



Episode 269: There's Always a Jack the Ripper

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

SALLY: And I'm Sally Goodger.

EMILY: We can keep this so short. Chapter one of three. Remember how Rand left, uh, whatever that city is.

SALLY: Bandar Eban.

EMILY: In Arad Doman. He just left – abandoned it for everyone to starve.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Leaderless, chaos in the streets, all the food has gone bad so everyone – refugees pouring in, no doubt disease will soon enter this overcrowded city. And Rand just left, but, you guys, it's fine now, because he feels really bad about it!

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And that's all that's required. And because he's enlightened all those very difficult problems, problems that people in the real world face routinely, are just viola! Solved.

SALLY: It –

EMILY: Because he's Jesus.

SALLY: It is the most infuriating chapter of any book I've ever read.

EMILY: [laughs] It was pretty bad.

SALLY: Um –

EMILY: [laughs] I was reading it like, "Sally's gonna love this." [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Go off, queen.

SALLY: Um, when I was transcribing the episode last week, for whatever reason, I was reminded, um, of how important it is to, uh, demonstrate your literary arguments through specific examples in the text. I think we made an offhand comment about how Rand does not face any consequences of the war crimes that he commits. And so I would like to posit this as the perfect example in the text [laughs] of my literary argument. Um, as Emily referenced, Rand when he was at his darkest, probably about four and a half hours [laughing] after nuking Graendal's fortress –

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Is what it feels like. Uh, decided he was just leaving Bandar Eban to, um, the horrors of war that have been foisted upon the city.

EMILY: Yeah, eventual Seanchan invasion, God only knows.

SALLY: The eventual – and all of the problems that Bandar Eban is facing are direct results of Rand's actions. The way that his wars have rippled across the continent. Of course, there's also the threat of the Seanchan, which is not Rand's fault, but his response to it, in large part, has been pretty minor.

EMILY: Yeah, and everything he did in Arad Doman directly made it worse.

SALLY: Yeah, so he makes everything worse. He doesn't succeed in finding, like, a council to lead. Everyone in the streets starving, like Emily referenced illness is beginning to run rampant, and Rand is just, like, literally leaves being like, "Not my problem." He says that to someone, basically, and just fucks off. As a refresher.

EMILY: Yeah, he gives up and is like, "I can't do anything. Everything is too difficult to solve here."

SALLY: Yeah, so he leaves, creating, um, a city full of refugees, um, who are facing just, like, incredibly inhumane consequ – uh, incredibly inhumane conditions. And he just leaves, and then

he comes back and he apologizes – he does at least apologize, I guess, but it's, like, really condescending to just, like, walk through the streets and everyone is, wow, surprise starving, sick, angry. Everyone's forming little street gangs because they don't know what else to do. And Rand is just, like, "This is my fault." And Min's like, "No, it wasn't!"

EMILY: Min –

SALLY: Min's like, "No, baby!"

EMILY: Delulu. [laughs] Absolutely –

SALLY: This was not your fault at all!

EMILY: I don't know what's worse. I mean, obviously this whole thing is in Min's point of view, and she worships the ground Rand walks on. And I don't what is worse, that maybe she actually believes this.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And is like, "Rand absolutely has never done anything wrong in his life ever." Or if she is just condescendingly putting on a supportive girlfriend show for her boyfriend. Both are equally bad, I would say.

SALLY: Yeah, your job is to be, like, to your partner, be like, "Yeah. Do better."

EMILY: Now what can we do to fix it?

SALLY: Yeah, like, I'm glad you acknowledge that you made a mistake. How can I support you in, you know, moving forward.

EMILY: Mm-hmm.

SALLY: But she's just like, "No, Rand. You did everything you could for these people. There's no way you could have done anything different. Remember that child you had Nynaeve torture? Not your fault at all. No big deal." And Rand's like, "[breathy] Min, I couldn't do this without you."

EMILY: Rand's, like, at his lowest, which, like, Rand's been at his lowest for three books now, so. Rand, when confronted with the Horrors TM, is like, "Oh my god." He just, like, sits down, puts his head in his hands. He just can't take it, which is ridiculous.

SALLY: Yeah, I just have, like, absolutely no sympathy, obviously, because he's walking down the street full of refugees who are literally dying and he's like, "How can I make this about me? Again?"

EMILY: Yeah, Rand, whatever. And if I'm being ultimately, like, having a – a humanist approach to this whole thing, I acknowledge that it would be very difficult to see the consequences of your actions in such visceral detail and I acknowledge that Rand would be feeling a type of way about it now that he has feelings again.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: But, Rand has not earned back our sympathy even if he has always had Min's so –

SALLY: Right.

EMILY: To watch this sort of breakdown of his is just, like, ludicrous to the readers, if not – even if not to Min. And Min, like, drags him out of this deep hole that he, Baby Jessica like, has fallen into and is like, “But, Rand. Everything's gonna be fine, because I look around and I look at you and I see all these incredible visions of people fighting in the Last Battle and going on to do great things. Like, you know, the normal status markers for what we accept for quote unquote “great things” like becoming an Aes Sedai or [laughs] saving a woman's life. Because, for the record, nothing in your human life matters unless you go on to greatness.

SALLY: Yeah. Of course. Glory.

EMILY: [sighs] But she's like, “It's fine because we're saving them now and everyone's going to fight in the Last Battle and you're going to lead them and everyone loves you, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.” Rand's like, “You're right, Min, How could I do this without you?” And she's like, “Well, you have a million advisors, so you'd probably be fine.” And he's like, “But none of them *love me*.” Or whatever.

SALLY: Yeah. Yeah.

EMILY: He's like, “You're so clear headed.” And I'm like –

SALLY: No!

EMILY: This woman is standing in front of you having full hallucinations [laughs].

SALLY: Also, [laughs] Emily is right. She is, like, full blown delusional when it comes to Rand. It is ridiculous!

EMILY: Yeah, clear-headed? Absolutely not. You know who's been clear-headed about you, Rand? All the people who you have pushed away. Mat, Perrin. They pretty much knew what was going on with you.

SALLY: Yeah, but you gotta have your Yes Man girlfriend. Your Yes Girlfriend.

EMILY: Yeah. Your Yes Boobs.

SALLY: [laughs softly]

EMILY: It's what she is, a walking set of boobs.

SALLY: Yep.

EMILY: At this point in the series. Anyway.

SALLY: Yeah, so Rand is like, "Min's so right. This wasn't my fault. Um, so I'm gonna just walk around [laughs] sort of in my weird condescending Weird Girl Rand era and just be like, 'You're now the Captain of the Guard, random man I saw in the street.' And this guy is now leading the city because he was a merchant or whatever." And it's not necessarily arbitrarily assigning people to do things, but he's just, like, walking around, quote unquote "solving" all the problems that he left in, like, an instant, and everyone is just accepting this. Everyone in the street is like – Min references them looking at Rand in adoration or hope or, like, they see the light in him or something about him makes people *feel* better, which is so condescending and ridiculous, because these are the exact people he left to starve and die.

EMILY: Mm-hmm. Like, the whole...not the whole point, but what's going on in this chapter is that we're seeing the reversal.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Or the loop-around of Rand's *ta'veren* effect on people. In the last couple of books, he's been more or less only affecting things negatively. People have been dying, food has been spoiling, weather has been bad, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Now, he goes places weather is good, magically the food is unspoiled, which I am willing to accept.

SALLY: Yeah, that didn't bug me. That's fine.

EMILY: Yeah, that was, like, one of those weird little fate things.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But it, I think, as we have talked about before, is concerning when we see the *ta'veren* nature effect people.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Whether it is in a quote "good" way or in a quote "bad" way, because it is so similar to mind control. Min herself draws the comparison to Compulsion. She's like, "An outsider looking in would be like, 'Whoa, he must be doing something to them.' But nope! That's just Rand's aura." And I'm like, "It's a creepy aura." And the fact that we're not recognizing that is extremely weird.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Like, Rand just magically making people step up.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: And, he's not even necessarily solving the problems besides finding the food, you know? Everything he's doing is promoting people to solve the problems on their own. He's like, "I'll take this guy who was vaguely competent and has been doing everything in his power to keep the city from bursting into flames more or less. I'll just put him in charge, arbitrarily – like you said – because everyone who was supposed to be in charge left. And literally this random guy I see on the street, I'm going to make him in charge of people and we're going to start organizing infrastructure – they're going to start organizing infrastructure. And all I have to do is stand here and influence them to do these things." Which, um, is moderately insulting because the implication is that if they had the right attitude the Domani would have been able to solve this problem on their own.

SALLY: Yes!

EMILY: Like, we're blurring the lines between what is a magical affect and what people can do themselves by having Rand magically effect people.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Like, it's not like Rand is empowering people to have super strength or magic abilities or anything like that. The only thing he's doing is [laughs] making them visualize success *The Secret* style and now suddenly they were starving a minute ago but now they have the capacity to organize, to lead each other, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

SALLY: Yeah, it's – it is really troubling and so upsetting and, narratively, is just wiping the slate clean for anything that Rand did to Bandar Eban without him having to deal with any *actual* consequences. Even just the people not liking him.

EMILY: Yeah, because, now, the other thing about Rand magically influencing people is that they're no longer like, "Hey, so you abandoned us," or "You fucked up," or "I need to confront you about this, because that's part of my process." Or any other sort of negative thing. Rand will, like, walk up to someone and they'll be like, "Oh, hey, it's the Dragon Reborn, you abandoned us." He's like, "[in a pouty voice] Yeah, I'm sorry, but could you help me?" And they're like, "You're so right! I was born to serve you, my Lord, and forgiven. Everything you've ever done is forgiven." So, it's, like, changing hearts and minds is actually [laughs] an incredibly toxic thing, in this case.

SALLY: Yeah! Yeah, because it's just not earned. Rand doesn't do anything for it, he just shows up and is like [clicks tongue, claps] "Sowwy."

EMILY: Yeah, it's never satisfying when a main character, um, puts no effort into doing something and something happens, you know, has a good effect anyway. The only reason that

works for things, like, Mat's luck powers is because Mat's luck powers affect him in bad ways also.

SALLY: Yeah, they're balanced.

EMILY: Even if it's just, like, his constant dread about something that's going to happen.

SALLY: Yeah, those also have, like, rules.

EMILY: Mm-hmm.

SALLY: You know? It's more of, like, magic skill set than it is just of, like, a way of being.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: So, fuck this chapter.

EMILY: Yeah, no consequences for Rand that he has to face. He doesn't even have to be uncomfortable for more than ten minutes about it.

SALLY: No, he just –

EMILY: He just waltzes in there with Min, fixes everything and is like, "Okay, get ready to march for the Last Battle. Bye!"

SALLY: Bye! Stupid...

EMILY: And everyone's like, "Great."

SALLY: Bastard man! I hate him. Whatever. I'm happy for the people of Bandar Eban. I'm happy they've got porridge.

EMILY: Yeah, I'm happy more people aren't going to starve, but people have undoubtedly starved.

SALLY: I know. And died. Horribly because of what you did, or what you didn't do.

EMILY: Yeah, your passivity. Ugh! God.

SALLY: [sighs]

EMILY: Like, I just want in fantasy for powerful leaders to have to face the consequences of doing crimes against humanity.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Is that so much to ask? The world I live in doesn't have consequences.

SALLY: [pained laugh]

EMILY: So, I want to read about them. To envision a better world.

SALLY: [laughs] If anyone's gotten one of those stock bitch ass responses from one of their congressmen.

EMILY: Oh yeah.

SALLY: That are just like, "You don't deserve to have any opinion."

EMILY: What are you talking about?

SALLY: [laughing] That's what Rand feels like.

EMILY: Yeah. You're just so, you know...

SALLY: The people I step on.

EMILY: You're the person I, uh, don't count their opinion at all.

SALLY: Get back to work!

EMILY: Get back to work making capital! You're the worst. Okay, another terrible chapter.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Parley! Parley!

SALLY: Par-lee [laughs].

EMILY: Par-lee. So.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: We're getting ready to fight the Whitecloaks.

SALLY: And then we don't! It's so annoying [laughs].

EMILY: I know, it's so upsetting [laughs]. I wanted to see those motherfuckers die!

SALLY: Neald at the beginning is like, "Can't wait to kill Whitecloaks." He's, like, skipping down the path and Rand's like – Perrin's like –



EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs] It's a funny image, right?

EMILY: Like, throwing flowers and Perrin's like, "Um, maybe don't celebrate bloodshed." And I'm like, "That is so rich coming from you, Mr. Revenge Against Faile's Captors." Someone literally is like, "Well, you were pretty bloodthirsty about Malden and he's like, "Well, they needed killing." And someone else is like, "The Whitecloaks might need killing."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And he's like, "Well..."

SALLY: No. I say different.

EMILY: I – I don't think so. As they're walking, Neald is like, "Okay, bad news, Grady and I have been having trouble Traveling." And Perrin's like, "That's weird. Like, you can channel other stuff, right?" And they're like, "Yeah, like, no problem. It's just we can't open gateways and it's, it's probably nothing." When has it ever been nothing, you guys? They're like, "We're probably still just burnt out or some other weird thing. Don't worry about it." And Perrin's like, "Okay, I'm not going to worry about it." Even though people being able to Travel is a pretty vital thing in your battle strategy I would say, but [confused noise] I'm not Perrin.

SALLY: And this is Graendal's weird little dream –

EMILY: Dreamspike.

SALLY: Dreamspike. That's what it is.

EMILY: Taking effect. Is them not being able to travel. They don't know that yet. Um, the Whitecloaks are all, like, lined up, ready to just have this, you know, what's that word?

SALLY: Pitched battle.

EMILY: Pitched battle, thanks.

SALLY: You're welcome. I'm so – that's the one time I've gotten a military term right.

EMILY: [laughs] They're ready to just have a pitched battle. Perrin's like, "In my forces I have mostly refugees."

SALLY: Yeah [laughs].

EMILY: Which is strikingly similar to Masema's army of refugees, but these ones are good because they're good people not ear amputating villains [laughs].

SALLY: I mean that is – I mean, we don't know that there are no ear amputating villains in Perrin's –

EMILY: [laughs] There's one Jack the Ripper in there.

SALLY: [laughs] There always is.

EMILY: [laughing] There always is.

SALLY: Um.

EMILY: But, like, to the point, they're just cannon fodder. They don't have armor or anything like that. Perrin's like, "They'll be the first to die," and I'm like, "So stop them fighting or equip them better."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Are you in charge or aren't you? I mean, you don't know. So.

SALLY: Yeah, god! How are any of us supposed to know? Perrin also does some – or Brandon Sanderson does some pretty funny, like, linguistic gymnastics to [laughs] avoid using the term cannon fodder. [laughing] I can't remember what it was, but it cracked me up. Because cannons don't exist yet.

EMILY: *Innocents with blades.*

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: It's so edgy [laughs].

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: Anyway, Perrin's all standing there and [laughs] still thinking about hammers and axes.

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: I could kill him. When he suddenly has this epiphany, he's like [laughs], "Oh my god. The difference between a hammer and an axe is that a hammer can be used to create and destroy, an axe can only be used to destroy." And I'm like...

SALLY: First of all, incorrect.

EMILY: [laughs] So incorrect!

SALLY: Axes are tools and if you need to cut down a tree to make a house, you've used the axe to make that house.

EMILY: You – oh my god! It's, like, the first tool you get in Minecraft, the create video game, is an axe.

SALLY: Yeah, is an axe. So, first of all, Perrin's conclusion here is incorrect.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: It's just, like, a fundamentally incorrect metaphor.

EMILY: And also, he's had this epiphany six times before!

SALLY: Yeah. Second of all, it's like we're living in *Groundhog Day* – not *Groundhog Day*, *Fifty First Dates*, or whatever, where he keeps forgetting everything that happened the day before. And he's just – truly – he's telling it to us like he's never said this before in his life.

EMILY: [stressed laughter] It makes me feel delusional. I'm like, "Am I being gaslit by this series?" [laughs]

SALLY: You are.

EMILY: I am!

SALLY: Brandon's trying to be like, "Perrin's never thought this before."

EMILY: Yeah, Perrin's – shhhh. He's never had this epiphany before because I need him to have this epiphany now. And I'm like people can have multiple epiphanies about different topics.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But the fact that we are still relying on the hammer and axe visual metaphor is [laughs] *shocking* to say the least.

SALLY: Shocking to say the least and, like, truly terrible writing.

EMILY: [groans]

SALLY: Like, I really hate using this term because, like we've said multiple times, when you use something as a crutch, like crutches can be helpful because they help people move, but this one is just, like, the most taped together scaffolding on this narrative.

EMILY: Yeah, I mean, it's a crutch, but it's not helping. It's helping you move from bad plot point to bad plot point.

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah.

EMILY: So, it's like you're using a crutch to slide down a hill. Like what the fuck!

SALLY: It's so bad. Because there are so many other, like, thought processes Perrin could have had. Like, he could have looked back at his army of refugees and finally had the epiphany that he is in charge. Like, that's just the epiphany, it doesn't have to do with this fucking –

EMILY: I can stop this from happening!

SALLY: I can stop this from happening.

EMILY: I don't want this to happen, so bam! I can stop it. No.

SALLY: End of epiphany.

EMILY: Yeah, or his epiphany could have been you know what? I don't want innocent people to die. I'm fine with the Whitecloaks dying, but if it's gonna take a bunch of refugees with swords to die first, I'm not okay with that!

SALLY: Not comfortable with that so I'm going to take a different course of action.

EMILY: [sighs]

SALLY: But no. The *hammer* – let's, let's review. I don't think we've got this enough times. Let's review. Option One: axe. Option Two: hammer. We're making a flow chart. Axe, there's only one place to go. Destruction. Hammer, two diverging paths. Two [laughs], two –

EMILY: Two roads diverged in a yellow wood and I took the hammer.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Because the hammer's the only thing that can create something.

SALLY: Hammers can create or destroy.

EMILY: I feel like I'm in the SAT. I feel like I'm in one of those dreams where I feel like I'm taking the SAT.

SALLY: What's think of some other tools! Screwdriver.

EMILY: I [laughs] – fucking.

SALLY: Screwdrivers can only create [laughs].

EMILY: Yeah, what if Perrin was confronted with a full toolbox? What would that do to his mind?

SALLY: Would he be like, “I could stab someone with a screwdriver! Oh my god!”

EMILY: Completely lose it.

SALLY: I could hit someone over the head with a wrench.

EMILY: AHHHHHH.

SALLY: [laughing] So stupid.

EMILY: Okay. Perrin is like, “Gather all the channelers.” They all come trotting up. Perrin’s like, “I want you to make a ton of explosions, like, unleash the full force of your power. Not on the Whitecloaks, but on the ground in front of the Whitecloaks to spook them.” And everyone’s like, “That’s a terrible strategy because we were planning on using the element of surprise.” And Perrin’s like, “Yeah, but now they’ll be afraid of us, and they’ll think that we have more power that we’re holding back, because what idiot would unleash his full power.” And I’m like, “Well, they have met you Perrin, so they know you’re an idiot.”

SALLY: Yeah, poor Arganda or whoever, who’s, like, a seventeen time veteran.

EMILY: A military guy, yeah.

SALLY: Is like, “This is the dumbest idea.”

EMILY: Perrin’s [laughs] – and Perrin’s so condescendingly is like, “He’s just an axe and axes are fine, but he’s clearly never [laughs] had any other thought in his life.

SALLY: Perrin has also devised a new taxonomy system for the world.

EMILY: Axe, hammer.

SALLY: [laughs] Are you –

EMILY: Axe, hammer.

SALLY: Yeah, are you an axe or a hammer?

EMILY: Arganda probably has kids, you know? Like.

SALLY: Yeah, he’s got a full life. Probably. For what we know.

EMILY: I mean, he probably doesn’t because Robert Jordan wouldn’t have come up with one for him, because he hates his side characters, but whatever. [sighs] So, Perrin’s like, “Let’s go request another parley or, like – ” Like, he has Grady amplify his voice so he can be like, “Hey! I want to try another parley. Please come talk to me.”

SALLY: [laughs] Parley.

EMILY: Par-lee.

SALLY: [laughs, snorts]

EMILY: Parsley.

SALLY: It just makes me laugh every time. Makes me think of *Pirates of the Caribbean*.

EMILY: He's like, "Set up the tent and we're gonna do it more formally. Like, I'm gonna have all my people there, all my advisors there." They're like, "Great." We flash over to Galad after hearing this announcement. He's like, "Yeah, we should probably go to this and everyone –" [laughs] Bornhald and Byar, the anti-Perrin...

SALLY: League.

EMILY: League. Are like, "Absolutely not, it's a trick. He's gonna murder you" And Galad's like, "I mean, he went to the last one and didn't murder anyone. And he didn't murder us just then, so I'm pretty confident that we can..."

SALLY: Not get murdered.

EMILY: "Not get murdered. But even if I am, like, buddy you're in charge after this." [laughs] He's also like, "Bornhald and Byar you can come with me." For some reason. He's like, "I've gotta leave all my captains, you know, behind, so that we're not leaderless, [laughing] but I will take Bornhald and Byar because no small loss if they die."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Not his thought process, but it would have been funny if it was.

SALLY: He's like, "I could sacrifice – these two are expendable."

EMILY: Extremely expendable. Um, they – he goes to the tent, walks in, and he goes – sees, you know, Perrin, some Aes Sedai, um, immediately spots Berelain and has, has what amounts to a total crisis.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: He comes on the spot [laughs].

SALLY: That's basically what happens.

EMILY: He's like [laughing], "I've never seen a woman who's as beautiful as I am."

SALLY: [laughs] I mean, yeah. That's kind of the vibe.

EMILY: [laughs] So, he just, like, can't handle it. He's like, "What?" He swoons. He faints. And Perrin's like, "You good, dog?"

SALLY: Yeah, can you sit down and talk to me?

EMILY: Galad's like, "Who's this pretty lady?" Galad's like – he's like, "This is Berelain, the First of Mayene. You might have noticed her flag that I have – has been very visible in our camp." Galad's like, "Yeah, I guess I knew that, but I didn't know she was a Grade A hottie!"

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And I'm like...no one thinks like this. No one has ever seen a person so beautiful that they stop doing things for a minute.

SALLY: Yeah, like, I – it's never happened to me, at least, I will say and I've seen some Grade A Hotties, I think, in my time.

EMILY: Sure.

SALLY: We all have. It also just comes off as especially weird because Galad has never expressed any type of sexual attraction.

EMILY: Fully was, like, asexual Galad up until this point.

SALLY: Yeah! So for them to just be like it took truly the hottest woman apparently in all of time for Galad to experience any type of sexual attraction, it just reads so weird. It just comes off really strange.

EMILY: It reads like Berelain is some sort of corrupting force.

SALLY: Ooh, yeah. That's – that's exactly what it is.

EMILY: Like, her tits just cause men to fall over, because Berelain, unlike Galad, has had an active, healthy sex life. Well, maybe not healthy.

SALLY: Active [laughs].

EMILY: Has had an active sex life up until this point, you know? We know that she's been attracted to people prior to this, so it's not like she spots Galad and is like, "My entire world has come crashing down." Although she does act a little silly about him in future chapters. But, like, Galad is like – has never seen a woman before. He was, like, supposedly into Egg a while ago, like, in their early days, but, um, he's never talked about it in any sort of way.

SALLY: No, yeah. We never got Galad be like, "Egg was..."

EMILY: I'm lusting for Egg.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Has been a very pure almost childlike romance.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Anyway, now he's like, "God dammit, it's the hottest..." I think he refers to, um, oh now. He's talking about Perrin when he – [laughs] He calls Perrin a creature.

SALLY: [laughs] That is pretty funny.

EMILY: Anyway, Perrin's like, "Okay, that was weird. So, you've met Berelain. This is Alliandre, the Queen of Ghealden, where you stand."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And Galad in his head is like, "Well, I'm sure there's a bunch of, like, would be kings and queens running around. No one's really in charge."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So that doesn't mean anything. He's like, "And here's Faile, who is also very important, like, she's a cousin to the, she's a cousin to the queen of Saldaea." Um, and Galad's like, "I guess if we're giving each other names, I'm Galad blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." And Perrin's like, "Cool, nice to have a name and a face." And Berelain's like, "Oh, you mean the stepbrother to the queen of Andor?" And he's like, "Yeah, um, hope she's good." And Perrin's like, "Yeah, I think she's fine." Um, anyway, Perrin's like, "Let's get to the root of the problem here. You have been told..." [dog barks in the background] Or rather, he's like, "I killed a couple of the Children of the Light a few years ago [dog barks]."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: "And you guys are still out to get me for that. You wouldn't be stopping us otherwise." Which, I think, is giving them too much credit. They would find any excuse to stop anyone, because they're Whitecloaks.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um, but Bornhald is like, "Actually, you also killed my daddy!" And Perrin's like, "Sure didn't, bud. That was fully the Seanchan, so sorry!" Um, he was like, "He seemed fine even though he was going to kill me." And, um, Bornhald is so mad. Galad is like, "You just confessed to murder." And Aybara – Aybara [laughs]. It's all – Galad refers to him as "Aybara" throughout this, which is funny. Perrin is like, "Yes, I killed them. I did not do *murder* because



we were, like, in a fight and they killed some of my friends.” Galad’s like, “Oh, what friends?” And Perrin’s like, “Wolves.” And Galad’s like – [laughs].

SALLY: I know. What if Perrin had just *not* said that?

EMILY: Yeah [laughs]. Galad’s like, “[sighs] I need you to stop saying odd shit.”

SALLY: Yeah, like, the point, I guess, narratively is to be like Perrin’s embracing his wolf side but like there’s a time and a place and the legal [laughs] court of law –

EMILY: Yeah, to be like, “And I speak to wolves telepathically, so they count to me as human friends,” is a little bizarre.

SALLY: [laughs] Like what if you were just like, “The people I was traveling with.”

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: The friends I was traveling with.

EMILY: No, but they’re just, like, so specific – yeah.

SALLY: You also could have just said the name Hopper and been like, “Nobody needs to know that’s a wolf.”

EMILY: I mean, someone would have been like, “That sounds like a fucking horse name, but whatever.”

SALLY: And Perrin could have been like, “He’s just a weird old guy, which also would be true!”

EMILY: A weird guy, anyway.

SALLY: It’s, like, Perrin pick a time to lie. The time to lie is now.

EMILY: Galad’s like, “Wolves aren’t good friends to have. They’re evil.” And Perrin’s like, “Wolves aren’t evil. You’re thinking of rats and [laughs] birds or something.”

SALLY: Yeah, rats and ravens.

EMILY: Which, as we all know, are evil.

SALLY: Yeah, notoriously on the side of the devil.

EMILY: Yeah, wolves are aligned good. So, stop worry about it.

SALLY: Take out your field guide to evil animals [laughs].

EMILY: And Galad says, “I don’t accept the killing of wolves as something to exonerate you. Like, people kill wolves. That’s – and it’s not the same as killing humans.” Which is a fair point and the point on which this trial will hinge [laughs].

SALLY: And Galad is right. Galad is right. The legal counsel is correct on this one.

EMILY: But Perrin’s like – oh, he does switch to “Perrin” here I the middle, randomly. Typo. He keeps going back and forth. Anyway, Perrin’s like, “Well, what if I have a trial?” And Galad’s like, “That’s a great idea, except you wouldn’t accept punishment.” And Perrin’s like, “Well, let’s have a trial before we stop talking about punishment.” Um, and Galad’s like, “Well, regardless, we can’t find anyone to judge it fairly.” And Perrin’s like, “Alliandre’s the *queen* of the land that you are trying to exorcise justice on.” Galad’s like, “Yeah, but she’s also your fealty – she’s sworn fealty to you, whatever, so she’s not fair. Um, nor is Berelain. Even though of course *I* would trust her.”

SALLY: Yeah. He’s like, “My men wouldn’t.”

EMILY: My men wouldn’t though because she’s a hussy [laughs].

SALLY: [laughs] Because she’s a dumb slut.

EMILY: Um, and so they’re kind of like, “Well, we’re at an impasse,” but right as Galad is getting up to leave. Who should walk in but Morgase. Finally, the long-awaited reunion.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: It is nice that they hug each other and are happy to see each other.

SALLY: Yeah, and it is finally nice to be like, “This is Morgase everybody. This is not Maighdin.”

EMILY: Perrin’s like, “Maighdin?” Galad’s like, “This is Maighdin. This is the fucking Queen of Andor.” And she’s like, “Uh, point of order. I am no longer the queen. I have abdicated and will not be the queen.”

SALLY: Which is a bad idea. Why would you let your twenty-year-old child?

EMILY: Yeah, idiot.

SALLY: Elayne is not a good ruler.

EMILY: Yeah and Galad’s like, “Oh my god. Is he holding you captive?” And Morgase is like, “No. It’s fine. I don’t love him but he’s not doing anything evil.” And Perrin’s like, “This is great! Like, why don’t we have her as the judge? She’s a queen. She’s sat on trial before.” And Galad’s like, “Yeah, I would accept that.” And then he’s like, “I don’t know if my men would,

but they'll believe me when I say we can trust her." And I'm like what about Berelain a minute ago?

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So, you can, you can persuade your men sometimes but not other times? Are you a good leader or aren't you?

SALLY: What is the truth?

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: What's the truth, Galad?

EMILY: And then he's like, "Mom, why don't – I'm gonna take you back to the Whitecloak camp." And she's like, "Yeah, I fucking love the Whitecloaks who raped and almost killed me."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And Galad's like, "It'll be fine, because you're with me." And she's like, "Okay." Which no one would do.

SALLY: Yeah, I would be like, "Fuck your little terrorist friends, I'm staying here."

EMILY: Yeah, like, the trauma alone of having to confront just being in a Whitecloak centric place again would be horrifying.

SALLY: Yeah. No way.

EMILY: But of course no one has trauma in these books. So, Morgase is like, "Yeah, sure," and skips along. Um, Perrin's like – and then she's like, "Perrin, I'm not – just because you've taken me in and then made me your servant."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: She's like, "I'm not going to be, um, I'm not gonna pull my punches, basically." And Perrin's like, "That's fine." Oh, there was another funny thing that Galad says. "I've seen my mom sit in judgement. She was fair. Harsh but fair." Harsh isn't fair.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Harsh is unfair.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: It means when you can choose to exercise leniency, generally not doing that [laughs].

SALLY: I love when people say, “It’s harsh but fair.” And you’re like –

EMILY: Then that’s not fair.

SALLY: Nooooo. Bestie?

EMILY: You can be harsh sometimes and lenient sometimes and maybe it all balances out to fair, but, if it’s skewing harsh then that’s not fair. AHH!

SALLY: Galad, where did you learn anything? Who taught you this?

EMILY: Anyway, Perrin’s like, “Give me three days to prepare.” They’re like, “Great. We’ll meet in three days to have a witch trial.” I hate to use that phrase but that is essentially...

SALLY: Yeah, it is, like, a literal that’s what the Whitelcoaks think they are doing, is putting a witch on trial.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: And Perrin has to be like, “I’m not a witch, I just talk to wolves” [laughing].

EMILY: [laughs] I just talk to wolves, which is not witchcraft!

SALLY: [laughing] I promise it’s a totally different thing.

EMILY: [laughing] It’s a totally different – it’s fine! And more to the point, only totally good and normal guys do it.

SALLY: Yeah, duh.

EMILY: And I have the proof. Here’s Elyas, the only other guy I know.

SALLY: There is another guy.

EMILY: But he turned fully into a wolf [laughs].

SALLY: [laughing] So we’re not going to bring him to the trial. AHHHH.

EMILY: It’s just me and Elyas, and I don’t know what to tell you. We’re both nice.

SALLY: We’re both super normal. I’ve never done anything like go on a sort of murderous rampage when [laughing] my wife got kidnapped. I never did anything like that.

EMILY: Yeah, the really frustrating thing about the Perrin going on trial subplot is that Perrin does deserve to be on trial.

SALLY: Yes! A hundred percent.

EMILY: Just like almost every other character in this series, who has done despicable crimes.

SALLY: Yeah! Yeah.

EMILY: Tragically, the crimes Perrin has committed are not necessarily the ones he needs to be on trial for. More to the point, the Whitecloaks are not the people who need to be prosecuting him.

SALLY: No! I think, like I –

EMILY: The Whitecloaks have not been wronged by Perrin.

SALLY: Yeah, like, I agree with Perrin finally stepping into his power as a leader, which I'm sure we will do, like, nine hundred more times [laughs] before the book is over.

EMILY: Sorry. He's going to have to rehash before it really happens.

SALLY: Yeah. Um, and being like, "I'm going to stop this." But also, like, submitting yourself for trial by the Whitecloaks is an insane thing to do because they have absolutely no authority over you.

EMILY: Yeah, it is giving them authority over you.

SALLY: Yeah, like all you're doing is validating and legitimizing them. Like, it's a ridiculous thing to do.

EMILY: Yeah, it would be one thing to be like, "I will stand trial via the Ghealdanin justice system, or rather the Andoran justice system."

SALLY: Yeah, where the crime happened.

EMILY: Where the crime happened and, you know, maybe we get the same end result. But!

SALLY: Yeah, but I'm not being tried by you.

EMILY: Yeah, it's just – it's just stupid.

SALLY: And for Morgase to agree to it is also kind of...nuts.

EMILY: Yeah, Morgase. Like, you're no longer queen. How do you have the authority?

SALLY: Yeah, and just thinking through exactly what you're saying, like, this is a crime that happened on Andoran soil, so for her to just be like, "It's totally fine to do this extrajudicial thing rather than packing him up for Elayne to try."

EMILY: Yeah, she's like, "Okay." Like, she should have been like, "Alright, we're going – if you're ready to submit to a trial, then we're all packing it up, Traveling to Caemlyn, where my daughter, the queen, will sort this out." Which, at least, would have been an interesting thing. To have, you know, eventually at some point we know Perrin is going to have to meet with Elayne in order to sort out the whole Two Rivers quote unquote rebellion.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So, it would have been nice to just, like, jam all those plots together and it would have been great for not having the fucking Whitecloaks...

SALLY: Do this!

EMILY: It also would have been a way, if not a great way, for, like, I don't know. If the Whitecloaks are under the Andoran umbrella via Galad and Elayne working together, then that at least is something better than what they currently are.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: There's just a lot of different ways this could have gone. Anyway, Egg is in the White Tower corresponding with various monarchs. Hilariously, Darlin is like, "Yeah, Rand's pretty unhinged, but, you know, it is the last battle so [noncommittal noise]. But I agree he probably shouldn't break the seals." And Elayne – Egg's like, "The balls on this guy. He just wrote this down" [laughs].

SALLY: Darlin doesn't care. Darlin has actively been in rebellion against the Dragon Reborn.

EMILY: [laughs] Yeah. Darlin's like, "Like I give a shit."

SALLY: Like I give a fuck about that clown. I'll tell you whatever I want.

EMILY: Darlin is the best character in this series.

SALLY: Darlin is the best character. Darlin also says the very reasonable thing of I'm not bringing my entire army to the Fields of Merrilor.

EMILY: Because the Seanchan. Have you heard of them? And Egg's like, "You gotta! I'll provide you gateways if you need to run back." And in her head, she's like, "That probably won't be enough" and it's like, "Okay, so."

SALLY: So you're lying?

EMILY: So you're denying the truth. Okay, anyway.

SALLY: I love you, Darlin. I wish you were my husband.

EMILY: I love you, Darlin. God. Marry me.

SALLY: He's so husband coded.

EMILY: He really is. Glad he gets a wife and is like – who is like, “Yeah, he's husband coded.”

SALLY: Yeah, that's my – that's the love of my life. Darlin.

EMILY: Uh, Silvianna comes in and is like, “Egg, it's happening.” And we're like, “What's happening?” Oh boy. It's another session of the Hall of the Tower, the most exciting thing that ever happens in the Egg subplot.

SALLY: I *love* these scenes.

EMILY: Yeah, they're – guaranteed a woman's gonna cry, faint, or throw up.

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: Because these women, despite having literally gone through tests to make sure they can maintain their composure under pressure just can't help it.

SALLY: [laughing] It is –

EMILY: Their wombs start, you know, ping balling – pin balling about in their insides and they're like, “God, I have to swoon! Because of how she's manipulated the law!”

SALLY: You're so right that it is – in the context of what we just saw Nynaeve go through, every reaction an Aes Sedai has given in this book is meaningless.

EMILY: I mean, listen. The Aes Sedai are all a bunch of traumatized freaks given – just based on the two tests they've had to go through. [laughs] It actually makes a lot of sense that they're fainting, crying, and throwing up every thirty seconds.

SALLY: Constantly.

EMILY: But in Robert Jordan's world that's not what is happening.

SALLY: They're calm and serene. She serenely threw up and wept.

EMILY: [crying noises, gagging noises]

SALLY: [laughs] Tybalt stop biting me! I'm allowed to have my hand here. I'll stop touching you, I guess.

EMILY: So, Egg goes into the Tower, into the Hall. They're having a meeting, like, not with everyone convened. Egg's supporters have very pointedly been left out. But they're having a meeting about how are we going to prevent Egg from just being in charge of the entire Last Battle because of this dumb law that says when we declare war the Amyrlin's in charge. They're like, "Obviously we're going to be at war. It's the Last Battle. But we don't want Egg to be in charge." Egg's like, "Yeah, I agree. I don't want to be in charge, but I don't want to, like, I don't want to – we've got to figure out how to word this well." Clearly manipulating them. Eventually she gets them to admit that, like, okay the Hall's going to take care of the war prosecution while Egg gets to wrangle monarchs. They all vote on it. Egg's supporters enter at just the right moment and only then does someone reveal like, "Oh my gosh! The Dragon Reborn is a monarch, so she gets to wrangle the Dragon Reborn." And everyone's like, "Oh no!"

SALLY: We've been manipulated! Again!

EMILY: Again! It's almost like when Egg seems like she wants to do something we should really take a break and let everyone think it through.

SALLY: Yeah, reconvene.

EMILY: But no, they're women so they're stupid.

SALLY: You're right. Their wombs are wandering so fast all the time. Too fast, too furious.

EMILY: [sighs] Egg's like, "Glad we've settled that. Now I want to bring up a different matter, which is that we shouldn't be convening the Hall and not letting people know. That's how we got to the big schism in the first place and, you know, the power to pass laws when not everyone is present has only ever been used for bad things."

SALLY: Yep.

EMILY: And everyone's like, "Wah! We don't like to think about that." And she's like, "Well, think about it. And now we have to make new rules." Finally, everyone agrees to it, which is great. I'm glad they're making some progress on that front, I guess.

SALLY: Yeah, it is wild that the governing body can just, like, meet in secret.

EMILY: Yeah, Egg's like, "Okay, starting now if someone, you know, on, in the Hall, has to, like, leave the Tower, then someone has to be able to, like, be their sub." Which is a totally normal thing, but whatever. Um, they leave. Silvianna's like, "Great job, Egg. Um, now what?" Egg's like, "Can you send – " Or maybe actually she sends them. She sends Nicola and another girl, who's an Accepted. She's like, "Go to the Traveling grounds. Go to Caemlyn. Elayne is going to give you a bunch of copies of *ter'angreal* that we can use to get to *tel'aran'rhiod*. I'm going to



start training you.” Silvianna’s like, “Um, I don’t know if it was the best idea to tell Nicola Loudmouth.”

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: “Mrs. Can’t Shut Up that because they’re going to be spreading it everywhere.” And Egg’s like, “Yeah, I want them to spread it everywhere so I can lay a trap, a clever ruse for Mesaana.” Silvianna’s like, “Okay, don’t put, you know, Accepted in danger please.” Egg’s like, “Don’t worry, they’ll be fine.” She’s like, “Oh also, have you found out where Gawyn is?” She just thinks he’s in Tar Valon somewhere. And Silvianna’s like, “Oh, yeah. I actually found out he’s in Caemlyn so.” And Egg’s like, “Oh, okay, send him a letter to come back.”

SALLY: She’s like, “I need him.”

EMILY: I need him. It’s, like, girl, no you don’t.

SALLY: She also says, I would just like to draw everyone’s attention to this, “That man will be the death of me.”

EMILY: And he is! [laughing]

SALLY: [laughs] So, just thought that was a fun little, you know...

EMILY: I hope Brandon Sanderson did that intentionally.

SALLY: Foreshadowing.

EMILY: Um, yeah. It’s weird that Egg wants Gawyn back. Is all I’m gonna say.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: He – she – her life has not changed significantly in his absence, for the worse, certainly.

SALLY: No.

EMILY: Having him there won’t be better. So, it would have been great if he left and she was just like, “Oh, right. He was weird and not normal about me, so I’m going to carry on.” But she’s like, “Get him back here, because I need him.” And I’m like, “For what?”

SALLY: Yeah. To fight with?

EMILY: No. What are you doing?

SALLY: Does that get you off?

EMILY: Yeah, okay. [high pitched] So! [laughs] Okay, those are those three chapters. What would you say your mood is?

SALLY: I would say, after that – I forgot to track it from last week. We said what? Resigned and mad, last week?

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Well, um, I am feeling...mostly mad.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Mostly mad.

EMILY: Mad and confused.

SALLY: I was just about to say the same. A little confused.

EMILY: Confused not like – like, I understand what's going on in the plot, I just don't understand why these choices are being made about the plot.

SALLY: Yeah. Like, again, the hammer? Again?

EMILY: Yeah, but mostly mad.

SALLY: Okay, I'll do mad and a little confused. And last week we were resigned and a little mad. So.

EMILY: So, that's [muttering].

SALLY: What a beautiful chart. I'm gonna post a picture of it so you guys can finally see it, but it's –

EMILY: It's a rainbow that's slowly going to become more and more red, I sense.

SALLY: Yeah. Yeah. We're gonna have one instance of happy on the board the entire season [laughs].

EMILY: [laughs] The one moment we were happy was when Rand was weird in a funny way.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But now he's weird in an infuriating way.

SALLY: Yeah. In a not funny way and a not *fun* way. Stupid.

EMILY: Well, uh, thanks everyone for listening. Thanks to Glynna MacKenzie for our theme song. Thank you to our patrons on Patreon and our followers on social media.

SALLY: Yeah, we love you guys the most.

EMILY: Mm-hmm. Um, I think that's it. Do you have a sign off?

SALLY: [laughs] I do. Um, I was in a training, a virtual training all day, um, for the last two days and a half day today. And it's, like, a, it's a regulation training, so, like, pretty intense, like, it's through this really well-known consulting agency in the country and our, like, [laughs] it was virtual so it was cameras off, mics off, was supposed to be, like, the vibe. We were told at the beginning, like, nobody wants to hear your background noise, keep your mic off. [laughs] Yesterday, in the middle of [laughs], in the middle of just the presenter talking someone had their mic turned on and just [laughing] belched so loud.

EMILY: [laughing] No!

SALLY: [laughing] Just, like, it was unbelievable, like, cartoonish.

EMILY: How many people were in this?

SALLY: Like, twenty-something. I know. And, like, the presenter didn't miss a beat. She was just like, "Yes? Do you have a question? You've unmuted." Because if someone – you could unmute to ask questions.

EMILY: Uh-huh.

SALLY: And nobody said anything. But I was, like, openly weeping. [laughing] I was laughing so hard, so I don't know how she kept such a straight face. Oh my god, you guys [laughs].

EMILY: Guys, turn off your mics.

SALLY: [laughing] It was so funny!

EMILY: What in the world!

SALLY: Uh –

EMILY: Frat boy-esque –

SALLY: I know. It was a woman, too, from the best I could tell.

EMILY: Oh.

SALLY: Yeah, so kind of impressive.

EMILY: Okay, everyone. Well, have a good week?

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: So wild.

SALLY: [laughing] It was so funny.

EMILY: Bye!