



Episode 270: Get in the Purple Zone

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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: I had to get, you know, my blood tested.

Sally: Uh-huh.

Emily: Um, 'cause my doctor was like, "So you have anxiety. What if it's also your thyroid and/or your vitamin D levels," and I was like, "Yeah, whatever, I don't care. I probably am vitamin D deficient." Got my test back yesterday – (laugh) yesterday. Thyroid's normal. Vitamin D: so deficient.

Sally: Oh, no.

Emily: I'm like – my bones are instants away from cracking. It would appear –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Based on the deficiency level of vitamin D in my body. (laugh)

Sally: Oh, no.

Emily: So I was like, "Okay, whatever, I'll go get, you know, some vitamin D supplements at the pharmacy."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Then today I get a message that's like, "Your prescription's ready." I'm like, "I already got my prescription. My anxiety pills." I go look it up and it's like, oh, no, it's actually this very special vitamin D supplement that you have to take once a week 'cause it's so much vitamin D.

Sally: Oh my God.

Emily: So apparently my doctor was like, "Huh?"

Sally: "Oh my God, she's dying."

Emily: Simple pharmacy at Smith's-level –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Vitamin D will not do.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: We have to get her the big boys.

Sally: The big boys.

Emily: So I have to go pick that up tomorrow.

Sally: Oh, I'm so sorry.

Emily: Very annoying. Anyway. Anyway, Towers of Midnight, huh?

Sally: Or something.

Emily: Or something. This is Everybody Hates Rand, your friendly neighborhood Wheely Time podcast. I'm Emily Juchau.

Sally: And I'm Sally Goodger. And I forgot our mood tracker once again, so I will get it at the end of the episode.

Emily: Oh, that's okay. Um, this is, like – I read this, like, a week ago.

Sally: That's fine.

Emily: Uh, so it's not super, super clear.

Sally: I read it today and it didn't feel super, super clear.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: It's kind of a muddled section, a little bit.

Emily: Lots of bouncing around.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: As far I recall.

Sally: Yeah, that's correct.

Emily: Um –

Sally: Oh, Tybalt. You found some kibble, I see.

Emily: I'm so happy for you, pal. From what I recall, we start with Perrin and Faile going to bed. Faile's like, "I'm sort of weirded out that, uh, the lady who we thought was our serving woman was actually the queen of Andor this entire time."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Perrin's like, "Well, let it go." And Faile's like, "Okay, I'll just stop having feelings about it, I guess." (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, and Perrin goes – she's like – she's also like, "Are you sure about doing the whole trial thing?" And he's like, "I gotta. The best – you know, it's the only strategy I got at this point," and she's like, "Okay." He goes to bed to have a training sequence with Hopper. He wakes up next to the Tower of Ghenjei, which is kind of funny, 'cause –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Hopper's like, "You must've – you must've been thinking about it," and Perrin's like, "I was certainly not thinking about it," and Hopper's like, "Oh, okay, then someone you're – obviously the next most obvious answer is that someone to whom you are telepathically connected –"

Sally: (laugh) Yeah. "Is thinking about it."

Emily: "Is thinking of the Tower of Ghenjei," and Perrin's like, "Okay."

Sally: "Sure."

Emily: "Mat, I guess." Um, but Hopper's like, "Stay away from it. It's bad – it's a bad place." Um, they go to investigate the little purple dome that is around Perrin's – not just the camp, but around the geographical region generally.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's unclear how much area this covers, you know, in terms of square mileage. Um, but they're – they can feel that there are some wolves inside this barrier and that there's some distress and Slayer's, like, attacking them. Perrin's like, "Gotta go get them." So Hopper's like, "Yeah, problem, you can't just teleport past the barrier," for some reason. And Perrin's like, "Oh, that sucks," so he tries to just go through it and it, like, repels him.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And he's like, "No!" And Hopper's like, "It's cause you're an idiot," and goes through, and then Perrin's like, "Okay –" Hopper's like, "You just gotta, like, do the usual wolf stuff of mind over matter," or something, so Perrin's like, powers through the barrier – I actually think he just runs through it, 'cause he's like, "Momentum alone will carry me."

Sally: Yeah, the – the barrier, like, takes your strength away and so Perrin's like, "It can't take my strength away if I'm running really fast."

Emily: Physics.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: (sing-song) Perrin the Science ... Wolf.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) I really couldn't think of a rhyme for "Perrin."

Sally: Perrin. Karen. Starin'. Barren. (laugh) This is the rest of the episode.

Emily: This is the – this is the greatest podcast ever. Give us an award for 2023. Um –

Sally: Yeah, where's our Webby?

Emily: (laugh) Is that what it is?

Sally: I think that – I think they give – I think Webby gives podcast awards.

Emily: Oh, okay. Um –

Sally: I don't know why I remember it from the –

Emily: They probably just give it to celebrities.

Sally: Aubrey Gordon documentary.

Emily: Um, then they get in the purple zone. (laugh) The purple zone.

Sally: Get in the zone.

Emily: Sounds like it's a commercial for Mountain Dew of some kind.

Sally: I was thinking AutoZone.

Emily: Auto – "Get in the zone. The AutoZone."

Sally: "The Purple Zone."

Emily: The purple zone. Uh, they get in the zone, they go to rescue the wolves. Perrin, like, briefly runs away from Slayer, gets away from him. The end.

Sally: Yeah, Perrin sees a bunch of, like, teleportation and shit.

Emily: Yeah, it's just some, you know.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But they get away from Slayer and Perrin's like, "What's this giant purple thing?" And Hopper's like, "I don't know, but I don't like it." End of scene.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Meanwhile, Ituralde –

Sally: Oh my God.

Emily: So much is happening to Ituralde.

Sally: Um.

Emily: Ituralde's in Malden. Um –

Sally: (laugh) He's not in Malden, isn't – is he?

Emily: ... Maradon.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Boy, it was a mistake having two Ma – Ma –

Sally: Ituralde is now taken over Malden.

Emily: Ituralde has teleported to Malden, a highly defensible city, as we've seen. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: Dealing with, you know, attacks against the walls, he – he goes to talk to one of the main Asha'man guys, whose name is Deepe, with an "e" at the end.

Sally: (laugh) So dumb. This is also, like, a really minor complaint, but we're introduced to this guy and his name's, like, Deepe Bardor or something – Bhardar, something like that. And then we find out he's Andoran. And, like, not that there's been any sort of, like, naming convention given, but, like, I would not have clocked that as an Andoran name.

Emily: I was like – Deepe Bhadar.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's B-h-a-d-a-r. So I was like, okay, so presumably if we are going by normal naming conventions –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That is a vaguely South Asian name.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But no, he's Andoran. The white guy.

Sally: So he's just, like, a white guy.

Emily: And I'm like, what?

Sally: And I know that, like, does not matter. You can have whatever naming convention in your fantasy land that you want, I guess. But also, like, we are bringing real world cues to this.

Emily: Yeah, most –

Sally: So it's just like – it's weird. And also, like, typically our Andoran names have been, like, Elayne.

Emily: And Charlz.

Sally: Yeah, so it was – just bugged me.

Emily: And Tim. And Bob, you know? Bob Cratchit. Um, yeah, it is – it is weird. There – there – I agree. The, like, names – the fantasy names in this text have more or less been, like, you know, so adjacent to – to white people names –

Sally: Right.

Emily: That they indicate white people or they're just, like, fantasy™ names –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That don't really correspond to any sort of nationality or race. So this one is just, like, slightly off the balance scale there.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So it's a little annoying.

Sally: Felt a little strange to me.

Emily: Anyway, Deepe is like, "We've got a problem, which is that I can feel channelers –"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Amongst the enemy ranks. And, you know, I can only feel male channelers, so who knows if there's female channelers." And Ituralde's like, "Ooh, well, that's a problem." Um, and Ituralde starts to give this, like, big order of, like, uh, "I want the Asha'man to be ready to, like, retreat back because you're, you know, an important resource, so I don't want to just, like, lose all of you guys." Blah blah blah blah blah. When the wall that they're standing on explodes. And, credit to Brandon, it's a very good, like, depiction of being in an explosion.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Ituralde loses his hearing for a little while, um, and Deepe loses a leg or both legs.

Sally: I think just a leg.

Emily: A leg, yeah. And Ituralde is kind of, like, stumbling half-consciously around, eventually gets taken to a – a medical tent and is capital-h Healed by one of the other Asha'man, so he gets his hearing back, but also this guy is like, "I'm gonna use a weave on you that'll, like, you know, give you a jolt of energy." It's like Panera's caffeinated lemonade. It could be dangerous, but – (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Is that too deep of a cut?

Sally: No, that was funny.

Emily: Um, he's like, "But it'll get you on your feet." Ituralde's like, "Great." Uses it. Um, so that Ituralde can keep command. But of course now there's a giant hole in the wall, so Ituralde is like, "Well, this is bad. We probably need to abandon the city." And Yoeli's like, "Unfortunately I will not be abandoning the city because I have a death wish and so do all of my guys."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Ituralde's like, "That's so great for you. I love that. And I love that now I'm in a position where I either have to abandon you or leave –"

Sally: Die.

Emily: Yeah, "Die with you," great. Um, but he chooses to defend –

Sally: He's manipulated into staying.

Emily: Yeah, Yoeli's like, "Aren't you one of the great generals? Show me your dick." Like, what the fuck is –

Sally: (laugh) Yeah, basically that's how the scene goes.

Emily: Yeah. It's like –

Sally: He's like, "What's the point of you?"

Emily: "What's the point of you? I thought you were so great, so show me." Ituralde's like, "Fine," and sets up this sort of, like, ongoing ambush system where everyone hides in buildings and when a bunch of – you know, a group of bad guys are walking up a street, they get attacked by archers and cavalry coming from big buildings, and you know, blah blah blah blah blah.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Basically the only sort of, um, warfare you can conduct inside of a city. No mention, really, is made of where the civilians are at this point.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I don't know if they have been evacuated; it doesn't seem –

Sally: It's hard to – yeah, it doesn't –

Emily: Like –

Sally: Seem like they're there, but.

Emily: It just, like, doesn't seem like a concern, though, either.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, that is my main issue when a city gets invaded. Not that it's – I mean, it is less defensible. It is obviously always better to hide behind a big wall.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: But, like, cities are well-enough equipped to suit guerilla warfare, urban guerilla warfare, except that they're full of people.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: For, like, such rigorous attention to these Ituralde military scenes, that seems like a big gap in, um, the narrative.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Anyway. We then get a scene where Faile and Alliandre and Berelain are walking along, you know, in the campaign for Berelain and Faile to look like friends. And Faile's like, "It's suddenly a lot easier to be Berelain's friend because she's being an absolute imbecile over Galad, who she saw once."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's like her brain fled from – fled through her pussy. She's just – (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. Like, I'm sure it will get more annoying to me as we go on, but I was reading this, and I was just like, this is just – like, she just has a bad crush. You know?

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: She's making up silly excuses to go –

Emily: She's like, "Maybe Perrin should send –"

Sally: See –

Emily: "Me as a mediator –"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Or something," and Faile's like, "To an army full of Whitecloaks? They'll just take you captive or something. No."

Sally: Yeah. Like, she's not being the smartest woman in the world. Um, but for right now I think it's kind of sweet.

Emily: Yeah, I just –

Sally: But Alliandre or somebody makes – Faile makes the great point that Galad might be a viable romantic interest if he wasn't the leader of a domestic terrorist group. (laugh)

Emily: Yeah, Faile's like, "Sure, he's hot, I guess, but he's also in charge of the Whitecloaks."



Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which is a significant –

Sally: Yeah. That's a pretty large red flag. So maybe I take my comments back. It's not sweet. Berelain is being dumb.

Emily: They're just like, "Girl." Um –

Sally: Then they get attacked by knives. It's a bubble of evil.

Emily: Yeah, and then they get attacked by all their weapons come to life and attack people, and the magical solution to this is you throw dirt at it. I – there's no logic here, that's just this bubble of evil.

Sally: Yep.

Emily: The most hilarious bit of this is that Perrin's hammer, among all the weapons, does not attack anyone. (laugh)

Sally: Because it's not a weapon, you guys.

Emily: Because it's not a weapon, you guys. It's just reinforcing Perrin's –

Sally: It can also create.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: You guys are not getting it. (laugh)

Emily: Which, like, I don't know if that is meant to indicate that, like, the things that are seen as weapons by the bearers or something, but Perrin does patently use it as a weapon.

Sally: I know.

Emily: So it just feels like Brandon or Robert or whoever is being like, "Please believe me that hammers are different than other weapons in this super important way."

Sally: And I don't. Believe you.

Emily: And I don't, yeah, I –

Sally: You can use almost anything as a tool, as our many, many, many ancient ancestors proved.

Emily: I spent basically my entire adolescence watching crime procedural shows.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, at my friends' houses, you know? It's just CSI, Criminal Minds, Psych, whatever. Do you know how many people have been hit in the head by normal-ass hammers and died?

Sally: Many.

Emily: In those TV shows? So many.

Sally: It's silly. My other favorite part of this is that Grady and Neald are like, "No big – no big deal, babe," and they're just walking around –

Emily: Yeah, Perrin is like, it was actually very scary, like, they both have little knives and they were just like, "Pew," grenades.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "We are weapons." So then they were just walking around, like, "Doo da doo da doo."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Their section of the camp was the safest. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. (laugh) Everyone was like, "Thank you, Grady and Neald."

Emily: And everyone's like, "Oh my God. Are Grady and Neald, like, super hot?"

Sally: (laugh) "Is it just me or did the Swede get, like, super hot?"

Emily: (laugh) "Is it just me?" Gaul's like, "Is it just me, or are Grady and Neald, like, so hot?"

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: God, if only. If only this show.

Sally: That would be the throuple of all time.

Emily: Um, we cut over to Morgase and Galad –

Sally: (gagging noise)

Emily: Where Morgase is valiantly trying to teach Galad, who I believe is in his late twenties, critical thinking. And she's like, "God, I really messed this – this was a bad parenting decision, that I let him get this far –"

Sally: Yeah, at least –

Emily: "Into extremist thinking," and I'm like, yeah, girl, but also, he is twenty-seven or whatever.

Sally: Yeah, and, like, a –

Emily: How did it get this bad?

Sally: At least to Morgase's credit she's like, "Mm, this one might be on me."

Emily: She's like, "You know –"

Sally: "This one might be on me."

Emily: “I really just let him go around thinking that he is the ultimate arbiter of right and wrong.”

Sally: Yeah. Yeah. And in hindsight? (laugh) In hindsight, that was not ideal.

Emily: “In hindsight, maybe, uh, um.”

Sally: Um. So then she just also talked about child Galad, she was like, “He was super severe and melancholy and even as a child thought the world was black and white,” and it’s like, so you didn’t say anything when he was six?

Emily: Yeah, like, it’s a thing where she’s like, “I was just so busy running the country, I guess, that I didn’t really pay attention to my stepson’s weird neuroses.” (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it’s like, girl. Yeah. At least you’re self-aware enough to realize that this was a bad parenting –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Decision on your part, and we, at this point, can only wish you’d done differently.

Sally: But to Emily’s point, Galad is like twenty-eight or whatever. Like, at some point, he is responsible for his own decisions.

Emily: Yeah, it’s – what I find mostly remarkable is that Mogase solely is in charge, for some reason, of Galad’s critical thinking skills.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, it is true that, um, she was probably a – an extremely important influence in his life, but for his younger years, at least, he had a father.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Before Thom killed him in a hunting, quote unquote, accident.

Sally: Accident.

Emily: Um, and, like, he’s had teachers and tutors his entire life.

Sally: Yeah, and he had a mother briefly. (laugh) I guess.

Emily: Yeah, at some point. He had siblings, like, yeah, Galad has not been raised in a vacuum.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: This is not the first time he should be hearing that sometimes things are messed up.

Sally: Yeah. And because Galad finding out that Valda did not kill his mother, he only raped her brutally –

Emily: Yeah, that sent him spiraling. He's like, "Oh my God."

Sally: He's like, "Oh my God, I did a bad thing by killing someone who was innocent of murder," and Morgase is like, "Valda was categorically not innocent of anything. I'm sure he murdered other people."

Emily: Yeah, Morgase is like, "Um, I wouldn't lose sleep over that one," and Galad's like, "You don't understand, I have to lose sleep." And Morgase is like, "There are actual things that you could lose sleep over. Such as the domestic terrorism of your group."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Valda is not one of them."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Morgase is like, "Let me give you a thought problem." (laugh) "I have been a judge on many criminal, capital cases –"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "And I know of at least one where I sentenced an innocent man to death and, like, what do I do about that? Is there any – are there any solid answers about that one?" Like – um, and Galad's like, "Oh my God. I've never heard –" (laugh)

Sally: She's like, "Do I deserve to die, Galad?" and he's like –

Emily: Galad's like, "Oh my God."

Sally: "Oh my God."

Emily: "I don't know what the answer is."

Sally: It's so –

Emily: And it's like, the answer is, abolish capital punishment, Galad, but that would require you to think outside of the box here.

Sally: Yeah, the answer is you shouldn't have sentenced a man to die.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Um –

Emily: But does more capital punishment solve the problem? Who knows.

Sally: Yeah. Yeah, Galad is like, "I have to release a letter to my men, letting them know that I killed a man who was innocent of murder," and it's just, like, this whole spiral – and it's nothing new with Galad. Like, we've seen him do this type of stuff before. This is a heightened example, showing how ridiculous this black-and-white honor system is that he has invented for himself. Um, I think that for once the narrative is perhaps intentionally showing us that Galad is making ridiculous decisions, and particularly around this trial. Like, one of Morgase's big arguments is

that, like, the Last Battle is literally happening right now. Like, we shouldn't be doing this. Um, and Galad is just like, "No, no, no, it's important." It's like, it's not, though.

Emily: Yeah, the narrative is setting up Galad to have some sort of character growth.

Sally: Yes.

Emily: Or development. Um, and that's fine. I think the only issue here is that we are on book thirteen of fourteen –

Sally: Yep.

Emily: And so this is quite wild to be having this sort of baseline of character growth and development happening.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Galad has been introduced – Galad was introduced to us as a character in book one, and right around the same time, the, like, main problem of his character was also introduced with Elayne and Gawyn both saying, like, "Yeah, Galad has a problem with extreme thinking."

Sally: Mm.

Emily: Um, and that was shown to us and more exemplified in the next few books, but, like, around book six, when it became, like, a thing and a problem, like, it should've started resolving. But Galad is a minor character in a book full of major and minor characters, so there just has not been page space to devote to him –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Until this point. The narrative would have us believe.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's like, the – the – I was thinking about this a lot last night, 'cause I was thinking about "Our Flag Means Death," but, like, this series does not quite know how to distinguish between characters who need to have character development and characters who can be flat in the background.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It is giving – boosting too many characters who should be side, flat characters to character development stage.

Sally: Right.

Emily: You know, Galad, Berelain, Gawyn.

Sally: Yeah. No, that's a very good point. Not every character needs to be a round, fully fleshed-out dynamic character.

Emily: Yeah, some characters, sad as it is to say, in fiction are just there for other characters' character development.

Sally: Yeah. And that's fine, they can still be lovely and interesting characters. They're just not, like – there's not a lot to 'em, you know?

Emily: Yeah. That's fine.

Sally: And that's fine. Side characters are some of the best characters because they just get to have this kind of, like, one personality – one or three personality traits, and it's just kind of comforting to come back to them. Like, yeah.

Emily: Um, we get a brief cut to Perrin talking to Gaul, um, and, like, Tam runs in and is like, "Perrin, I gotta go," and we're like, "Whoa, Tam's still here?" And also, oh, Tam is leaving, that must be that – we're on page 462 of Towers of Midnight. The Perrin timeline has finally caught up to where the Rand timeline was at the end of the last book. This is so confusing.

Sally: It is so confusing, and it also made me so mad. We'll talk more about it when we get to the end, but I was like, why are we doing this?

Emily: It's so unnecessary.

Sally: Like, you could maybe do this one scene to, like, indicate that Perrin is behind – Perrin also does not need to be behind because Perrin's arc is really atemporal. Like, there's nothing –

Emily: Anchoring him.

Sally: Anchoring him to any other particular event. If they were just like, "And suddenly it's the Last Battle and Perrin's gotta go," I'd be like, yeah, that – sure.

Emily: Sure, yeah.

Sally: No big deal.

Emily: Ridiculous.

Sally: Whatever. Bye, Tam, I guess.

Emily: Um, we get a section of Elayne and Birgitte going to a demonstration of the cannons – the first demonstration, 'cause now Aludra has, you know, not just made prototypes but made actual –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: First attempts.

Sally: Sweet.

Emily: Um, so they, like, watch from the top of a wall while this happens. Aludra's, like, explaining, like, these are very, um – you know, these are very early cannons in the history of our world's cannons, so it's like – takes multiple men to load them, and it takes several minutes

just to get one cannonball fired, blah blah blah blah. But look at the levels of destruction they can wreak. And Elayne's like, "Sweet, this is a great weapon. I can't wait to use this." And Birgitte, wisely, is like, "Eugh."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "This is bad."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "For the world generally; it might be fine for now, but –"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "I don't like this." Uh, then we get a Faile point of view as she is meeting with, you know, her little spies who she sent to the Whitecloak camp, and all they come back with is – yeah, so the Whitecloaks. They don't come back with anything useful.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, so Faile spends some time, like, with the guy who's in charge of the Two Rivers guys now that Tam is gone, just talking about, like, okay, here's what we're gonna do if things go south. We're gonna have this whole, like, escape plan via the Travelers and blah blah blah blah, and covering our retreat, yadda yadda. Then we get, um, a Perrin and Hopper training sequence wherein Perrin's like, "I'm not learning fast enough; I need to know how to do more stuff," and Hopper's like, "Okay, we can speedrun it by putting you into nightmares." Like, going out and finding people's nightmares that are floating around in Tel'aran'rhiol, which we know is a thing, um, and you will, like, practice basically, like, banishing them, I guess, just by anchoring yourself to whatever is real. Um, and we've seen sequences like this before through the girls' points of view. Perrin goes and does it, and it's, like, a lady's dream about the Dragon Reborn, kaiju-style rampaging through the countryside, which is actually extremely funny. Um – oh, my leg fell asleep.

Sally: Oh, no, not your leggie. Come back, leggie.

Emily: (grunt) Um, and this is fine. It's mostly annoying because it puts in stark contrast how every time one of the girls encountered a nightmare, it immediately veered into torture porn.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It was like, and it's a nightmare of women being sexually assaulted by Myrddraal or something –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And torture's happening, and everyone's in a Saw trap, and Perrin's just like, a scary a version of Rand.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's like, okay.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: We can clearly see where –

Sally: Yeah, where –

Emily: Where the authors' priorities lie.

Sally: Women stand.

Emily: Um, but Perrin, just by the monster being Rand, Perrin's like, "I know Rand isn't a kaiju," so he –

Sally: If only he were.

Emily: Yeah. Hopper also comes in and saves his ass, and then, when they're done with that, they're, like, gonna do more, but Hopper's like, "Something's happening." (sniffing)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Sniff, sniff. Over at Dragonmount. So they go over to investigate, and it's like, ah, they're on the slopes of Dragonmount, and there's a huge storm going. And we, reading this, are like, oh, is this the moment of Rand's enlightenment? The climax of the last book? Now, in the middle of Towers of Midnight? What an odd decision. So we get, like, Perrin climbing the mountain in this raging storm, and Hopper leaves at some point. Hopper says, like, "A choice has to be made," and Hopper's – Perrin's like, "Okay, what – what's – what do we choose? What's the correct one?"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Right or left?" Hopper's like, "No, it's not our choice," and Perrin's like, "Then why the fuck are we even here?" and Hopper's like, "But it's a decision between the Last Battle or, you know –"

Sally: Oblivion.

Emily: "Nothing. Oblivion." And Perrin's like, "Ooh, sounds serious." So he, like, climbs the mountain and gets up to this, like, you know, dream version of Rand, where Rand is standing in the middle of the storm and getting surrounded by darkness. And Perrin's like, "You can do it, Rand!" Like, shouting encouragement at him as Rand slowly disappears behind the darkness. And then, suddenly, some light emerges – it made me think of that scene in Beauty and the Beast. You know, where, like, little dots of light –

Sally: Oh, yeah.

Emily: Start shooting off his fingers. Animated Beauty and the Beast, to be clear.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: And then, um, Perrin – suddenly it's all light, and the storm goes away, and all the wolves and Perrin are like, "Fuck yeah, we did it, the Last Battle." So. What a wild decision is all I have



to say, to have this scene, A, in the middle of Towers of Midnight and not concurrent with this actual scene happening at the end of –

Sally: The last book.

Emily: The last book.

Sally: Almost five hundred pages of content ago.

Emily: And, B, to have this scene where Perrin does nothing.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And is just looking at it. Like, okay, it's fine to have a scene where, as Perrin references, like, someone is just witnessing something else major that is going on.

Sally: Sure.

Emily: We have in fact seen that in this, like, series before –

Sally: Sure.

Emily: In terms of characters witnessing Rand doing important things. But for, like, pacing and tension and development reasons, those things have to be concurrent. To have it happen after we already know the result is freaking wild.

Sally: Yeah. Yeah, there's absolutely no tension in this because we know what happens.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Like, we're like, as soon as he's like, "We're on Dragonmount and there's a storm," I'm like, oh, yeah, it's just that clown, you know? So there's no tension, which is really frustrating because this is quite a drawn-out scene. It's like six or seven pages, basically, of Perrin – that might be a little long, maybe like five pages. But still, that's quite a long time –

Emily: Of Perrin climbing this mountain and being like, "It's so bad."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "The storm is so bad and scary, and Rand is so bad and scary," just over and over again.

Sally: Yeah. It's just, like, really drawn out for a scene with, like, no tension. Like, it's incredibly boring just on, like, a basic reading level, and yeah, there's just, like, no purpose to it. We gain absolutely nothing out of this except that the wolves are like, "Cool, it's the Last Battle."

Emily: Yeah, rad.

Sally: But, like, we don't need that.

Emily: We already know.

Sally: Yeah. I – I don't understand this decision literally at all. Because it's not like Perrin played a role in it. We already know that it was Lews Therin being like, "Maybe Ilyena lives still," that made Rand not wanna, you know, blow up the world.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: So what is the point of Perrin being like, "Go, bestie"?

Emily: Yeah, you could've written this scene in two ways to have more of an impact. One, you could've had Perrin be the point of view character of this, like, epiphany.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, it almost would've been more impactful if we didn't know Rand's thought process, because –

Sally: Oh, yeah, seriously.

Emily: God, Rand's thought process was so –

Sally: Bad, yeah.

Emily: Boring and sexist and boring.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, and having the scene through Perrin's eyes would actually fulfill the purpose of having a, quote unquote, witness scene.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Like, when a character's a witness, that is because they are witnessing for us, the readers.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Like, they are the vessel through which the scene is unfolding. And that's fine if a character is witnessing something but not taking action if that is what is happening for the reader also.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Or you could've had Perrin actually have an impact on this scene. You could've had Perrin – like, Rand hear Perrin's voice on the wind or whatever and be like, "Encouragement, love, friendship." Of course, that would've required there to be any love or friendship in the Wheel of Time series –

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: A theme which has been starkly absent for the last – eight or nine books?

Sally: Yeah. Woof.

Emily: So it would have been pretty wild and out of place if Perrin's voice alone managed to –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Rescue –

Sally: “Go, bestie!”

Emily: Rand from the abyss. (laugh) Kind of would've required rewrites of the entire series.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But, like, at least then Perrin would've been doing something.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Or – I don't know. If Perrin had been doing it – it didn't have to be Perrin just hyping up Rand. If Perrin was doing something important in the world of dreams, that would have –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Been cool. It would've been cool if Egwene was there at the same time, you know?

Sally: Yeah, and they're both like, “Damn, are you seeing this shit?”

Emily: Yeah. And, like, “We both are doing things to help Rand,” and now it becomes, like, a group effort –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Instead of Rand's solo enlightenment journey, which was so unsatisfying.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: (sigh) So just an absolutely wild narrative choice, is all I can say.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Truly don't know what to do with it.

Sally: I don't think there is anything to do with it.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Just be like, “Kay, girl.”

Emily: You're just like, well, that was bizarre.

Sally: And totally useless. You stupid bitch.

Emily: I guess that's it for that section. Um. In our next section, we will have Mat's confrontation with the gholam.

Sally: Sweet.

Emily: We will have more Maradon – not Malden – um, sections, including the climax of that sequence. It will end, one way or the other. Um, and we'll have an extremely annoying Min point of view, as always, and then we'll have some sort of scattered points of view from Egwene, Perrin, and Gawyn.

Sally: Is that chapter called "Good Soup"?

Emily: Yeah. "A Good Soup." 'Cause the chapter starts with, "Siuan makes a pretty good soup." And that's the only reference to soup that there is. It's just clearly like – Brandon was like, "I have no idea what to name this chapter because there's no thematic coherence, so soup it is." Um, all of which is, uh, sort of leading – the Egwene and Perrin stuff is leading up to Perrin's, um, trial, Whitecloaks trial, obviously, and also this sort of climactic Tel'aran'rhiod sequence that will intersect with Egwene's Tel'aran'rhiod sequence, where she is confronting Mesaana. So.

Sally: Cool. Whoa.

Emily: We're ramping up to something.

Sally: Something.

Emily: We already know that, like, the climax of this book is going to be the Tower of Ghenjei –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So it's, like, a little confusing that we're going to be having a different climactic sequence for other characters going on at, like, the midpoint of the book. You know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: They're not all intersecting, the way they did so neatly at the end of the Dragon Reborn, but so it goes.

Sally: Yeah, I was just gonna say, I miss the early books where, like, climactic sequences made sense together –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Even if they were separate.

Emily: Where things were all happening at the same time.

Sally: Yeah, same time.

Emily: Approximately, yeah. Pretty cool.

Sally: And now it's like, Perrin's actually six months in the past.

Emily: Sooooo.

Sally: And yet somehow he and Egg are doing the same thing, even though Egg had a – decided to go after Mesaana after her encounter with the enlightened Dragon Reborn.

Emily: (makes an “I don’t know” noise)

Sally: So, I guess –

Emily: Yeah, it would’ve been three days for Perrin and for Egwene –

Sally: A month?

Emily: A month.

Sally: Two weeks?

Emily: Who knows.

Sally: Hard to say.

Emily: We will –

Sally: I don’t know how long Perrin goes before that, but it’s just like, why aren’t they just on the same –

Emily: Yeah, I don’t remember how much time there is between –

Sally: They’re probably on the same timeline by then, but I just think the whole thing is silly.

Emily: Wild.

Sally: Silly billy.

Emily: Okay, everyone. Thanks for listening. Our mood? Confused, primarily, for me. And annoyed? Is “annoyed” one?

Sally: Yeah, “annoyed” is one. I also feel confused. Everything about the world of the wolf dream is very confusing to me; I don’t know why it has to be so different from Tel’aran’rhiod. It really bugs me.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: That it’s like the same place with two different systems.

Emily: Sets of rules, in a way, yeah.

Sally: Yeah, I don’t like that. So confused, annoyed.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, thanks for listening, everyone. Thank you to Glynn MacKenzie for our theme song.

Sally: Yes.

Emily: Thanks to our patrons on Patreon and our followers on social media. Um, welcome to 2024, as you are listening to this.

Sally: That's right. That's weird.

Emily: Thanks for the full year of 2023.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: We really enjoyed, um, talking to you guys, if not the books themselves. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, you guys make it a lot better. And ...

Emily: And we're looking forward to finishing the series this year, I believe.

Sally: Yeah, it'll probably be the final year.

Emily: Yep. So, 2024, the end of an era.

Sally: 2024, the Last Battle.

Emily: The Last Battle.

Sally: The whole year.

Emily: Mm-hmm. Um, anything else to add?

Sally: Naur.

Emily: Do you have a sign-off?

Sally: I mean, this is very, very minor. Uh, the sign-off itself. I'm having some problems with my eyes; I don't know what they are. They just, like, hurt an incredible amount, and the doctors are like, "You're fine. Actually, go die in a gutter," the way the American healthcare system is wont to do. (laugh) Um, so in, like, you know, trying all the home remedies, including wearing – I have a pair of glasses that are blue light-filter glasses, but Past Sally, for some reason, despite working an administrative-heavy job where she sits in front of a computer screen eight hours a day – eight hours a day – I put the blue light filter in this, like, bright orange pair of glasses and it's just, like, so embarrassing every time I have to, like, take a meeting with one of my, like –

Emily: Aww.

Sally: Bosses or consultants or funders and just be like, "Hello, it's me, in my –"

Emily: They're very cute.

Sally: "Orange glasses." (laugh) Thank you.

Emily: They look so charming.

Sally: Thank you.

Emily: I have another charming Sally – (laugh)

Sally: Oh my God. (laugh)

Emily: Sally has this bit, um, in our – it's totally sincere on her part, but in our family group chat, my family's group chat, which includes both my brothers in law and Sally, every time someone posts a picture of one of my parents, Sally will, like, hype them up. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Generally using extremely Gen Z slang that they have no hope of understanding. So she'll be like, "Chris, your drip is on fire," or whatever.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Me and all my siblings think it's the funniest and funnest thing in the entire world, and I think my parents are just delighted but confused.

Sally: Well, I'm glad your siblings think it's funny. Every time I do it, it is just, like, genuinely, like, to –

Emily: I know. It's one hundred percent you just being so nice and hyping them up, but it's always – I get such a kick out of hearing what you say. You told my mom her hair was great; I think you said, "Grandma? More like Glam-ma," and me and all my siblings were like, "This is the best thing that's ever happened." (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Anyway.

Sally: Well, I thought she looked great.

Emily: It's just a sweet Sally thing.

Sally: Thanks.

Emily: Why she's the favorite in-law. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Alright, everyone, have a good week.

Sally: Bye.

Emily: Goodbye.