



Episode 264: This Is My Fight Song

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Running Time: 40 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.

Sally: Okay.

Emily: I want to preface this by saying, once again, sorry for any construction noises. We're, um, speedrunning this a little bit so that we have time for our cat caretaker –

Sally: Yes.

Emily: To come by for some instructions while we're both out of town next weekend. Um, I also want to say, sorry I sound like this. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, Emily's a little sick.

Emily: Um, I absolutely – speaking of speedrunning, usually my colds last a week, and I'm at three days –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And seem to be petering out; I'm at the end stages –

Sally: Nice.

Emily: Which is when I have a cough, so, um, I also sound like I'm on the verge of tears, vaguely, since I'm congested, so although Towers of Midnight is bad, it is not bad enough to bring me to tears.

Sally: You don't sound that bad, I will say. Like, it might sound worse in your head, but I think you sound, like, a little congested but not too bad.

Emily: Well, same goes for Letter to Hozier, which actually is a serious subject matter, but I promise I'm not on the verge of tears about it, so.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: If it sounds like that.

Sally: Her letter's very good, though.

Emily: Hey – yeah, if you are one of the rare crossover –

Sally: Listeners.

Emily: Listeners.

Sally: We don't really promote that podcast, so.

Emily: Yeah. I'd, like – it's out there, but, you know.

Sally: I'm kind of embarrassed to promote it for some reason.

Emily: Yeah. (laugh) It's too personal.

Sally: Like, I need – I need to get better about promoting my own work and being, like, owning it, these are my feelings, but –

Emily: Yeah, but then people know my feelings.

Sally: Yeah, that's the dilemma.

Emily: That's pretty rough.

Sally: The dilemma – the feelings that I wrote and recorded into a microphone and put on the internet. (laugh)

Emily: Like, it's bad enough that people I know know that I have a podcast.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Sadly, um, this weekend, I'm going to – (laugh) My sister put together this thing where we're all going to – all the female members of my extended family – don't ask me why it's only the female members, 'cause I don't want to get into it – um, but we're gathering to do some, uh, family history work with my nana, who is our last living grandparent on that side. You know, like, label some photos, get them scanned into a Drive, and do some, like, ask her to tell stories about her life. And today I realized, I have professional sound equipment –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And I have some skill, not good skill, but some practice –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Handling audio files, so I texted my sister and was like, "Hey, do you want me to bring my mic and everything?" She's like, "Yeah, that's great." I'm thrilled 'cause it gives me, like, a designated task to do rather than just kind of being like, "What do you want me to do?" all weekend.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Which is what my original plan was.

Sally: Sure.

Emily: Um, anyway, but now it's just occurred to me that my entire – all my cousins are gonna be like, "Why do you have a microphone?"

Sally: Um, confession time, sometimes at the old office you could see the microphone in my meetings, and people would ask about them, and I would say, "Emily has a podcast."

Emily: WOW.

Sally: So you can just be like –

Emily: Thrown under the fucking bus. (laugh)

Sally: You can just be like, "Sally –" Actually, no, what I would say was, "Emily does some audio stuff sometimes," be, like, really vague about it; I wouldn't say specifically that you had a podcast because then they might –

Emily: "Emily, that dunderhead, has a podcast." (laugh)

Sally: Then they might be like, "What's the podcast?" and then I would have to think of a fake podcast that they would look up on the internet and be like, "That's not real."

Emily: She just does Diet Coke ASMR for –

Sally: Yeah, I would just say, "She does audio stuff," so –

Emily: For forty minutes.

Sally: You can just be like, "Sally does some audio stuff."

Emily: Ugh, yeah. But then I'd have to be, like, explain who Sally is to my cousins who I'm not out to.

Sally: Oh, yeah. I'll be whoever.

Emily: Okay.

Sally: "Sally –" Or be like, uh, "I borrowed it from Devin."

Emily: Yeah, "I borrowed it from a male friend."

Sally: "A male friend."

Emily: "I have male friends."

Sally: "Men. Yes, I love men."

Emily: "Men flock to me," and my other – my other gay cousin will be like, "What the fuck?"

Sally: Sam will be like, “Men flock to this?”

Emily: Anyway, my sister – also regarding this weekend, my sister texted me, “Can you keep a secret?” and before I was like, “Couldn’t stop you if you tried –”

Sally: Yeah. Yeah.

Emily: “It I tried,” it was, like, within half a second, she said, “I hired a magician to perform at this –” (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) She hired a magician? Sarah, what the fuck are you doing?

Emily: And I was like, “You should’ve done exotic dancers, except Mom is alive,” so –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And that would’ve killed her. And she was like, “You don’t think Nana would’ve been upset?”

Sally: Just –

Emily: And I was like, “No, Nana’s no prude.” She –

Sally: Yeah, Nana would vibe with it, possibly. Um –

Emily: My Nana’s the only one of my grandparents who I’ve ever been able to watch a PG-13 movie with –

Sally: Wow.

Emily: And have her laugh at the raunchy jokes, so.

Sally: What an icon.

Emily: Yeah, Nana K. She’s the greatest.

Sally: I cannot – I can believe that Sarah hired a magician, knowing who she is as a person, but a magician?

Emily: What you have to understand is that whenever Sarah needs to host a party, this is her go-to route. Not necessarily a magician, but, like, an event. Sarah’s hosted multiple bachelorette parties where she’s brought in, like, an exotic animal handler. Um, you know, magicians, whatever. I don’t know where she gets it, but –

Tybalt: (loud meow)

Emily: Hey, Tybalt.

Sally: Um –

Tybalt: (meow)

Emily: Shut the fuck up.

Sally: It – maybe it’s something in the oldest sibling mindset, because my oldest brother also really likes to have, like, an event around which an event –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Is planned. Like, it can’t just be like, “We’re all getting together.” He’ll be like, “We’re all getting together, and we’re all going to write a nice comment about this person whose birthday it is, and we’re going to read them out loud –”

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: And you’re like, can’t we just have a party and, like, vibe?

Emily: Yeah, there needs to be some structure –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: To the evening –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: In order for it to – hey, Tybalt.

Sally: Yeah. Or he’s like, “There will definitely be a bounce house and a balloon animal person,” and you’re like, homie. These kids are five. Okay.

Emily: Yeah, we’re able to talk all about magicians and my illness because there’s not much to talk about in Towers of Midnight.

Sally: These chapters are weird.

Emily: Yeah, they’re very short. Um, when I do the chapter, like – when I – when I figure out the reading schedule, I usually go based on, like, chunks rather than actual page length –

Sally: Sure.

Emily: But this made me regret that.

Sally: Um, this is Everybody Hates Rand, your –

Emily: Oh, fuck, yeah, your friendly neighborhood Wheel of Time podcast. I’m Sickhead, Emily Juchau.

Sally: And I’m a magician. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) Shut up.

Sally: That’ll be really funny if you cut that part out.

Emily: Abracadabra.

Sally: I’m Sally Goodger.

Emily: I won't cut that part out unless we find forty minutes of stuff to talk about in this.

Sally: We could talk about how fucking weird Elayne is acting.

Emily: Elayne's – I felt like she was acting the same as she always is, which is that her three character traits are: rich, pregnant, and woman.

Sally: Yeah, I felt she was, like, a little more egregious in Brandon Sanderson's –

Emily: That could be, yeah.

Sally: Handling of her. I don't know, I found her – like, I always find Elayne really grating, but I found her, like, extra grating.

Emily: Well, yeah, they're certainly not giving her a lot to work with here in having her just, like, complain that people are asking for her to set hostages free.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And she's like, "No, absolutely not. They besieged Caemlyn," blah blah blah blah, and I'm like, it takes two to prosecute a war, my friend.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You also contributed to this, so.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, I don't know, man.

Sally: She's – she's also being – she's really mad because what the hostages are asking for was what she was already going to do –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And now she's like, "I can't do it 'cause it'll look like they won," and it's like, could you just do the decent thing?

Emily: Yeah, she's also, like, stomping about, stomping on things like a child throwing a tantrum, and then a second later, she's like, "Oh, I feel calm again, wow, these mood swings are crazy," and I just want to remind us all: Elayne is, maximum, three months pregnant.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: (laugh) She's like, "I feel so – I'm so big –" Like, the way she talks about herself is like she's in the third trimester –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Well into the third trimester.

Sally: Yeah, like she's – her due date is tomorrow.

Emily: Yeah, she's probably not even showing yet.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Probably her main, like – I have never been pregnant, but I have known people who have been pregnant; I know it varies person to person, but probably her main symptoms are that she feels ill.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That would be the normal symptoms –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Except Robert Jordan didn't want to write her constantly throwing up, so he's like, "Oh, women who can channel don't get that."

Sally: Coward.

Emily: I know.

Sally: Make Elayne puke in the middle of her war cabinets.

Emily: Yeah. Whatever. But, like, we're really overemphasizing the, like, pregnant woman bit here.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And again, it's supposed to be comedic relief that Elayne feels bloated and has mood swings and that it's – (laugh) like, you just can't help – I always end up thinking of that SNL – no, it's not even an SNL skit, it's a skit within 30 Rock, where they're like, if Hillary Clinton were president –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's like, "Oh, no! My period!"

Sally: "Let's nuke Russia!"

Emily: "Let's nuke Russia!"

Sally: Or whatever it is. Yeah.

Emily: Yeah, that's exactly how it feels.

Sally: Yes. Truly. She's just, like, throwing a tantrum because she had a – a hormonal mood swing –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And you're like, have – did you consult a woman?

Emily: No.

Sally: A single woman about what it's like to be pregnant?

Emily: I don't believe they did.

Sally: So, yeah, we're with, um, Elayne. She is in her rooms or whatever with Dyelin and Birgitte. They will eventually be joined with Halwin Norry, but they are going over this request from Ellorien, I believe?

Emily: Ellorien, who was not one of the rebelling nobles but was one of the, um, neutral ones, rather.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And as a reminder, Elayne has the most, like, egregious, um, offenders from this rebellion, um, those who she was able to catch, anyway, are – I don't think they're in the dungeons, but they're probably, like, locked up in rooms –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Somewhere within the palace.

Sally: Under house arrest.

Emily: Yeah, under palace arrest.

Sally: Palace arrest.

Emily: So it's not like they're suffering, you know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: They're doing fine. But Ellorien's like, "You should set them free," and Dyelin is also like, "You should set them free; you don't want to set a bad precedent for being, like, iron-fisted," you know?

Sally: Yeah, unreasonable.

Emily: Yeah, unreasonable, like, everyone knows that when noble people do it, they get away with shit.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, Birgitte at one point is like, "I think we should execute them," and they're like – (gasp)

Sally: (gasp)

Emily: "But they're rich."

Sally: Literally – let's – literally, that's basically what Elayne says. She's like, "We can't do that, they're noblemen," and Birgitte's like, "So the soldiers all suffer and they just get away with it?"



Emily: Yeah, all the soldiers who they commanded get to die or whatever, but they're fine?

Sally: And Elayne's like, "Yeah," and Birgitte's like, "I get it, I won't argue with you," basically, and it's like –

Emily: Birgitte's like, "I know, I've been around, I get how it goes, but somebody has to fucking call out –"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "How stupid this shitshow is. "

Sally: Yes. Thank you, Birgitte.

Emily: Um, so yeah. And Elayne's mad because now Ellorien suggested it so now Elayne doesn't look merciful when she does it; she just looks like she's following advice.

Sally: Like, which is also fine?

Emily: Or something? Yeah, which – yeah, okay.

Sally: I don't know if I'm, like, particularly disillusioned with world leaders, given current and constant events of the 21st century, but reading this and Elayne talking about, like, she has to do this in order to be respected, and she has to do this in the public eye, and she has to do that, she has to, like, basically do all this, like, public relations and marketing of herself as a leader rather than just, like, making decisions. I was just like, you are so annoying, and I never want to read another book about a politician or a leader of any sort ever again. Like, I'm sick of these – this, like, how do we do it in the most political and the most effective way? It's annoying.

Emily: Yeah, because it's, like, really not about the common people and what the common people think.

Sally: No.

Emily: The common people largely don't care as long as they are being fed and you're not committing human rights violations right in front of them.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But – so, like, all of this is just for the benefit of other rich people.

Sally: Yeah, that's –

Emily: Other rich noble people –

Sally: Exactly what it is.

Emily: All of whom are playing the exact same game, so who cares? Yeah, it's just – I – I'm quite disillusioned with the whole political machinations, partly just because, just, Robert Jordan just doesn't do it in any way that's interesting.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um.

Sally: Like, I think legitimately the only piece of media I've enjoyed that's about this at all in the last, like, decade, is Veep –

Emily: Mm.

Sally: Because it's supposed to be –

Emily: It's satirical.

Sally: Ridiculous?

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Like, you watch it and you're just like, okay. (laugh)

Emily: I think Game of Thrones made inroads on this –

Sally: Sure.

Emily: And I think that's largely because Game of Thrones is made up of a – unapologetically bad person cast.

Sally: Sure.

Emily: Much like Veep.

Sally: Sure, yes.

Emily: So it, like, gets to the point of ludicrousness –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's like, you can allow yourself to have fun watching them do evil things because you know they're evil people, as opposed to Elayne, who we are told over and over again is one of our heroes and a good person.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And then it's like, okay, but then why is she acting like such a raging bitch all the time?

Sally: Yeah. Sorry, I just – I have not watched the later seasons of Game of Thrones, but I've watched, like, video essays about them, and when you were talking about people doing ludicrous things, I flashed to that scene where Cersei, like, bombs, like, half the city –

Emily: Oh, yeah, and is sipping her wine.

Sally: And is, like – and, like, turns around dramatically or whatever, and you expect some sort of, like, girl boss song to play.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: (singing) “This is my fight song –”

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) I think that’s the one Lindsay Ellis uses all the time.

Sally: Ah. So, yeah, I agree with you, Game of Thrones does the same thing, where it’s like –

Emily: And, like, on the other hand, you can go in the opposite direction and have a cast be about good people trying to do good things, and the goodness of the characters matches up with their behaviors, like in the Goblin Emperor –

Sally: Yes.

Emily: By Katherine Addison.

Sally: Yes.

Emily: But here we’re getting a definite, um, mismatch between, like, behaviors and what the narrative is trying to force us to believe about characters.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, I don’t think Elayne is a good person; I think she’s a rich person.

Sally: Yeah, absolutely, she’s not a good person, and she’s not a good queen.

Emily: But the – because she keeps being like, “We’re marching to the Last Battle with Rand, and that’s the most important thing,” we’re supposed to be like, yeah, she’s a good guy.

Sally: Yeah. Literally in this chapter, Elayne decides to annex Cairhien. On – (laugh)

Emily: Yeah, she’s like, “My next move is going to be to take over Cairhien because it will help unite the country and there’s a steward waiting for me, and I have as good a claim as anyone,” blah blah blah blah blah, and Dyelin’s like, “It’s gonna look like Rand gave you the throne,” ‘cause he did –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Elayne’s like, “Well, it doesn’t matter ‘cause it’s Cairhien, I don’t care about them as – the way I do Andor.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And I’m like – I hope the Cairhienin set up yet another French revolution –

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: And guillotine you, because –

Sally: Guillotine you.

Emily: You are annoying. And that's, like, what she's gonna do. That's her plan.

Sally: That's her plan to prove that she's, like, a strong and capable leader.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Is to take over France.

Emily: (singing) "This is my fight song –"

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: And meanwhile, Halwin Norry comes up and is like, "Hey, I know you want me to be a spymaster, and I hate that, but I did do some spying, and this one Aes Sedai who's in the city who keeps annoying you 'cause she's sent from Elaida has been seen covertly going to visit with some of the nobles," and Elayne's like, "Oh, obviously she wanted you to see that so that she would – so – to make me feel threatened –"

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: "And to try to bring her in for advice, the way she wants." Um, and Halwin Norry's like, "Oops," and she's like, "No, no, if you hadn't noticed, that would've been embarrassing, because then they would've known we don't have a competent spymaster." (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. (laugh) Poor Halwin Norry.

Emily: Yeah. Norry's also like, "I have this weird letter for you. Um, I know you instructed that, like, mercenary bands have to keep a certain amount of distance from the city," blah blah blah blah blah, "and this is from one of the mercenary band's leaders." Hands her a letter from Mat that, again, the, like, comedy factor is meant to be cranked up in that Mat says some really ridiculous things; it's littered with misspellings and crossout things –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And dumb postscripts and is just overall characterizing Mat as a buffoon. Um, I think it's grating; I think it's particularly grating because we actually – Mat is one of the few characters who we've had a sample of writing from in the past.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Back when he was in Ebou Dar and when Robert Jordan was piloting his character. As often as we've joked about Mat being illiterate, like –

Sally: Sure.

Emily: There were no misspellings in that; it was a perfectly concise, to the point, vaguely rude but not –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Horrifically rude letter.

Sally: Not – like, yeah, he’s, like, referencing Elayne’s ass.

Emily: He’s like, “Get your pretty ass into gear,” blah blah blah blah, “Sorry I talked about your ass,” P.S.

Sally: “P.S. I’m married now,” and it’s like, Mat, no –

Emily: No one gives a shit.

Sally: No one cares.

Emily: You’re so annoying. So, like, it’s just – I know – I get Robert – I get Brandon Sanderson is trying to do something here, but it ain’t working because we have precedent.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And even if we didn’t have precedent, it would be annoying because it’s always annoying –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: When you have a character who behaves like this.

Sally: Yeah, behaves like a fifteen-year-old boy.

Emily: Anyway, the gist of Mat’s letter is, “Hey, it’s me, can you come – can – will you let me come to talk to you, I need to use your bellfounders,” and Elayne’s like, “Ah, great, Mat’s alive,” and I’m like, it’s so nice how you just have been able to not think about Mat being alive for the last three – six books?

Sally: Let’s see, you know, after you abandoned him in a city that was under siege by the Seanchan? And were just like, “Well, guess we’ll just have to see what happens”?

Emily: Yeah, like, Elayne, Nynaeve, and, um, Aviendha – I guess that was the other people – Elayne and Nynaeve and all of the others abandoned Mat and some of his friends to Seanchan occupation, and it’s just like, haven’t thought about it for the last six books. Like, it – they made it this big, like, ethical crisis in the moment –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: But afterwards have just been like, “Oh, I’m not gonna think about that,” or Nynaeve has been like, “Ooh, I feel really bad about that, but,” blah blah blah blah.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which, again, there’s, like, a weird precedent for in that when Egg was captured by the Seanchan, they made a big huge fucking deal about –

Sally: Going to get her.

Emily: Going after her. And I do understand that Egwene is a woman who can channel, as opposed to Mat, none of his people who were with him were channelers, so maybe less of a big

deal, but ultimately, like, you didn't know. Mat was in a very weird political position at the time, with Tylin.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Like, he very easily could have been –

Sally: Executed.

Emily: Executed or captured –

Sally: Tortured.

Emily: Or any other sort of –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, thing. And you guys just didn't care, 'cause again, you're assholes.

Sally: Yeah, because you're rich.

Emily: Why.

Sally: Yeah, because Elayne is a rich person who will only protect the interests of the elite.

Emily: Anyway, she's like, "This is fantastic; I wonder why Mat needs bellfounders," and Birgitte's like, "Eh, who knows," and they are – just go about their business, but now they'll set up a meeting with Mat and Thom. Um, the next couple chapters are from Min's point of view. Min's her usual extremely annoying girlfriend self.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: She's just like, "Rand –" She's, like, literally staring out the window in Rand's direction, just longing for him.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's like her brain shuts off as soon as he's no longer in the room.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And when he's in the room.

Sally: Yeah, her brain just shut off when they started fucking, I guess.

Emily: Yeah. Um, yeah, as we all know, that's what happens to women.

Sally: Yes.

Emily: You lose your virginity, then – and also your mind.

Sally: And also your mind, yeah.

Emily: Ahhh.

Sally: Uh, yeah, she's, like, dramatically looking off in Rand's direction and she's, like, smiling, 'cause she's like, "He's better now," or whatever.

Emily: "Oh, it's so great."

Sally: She's like, "I can feel light coming through the bond," and it's like, I get it, Rand is enlightened.

Emily: It's really just egregious, yeah.

Sally: I understand. And Nynaeve comes in and is, like, yelling at her because Nynaeve is a really pleasant person. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah, Nynaeve's like, "Where's Rand? Why aren't we going after him? Where the fuck – why won't you tell me where the fuck he is?" and Min's like, "Just give it a rest." (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: Min's like, "If he's not back in a few more days, then I'll lead you to him," as it were.

Sally: Yeah, and I guess Nynaeve has a good point of being like, "Do the Forsaken have Rand?"

Emily: Yeah, "Where the fuck –" Min's like, "He's not in any danger." Min keeps whispering. I – I tracked the phrase "Min said softly" multiple times in this chapter. Min's like, "He's fine. He's just so great. Everything's fine. Nynaeve, it's fine." And I'm like, dear God.

Sally: Could you speak at a normal volume?

Emily: Everyone, calm down. Um, then someone comes to get them because Alanna went missing, and everyone's, like, in Alanna's room like it's CSI, and there's – like, they're like, "There's no sign of – like, there's no sign of a gateway; there's no sign of her just leaving, what could've happened?" and I'm like, couldn't you do a gateway above the floor and then not have a – leave a sign?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I feel like there's lots of ways to make someone disappear.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Anyway, everyone's like, "This is a huge problem," and Nynaeve's like, "I don't get why it's a problem," and Cadsuane's like, "'Cause, you know, she's bonded to Rand, and they could torture her or something and make Rand do what they want 'cause he'll feel it," or something, blah blah blah blah blah.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Nynaeve's like, "Oh. Well, then, why the fuck weren't we guarding her?" (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, which is a good point.

Emily: And Cadsuane's like, "Valid. I hate to admit, but it's valid."

Sally: "Valid."

Emily: Um, and then she's, like, drinking tea, Cadsuane is – she, like, takes a sip of tea and is like, "What the fuck? It's not spoiled tea. The tea's good." And that's when Rand comes back, baby. Here he is.

Sally: Here he is.

Emily: Everyone runs out to the courtyard – there's literally like a – a crowd of people swarming Rand, including the Aiel. Min gets – he's, like, talking to some people. Min's like, "He's in weird clothes. He looks like Jesus."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He's wearing a robe, like Jesus.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Min runs up to him and is like, "Oh my God, I'm so glad you're back." He's like, "Yeah, everything's great now." Um, then the Aiel look at him, vaguely threateningly, and Rand's like, "Yeah, I messed up again. I owe you guys." And Rhuarc's like, "Fuck yeah you do. You suck."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Rand's like, "Yeah, I'll make it up, and first of all I won't go anywhere unless the Maidens are with me," and if I were them, I'd be like, "Your promises aren't worth shit."

Sally: Yeah, how many times have you said that now?

Emily: Yeah, like, six? Who cares? But for whatever reason, they're all just like, "Yeah, okay."

Sally: "Whatever."

Emily: And Rand's like, "I'll meet my toh," which I don't know if that means they get to beat him up later or what; I don't really care, though.

Sally: Also, this is so small, but it really bugs me – like, Rand is, like, doing his political stuff, and Min runs up and just, like, hugs him –

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: And just, like, won't let go of him.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Which feels just, like, unprofessional, Min. Like, time and place.

Emily: Yeah, if you're going to be the First Lady of ... Cairhien, Illian, Tear, Arad Doman, and every other fucking country – (laugh)

Sally: Uh, not Cairhien. Elayne is taking that over. (laugh)



Emily: Excuse me, yeah, Elayne will be the First Lady of Cairhien. (laugh) But, like, you can't – yeah, you're just like, it undermines him to – as a politician. And I'm not saying, like – like, yeah, it just isn't very – it isn't a very astute move.

Sally: Sure, and –

Emily: She can't separate public from private, which seems like a very baseline political thing to do.

Sally: Yeah, like –

Emily: It's fine if you, like, give him a quick hug.

Sally: Yeah, be like, "I'm so glad to see you," but to just be, like, hanging on him, it's just – it's just this, like – it really bugs me because Min is supposed to be a smart person, and again, it's like her brain just turns off when it comes to Rand, and she can't understand that, like, it's not actually appropriate for me to just be, like, hanging on my boyfriend like some sort of horny dog –

Emily: Yeah, it's –

Sally: While he's trying to, like, lead several countries.

Emily: It's very infantilizing of Min.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, it, again, makes her look brainless. It's just so – it's just the usual –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Misogyny in this text.

Sally: It's just really silly. But – (laugh) Rand is talking to a lot of people, and he's like, "Bring Cadsuane out; I won't execute her, I promise." (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) Um, Nynaeve's like, "Where the fuck have you been?" He's like, "Just being." (wheeze)

Sally: He is so weird. I know we keep hitting on this, but that's the weirdest answer.

Emily: He's like, "Existing," and everyone's like, "Okay."

Sally: Nynaeve should've punched Rand directly in the face.

Emily: Yeah, Nynaeve's like, "You're a dick," and he's like, "I know, Nynaeve. You're right, and I'm gonna help Lan, but first I've gotta do some other shit. But I'll for sure help him before he gets to Tarwin's Gap," and again, if I was Nynaeve, I'd be like –

Sally: Prove it.

Emily: "This is not worth anything."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He tells – he sends Narishma to go to the Borderlanders to accept their terms for a meeting. If I were the Borderlanders, I'd be like, "Uh, the price just jacked up. Now you –" I don't know, I don't even remember what their initial terms were, but I'd be like, "Pay us money."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "To see us."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, but he's like, "I'll meet with the Borderlanders." He's like, "Min, I really need you to work that girl math for me and tradwife it up in here, read some books and just really figure out what the fuck is up with Callandor."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And she's like, "Of course, Rand, I won't let you down." He's like, "I know you won't," and then they start fucking in the middle of the courtyard. (laugh)

Sally: Basically! It's like, you guys are in charge. Could you –

Emily: It's terrifying. (laugh)

Sally: Behave?

Emily: If I were the Tairens, I'd be like, "Oh, God."

Sally: They're like, "Darlin?"

Emily: Like, this is why we don't let 25-year-olds run countries. They're too horny.

Sally: They're too unstable. (laugh)

Emily: Dear God. Um, Cadsuane comes out and is like, "Hi." Rand's like, "Sorry for blowing up at you, but in fairness to me, you're an asshole."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Except he says it way more, like, you know –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Instagram-my than that.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, and he's like, "I need to do – I need you to do something for me. I just found out the White Tower has the king of Illian fully captive." And she's like, "Uh, I'm not gonna go get him from the White Tower," and he's like, "No, I don't want you to. I need you to find a different

person in such-and-such place.” The dots won’t be connected for quite a while in this book on that, but just so you know, he’s sending her to go look for the king of Arad Doman ‘cause he’s suspected, like – it has occurred to him that, “Oh, one ruler who I thought was dead isn’t dead, and he isn’t dead because I thought Sammael killed him but actually he didn’t, so maybe Graendal didn’t actually kill the king and maybe he’s just stashed away somewhere.”

Sally: Sure.

Emily: So that’s that. The king of Arad Doman will show up eventually.

Sally: That’s nice, I guess.

Emily: Not really. He’s in there for, like, two words and then is gone. Rand also mentions that he’s gonna – he’s getting ready to go back to Arad Doman with Min and whoever, so that’ll probably be our next thing with him. And finally, he lines up all of the Tairen nobility and goes down the line, like, staring at them, doing, like, Jedi mind tricks at them, and when he gets to the end, where it’s, like, Weiramon and Anaiyella, who I think are, like, the only two named Tairen nobility, so again, the percentage of Darkfriends –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Seems egregious.

Sally: Off the charts.

Emily: But he’s like, “So it’s you guys. Make sure – don’t – I’m not gonna be pushed around anymore, so tell all your friends,” and then just leaves. Like, why isn’t he like, “These guys are Darkfriends, put them in the dungeons.”

Sally: Yeah, he’s like, “You guys can go,” and Nynaeve, again astutely, is like, “Why would you let them go?” (laugh)

Emily: And he’s just like, “‘Cause I’m –”

Sally: “I’m sending a message.”

Emily: “I’m sending a message.”

Sally: Yeah, whispering.

Emily: And I’m like, it would also send a message if they were in a dungeon.

Sally: Yeah, or if you just killed them.

Emily: Yeah, or if you just – pfft. Dead.

Sally: Rand creates guns on the spot.

Emily: Rand created guns in his enlightenment. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, that’s what he learned on the top of the mountain. Guns.

Emily: Dynamite. And those are those two – the –

Sally: Finally –

Emily: Oh, sorry.

Sally: Tam is there.

Emily: Oh, right, Tam's there. And Rand runs up to him and gives him a big, crying hug.

Sally: Yeah, it's, like, weeping.

Emily: Which, again, public versus private –

Sally: Yeah, I was like –

Emily: Maybe not the time or place. You rule six countries.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Whatever.

Sally: And, like, this – all this talk – all this talking about, like, a public persona does not mean that, like, public figures are not allowed to be vulnerable.

Emily: For sure not. Like, it's great that Rand gets to reconcile with Tam. It's also great that Min and Rand are happy to see one another.

Sally: Sure.

Emily: But, like, you're just out in the middle of the streets. Everyone's looking at you.

Sally: Yeah, it's just like – it is – it's an unfortunate truth that, like, we want to see our public figures have a little bit of, like –

Emily: Dignity.

Sally: Dignity and decorum, and, like, they need to have it together. So, like –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Could you at least just, like, step inside before weeping on your father?

Emily: Yeah. If – I would be like, “Oh, this is awkward and weird.”

Sally: Yeah, I would be like, “So the Dragon Reborn has lost it.”

Emily: “And is a daddy's boy.”

Sally: “Fully.” Yeah.

Emily: “So now I'm going – now I, a Darkfriend, am going to target Tam for assassination.” You know?

Sally: But yeah, now Rand can see Darkfriends with his magic eyeballs.

Emily: With his Darkfriend vision.

Sally: (laugh) Darkfriend vision. He's got a little setting –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: He clicks it on.

Emily: (laugh) Infrared.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Darkfriend vision. Um –

Sally: What do you think the Darkfriend vision looks like? Are they just, like, smoking? They've got a little aura; a little bad, stinky aura?

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: They've got the stink lines they put on them in cartoons? (laugh)

Emily: Maybe they look like a zombie filter on Instagram.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Or something –

Sally: Amazing.

Emily: It's just a really funny Instagram filter. It's like the giant puppy dog eyes.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's like the uwu filter.

Sally: Yeah, uwu.

Emily: These are the Dark One's special boys and girls.

Sally: Yeah, special boys and girls. That's the oath to Dark One, actually. It puts a permanent invisible –

Emily: "I'm Daddy's special boy."

Sally: Daddy's special boy.

Emily: Um, and then he's like, "Tam, I want to introduce you to Min." And Tam's like, "Yeah, I met her."

Sally: "I met her. You've been gone for three days."

Emily: "It's – it's been three days." And Rand's like, "But you – I didn't get to introduce her. So this is Min. She's very – she's very stupid. So you have to treat her gently. Like a bird that's run into a window too many times." (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: "But God, she's a great lay." (laugh)

Sally: Basically. He says, "She's very important to me."

Emily: Yeah, you can tell Brandon Sanderson was really trying to, like, what's a normal thing for someone to say about their significant other to their parent that isn't, like, you know, super weird? And I'm like, you just have brought it around – by thinking about it too hard, you've brought it back around full circle, and it's super weird.

Sally: Yeah, like, it – couldn't you have just said, "This is Min."

Emily: "She's my girlfriend. One of three."

Sally: "She's one of my three girlfriends."

Emily: "Believe it or not."

Sally: "Believe it or not, one of three."

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: "And they're all bad."

Emily: So those are those chapters.

Sally: Those are those chapters.

Emily: Rand is acting so weird.

Sally: Yep. He's still on it, he's still on his bullshit.

Emily: And, like, it is kind of funny, how weird he's acting.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But I'm also just like, oh, boy, I'm already sick of this.

Sally: Yeah, it does get a little old. Like, is Rand gonna settle in at all and, like, stop saying weird shit? (laugh) "I don't sleep."

Emily: Yeah, Min sees him and is like, "Oh, he looks weird. Like, he suddenly has lines around his eyes, and he's too young for that," and I'm like, so he has Lews Therin's eye wrinkles?

Sally: I – he's got Lews Therin's eyeballs, that's why he can now see Darkfriends.

Emily: Oh, yeah, that's – they did an eyeball exchange.

Sally: They did an eyeball exchange like in Naruto.

Emily: They did – yeah, a battlefield eye transplant.

Sally: Which is totally a thing.

Emily: Which is achievable by eleven-year-olds, I'm assured by Naruto.

Sally: Yeah. (laugh) It's a very simple surgery.

Emily: It's a very simple surgery, and it's okay if one person – one of the people is being crushed under a boulder. Spoilers for Naruto, I guess.

Sally: Spoilers.

Emily: Um, yeah, there's a fuck-ton of eye transplants in Naruto.

Sally: Yeah, Naruto's got a lot of eyeball stuff going on. I wasn't really prepared for it.

Emily: Sasuke! I want your eyeballs!

Sally: Yeah. Oh, Rand says, "She's very special to me," not important, excuse me.

Emily: Oh, sorry, that's even weirder.

Sally: That's weirder, yeah.

Emily: Well, should we track our mood or something?

Sally: Oh, yeah, let's do it. (sing-song) Da da da da da da. I need a little theme song.

Emily: (vocalizes circus music, then transitions) "This is my fight song."

(both vocalizing)

Sally: Okay. Episode 264, our fifth episode of this season.

Emily: Wow.

Sally: Are we feeling happy?

Emily: No.

Sally: Sad?

Emily: Mm.

Sally: Dead inside?

Emily: Mostly.

Sally: Mad?

Emily: Mm.

Sally: Confused? Or like we want to quit the podcast?

Emily: Mm, mostly resigned –

Sally: ‘Kay.

Emily: Or mad or sad. I’m having a hard time parsing it.

Sally: The primary colors.

Emily: What about you?

Sally: Um, I feel mostly just, like, nothing.

Emily: Yeah, so yellow is primarily.

Sally: Okay, yellow, and we’ll do a little bit of red and blue.

Emily: Okay.

Sally: I do also feel sad because Elayne is here, and I don’t like her very much. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah, it’s hard to sort of just come to terms with the fact that Elayne is going to be in a chapter whenever it happens.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I go through the five stages of grief every time. Um, thanks for listening. Thanks to Glynn MacKenzie for our theme song; thanks to our patrons on Patreon and our followers on social media. Again, sorry for the construction noises. We hope and pray this will not go on for the rest of Towers of Midnight. They have to stop sometime, you know?

Sally: They have to stop when the snow starts, right? Um, so as you guys may know, we have a [bookshop.org](http://bookshop.org) affiliate page, which we encourage you to check out. Um, it’s [bookshop.org/shop/everybodyhatesrand](http://bookshop.org/shop/everybodyhatesrand), and the [bookshop.org](http://bookshop.org) affiliate program is really cool: any books that you buy through our storefront, is what I think it’s called, ten percent of that comes back to EHR, and then we turn around and donate that ten percent, uh, that we get to, um, mutual and direct aid requests, prioritizing Black and Indigenous people — Black and Indigenous queer people, excuse me. Uh, this time around, we just got a payout, we’re doing something a little bit different. Um, also as you may know, there have been a couple of strikes going on in Hollywood, um, and around the entertainment industry. Uh, the writers’ strike was perhaps the most famous one, but there’s also the SAG-AFTRA strike, um, the actors are doing, which I believe is still going. And part of that strike, they have asked, the unions have asked, um, like, influencers and podcasts to not talk about media that is part – that is managed by one of the companies they’re striking, which – which includes Amazon. Um, that’s a major reason why we’ve not been talking about the show, but, um, you’ll recall that we did talk about the trailer, and we’ve also posted some stuff on our Tumblr from the show, which just feels a little bit, uh, out of line – we just weren’t really thinking about it at the time, and so to try and, uh, make up for that and, uh, continue to show solidarity, we’ll be donating our most recent funds to the, uh, I might mess this up, but it’s the entertainment community fund, which is providing support to,



um, folks in the sort of entertainment industry who are part of the strike who need support with, like, bills and things like that. So.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: That's our attempt to sort of give it back a little bit for what feels to us like a little bit of a misstep there. Um, and then we'll be back at it with the mutual aid requests next time around.

Emily: Yup.

Sally: That all sound okay?

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Sorry, that was a little bit long, but.

Emily: No, it's fine.

Sally: 'Kay.

Emily: Do you have a sign-off?

Sally: Do I have a sign-off? Um, last weekend, we got together with Emily's family for dinner and a movie. Uh, Emily's family found out that I have not seen the M. Night Shyamalan movie "Signs," which, uh, was obviously a huge lack in my education.

Emily: My family loves "Signs." And "The Sixth Sense," and "The Village."

Sally: (laugh) Yeah.

Emily: And "World War Z" and a number of other movies, but mostly "Signs." (laugh)

Sally: Um, so they were like, "Sally, we have to show it to you," and I was like, yeah, I'm totally on board with seeing that. Um, so we got together for dinner, and we were watching the – we were starting the movie after dinner, and Emily's sister, Sarah, is so sweet; she was, like, curled up next to me; she's a very, like, physically affectionate person, so her head was, like, on my leg. Um, and Emily and, uh, I watch everything with subtitles. I think people who don't are, um –

Emily: Crazy.

Sally: Yeah. And there were no subtitles on, 'cause Emily's dad had the remote, and he didn't like them, and Sarah, that's Emily's sister, asked about subtitles – she's like, "We're not gonna have subtitles?" and Emily's dad was like, "No," and so Sarah whispers softly, into my leg, basically, "I guess I'll just have to guess at what they're saying." (laugh) Which was very funny. Obviously we had the audio on.

Emily: Yeah – (cough) Yeah, the audio was on, but Sarah's also pretty persnickety about what the volume is.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It has to be a multiple of five for some reason, so.

Sally: Oh, no, yeah, that – it bugs me too when it’s not a multiple of five. Also, Emily’s dad was cranking that TV.

Emily: I know, I give him the remote –

Sally: It was so funny.

Emily: ‘Cause otherwise he would just be wanting me to turn it up the entire time.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I was like, he’ll only be happy if he’s in control, so.

Sally: No – which was fine; it was just, like, extra funny for Sarah to be like, “I guess I’ll just not know,” and it’s like, the volume is on, like, 80.

Emily: Yeah, it’s not, like, hard to hear what they’re saying in “Signs,” but.

Sally: I know she was joking, but. It was pretty funny.

Emily: Alright, everyone.

Sally: “Excluding the possibility of a female Scandinavian –”

Emily: (laugh) “Of a female Scandinavian Olympian.” Goodbye, everyone.