



## Episode 263: I Love My Ugly Son

Release Date: October 30, 2023

Running Time: 43 Minutes

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

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

[theme song by Glynna MacKenzie plays]

EMILY: Okay. Let's do it.

SALLY: Hey! No construction noise this week!

EMILY: I know. I'm doing the transcript and it's quite bad.

SALLY: [laughing] I'm sorry, you guys.

EMILY: Yeah, very sorry. Now they've covered up the construction with, like, one of those, you know, football field sized drop sheets. And it's actually wiggling me out more than the construction noise, because every time I see it in my peripheral vision, it just looks like a column of smoke.

SALLY: Sure. I've had the same. Especially early in the morning I'm like, "Okay, the building next door is just on fire."

EMILY: You're like, "Oh, great. There's nothing. It's the void."

SALLY: Yeah. The void is staring back at me.

EMILY: Rippling in the wind. Yeah, so. I think it's just weather proofing, in case it rains.

SALLY: Yeah, I think so, too. For the longest time the other day I was looking at it and I was like, "Why would they do this *now*?"

EMILY: They're hiding from us [laughs].

SALLY: Yeah [laughs].

EMILY: It's because we moved in.

SALLY: Are they sick of us looking at them. I'm like, "It can't be because of the dust, because it's always super dusty."

EMILY: They're like this *Rear Window* wannabe bitch is – will not stop peering through the blinds at 8am [unscrewing a bottle]. Okay, we're gonna get through this even though I'm half asleep.

SALLY: I know. Emily had to work really hard today. Um.

EMILY: But we can do it.

SALLY: Can we?

EMILY: I don't know. This is Everybody Hates Rand [laughs], your friendly neighborhood *Wheel of Time* podcast.

SALLY: And I'm Sally Goodger.

EMILY: And four chapters today, baby.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: We're really – we're rushing through it. But, you know, four chapters and not tons to talk about, I'd say. Um, we start off with another Lan point of view, already the pattern is becoming clear in that Lan, having picked up a single follower, whose name is like –

SALLY: Bulen.

EMILY: Oh, I was gonna say Bueller [laughs].

SALLY: Buford.

EMILY: Buford [laughs].

SALLY: Lan's little minion Buford.

EMILY: Yeah, Lan has a little minion and he's forcing them to go on backroads so as to avoid acquiring more minions, because Lan is capital D, capital W Death Wish Personified.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: He's just such a little freak. Or a big freak, I guess. Tall man. But they, uh, as they're riding along through a town or something they pick up three more followers who refuse to be left behind.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And Lan is mad about it.

SALLY: Yeah, and they all have names and characteristics and it's like these are just cardboard cutouts.

EMILY: Yeah, I don't know anything about them.

SALLY: It's weird.

EMILY: It's like two are Malkieri and one's not and I'm like, "Okay."

SALLY: Cool.

EMILY: It's irrelevant. We then get an extremely, um, interesting [laughing] – Sally's trying not to roll her eyes...

SALLY: Very diplomatic choice of words.

EMILY: Too hard or the optic nerves will fry.

SALLY: Burst. Yeah.

EMILY: We then get a combination of Perrin and Galad points of view. The rest of the chapter is intercut between the two of them. What Brandon Sanderson is going for here is, um, you know, he's trying to render something that is frequently seen on television or in movies into literary form. Wherein we're seeing a very similar scene happening in two different places with two different characters, and we're just cutting between them. You know, this is like – the, the classic example is when, like, you have, um, a group of criminals are being interviewed by the cops and we, they'll, someone will answer a question that was addressed to a different person and therefore we get things pieced together. It's like that, but a little less smooth. Um, the – so, so that's what we're going for. This is meant to emphasize that Perrin and Galad are narrative foils, um, in similar positions in that they are leaders of groups of people that they have, hmm, somewhat tentative control over. Galad is more or less leading a pack of feral dogs.

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah, to put it mildly.

EMILY: Um, and Perrin is leading a, as we know, a very disparate, fractured group of people that's mostly made up of refugees. Um, they both are people who are relying on information from advisors and scouts. They both have friend...ships. I don't know. I don't know. It gets

looser the more I try and compare them, because of course Galad and Perrin are very different characters.

SALLY: Very different characters, narrative foils for exactly the reasons you say that they're, like, similar characters playing off of each other, but, like, they're also, obviously, diametrically opposed in these situations, so there's going to be combat between them.

EMILY: Yeah, the other intended effect of this scene is to, like, you know, bring it all to a point, which is the inevitable meeting between the two of them, which, because of the way that it's being framed, is almost certainly going to involve conflict of some kind, you know? We're not having Byar be like, "Yeah, Perrin's a great guy and you should totally trust him." Or even a measured, "Yeah, I've run into this guy before and things have been a little weird around him, but I don't know!"

SALLY: Yeah, or even Galad doing any type of, like, research or critical thinking from the information he's getting from notorious creep and violent freak Dain Bornhald and Jaret Byar.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Like, these guys roll in and they're just like so militant and extremist about Perrin being a Darkfriend and he's got these golden eyes and Galad is just like, "Yeah, that tracks."

EMILY: They're like [laughs] – Bornhald's like, "He killed my dad," which is not true. Not even vaguely true.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And that's just, you know... the Whitelcoaks have always been an exasperating group of people because we, the readers, know what's going on and the Whitecloaks are just these agents of meaningless conflict.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: [clears throat] We were talking the other day about how, you know, a good conflict, a good argument, narratively, one that's satisfying, I mean, is one where you can see both points of view.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Both characters, both groups' points of view. That almost never happens in *The Wheel of Time*. We're very much set up to stick with our main characters and they guys who the main characters are against.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: We're supposed to have, I believe, some sympathy for Galad, because Galad has been a good guy character. He's had that sort of framing.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: We're supposed to give him the benefit of the doubt, you know? He's not, like, Bornhald Senior, kidnapping random people off – oh wait. He is, you know?

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: It doesn't really hold water at this point. Galad's no longer a good guy, we're just being told he's a good guy.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: So, we've talked about the intentions of this...

SALLY: Structure.

EMILY: Structure. The effect is kind of laughable.

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah.

EMILY: It just – I just feel wildly condescended to.

SALLY: Yeah! Absolutely.

EMILY: It also just doesn't work like cine – books aren't movies.

SALLY: Books aren't movies.

EMILY: And trying too hard to make them into movies feels a little ridiculous. Like, there are other ways to get your point across if what you're trying to do is elevate tension, trying to elevate conflict, there are different ways to do that in literature that don't involve relying on techniques that come from visual media.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So, not, like, super impressed with this.

SALLY: No. Not at all. It's also just, like, really frustrating because it, what it is doing in the literary format is just, like, interrupting both Perrin and Galad mid-conversation repeatedly. So, every time you have to pick back up with one or the other of the characters, it takes you a minute to be like, "Are they responding to what Galad was talking about a second ago or is Perrin responding to something that Gaul just said to him." Like, it's really disorienting and hard –

harder to follow than it would have been if it would have just been Galad, Galad point of view, break, Perrin point of view. They are heading in the same direction.

EMILY: Yeah. We also, I would argue, the Galad point of view is totally necessary.

SALLY: Yeah, same. I was just about to say we don't need both of them.

EMILY: Yeah, I mean, like, we already know that Byar and Bornhald have Galad's ear. We can assume what they have told him without the frustration of actually listening to it and having Galad believe it, again, without any sort of critical thought. Um, so, yeah, it's – Galad's point of view is frustrating. Perrin's is frustrating, mostly because we know where it's going. Perrin and Gaul are talking, and it's a pretty, like, reasonable conversation. Gaul's like, "Yeah, we checked it out. It looks like Basil Gill and the others have been kidnaped blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. We could take them, you know, blah, blah, blah, blah." And Perrin's like, "Yeah, let's try and avoid conflict if we can. Duh, duh, duh, duh." You know, just a fairly normal conversation [laughs].

SALLY: Excuse me. Yeah.

EMILY: Although Perrin keeps being like, "Ugh, my past keeps catching up with me."

SALLY: Yeah, the other thing Bornhald and Byar and whoever keep telling Galad is that Perrin murdered those two Whitecloaks back in Book 1.

EMILY: Mm-hmm.

SALLY: And it's like yes. He did. Because they were attacking him.

EMILY: And I – yeah. I believe Perrin, they'll make us do the blow by blow later, but it's a sort of, um, it's, uh, uh, an interesting setup in that we are forcing a main character to own up to violence that they committed in, early in the series. When – not just early in the series, but generally fantasy series like this, characters, good guy characters, can pretty much kill indiscriminately without ever facing consequences.

SALLY: Yep.

EMILY: So, it's on one hand interesting to have to face any sort of consequences. But, on the other hand, this is clearly just, like, a narrative, uh, set piece that is less about Perrin facing consequences than about just sort of, like, torturing him? I don't know.

SALLY: Yeah. It feels like a big, like, structurally it feels like a big stalling point. Like, we are in Book 13. Like, let's go. Come on. We've gotta get moving and grooving to the Last Battle.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Even though we still have, like, thousand pages of actual book count before we get there. Like, for fuck's sake. Let's go.

EMILY: Perrin is also a character who I don't need to interact with the consequences of violence as a narrative theme anymore.

SALLY: No! [laughing] I'm so over it.

EMILY: [laughs] Yeah. Perrin is constantly thinking about it. He might not have sat, lain awake at night – we might not have zoomed in on him like, “Dang, those two Whitecloaks I killed because I was in a berserker mode for the first time. Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.” But it's like Rand, they are both very aware that they are responsible for many people's deaths.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: It's not necessarily something that we need to have them be like, “Let's go to trial about it.”

SALLY: Yeah. Like with so very many plots in *The Wheel of Time*, if this, like, whole trial setup, where it's like we've got a Hero, capital H, going towards a larger thing that they consider more important than their everyday actions, suddenly being interrupted by, like, the forces of justice to be like, “You have to stand account for this horrible thing that you did.” And then, like, the whole narrative is, like, a courtroom drama almost about, like, presenting this and what it means. I would be so on board with that. I would eat that shit up. I would love that. But that is a plot that has to – it doesn't belong here. Like, it has no place. We've already covered the themes. Structurally, it plays no point. It's ridiculous.

EMILY: We're being dropped into an episode of *Law and Order*. And I do use *Law and Order* deliberately because it's copaganda and the Whitecloaks are basically cops.

SALLY: The Whitecloaks *are* basically cops!

EMILY: The idea that the Whitecloaks – we haven't even gotten to the trial yet, but the idea that the Whitecloaks can enact justice on anyone is a little bit ridiculous.

SALLY: Yes, in my fantasy novel there would be some, like, some cool, sexy lawyer, like the lawyer in the NXIUM trial, that's bringing – that's a very niche –

EMILY: Moira. We've been watching –

SALLY: That's a very niche EHR HQ [laughs] insider bit.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: But if you've watched *The Vow* or *Seduced*, you know who we're talking about. If there was, like, some interesting figure of justice trying to, like, do something. Not just, like, the fucking cops. I would not be on board with them being like, “Oh, you have to deal with the cops.” I'm never on board for anyone having to talk to the cops.

EMILY: Yeah, and before you tell me that the Whitecloaks are like, “Well, it was people in the Whitecloaks who died.” Like – [sighs].

SALLY: If a member of my family got murdered, that does not mean that I get to be the judge, jury, and executioner.

EMILY: [laughing] Yeah! Exactly.

SALLY: [laughing] That’s not how it works.

EMILY: Um, you’re on trial now!

SALLY: Yeah, I’ve set up a courtroom in the middle of this forest. Here’s your lawyer. That’s ridiculous – that’s ridiculous [laughs].

EMILY: And the jury is made up of me.

SALLY: Yeah!

EMILY: You silly, silly geese.

SALLY: Yeah, and again to your point about the Whitecloaks acting like cops, we talked last week about how they exist – in many weeks – about how they are existing as this extrajudicial, extrajudicial form of justice. Like, they have no actual authority over Perrin.

EMILY: Yeah. So, anyway.

SALLY: Stupid.

EMILY: [laughs] Yeah. Um, in the middle of this set of four chapters we’ll get a Mat point of view, but we’ll come back to that so we can finish up the Perrin-Galad thing.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: After these intercut scenes we, um, next get Perrin walking around the camp with Grady and I think someone else – oh, Elyas. Um, they’re just walking around doing, Perrin’s doing his little inspection and they’re just continuing to talk about the Whitecloak threat on the horizon. Um, Grady’s like, “Yeah, I can travel more and Neald is working with the Wise Ones.” Uh we then – Grady notices some channeling and goes over and we see Neald with one of the Wise Ones and one of the Aes Sedai and they have successfully bonded and are – not bonded like Warders, uh, linked. They have successfully linked and now Neald can make big gateways again. So, that’s exciting. Neald also expresses a lot of joy at the linking process and he’s like, “It’s so cool to wield *saidar* and have – I feel complete blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.” And it’s just, like, oh it’s so nice to see characters that are, just have a very nice relationship to –

SALLY: A joie de vivre!



EMILY: [laughing] Who aren't just depressed Muppets walking around.

SALLY: I intercut your point there, but one it's nice to have Neald be like, "This is really exciting!" versus being like, "It's really scary and intimidating to deal with the other half of the Power," for whatever dumb gender dynamics they have going on.

EMILY: Yeah, I don't know if this is telling us that Neald is in touch with his feminine side. Neald is very gay coded.

SALLY: Yeah, Neald is very –

EMILY: [laughing] So, they're like, "Get it?"

SALLY: Get it?

EMILY: Get it?!

SALLY: Um.

EMILY: Brandon Sanderson fans will be like, "He's a gay character. [laughing] Brandon Sanderson – [cuts off laughing]."

SALLY: Brandon Sanderson's doing a really good job at representation. Neald has a curly mustache.

EMILY: Yaaaas.

SALLY: [laughs] Yaaas queen!

EMILY: And he says yaaas queen.

SALLY: [laughing] I do sort of love the headcanon that Neald's walking around using, like, only incredibly queer lingo and slang in, like, every meeting –

EMILY: And Grady's his translator [laughs].

SALLY: Yeah [laughs].

EMILY: It's like that sketch from forever ago. Obama's –

BOTH: Anger translator.

EMILY: Grady's just like, "This is Neald. He's – he talks like a drag queen." [laughs]

SALLY: Oh, it's so good. We then have the incredibly tragic sidebar where Grady pulls Perrin aside and is like, "Can I have an afternoon off now that I can make gateways again?"

EMILY: [laughing] Oh my god, yeah.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Now that I can literally teleport could I maybe go see my wife and child?

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And Perrin's like, "Mmm, it's really not a good time." And I'm like –

SALLY: Grady is so – he's like, "Literally can I have a single afternoon to go and then I will come back?" And Perrin's like, "Hmmm I don't know, bestie. What if we need you?" And he's like, "That's why Neald is here." And Perrin's like, "Hmmm."

EMILY: Perrin should go on trial for labor violations.

SALLY: Yeah, for being a fucking CEO.

EMILY: For being a manager. No you can't take the time off.

SALLY: No, you can't take the time off. You're needed here. This is your real family. Your job.

EMILY: Grady, Grady ask forgiveness not permission.

SALLY: Yeah, just fuck off.

EMILY: You should have just fucked off and have Neald be like, "Oh, yeah, Grady is with his wife and child, because, as a reminder we are human beings with lives."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Not just your little teleport tools.

SALLY: Not just your little teleport boys. Two things. One, Grady says that his son is really ugly [laughs].

EMILY: [laughing] Which is actually so iconic. Perrin's like, "I'm sure you have a lovely son." And Grady's like, "No, he looks like balls. But I love him!"

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: I love my tall wife and my ugly son [laughs].

SALLY: [laughing] I'm, like, crying reading it. I'm like, "What were they thinking?" Being like, "Grady says that his son is really ugly."

EMILY: We're just, like, giving, trying to inject some personality into Grady and I'm like, "I have enough personality for – Grady has more personality than Perrin does."

SALLY: It's just a weird little tidbit [laughs], also – okay, whatever. The other really tragic thing is like Perrin's like, "Well, you've never asked for time off before!" like a manger. And Grady's like, "Yeah, before I thought I was going to go crazy and kill everyone that I loved."

EMILY: But now.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: [laughs] But now, believe it or not, *saidin*'s cleansed. Whee!

SALLY: Whee!

EMILY: And Perrin, at least, isn't like every other character in this series who is like, "Prove it, bitch!" He's like, "Alright, I believe you. If you say so. If you and Neald agree, I believe you."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Which is great. He's like, "Yeah, that sounds like a Rand sort of thing to do."

SALLY: Fuck around with.

EMILY: That's great. But I'm also like yeah, that is a real tragedy that Grady is like, "Yeah, I've just been distancing myself from my wife and son so that I don't murder them. But now I think I'm good."

SALLY: Now I'm good! Now I want to go see my family.

EMILY: Now I want to have a family life again. And I'm like, "Okay. Good, Grady."

SALLY: Good! That's excellent, Grady. Work-life balance.

EMILY: Bring your boyfriend Neald.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: He and Neald just act so much...

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Like they are in a long term [laughs] –

SALLY: Committed relationship.

EMILY: Committed relationship.

SALLY: [laughs] This is my husband Grady and his boyfriend Neald and our very ugly son [laughs].

EMILY: And our ugly as fuck son!

SALLY: It's like how every time Olver comes on screen –

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: [laughing] The authors are like, “This is the ugliest child alive.”

EMILY: What is it with the authors being like – maybe because it's supposed to be, like, Gaidal Cain, are we supposed to be like –

SALLY: [laughing] I don't know.

EMILY: Every little boy who's ugly is Gaidal Cain. I'm like, “I don't care. Why in the world would that be relevant to me?”

SALLY: And I'd maybe get it if the first time Mat saw Olver he was like, “That's a weird looking kid. He's got to grow into those ears,” or whatever. But every time?

EMILY: Every single time.

SALLY: Like, “That kid's face is fucking busted. I've never seen an uglier [laughs] kid in my life.”

EMILY: I want you all to consider how whack it would be if, like, Birgitte ran into an ugly child and was like, “It's my husband.” Like, we would be like, “This isn't okay.”

SALLY: Remember how in *Twilight* the werewolves imprint on babies?

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: That's what I would think about [laughs]. That's what I would think about. [laughing] You named my daughter after the Loch Ness Monster?

EMILY: [yelling] The Loch Ness Monster?! [laughs]

SALLY: Okay, the energy of this episode is going off the rails.

EMILY: Hi, Tybalt. You have emerged. As soon as we start talking about vampire babies you're like –

SALLY: It me!

EMILY: Yeah, you're a vampire baby. Hey, Renesmee. No! Don't!

SALLY: Renesmee. God.

EMILY: Claws. Okay, so.

SALLY: Grady's time off is not approved.

EMILY: Grady's time off is not approved because Perrin's a bitch.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Then Perrin goes and [cat sound in the background].

SALLY: Hey, Tybalt. Are you stuck?

EMILY: No, he's just – I can't remember what Perrin does next.

SALLY: They get – a rider comes in from the Whitecloaks.

EMILY: Oh.

SALLY: Basically.

EMILY: Oh yeah. Bornhald himself, I think.

SALLY: Yeah. Dain Bornhald.

EMILY: Comes up and is like, "Murderer! You killed my papa!" And Perrin's like -

SALLY: Hey, Dain Bornhald.

EMILY: I didn't. Hello. Hi, bestie.

SALLY: No, I didn't! [laughs] Slay.

EMILY: They're like two people who were in a relationship and had very different breakups [laughs].

SALLY: Yeah. Perrin's like, "Your dad? I didn't know your dad."

EMILY: Perrin's like, "Okay, whatever. Hey, Dain, you whack, alcoholic little gremlin." And Dain Bornhald is like, "You monster." [laughs]. Anyway, he's like, "Come talk to the Lord Captain Commander." And Perrin's like, "Okay." They're like, "You can bring some Aes Sedai." And he should have.

SALLY: Yeah, for some reason he doesn't. He just brings Grady in disguise.

EMILY: Yeah, I think he's like, "I'm keeping the Aes Sedai back so they don't know we have Aes Sedai." He brings Grady and one of the Wise Ones, who, of course, doesn't look like a channeler the way the Aes Sedai do. And I guess it works because they're like, "Oh, he must not have Aes Sedai actually." Um, but he goes and meets with Galad and is like, "Hey, give us our people back and we'll be on our way." And Galad's like, "No."

SALLY: Naur.

EMILY: And Perrin's like, "Okay, then, what was the point of this conversation?" And Galad's like, "I just wanted to see if you have yellow eyes for real." And Perrin's like, "Wasn't, wasn't really hiding it."

SALLY: Yep, those are my eyeballs.

EMILY: Those are the eyeballs.

SALLY: They are the ones in my head.

EMILY: He's like, "Great. This has been a super productive conversation."

SALLY: Grady does threaten to kill Galad. He's like –

EMILY: Grady's like, "I could kill him." And Perrin's like, "No."

SALLY: No.

EMILY: And I'm like, "Come on. Let him."

SALLY: Why – why are you such a snowflake, Perrin?

EMILY: Yeah, why are you so annoying? You denied Grady's time off request, the least you could do is let him assassinate Galad.

SALLY: Yeah, assassinate the –

EMILY: As a treat.

SALLY: Yeah. He should get to assassinate a Whitecloak every time you deny him time off.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Until he works through all ten million of them or whatever.

EMILY: Maybe he earns time off by assassinating Whitecloaks.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Instead of hours worked it's Whitecloaks assassinated.

SALLY: Whitecloaks assassinated. It's not a bad business model.

EMILY: Yeah. Anyway, they're like, "Okay, bye." And that's it. And we're like okay so that whole thing, intercut conversation, hasn't led to any sort of resolution in this.

SALLY: Naur.

EMILY: They just met and we're like, "We don't like each other." And then were like "Bye."

SALLY: It's also weird to me that Perrin and Galad met at this point in the series. Like, I keep forgetting who has interacted with...each other.

EMILY: Yeah, Galad and Gawyn have been in this, like, weird sort of bubble. Like, they have managed to interact with everyone except Perrin, I guess, if you count all of our main characters. But, like, it's just weird. Yeah.

SALLY: Yeah. Just that these are two enormous characters and they just haven't crossed paths yet.

EMILY: Yeah, Dain Bornhald's like, "Have you heard of Perrin Goldeneyes?" And Galad's like, "Whomst?"

SALLY: Yeah. Naur.

EMILY: And I'm like, "What do you mean you haven't heard of him? He's one of the main characters in the book [laughs]. And you're a side character at best, Galad." [laughs]

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: [sighs] Get it through your head. Anyway, meanwhile in Caemlyn, Mat is doing his Brandon Sanderson version of Mat stuff. He's, like, out drinking or something. Gathering info. Um, he is in quote disguise unquote in that his clothes are slightly less fancy, and he has grown some scruff. He's like, "Everyone's after me, there's a fucking bounty on my head." As Verin showed him in the last chapter, someone's looking for him. Um, how spooky. I am with – he tells us that the Band of the Red Hand is camped outside of Caemlyn, like a few miles away. Mat has sent a letter to Elayne being like, "Hey, we need to meet up," because Mat is invested in getting

Aludra's cannons funded and Elayne seems like the right avenue for that. But she has not responded to him yet. So, he's sort of in this, like, stasis point. As he is, like, wandering around, gambling, doing his stuff, he overhears that somebody got murdered by having their throat ripped out and all the blood drained. And Mat's like, "DUN DUN DUN, [deep voice] the *gholam*."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: My old bestie is back. So, he goes and finds Thom where Thom is performing in a different tavern. Thom's like, "Yeah, I heard that, too." [laughs] I'm like, "You didn't run go find Mat right away?"

SALLY: [laughs] Also, Thom, you don't have to show off.

EMILY: He's like [in a sassy voice], "Yeah, I heard that already. God. Old news."

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: [laughs] I know everything. Then they walk back to the camp, um, they get there, and Mat is, like, walking to his tent when Teslyn comes up. I guess the Aes Sedai were, like, also in Caemlyn, scouting or something. Teslyn is like, "Hey, I just wanted to let you know that I'm planning on leaving soon, but I wanted to thank you for everything that you did." You know, she's very polite. She and Mat have a very good relationship. They shake hands, Mat's like, "Uh, you can have some horses, actually. I was a bitch to Joline because she was a bitch first, but you're not a bitch so you can have some horses."

SALLY: Have some horses.

EMILY: And she's like, "Okay, great." Then he walks into his tent and smells blood? Can you guys smell blood?

SALLY: Mm-hmm. If there's enough of it.

EMILY: I guess. I guess I've never encountered quote "enough of it" [laughs] unquote.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Well, anyway. Mat –

SALLY: It just smells like copper to me. Like, it smells like pennies.

EMILY: Wow.

SALLY: It also tastes like pennies. [whispers] To me. Can you taste blood? When you have it in your mouth? [laughing] Like if your mouth bleeds, not if –



EMILY: If I'm sucking it, you mean?

SALLY: [laughing] Yeah, if you're –

EMILY: If I'm having my dark –

SALLY: [laughing] Your vampire needs.

EMILY: Um, [laughs] yeah, I guess it tastes vaguely of copper, but I haven't really thought of it before and I don't smell it, but I would attribute that to the fact that I don't have a very good sense of smell." Um, anyway, Mat smells blood and is like duck and cover before the *gholam* can get him. Um, the *gholam* was lying in wait, but Mat makes an escape out of his tent. He grabs his spear and, like, wraps the foxhead medallion around it so he can get the *gholam* to run away. Um, the *gholam* and he are neck and neck, and Teslyn comes out and starts yeeting chairs at the *gholam*.

SALLY: Yeah. Iconic.

EMILY: Which finally drives him away. Um, Mat runs into the tent – oh, the *gholam* kills a couple of people on its way out. Um, Mat goes into the tent and finds – because he's worried about Olver because Olver usually sleeps in his tent. Luckily Olver was not there. He was with –

SALLY: Noal.

EMILY: Noal, playing their litter chutes and ladders game in a different tent. However, tragically, Lopin, one of Mat's serving boys, serving men, I guess [laughs]. They're in their middle age.

SALLY: They're, like, seventy.

EMILY: But he got murdered, which is really sad.

SALLY: Which is really sad. Needless, Brandon. What did Lopin ever do?

EMILY: Nothing. He was just a little guy.

SALLY: He was a little guy who was stitching up clothes and stitching up Mat.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: And you're gonna get rid of him?

EMILY: You're gonna get rid of him? Now? At this juncture? Um.

SALLY: Foolish.

EMILY: Yeah. Anyway, then they congregate afterward and come up with a gameplan wherein Mat's going to start sleeping in Caemlyn every night, like a different inn every night. So are Noal and Thom.

SALLY: And Olver.

EMILY: Olver, I think. Because they're, like, the main targets they think. Oh, because, like, in the conversation Mat had with the *gholam*, the *gholam* was like, "I'm gonna go after everyone. That fucking old guy. That [laughs] ugly ass little boy."

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: And your wife! [laughs]

SALLY: Yeah [laughs].

EMILY: And Mat was like [*Borat* voice], "My wife!"

SALLY: Not my wife and my ugly son [laughs].

EMILY: And Mat's like, "Oh my god, Tuon!" And I'm like, "Bestie, she is so far on the other side of the continent, like, don't stress."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Worry about Thom.

SALLY: Worry about Thom.

BOTH: And Noal.

SALLY: And your ugly son.

EMILY: Yeah, these are the valuable members of this group. Um, but they're like, "Yeah, we'll do evasive maneuvers." And meanwhile Mat's gonna write another letter to Elayne to try and get her to see him. This whole – they're only in Caemlyn, I mean, the – yeah, they're basically in Caemlyn because Verin told them to be, right? Because Mat is trying to get through the time limit on this letter. The deal is that he has to wait a certain amount of days before he can leave Caemlyn, *or* open the letter whenever and do what it says.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: And he does not want to open the letter, because he's worried it will ask him to do something, um, bad or humiliating in some way. Fair enough, Aes Sedai aren't nice to people, so I get it, I guess. Um, but this is delaying their departure for the Tower of Ghenjei, though Mat notes that would also want to be here to get the production of the cannons started.

SALLY: Yes.

EMILY: So, sort of killing two birds with one stone. Um, I don't know. He's annoying.

SALLY: Yeah, the only other thing that I really want to say about it is that there's this incredibly – this *new* incredibly annoying, like, Mat tick that Brandon has added in, where he's like, Mat's like continuing – I say continuing, but it's way more egregious than Mat has ever been before, where he's, like, "continuing," in quotes, to, like, notices how beautiful and sexy women are and how large their tits are and how much he would like kissing them. But he keeps undercutting it with, like, "I'm a married man. I don't notice that stuff anymore, so maybe I'll think about her for one of my friends." Which is also, like, gross.

EMILY: Uh-huh.

SALLY: So, it's really heinous. There was probably, like, thirty instances of it in these two chapters. Like, it's a lot.

EMILY: Yeah, it's egregious. It's, again, meant to be comedic because we're meant to think that Mat is funny for being so un-self-aware. Like, it's, like, [sighs] he's noticing women who are sexy and then being like, "Well, not for me, obviously. I'm just noticing so I can get her – "

SALLY: *Give* her to Thom.

EMILY: Give her. Give her to Thom.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Which A) gross and B) we're just supposed to be like, "Oh, that Mat. He's so..."

SALLY: What a rascal.

EMILY: Yeah, what a rascal. He just is lying to himself about blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And it's like there's nothing really funny about this. It's not – the idea of giving women to your friends isn't funny. The idea that Mat can't continue to find women attractive after he's married is ridiculous.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: The idea that that's something you can or should turn off once you're in a committed relationship.

SALLY: Yeah, or, like, at all. Like, you can't help what your brain notices.

EMILY: Yeah. And also just – yeah, the way that Mat notices and interacts with these women is much more egregious than it has been in the past. Like, we're not saying that Mat has never in

the past been like, “Oh, there’s a sexy lady.” We had that, like, long scene a while ago where Mat and Brigitte were, like, pointing out hot people to each other. Or hot people in Mat’s case and ugly ass dudes in Brigitte’s case.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: But, like, there’s always been an element of it being sort of charming. Mat hasn’t necessarily framed his attraction to various women in gross ways before. But, um, yeah, kind of the – we’ve transitioned from him having, like, a pretty healthy, you know, straight sexuality to him just, like, laden with, like, weird monogamous shame, having, like, a complex about it. And, yeah, he’s now talking about women as commodities that he can hand out to his friends. And yes, we know that he is not being literal, and it is meant to be a joke.

SALLY: But, like, still.

EMILY: It’s gross.

SALLY: It’s also just way more objectifying. Like, Mat has noticed in the past if a woman has nice tits, you know? And that’s fine. So have I.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: What are you gonna do?

SALLY: What are you gonna do? But it’s just, like, a lot more objectified and, like, gross...in the way that Brandon Sanderson writes it. Like, Brandon Sanderson, in my limited experience with him, is not an author who excels at writing human sexuality, which is fine. No one – not everyone has to be. But he’s really trying hard here to do something that he’s not excelling at.

EMILY: Yeah. It doesn’t come super naturally to him, which, again, is fine. Some people emphasize in their writing...

SALLY: Many other things.

EMILY: Yeah, besides just, like, sexuality, finding people attractive, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. It’s not something that you even really notice when it’s gone.

SALLY: Yeah, absolutely.

EMILY: Um, but that is obviously a big facet of Robert Jordan’s work, with characters constantly noticing when – oh my god. Remember when Perrin was like, “I suppose *some* women would find Galad handsome.”

SALLY: Not all women. Not Faile. Definitely not Faile.

EMILY: And I was like, “What are you talking about?”

SALLY: Someone who’s not Birgitte who would think he’s way too hot.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Not nearly ugly enough.

EMILY: Yeah, there’s one woman in the world who would not find Galad attractive, I guess. I mean, women with taste who would be like –

SALLY: That’s a cop.

EMILY: That’s a cop.

SALLY: That’s a member of the KKK.

EMILY: Wouldn’t find him attractive. But, like, for the love. We get it. Perrin’s straight. Anyway, yeah. Yeah, uh, so Brandon is, like, trying to adapt to the, to Robert Jordan’s writing style and conventions and he’s – it just doesn’t come naturally. He’s not very good at it. So, yeah, now being in Mat’s point of view feels sleazy.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Which it hasn’t in the past.

SALLY: That’s a good word for it.

EMILY: Um, I’m like, “This man needs to be on a sex offender list, and I don’t even believe in having a sex offender list.”

SALLY: It’s – he’s gross!

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: He is [laughs] grossing me out. Ugh, it’s also – the other – the final thing that I will say is that I know that the whole thing we’re playing with is, like, Mat’s curiosity – with the letter. Is, like, Mat’s curiosity and Mat’s, like, trickster persona and needing, his little magpie tendencies to investigate and have things. But I was thinking, how many times do I just put a letter on my desk that’s, like, a bill or something. And I’m like, “Oh, I need to look at that.” And I, like, forget about it for three weeks.

EMILY: Yeah, so you’d just completely forget.

SALLY: So [laughs], if Verin gave me this task, I would put the letter down and then –

EMILY: “Oh shit, where’s that thing?”

SALLY: Yeah, like a month would pass and I’d be like, “Oh my god! Right.”

EMILY: Am I allowed to leave yet?

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: The fuck –

SALLY: That would be me because I have – I am not...a very productive person.

EMILY: So, yeah. Just annoying, generally, the chapters we’ve read. Not great. The next section is going to be Elayne and, uh, then we’re going to get, I think Min’s point of view primarily. It might switch, but I think it’s mostly Min.

SALLY: That’s random.

EMILY: Well, it’s going to be, like, an outsider point of view for new and enlightened Rand returning to Tear.

SALLY: New and weirder Rand.

EMILY: So, yeah, we get to see Instagram influencer girlie, Rand [laughs] roll back up

SALLY: Hi baby!

EMILY: Hiya!

SALLY: That will be interesting.

EMILY: Like and subscribe! [laughs]

SALLY: Like and subscribe! For the low price of \$999, you can come to my wellness retreat in Sedona, Arizona [laughs].

EMILY: [laughs] What?

SALLY: [laughing] Apparently there are a lot of psychic wellness retreats held in Sedona, Arizona.

EMILY: Sedona – for \$999 you can come to my Saving the World from the Dark One, in Sedona, Arizona [laughs].

SALLY: I was just listening to my cult podcast – that I’m going to be referencing all season, sorry – about a lady who got scammed by this psychic. And she’s like – she’s really funny about it. She’s like, “I know. I know! [laughs] Everybody, I know.”

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: And she’s like, “I went to a retreat in Sedona.” And both the hosts are like, “Why is always Sedona?”

EMILY: *Sedona!* [laughs]

SALLY: [laughing] Why is it always Sedona, Arizona?

EMILY: What’s the *Wheel of Time* equivalent of Sedona, Arizona, I wonder.

SALLY: I don’t know. Somewhere in the No Man’s Land. Or, like, Saldaea.

EMILY: Fucking Hinderstap.

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah.

EMILY: That’s the only town name I know. Um, okay everyone, that’s it.

SALLY: That’s it. Shall we rate how we’re feeling.

EMILY: Yeah, let’s do it to it.

SALLY: [unzipping a bag] Beep, beep, beep. Sorry you can hear these markers clitter clattering around.

EMILY: I mean, it’s better than just the constant hammering from the jackhammer.

SALLY: [markers click together] Okay, as –

EMILY: Is there an annoyed option?

SALLY: There is not, but I could do, like, a light red, which is mad. So, we’ve got happy, sad, dead inside, mad, confused, or feeling like quitting the podcast. But I’ve got a whole bag of markers over here. We could add annoyed onto the list.

EMILY: No. How are you feeling?

SALLY: Ummm, I mostly feel dead inside this episode.

EMILY: Let’s do a yellow-red combo. Orange. Except they’re markers so they don’t...

SALLY: They don't really blend.

EMILY: Mix like that.

SALLY: What should we do? [coloring noises]

EMILY: Thanks everyone! [puts on an airy voice] Thanks for listening to –

SALLY: For coming to our wellness retreat in Sedona, Arizona.

EMILY: [still in the airy voice] Thank you for coming to our wellness retreat in Sedona, Arizona. I've been Emily Juchau and this has been Sally Goodger. And that's Ed. [laughing] Okay, thanks to Glynna MacKenzie for the theme song. Does my breathy influence voice inspire everyone?

SALLY: I really like it.

EMILY: Do you find it sexual?

SALLY: Mm.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: I'm really tired you guys. [zipping] Thank you, Glynna MacKenzie, for the theme song. Thanks to our Patrons on Patreon and our followers on social media. You all are the best. Um, do you have a sign off?

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah. I've already told you this, I'm sorry. My, uh, growing up there was a family across the street from us, the Russells, who we love. Friends of the – podcast celebrity, Cole Russell.

EMILY: Podcast – yeah.

SALLY: And their dad is just one of those, like, very dad guys. Like, he's just always keeping tools around that he feels like he's gonna use or, like, food that's well past expired, but he's convinced is still good and stuff like that.

EMILY: I think he's featured in this – in your sign offs before.

SALLY: Oh yeah. Probably.

EMILY: When he was watching some documentary.

SALLY: Oh, yeah! When he was watching PBS.



EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: So, this is my kind of strange, but lovely, very kind, charming uncle Mark. And a while ago we ended up with a saw that we, that Emily needed for, like, one project, but we never used again.

EMILY: It was, like, seven dollars at Home Depot.

SALLY: Yeah, please note the price [laughs]. And we gave it to Mark's daughter, Alecia, who – our friend.

EMILY: No, I had to give it to Cole.

SALLY: Oh, you gave it to Cole.

EMILY: Yeah, it was like a whole, a whole thing. I didn't want the saw anymore. We were moving and I'd packed everything except for the fucking saw.

SALLY: Right. Right. That's right. You gave it to Cole, his son, um, and – to give to Mark. And we're like, "See if your dad wants this." Well, I saw him today. He was on a ladder, cleaning out my mom's gutters. Just, like, randomly he'd walked over to this. And he – I was like walking away and he was like, "Hey!" And I was like, "Hey!" And he was like, "Tell Emily, that I *love* that saw that she gave me. It's the –" he said a specific saw name. I have no idea what it is. He's like, "It's the best type of that saw that I've ever had." And I was like, "That saw was probably like three dollars." And he's like, "It's such a good saw. I've used it like three times." And I was like, "Okay."

EMILY: I'm so happy that he loves it. And I'm so happy that it went to the right home, you know? I truly had no idea what to do with this saw, but then I saw Alecia and was like, "You know who would love this saw? Your dad." Mark.

SALLY: Mark. And he does. He was like, "It's such a good saw." And I was like, "Again, it was seven dollars."

EMILY: I was mostly doing it as a bit, giving it to him.

SALLY: No, he's using it, baby.

EMILY: I'm glad I maintain the favorite in-law status.

SALLY: That's true. Everyone's obsessed with Emily. How could you not be? Look at her.

EMILY: [hissing]

SALLY: Don't make that noise!

EMILY: [laughing]

SALLY: [laughs] You are a menace.

EMILY: [airy voice] Goodbye, everyone. We're going to Sedona, Arizona [laughs].

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: [hisses, laughs] Bye!