



Episode 274: Perrin's Feelings Exhibition

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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: Okay. Listen. I'm a slut for a magic hammer, but I think that hammer – if you're gonna make a hammer magical, it should do something other than extra damage to Trollocs, you know?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's quite boring.

Sally: Yeah, when Perrin's just, like, smashing them, and it's like, it causes, you know, blunt force trauma and fire damage.

Emily: And I'm like, alright, maybe that's relevant in, like, you know, gaming terms.

Sally: Sure.

Emily: To have a weapon that does plus-one or plus-two damage –

Sally: Right, right.

Emily: But this is a book. I need some cinematic –

Sally: Right.

Emily: Explosions.

Sally: Explosions.

Emily: You know?

Sally: Sort of like a protective aura around the people fighting with Perrin.

Emily: Mm. Mm.

Sally: Some type of, like, bardic inspiration.

Emily: Yeah. Yeah.

Sally: Just, like, um –

Emily: Heal – healing powers.

Sally: Healing powers.

Emily: He should've been able to lift Galad bridal-style and heal his broken ankle. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. I – we really – we'll get there, but –

Emily: That would've been sexy.

Sally: We end this, and I'm like, I think Perrin and Galad should fuck.

Emily: Yeah, Galad should've fucked every single member of – except Rand, 'cause that's his half-brother.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: (laugh) So I take my words back.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But he should've fucked Perrin, he should've fucked Mat. He probably should've fucked Egg.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Nynaeve. They had kind of, like, a hate –

Sally: Yeah, they had kind of, like, a fun little vibe going on.

Emily: Hate-sex vibe going on, yeah.

Sally: She could've had a little fling before she and Lan got married.

Emily: And that would've been extremely funny, I think, because then it would've been like, "Hey, I'm your half-brother, I have fucked all of your friends," and Rand's like, "I haven't even fucked any of my friends."

Sally: Yeah. And Galad's like, "Well, catch up."

Emily: "Well, catch up." And Rand's like, "Fine, I'll get your sister pregnant," or whatever. Eugh. Um, anyway, this is Everybody Hates Rand, your friendly – oh my gosh! That's so cute!

Sally: (laugh) Um, I am transcribing last week's episode – sorry to interrupt – and I did so much cross-talk and so much interrupting of Emily and, like – just, like, excitedly agreeing with everything you were saying, and it's just, like, bad audio quality. So I've brought this tiny monster that I bought at the Nordstrom Rack. I actually went back to get him because he spoke to me so.

Emily: Yeah, I remember that.

Sally: It's just, like, a little stuffed animal, and he's on my leg to remind me to not interrupt.

Emily: Well, I did just interrupt myself by –

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Squee-ing over how cute he is, so.

Sally: He is really sort of darling.

Emily: Really, I think you have nothing to blame for. Guys, he's got that cute little monster face where he has pointy ears and one tooth –

Sally: One tooth.

Emily: coming out of his little smile. We'll put a picture of him on the internet –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Unless you feel that would be exploitative. I don't know.

Sally: (laugh) I did just put an article to read on my, you know, to read list about a child YouTube star, which I'm fascinated to dig into.

Emily: Like, a specific child? Or just, like, the trend generally?

Sally: Um, I think – it seems like this – I saw it on Twitter – uh, this specific reporter talking about it, it seems like kind of one of her areas of interest, is to explore this phenomenon.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: I haven't read the article yet – I, like, put it in my Safari browser to return to – um, but the specific article that was, like, at the top of the reporter's list was about a specific child star, but the child star is still underage, so she reported anonymously.

Emily: Ah, gotcha.

Sally: But from what little I skimmed in the intro paragraph, her dad said something like, "I'm not only your dad; I'm also your boss." So I hope he gets struck by lightning.

Emily: Bean Dad could never. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. (laugh) Um, so, to return, I can post a photo of my monster son, but you guys aren't allowed to send us money over his appearance.

Emily: Yeah, we're – we're not his boss.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He is his own monster little guy. He's so fucking cute.

Sally: He is really cute.

Emily: Okay, I don't remember where I was in the intro, but it's Everybody Hates Rand, your friendly neighborhood Wheely Time podcast. I'm Emily Juchau.

Sally: And I'm Sally Goodger.

Emily: And, um – (clears throat) Ah, fuck, I meant to look up Nakatomi Plaza, or Nakomi, as Aviendha's spiritual guide is called. Did you read that chapter?

Sally: Uh, I sure did –

Emily: Okay.

Sally: And was like, "Hello?"

Emily: Yeah. It's confusing. It's like, hey, who's this lady?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And why does she disappear? Is she a ghost?

Sally: Is she a ghost? Is she an apparition? Is she God? Who is she?

Emily: I dunno, and as far as I know, every Wheel of Time fan ever has been like – ("I don't know" noise) Let's look at our Wheel of Time Companion.

Sally: Oh!

Emily: We never do that.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: See if it's mentioned.

Sally: Thanks, Mitchell. You're the one who bought this for us.

Emily: "A mysterious Aiel woman whom Aviendha met in the Waste. Bair told Aviendha that she knew no one named Nakomi but that it was an ancient name." That's it.

Sally: Hmm. Well, I think there's a lot to be said about the sort of, like, trope or archetype of, like, mythical figures appearing in sort of liminal spaces, like someone coming out of the woods or out of the desert – there's an argument to be made for the desert as a sort of liminal, archetypal – archetypal – archetypal – archetypal – whatever it is – (laugh) space. Um, sort of, like, mystical figures giving you advice. Like, it's not out of the realm of, like, fantasy stuff. It just needs to be a bit more anchored, I think, in order for it to be functional.

Emily: Yeah, it feels like the authors were drawing on – we – we've often compared the Aiel to Indigenous groups –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And a lot of Indigenous peoples have, like, um, coming-of-age –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Rites and rituals that are more formalized than, you know, other cultures' coming-of-age rituals, like when my mom handed me a book that was like, "Here's how to use tampons." You know, other groups of people –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Get to do special things. (laugh)

Sally: Get to do fun things.

Emily: Get to do fun things, like special dances and stuff. Okay?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I'm not jealous. I am jealous. Um, but, uh, and that's – so I think they're drawing upon that generalized idea of, like, going out into the wilderness.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: We saw that with Rhuidean, of, like –

Sally: Yep.

Emily: You can only go – you know, there's all these formalized rites –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, that you have to follow. And so with the idea that you will, like, see things and interact with people and beings and entities, um, that are not necessarily physically there –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Is very, like – is, like, a commonly reported thing. Um. So I think that's what they're drawing from, but I think you're totally correct that it needs to be anchored in reality because none of the other Aiel – like, Aviendha will come back and be like, "So what was up with this bitch?" and all the Aiel will be like – ("I don't know" noise)

Sally: Who?

Emily: Who? And also, this is the Wheel of Time, where we have seen, like, historical, mythical figures step out of the past, literally –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: To interact with the main cast. Like, Aviendha could be doing stuff in Tel'aran'rhiod, where she interacts with some, like, you know, not Birgitte-like figure, but, like – we just don't know anything about, like, the Aiel mythology –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Except what we learned in extensive detail about the Aiel history. But it's not like the Aiel have culture heroes the way everyone else seems to have the Heroes of the Horn. It just feels so – what I'm trying to say is that it feels like a clumsy, like, "Hey, just as a reminder, the Aiel are inspired by Indigenous groups of people, but only in that they have these specific rites and rituals."

Sally: Right.

Emily: You know, they're not actually racialized the way so many – I mean, they are racialized, but they are not racial minorities the way actual Indigenous groups are, et cetera, et cetera. It's just, like, a very weird thing, where we're giving you the – the symbols of this culture without giving you any of the actual legwork to understand it.

Sally: Totally. And in that way, it kind of borders, if not kind of teeters, if not falls, on the side of being a bit racist.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Um, as though drawing on – I called – initially called it a trope, which it does still function in that there's other stories and mythologies where you would also expect to see, you know, figures of wisdom coming out of somewhere.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Not just, um, what we consider – um, not what we consider – what am I trying to say? That isn't, um, just a thing that you see Indigenous, um, cultures experiencing. You'd also see it maybe in, like, Greek mythology –

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Somebody would – you know, a prophet appears from the forest or whatever.

Emily: Yeah, it's very much an archetype of real-world cultures and fantasy.

Sally: Um. Right. But you're so right in the way that the Aiel are, um, racialized and drawing so much on Indigenous cultures without doing any type of legwork, um, into these various rituals that are almost just serving as, like, signposts – like, rituals and cultural things that are just, like, serving as signposts. It starts to feel a bit more like a stereotype.

Emily: Mm.

Sally: Like, we are supposed to just accept that the Aiel would have these rituals and something would come out of the wilderness to talk to Aviendha. I don't know if it quite goes all the way there, given how much, um, archetypes – it's also – how many archetypes it's also playing off of, but it just feels really strange. And, functionally, all it does is make Aviendha think about something in a different way. And I'm like, she's already going to, like, the magical place, where she will be taught lots of stuff and been given perspective, so, like, why do we need this to give her this specific perspective when, like, she is going to the perspective place?

Emily: Yeah, I guess it feels, like, a little, like, infantilizing toward Aviendha that she needs someone to, like, hand-hold her –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: To this sort of epiphany that she is on her journey to coming to. Um, when it feels very much like she should – like, the point of her training and her apprenticeship should be that she should be able to come to these conclusions on her own.

Sally: Right.

Emily: Perhaps after, like, her experience in Rhuidean, which we will get to later in this book. But Nakomi just seems completely unnecessary. It's a very weird and superfluous scene.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: For basically no reason.

Sally: Yeah, 'cause all we get from Nakomi is this, like, sort of stumbling through the philosophy that perhaps the Aiel don't always need to live in the Three-Fold Land, that that is not their destiny, that perhaps the Three-Fold Land was only, like, a testing ground for their true destiny. The Waste. And it's like, okay, that feels a little weird, but.

Emily: Yeah, that's sort of bizarre, sort of like a Manifest Destiny sort of –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Vibe going on here. Yeah, it's like, Aviendha starts this chapter – she's like, "By the way, I didn't Travel directly to Rhuidean 'cause I needed to get right with God –"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Or whatever. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) It's just like, fine, bestie, whatever you need.

Emily: Um, so she's just, like, running through Rhuidean – or, not Rhuidean; the Waste. And she's just like, "It's so good to be back because the wetlanders suck." It's just, like, the classic Aiel point of view, where it's like, boy, all the wetlanders are trash; all their customs are trash. They're such weaklings. And it's like, I don't know why we're still – I mean, I know why we're still covering this ground; it's because Robert Jordan doesn't know how to do character development. (sigh) But, like, it's a little ridiculous, you know. Aviendha has had many more than most Aiel, like, cultural opportunities to –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Go out and see the world and learn that the wetlanders are not a huge, just conglomerate group; they are a variety of different peoples.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, whom she can have nuanced feelings about. Anyway, she's like, "It'll be so great for the Aiel, after the Last Battle, to just book it on back to the Aiel Waste and live the rest of our lives there." Then she meets Nakomi, who just, like, pops out of nowhere and is like, "Hmm, hey, friend. Hey, girlie." (laugh)

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: "Maybe – maybe that's wrong because the, uh, Three-Fold Land is called the Three-Fold land because it's meant to, like, forge us into something for testing. And what's the test gonna be?" And Aviendha's like, "The Last Battle." And Nakomi's like, "Yeah, so after the Last Battle, we'll have proven ourselves, right? So we can just do whatever." And Aviendha's like, "Whoa. That's insane, dawg."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And it's like, there's – um, this is a, uh, complicated issue that I do think deserves – like, Aviendha should be thinking about.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, lots of our characters are thinking about the future after the Last Battle, and I think it would be valid for Aviendha to be like, "On the one hand, this is where my people grew up, and a lot of our culture and, like, identity is tied to this place and this environment specifically, and so we shouldn't just throw it away at the first opportunity. But also, maybe there are benefits to living, uh – to integrating with the rest of the world." And, like, that's not a decision Aviendha can make for her entire people.

Sally: (laugh) Yeah.

Emily: So I don't know why we're kind of acting like that.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, but it's just, like, a thing that we can be thinking about that doesn't necessarily have to have answers.

Sally: No, not at all. Like, um, it's one of those issues where, like, there probably isn't a correct answer, and that's okay. Like, multiple truths can be correct and valid, to not overuse that word, but can be true and valid at once. Um, so yeah, it's nice to, um, see those types of questions being raised in a book that's about the – in a series that's about the, quote unquote, apocalypse; to see people having enough hope and enough foresight to consider what comes after. I know the Last Battle isn't technically an apocalypse, but it's interesting.

Emily: Yeah, I just wish there wasn't, like, this attitude prevailing in this book, and maybe this is just in books generally, that, like, if a character thinks about something, then it has to be resolved.

Sally: Right.



Emily: Because what Aviendha's going to go through in Rhuidean and throughout the next book is going to be like, okay, we are going to checkmark-resolve what's up with the Aiel. And I'm like, I don't necessarily think that we need to do that.

Sally: No.

Emily: I'm comfortable, like, leaving this series, being like, the Aiel have definitely changed as a group of people, and they have a lot – they have a rich future ahead of them, and I hope it goes interesting places, but wherever it goes, frankly it's none of my business because the series is over. (laugh)

Sally: Totally. And I think there's a lot of, like, um, both narrative value and, like, if we talk about the sort of, like, personal enrichment you gain from reading anything. Like, there's a lot of value from that aspect when you read a book that leaves you with questions and things to think about. Um, it's just – again, narratively, it means you've built a really rich story with lots of things that are going on for it that are not necessarily narrative-focused. And that's really exciting, and that means you've done your craft really well.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: And in the, like, enrichment side of things, like, reading is excellent for considering various perspectives, and when a book prompts you to think about something rather than giving you the answer, um, I don't know, that's just one of the good parts about reading.

Emily: Yeah, I agree.

Sally: Even if the question is like, yeah, what do we – what do we do with – even if it's about a fantasy desert land and what that means culturally and environmentally and, like, the functionality of its lack of resources. It's interesting.

Emily: Yeah. So interesting. Wish it kind of wasn't going where it's going, but we'll get to that when we get there. Overall –

Sally: I'm sure it will end up being somehow racist. I don't know. (laugh)

Emily: Shan't spoil it for you.

Sally: I'm just guessing.

Emily: I shan't spoil it.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Um. (laugh) But super weird scene. Dunno.

Sally: Aviendha's eating, like, a lizard or a turtle or something?

Emily: Yeah, she calls it, like, a "shellback," so I was like, is this just, you know, fantasy A Turtle?

Sally: Yeah, are you just eating, like, a box turtle?

Emily: Which is – okay.

Sally: That's fine, you're in the desert, but, like – she's just like, sitting there, roasting this reptile or whatever, and just a lady comes up and –

Emily: Yeah, it's very Mad Max eats a raw two-headed lizard –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Vibes. Just –

Sally: You're like, bestie, hello?

Emily: If this is you thriving, then okay. Good for you. Couldn't be me, though. We then switch over to Perrin, who's, like, having a bad time. (laugh) Mentally, you know, the way he always does. The whole army has moved positions; they are now in a totally different random place. Everyone's kind of settling down. Perrin's just, like, gazing into the middle distance. "Who am I?" You know, very Zoolander.

Sally: Sure.

Emily: "Who am I?" Um, and Faile gets – comes up to him and is like, "The vibes you're giving off right now are so rancid, and everyone's mega stressed about it."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And he's like, "Tsk, don't know what to tell you, Faile. I feel mega rancid. That's just how it is." And she's like, "Okay, well, you're a leader of men, so please pull it together."

Sally: Yeah, could you at least do this, like, in private?

Emily: Yeah. And he's like, "No, I need to make an exhibition of my feelings." (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: "To prove it, I am going to go do some blacksmithing," just to, like, once again, get right with God.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: On Perrin's walk with Christ, blacksmithing is a necessary component. So he goes up to the, you know, little makeshift forge that they've got for making horseshoes and whatever. On his way, he's like, "Hey, military boys, can you show me, like, maps of where –" This is very confusing, by the way. It's like, the whole "Perrin has Traveled away, the Whitecloaks are still on the road that they were on –"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It took me until Perrin literally spelled it out a couple chapters from now to understand what was going on. But he's like, "Bring me some maps." Meaning maps of the road and the area that they would have been on if they had not teleported away. So they bring it over and

Perrin's like, "Where is the best spot for an ambush on this road?" And they're like, "Here: it's both the obvious place for camping – like, it's a good position for that – and also a very good place to get surprise-attacked and murdered," and Perrin's like, "Hmm." Then he starts blacksmithing. He's, um, just making shit. And also vibing and thinking about himself and his feelings and whatnot. I shan't bore you with the details because we have really, really laboriously covered this ground already. (laugh) But basically, while he's in the process of doing this and making something, question mark – spoiler alert, it's a hammer, and it's fucking obvious that it'll be a hammer; I don't know why it has to be a mystery –

Sally: It's the world's biggest hammer.

Emily: Yeah. He describes it, and I'm like, yo.

Sally: He's like, "It's four feet long," and I'm like, that's almost as tall as me.

Emily: Yeah. What the fuck are you doing?

Sally: What are you doing with that?

Emily: Anyway, at some point, Neald, who's a go-getter, is like, "I can jump in and do some magic, you know, to heat the metal."

Sally: Yeah, he – the, like, coals aren't getting hot enough and Perrin's mad about it or whatever.

Emily: Yeah, Perrin's, like, dissatisfied with the quality of this, like, to-go forge.

Sally: Yeah, Ikea pack-it-up forge.

Emily: Yeah. He's like – (grumbles) and Neald's like, "I can do that with magic!" So he starts doing that and as – and Perrin's like, "Oh, this is great. Magic forging is fucking awesome." Um, and so we're getting, like, Perrin's thought process intercut with, like, Grady being like, "Hey, Neald? What the fuck are you doing?"

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: And Neald's like, "IDK, dawg, but it feels right, though."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I love it.

Sally: Which is how we know ta'veren –

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Is at work here.

Emily: And magic. Something is happening, magically.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Then Neald's like, "Quick, I need a circle to, like, get more power." Perrin is, like, totally ignoring –

Sally: He's like, "That's not my business."

Emily: He's like, "That's not my business. Whatever. Magic is happening." Um, so Neald's doing stuff with the Power; Perrin forges this big-ass hammer, including – he gets a little symbol of a little wolf –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: In flight on it, to commemorate Hopper, and I'm sure Hopper, dead Hopper, would love to know that he is now Perrin's hammer –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: In spirit. (laugh) Perrin thinks about that hammer more than he thinks about most things, so.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Really it's quite a sweet gesture.

Sally: Yeah. It is very cute. It's funny, too. Like, if anyone else was looking at the hammer they'd be like, "Why is there a flying wolf?"

Emily: "Why is there a – wolf? Hello?"

Sally: "What's going on?"

Emily: He'd be like, "It's a whole thing."

Sally: "Don't worry about it."

Emily: "Don't ask him about it; it's – he'll start crying." (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But he forges this hammer. Neald, like, keels over, um, and Perrin's like, "You know what? I have come to a decision, which is that I am going to be myself and be a leader because that's what – duh." I don't know.

Sally: It's like, oh, thank – good.

Emily: Okay, great. He's like, "Hey, boy." I dunno, some Two Rivers kid. He's like, "Did you really throw away all the banners?" And this kid's like, "No," and Perrin's like, "Okay, go get the last one." And this kid's like, "Here you go," thinking Perrin's gonna fucking set it on fire in front of them all to kill all their hopes and dreams.

Sally: Right.

Emily: And Perrin's like, "No, you guys are right. Till the Last Battle, if you want to stick with me, then I've got you. I will be your leader." And they're like, "Huzzah," and Perrin's like, "So, Neald, what the fuck was up with that?" and Neald's like, "I dunno, bestie. I just felt it in my bones."

Sally: "It was the muse."

Emily: "It – the muse called to me."

Sally: "Sing to me."

Emily: "Sing to me, Paolo." Uh, they also name the hammer, and think of the big magic hammer you know from your stories, everyone. What's its name? I'll give you a hint about the name of Perrin's hammer: It's very similar.

Sally: Mjolnir.

Emily: Yeah, it's, like, Mahlnir or something.

Sally: Mahlnir.

Emily: But it means "He who soars –"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Or "Hopper," more or less.

Sally: It's very sweet.

Emily: But Perrin also is like, "Hey, I – Grady and Neald, let's get Traveling. We are going to go to this spot, where –" He also, like, earlier, sent out scouts to see if the Whitecloaks – where the Whitecloaks were. They reported that the Whitecloaks are in that very spot. So Perrin's like, "Let's get going." Berelain has a freak-out 'cause she thinks that Perrin is going to go murder – Galad.

Sally: Galad. She doesn't really care about the Whitecloaks as a whole, which is relatable, but she's like, "What about my weird hot crush?"

Emily: Yeah, she's like, "You can kill all the others just as long as you – just as long as the guy I'm into stays alive."

Sally: And then Berelain, as usual, proceeds to say the most "I am not alright" things on the entire planet, um, 'cause Faile's like, "Damn, you really can pick 'em, girl," when she's like, "You can't let him kill Galad," and Berelain's like – and Faile – I think Faile makes some comment like, "At least he's not married this time," or whatever.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And Berelain's like, "Well, Perrin was promised to me." (laugh)

Emily: And Faile's like – (laugh) Faile, like, looks at the camera and is like, "Oh, worm?"

Sally: Yeah. Everyone reading this is like, “You are deranged.”

Emily: Yeah, and then Berelain goes over – we’re – so, like, we’re all thinking, like, did we miss some sort of –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Way back in – flip, flip back three thousand pages to the Shadow Rising – hey, what?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: What? How could she have misconstrued this? Um, and she’s like, “Well, I guess he wasn’t actually promised to me. I was just picking up on subtext, that the Dragon Reborn wasn’t into me, so I needed to go after one of his close friends, and I chose Perrin because Mat, although single, was by far the inferior option.” (laugh)

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: She’s like, “And clearly he wants us to be together because he sent me along with Perrin on this little mish.”

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: And Faile’s like, “Okay, that’s unhinged.”

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Like, “Girl.” She’s like, “What I think you’re failing to understand is that both Perrin and Rand are farmers.”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “And aren’t, like, enmeshed in the Game of Houses the way you were clearly operating. Like, your brain has literally been rotted by the political machinations –”

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: “That are your entire worldview.” And Berelain’s like, “Well, obviously it doesn’t matter now. Like, whatever, because I have sworn off Perrin and now I’m just into Galad.” And Faile’s like, “He’s not gonna, like – he’s not a great political match.” And Berelain’s like, “No, yeah, because he’s the half – he’s the half-brother of the queen of Andor, so actually it’s a great political match; I’ll be – I’ll be still tied to the Dragon Reborn that way, through Elayne,” not knowing that Galad and Rand are half-brothers –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which I’m sure would get her even hornier.

Sally: Right.

Emily: Anyway, she’s like, “Please promise me that we won’t let Perrin go ambush the Whitecloaks,” and Faile’s like, “I really don’t think that’s what’s going on here, but fair enough,

Perrin is not communicating what his plans are, so sure. I'll agree." Cut to Galad, who is just camping with the Whitecloaks. Byar comes in and is like, "You did a big mistake." And Galad's like, "I didn't." Actually, I mean, they start getting attacked – I – I can't remember.

Sally: No, they see – they're, like – they're basically in this confusing –

Emily: Oh.

Sally: Geographical set-up where, like, there's basically, like, a plateau or something –

Emily: Mm-hmm. Right above them.

Sally: Above them, and they start seeing all Perrin's guys come in with their, like, huge longbows or whatever, and Byar's like, "We're fucked."

Emily: Yeah, it's like the Huns.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: The Huns on the ridge in –

Sally: Mulan. Yeah. Um.

Emily: Mulan. Byar's like, "We're fucked; you should've killed him when you had the chance." And Galad's like, "I don't think so. Like, I made my choice; he can make his choice. That is how the world works. But whatever, Byar. Let's get ready to respond to this attack." Up on the plateau, Perin's, like, looking out with his wolf eyes and is like, "Okay, I need the ladies to retreat when I give the command, and we're gonna do this stuff." Faile and Berelain are like, "Uh, why would you attack the Whitecloaks?" I mean, I know why you would attack the Whitecloaks – it's a very hilariously cutthroat move –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And fully – I fully support it.

Sally: A hundred percent.

Emily: It would've been so hilarious if Perrin was like, "I have, um, had my self-actualization apotheosis moment, and –" (laugh)

Sally: "And now –"

Emily: "My first decision will be to murder all the Whitecloaks."

Sally: Yeah, "I've had enough of these guys, they're not really doing a whole lot for anybody, and they're morally bankrupt, so."

Emily: Yeah. Morally bankrupt with a god complex, a great combo –

Sally: Best combo.

Emily: For people to have. Yeah, so, um, he's like, "What are you talking about? I'm not gonna attack the Whitecloaks, there's a bunch of Trollocs and Myrddraal coming out there," and, you know, a bunch of Trollocs and Myrddraal pop up, literally, out of the ground.

Sally: Yeah, and everyone's like, "What?"

Emily: Everyone's like, "Exsqueeze me?" And also, I don't – Faile should've – Faile's like, "That's so great, bestie. I love you so much. Thanks for not attacking the Whitecloaks," and leaves. But if I was Faile, I would be like, "Perrin, you have no right to act surprised –"

Sally: Yeah, you –

Emily: "That that's what we assumed you were doing because you simply did not tell us what was going on."

Sally: Didn't communicate to a single living soul. You din't communicate to the reader, so when Perrin lays out his fucking Hercule Poirot checkmate about how he pieced together this attack, I'm like, what the fuck are you talking about?

Emily: Okay, bestie.

Sally: Sure, I guess if you say so. You knew the Trollocs were gonna be there and they're there. Whatever.

Emily: Yeah. As Perrin will relate to Galad in a minute, he figured that there was going to be an ambush at this part because it was the logical next place for his army to go, and of course everyone's always out to get Perrin. Um, because that – you know, the dream spike was designed to keep them traveling by foot along this very obvious road. Perrin's like, "Furthermore, all of our travel delays and things going on have sort of led us to this point. And obviously I got away, but they were clearly – the Forsaken or whoever were clearly willing to settle for the Whitecloaks, who will be a force at the Last Battle, presumably. Um. So I deduced –" Yeah. (French accent) "I deduced –" (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: "My name is Hercule Poirot." (normal accent) He's like, "It's fine, I figured we could go save the Whitecloaks." Um, and meanwhile the Whitecloaks realize about the Trollocs and the Myrddraal and are like, "Oh my gosh," and they are having a bad time, you guys. And Galad falls off his horse and breaks his ankle, and everyone's like, "Oh my gosh, this is so bad." Perrin is like, "Let's lead a charge down to rescue them, literally," um, and one of his military guys – I can never keep them straight – Arganda or whoever – is like, "I wanna kiss you on the mouth for this. I love a charge downhill."

Sally: Yeah, he's like, "This battle is making me really hot and bothered."

Emily: He's like – (panting) "Cavalry charge? You're speaking my language."

Sally: "There's a cavalry charge. We have – we have the high ground. There's superior position."



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

Sally: He's like, "Everything about this is super sexy."

Emily: "Talk dirty to me, please."

Sally: Yeah. And –

Emily: "Cavalry. Ooh."

Sally: And you're like, okay, Arganda, Gallenne, whoever you are. Why are you so weird?

Emily: (laugh) Go to therapy, my friend.

Sally: What the fuck?

Emily: Perrin's like, "Okay, I'll unpack that later." He goes down, um, and, like, physically rescues Galad from being impaled or whatever and is like, "Here, get on my horse," which, you know, is just, like, okay. Very damsel in distress-coded of you.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Again, he should have lifted Galad in his burly –

Sally: Picked him up.

Emily: Arms –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Galad – while Galad daintily swooned.

Sally: Daintily swoons over his broken ankle.

Emily: Um. Alas. Instead what we get is Byar trying to stab – (laugh) stab Perrin in the back.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, and Bornhald, who has also been having a come-to-Jesus moment, is like, "Eugh," and kills Byar. It's a very, um, Perrin v. Aram callback.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, and I – I wish that the authors had done more with that.

Sally: Uh-huh.

Emily: Um, like, you know, have Perrin have any sort of interaction with Bornhald after this or – or something. I – I don't know what I would have had them do, but I think it's a very interesting, like, foil moment, because you have Byar, who's this crazy zealot, which is very similar to Aram –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, and having to be killed by someone who they considered a friend. Like, the parallels are just – draw themselves.

Sally: The parallels are there. Um, what is it about Perrin that just, like, attracts the zealots, man?

Emily: Yeah, I don't know why he's – his little plot has been so rich with this. While he was forging the hammer, he did have this little moment where he was like, "You know, what happened with Aram was due to my failure of leadership, and my bad, homie."

Sally: Yeah, it's really frustrating, 'cause he's like, "Can't do anything about it now," which is technically true, but it's like, I dunno, you could try to do something. Give money to his family.

Emily: You could think about it a little more.

Sally: Think about him, honor him in some way.

Emily: Yeah, have a funeral or something.

Sally: Keep him in your memory.

Emily: Faile and her girly friends had a weird funeral ritual for their literal – in some cases – rapists, so –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I feel like having a funeral for Aram would be appropriate.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: (sigh)

Sally: Um –

Emily: Yeah, I dunno.

Sally: Yeah, but it's – it's interesting to watch, um, the sort of Bornhald –

Emily: Saga.

Sally: Saga. Um. He's also a very fascinating character to me.

Emily: He's very annoying –

Sally: Yeah. Annoying, yeah.

Emily: Through most of the book – most of the series, I mean – so it's interesting to have him suddenly have character development in this –

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Book. And I would argue, again, it's far too far apart.

Sally: Right.

Emily: You know, so it's hard to – I – I happen to be working, uh, on graffiti-ing a copy of the Shadow Rising, which Bornhald is in extensively –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: In the Two Rivers, and I'm like, God, he's fuckin' annoying.

Sally: He's annoying.

Emily: So I think it would've been more appropriate if these two events had been closer together, but I agree; it's interesting to have Bornhald be like, "I thought this guy killed my dad. Turns out he didn't, and my friend was lying to me, so now –"

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: "I have to kill my friend?"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Which is an extreme thing to happen, but I – that doesn't mean I'm gonna feel, like, happy and in love with that dude."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, that's just a complicated cocktail of emotions, Bornhald.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I hope you do not descend into alcoholism –

Sally: Again.

Emily: Again. I hope you and Galad, you know, kiss about it or something. Whatever.

Sally: It could help.

Emily: Yeah, it could help.

Sally: Um, Galad – speaking of kind of, like, people's becoming, um, disillusioned with the Whitecloaks, Galad is in the middle of this battle, and the Whitecloaks – the Whitecloaks – (laugh) The Whitecloaks –

Emily: The Whitecloaks.

Sally: The Whitecloaks are in absolute fucking shitshow. Like, there's twenty thousand of them, Galad is giving his orders, and they all just, like, completely just fuckin' lose it when faced with Trollocs, which they're like, "We didn't even believe these were real," or whatever, because, um, the Whitecloaks, like lots of masculine posturing, haven't actually done any of the hard stuff that they claim to be talking about, like fighting the Shadow.

Emily: Yeah, they've been, uh, murdering women and children, so.

Sally: Yeah, so to them, there's like, "This is –"

Emily: "Real? A real fight?"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: They're just classic bullies being faced –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: With bullies. Yeah. Galad has this line where he's like, "Oh, the Whitecloaks are just regular people."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: They're not, like, by being Whitecloaks, more powerful. Their – their goodness does not elevate their martial prowess.

Sally: Yeah, they're not, like, divinely protected.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: We're not looking out and seeing a bunch of, like, you know, holy warriors.

Emily: Yeah, which arguably is an important – a more important moment to happen for Galad than almost literally everything prior to it in this book.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, it's important for Galad just to, like, lose a little bit of faith and to be like, "Huh, well, I haven't actually had to reckon with the organization that I've tied myself to."

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Like, Galad has been doing a little bit of reckoning with his own sense of morality, his own superiority complex, but it's good to apply that to the people around him that he's tied himself to.

Sally: Right. So I – for all we can say that it's, like, frustrating that Galad needs to have this moment at all, um, I do think these moments, where people become a little – just, like, a little bit disillusioned or a little bit deprogrammed are just, like, really valuable things to consider. Um, again, not that everything has to have real-world consequences, but when thinking about, like, high-control groups or propaganda or things like that, if you can just get people to just have that one moment, where they're like, "These pieces aren't adding up," that can be really helpful. So.

Emily: Mm-hmm. Yeah, it would've been really cool if Galad's plotline had been sort of along the veins of having someone be deprogrammed.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Like, if Galad had either been in control of the Whitecloaks or if we'd been following his journey earlier and we could've seen him progressing away from that, that would've been

really interesting, because someone who joins a cult, realizes the cult ain't shit, and then becomes the leader of the cult, is a pretty fascinating –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Journey or someone to take, so it's a little sad that that doesn't follow that order.

Sally: Yeah, it's also – um, we've talked in previous episodes about kind of talking about things that foil Aram and how Galad is, in some ways kind, of like a foil or a narrative double of Aram, in these kind of, like, going to extremist beliefs as, like, a young man with – who's not totally certain of his place in the world. So, like, whereas Aram never got the chance to be, um, deprogrammed from the Masema cult and really went to the unfortunate extremes of what it meant to believe in him and listen to him, like, it'd be interesting to see that aspect of Galad's character and plotline be highlighted more, but naur.

Emily: Yeah. Agreed. We do get a callback to the long-forgotten Portal Stones.

Sally: (laugh) Yeah.

Emily: That's where Perrin thinks the Trollocs are coming from. He's like, "Portal Stones," and we're like, the what? I haven't read about those since book four, baby.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Okay. Um, but the Perrin-Galad plot is resolved by – after Perrin rescues Galad, Galad is like, "I pronounce judgment: it's that you have to pay a fine to the families of the men you killed and fight in the Last Battle," and Perrin's like, "Done deal, baby."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Easy peasy."

Sally: And then they kissed with tongue.

Emily: And then they made – and then they fucked on the battlefield.

Sally: Yeah, and then they made sweet, sweet love.

Emily: Um, yeah, that would've been so great, if Brandon and Robert weren't cowards.

Sally: If they weren't cowards. They're like, "The important thing about – the important resolution to any plotline is gay kissing."

Emily: Yeah. What about the Faile/Berelain/Perrin/Galad –

Sally: Galad.

Emily: Love –

Sally: Polycule.

Emily: Polycule, yeah. That could've been incredible.

Sally: Yeah, I think that would've been really iconic.

Emily: But that's those chapters, I guess. The battle – the battle is ongoing when we leave them, but it is – sort of the vibe is, the tides have turned.

Sally: Yeah, we'll win, blah blah blah.

Emily: Now that – now that Perrin has joined. Um, our next section will be jumping around quite a bit, uh, but we'll mostly follow Perrin and Galad again as – in sort of the aftermath of this and as they Travel to Andor. And that's what's on the docket. My feelings at the end of this chapter are some confusion over the Nakomi thing –

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, and otherwise pretty neutral, I guess. Happy, a little? About hammers?

Sally: Okay, happy, confused. I don't have a neutral one yet, so I'll add that.

Emily: Yeah. Sorry.

Sally: Happy, confused, and neutral. That's okay, we've got –

Emily: What do you feel?

Sally: I don't know.

Emily: Dead inside.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Resigned.

Sally: Just kind of – I was –

Emily: That's kind of the neutral.

Sally: Yeah. I'm probably neutral. Like, these chapters were fine. I do like magic hammers. I wish – I feel like everything in Wheel of time is like this, where it's like we get the coolest fucking scene –

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: And it's totally just, like, sidelined for whatever the male characters are complaining about in the moment. Like, why wasn't the whole scene about – why wasn't this from Neald's perspective, you know?

Emily: Yeah, I wanted to know what, like, Neald was actually doing.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And, again, I wanted the hammer to have a cooler magical effect.

Sally: Yeah. Get –

Emily: So RIP.

Sally: It raises the dead.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: That'd be fucking sweet.

Emily: Revivify spell.

Sally: Perrin's a necromancer now.

Emily: Oh my God.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Yeah. Or, like, raises wolves from the dead.

Sally: (gasp) Ghost wolves.

Emily: Hopper comes back.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Okay. Okay.

Sally: That'd be fucking sick.

Emily: Um, thanks for listening. Thanks to Glynna MacKenzie for our theme song. Thanks to our patrons on Patreon and our followers on social media. (laugh) Do you have a sign-off?

Sally: Yeah, um. Our apartment building has kind of like an office space downstairs where you can, like – on the main first floor – where you can go and, like – there's – there's not computers or anything; there's, like, the communal printer and just, like, workstations. And I've been going down there 'cause I've just, like, in the winter in particular, just obviously struggle more mentally, and I've just not been being very productive and I'm trying to, like, establish little rituals that help myself feel like we're working, you know, different environment. And every time I go down there, the weirdest fucking shit happens to me. Like, I just overhear – not – things aren't happening to me. I just overhear the weirdest things. I'm, like – I am always down there basically by myself, so I don't know if I'm like the only person who uses this. But last night I was down there, um, just, like, writing, doing my thing, and this person comes and, like, sits – and I couldn't see them, the way that it's structured – comes and sits, and she – I could not tell you which of these possibilities is true. But she seemed to be speaking just, like, what were either, like, weird homework for some type of trade school or, like, canned, automatic menu responses for a hotel? Because I would just hear her, like, over and over again be like, "Yes, we have a heated pool," and, uh, "Thank you so much for staying with us," and, you know, just, like – I was like, what? I could not tell you. It was so bizarre.

Emily: Yeah, what?

Sally: I don't know. It sounded like travel – like, if you were to, like, somehow call a big hotel chain and it would be like, “Speak to a –”

Emily: Yeah, “Here's the menu,” yeah.

Sally: “Speak,” yeah, “Luggage information.”

Emily: God, I guess –

Sally: “Concierge info.”

Emily: I didn't know those people had jobs, like that that was a job.

Sally: Yeah, I don't – I don't know if it was or, like, what was going on. Either that or she was scamming people, which –

Emily: Ohh, that could be, yeah. Could be.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Alright, everyone. Have a great week.

Sally: Bye.

Emily: Goodbye.