



Episode 266: The Elayne/Farquaad Similarities

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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: So ... I've forgotten everything I've read and thought about in this – (laugh) in my life.

Sally: It's because there's, like, nothing really to talk about.

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

Sally: And I'm Sally Goodger.

Emily: And yeah, a long section with not a lot, um, of discourse to be had. Lots of, like, plot stuff, but not plot stuff I super care about.

Sally: Yeah, it's all just annoying. It's all just, like, our female characters can't ever be wrong or ever lose, which really bugs me.

Emily: Yeah, but simultaneously they're all the stupidest people in the entire world.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which is tough to reckon with.

Sally: Yeah, it's hard to reconcile, like, how is Elayne acting like an absolute buffoon and yet the narrative is telling us that she wins this negotiation.

Emily: Yeah, like, she's really good at it.

Sally: It's really exhausting.

Emily: Um, yeah, we've got Elayne, we've got Mat, we've got Faile, we've got Perrin, and I hope to God that that's it.

Sally: We have Ituralde as well.

Emily: We have Ituralde. Alright, I'll accept Ituralde's application to the narrative.

Sally: Yeah, he's at least doing something, unlike the rest of every character in the series.

Emily: Yeah, he's doing a – a big battle. He is single-handedly waging the Last Battle.

Sally: Yeah, seriously.

Emily: Um, which we're gonna get repeated – um, throughout this book, we're gonna get repeated, like, little – little segments of chapters where we go see what Ituralde is up to in the city of Mara – Maradon. Don't be fooled: it's not Marathon.

Sally: Maradon.

Emily: Maradon, like a megalodon.

Sally: Hmm. There's a big shark that lives there. It's Ituralde's friend.

Emily: That's nice to think about.

Sally: Yeah. "This is my big shark friend."

Emily: "This is my giant shark friend." Um, and it – it will be – it's, I think, one of the least offensive, certainly, and one of the more interesting, um, subplots of ... Towers of Midnight. I just had to check the spine of the book because I forgot which one we were talking about. (laugh) Um, just because we get to watch, um, the sort of – (laugh) you know, psychological disintegration of someone who is in a really tough battle situation for –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Uh, a long period of time without a lot of support. Um, and, you know, Brandon Sanderson's pretty good at writing –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Action sequences, battles.

Sally: Yeah, for sure.

Emily: Um, so it's sort of our light in the darkness, getting to return to Ituralde even if he doesn't quite read like the Ituralde of the past. You know? Got that Brandon flavor on him.

Sally: Yeah, not even close.

Emily: (laugh) Um, but, you know, he's still just a guy doing his fighting schtick.

Sally: (laugh) Just imagining, like, a bottle of seasoning that's like Brandon Sanderson, and you're just rolling them in batter and sprinkling that in.

Emily: I'm picturing it like the Nickelodeon slime, you know? It just gets dumped on random characters.

Sally: Just a vat.

Emily: ‘Cause some characters fly under the radar, you know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Gawyn? I can’t tell the difference –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Because he’s equally obnoxious in both.

Sally: Yeah. Brandon Sanderson showed up on my TikTok today.

Emily: He has a TikTok?

Sally: I know, I was shocked too.

Emily: No.

Sally: I was, like – especially, like, I’m sure my phone – I’m sure the little robots in my phone are picking up that I say his name several times a week.

Emily: They’re like, “These sluts are mad horny for Brandon Sanderson.”

Sally: And it’s just like, what?

Emily: Um, yeah, so Ituralde. He’s the Brando-flavor of Ituralde now. Like how all the various Mountain Dews have different –

Sally: (laugh) Code Red.

Emily: Yeah, Code Red.

Sally: Ituralde: Code Red.

Emily: Code Brando. Um, so he’s not quite the same, obviously, but he’s still just like a military guy who’s interacting with the military and with a military situation, and honestly? There aren’t any women for there to be anything problematic to be said.

Sally: For it to be really offensive. Yeah.

Emily: So.

Sally: Ituralde’s just running around, being like, “They’re flinging – they’ve got the trebuchets out,” “they” being the Trollocs –

Emily: Yeah, who –

Sally: Who are conducting guerilla warfare.

Emily: It’s, like, sort of mind-boggling to realize that there is actively a concerted invasion going on –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: In the Borderlands, you know? Like, that's not something that we have, um, come up against so far. It's been sort of, like, steadily implied throughout the series that it's something that will happen eventually, and of course we had the prologue at the beginning of this book where we had people reacting as if to some sort of invasion.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: But now we're just getting, like, oh, no, actively there is some sort of huge army coming up against some city in Saldaea. We get a map of Maradon but not really a clear idea of where Maradon is –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: In Saldaea.

Sally: Uh-huh.

Emily: Um, and, like, from a – from a wider lens, narrative standpoint, we're getting Ituralde going through this battle mostly just to be sort of our, like, check-in of, like, yeah, not only is the Last Battle imminent, which we've been telling you for the last several books, but it is actively, like, starting.

Sally: It's happening, yeah.

Emily: Yeah. And it's just one short little guy.

Sally: Just one little guy and his little army.

Emily: With his little beauty marks or whatever.

Sally: His cunty little beauty marks.

Emily: I know, serving cunt.

Sally: Running around the Borderlands.

Emily: Yeah, he's like –

Sally: Five-foot-one.

Emily: "Trebuchets?" and "They're flinging corpses at us, only some of the corpses aren't corpses," and I'm like, I feel like if a live person got flung in a trebuchet, they'd soon be a corpse, but what do I know?

Sally: (laugh) I know. They're, like, draghkars or whatever –

Emily: Yeah, which are winged.

Sally: Yeah, so I –

Emily: The implication being that if you have wings you can survive being flung in a trebuchet, but it's not like they were like –

Sally: It's not like they used their wings to fall down.

Emily: Some of them – some of them slowed their fall –

Sally: Yeah, it just –

Emily: By flinging out their wings – it doesn't make a lot of sense. But it's an attempt to be clever.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Wow.

Sally: The Trollocs. Sun Tzu.

Emily: Yeah, Sun Tzu up here. I love it when everyone is quoting Sun Tzu all over the place. "The battle doesn't – the plan doesn't last until the first arrow gets shot."

Sally: "The party don't start till I walk in." (laugh)

Emily: "Till I walk in." (sing-song) "Don't stop, make it pop –"

Sally: That's a quote from Sun Tzu.

Emily Um, yeah, it is, and that's what Ituralde's theme song is.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: He's like slaying draghkar and also slaying us.

Sally: Yeah, also just slaying.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Slay. Yas, slay.

Emily: Yas, queen. Okay, so that's Ituralde.

Sally: That's Ituralde. He's doing great.

Emily: At Maradon. Um, just sort of – 'cause we have, like, a chapter that's Elayne- and Mat-centric and then Perrin and Faile in the middle and Ituralde and then back to Mat and Elayne. So going to the Perrin and Faile, I guess. We have Perrin in, uh, Tel'aran'rhiod interacting with Hopper.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, and we're sort of getting our first – not first, but, like, Hopper's attempts at teaching slash mentoring Perrin. Um.

Sally: Yeah, and Hopper's like, "You're so stupid, why don't you get what I'm saying?" and he's sending, like, collage – like Pinterest boards of instructions, and Perrin's like –

Emily: He's like, "Here's your inspiration board." And Perrin's like, "I don't know how to tell you, pal, that I'm not a wolf."

Sally: Yeah. (laugh) And Hopper's like –

Emily: "I have but two legs and one stupid brain."

Sally: Yeah. Hopper's like, "Well, this is – you're –"

Emily: Hopper's like, "You're inadequate then."

Sally: Yeah, get it together.

Emily: "This is terrible. For the love. Why don't you just turn into a wolf? I'll feel better." And it starts out with Perrin in Tel'aran'rhiod, and he's, like, doing this thing that we've seen Egg do many times, which is, like, scout the enemy's camp via Tel'aran'rhiod.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And as he's doing this, Perrin's like, "Dang, I didn't even think of doing this when Faile was kidnapped in Malden," and it's really funny for me to wonder about whether that's because Perrin didn't think about it or because Robert Jordan didn't think about it. (laugh)

Sally: Robert Jordan didn't think about it.

Emily: And Brandon is like, "Ummm. So I better address that."

Sally: "Umm." Yeah, kind of an oversight, RJ.

Emily: Sometimes Brandon Sanderson taking over the series reminds me of all of the live-action Disney movies that are coming out that are just, like, designed to address plot points that only –

Sally: Sure.

Emily: Nerds on the internet cared about.

Sally: Sure.

Emily: Like, you know, isn't it Stockholm Syndrome in Beauty and the Beast? We better have her be a feminist.

Sally: We better have her be a girlboss.

Emily: A girlboss.

Sally: Who can read.

Emily: Who's inventing literacy or something.

Sally: Yeah, she is inventing – she's the only person on the planet who can read currently.

Emily: I don't know.

Sally: And she's teaching the populace.

Emily: The female populace.

Sally: Yeah, sorry.

Emily: Little girls. Not men. Yeah, God forbid. So anyway, that's how that makes me feel sometimes.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, but Perrin is approached by Hopper, who's like, "Follow me," and does his little teleporting thing, and Perrin's like –

Sally: "Girl, where'd you go?"

Emily: "Girl, what? I don't know how to follow someone who's teleporting," and Hopper's like, "Ugh, fine, just come with me to Emond's Field." Perrin goes there and Hopper tries to communicate to him, like, "When you come to Tel'aran'rhiod, you are, like, too much here and so you need to anchor yourself in the real world, and for you, that's, like, your home." And Perrin's like, "Eh, well, I don't really have a connection to Emond's Field anymore," which is fucking hilarious of him to say.

Sally: Yeah, where his whole family got murdered?

Emily: Yeah, his whole family – he's like, "Um, forget about my family – my unnamed family –"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Members' graves. My whole world is Faile now."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Hopper's like, "Yeah, whatever works for you. I don't give a fuck. If you have to think about Faile, then do it." Um, and he's like, "But you also gotta be fuckin', like, quick on your feet and make sure that you are anchored in Tel'aran'rhiod simultaneously so no one can shunt you out of it."

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: So he's doing this little, like, you know, Mister Miyagi training sequence with Perrin of trying to get him to prepare himself for psychological attacks –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: In Tel'aran'rhiod. Um, and, like, I don't find any of that particularly offensive. I feel like –

Sally: No.

Emily: The whole training sequence in Tel'aran'rhiod is something that I, at least, find interesting to see how Perrin and Egwene have had very different, um, approaches to learning Tel'aran'rhiod.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: You know? Um, I think this would've worked a lot better if it had come much earlier in the series.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, if Perrin hadn't put this off for so long. I do get the sense that, again, Brandon Sanderson is like, "Here's something that would have been fucking cool –"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Six books ago. So might as well slide it in under the wire while we're just dithering about with Perrin and the Whitecloaks."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, but, like, it is interesting to see the world always through Hopper's perspective. I just – he's the best character.

Sally: That's true.

Emily: That's all – this weird ghost wolf who's like, "Yeah, I'm mentoring this young idiot over here for reasons unbeknownst to anyone else. I had a three-minute connection with him and now he's my son, I guess."

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: And I'm like –

Sally: That's how it works in the wolf world.

Emily: Yeah. And I'm like, okay, Hopper, I would do anything you said. I –

Sally: Correct.

Emily: Like, I wanna be trained by Hopper in the wolf world –

Sally: Right?

Emily: Rather than stumbling about, I guess being trained by the Wise Ones. That was Egg's experience.

Sally: Yeah, much less pleasant than running around with wolves, I think.

Emily: Yeah, getting to hunt deer and whatnot.

Sally: Yeah, you're –



Emily: Do your thing.

Sally: You're so spot-on, though. Like, I think it would've been – I don't know if they would need to be, like, exactly simultaneously, like this arc and Egg's arc, but much closer. 'Cause by now I've basically, like, forgotten how Egg did it other than, like, it's a little bit more rigid, and Hopper's a little bit more liminal because he's a wolf.

Emily: Yeah. And, like, Brandon Sanderson will, luckily, throughout this book, sort of try and combine those parallel arcs of Perrin and Egwene and, like, show us how they have different learnings and different strengths.

Sally: Good.

Emily: Um, unfortunately I do think he sort of, like, ends up coming out strongly in Perrin's favor.

Sally: Mm.

Emily: Being like, "Oh, well, of course Perrin's superior because he's a man." (laugh)

Sally: He's a man.

Emily: You know, that's not, I'm sure, his intention, but that's what, in the man versus woman books, it sort of ends up feeling like.

Sally: Sure, absolutely.

Emily: Um, but at least that will be addressed and we'll get to see them simultaneously doing fun things in Tel'aran'rhiod.

Sally: Cool. Sweet.

Emily: Um, at the end of this little section, Perrin and Hopper encounter some sort of, like, force field wall, and they're like, "What the fuck is this?" And Hopper's like, "Mm. Don't like it."

Sally: "Hmm."

Emily: "Let's go somewhere else." And I think it, like, disappears –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Perrin's like, "Okay. That was weird."

Sally: (laugh) "Moon's haunted."

Emily: "Moon's haunted." (makes a sound imitating a gun being cocked, laughs)

Sally: That's sort of Hopper's vibe.

Emily: And then they just leave, yeah. And Hopper's like, "Moon's haunted. We better go somewhere else, then."

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: Um, we then switch over to Faile, who goes to address the Berelain situation. I shan't draw out the agony. She just goes into Berelain's tent and is like, "Listen, we can't keep doing this. You're an idiot; I hate your guts. You're not gonna ever fuckin' end up with Perrin. Clearly you expected me to die in Malden, but here I am, bitch, so."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "What are we gonna do about it now?" And Berelain's like, "Mm-mm," boobily, you know, the way she does.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) Berelain's like, "I dunno, I'm just a slut with a god complex, I don't know what Robert Jordan's doing with me here," and Faile's like, "Okay, well, I'm not smart enough to think of anything because I'm but a woman."

Sally: Sure.

Emily: "So I'm going to challenge you to single combat." And in her head she's like, "Please, God, don't let Berelain actually take me up on this single combat."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which at least is a refreshing amount of character growth from Faile, who undoubtedly would have challenged Berelain sincerely to single combat back in book four or five.

Sally: Sure.

Emily: Um, but she's like, "I just want to put Berelain in a situation where she's desperate enough to agree to an alternative —"

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: "And think of an alternative." And Berelain's big plan is, "Let's pretend to be friends, and everyone will be like, 'Oh, well, surely Faile wouldn't befriend someone who'd actually slept with her husband,' so. And then it'll all go away, and also I'll, like, put out a — an official statement being like, 'No, I didn't fuck Perrin.'"

Sally: "I did not have sexual relations with that woman." (laugh)

Emily: "I did not have sexual relations with that wolfman." (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: "I did want to, though."

Sally: I did think about it, and I did try."

Emily: "I did think about it," yeah. And it's just, like, I don't know, it's like, yeah, this is growth for Faile, I guess, and I'm happy for her, I guess, but this whole plot has been so agonizing.

Sally: Yeah, like, Faile keeps being like, “It’s been time to address the Berelain problem, it’s been time to address the Berelain problem,” and, like, maybe I’m just not, like, immersed fully enough into the culture of the Two Rivers, which is like a very purity-based culture where infidelity is such a big deal, but I just keep being like, what Berelain problem? Like, I’m sorry there are rumors about you, but does this really affect anything? Like, Faile references how it makes Perrin look like a bad leader, and Berelain correctly is like, “Lots of leaders have dealt with rumors of infidelity,” like, “It’s nothing that he can’t overcome,” and Faile’s like, “But I can’t figure out how to do it,” you know?

Emily: Yeah, like, Faile’s like, “Well, but you’re – it’s different, ‘cause you come from a slut country, and I come from a country where people get married and never cheat on their partners.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Because that’s something that has happened anywhere.

Sally: Yeah, exactly.

Emily: You know? And also, it’s just like, people keep being like, “This is a huge problem in terms of Perrin’s reputation and his leadership,” and we have not actually seen any –

Sally: Yeah, exactly.

Emily: Physical consequences of that except that Perrin is uncomfortable –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: With people?

Sally: Perrin keeps being like, “They keep, like, looking at me funny,” and it’s like, okay, is that real, or is that, like, some perceived story that you’ve made up?

Emily: Yeah, this whole thing just sort of feels like a problem that was created so that Faile has something to do and manifest character growth in. In reality, it would be much more satisfying if Perrin could just be like, “You know what? I don’t give a fuck.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “I’m confident enough in me and my relationship with my wife and, very importantly, she believes me that I didn’t cheat on her.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, what – what else do we need? That’s the important thing.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And, like, if I were a leader and was just like, “Hey, Perrin and Faile seem to have a completely normal relationship after all that,” I’d be like, yeah, clearly, even if that is something I’m concerned about, I care about that more than, you know, whatever Berelain’s doing.

Sally: Yeah, like, I – I think the people in Perrin's camp care more about having enough food to eat than whether or not their weird, reluctant leader had an affair.

Emily: Yeah. It's just, like, making something out of nothing.

Sally: Yeah, so it just blows up into this whole scene where Faile's like, "I challenge you to a single-combat knife fight," and Berelain is like, "Hey, actually? What the fuck is wrong with you?"

Emily: Berelain's like –

Sally: And she's – Berelain is correct. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah. And Faile's like, "I just have to make her think that something the fuck is wrong with me –"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "So that she'll solve this problem," and I'm like, what? The – the, like, gymnastics that we're going through just to correct a problem that isn't a problem.

Sally: Yeah. Like, part of it is funny, thinking of Faile playing on her own reputation of being sort of feral. (laugh) You know?

Emily: Yeah. Yeah.

Sally: And her being like, "Berelain will believe that I will get into this knife fight," and the other part of me is like, it would be really funny to watch Faile and Berelain have a knife fight.

Emily: Actually have a knife fight, yeah, it would be extremely funny.

Sally: Like, does Berelain even know how to use a knife?

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Hard to say.

Emily: I don't – I just, um, it's also silly because, like, okay, the – how I see this problem actually manifesting the way that we're complaining it's not is the Two Rivers guys leaving.

Sally: Sure.

Emily: Since they're the main people at stake here, you know? Um, and Perrin has made it abundantly clear that he wants them to leave.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So.

Sally: And he doesn't want to be in charge of them, so.

Emily: So.

Sally: Why do you care if there are consequences? They align with what you want.

Emily: This is just something that is nothing.

Sally: (whisper) Nothing.

Emily: This is just wasted pages, wasted words.

Sally: (whisper) Nothing.

Emily: Speaking of wasted pages, Mat and Elayne.

Sally: Mat. Matrim.

Emily: Um, we catch up with Mat as he sees off the Aes Sedai, um, and a surprising amount of people go with the Aes Sedai to Tar Valon. Um, Juilin and Thera, Amathera – you know, his sad girlfriend – they're also leaving. Uh, so are Egeanin and Bayle Domon. I think that's it from the original caravan.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So, more or less, Mat is left with, of the people he left Ebou Dar with, obviously he's got his army, but he's still got Thom, Noal, Olver, and Setalle Anan is also staying behind. Um. Oh, and also the sul'dam are leaving.

Sally: Oh, yeah.

Emily: Hey, the strike is over, so we're allowed to talk about the Wheel of Time show –

Sally: Oh, yeah, that's right.

Emily: Now, and I just wanna say, they handled it way better in the show.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Egg getting to murder – (laugh)

Sally: Her abuser? Amazing.

Emily: That was sick.

Sally: That was fucking sweet and, um – oh, what is the actress's name? Madeleine Madden? Is that her name?

Emily: Madeleine Madden, yeah.

Sally: Yeah. Um, uh, Madeleine Madden, who did – who played Egg – Madeleine? Madeleine? I don't know. Um. She did such a good job with that whole arc.

Emily: Oh, yeah.

Sally: I mean, she's an incredible actress, but, like, that whole arc in particular with Egg being, um –

Emily: Psychologically and physically abused.

Sally: Yeah. She just, like – the acting was off the charts there.

Emily: Yeah, it was –

Sally: She did an incredible job.

Emily: It was riveting in an unpleasant way –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which I think was supposed to be the point and, uh, made me think a lot about how I think in the initial – our initial reading of book two, we were kind of praiseworthy of the time skip –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And how it didn't actually go into, like, the sort of, um, intimate little violences –

Sally: Sure.

Emily: That were being committed against Egg's person, and perhaps I still stand by that, but I do think there is also some merit in being like, "Here's exactly how horrible the Seanchan are," from a main character's point of view, and hopefully the show will not then go out of its way to redeem the Seanchan, but we won't know that for probably many years.

Sally: Yeah, I still – if that's what we ended up saying, I still stand by it in, like, a book format; I think that is really difficult and, candidly, I don't think Robert Jordan would have handled it very well.

Emily: Yeah, he certainly does not have the writing ability –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Probably, to get across –

Sally: To just, like, to get across that sort of, like, nuances and emotion in the way that they're breaking down her psyche that –

Emily: But Madeleine Madden sure did.

Sally: Yeah, exactly. It fell with the talent that it needed.

Emily: Yeah, you're right.

Sally: Um, we're – and it just, I think, works a lot better in a visual format, where you can just, like –

Emily: And it was so fucking sick when she got to kill Renna.

Sally: I know, when she was just like –

Emily: I was like, “Yes, bitch.”

Sally: “Fuck you, Renna.” I was like, “Yeah, slay.”

Emily: “Get ‘er.”

Sally: “That’s my Amyrlin.”

Emily: “Get ‘er. Rrgh. That’s my Amyrlin Seat.”

Sally: Yeah, so I hope Egg, throughout the series, throughout the show, retains a little bit more of that, you know, grit.

Emily: Yeah. Anyway, so the – the sul’dam are going to Tar Valon.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And they’re like – they have a weird interaction with Mat where Mat’s like, “Yeah, go learn and then maybe we can figure out how to keep the Empire from falling apart together,” and they’re like, “Hey, slay, that’s a way to think of it that we haven’t thought of before. Like, we have this weird guy on our side who’s now technically the emperor or whatever the fuck –”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Consort. Um, so, “Maybe we can actually do something good for the country that we still love despite the horrors it has committed against people who are like us.” And I’m like, this doesn’t –

Sally: Wait a second.

Emily: Wait a second.

Sally: Hmm.

Emily: And also, Mat, why do you want to keep the empire – empire intact? It’s so stupid.

Sally: Yeah, you’re so horny for your mean wife.

Emily: Anyway.

Sally: You should – you of all people should not give a fuck about this empire.

Emily: We’ve wasted enough fucking air time on the Seanchan’s redemption, but.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Mat sends them off. He gives Juilin a prank – not Juilin. (laugh) That would be hilarious if he gave Juilin –

Sally: It would be funnier if it was Juilin, I think.

Emily: Prank cream puffs or whatever –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That turn his mouth blue. That's what he gives to Joline and it's supposed to be this big comedic moment. Um –

Sally: And it's not.

Emily: And it's not. It's really funny.

Sally: Just in case you're missing that tone.

Emily: (laugh) Yeah, sorry, it's just like, "Okay." Um. He goes and sees Setalle Anan. Basically to be like, "Hey, can you keep an eye on Olver? I'm gonna move him into the city, and the gholam's all after us, blah blah blah blah," and she's like, "Yeah, for sure." The whole, like, little sequence – little scenelet is just laden with the classic misogyny of Mat being like, "Women, am I right?"

Sally: "Am I right?"

Emily: Sitcom audience laughter.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But, like, as with every other Mat and Setalle Anan scene, it is – there is a sweetness to it. Like, it's nice at the end that Mat is like, "So you're not going to Tar Valon?" and she's kind of like, "Yeah ... trauma, you know?" and he's like, "Yeah, I'm sorry about whatever happened," and she's like, "Thanks, pal." And then they part ways, you know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, that's nice. I wish we had more of it, and I wish the sitcom laugh-track wasn't happening in the background. Elayne, meanwhile, meets with the leaders of the Kin, Alise – or Alice; I never remember what we settled on – and Sumeko. Perhaps we didn't settle on one? 'Cause she was mostly in the Path of Daggers and we didn't read that. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, let's go with Alice.

Emily: Um, I mean, first she's, like, up in this garden where she met Rand, and yet again Birgitte's like, "Sure would be nice if you weren't making yourself a very visible target for any assassin," and Elayne's like, "Nothing can happen to me because I'm an idiot."

Sally: "Because of my babies."

Emily: "Because of my plot armor." And Birgitte's like, "Plot armor isn't real." (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, Birgitte's like, "You can still have healthy babies if you lose an arm –"

Emily: "Are in a coma."

Sally: "Are in a coma, become very critically ill." Like –



Emily: And Egg's just like, "I don't – I will ignore that sign because I can't read," you know? Like – so stupid.

Sally: Yeah, literally. "This sign doesn't apply to me because I can't read."

Emily: We're not even, like, given any attempt at Elayne rationalizing this, because the authors know there is no rationalizing this. Any reasonable person would be like, "You make good points."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "And I will try and be more cautious, especially given that a couple of books ago, I got kidnapped and blah blah blah blah." But for some – but, like, we're just so committed to have Elayne being this buffoon of a person.

Sally: Yeah, I also don't understand why it, like, matters either to the plot or to her that she's, like, allegedly not in danger. Like, okay, so? Like, I really just don't understand this plot. Like, it just gives her an excuse to do all these dumb things, which is exactly what you're driving at. It's just like they want her to be this buffoon of a character. But if someone gave me this weird little prophecy, I would be like, great, still no reason to go rock-climbing without a harness, you know? Like, that's just ridiculous.

Emily: Yeah, it would be much more, like, gratifying if we had Elayne being like, "Yes, these are reasonable suggestions; I am still going to take reasonable amounts of risks, though." You know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Because – not because I think that danger doesn't apply to me anymore but because some risks you still have to take."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Things be dangerous, still.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, it would be perfectly reasonable for her to be to Birgitte like, "I'm in a protected part of the palace."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "I'm not going to, like, let fear of being shot point-blank constantly ruin any enjoyment I have of life."

Sally: Sure.

Emily: That's a reasonable thing to say.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Similarly, I don't agree with her decision to go after the Black Ajah a couple of books ago, but if she had just been like, "You know what? I am the most powerful channeler here; this is something that requires my presence," then that would have been infinitely more admirable than her just being like, "I can't die."

Sally: Yeah, instead, Birgitte brings this up, and Elayne is like, "I've already told you that being in charge —" (laugh) "Some of you may die."

Emily: "Some of you may die, but that's a sacrifice I'm willing to make."

Sally: (laugh) Like, she's —

Emily: And Birgitte's like, "For the love of God."

Sally: Like, Elayne is basically quoting Lord Farquaad.

Emily: Yeah. (laugh) The similarities between Elayne and Lord Farquaad are striking, honestly.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Lord Farquaad is obsessed with Fiona the way Elayne was obsessed with Rand for many books.

Sally: "Some of you may die."

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: "But that is a sacrifice I'm willing to make." Yeah, she's like, "Being queen means that you have to let go of feeling guilty when other people die for you," and I'm like, I don't think that's what it means.

Emily: I don't think that's true. Elayne also interacts with every peasant as though they are Shrek. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: I'm just saying.

Sally: Alright.

Emily: (sigh)

Sally: Prepare for my upcoming literary analysis comparing Elayne to Lord Farquaad. "Some of you may die."

Emily: "Some of you may die." Anyway. Elayne meets with the Kin and is like, "I have a plan that will ultimately just benefit Andor because that's what I'm all about. And it's that I want to install, like, the Kin's base of operations here in Andor and, uh, you'll provide gateways and Healing for me, and in return ..."

Sally: "In return, you live here."

Emily: “You live here and I don’t know.”

Sally: “I guess I give you protection?” She doesn’t even say that, but it’s kind of implied that they’d – and Alise – Alice – again, whatever her name is – is like, “So you just want us to be in your pocket?” And Elayne’s like, “Nooo.”

Emily: “Yes, but don’t say it, it’s rude.”

Sally: Yeah. It’s –

Emily: They’re just like, “This is just clearly, like, to benefit Andor and to, like, give you an edge.”

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, you just – like, Elayne’s power-grubbing little hands are so upsetting.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: The way that she’s going about all of this. Um, and they’re just like, “You don’t – I don’t think the Amyrlin, who is technically in charge of us –”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “Would approve of this.” She’s like, “Don’t worry, I’ll talk to Egg about it, and it’ll be totally fine that I’m, like, paying you guys to create gateways, and it’s important anyway ‘cause I need an edge against the Seanchan or something.” And I’m just like, this is ...

Sally: This is nothing.

Emily: This is nothing.

Sally: It’s – it is just more power-grubbing, to set up Elayne to be, like, the queen of all time.

Emily: To be like, “Wow, she’s so good at making these incredible decisions to secure power in Andor.” Um, we then get a chapter of Mat finally going to visit Elayne. He has an obnoxious interaction with Olver. You know, the classic bit. All the classic, quote unquote, comedic bits. But he, Thom, and Talmanes, with an escort, like, go into Caemlyn, go up to the city, and are met by our good old friend ... Guybon. Boy, I really almost called him Chubain.

Sally: Charlz.

Emily: Yeah, good old Charlz meets them and is like, “I’m here to escort you.” He’s like – they have this weird bit where they’re like – he’s like, “I’ve heard all these crazy rumors about you,” and Mat’s like, “Oh, worm? What have you heard?” and he’s like, “I heard you walked into death’s domain and demanded answers to your questions, and I heard you got hanged for nine days.” Um, and it’s like an obnoxious scene because it’s Brandon-flavor Mat. Um, but, like, it is interesting to at least think about the concept of Mat as a character who we know is very archetypal –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, kind of within his lifetime having – like, facing the fact that real things that happened to him are, like, already exploding and expanding into myths and archetypes.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: (clears throat) Like, that's kind of interesting to think about, I guess.

Sally: Yeah, I agree.

Emily: But that's it. (laugh) It's not very funny, this little convo.

Sally: Yeah, it's not very funny and it could have been funnier in different hands, but it is, like, fun and interesting –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: For Charlz to be like, “You were hanged for nine days,” and Mat being like, “That's ridiculous, who gets hanged for nine days and lives? I was hanged for, like, a minute.”

Emily: “For, like, nine seconds.”

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) “And I wish I hadn't been.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I wish Mat and Guybon would kiss.

Sally: That'd be fun, I think.

Emily: He says – he says Guybon is pretty. And I'm like, Mat –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: You're not beating the bisexual allegations. But also, I don't want to do that because I know Brandon Sanderson is doing this extremely heroic thing of being like, “Straight men can call men pretty.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That Robert Jordan has refused to do thus far.

Sally: (sigh) Yeah. Like –

Emily: ‘Cause sometimes men be pretty, you know?

Sally: Yeah, God. That – sometimes there's nothing else you can say but, “That man is very pretty.”

Emily: (laugh) Timothee Chalamet.

Sally: Tim – Tillamy Chillamy.

Emily: (wheezing) Tillamy Chillamy.

Sally: Tillmay Chillamy is a very pretty man. (laugh)

Emily: “I’m making chocolate, of course.”

Sally: “I’m making chocolate, of course.”

Emily: Uh, Sally does it so good. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: It makes me so happy. Okay –

Sally: Guys, don’t go see Wonka. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah, for fuck’s sake, don’t give the – I know it’s funny, but, like, don’t commit to the bit that much and don’t give them money. Um, I won’t rest until Tillamy Chillamy is bankrupt. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) Emily’s personal mission in life is bankrupting Timothee Chalamet.

Emily: My personal vendetta against Timothee Chalamet. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Ahh. I want you guys to know I really don’t think about Timothee Chalamet at all in my real life.

Sally: Why would you?

Emily: It’s only on this podcast. Mat and Elayne meet; the entire scene is just, you know, filled with the classic misogynist drivel of Mat’s point of view these days. Um, I do think that a lot of it just, like, lacks the subtlety that it had in the Robert Jordan era. It’s upsetting to think of anything Robert Jordan ever did as being, quote unquote, subtle –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, but we really are facing, like, Brandon Sanderson, as one would if you were not the author but were trying to mimic the author’s style, just having, like, the blunt instrument of this –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Gender dynamics. Um. So it’s just a lot more apparent. Hard to miss. He just, like, keeps saying things about Elayne’s looks and blah blah blah blah.

Sally: Oh my God. For one second, just – Elayne says in her point of view and then Mat references here that she has gained weight.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: But Elayne says in her point of view, she's like, "The pregnancy is barely showing, but I feel enormous," is the word that she elects, and it just made me so insane. It's like, two months pregnant, you're probably not even show – she's like, "I had to get whole new clothes," and it's like, that's –

Emily: She's like, "What a bother," and I'm like, yeah, being rich must be so hard for you.

Sally: She's like, "I'm gonna have to get new clothes again." It's like, sorry. That's what being pregnant means.

Emily: Maybe go shop in the maternity section at Old Navy like the rest of us, Elayne. Goddamnit.

Sally: Get some stretchy pants.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: You'll live.

Emily: They look mad comfy.

Sally: They do look mad comfy.

Emily: Um. (laugh)

Sally: Anyway, sorry, I just had to – speaking of misogyny.

Emily: Yeah, they're just – we're just – and also fatphobia. Just, like –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: The idea that we must talk about weight whenever it fluctuates at all in a woman.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, it is, like, sort of meant to be comedic relief here that Mat's like, "Ah, Elayne's gained weight. I'm not gonna say anything about that 'cause you don't say things like that."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And then Thom's like, "How's the pregnancy?" and Mat's like, "The what?"

Sally: "The what?"

Emily: "The what now?" And she's like, "Yeah, Rand and I fucked," and Mat's like, "Okay."

Sally: "Congrats."

Emily: "That's great for me to know. Um. Anyway. I need to talk to you about cannons."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, and it's just, like, a haggling scene. Like, Mat is like, "Here's these cannons I want to make; I need your resources," and Elayne's like, "Okay, well, obviously I'll make them if they're mine," and Mat's like, "I don't want to do that. I don't trust you, bitch."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And she's like, "Well, you can't just have my resources," blah blah blah blah blah. They come to an agreement. The agreement is largely immaterial to us.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: The important part, for now, is that it, um, will keep the Band near Caemlyn while the cannons are being made, um, and slightly beyond that because Elayne has essentially, like, contracted them as freelancers along with the cannons.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, Mat also agrees to lend Elayne the foxhead medallion to study for three days. Um, despite the fact that he knows the gholam is in the city and after him and that is his only protection. But Elayne is like, "Ideally I'll be able to make copies," so then Mat's like, "Hmm, well, that could be good for fighting the gholam purposes."

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, and more or less that's the scene. The only other throughline in that chapter is that Mat looks absolutely disgraceful.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And everyone is like, "What happened to you?" And he's like, "I have been twelve hours without my serving man. My beloved serving man." (laugh)

Sally: "My beloved serving man."

Emily: "And already I'm disintegrating."

Sally: "I don't know how to shave."

Emily: "I don't know how to shave; I cut myself shaving. I don't know how to dress. I'm just such an idiot."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I'm like, Mat knows how to dress. Why is everyone so obsessed with –

Sally: Mat is a grown man.

Emily: Yeah. It's a lot funnier if Mat intentionally dresses poorly.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like he basically was doing, I think, all of book four.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He's like, "I'm wearing fancy clothes but I don't take care of them."

Sally: "I don't take care of them, so I look a hot mess."

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Rebel without a cause.

Emily: Um, but that's that. The next chapter title is one I've never fucking seen before.

Sally: Oh, yeah. Whose point of view is it?

Emily: Nynaeve's. I think it's Nynaeve taking the Aes Sedai test.

Sally: Nice, does she pass?

Emily: No, she fucking dies in there.

Sally: Ha. RIP. Rip.

Emily: (laugh) It's over. She's been with us for thirteen books, but see ya.

Sally: Gotta let her go. Kill your darlings.

Emily: Yeah, kill your darlings. Goodbye, Nynaeve. Um, sorry. So that's those chapters.

Sally: That's – that's them.

Emily: Um, as just mentioned, we're gonna get a Nynaeve point of view in the next one. Um, I think we'll get some more Ituralde.

Sally: Sweet.

Emily: Some Perrin or Morgase or something, I don't know.

Sally: Yeah, when's Morgase gonna come and kick some sense into her stepson?

Emily: Yeah. So far we still have the dramatic irony of Morgase not knowing that Galad is in charge of the Whitecloaks; otherwise presumably she'd be like, "Oh, I'll go talk to him."

Sally: "Oh. Hold on."

Emily: And of course no one in the camp knows that she is queen, besides Tallanvor, who I fucking hate.

Sally: Yeah. Tallanvor should die, I think.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: First cannon victim.



Emily: (laugh, makes an explosion noise) Um, what's our – what's our mood after this?

Sally: Oh. Guys, I keep forgetting. Okay, so I'm guessing your mood is mad?

Emily: Yeah, I guess.

Sally: Um.

Emily: How about you?

Sally: I feel like – do we feel like “resigned” and “apathetic” are similar enough?

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Okay, then I feel resigned.

Emily: I mostly feel resigned too.

Sally: ‘Kay.

Emily: You can pretty much just do yellow.

Sally: Just a dumb set of chapters with dumb things happening.

Emily: Not a lot of redeeming qualities, these chapters.

Sally: Like, come on.

Emily: Anyway, while Sally tracks our mood, thank you, everyone, for listening. Thanks to Glynna MacKenzie for our theme song. Thanks to our patrons on patreon and our followers on social media. We sure do like you guys.

Sally: We sure do, especially ‘cause our social media is kind of silly. (laugh) So thanks for following along.

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

Sally: Oh, I do. Oh my God, you guys, I just went to the gym in our apartment building –

Emily: Oh, a very recent one.

Sally: Yeah, very recent, within, like, the last two hours. And I was just there to do my, like, little thirty-minute walk, very leisurely. I just wanted to chill. I was gonna do some, like, self-reflection activities while I was down there; that's what I've been working on this week. And there was this group of, like, four men –

Emily: Ooh.

Sally: Our gym is divided into, like, the cardio machines and the weight machines, like most gyms are, you know, but there's this kind of, like, big archway so they're connected. And these guys were playing their music super loud, slamming weights, talking, grunting, moaning. Like,

every – when the weight was too heavy it would just be like – and I heard it at first and I took an earphone out and, like, whipped around ‘cause I was like, “Hey, fellas?” (laugh)

Emily: “Surely someone’s not sexually moaning in the gym.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I like to think these four guys are just like, “Hey, fellas, time for our Wednesday night homoerotic activities.”

Sally: Yeah, I seriously was like, are you guys gonna fuck in the gym? (laugh)

Emily: You stumbled into a porn set –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And didn’t even know it.

Sally: And they were like, “Oh, shit.”

Emily: Right in front of your salad. (laugh)

Sally: “We gotta wait until this girl finishes her walk.”

Emily: “Right in front of my treadmill.”

Sally: Right in front of my treadmill. God.

Emily: I’m sorry. Well, people, have some gym etiquette.

Sally: Don’t grunt and moan in the gym. I’m sorry the weights are heavy; maybe don’t lift as heavy.

Emily: Yeah, if you can’t keep it to yourself a little, then maybe do some home workouts first.

Sally: And what is – what is –

Emily: And don’t play your music without headphones.

Sally: Don’t play your music without headphones. Come on. You guys, it’s 2023.

Emily: Yeah, come on.

Sally: Behave like it.

Emily: Alright, everyone.

Sally: Animals.

Emily: (laugh) Have a good week.

Sally: (laugh) Good night.

