



Episode 256: Get Squashed, Idiot
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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, I forgot to turn the AC off, but you know what?

Sally: It's too hot.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: It's like 96 degrees in, um, Salt Lake right now. So.

Emily: I was also wearing a bunch of layers in the office, 'cause it's freezing in the office –

Sally: Sure.

Emily: And then come – came home, you know, and now I'm overheated, so.

Sally: Sure.

Emily: Simply must have –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Some cool air. You guys will just have to deal with that little buzzing in the background.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Soooo don't worry, you won't have to put up with the AC for long, 'cause this will be short, because what's there to talk about? Rand almost nuked a place.

Sally: And Nynaeve had to be like, "Hey, pwease? Don't do this?"

Emily: "Hey – hey, bestie, pwease?"

Sally: "Pwease?"

Emily: "Hey, big tough man, pwease no nuclear bombs."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: If only someone had said that to Oppenheimer. (laugh)

Sally: “Hey, pweweeeeeaaase.”

Emily: Which is what I’m sure the movie is about.

Sally: Yeah. “Pwease no bombs.”

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Okay.

Emily: Goodbye. Tybalt just ran off. I still haven’t seen Ed. He could be dead for all I know.

Sally: Ed’s been sleeping a lot.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And occasionally I just have to go over and make sure he’s breathing.

Emily: Yeah, Ed – when the day comes, it will –

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) Come – it will come in silence.

Sally: Yeah. He’ll just –

Emily: Go gently into that good night. (laugh)

Sally: Yep. He sure will. Ed will not rage against the dying of the light.

Emily: He’s like, “Okay. Onto kitty heaven.”

Sally: Yeah, Ed’s like, “No big deal to me, homie.”

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: “More sleeping.” (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) What a grim way to start this episode. This is Everybody Hates Rand, your friendly neighborhood Wheel of Time podcast. I’m Emily Juchau.

Sally: And I’m Sally Goodger. And I will say, for any concerned listeners, Ed is actually doing quite well. He just –

Emily: Yeah, he’s – he’s recovering from his medical, um –

Sally: Trials.

Emily: Trials. Yeah, he just does sleep deep and hard.

Sally: (laugh) Yeah.

Emily: Unlike Tybalt, who's very, uh –

Sally: Jumpy. Yeah.

Emily: Yeah, very jumpy and anxious. So.

Sally: Easy – easy to wake up.

Emily: It – it's a pretty sharp contrast.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Okay. We're talking about, you know, like we have been, Egg and Rand. Uh, we pick up with Egg as she is back in the – I was about to say the Salidar camp, but they're not in Salidar anymore. The rebel Aes Sedai camp, in her tent with Chesa, who, like a good servant, has – only wishes to serve.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, and is just so happy to have someone to serve again. But, you know, we've talked about the servant-lord politics of Robert Jordan before.

Sally: It's so bad. Egg's like, "She's kept my tent exactly the same," like some parent when their kid goes away to college.

Emily: Yeah, and I'm like, eugh.

Sally: Yeah. It's so haunting.

Emily: Maybe Chesa should've got a different job, or some –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Or just left. Who knows. Anyway, Egg is sitting there, being perfectly still because to not be perfectly still would be to ruin the illusion –

Sally: In her own tent.

Emily: Yeah, even though no one's there. She's like, "I can't – I can't cause – give myself any bad habits," and I'm like, you are actually, like – you have, in the last book or so, crossed a line into being absolutely crazy about the whole Amyrlin image thing.

Sally: Yeah. She's having a sort of parallel arc to Rand, where Rand's like, "I can't feel anything," and Egg's like, "I can't emote anything –"

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: "Even if I feel things, so."

Emily: Which is just, like, the opposite of what – they’re both doing things that are, like, the opposite of, um, system growth.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: You know, like, if Egwene is supposed to represent this, like, sort of new age Aes Sedai, the best Amyrlin Seat that there’s ever been, but, um, what she’s representing is kind of, like, a good Aes Sedai as the Aes Sedai are now –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And it’s like, at the end of the series, it would be cool if the Aes Sedai changed.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: As a system at all, including maybe, like, allowing leaders to emote –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And be people.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Allowing the Aes Sedai generally to be people with personalities and not just these, like, mystical weirdos who creep everyone out because they pretend to have no personalities.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, that would be great, you know? And it would be great if men would be normal.
(laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Rand.

Sally: Rand. If your response isn’t immediately, “I’m going to blow up what bothers me,” which is what more men than you’d think would respond to this situation.

Emily: Yeah. They’re like, “Hyper-violence is the answer.” I don’t mean to call you out, John Wick, but.

Sally: Yeah, I mean, for all of John Wick’s, um, good things, they are very hyper-violent movies.

Emily: Yeah. Great movies. Warped sense of masculinity, as it were. Um, so Egg is like, “Here I am being extremely weird about this whole thing,” but finally she gets ready to go, um, to this meeting with the Hall of the Tower. She leaves her tent, and Gawyn is sitting there and presumably has been for multiple hours. And she’s like, “Step aside, slut.” (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: “Step aside, scrub.” And he’s like –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “No, we need to talk about this, Egg,” and she’s like, “I have told you that I do not want to talk about this right now; I have other things to do,” and he’s like, “No.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He’s like, “I’m the man, and so we have to talk when I say we have to talk,” and she’s like, “I am trying so hard not to murder you where you stand.”

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And also, um – he’s like, “I have waited for months to talk to you; I’ve made all these sacrifices.” Um, blah – “I’ve sacrificed all these things,” and she’s like, “Um, exsqueeze me, I was just in the White Tower as a captive, being tortured on the daily –”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “For months. And you undermined all of the, like, work that I was putting in –”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “And putting up with.”

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: “So we’re talking – but we’re still talking about your sacrifices?”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And he’s like, “Well, we were worried about you,” and she was like, “Yeah, that was what I was asking you to sacrifice, was your peace of mind.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “Sorry.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “But not sorry.”

Sally: “But that’s what I asked for. And ...”

Emily: And he’s like, “You just, you love me,” like that fixes everything.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And she’s like, “Maybe, but, like, right now I’m, like, pretty pissed at you, so.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “You – and you need to, like, cope with the fact that I am not just a person; I am also a political leader –”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “Now. So, and you – if you can’t accept that, then get –”

Sally: “Get fucked.”

Emily: “Gone.” Um, and he’s like, “Well, it’s just so hard for me because when – the last time I saw you, you were in a totally different position.” And she’s like, “Yes? That was eight months ago. People change in eight months.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “I don’t know what to tell – this is an absurd conversation to be having.”

Sally: Yeah. It’s – he’s being so annoying.

Emily: He rounds this off by saying, “I can change. But you have to help me.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And she is like, “Okay, bye,” um, and she goes off to go to the Hall of the Tower, but of course – the, like – it’s obvious – we’ve already talked about how Gawyn is rancid. But, like, in this little section, he does not apologize, he does not to – seem to accept that what he did – like, you can accept – you can disagree with your partner fundamentally; Gawyn can still think that what he did was better, but he is not really giving in to her perspective of the idea.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, he’s not being like, “Okay, I understand why you feel that way. I understand why you’re upset. Regardless of my feelings, I did do something you asked me not to; therefore, I apologize.” Like –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: No mature communication skills here at all.

Sally: No.

Emily: And of course the ending little zinger of him being like, “I can come to accept your position as a leader and all of the work that you’re doing, but you have to bear that burden for or with me.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it’s like, that is such an entitled fucking thing to say.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, no.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That's your shit to deal with.

Sally: Yeah. Your – it is not your partner – and particularly in this instance, it's – it's very much a, like, emotional labor, men versus women situation.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Like, so much of, like, Gawyn's shit he is projecting onto his female partner because why should he have to do anything in a relationship? He's a man. He's already given her everything by loving her.

Emily: Yeah, he is also stuck in this sort of, like, chivalric romance trope that he is – believes he is entitled to.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Which we've talked about a little bit before, how Gawyn and Galad are part of that trope and how they are perhaps deconstructions of that trope but not necessarily successfully.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, and – 'cause Gawyn keeps insisting, like, "Well, you love me," as though that, like, fixes everything.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: As though that's sort of like – a woman's love means that all of the other, like, bad stuff doesn't count. You know, disagreements aren't valid. Any of her, like, negative feelings are irrelevant.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: She's just, like, not a full person. She's a trophy to be won.

Sally: Yeah. Absolutely. And, like, to talk about the role that Egg should play in Gawyn's chivalric romance, like, if we were in a chivalric romance and she was the object, uh, to be won, basically –

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Is the way that women function in those romances; they are objects to be wooed and won, and the love that you get from that woman is a – a literal boon, like oftentimes they'll be giving you something, but it is very much like you have won something, and then you've just, like, you've done it, you've won.

Emily: Yeah, mission accomplished.

Sally: Mission accomplished. And, like, her job is to just love you and do what you tell her to do. And so Gawyn, occupying this role, is like, "Well, wait a second."

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: “I’ve won. So why – where’s my perfect wife?” (laugh)

Emily: Where indeed? We’re going to see versions of this conversation repeated throughout Towers of Midnight, and we are going to see it, um, sort of enacted rather than in dialogue – it will be through people’s actions – in A Memory of Light. So unfortunately this isn’t something that resolves with Gawyn growing as a person, um, and that sucks for everyone involved. End.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Meanwhile, uh, back at the White Tower – Egg, by the way, does not know, of course, that Elaida was captured –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: So she is still operating under the assumption that Elaida is in control of the White Tower, and therefore she thinks that the only way to resolve this is to, um, go to the White Tower at the head of her army.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: You know, possibly resulting in violence. Once again, we’ve come up with the, like – not a lot of creative problem-solving here. Egwene can Travel.

Sally: She mentions several times in this chapter alone that she’s gone back to the White Tower to get things of hers.

Emily: Yeah, she, like, went to fetch the Oath Rod.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Shit like that, and it’s like, okay, so why didn’t you just, when you woke up, go back?

Sally: You couldn’t have just, like – she’s like, “I can’t go back as a captive now,” and it’s like, well, duh, and she’s – but you couldn’t have, like, popped into Saerin’s office and been like, “Hey, we’re, like, buddies now, kind of, allies?”

Emily: Yeah. “Hey, Silviana –”

Sally: “Like, perhaps you could –” Yeah.

Emily: Or someone.

Sally: “Can you tell me what the fuck is going on?”

Emily: Yeah, instead she’s sitting in her tent, not fidgeting.

Sally: Not fidgeting. Thinking about how she failed because Sivan didn’t follow her instructions.

Emily: Yeah, she’s like, “It was a failure of my leadership that Sivan and Gawyn did this thing, because I can’t just take – I have to be a good leader and take responsibility for my followers’ actions,” and I’m like, you can just accept that people fucked up.

Sally: Yeah, you could just be like, “No, Gawyn and Siuan fucked up.”

Emily: Yeah, it would probably, actually, like – like, if you can – if you can judge that correctly, and it would be a correct judgment in this instance – she’s like, “I withheld too much from Siuan,” and I’m like, no, you didn’t.

Sally: Yeah, I kept thinking, like, what didn’t you tell Siuan?

Emily: Yeah, you weren’t like, “So I’m getting beaten within an inch of my life every day,” because that would’ve freaked her out, like –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So that was a wise move.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It’s – it’s just wild. Egg is, like, off the deep end.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um. But in the White Tower, the heads of the remaining Ajahs – not including Red and Blue; Blue because they got evicted from the fucking White Tower –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And Red because they’re the Red.

Sally: Everyone hates them right now.

Emily: Yeah. Um. They are all in a meeting together. Um, and this is when we finally get the mega reveal – I know, everyone’s been waiting with bated breath to solve this mystery: why were some Sitters younger than others?

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Oh my God, the vast conspiracy.

Sally: I’d fully forgotten about it.

Emily: Because it’s stupid! (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) And they were talking about it, and I was like, what are they talking about?

Emily: I don’t think I remembered the first two times I read this book either, and I only remembered it this time because every time it came up, I was like, why are we acting –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like this is some fucking –

Sally: Deep state, yeah –

Emily: Yeah, Watergate scandal.

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: Like, Jesus Christ. So apparently, the heads of the Ajahs got together around when Elaida got elected and were like, “Let’s just run the Tower in secret.”

Sally: Yeah, puppet government.

Emily: “You know, we’ll basically – yeah, use Elaida as a puppet government, and we’ll use the Hall, also, as a puppet government,” because apparently this has been done before to great success, and I’m like, okay.

Sally: Has there ever been a great success in the White Tower?

Emily: Yeah, the leadership – the leadership of the White Tower has been one shitshow after another, and we have seen three successive Amyrlins –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So it’s hard to believe at this point.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, they’re like, it’s all good. So what we’re going to do is we’re going to send little spies, like everyone – like, there were so many fucking spies going back and forth between these two camps –

Sally: I know.

Emily: Was anyone actually a rebel or actually in the White Tower?

Sally: I know, were they all just in limbo between the two?

Emily: It’s like when we’re like, everyone’s Black Ajah.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: There’s, like, no people who are just normal.

Sally: Yeah, they’re – everyone’s either Black Ajah, a spy, or both.

Emily: Yeah. Christ. Anyway, they send some people to join the Hall of the Tower in the rebel camp – or, like, existing Sitters, because of course those Sitters would get elected to the new Hall of the Tower, ‘cause that’s one less person to elect.

Sally: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Emily: And then they elected some puppet Sitters for their own Hall of the Tower.

Sally: Yeah, and they’re like, “We picked younger ones ‘cause we thought they’d be more easily manipulated.”

Emily: Yeah, “In the same way we picked young ones to go to the Salidar White Tower because, um, we thought they’d be less suspicious.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Both dumb choices. I mean, it isn’t really dumb because barely anyone noticed, and when they did notice, they were like, there’s clearly no plan going on here because what – what –

Sally: Nothing’s happening.

Emily: Nothing’s happening! The Salidar – and the heads of the – (laugh) Like, you can’t be like, “There’s a conspiracy happening” and then show us the conspiracy and nothing happened because of it.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Except that there was this mystery –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That had no consequences that Siuan was bothered by.

Sally: Yeah, and every time she brought it up, Egg was like, “I don’t think this is anything.”

Emily: “This doesn’t feel like anything.”

Sally: Yeah, “Like, it’d be one thing if, like, bad things were happening –”

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: “And we could trace it to this, but, like, I just don’t think this is anything.”

Emily: Like, Egg has had problems from the Hall of the Tower, but none of it has stemmed from the young members. It has all been from, like, Romanda, Lelaine.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And the problems in the White Tower itself seem entirely to do with, like, the Elaida-Alviarin power struggle.

Sally: Yeah. So I don’t know what the fuck this is.

Emily: It’s stupid. The point of this whole conversation is that they’re like, “Well, that was fucked up. Now what?” And they’re like, “Obviously, we have to elect Egg.” The end.

Sally: Yeah, so then we’re given another, like, heavy dose of dramatic irony here where everyone in the White Tower proper is like, “We want to elect Egg anyway,” and Egg is preparing to bring her armies to the door.”

Emily: To go to war, yeah.

Sally: So it’s just like –

Emily: Maybe if you'd Traveled back to the White Tower, you could've sorted this out. Go figure.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Anyway, we then switch over to Siuan, who's watching the Hall of the Tower gather, and this is just like a, quote, romantic scene with her and Gareth Bryne.

Sally: He's like, "Maybe we should get married."

Emily: He's like, "Oh, I was actually going to demand that you get married, which is somehow more honorable than you breaking your promise of indentured servitude, is me making you promise to do something that I didn't tell you what, and then it's marriage." You guys are so healthy.

Sally: You guys are super healthy. He also goes on this weird-ass rant where he's like, "I finally understand that you're not a dishonorable person; you're just so committed to your goal of saving the world that that's more honorable to you than anything else."

Emily: "And you're very selfish." And Siuan's like, "Aww, you're right." (laugh)

Sally: She's like, "Wow, he gets me." (laugh)

Emily: And I'm like, terminally heterosexual, you two. So stupid.

Sally: Yeah. It's – like, it's so heinous. Just the idea of, like, demanding that somebody marry you, that alone is vile.

Emily: Then we go to Egg as the Hall of the Tower is meeting. Egg kicks it off by pulling out the Oath Rod and swearing the Three Oaths. So she's like, "I have evaded doing the dumb Aes Sedai test, but now all of you have to –"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You know, this is her – this is her backdoor method of getting in to talk about the Black Ajah.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: She's like, "Okay, you just saw me promise that I can't lie on the Oath Rod, and now I'm telling you that I am not a Darkfriend, and so I propose that to get rid of all of the Black Ajah hiding among us, we just all do that." Sheriam, of course, immediately panics and –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Tries to leave. Egg neatly grabs her and does a dumb little Brandon Sanderson-ish trickery to make Sheriam admit to, uh, say a lie. And it's just like, you guys, the lie is dumb. The lie is "Is your hair red?" and it's like, what if she dyed her hair? Also –

Sally: Also, I don't – this is me being a little nitpicky, so I apologize, but the Oath – these Oaths are very confusing to me. Like, are they physically stopped from lying? Is that what would happen?

Emily: Yeah, we have – you bring up a good point. I don't think we have ever actually seen anyone – no, I think we have seen a – we had that one, like, physical consequences when, um, I think it was the Black Ajah hunters –

Sally: Mm.

Emily: Made a girl – they, like, made her re-swear the Oaths but then they also, like, tried to get her to do something else, and she started, like, choking or something.

Sally: Mm. Okay.

Emily: So we have seen that before, but pretty scantily for a fourteen-book series, I would say.

Sally: Yeah, where a lot of emphasis is placed on this not-lying in particular.

Emily: Yeah. Yeah, and, like, other things, like what happens if you try and use the Power to murder someone?

Sally: Murder someone or make weapons or what the fuck.

Emily: Yeah, it's a very, like, arbitrary type of judgment, you know? Like, you can argue – you can – you can convince yourself of a lot of things. You can jump through a lot of, like, psychological hoops in order to get around things.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And we don't see that really used, um, to sort of explain how people – like, it's like there's some arbiter – arbiting force –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Above the Aes Sedai that's like, "Mm, well, you did lie then, so I'll choke you or whatever."

Sally: Shock collar. Zap, zap.

Emily: Yeah, zap, zap. Rather than, like, the Aes Sedai being like, "I didn't intend to lie."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, could be the case here if Sheriam –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: If we didn't know Sheriam was Black Ajah, it could've just been like, she was getting asked a lot of rapid-fire questions, blah blah blah.

Sally: Yeah, sometimes you say stupid things. Yeah, it – yeah. So the idea of, like, intent versus action versus – I don't know, the Oaths are confusing to me.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: The actual magic behind them.

Emily: But Brandon Sanderson clearly thinks this is cute, so we'll just let him have it, I guess.

Sally: But Brandon.

Emily: Anyway. Everyone's like – gasp, shock and awe, Sheriam's a Darkfriend. Then Moira tries to fuckin' book it.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And the Tower is like, okay, everyone – everyone else comes up and re-swears the three Oaths. Unfortunately we don't get any reveals about the rest of them, which maybe fortunately. I don't know. It's kind of like, could've been cool if we got, like, one surprise of someone.

Sally: Yeah, be like, surprise, Romanda's a Darkfriend.

Emily: Yeah, surprise, Lelaine has been evil this entire time, you know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's like if Elayne had been a Darkfriend.

Sally: Guys, it would've been so good.

Emily: I know, it would've been incredible. Anyway, Egg's like, "Okay, so I have a bunch of names, and we have to somehow, like, gather people here and make them go through this without warning them what's about to happen, otherwise all the Darkfriends will just scam," and it's like, it's impossible to keep a secret in all of – you know, like, the plan they come up with is fine.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: As plans go. Considering you can only rely on, you know, these other eleven women or however many there are, so.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um. I would have probably done it differently, but.

Sally: Yeah, they're – (laugh) their plan is to, like, round them up, Ajah by Ajah, everyone in the camp, to bring them here and do the same thing.

Emily: Like, pretend there's some sort of weird announcement.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And then do the same thing and have everyone, like, standing by to grab people. Egg will, like, share the names. Probably the first thing I would do is, like, grab a pretty large group of women whose names are not on the list –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You know, just have people approach them, bring them in, swear on the Oath Rod. And then now we have a larger force of people.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: What – whatever. Egg is on a time crunch ‘cause she thinks she has to go attack the White Tower. So they start this Black Ajah purge and are like, “We march on the White Tower. At dusk we ride,” or whatever.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So — blood will be spilled this night. Like, they actually execute the Black Ajah. We’ll get into this later.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: They just fucking behead them all.

Sally: Jesus Christ.

Emily: I know, it’s like a guillotine.

Sally: Fucking hell. This – everyone is losing their moral compass.

Emily: Yeah. Like, okay. Whatever.

Sally: Yeah, um. Just some – okay.

Emily: Then we get to the next chapter, where Nynaeve is arguing with Rand about going to rescue Lan. She’s like, “You have to do your – you – the Last Battle, it – you should do it at Tarwin’s Gap so that you are supporting Lan.” And Rand’s like, “No. I’m going to go straight to Shayol Ghul.” They’re on their way to meet with the Borderlanders, they believe. Rand has, like, set up this sort of embassy, where he’s like, “I’ll only bring four channelers; you’re only allowed to bring four channelers; blah blah blah blah, we’re meeting at this place.” So they’re on that road toward the meeting spot. Um, Nynaeve is like, “Rand is so insensitive.” I’m getting a little, like, annoyed by Nynaeve trying to convince Rand to do this. Not because I don’t agree that Rand should maybe show a modicum of care for Lan. But, like, Lan is fully in charge of this suicide charge.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: He fully made that decision.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So, like, Nynaeve, you can’t ask other people to bail out your husband from his suicidal tendencies, as much as you would like them to.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, at a certain point, you have to accept that this is the decision he made and that he wants to die. Like.

Sally: Yeah, unfortunately. And also, it's just like, you're not gonna get help from Rand at this point, and you are not powerless. Like, if you are really determined to try and find help for your husband, at this point just go somewhere else.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Like, go to Elayne.

Emily: Ditch Rand, go try and find help elsewhere. But –

Sally: But I agree, it's like, you can't save Lan from himself.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Which is what is the problem.

Emily: Yeah, exactly.

Sally: Fundamentally.

Emily: And you can't ask other people to be like, "Help me save my husband from himself."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You know, in a non-sort of actual intervention setting.

Sally: Yeah, and, like, unfortunately, like, Rand's strategy is a good one. He's like, "Everyone will be focused on Tarwin's Gap, and I can take my force directly to Shayol Ghul."

Emily: Yeah, he's like, "I'm gonna go straight to Shayol Ghul. I'm gonna hope for, you know, the Phantom Menace effect, that once I kill the Darkfriend, all the other bad things will stop happening."

Sally: Yeah. Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: And I'm like, yeah, that's a fairly good –

Sally: All the Trollocs will turn to dust.

Emily: Yeah. I'm like, okay. He –

Sally: Yeah, sure.

Emily: He's trope-savvy, I'll give him that.

Sally: Yeah, yeah, he is.

Emily: Um, Nynaeve eventually gives up on this and is like, "Mm, well, what – Cadsuane wants me to find out where Perrin is from Rand," so she's like, "Rand, where's Perrin?" and he's like, "None of your business." (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, he's so fucking rude about it.

Emily: He's like – (makes "I don't know" noise) And she's like, "Okay, copy." Anyway, they get to the meeting spot and find not the Borderlander embassy but just Hurin.

Sally: Yeah, a single man.

Emily: Just, you know, our best cameo appearance from a guy who has not appeared since book three.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He's just like, "Hey, it's me, Hurin." And everyone's like –

Sally: And everyone's like – I mean, I was like, "Yay!"

Emily: I know, I was like, this is like seeing a celebrity.

Sally: Yeah, it's –

Emily: It's like if Keanu Reeves walked into a restaurant. I'm like, "Hurin!"

Sally: "That's my bestie!"

Emily: "I know him!" (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, "I love him!" Unfortunately he gets really the short end of the stick in this scenario.

Emily: Yeah. Hurin's like, "Hey, Rand, my bestie."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Rand's like – (Batman voice) "Are you really Hurin?" And Hurin's like, "Yeah."

Sally: "Yes?"

Emily: "Um, are you okay?" And Rand's like – (Batman voice) "No."

Sally: Rand, like, picks him up with the Power and, in my head, is, like, twirling him around in the sky. (laugh)

Emily: It says he spun him around at one point.

Sally: Yeah. So.

Emily: And Hurin's like, "Okay, this is weird. They just sent me to, like, tell you they – they're gonna – they want to meet in Far Madding."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which is, you know, where boys can't channel.

Sally: Yeah. (laugh) No boys – no boy channelers allowed.

Emily: No channeling, sorry. And Rand's like, "Um, well, I don't want to do that," so he, like, brings Hurin and everyone else, Travels to an overlook of Far Madding so he can look down on it, and he's like, "I can't believe these Borderlanders and their arrogance, and what are they doing? Blah blah blah blah blah, dismissing their duty and they want to put me in a box," and I'm like –

Sally: Here we go again.

Emily: This – the stupid box. The box and the list.

Sally: The fucking box.

Emily: I'm go – Rand.

Sally: The box is a one hundred percent valid trauma.

Emily: Yes.

Sally: The way that it is utilized as, like, Rand's excuse for every bad thing that he wants to do is really grating.

Emily: Yeah. He's like, "All I have to do is psychologically convince myself that someone's gonna put me in a box –"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "And bam."

Sally: Yeah, "And then I can do whatever I want."

Emily: Rand's obsession with boxes is matched only by Tybalt's obsession with boxes. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) That's true.

Emily: But on opposite ends of the spectrum.

Sally: Tybalt wants to be in every box.

Emily: Tybalt loves boxes. Rand does not – does not like them. Anyway, Rand's like, "I'll show them. I'm gonna, like, rain down fire on them." He whips out his little access key. And Nynaeve's like, "Pwease?"

Sally: "Pwease no."

Emily: "Pwease don't do that. Not today." And he's like, "Fine. Alright. Hurin, go tell the Borderlanders that if they want to go back to the Borderlands and do the fucking shit that they're supposed to do, then I will provide them with travel. Otherwise I don't care."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "They can be here and suffer the shame of watching the Last Battle while they cower here –"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Blah blah blah blah blah. And Hurin's like, "Okay, well. This has been a fun cameo appearance. I'll never appear again."

Sally: Unfortunately.

Emily: Actually, I don't know; maybe he does in one of the many –

Sally: He's the best character, so.

Emily: Memory of Light little snippets. Anyway, um, they leave, go right back to Tear. As they're, like, stabling their horses, Rand is like, "Nynaeve, Perrin is in front of a statue." And Nynaeve's like, "There's so many statues." (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He's like, "It's a distinctive statue. It's, like, a sword in the ground," or whatever. And she's like, "Okay, why are you telling me this?" and he's like, "Because your feminine wiles convinced me not to burn down an entire army of people."

Sally: Yeah, he says, "I owe you a debt for caring when I was unable to."

Emily: Yeah. "I owe you a debt for your emotional labor, which I have officially stopped doing because it's too hard."

Sally: "It's too hard to have feelings."

Emily: "It's so hard to have feelings. Oh my God."

Sally: What if I just, instead, solved every single one of my problems with a massacre?

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Has anyone thought about that?

Emily: Just really toxic masculinity, taken to an extreme. Um, Nynaeve's like, "Okay, bye," and goes and finds Cadsuane and is like, "I know where Perrin is, but you gotta tell me the plan." Cadsuane's like, "Mm, maybe, maybe not. What happened with the Borderlanders?" and Nynaeve's like, "He almost nuked them," and Cadsuane's like, "Eugh."

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: And one of the other Aes Sedai is like, "I don't know why we're overreacting. Min's just been sitting here, telling us about all the viewings that are going to happen after the Last Battle, so clearly everything's going to be fine," and Min's like, "Actually, I've been doing some scholarly research, and if the Dark One wins, there will be no Pattern, so then my viewings won't come to pass because, you know, there is no fate, no future, et cetera." And they're all like, "Eugh. Yuck."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which I think is Robert Jordan's sort of subtle way of being like, "There's still stakes," you know?

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: At – you have to imagine that it's – at some point on Reddit, people were like, "We don't have to worry about the Dark One winning because –"

Sally: "Min said Elayne's babies will be fine."

Emily: Yeah, "Min said Elayne's babies will be fine. Clearly, the Last Battle's happening next week, and Elayne is only three weeks pregnant."

Sally: (laugh) "Elayne's thirty-six hours freshly pregnant."

Emily: (laugh) "Elayne's two days pregnant. Um, and the Last Battle's happening tomorrow, so she'll be fine. Everything will be fine." And it's like, no, you guys. There's no actual risk because that's the trope. That's the genre that we're in.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, be self-aware.

Sally: It's okay, yeah.

Emily: It's okay.

Sally: Although it would be kind of iconic for Robert Jordan to be like, "No, the Chosen One lost."

Emily: "No, and then the Dark One wins." (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: "And everyone died. Bye!"

Sally: Isn't that – "Here's a cautionary tale about not processing your feelings."

Emily: Yeah. It would actually be so baller if he did that, yeah. "This is what happens when you get a Chosen One and are like, 'How much toxic masculinity can I fit in this bad boy?'"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "He's very tall, so a lot."

Sally: "A lot," yeah.

Emily: (laugh) Um, anyway. Cadsuane's like, "Okay, Nynaeve, well, I don't actually have any business with Perrin; it's that there are people he is with that I need to talk to."

Sally: Is it Tam?

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Papa?

Sally: If you can't fix a boy's problem –

Emily: Maybe –

Sally: Talk to his dad.

Emily: Maybe his daddy will.

Sally: Maybe his papa will come through and fix it.

Emily: In my experience, and I don't mean to put Chris Juchau on blast – (laugh) I actually really like my dad. But, um, most people, when they have a problem, dads won't fix it –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But will do the opposite and make it worse somehow.

Sally: Yeah, really heighten all of your emotional issues –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Being around your dad, so. It's a good thing Tam is a good dad.

Emily: Yeah, Tam – well.

Sally: Well – you're right. You're right.

Emily: We'll talk about it more, I guess, but, like, Tam was a good father to Rand in his youth, I would say.

Sally: Sure.

Emily: Tam has maybe, um, faltered on the whole fatherhood thing –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Since finding out in the last year, two years, that Rand is fully the Dragon Reborn and out there conquering nations and not being like, "Maybe I should drop in. And, like –"

Sally: Have a chat.

Emily: You know, "Maybe we should go to lunch or something." (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, you're right. You're right, bestie.

Emily: It was also maybe not great to reveal – to keep from him that he's adopted.

Sally: Yeah, I agree, that's –

Emily: That caused some – some problems. Generally speaking, you should not not tell your kids that they're adopted.

Sally: Yeah, you should reveal that to them.

Emily: It's important info for them to know. So, yeah, Thom – (laugh) Thom. Um, Tam had two big fuck-ups.

Sally: You're right. You're right.

Emily: But other than that, he was a stable father figure.

Sally: At least he is a nice dad, I guess I should say.

Emily: He is a very nice dad, and he does love and care for Rand.

Sally: Yeah. He definitely, like – I just feel like if I was a parent and my 18-year-old son started conquering nations, I would be like, "Hmm. Perhaps my parenting is not finished."

Emily: I'd be like, "Uh, I didn't even get around to teaching him how taxes work, so."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You know –

Sally: We gotta fix this.

Emily: Like, maybe I should go see if he needs some help.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Yeah. Yeah, for sure.

Sally: So.

Emily: Who knows? So, Tam, you maybe – you maybe did – you maybe, uh, faltered at the finish line there.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But otherwise. But if you were – if you were entirely faultless, then you wouldn't be a good character.

Sally: You wouldn't be a real character, yeah.

Emily: Yeah. You would just be a weird sort of angel in the background, and those aren't fun. So those are those two chapters.

Sally: Those are only fun if they're Aziraphale from Good Omens.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And even he –

Emily: He's just enough of a bastard to be interesting, as Crowley says. So the next couple chapters are just going to be Egg, I believe.

Sally: Egg. Egg time.

Emily: Yeah, it'll just be Egg consolidating her rule over at the White Tower –

Sally: Sure.

Emily: Which, unfortunately, we know, will probably not be as dramatic as she thinks it will be, unless we get some serious shenanigans.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Then, after that, it will be Rand meeting with Tam and then we'll be in the end. So very close to the finish line here, guys. Anything to add?

Sally: Naur.

Emily: Okay, thanks for listening, everyone.

Sally: Yeah, thank you.

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

Sally: Yeah. As always, you guys are the best.

Emily: Yeah. Do you have a sign-off?

Sally: I do. (laugh) I saw my friend Brie this weekend, who was telling me –

Emily: Brie, of our “Supernatural” episode fame.

Sally: Yeah, Brie, who has guested on this podcast. Um, she was telling me a story about how she went to visit her, um, brother and sister-in-law and her niece and nephew.

Emily: Uh-huh.

Sally: Her niece is five; her nephew is too. And, um, her brother is in the military, so he must have, like, not been –

Emily: Around.

Sally: He must've been, like, on-duty or something. 'Cause she was like, “I was just staying in the room with my sister-in-law,” um, at their small house. And every morning, her nephew would come in to, like, wake up his mom – of course at, like, some heinous toddler hour –

Emily: Yeah. Five a.m.

Sally: At, like, six a.m. (laugh) And her nephew, in his, like, toddler fixation, is currently going through an obsession with produce.

Emily: Oh. My God.

Sally: So he got, like, attached to this butternut squash – (laugh)

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: As though it was, like, a stuffed animal. And for the three days she was staying there, every morning he would throw the squash up into bed to wake up Brie and Megan. (laugh) So he would just be like, “It’s time to get up, Mom,” and just launch this butternut squash –

Emily: “Get squashed. Yeet.”

Sally: Into the bed. (laugh)

Emily: I can’t think of a worse way to wake up –

Sally: I know. I was like – (laugh)

Emily: Than getting hit by a squash. (laugh)

Sally: At, like, six in the morning.

Emily: Actually, that’s not true. It’s pretty bad when Tybalt rubs his wet face –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: On your face at six in the morning.

Sally: That’s true. But I was – we were at a, like, a – an art festival, and I was sitting on the lawn, like, openly weeping ‘cause it was the funniest story I’ve ever heard.

Emily: It’s so good. (laugh) Oh, toddlers.

Sally: I know. They’re so funny.

Emily: Alright. Have a good week, everyone.

Sally: Bye.

Emily: Bye.