Captain Chubain, Chubain.

SALLY: Chubain.

EMILY: He’s, like, forty-something.

SALLY: Yeah, but Saerin has to – Brandon Sanderson has to let us know that he’s, like, really hot.

EMILY: He’s, like, mega hot.

SALLY: And everyone thinks he’s not competent because he’s super hot, but he’s, like, really good at swords.

EMILY: Yeah [laughs].

SALLY: Which is just, like, [laughing] Galad 2.0.

EMILY: I know!

SALLY: So [laughs].

EMILY: They’re like, “Hey, gay boy. [laughs] You can’t lead any – ” [laughs].

SALLY: You can’t lead any people.

EMILY: And he’s like, “But my sword!” So, he’s like a mix of Galad and Gawyn.

SALLY: Yeah. [laughing] “Hey, gay boy.”

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Hi, gay! [laughs]

EMILY: [laughs] Hi, gay!

SALLY: [laughing] Okay, this episode has gone off the rails.

EMILY: I know, I'm so sorry. [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: [laughing] It's just that he was introduced, and I immediately was like, "Isn't there a guy who's exactly like him, but in Andor?" Like a mega hot young commander.

SALLY: Oh, yeah. Isn't that – what's his name? Charlz Guybon. Is that him?

EMILY: Guybon! Yeah, it is.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: It fucks me up because it's Charlz and Chubain. So, they both have 'Ch' names.

SALLY: They're basically the same person.

EMILY: Anyway, I think they should fuck nasty, so.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: [laughing] Yeah, sure.

EMILY: I ship them. They've never interacted in my entire life, but they have so much in common.

SALLY: They're my OTP.

EMILY: They're my OTP, yeah.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: [laughs] Anyway, he approaches Saerin and is like, "Here's what's going on. We're having a real tough time fighting these guys." And she's like, "Well, then use arrows, duh!" [laughs] And I'm like, "Do you think this man hasn't been using arrows?"

SALLY: She's like, "They've only been using butterknives."

EMILY: I'm like –

SALLY: They've gone in to attack at close quarters only.

EMILY: I'm like, "Oh my gosh, you guys." It's so frustrating listening to people be like, 'You're an idiot,' to each other over and over again. When there's no – that can be satisfying in a like *Ocean's Eleven* type situation where it's all fun and banter and –

SALLY: Sure.

EMILY: People genuinely like each other at a core level. But now it's just, like, ugh.

SALLY: Everyone fucking hates each other apparently. And nobody is actually trying – Saerin's like, "I'm just trying to actually organize a resistance" and then she's just fucking mean to everybody she talks to.

EMILY: Yeah, and it's like, "Great. I hope that works out for you." Katherine shows up and is like, "This is terrible. *I'm* in charge." And Saerin's like, "No, you're not. You can't just be in charge."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um, and, uh...that's just, you know, dumb, dumb power...dynamics. But Saerin's also like – Saerin's like, "Okay, there's, like, two sort of centers of resistance. There's the one down here on the ground level and then there's one further up on the twenty-second or twenty-third floors." Is what they're hearing. A second rallying point for the defense. And it's so well that the Seanchan are leaving the lower levels to focus up there. And Saerin and Katherine are like, "What's on the twenty-second and twenty-third level?" And they're like, "Oh, it used to be the Brown Ajah quarters, now it's the Novice quarters. [gasps]." Gasp! Cinematic gasp. "It must be Egg." It's, like, the most, the most dumb.

SALLY: Egg! She's up there!

EMILY: She must be up there!

SALLY: Throwing bombs!

EMILY: Yeah, we then flash over to Egg who's just like, "I'm gonna fuck these guys up."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And is just fucking guys up.

SALLY: Yeah and is just like, "Me and my magic wand are."

EMILY: Yeah are just making – me and my magic wand – she's like, "I know, I'm not going to totally win this fight because it's a raid. It can't really be won. Surprise attack is always going to end up with some people dead and some people captures. *But* I'm gonna make sure they never do this again because they'll be like, 'Oh shit we lost so many people it wasn't worth it.'"

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um, which, you know, as strategies go is a sensible one.

SALLY: Sure.

EMILY: We then switch over to Gareth Bryne who is down on ground level, I think, like, on the grounds themselves.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: He has to, like, dodge because a pterodactyl gets shot out of the sky. How hilarious would it have been if Egg sniped a pterodactyl and it killed Gareth Bryne? [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs] It would have been really iconic [laughs].

EMILY: Real butterfly flaps its wings and –

SALLY: It would have been only more iconic if it killed Gawyn [laughs].

EMILY: [laughs] And Robert Jordan is like, “Isn’t this tragic?” And we’re like –

SALLY: And we’re all like, “No.”

EMILY: No, bestie. It was actually extremely funny.

SALLY: It was one of your better ideas [laughs].

EMILY: Yeah. So stupid. Bryne, like, dodges this, because Gawyn warned him. And then he looks over and is like, “Ah, Gawyn’s engaging two guys at once. What an idiot?” But then Gawyn’s so good at swords and so sick at fighting that he just, like, takes care of it instantly. And Bryne’s like, “Whoa. Even I found that sexy.” And it’s just, like, why? It’s a – I’m trying to understand what, why the decision has been made in this book specifically, because I don’t really feel like there’s much of a through line to earlier books. I don’t know why Brandon Sanderson, assuming it was him, was like, “I have to magnify Gawyn’s sword abilities to a truly unrealistic level.”

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Like, at this point, it’s so, like, attention has been called to it so many times.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: It’s been so unrealistic. So OP. And it’s been from multiple people’s points of view, not just Gawyn’s, so we know he’s not just exaggerating his own prowess. That it’s, like, are we supposed to believe that Gawyn’s, like, doping or something?

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: [laughs] Because when we met him and first saw him sword fight back in Book 3, he got his ass kicked by a man who had just stumbled out of his sick bed two hours earlier and had a stick.

SALLY: Yeah, yeah.

EMILY: And in that fight, generally, Mat was like, “Gawyn’s fine. Gal-Galad’s better. Galad’s better.” And then every time we’ve seen Gawyn since then it’s been kind of like yeah he did defeat this one Warder, presumably in single combat. That’s always possible if you get lucky, and also Gawyn is young and this guy was not, so blah. You know, it wasn’t, like, that much of a stretch to believe that Gawyn could have killed this guy.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um, and then it’s just been, like, Gawyn doing sort of normal soldiering things.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: We haven’t been, like, he’s the best swordsman in an entire century, you know? His Midi-Chlorian count is off the charts. Is that what they’re called? Midi-Chlorians?

SALLY: In *Star Wars*?

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: I don’t know.

EMILY: It’s just the most dumb ass reason for the Chosen One, you know?

SALLY: Um, yeah, I don’t know what the reason is either. Like you said in an earlier episode, whether or not it was Brandon Sanderson’s decision, it really does make Gawyn seem like Brandon Sanderson’s Most Special Favorite boy.

EMILY: [laughs] Yeah!

SALLY: It’s really grating. Um, again, I don’t know if that is actually something we can pin on Brandon Sanderson. And it grates me especially because it feels – the subjective experience for me of reading it, is like Egg is also becoming extremely powerful in this book. Not just politically, but we see her here channeling in huge amounts. She’s learning so much. She’s just such an unstoppable force and all of the sudden it’s like well her romantic interest is being reintroduced to the plot and now we have to make sure that, like, he can hold water against her.

EMILY: Yeah. Like, she’s not only the best Aes Sedai who ever lived, she’s the best Amyrlin Seat who ever lived, so he has to be the best *Warder*, who ever lived.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And it's, like, that's stupid. We already know the best Warder who ever lived is Birgitte, so.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: You're not going to compete.

SALLY: Duh! Yeah, and it's, like, um, it's this very frustrating presentation of, like, a woman cannot have a partner who is less quote unquote successful than she is.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Um, suddenly Gawyn has to be the best general, the best fighter, the best Warder, the best strategist. None of which are really –

EMILY: Remotely true.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Or should be, in any reasonable sense.

SALLY: It would be totally fine and wonderful if Gawyn was just, like, a dude that Egg really loved.

EMILY: Yeah, like, the Warder, the whole Warder thing, as Gareth Bryne has been telling us throughout his last few sections, is, like, it sort of does magnify your abilities, so even – like, there are so many Warders, you know? And all of them, presumably, were just more or less normal guys.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Guys who were pretty good in terms of swords, fighting, martial prowess. That's in line with Gawyn, whatever. They don't all have to be the best.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: At martial prowess. It doesn't make sense.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Like [sighs].

SALLY: Yeah, it's –

EMILY: Let me put this in terms Brandon Sanderson would understand, because he's so invested in imbuing every single one of his characters with, like, game mechanics.

SALLY: Mm. Mm-hmm.

EMILY: You can have multiple fighters, fighter class people on the field, you know? And that doesn't diminish the abilities of any of the other ones. You don't have to have them all be level eleven and only Gawyn's level twenty.

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah, I was about to say. It really feels like someone has [laughs] like modded their game pack so their level one hundred character from their last play through [laughing] was at the beginning of the next game.

EMILY: Yeah, clearly someone min maxed Gawyn here.

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: Like, just take out every single one of his wisdom and intelligence points. Pour that shit into strength and dex.

SALLY: Um.

EMILY: You stupid assholes.

SALLY: Yeah, so he doesn't really make sense, um. And just, like, again from the feminist lens of this text, it's very annoying to all the sudden have to be like, "Gawyn can hold his ground." Which is obviously not true because he's making *bad* strategic decisions.

EMILY: Yeah, I think you're totally right to sort of pinpoint it as, like, a well Egg has been leveled up so far that now we have to level up Gawyn to match here. Um, which I think, you know, is already gross from a feminist perspective. You can have people have different skill sets.

SALLY: Yeah!

EMILY: And that's totally fine in a partnership. Um, but also from a narrative level it doesn't make much sense, because so much of Gawyn's arc, both in this book and in the next two, is about his inferiority complex next to Egg. And it's, like, that doesn't ring very true when he's also the best sword boy that's ever lived.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So, it's, like, you know maybe that would hold a little bit more water if he was just kind of an average guy.

SALLY: Yeah, if he was just *a guy*!

EMILY: And was just stressed because Egg is the best Amrylin Seat of all time so she's going to be the target of millions of assassination attempts, probably.

SALLY: Yeah, and he's like, "And how am I gonna handle this?!"

EMILY: He's like, "I'm just a dude! You know? With my Warder powers and some, you know, a sort of baseline skillset that might help me because I was raised in a palace." But.

SALLY: Sure.

EMILY: Instead we're like, "Gawyn's the best" and he's like, "Well, since I'm the best, I want to be the best person in the partnership. I want to win at partner."

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Something that is both possible and normal to want.

SALLY: Yeah! And it's not, Gawyn.

EMILY: It's not and it just makes everyone come out looking weird and stupid.

SALLY: Yeah!

EMILY: So, that's Gawyn's sword [laughs] tangent.

SALLY: He's so good at swords, you guys.

EMILY: He's so good at swords! Anyway.

SALLY: He, like, kicks Gareth Bryne's sword into his hand or some shit.

EMILY: I know and it's, like, oh my god. Imagine if he'd, you know when [laughs], you know the meme of everyone watches *The Two Towers* and is like, "That's where Viggo Mortensen broke his toe."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: How iconic would it have been if Gawyn tried to kick this sword and just slashed his entire foot off [laughs].

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah, Gawyn could be a charming character if he had a sort of Bella Swan level of incompetence.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: [laughing] And a clumsiness about him.

EMILY: Bella! Hey, loca! Where you been? [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs] That's Gawyn.

EMILY: That's Gawyn. Gawyn, like, points up to where Egg is and is like, "Check that out." And Bryne looks up at it and, like, can't see distinguishing features, but very clearly makes out a person in a white dress.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Doing incredible power stuff. Um, and it's, like, we have been led to believe that Bryne is a smart guy, capable of, you know...putting some logic together. Bryne is well enough aquatinted with Aes Sedai to know that a white dress probably means a Novice.

SALLY: Means a Novice, yeah.

EMILY: Um, he knows that the only Novice capable of fucking up the Seanchan is Egg. Sooo, then later when they're like, "Well, where could Egg be?" And no one – I, like, thought he made that assumption. And they're all just like, "We don't know?" I was like, "What? You just saw her, stupid." Whatever. Bryne is trying to organize his soldiers to, like, send back the wounded. He's like, "I'm going to have to leave some of them to die here, because I can't get healing anywhere." He's also like, "Where's Suan?" Suan comes back with some Novice that she found, and this Novice is like, "Yeah, Egg is up in the Novice quarters." So, yet again, they should probably be like, "Oh, that's Egg."

SALLY: That's Egg!

EMILY: Ta da.

SALLY: That one.

EMILY: Actually, she's like, "The Novice quarters, to be clear, are on the twenty-second floor." And they're like –

SALLY: Who could that be?

EMILY: Who could that be? We don't know.

SALLY: That's a crazy powerful Novice.

EMILY: Stupid.

SALLY: I bet she'll be the Amyrlin Seat one day.

EMILY: They're like, "Okay, well, that's make our way up there." And Siuan's like, "Oh, well, let me heal your guys." And Bryne's like, "Whoa, she's willing to heal my guys. This must be true love." And it's like if she was unwilling to heal your guys that would be like –

SALLY: Cruel!

EMILY: Pretty fucked up, you know?

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Anyway, while she's healing them, Bryne *senses*, mirac – with his new Warder senses, somebody about to leap from the shadows and slay them both. He manages to kill them first, it's one of these, we know, Bloodknives.

SALLY: Bloodknives!

EMILY: From the Seanchan. So, one down, four to go. Um, and Siuan realizes, because of Min's viewing from books and books ago, when Min was like, "You need to stick to Bryne because you guys will save each other's lives." Or whatever. Um, and Siuan's like, "Oh, that's so weird. She said that we have to stay close to each other and save each other's lives." Then she makes the intuitive leap that maybe Bryne has been poisoned. She finds out that he has, heals him, and they're all like, "Great, how cool. Thanks, Min."

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Min's done something useful. Anyway, um, they run off. Then we cut to Egg who, um, just has this sort of very YA protagonist pass out moment, so that she can be both conscious and unconscious when she is picked up and carried away by the love of her life.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: It's so...

SALLY: It's very *Twilight*.

EMILY: It's very *Twilight*.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: It's very, I would say, romance genre, generally.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: This sort of floaty, half-conscious state, where a man, a strong man picks you up and takes you somewhere.

SALLY: Sure.

EMILY: And you just can't resist because you're so exhausted. Um, I don't know. I don't actually know what to say about that. It's incredibly distasteful and weird to have Egg, who was nuking pterodactyls five minutes ago suddenly be reduced to heroine of a romance novel.

SALLY: Yeah, and I'll say, I don't – like with so many, like, romance novel tropes, they have, like, a weird nugget of...um....

EMILY: Non-consent [laughs]

SALLY: Dubious non-consent [laughs].

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Um, which is, like, really...that's, like, such a difficult thing to unpack for that genre and we will not attempt it here, but I – it's so frustrating, because there's part of me that's like, "Of course Egg would be exhausted after this, you know? Of course she would probably just completely conk out." But it would almost have been better if was just completely unconscious. For some reason. In my mind. Because, again, she just gets totally nerfed down into – suddenly we have to bring her down to a level in which Gawyn can save her.

EMILY: Yeah. It's also incredibly annoying, because, um, with this, like, non-con thing, there are very few situations in which someone is unconscious and you can't wake them up.

SALLY: Ye – yeah!

EMILY: Like, and if she's not waking up and you're trying to wake her up, then that is an actual medical problem.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But there's no actual attempt to wake Egwene up.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Gawyn stumbles across her seemingly unconscious body.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Gareth Bryne is like, "Is she wounded?" And they're like, "No, it doesn't seem like it, but she was just left here." And they just are like, "Okay, that's grounds for us to whisk her away."

SALLY: To just take her.

EMILY: Without sort of talking to her about what she wants.

SALLY: Yeah, you're right. It, um, in terms of, like, actual fainting, people do not typically stay unconscious for very long and if they do suddenly we're entering more into a, like, are they in a fucking coma?

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Like, what's going on? Um, so, I guess what I really mean is, it would have been one thing if Egg had just fallen asleep.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Been like, "I am exhausted. I have sat down to try and gather my wits and I just fell into a very deep sleep." That would have still been annoying because Egg does not get a say in whether or not she is taken from the White Tower which is, of course, the core of the issue.

EMILY: Mm-hmm.

SALLY: Nobody thinks, like you said, to try and wake Egg up. Even she were asleep, they should have tried to wake her up. Gareth, Suan, and Gawyn are all making *incredible* intuitive leaps about the fact that Egg is in danger. Um, without talking to any of the Novices who, like, at least have the benefit of not being Aes Sedai and perhaps being more acquainted with Egg, because Egg was also a Novice, you know? Like, one of them could probably tell them what just happened. But they're all just, like, "No way."

EMILY: Yeah. Like, to be clear, the whole Gareth, Gawyn, and Suan go to rescue Egg from the White Tower subplot has been fine up until this point.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Because, as you pointed out last time, like, um, you know, Suan promised Egg, "I won't come rescue you unless you are in danger."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And they have every reason to think Egg is in danger.

SALLY: Yeah!

EMILY: Until they get here, find Egg seemingly uninjured, not in danger because the Seanchan are gone.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And are just like, "Okay, well, we're taking her anyway."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Like, there's a real, just, like, leap of, um, a leap frogging of consent there.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um, all of which is to say they deserve every bit of Egg chewing them out in the next chapter and if I were Egg I would, like, not trust any of them anymore.

SALLY: Yeah. I would be like, "Siuan, you're not my advisor anymore. Gareth, I'm going to look for a new captain of my guard."

EMILY: Yeah. Like, that was fucked up.

SALLY: Yeah. Like, you absolutely should have tried to speak to me before taking me out of there. Even if you thought I was in danger.

EMILY: Especially – I mean just because this little dreamy sequence has been set up so perfectly that it is apparently just Egg and these three alone.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So, they could have woken her up. She's like, "I'll check in with you tomorrow, but I'm fine for now." Then they just leave again.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: With no one ever seeing them or that being an issue.

SALLY: Yeah, especially now that you have a way into the city.

EMILY: Mm-hmm.

SALLY: Fucking Jesus. The more we talk about it, the angrier I get. And it's just so disgusting as an image for Egg to have been like in this incredible leadership role throughout the raid, really organizing the forces of the Tower, exercising a lot of good strategy in getting this *ter'angreal*, and then just showcasing her incredible power and ability. And then to just be like, "Oh, but at the end a big man carries her away!!"

EMILY: The best sword boy!

SALLY: Oh my gosh, remember how little she is? How petite and feminine she is?

EMILY: And how big is penis is! I mean his sword.

SALLY: [sighs]

EMILY: Because guys. Swords are phallic [laughing]. I just need to remind everyone of that every time.

SALLY: Also, I would not even care if Gawyn's whole thing [laughs] was just that he's a great fuck.

EMILY: Yeah. Yeah.

SALLY: [laughing] That's his whole role. Egg's like, "This is my boyfriend who I like having sex with him."

EMILY: Yeah, he's a fantastic lay.

SALLY: And everyone's like, "Okay" [laughs].

EMILY: Great. Do your thing.

SALLY: Sure. But the fact that it's just this layer upon layer of Gawyn being so good at swords.

EMILY: [sighs] We then cut back over to Saerin just so that we can get the news, through her, that Elaida is missing. Um, and you know, at the end of the raid, everything is kind of, everyone is getting back into place. They're like, "Oh, no. Elaida got captured." As witnessed by this one, uh, Novice or Accepted or whatever. Then we cut to Elaida being carried on the back of one of these flying creatures. Waking up and realizing she's been collared. She's just our classic torture porn sequence of look at this bad woman. Now she's getting the consequences of her actions. Which no human should ever have to face.

SALLY: Yeah. It's, like, once again, same as with Galina, it's like, "Look at what is happening to this mean lesbian for being such a mean lesbian."

EMILY: Mm-mm.

SALLY: And we're just going to make her suffer deeply inhuman things as a consequence for being mean.

EMILY: Yeah. We're also, like, there's an element in this that's supposed to be celebratory.

SALLY: Yeah! Like Elaida's –

EMILY: Like we're supposed to be like, "Oh, fuck yeah. Elaida's now out of the Tower. She can't stand in Egg's way anymore. And also she'll get what she deserves."

SALLY: And it's, like, no human deserves this.

EMILY: Yeah, and also its way more interesting when there are more barriers for our hero to deal with.

SALLY: Yeah! Yeah, it's like –

EMILY: Like, this situation of Egg now having to consolidate the Aes Sedai is a lot more interesting if Elaida is still there.

SALLY: Yeah, if Elaida – if everyone, if everyone in the Tower was like, “Elaida you did jack fuck all during that.” Elaida could have a very like the leader ran and hid arc.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Here. And then everyone is like, “Egg actually did something, so yeah if we're gonna have an Amyrlin, it's gonna be this one.”

EMILY: Yeah. It would be great if Egg got to succeed, again, based on her own, um, successes and power rather than just deus ex machina plucking Elaida off the gameboard.

SALLY: Yeah. Boo! Tomato, tomato.

EMILY: Okay, then we get to Rand's latest crime against humanity, which is that he is in the process of leaving Arad Doman. He's like, “Boy, these people sure do [laughs] seem like they need some help. Unfortunately, I am not going to give it to them. And I am not equipped to give it to them, and I am actively abandoning them.”

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Um, Bashere is like, like Rand talks to Bashere, is like, “Hey, is everything in place for the Arad Domani to select their new government?” Like, he has only ever managed to find a minimal amount of their council, which is not technically enough to elect a new king, so they have to pick new councilors. And Bashere is like, “Yeah, they've got their instructions, but pretty sure they're just going to, like, abandon the city as soon as you're not breathing down their necks anymore.” And Rand is like, “Meh. Oh well.”

SALLY: Well, I did what I could.

EMILY: He's like, “What's the status of Ituralde?” Bashere's like, “Not good. They're starting to get, like, raids from Trollocs and I don't think he's going to be happy when he finds out that you are not here anymore.” And Rand's like, “Oh, well, once he abandons the Borderlands, then that's fine. I'll just send someone else.” And I'm like, “Oh my god.”

SALLY: Which is another, like, incredible assumption that Rand is making. I think Ituralde has every right to abandon the Borderlands, but Rand to just be like, “Well, he will definitely do that and come back to Arad Doman and then maybe he'll think of something.”

EMILY: Yeah, he's like, "Well, the next thing we have to do is talk to the Borderlanders, I guess, because I have no idea what the fuck they're doing." And Bashere's like, "Yeah, I don't know what they're doing either. Shrug emoji." Um, like Rand's like, "Go find out where they actually are so I can go confront them." Bashere's like, "Peace out." Um, then a guy comes up right as Rand is about to leave and is like, "Hey, Rand [laughs]. Hey, Dragon Reborn, just so you know, all of the food that you have ordered into the city has spoiled." Um, and people from all around the countryside, refugees, have been coming to Arad Doman specifically because Rand was sort of...

SALLY: Promising food.

EMILY: Promising food. Um, which was, like, kind of there was already a 'well, is there going to be enough?' problem and now it's just all gone. He's like, "What are you gonna do?" and Rand is, like, doesn't say anything. Just leaves.

SALLY: Yeah, it's, like, so dickish.

EMILY: He's just like, "Goodbye." And it's, like, okay. So, leaving some people to starve.

SALLY: Yep, just starve to death.

EMILY: And then they walk into Tear where they are celebrated immensely.

SALLY: It's disgusting.

EMILY: Because, I mean, A) there is sort of a set up quality to it. Like this is clearly, like, it's almost like Darlin was stage directing in the background.

SALLY: Now cheer!

EMILY: "Okay, we gotta make the Dragon Reborn feel welcome." But, as Rand has pointed out, every other country he's been in has, like, he's removed one of the Forsaken or done something else, you know, objectively helpful for the country. He's like, "I just went into Arad Doman, did fuck all, and then left. And now they're gonna starve if the Seanchan don't get them." He's like, "And I don't know why these people are celebrating me, because I failed with the Seanchan, so they're probably going to get taken over, along with Illian." And Bashere's like, "Uh, that's a pretty, like, mercenary position to take." And Rand's like, "Yeah, well. I don't care. Anymore. About anything." And we're all supposed to be like, "Ah, poor baby." Rand gets up to the Stone of Tear, meets with Darlin and Dobriane. He also mentions Weiramon. Weiramon is always given way more word count than he deserves.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: For just being, like, a guy. In the next book, we'll find out that Weiramon is a Darkfriend and it's just like who cares? Has he done anything about that? No.

SALLY: No. It is very funny, though. [laughing] Rand is like, “Weiramon’s a fucking loser. I fucking hate him. What a piece of shit.” And Lews Therin is like, “I like him!”

EMILY: Lews Therin’s like, “I like him. He’s an idiot, but, you know, we just know he’s an idiot. So, he’s easy.”

SALLY: Yeah, it’s not like he’s unpredictable.

EMILY: Yeah. And Rand’s like, “God you’re fucked up.”

SALLY: Rand’s like, “Shut up.”

EMILY: Um, he’s like, “Here, look at all my people who I don’t like, gathered in one place.” He’s like, “Okay, Darlin, get ready to march.” And Darlin’s like, “Oh, yeah. To Arad Doman like you said.” And Rand’s like, “No, we’re going to Shayol Ghul.”

SALLY: Imagine being Darlin.

EMILY: End chapter. I know. Darlin, who has been given, like, six conflicting sets of orders in this time.

SALLY: I would just...

EMILY: This poor man.

SALLY: Start screaming.

EMILY: I know. I’d be like [screaming noises]. So, that’s those chapters. So fun. Fun and fresh. Lots of bad things happening.

SALLY: A lot of men behaving badly.

EMILY: Yeah. Yeah. Um, next section we’ll get another Egg, Rand twofer. More men behaving badly.

SALLY: Nice!

EMILY: You know, just that sort of stuff.

SALLY: I wish they’d stop.

EMILY: We will, at least, see the return of the king. By whom I mean Hurin, from Book 2.

SALLY: [gasps] Are you joking?

EMILY: No, he gets a little cameo.

SALLY: I thought he would never come back.

EMILY: [laughs] Appearance.

SALLY: Ugh, that's my favorite character.

EMILY: You dropped this, king.

SALLY: You dropped this, king.

EMILY: It's his nose, because [laughs] that's his whole thing.

SALLY: Yeah, because that's a really sick power!

EMILY: Uh.

SALLY: If I could smell violence or whatever he does. I can't even remember if it's violence or, like, danger.

EMILY: [laughs] Danger.

SALLY: [sing song] Danger!

EMILY: I smell danger. So, that's where we're at. Thanks, everyone, for listening.

SALLY: The Seanchan have been turned away from the White Tower.

EMILY: Yeah, goodbye! But they'll come back for Tear, Illian, and Arad Doman. And Rand will be like, "Take them. I'm serving them on a silver platter."

SALLY: And we'll be like, "Listen."

EMILY: As long as you don't interfere with me fighting the Dark One I don't give a shit.

SALLY: I feel like there are so many ways Rand could have been a better – I know everyone is like, "Don't cast stones." But I feel like Rand could have been, like, done this so many ways different in terms of, like, I don't know, getting some partners to do all the political stuff while he did all the Dragon Reborn fighting stuff.

EMILY: Yeah. It sure seems like he could have did – could have done pretty much anything other than what he does.

SALLY: Rand's too busy being like, "Nobody controls me. I'm a man and I'm correct."

EMILY: Rand's too busy blaring Likin Park and –

SALLY: [laughing, singing] I wanna push you around.

EMILY: [laughs, sings] Well, I will! Well, I will!

SALLY: [laughs] I'm sorry, I wanna push you a-round.

EMILY: Yeah. Don't, don't forget that crucial enunciation.

SALLY: [laughs] Anyway, Rand's been listening to that the whole time.

EMILY: [laughs] Okay, thank you for listening.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: [laughs] Thanks to Glynn MacKenzie for our theme song. Thanks to our Patrons on Patreon and our followers on social media.

SALLY: Yeah!

EMILY: Anything to add.

SALLY: No!

EMILY: Okay, do you have a sign off?

SALLY: Let me think for a second. Do you have anything?

EMILY: Uh, I have one. I got my second award from my company for being, you guessed it, diverse [laughs].

SALLY: Diverse! She got the award of excellence or something.

EMILY: Yeah, I gave my trophy to my brother-in-law and now it's on his bedside table.

SALLY: Yeah, and he really loves it and –

EMILY: He really loves it. The first one is at my mom's house.

SALLY: Emily's just giving out like candy.

EMILY: Yep. I'm –

SALLY: Because she's so diverse.

EMILY: I'm hoping to accumulate one per year for the next five years of my career or so, so that I can just send them to every single one of my family members' houses. Um, but yeah, I've never come out at work [laughs].

SALLY: [laughs] And they're just like, "Something..."

EMILY: Something about her shaved head.

SALLY: Mmmmmm.

EMILY: And her sort of teen boy apparel makes us think maybe.

SALLY: Maybe. [laughing] Emily also got misgendered at work last year.

EMILY: Oh yeah, last year when they presented the award they used they/them pronouns [laughing] despite the fact that I have never asked anyone to use they/them pronouns.

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: You all should really try working in Utah sometime.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: [laughs] It's so fun. Have a good week, everyone.

SALLY: Bye!

EMILY: Bye.