



Episode 281: R.I.P. Darrell K. Sweet

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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 Glynn MacKenzie plays]

EMILY: Okay, I didn't bring out the bagpipes, but this is still – oh my god [laughs].

SALLY: Yeah, I do – I do have visual exhibits [laughing] to bring if we want to talk about the cover this episode. We can do it another episode.

EMILY: No, I'd love to, um. This is momentous occasion. We're embarking upon [smacks book] the final season of Everybody Hates Rand, a *Wheel of Time* podcast. [laughing] I'm Emily Juchau.

SALLY: And I'm Sally Goodger [laughs].

EMILY: I'm gonna start the season by completely disrupting the usual [laughs] proceedings.

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah.

EMILY: Um, and the last book of Wheely Time.

SALLY: Yeah!

EMILY: So, um, you know. Find the reading schedule online, if you're inclined to follow along. It's a little weird this time around, because one of the chapters in this book is, like, two hundred pages long... so we had to split that up a little bit. But overall, it's the usual one or two – or two or three chapters.

SALLY: Look I went right to it.

EMILY: [gasp] Yeah, it's right there. Smack in the middle almost. How'd you find that so fast?

SALLY: Um, my mother always claims our family's a little psychic so [laughs] maybe that's it.

EMILY: Not what I was expecting.

SALLY: [laughing] Sorry, I'm feeling a little silly.

EMILY: We've gotta be a little silly. We gotta feel a little silly when you talk about Wheely Time.

SALLY: Um, yeah. The final book and the final season. A little sad, but I'm sure I will feel less sad once I get into more of what Brandon has done.

EMILY: [laughs] Sure, sure, sure. Yeah, I think we'll – our focus this season, I'm hoping, we'll be, you know, we're talking about the ending. So, we'll be talking a lot thematically about how – what makes a successful wrap-up to a narrative, what makes a successful character arc completion, what makes successful – what makes a successful series as a whole that com – that ends well. While still, I hope, trying to celebrate the fact that ending any series, especially one as long as this one, is a momentous achievement for both Brando and Robert. As we've said many times, Brandon had an unenviable task and probably did [laughs] his best. Did his best. And for that, we thank you, Brandon.

SALLY: Yes. No, I was thinking again, we'll get into it, but, like, when I was reading *Talmanes* –

EMILY: Mm-hmm.

SALLY: Sorry. [With a French accent] *Talmanes* or whatever you guys call him.

EMILY: Shut up. Shut up! He's not that French

SALLY: [laughs] Not in this fucking chapter, he's not. He uses the word 'peasants' like once at that's the most we get out of him.

EMILY: I know. I was like, "How dare you?"

SALLY: How dare you make him... anyway, he just reads very out of character, and I can't remember if we ever had a *Talmanes* point of view from Robert Jordan, or if it was Brandon picking up that torch and doing his best to figure out what that man's internal life is like. But I was like, "This is not hitting, Brandon." And then I was struck all again by how difficult it would be to pick up somebody else's characters and try to make them move on the page in anything like the similar way to the original author.

EMILY: Yeah, for sure.

SALLY: So, I agree that he did his best. Um, yeah.

EMILY: We must talk about the cover. And to talk about the cover, we first bid a fond farewell to Darrel K. Sweet.

SALLY: I know! Who also beefed it before this book came out!

EMILY: Who also beefed it! And I want you guys to know, when we talked about Darrell K. Sweet in the past, I fully thought he was still alive.

SALLY: [laughing] And they just got rid of him for Book 14?

EMILY: No, I forgot he didn't do this one. I was fully operating in a world where the things I was saying on the internet about that man's work we're accessible to him.

SALLY: Mmm.

EMILY: And that's the kind of gumption I have.

SALLY: Sure. Sure, sure, sure.

EMILY: Slash the lack of foresight.

SALLY: Um, Darrell K. Sweet, um [claps], may he rest in peace, um, passed before *A Memory of Light* was published. However, he did start the *Memory of Light* cover art.

EMILY: He got a draft and it is available online.

SALLY: On the internet, you can find it. One of our dear patrons sent it to us, which made me laugh, um, so hard when I first saw it.

EMILY: I do vaguely remember seeing this in the past and being like, "Hey, what?"

SALLY: Um, you can also find it on Dragonmount. Even if – if you just search *A Memory of Light* cover on Google it was, like, one of the first that popped up. It is so funny. You look at it and you're like, "This is giving *Midsommar*."

EMILY: Yeah. It really is.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: I haven't even seen *Midsommar*, but I know that's giving *Midsommar*.

SALLY: It's three women –

EMILY: Presumably Elayne, Aviendha, and Min.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: We are evoking Min's oft cited vision of the three women gathering around Rand's bier – is it byre or beer?

SALLY: Oh, that's a good question.

EMILY: You know, his little burial shroud where they stick a body in olden times before they had mortuaries.

[computerized voice says bier like "beer"]

EMILY: Bier. It's bier. I knew that [coughs].

SALLY: You're so smart, Emily.

EMILY: Anyway, except he is prepared for what seems to be a Tibetan sky burial.

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: [laughing] He's on, like, the top of this very large rock, all wrapped up. And in the background, there's, like, this cloud formation that's yin and yang, you know, like the Aes Sedai of olden times. And the women are all wearing long, white dresses and they have loose hair. They're all gazing up at it, the body, that is.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: There also seems to be, like, *bones* on the battlefield around them.

SALLY: Yeah, there's just, like, helmets and swords and that could be a skeleton back there.

EMILY: Yeah, so that's about...now, this cover is about as connected to reality as most of Darrell K. Sweet's covers have been, [laughing] which is to say, minimally.

SALLY: Um, and that's what I love about Darrell K. Sweet. If there's one thing the man has, it's panache, you know?

EMILY: Yeah. Yeah.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Where he will take a prompt and be like, "I'm absolutely not doing that," and run in an opposite direction.

SALLY: And just be like, "Look at this haunting..." It looks like a mummy, you know? It's a wrapped body.

EMILY: Sure.

SALLY: There's no way to make it not look like that.

EMILY: Yeah, Imhotep might pop out of that at any moment.

SALLY: Yeah, okay this – [laughs] on what appears to be a twelve – twelve- to twenty-foot-tall random rock formation.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: [laughing] In the middle of this empty field.

EMILY: You have to assume that it was there originally. Either that or the three women laboriously...

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Since there's no one else on this cover, they must have just rolled those rocks over.

SALLY: Yeah, Aviendha used all of her Wise One training to stack a bunch of rocks.

EMILY: Sure, sure. She – that bitch does know how to stack rocks.

SALLY: Anyway, what I love so much about this is that Darrell K. Sweet was like, "I need to make a cover to end one of the biggest fantasy franchises of all time. What I will do is put a mummy..."

EMILY: Front and center.

SALLY: Front and center.

EMILY: That would have been directly below the title.

SALLY: *A Memory of Light* –

EMILY: BODY.

SALLY: Rand's body [laughs].

EMILY: [laughs].

SALLY: And he was like, "That'll sell the book, baby."

EMILY: He'll be like, "Ah ha ha. You love to see it!"

SALLY: Hell yeah! Hell yeah! Um, so I just would love to have been the, like, Tor dot com marketing manager who had to sit down with Darrel K. Sweet – in my fantasy world where Darrell K. Sweet talked to a marketing manager, I don't know – and who had to be like, "...Hey, Darrell."

EMILY: I have some notes.

SALLY: I have some notes about what we put on the cover of books [laughs]. Just in general.

EMILY: Yeah, so, like, the title of this book is already sort of grim.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: *A Memory of Light*. And it's thematically appropriate as we get into the body of the book and sort of Rand's – spoiler [laughs] – confrontation with the Dark One.

SALLY: Holy shit no way.

EMILY: I know he actually – he does the thing.

SALLY: [whispers] What! That's crazy dog.

EMILY: Um, it's thematically appropriate, but it does feel like okay, we're talking about a memory of light, meaning light is gone, you know, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Um, and so having a haunting body, corpse –

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: On this sort of...it does seem like they're trying to resurrect him in a freaky way.

SALLY: Yeah, yeah.

EMILY: Having that on the cover would have been, I think, a step to far.

SALLY: Yeah. Yeah. I think it would have caused mass uproar. Instead, what we get is Michael, um...

EMILY: Whelan?

SALLY: Whelan, who, um, wrote a blog post about making the *Wheel of Time – A Memory of Light* cover and very openly admits in the second sentence, "not having read the *Wheel of Time* books."

EMILY: [laughs loudly]

SALLY: [laughs] “I focused on the scene provided and the characters therein, while also keeping in mind that this book was the culmination of many years of ready for devoted fans.” So [laughs].

EMILY: This is hilarious. I would kill to know if Darrell K. Sweet actually read *The Wheel of Time* because if didn't, then that's the funniest – if he *did* actually, that's the funniest bit I've ever heard. Because you gotta give it to Michael Whelan. He did draw a cover that is reminiscent of things that happen in the book.

SALLY: [laughs] Not Darrell K. Sweet's fantasy land *Wheel of Time*.

EMILY: Yeah. Rand looks like a person.

SALLY: Yes.

EMILY: With appropriate proportions.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: He's kind of doing a yoga lunge and holding his sword in a fantastic way.

SALLY: Yeah, he – you guys have all seen it. Who am I about to try to explain the pose to you? But you guys have all seen it, where his arm is up ninety degrees and he's holding the sword like...like what are you doing?

EMILY: Yeah, it's a very awkward pose, um, but you know? He is also gazing right into your soul, which is upsetting.

SALLY: Um, two things. One, Michael Whelan notes in his blog that Rand has never been the, like, singular focus of a *Wheel of Time* book cover, which I thought was interesting.

EMILY: Yeah, you usually have, like, the back of the Perrin's jacket also.

SALLY: Yeah, or something there. But he also, uh, goes through several figure drawings, where he was deciding what funny sword pose to put Rand in, and I would like to share with you my favorites.

EMILY: Okay.

SALLY: Um, number one.

EMILY: Oh!

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Oh. Now that is giving Hot Topic.

SALLY: [laughing] His hair is so bad.

EMILY: It's also giving stab myself in the thigh.

SALLY: I know. He's holding – first of all, he's got like a My Chemical Romance sort of, uh, swoop.

EMILY: Oh, he's got that 2008 eighth grade boy hair swoop.

SALLY: And he's also holding a sword kind of, like, two fingers wrapped around the hilt.

EMILY: Yeah, and the other fingers are fully on the blade, and I know *callandor* isn't, like, meant to be used as a sword, but [laughs].

SALLY: Isn't sharp, but feels a little silly.

EMILY: But still.

SALLY: And he's in another lunge. We've also got, um, this one which is pretty good.

EMILY: Ooh!

SALLY: Actively in motion.

EMILY: He's doing a little ballet move.

SALLY: There's also many editions of *the cave*. Capital T, Capital C.

EMILY: Oh, he's got it over – he's coming – he's also bringing it out from over –

SALLY: He's swinging it, yeah. Oh! From his back.

EMILY: From his back. I thought he was holding it like this.

SALLY: Weeee! [laughs]

EMILY: Like, doing Salt Bae with the sword.

SALLY: Yeah [vocalizing]. No.

EMILY: That's quite the action shot.

SALLY: I won't show you all of these. I mean, you can look at them. They're pretty funny. This seems to be – yeah.



EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Close to the –

EMILY: There's some Russian peasant women in the background.

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: [laughing] There, instead of...

SALLY: He's one of him just sort of kneeling in the darkness.

EMILY: Creepy.

SALLY: Which, again, like what do you think sells books? And then here he is, yeah.

EMILY: There's one that I like up there where he's holding the sword in what seems to be a normal way. Yeah! That one. He's just standing there and has it out in front of him. That's what I would have gone with, personally, but, you know, I ain't Darrell K. Sweet. I mean, Michael Whelan. [clicks tongue] So.

SALLY: I agree. I think this seems to be a normal way to hold a sword.

EMILY: Sure, sure sure.

SALLY: But I also don't do sword fighting in *The Wheel of Time* world where everything is named like [claps, laughs] Piss Your Pants in a Field or something.

EMILY: Try Really Hard Not to Piss Your Pants.

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: While You Cut a Flower By, By the Leaves.

SALLY: By the stem. Go Piss Girl.

EMILY: Go Piss Girl.

SALLY: Okay, that was –

EMILY: Rand whipped out his best sword move: Go Piss Girl!

SALLY: [laughs] So, yeah, we do end up with Rand on the cover front and center. I didn't even notice until looking at those sketches that there are women on the back of this book. I've never seen the back of the book.

EMILY: Yeah, that is – spoiler alert – Nynaeve and Moiraine. Moiraine in blue.

SALLY: Yeah, that’s what I figured because Moiraine is in blue and Nynaeve is yellow.

EMILY: Yeah, yeah and you love how they’re wearing these fancy outfits into –

SALLY: Into battle. Nynaeve’s hair is really short.

EMILY: It is very short. Um, Rand – *callandor* is made of glass, which is fun.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Including the hilt, which I think is especially fun. There is an eclipse happening in the background, which is also real to the book.

SALLY: So, though he did not read the book, good attention to detail, Michael.

EMILY: Yeah, Michael. Whatever scene you were provided with, impressive. Okay. Opening the book now. This book is dedicated to “Harriet, the light of Mr. Jordan’s life, and Emily, the light of mine.” That is Brandon Sanderson’s wife, not me.

SALLY: It could be dedicated to you.

EMILY: Shocking. I did meet Brandon Sanderson and he signed a book for me, and I told him my name was Emily and he was like, “That’s might wife’s name.” And I was like, “I’m sixteen?”

SALLY: Yeah, totally appropriate thing to say to a teenage girl. What?

EMILY: Yeah, okay. I’m glad we have something in common, sort of.

SALLY: You strange, strange man.

EMILY: We get to our *final* [intensely] epigraph!

SALLY: Hell yeah.

EMILY: I said that with any hesitation at all. I know. I’ve been doing this for years. It’s a fucking epigraph.

SALLY: We’re professionals.

EMILY: Hi Ed!

SALLY: By this point.

EMILY: Um, this is an epigraph about the Breaking. “And the Shadow fell upon the land and the world was riven stone from stone, the oceans fled, and the mountains swallowed up, and the nations scattered to the eight corners of the world?” Is that right? “The moon was as blood and the sun was as ashes. The seas boiled and the living envied the dead. All was shattered and all but memory lost. And one memory above all others, of him who brought the Shadow and the Breaking of the World. And him they named Dragon.” So, this book will A) be about the Dragon Reborn, B) be about an apocalypse. This epigraph is definitely describing a very intense apocalypse of the, do you remember that movie *2012*?

SALLY: Oh yeah.

EMILY: Where everything just blows up sort of? Sort of of that nature. And we’ll see if the apocalypse in this book is at all that dramatic. And finally, it is evoking the title of the book. It says, “All but memory lost, and one memory above all others of him who brought the Shadow.” So, this epigraph is a memory of Shadow, so Rand now is perhaps going to embody the Light. Okay, our last prologue. Um, it is not unusually long nor is it unusually short and...

SALLY: Both of those things somehow are bad.

EMILY: Yeah. It’s, um, we did read the whole prologue for this one and I’m sorry for that. But I could not figure a way to split it. Because we are doing a structure here that is *very* Brandon Sanderson, which is flipping between Talmanes points of view, which are, like, sort of the through line here, and between every Talmanes point of view there’s a different, random point of view from a new different individual.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: We’re doing a lot of the classic *Wheel of Time* prologue things, um, checking in with completely random people who, you know, Bayrd here. I don’t know who the fuck that – that’s just a random NPC.

SALLY: It took me like *four* pages of Bayrd’s point of view to know where I was and who he was talking to.

EMILY: Yeah, Bayrd’s point of view does have, um, one fatal flaw, which is that it assumes we have at all kept up on the Andoran succession [laughing] plotline.

SALLY: Yeah! I was like where the fuck are we? I thought we were with the Whitecloaks for a really long time, and I was like, “There’s no Whitecloak commander named Jarid. I don’t *think*.”

EMILY: Who knows!

SALLY: It really pissed me off when I found out it was just that guys’ husband – that girl’s husband – that woman’s husband.

EMILY: God, if only, if only. Um, there's Bayrd. Then we're also checking in with some bad guys.

SALLY: [gags]

EMILY: Uh, Slayer. Moghedien. I guess technically Bayrd's point of view is a check in with a bad guy if you count Jarid as a low-ranking bad guy.

SALLY: Yeah, I mean his name is Jarid so.

EMILY: Oh, boy. I hope we don't have any listeners named Jared.

SALLY: I love you, listeners named Jared.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Because I'm sure your name is spelled J-E – J-A-R-E-D.

EMILY: Normal.

SALLY: Not J-A-R-I-D.

EMILY: Normal, normal names.

SALLY: Normal Jared.

EMILY: Uh huh. And we're getting a brief, you know, check in with other subplots that are going to be relevant, most primarily the Black Tower subplot.

SALLY: Yee boy.

EMILY: So, saving Talmanes for last.

SALLY: [sighs]

EMILY: We've first got Bayrd, who is, uh, is in the army of Jarid Sarand.

SALLY: Yeah. Yeah.

EMILY: Who you probably don't remember because you're normal. Um, is Elenia's husband. Elenia is one of the ladies that tried to do a civil war in Andor and take the throne from Elayne. Um, and she was kind of imprisoned in another lady's camp and they kept being like, "Oh, your husband is out there with an army and he's gonna come rescue you." Well, here he is with his army, no idea where he's been fucking around for the last few books. But he is still insisting on "we are going to Caemlyn, we're going to overthrow, um, Elayne." So awkward that the Trollocs

beat him to it. And there has been a recent bubble of evil. All the metal in the camp has melted, which is aka-awkward. Boy, that was very 2013.

SALLY: Aka-awkward.

EMILY: 2012 of me and this book came out in 2012, so [laughs] you're welcome for evoking that so strongly.

SALLY: You're – yeah, you did a great job.

EMILY: Uh, through Bayrd's point of view, though, we see the soldiers en masse decide to desert and march toward the Last Battle. And Jarid is like, "What the fuck are you peasants doing?" And they're like, "Get a clue, dummy."

SALLY: They tie him to a tree.

EMILY: They tie him to a tree, which is actually hilarious of them. They're like, "Okay, you clearly are just going to be a reach bitch about this, so have – here you go."

SALLY: Yeah, I would love to tie my boss to a tree and quit my job.

EMILY: Uh, right?!

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Right?! Bayrd keeps being like, "Jarid's not so bad, he's been a fine employer and everyone likes him okay," and I'm like, "That can't be true."

SALLY: No, there's no boss that –

EMILY: Given the way that he's behaving, currently.

SALLY: There's no boss that is that way. All bosses are bastards.

EMILY: The through line here is that Bayrd is carving – is it carving? I don't know what he's doing.

SALLY: Oh, yeah.

EMILY: He's crafting a spearhead made of stone, you know, sort of just the idea being that the peasants at the very least are accepting armageddon and that they need to be there and now are just doing whatever it takes to get there.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Bayrd was a fine point of view until he mentioned something about how he would have loved to have Elayne on his lap, and then I was like, “Knock it off.”

SALLY: Yeah, I felt the same way. I was like, “That was such an incredibly unnecessary bout of sexism.”

EMILY: Yeah, just so – such an odd addition. By the way, Elayne is young and hot.

SALLY: Yeah, in case you *forgot*.

EMILY: What the fuck?

SALLY: Barf town. Barf town, Brandon. Boo. Two thumbs down.

EMILY: Isam is in a mysterious village. This is going to, you know, this is a brand new setting for us.

SALLY: Yeah, I found it quite interesting.

EMILY: Yeah. Isam is in a village called The Village.

SALLY: I think it’s called The Town.

EMILY: Oh, sorry.

SALLY: Not *The Village* by M. Night Shyamalan [laughs].

EMILY: This could be the M. Night Shyamalan –

SALLY: This could be the M. Night Shyamalan –

EMILY: Except less quaint.

SALLY: This is the sequel, *The Town* [laughs].

EMILY: [laughing] *The Town*, where everyone’s a fucking red-cloaked monster.

SALLY: Yeah, with sharpened teeth.

EMILY: Yeah, Isam is in this creepy, violent town, which seems to mostly be inhabited by those Aiel channelers who we talked about at the end of the last episode. You know, guys who went into the Waste to fight the Dark One and then, uh, got turned to the Shadow. Which, Isam reminds us of here, is something that you can just do to channelers. If you have a circle of thirteen channelers and thirteen Myrddraal, wham bam, baby. You can just lobotomize someone and make them evil.

SALLY: Yeah, so –

EMILY: Which is pretty fucked up. I do appreciate that it is coming back, because it was such a major, like, boogeyman in the first few books. You know, we had a lot of the, like, I think Egwene's Accepted test evoked that, Rand was super spooked by it. A lot of people were like, "Ah, that's so scary." And then we kind of stopped talking about it, like we stopped talking about a lot of things in books six through twelve, and so it's good that it's coming back, even as it is distinctly horrifying. And as soon as Isam mentions this we're like, "Of course this is what's happening in the Black Tower."

SALLY: Yeah, like, *duh*. Um, I agree. It's very sad, obviously. I guess in my head I had thought these Aiel guys had kind of chosen to become evil.

EMILY: Probably some of them did.

SALLY: That's true. You're right. It's never that black and white. But then this happened, and I was like, "Ooooooh!"

EMILY: That's super bad!

SALLY: That's so bad! I know, I know we're talking to the bad guys right now, but that's *so* bad that you guys would do that.

EMILY: Yuck. Yuck!

SALLY: That's not good.

EMILY: Yuck.

SALLY: Yeah, so.

EMILY: Um, geographically speaking, The Town is located near the valley of [exaggerated] Tha'kandar.

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: [clears throat]

SALLY: Outside of Mordor.

EMILY: [laughing] Yeah, fucking. Okay, so there's Shayol Ghul – Mount Doom – and then there's the valley of Tha'kandar, you know, Mordor.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And this is just, apparently, the only civilization there, which makes sense. As soon as Isam is like, “Yeah, I’m in a town and it’s right by Mordor over there.” You’re like, “Oh, duh, of course they would have a place for people to hang out.” They’ve got to have, like, conference rooms there. Not to mention, where are the evil scientists making the Trollocs?

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: There’s logistics happening.

SALLY: It’s true. There’s a lot of logistics involved in taking over the world.

EMILY: Mm-hmm. And someone’s gotta do it. And it’s this town.

SALLY: It’s The Town.

EMILY: And the bad Aiel who weren’t necessarily choosing to be bad, but now they are. And some women?

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: I don’t know. And Myrddraal. And the Forsaken.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And, like, one child.

SALLY: [laughs] A single child.

EMILY: A single child and, as far as I know, that’s it [laughs].

SALLY: Yeah, that’s who occupies The Town. Um, Isam mentions that he grew up here.

EMILY: Which doesn’t make sense to me, but I might not, um, fully remembering the Isam lore.

SALLY: Me either.

EMILY: Just as a quick refresher, Isam slash Luc are two people merged into one. Luc is the brother of the late Andoran heir to the throne. You know, the lady who would have been queen but then ran off to become the Aiel, [coughs] Rand’s mom.

SALLY: Tigraine or whatever.

EMILY: Tigraine.

SALLY: Tigraine.



EMILY: And so Morgase took the throne instead. Luc just went out there looking for Tigraine, I think.

SALLY: Maybe.

EMILY: Or maybe she went looking for him. I can't remember. Isam was somehow involved in the whole fall of Malkier and I thought he was an adult when that happened, but I guess he's, like, Lan's cousin. So maybe he was a bebe.

SALLY: Maybe.

EMILY: Also unclear, yeah. So, Isam's like, "Yeah, I grew up in this place and it fucking sucked [grumbling]." I'm – I would feel a lot more sympathy for you if you hadn't done all the atrocities against wolves.

SALLY: Yeah! Listen, Hopper died because of you.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Hopper died again because of you.

EMILY: Hopper died twice because of you, bitch! Um, Isam, it's interesting to have an Isam point of view, I think.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: We get some very late-stage answers about how the mechanics of this work. It seems to be just sort of a dual personality thing, where what's happening now is *Isam* is speaking and he's like, "Yeah, and sometimes Luc is in charge."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But not right now. And Luc has different feelings than Isam does. Luc hates Perrin and Isam is kind of like, "Eh, whatever. Perrin." Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Isam is the guy who hates wolves. Meh.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Anyway, Isam's been told to come to a hot meeting here with one of the Forsaken. He doesn't know which one. Moridin passes and he's like, "Ugh, I hope it's not that guy." It's not Moridin, though, it is a lady who we recognize, perhaps, as Cyndane.

SALLY: Mm-mm.

EMILY: Née Lanfear [laughs].

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Who's like, "Listen, bud. I'm hiring you to kill the Dragon Reborn. Finally get it done."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And he's like, "Well, you guys have given me that assignment in the past and [laughs] then you change your minds halfway through. So, are we for realsies this time?"

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: She's like, "We're for realsies this time. It's on you, bud." And he's like, "Okay. Whatever. Worm." She gives him a couple creepy Aiel guys to assist. So, thus starts the Isam slash Luc slash Slayer subplot. If you're keeping track, this will give Perrin something to do.

SALLY: It's nice that they, that they think of that for Perrin.

EMILY: It's nice that they think of that, because otherwise Perrin would just be fighting people with his hammer and, yeah, it would have gotten pretty boring to read.

SALLY: Yeah, we could have also just not read about it.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Perrin could have taken his magic hammer – like, just taken his magic hammer onto the fields and I didn't have to see him every again. But no. He's a main character or something.

EMILY: We're also, through this, tying together Lanfear and Slayer into the same sort of quasi out to kill Rand subplot.

SALLY: Yeah, that I'm sure will have to do with the World of Dreams or whatever.

EMILY: Mm-hmm. Will have to do with *tel'aran'rhiod*, will have to do with Perrin. Which, we'll get into much more later, but it is wild to have Perrin and Lanfear stuck in the same subplot at this stage.

SALLY: Yeah jeez.

EMILY: Um.

SALLY: I guess it's time for Perrin to take a turn.

EMILY: We then get an Egeanin point of view as she and Bayle Domon are entering the camp at the Fields of Merrilor. They go looking for Nynaeve or Elayne, presumably just to offer their skills.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: It's a little unclear. Uh, someone, our favorite Warder, Sleete.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: My bestie.

SALLY: My bestie!

EMILY: My bestie Sleete is like, "Here, Nynaeve, are some weirdos." Nynaeve is super pissed to see them, because, as you'll recall, Leilwin, Egeanin, and Domon were supposed to drop the male *a'dam* into the ocean and didn't. And, in fact, Egeanin turned it over to Suroth to buy her own freedom. Which wasn't super clear to me before. I thought it was, like, taken from them, but, uh...

SALLY: I vaguely remember her giving it to them. I think it might not have been fully con – like, I think there might have been some we got cornered or something, but I do remember her giving it to Suroth.

EMILY: Yeah, so Egeanin has not understood until this point that that was a bad move.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And Nynaeve is like, "It was super bad. You almost caused the world to end." And she's like, "Oh, yikes. I mean, it didn't though, so."

SALLY: Yeah, it just like a good old fashioned, back to our roots, Nynaeve just yelling at somebody. It's like –

EMILY: For something that didn't actually end up happening.

SALLY: Yeah. I found it very comforting.

EMILY: What was – what was the outcome of the male *a'dam*? Semirhage beefed it.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Ultimately. And Rand was deeply unpleasant for a while, but then he got over it. Which presumably would have happened without that whole little interlude, so.

SALLY: Yeah. Um, yeah, I think Nynaeve is kind of right to yell at her. It sounds like Egeanin was a bit of a coward, but, again, I don't remember exactly how it played out.

EMILY: No, I agree. She totally deserves to be yelled at. It just doesn't have as much weight. I like when Nynaeve yells at people – or when anyone yells at people and it's, like, yeah there's for sure, there's, there's some weight behind...

SALLY: Yeah. The consequence.

EMILY: The consequences and aren't just sort of, like, theoretical. Maybe it would be interesting if Egeanin had to confront Rand himself about her *big* fuckup here, but anyway. Um, Nynaeve agrees to take Egeanin to Egg.

SALLY: Ye.

EMILY: Which, again, is evoking one of – we're going to be talking a lot about people's visions and dreams coming to pass in this book. Uh, Egwene has a couple of times had dreams involving a Seanchan woman helping her. So, here we go. Egeanin. Uh, then we get an Aviendha point of view in the Wise Ones tent, or the sweat tent, as she's like [laughs], "So, listen to this, guys. Ain't this fucked up?" And they're like, "Boy, that is fucked up." They have a long conversation about the sort of rules of time travel and divination, generally.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And it's, like, okay. Fine. I get it. But ultimately they are like, "This is going to come down to, according to your visions of the future, Rand is going to do something tomorrow that does not involve us. And he'll think it's a good thing. He'll think he's, you know, exacting a price from every other nation, but not the Aiel because the Aiel have had his back."

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: "But really he'll be setting us up for some sort of massive failure, and culturally, to the Aiel, that will – being left out is a bad thing."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So, Aviendha is like, "Okay, I'm gonna go sort this out. Talk to him." Or something.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Meanwhile Bair is like, "I'm going to go to Rhuidean myself and investigate whether we all see the same future. Sort of get some of those answers."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: [laughs] Aviendha's like, "Have you ever heard of a chick named Nakomi?" And Bair's like, "No. Why?" [pages flipping] And Aviendha's like, "I don't know, because it was so odd."

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: It was so fucking odd. Whoa. Then we get an Androl point of view as he is in some sort of, like, basement meeting room with Pevara and his guys.

SALLY: Androl is making a fucking saddle during this.

EMILY: It's quite bizarre.

SALLY: [laughing] Which I don't understand.

EMILY: Yeah. He should have just been knitting or something [laughs].

SALLY: Yeah, I guess that is his form of knitting, leatherworking.

EMILY: He's like, "I'm really fucking it up big time." And you're like, "Okay, well maybe you should take a break."

SALLY: Maybe you don't need to be making a saddle.

EMILY: In the middle of talking about the Black Tower's downfall.

SALLY: [laughing] Stupid.

EMILY: Um [laughs], we're not, like, plot wise this isn't much farther than we were last time. Everyone is still kind of like, "Ugh, this is breaking bad. There's no way out. What are we gonna do?" They're kind of talking like, "Okay, we've gotta make plans to get the word out." And Androl's kind of resistant to that. He's like, "I don't want to go crying to the Dragon Reborn for help. We just need to fix it ourselves." Um, which I think is meant to be quite noble and manly of him, but I find a little silly. It's, like, I would find it more compelling I guess if Androl was like, "I don't trust the Dragon Reborn because he's left us to our own devices until now, so why should we believe he'll help us at all."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But they're kind of trying to make these plans. They have all concluded that people are getting turned toward darkness forcibly. Pevara's all like, "We should go to the Aes Sedai outside the Black Tower and get help." And Androl's like, "That won't be as much help as you think it is because, you know, they're Aes Sedai, they're stateswomen rather than death machines like all of the Asha'man in here. So, if it comes to a pitched battle..."

SALLY: Yeah, we'll win. The Asha'man will win, I mean.

EMILY: Yeah. Um, obviously the focus of this little section is mostly on Androl himself as a character, as a leader among men, and of his [mysterious voice] continuing, mysterious past. Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And on his relationship with Pevara, in terms of they are both standing in as sort of, like, archetypes of Channeling Man, Channeling Woman.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Opposite ends of the spectrum. How will they come together? How will they find common ground?

SALLY: Two households both alike in dignity.

EMILY: Two households both alike in dignity. And it's, like, very obvious that Androl and Pevara are going to get along and perhaps become a fighting unit that's more powerful than the sum of its parts.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So, it's a little annoying that [laughs] it will take us...

SALLY: Yeah, like, at this point in the series, I don't need to do the male channeler versus female channeler.

EMILY: Song and dance, yeah.

SALLY: Again. I also know that they are going to end up in a romantic relationship because this is Robert Jordan slash Brandon Sanderson's *The Wheel of Time*. So, it's just, like, this whole Romeo and Juliet – I made that dumb Romeo and Juliet joke, but it's, like, they're being presented to us at the beginning as though they're sort of like enemies to lovers, star crossed type shit and it's, like, I need you to go into Mazrim Taim's creepy basement where he's keeping thirteen Myrddraal [laughing] and fix this problem.

EMILY: [laughing] Yeah. Sorry, just imagining the breakroom –

SALLY: Yeah [laughs].

EMILY: Between the thirteen Myrddraal and all the evil Asha'man. Ah, so funny. [clears throat, deep voice] Hey, guys.

SALLY: [deep voice] Hey, guys. What you do today?

EMILY: [deep voice] How was your weekend? Oh, you know. Mondays, am I right?

SALLY: Eyy, Mondays. Eyy.

EMILY: Um, yeah enemies to lovers only functions if, like, the enemies aspect of that is actually some sort of compelling differences.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Rather than just two people who are kind of mean to each other.

SALLY: Yeah. And I – not to, this is so off-topic, but I feel like enemies to lovers is a pretty common, like, uh, plot in romance books in particular.

EMILY: It's very, very common.

SALLY: Especially in the so-called Romantasy genre. And I – not that I've read much of it, because I'm so happy for everybody who does like it, but it is not a genre for me. I've never really found one that is interesting to me. But my brief forays into it really do seem to be, like, people are considered enemies, either because 1) they just don't like each other or 2) one of them is perpetuating crimes against humanity against the other [laughing] and that's presented as like a haha enemies to lovers.

EMILY: Yeah, sort of a Kylo Ren plot [laughs].

SALLY: Yeah [laughs]. But this whole idea that people who fight are not necessarily, like, a successfully – to me, satisfying enemies to lovers. So, Androl and Pevara being, like, [muttering] she's such an Aes Sedai and always has to get the last word in. Like, okay. Just kiss or whatever. I'm so bored.

EMILY: For real. Um, finally, besides Talmanes, we get a Moghedien point of view as she meets with the other surviving Forsaken minus Cyndane, who isn't there for some reason. I guess this is the [laugh] same moment as her meeting with – I don't know. Double booked or something.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um, but Moridin is there. The update on Moghedien is that she now possesses her own little disembodied soul in a necklace. Whatever is going on there. She's obviously deeply traumatized from all the torture. Um, Demandred shows up and is being super weird. He's like, he just keeps dropping hints that he's got something big in the works [laughs] and we're like, "That's so great."

SALLY: Demandred would kill on Instagram, by the way, just constantly being like [laughing], "Something big's coming. Something big's coming!"

EMILY: Now wait, guys. When I get up to 100,000 followers.

SALLY: Yeah [laughs].

EMILY: Demandred is also showing this sort of, like, manic obsession with like, "I, personally, want to kill the Dragon Reborn.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Which, you really wish someone would be like, “I don’t know how to tell you this, Demandred, but the Dragon Reborn is going to be talking to the Dark One. He’s sort of got a schedule. So, we’re probably going to let Daddy Dark One do the one – be the one to kill him.”

SALLY: Yeah, I don’t know how, logistically, you can also be there and murder him.

EMILY: Mm-hmm. Demandred is sort of a Final Girl of the Forsaken.

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah.

EMILY: Is the only one who has survived without being horrendously tortured and/or killed and resurrected a la Moridin and Cyndane. Um, and, it’s sort of clear that the narrative doesn’t really know what to do with him at this point.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Like, in terms of personality. They’re like, “Oh, Demandred is suddenly carrying *a ton* of weight as one of the big bads. And he doesn’t actually have much a personality, he’s just been this threatening guy in the background.”

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: So, we’re just gonna have to give him the personality that, like, he’s out to kill Rand.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And it’s, like, oh, well, that’s sort of what all the Forsaken have going on for them.

SALLY: Yeah, it is, um, really frustrating because in this scene we get the final confirmation that, like, I know everyone loves –

EMILY: Demandred is *not* Mazrim Taim.

SALLY: Everyone loves to tell me that this was debunked in *Lord of Chaos* or whatever, and I just, like, don’t believe you. If it’s not that obvious to every reader on screen then it is not, perhaps, canonical. But in this, we get a final, very obvious, canonical reveal that Demandred is not Mazrim Taim.

EMILY: Because they’re in the same room together.

SALLY: Because they’re in the same room together and they’re also like, “Mazrim Taim’s been promoted! He’s done such a good job as a middle manager with his thirteen Myrddraal in his creepy basement.”

EMILY: He’s even one of the Forsaken and now he gets a cool celebrity single name, a la all the Forsaken.



SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Now, instead of Mazrim Taim he's [intense] M'hael.

SALLY: Yeah, which is his dumb fucking cult title. So.

EMILY: It's basically leader or something. Which then it's kind of awkward that you're the lowest ranking of the Forsaken. It should have been follower, am I right?

SALLY: Ehhh!

EMILY: Heh!

SALLY: Anyway, Mazrim Taim has been promoted because he's done such a good job.

EMILY: Because he's daddy's special boy.

SALLY: He's daddy's special boy.

EMILY: Which, like, to be fair, yeah. He has done a good job, [laughing] as opposed to Sammael, Rahvin, all the others.

SALLY: I know. This happened and I was like yeah.

EMILY: He did deserve that promotion.

SALLY: He at least has done something actually bad.

EMILY: Yeah, this is a merit-based promotion for sure, for sure, for sure.

SALLY: Like, to just, to yeah, have – anyway, we don't need to laud, we don't need to get him up on his gold medal podium.

EMILY: [laughing] He'll do that himself. Believe us.

SALLY: Um, yeah, but when we get this sort of canonical – and it's so stupid, because Demandred walks into the room and they're like, "He's got a hooked nose and dark hair," which are other synonyms that have been used to describe Mazrim Taim in the past in some form or another. So, then you're like, "Ah! Finally, the reveal!" And then it's like no fuck you. Mazrim Taim is also here. Um, once we made that reveal, or once Robert Jordan decided to go away from that plot, like, Demandred was nothing. And I know we've made that argument before, but it is really coming to a head at this final book. Where it's like oh, yeah. Demandred is the only Forsaken we haven't really interacted with, so he better do something huge in the final book, but he has no personality and we haven't set up any plans for him, and Mazrim Taim is a better big bad at this point.

EMILY: Yeah, Demandred will do something big in this book, but it's totally unforeshadowed, totally out of nowhere. So, at least in retrospect, pretty unsatisfying. Um, I think, my whole argument with Demandred and we'll get into this later, is that Demandred, instead of being focusing his vendetta on Rand, should have been functioning as an antagonist in parallel to Mat.

SALLY: Hmm.

EMILY: In terms of Demandred's role in the Last Battle, which will be as sort of a general figure leading the forces and Mat will be doing the same thing on the other side. Um, in the same way that Mazrim Taim is going to function as a parallel to Egg, and Lanfear, randomly, is going to be a parallel to Perrin.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And Moridin to Rand, vice versa.

SALLY: Right.

EMILY: Um, but that's, you know, what we could have had but lost. Um, finally we get the reveal that Graendal, like everyone else, been killed and resurrected in a new body. And the joke is that she's in an ugly body.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um, there are of course some antisemitic undertones here with describing Graendal as quote unquote "classically ugly features," and one of them is, like, a hooked nose.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And it's like shut up.

SALLY: Yeah, they do use that twice in the same chapter, don't they?

EMILY: [sighs] Yeah.

SALLY: A hooked nose. Interesting.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Bad.

EMILY: Lots of evil people have hooked noses and that's interesting.

SALLY: Bad is what I will say. Very antisemitic.

EMILY: This is the worst thing that could have happened to Graendal is that now she's ugly. And I don't even really want to talk about that because it's so fucking misogynistic and stupid.

SALLY: Oh no, she's ugly. Moghedien, like, laughs out loud in her face.

EMILY: Which honestly?

SALLY: Yeah, I mean, kind of iconic [laughs].

EMILY: Yeah, Moghedien is like [cackles]. [pause, cackles again]

SALLY: Um.

EMILY: Moghedien's a little unhinged in this –

SALLY: Moghedien needs a long vacation and some therapy.

EMILY: Moghedien needs to pound some Xanax and...

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Moridin does sort of send them to their battle stations, including he's like, "Moghedien, I'm going to have you checking in on an army." And we don't know what that is yet but keep that on the back burner. Okay! Talmanes!

SALLY: Here we go.

EMILY: Um. We, like we said, we intersect Talmanes' points of view with other points of view. And it's just Talmanes and the fall of Caemlyn. Talmanes and the Band of the Red Hand, you know, the forces he has left to him, considering some of them have been taken to Cairhien, um, they go to the city. Which is *super* on fire. Um, and go initially towards the palace, because they're like, "The palace is on fire, surely some people are defending there." And then they go in search of the cannons. Um, along the way they convince some mercenaries to hold one of the gates so there is an exit route, both for civilians and for them when they leave. Um, they do go to the palace and find that good old Guybon has been holding there and initially is like, "I don't want to leave because the queen will send messengers here and we gotta tell her what's going on." And it's like, okay, well, the queen's gonna figure it out pretty quick when all [laughs] the messengers die. So maybe don't worry about it. Um, and finally they go to the warehouse where the dragons are being kept and find that Aludra has managed to keep the dragons safe and, um, out of the hands of the Shadow, along with sort of keeping some civilians safe. Um, and it end with them sort of cornered against a wall and using the cannons to blow up the wall to escape the city as it is burning. Um, it's Talmanes' point of view throughout. Talmanes is initially fine, obviously, but in his very second point of view we find out he has taken a wound while killing a Myrddraal. Here's another threat that has not been in play in many, many books, but Myrddraal's blades, like the classic, you know, Nazgûl blades are poisonous. So, Talmanes throughout this is slowly dying in a very manly way, you know?

SALLY: Yeah, refusing to give in to the pain.

EMILY: Refusing to give in to the pain, just, he just keeps going despite it. And he refuses mercy killing, et cetera, et cetera. He even kills another Myrddraal. So badass while he's dying of his first Myrddraal wound.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: It's pretty silly, you know. Talmanes doesn't read like Talmanes. Talmanes reads like any Brandon Sanderson character. Just sort of that cardboard cutout of a character.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um, yeah, my main beef with it is Talmanes' voice and sort of this overarching portrayal of, um, you know, lionized masculinity.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: We're seeing a heroic ideal in Talmanes' point of view, as Talmanes himself, that is also embodied by people like Lan and Rand, in terms of, like, just don't give into the pain, overcome your body's physical weakness to do cool things and keep your head on your shoulders and stay cool and think through all the problems and blah, blah, blah, blah. Um, you know, sort of valorous in battle type men. And, I mean, that's very much setting the tone for what the Last Battle is evoking, in the very fact that it is called the Last Battle, you know? There's going to be battlefields, there's going to be men fighting. The idea of accomplishment, or sort of like heroic deeds in the Last Battle, is going to be determined by people's suffering proportionate to their victories, you know? And that is sort of what is epic to us. Or is supposed to be. And, um, uh I don't think I want to dive too deep into yet. I think that's something we can come back to as a theme, but that is what is happening with Talmanes.

SALLY: Yeah, yeah. We'll definitely talk more about it, but this can be kind of our first, uh, mile marker along the path of this theme as we hike through it. Um, I also think it's very indicative of that theme that it is Talmanes who dies in the first point of view. Like, he's – everyone I've talked to, he's been one of their fan favorite little side characters. You know, this weird little French dude –

EMILY: French dude.

SALLY: Who's, like, one of Mat's second in commands, best friends, kind of varying stick in the mud slash very smart, yeah, military guy. Yeah, and everyone I know who's read the series seems to really like him, so presumably a fan favorite, who is, um, his death is supposed to be shocking and upsetting, the way fan favorite deaths are, but it's also really leaning into the idea that all of our favorite characters, all of our good guys are going to *have* to embody this attitude in order to get to the end. And we're seeing that on the ground level with, like, a secondary character, so we need to, like, expect that to an even higher degree of our main characters.

EMILY: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Um, that's the prologue of *A Memory of Light*.

SALLY: Damn!

EMILY: It is definitely meant to grab you by the seat of your pants and yeet you into the action.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: It's very action packed, you know, we talk – this is obviously a very Brandon Sanderson style, but it is also very much trying to get you reading in terms of we're not having a bunch of boring talking scenes back to back, the way prologues traditionally happen. We're having fights interspersed throughout.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: To make sure that you are just *gripped*.

SALLY: Yeah, and I don't, I – we've talked about this before with Brandon. I don't love the, like, intercutting – *intercutting*, really hit my t's on that one. The intercutting for no reason. I mean, the reason here is pacing, exactly like Emily said. Like, though they are not the most boring prologue scenes we've had, like, the other ones, the non-Talmanes scenes, are interesting, interesting things are happening, they're still just sitting around talking sort of scenes. So, the action is supposed to build you up, leave you on a cliffhanger, you read the talking, and then it happens again and again. Um, and it's just a structure that is – feels manipulative because it feels like it's being used because there's nothing else of interest in the prologue. That's how I felt reading it.

EMILY: Yeah, it feels a little infantilizing because you're like, "If I'm at Book 14 of *The Wheel of Time* and I'm not at least somewhat gripped by the boring talking scenes, then I'm probably the wrong reader for this."

SALLY: Yeah! Like, if I can't sit through *The Town* as a *Wheel of Time* reader and be interested in what's happening, or Aviendha talking to the Wise Ones and at least be vaguely interested about how they're going to respond, why have I read thirteen other books?

EMILY: Yeah. We're getting, like, we're doing things that the prologue should do in this. Establishing new threats.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: And stuff – wrapping up sort of hanging plot points.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um, so the idea that the pacing would be a total mess without Talmanes points of view is a little absurd.

SALLY: Yeah, like, as we talk about in many – I think talking scenes could have been a very effective prologue and then we could have jumped into Talmanes as chapter one. Or vice versa. Have Talmanes as the prologue, or whatever. Just this sort of like stop, go, stop, go, stop, go.

EMILY: Yeah, I think Talmanes would have functioned as one of the points of view, but I honestly think we could have had him, one of those late-stage scenes where he's actively dying, Caemlyn's burning, and he's trying to get out. That's a good scene to pick up from the cliffhanger we left him on in the –

SALLY: Yeah, in the last book, where he was rushing towards the city.

EMILY: Mm-hmm.

SALLY: Yeah, I don't need the sort of agonizing blow by blow slow death of one of my favorite side characters.

EMILY: Yeah, for sure.

SALLY: Where he's just turning weird shades of black and oozing out of his face and making really bad jokes.

EMILY: So bad, you guys.

SALLY: As though that is his primary character trait, is bad jokes.

EMILY: They're like, "He's funny, get it? And it's only when he's dying that he can let, sort of let lose his humor." And I'm like, "No?"

SALLY: No.

EMILY: I don't think that's who he is.

SALLY: Also, not every character needs to be funny in order to be a good character, and I just like – [laughs]

EMILY: Yeah, that is a real Brandon Sanderson mainstay. If they don't have jokes?

SALLY: They're fucking useless.

EMILY: They're fucking useless. They must be evil if they don't have jokes.

SALLY: If only Mazrim Taim could crack a joke every now and then.

EMILY: Yeah, this whole scene would have been ten times more bearable if Talmanes was just himself throughout.

SALLY: Right.

EMILY: Just stoic and irritated by everything. Instead of cracking jokes and being a badass.

SALLY: Being *man*!

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: *Dreadbane*.

EMILY: So, that's the prologue you guys.

SALLY: Yeehaw! We did it!

EMILY: The length of this episode is probably indicative of how long episodes are going to be throughout *A Memory of Light*, but, you know, it is how it is.

SALLY: Lots to talk about. It's the final book.

EMILY: Lots to talk about. Lots to wrap up. But we'll be back next time with, I believe, chapters one and two. So, look forward to that. And until then, thank you for listening.

SALLY: Yeah!

EMILY: For fourteen books, if not – well, thirteen books and thirteen seasons, since we did skip good old *Path of Daggers* [laughs].

SALLY: And did we miss anything?

EMILY: Nope.

SALLY: I don't think so.

EMILY: We sure didn't. Thanks for listening, thanks to Glynn MacKenzie as always for our theme song, thanks to our patrons on Patreon, and our followers on social media.

SALLY: Yes.

EMILY: Anything to add?

SALLY: No.

EMILY: Do you have a sign off?

SALLY: Oh [laughs].

EMILY: What? [laughs]

SALLY: We, we were in Phoenix last weekend with a bunch of Emily's high school friends and we were all sitting in the backyard one night, like, waiting for our dinner reservation.

EMILY: Mm-hmm.

SALLY: Like, telling, like, stories from our childhood and, like, weird things that our parents did. And we're all, like, in our thirties, you know, so people were drinking and, like, swearing. And in the other yard there was a bunch of children [laughs].

EMILY: Oh my god! [laughs] I forgot about this.

SALLY: [laughing] There were a bunch of children. And, I don't remember what happened, but somebody was like, "We're in a neighborhood. Maybe we shouldn't be so...I don't know, inappropriate, or whatever."

EMILY: Yeah. Yeah.

SALLY: And I can't remember what they said, but Emily's friend Kat.... what did they say? Oh my gosh, it was so funny.

EMILY: They were basically like, "Fuck them kids."

SALLY: Oh yeah [laughs].

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Like very loudly standing next to the fence. Like, "Fuck those kids." And then like *immediately* a child – [laughs]

EMILY: A child, like, screamed. Not in pain or fear, but just sort of the way kids playing scream. It didn't seem to be a reaction to what was said, but it was so loud, so blatant, that we all just panicked.

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: Like teens whose mom comes into the room when they're watching an R rated movie. We all scrambled [laughs] inside.

SALLY: [laughs] It was so funny. It was, first of all the timing of what Kat said and the child – it was, like, instantaneous.



EMILY: It was so good.

SALLY: So funny. And then just the, like, coordinated scramble inside. Everyone was grabbing snacks.

EMILY: So many snacks.

SALLY: Giggling. It was so funny.

EMILY: We could be telling stories from Phoenix for a long time.

SALLY: Yeah, it was one of the funniest moments. And we all went inside and were just, like, crying.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Like, "Oops. Sorry, child."

EMILY: Sowwy!

SALLY: Sowwy!

EMILY: Okay, everyone. Hope you have a good week!

SALLY: Bye!

EMILY: Bye!