

Episode 287: R.I.P. Perrin's 94 Dead Relatives

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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: Sorry, you can hear Ed crunching in the background, if you can hear that.

SALLY: I guess we could take it away from him.

EMILY: No, he's so happy... It's not ASMR, it's just – what does ASMR stand for?

SALLY: I was literally just thinking – it's audio – we have to Google it.

EMILY: Audio stimulation.

SALLY: Aud – Audio stimulation, sexy radio.

EMILY: ASSR.

SALLY: [laughing] Yeah, sorry, that's my dyslexia really popping off.

EMILY: Audio stimulation, mmsexy [laughing] radio.

SALLY: [laughs] An autonomous sensory meridian response.

EMILY: That's nowhere near as fun as mmsexy.

SALLY: Mmsexy.

EMILY: Mmsexy.

SALLY: It's a tingling sensation that usually begins on the scalp. So I think it's –

EMILY: Well, I doubt you'll get...mmsexy tingling [Sally laughs] from Ed chewing his food louder than it's physically possible.

SALLY: He has to grasp it with his old man front teeth and then launch it to the back because he's got [laughs] very few teeth.

EMILY: Have we also told you guys how sometimes when we're trying to get Ed to eat, he will fake eat?

SALLY: [snorts] It's actually –

EMILY: In order to trick us as though he doesn't crunch so loudly when he actually does eat. It makes me wonder if Ed is a little deaf.

SALLY: [laughs] Did you tell Dr. B about the fake eating? Yesterday?

EMILY: No, I should have. I was trying to think of so many insane things.

SALLY: Dr. B is our vet.

EMILY: Dr. B is our vet who has to put up with Ed's –

SALLY: Tomfoolery.

EMILY: Crimes.

SALLY: And Tybalt, but she sees Tybalt way less often. He is –

EMILY: For real.

SALLY: Tybalt is healthy of body, if not of...mind.

EMILY: Mind [laughs]. Yeah, she was like, “How's Tybalt?” And I was like, “I need to be honest with you, Dr. B. He's insane.”

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: He's lost the plot.

SALLY: [laughing] Yeah, he has lost the plot 100%.

EMILY: Nothing going on between those ears. Anyway, enough about our cats. Welcome to Everybody Hates Rand, your friendly neighborhood *Wheel of Time* podcast. I'm Emily Juchau.

SALLY: And I am Sally Goodger.

EMILY: And once again, status quo these days, just bouncing around a whole lot. And it's easiest for me to go in order more or less.

SALLY: Sure.

EMILY: So we start with an Egg point of view where we get our first glimpse of the front lines in Kandor.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Oh, that's not yet. First, we see – first we have Egg going to a command tent to visit Bryne, Gareth Bryne. She is now accompanied by Egeanin as kind of one of her, like, weird bodyguards. Egg's like, “I just keep thinking of questions to ask her about the Seanchan.” We're like, okay, whatever. Surely Egeanin being in her vicinity will be important at some point. Otherwise, why did we go to all this trouble?

SALLY: Yeah, allegedly.

EMILY: But Egeanin walks into the command tent and Gareth Bryne has lit upon the idea of using gateways creatively, finally.

SALLY: Fucking. Yeah.

EMILY: One of the first five people to do so, and the first four were Androl. Um, but Gareth Bryne, he's, like, set up what is basically a viewing screen, which is just a hole in the tent. Egwene almost walks into it and plummets to her death, which would have been...

SALLY: Pretty funny, actually.

EMILY: Honestly iconic. Gareth Bryne's like, “I accidentally killed the Amyrlin Seat because I did not have proper safety equipment.”

SALLY: Yeah, is this OSHA compliant?

EMILY: It does not seem like it. He's like, “I sent Siuan to get, like, a rope or something to put around it.” But it's, like, maybe you guys should have a warning sign.

SALLY: Yeah, or, like, a door or something in front of it.

EMILY: Yeah, he's got Yukiri, one of the Aes Sedai, doing this and she's like, “I've been thinking about maybe I can change the weave somehow so that we can just see through it, but it's like solid.”

SALLY: Yeah, we could stand on it.

EMILY: Just like the Grand Canyon. Um, and it's like, yeah, that's a great idea because as it is, someone could theoretically shoot an arrow straight up and kill Gareth Bryne [laughing]. Imagine looking up.

SALLY: And here's Gareth Bryne.

EMILY: And there's a hole in the sky and an old man is looking down at you, like, a dad at a museum with his hands behind his back.

SALLY: I would be like, "God?"

EMILY God? [laughing]

SALLY: Oh no.

EMILY: The Trollocs are like, "Is this what God is?"

SALLY: [laughs] This is the Creator himself.

EMILY: [laughing] The Creator is a middle-aged weirdo.

SALLY: Middle-aged white man.

EMILY: Honestly, it makes sense. That's what the Catholics have been telling us for years.

SALLY: Oh, the Catholics.

EMILY: Anyway, Egwene looks at Bryne's battle lines that he's created and is like, "I think you should utilize the Aes Sedai more on the front lines and not just as a reserve force." And Bryne's like, "That sounds great to me. I just didn't want to overstep." So that's that. Now we go to Mat, Returning to, um, Ebou Dar. He is in disguise, which for him just means that his hat is off.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: And you know, he's now got just, like, a bandage over his missing eye. The Mat point of view is as nightmarish as they all are in that there is a quote unquote "joke" in almost literally every paragraph. Which, I don't know who told Brandon Sanderson that to have a funny character you need to do wordplay in literally every paragraph, but I wish they were dead [laughs].

SALLY: Yeah, I don't wish good things upon them and their household.

EMILY: That's not what comic relief is. Um, but Mat enters Ebou Dar, which is obviously now under Seanchan occupation. He, of course, like everyone else is like, "Here's how it's different under the Seanchan. It is cleaner and fewer knife fights. And, wow, everyone just sure seems happy and delighted."

SALLY: Yeah, it's the usual, um, colonizer propoganda out of *The Wheel of Time* that there are some people, in this instance, the Ebou Dari, um, who, for the record, happen to be brown. Just, I think that's key. Um, uh, who are just so unruly that they just do better if there's a firm hand

governing them. And what the Seanchan – we've made this argument a million times, so I won't, you know, waste much more breath on it – but the Seanchan are the firm, stern parent on Ebou Dar who are making everything better for them. Don't worry about the fact that there are still people who get hanged and beheaded. That's...that's for the overall good of these people who just can't...

EMILY: It's for law and order.

SALLY: Yes.

EMILY: President Nixon style. My fucking nemesis. We also get some, how shall we say, retroactive, uh, some retconning here in terms of Mat's relationship to the city.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Where he's like, “Yeah, in retrospect, I actually feel like Ebou Dar is my second home and being here was great and Tylin was great and our relationship was so fun.” And you're like, “What the fuck is happening?”

SALLY: And if you go back, let's flashback, freeze frame, rewind to *A Crown of Swords*.

EMILY: You're probably wondering how I got here.

SALLY: Yeah. And it's just, like, Mat consistently suffering, being bullied, being abused, being starved, being mocked, getting into fights, being chased by Darkfriends. And he was not happy during any of that. He was consistently in the worst mental place we've seen him in the entire series.

EMILY: Yeah, I'm like did we read the same book, Matrim?

SALLY: No!

EMILY: Because it was not good for you. You were very unhappy.

SALLY: Very depressed.

EMILY: But I guess, you know, as we've talked about before, Robert Jordan sort of... [laughs] Tybalt just –

SALLY: The cats are fighting [laughing] over here on the floor.

EMILY: Robert Jordan's sort of inability to pick a tone when it came to Mat and Ebou Dar, you know, kind of constantly vacillating between is it funny or is it horrendous?

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Is not serving him here because Brandon Sanderson has opted to not go with any of that sort of gray area and just be like, yeah, it was funny.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Mmkay. It wasn't.

SALLY: Yeah, it...yeah.

EMILY: Anyway, Mat goes looking for a bar to find out the news in the city. He eventually goes to one where the bouncer at the door is a Seanchan. Uh, the owner of the bar, I guess, is an Ebou Dari woman. Mat finds out that they are married. So, we have more of the, like, colonization sort of the colonizers come and intermarry with the population. And now it's like, well, we can't extricate them because some people are married now.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And we don't want to deal with the complicated issues of immigration.

SALLY: Yeah, yeah.

EMILY: Um, but Mat, it's a, it's a silly conversation generally. But through it, Mat finds out that Tuan is, um, facing multiple, like, assassination attempts. And Mat's like – gets really weird and intense about it. He's like, "I'm going to go save her." And this Seanchan bouncer is like, "No, you don't understand. They're, like, not meant to succeed. It's just sort of like a Seanchan power play." It's this Gneral Galgan, who we've seen in the past, who's just, like, exerting some of his flexing a little.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Being like, "Yeah, I can send people to kill you. They won't do it but..."

SALLY: Yeah. But I can.

EMILY: I can. And Mat is like, "I don't give a fuck, I'm going to go rescue her." *Classic Wheel of Time* man shenanigans.

SALLY: Yeah, and say what you will about Tuon, she is at least not a woman who generally needs rescuing.

EMILY: I know.

SALLY: She's the most powerful woman in this city. And, again, for all of her faults and crimes against humanity, a very resourceful and capable woman. So Mat is...

EMILY: Yeah, including being able to defend herself in hand-to-hand combat.

SALLY: Yeah, like she's an actual, like, trained physical fighter. So Mat is being peak *Wheel of Time* misogyny here.

EMILY: Peak paternalistic [sighs]. Yeah, for sure. We then switch to Moiraine and Rand. They are on the Tarwin's Gap battlefield. Rand is like, "I am going to go out and do some big Channeling." Moiraine's like, "That would be a mistake because you don't want to, like, over exert yourself before you have to go to Shayol Ghul. In fact, clock is ticking. Why don't we go to Shayol Ghul right now?"

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And Rand's like, "No, no, no. I have to do this." And I, you know, am sort of... This is a pretty typical Rand and Moiraine conversation in that Moiraine is advising Rand to do something and he's ignoring her.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But now Rand is capable of entrenching his, uh, stubbornness in, like, wellness language, in quote unquote "wisdom." So it sounds less like they are doing the same old thing and more like we're peers having a real conversation. It's still the same thing though.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So that's annoying because Moiraine came back, you would hope that there would be some growth in their relationship, but clearly there hasn't been really. Rand goes out and does some big channeling like he did back at Maradon in the last book to rescue Ituralde and his men, but eventually he is overpowered by the sheer volume of bad Channelers who are creating circles to go against him." Rand's like [fake shouting], "Taim! I'll kill you."

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: And I'm like, "...Should have killed him six books ago, my guy."

SALLY: I know! When everyone around you was like...

EMILY: I know.

SALLY: Take him out.

EMILY: You don't really get to scream someone's name when you hired them for a job, fully aware that on their resume was murder, evil, greasy hair [laughing].

SALLY: [laughs] Scheming, plotting,

EMILY: Scheming, plotting, villain.

SALLY: [laughing] Villainous behaviors.

EMILY: [laughing] Villainous behaviors and appearance.

SALLY: He sent you his super villain resume and you said, "That's exactly what I need."

EMILY: That's great. I love it. Sign off.

SALLY: Cult leader, known narcissist.

EMILY: [laughs] Known freak.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Oh, man. Anyway, Rand's like retreats and then he's like, "That was a mistake." And Moiraine's like...[laughing].

SALLY: No waaaaay!

EMILY: Looks directly into the camera. Is like, "Oh, was it?"

SALLY: No way, bestie. [affected] *Why yes!*

EMILY: Rand's like, "I can't personally..." [affected] *Why yes!*

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: What's that from?

SALLY: A Mike's Mic vocal tick. *Why yes!*

EMILY: Why yes! Oh, he's so good. Um, Rand's like, "Well, I guess I can't personally win the Last Battle." And Moiraine's like...

SALLY: And everyone on the battlefield is like, are you the stupidest man alive?

EMILY: Did you think we were doing this for nothing?

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: What are we to you? [laughs]

SALLY: Like, why do you have armies if you thought you could personally come out here and just kill every member of the Shadow?



EMILY: Then we see Birgitte doing fighting in Sherwood Forest.

SALLY: [French accent] In ze woods.

EMILY: It's kind of like a guerrilla warfare style thing going on. The Trollocs are now just sort of scattered throughout the woods and being attacked and cornered by various groups of people. And that's just the status quo at the moment. We get the usual stream of consciousness in Birgitte's point of view, which is her being stressed and worried about what it means to have been ripped out of the World of Dreams instead of being reborn. And she's just like, "Will I even respond to the Horn of Valere? I wish I had someone to ask these questions to, but it's just me." And we're like, "Okay, that's – damn, dude, that sucks."

SALLY: Damn, bro.

EMILY: Damn, bro.

SALLY: I ain't reading all that.

EMILY: I ain't reading all that, but good for you. Or –

BOTH: Sorry that happened.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Then we get Rand going into *tel'aran'rhiod* or rather one of his dream shards, which he's like, "This is just knowledge, secret knowledge that I learned from Lew Therin. Isn't it great? I can just have my fun meditation..." It's like elf dreams and fucking D&D. Elves don't sleep. They only dream [laughing].

SALLY: [laughing] I need you to stop saying odd shit.

EMILY: Yeah, that's Rand right now. Anyway, while he's in his creepy dream, he's like, "I've been infiltrated."

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: So he goes and finds that Lanfear has crafted a little set piece wherein she's in a little pool of water drowning.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: She's like, "Please help me." And Rand, to his credit, just kind of stands there watching [laughing] this for like a minute and is like, "Can you cool it?"

SALLY: No, babe, babe.

EMILY: Hey, I need you to dial down the drama like a little bit. And Lanfear is like, “Oh! Fuck, that didn't work?” And he's like, “No.”

SALLY: And she's like, “But I was wet in a thin white gown.”

EMILY: But I'm so *wet* and horny [laughs]. And Rand's like, “Nope, it's not working anymore. I have learned from my mistakes. And girl, I'm just not that into you anymore.” And she's like, “But we have so much history.” We get, like, more about their relationship as Lews Therin and Meirin pre Lanfear. You know, she was his girlfriend before he met his wife.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And that's the extent of their relationship. So, the fact that she's still hung up on him is like...

SALLY: A little pathetic?

EMILY: Yeah. Borderline unhinged and, you know, perhaps a little bit of a, like, male fantasy.

SALLY: Oh. Yeah.

EMILY: The hottest woman alive can't accept that you are happily married to someone else. So, she's going to wreck her entire life about it. Sort of like a power trip for men. I think they love to think that their ex-girlfriends are all crazy.

SALLY: Yeah. I'm sorry I called you pathetic, Lanfear. You're just trapped in a male fantasy.

EMILY: It is, like, pathetic. fYeah. But, you know, Lanfear is one of those characters who's like, you are so male fantasy that you are pathetic. It's just so sad.

SALLY: Yeah. Just a view right into that psyche.

EMILY: [sighs] Anyway, Rand's like, “Why don't you prove to me that you're going to the good side if that's what you really want? You know, you just have to mind meld with me for a second or something.” And she's like, “I don't want to do that.” And he's like, “Okay.” But then he mind melds just to show her that he is absolutely no longer interested in her. And she's like, “...You didn't have to do that.” [laughs]

SALLY: She's like, “Well, that was kind of mean.”

EMILY: That was kind of hurtful.

SALLY: Yeah. I didn't. When you did that, it made me feel bad [laughs].

EMILY: He's like, “Well, *yes!*”

SALLY: Well, *yes!* That was the point [laughs].

EMILY: So, we've got, you know, our male power trip going on here in the background, but we also have, um, um, you know, the whole the whole section is annoying for that reason. Anytime Lanfear appears, it's annoying. But we do have an attempt by the authors to be like Rand has closure on this subplot that was kind of left hanging because Lanfear beefed it sort of in the middle of their will they won't they narrative. And it's like well, if she just died, then that would have been closure of some kind. Rand hasn't been spending a whole lot of time thinking about Lanfear since she died. Uh, but her coming back, it is quite funny that she came back at the beginning of this book, you know, sort of reintroduced herself to Rand and then, like, the next time he sees her, he's like, "No."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Absolutely not. So, I guess that's growth, baby.

SALLY: Yeah, uh, to kind of call back to what you said with Rand and Moiraine's relationship, we're not – we are seeing growth with Rand in this one instance, um, which is good. I hope that means we're trending in the right direction, but it's, uh, in general I feel like we're not seeing a lot of growth from him. I feel like he's still trapped in a lot of his old...

EMILY: Patterns? Yeah.

SALLY: Even after being enlightened. So, this scene was kind of funny to me. I was like, "Okay, guess this is the first..."

EMILY: He has grown up a little bit.

SALLY: Yeah! The first, you know, domino that I hope we start to see Rand fully actualized, which in Book 14... he better.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: So [laughs].

EMILY: For fuck's sake [laughs].

SALLY: Let's see it, Rand. I love it. I love for you to tell Lanfear off because you have been so weird about her for so long.

EMILY: Oh, God. From a, like, narrative standpoint, what this is also functioning as is signaling to us, the readers, that Rand is not going to have some final showdown with Lanfear.

SALLY: Correct.

EMILY: You know that this is sort of it. Lanfear is not going to be one of the...

SALLY: The big bads for *Rand*.

EMILY: The big bads for Rand. But she's still floating around in this narrative. She's still obsessed with Rand, but Rand is like, "Meh," so whatever interaction they're going to have is going to be one sided.

SALLY: Yeah. And it, also knowing what we've talked about with Perrin, this, like, gets her out of Rand's plot in order to put her more squarely in Perrin's plot. So, it's serving that narrative function as well. Sort of changing lanes there.

EMILY: Yeah. Speaking of Perrin, we see him also in the woods where everyone is hanging out. Um, and he sort of out of nowhere goes to one of the Wise Ones. What's her name? Edarra, who's been hanging out with him since several books ago. You know, she's just been one of his one of *his* Aiel, I guess. Anyway, he's like, "I need to ask you something. You know, you know the World of Dreams." And she's like, "I'm [laughs] familiar with the concept, yes." He's like, "I need to get there personally, bodily, not sleeping." And she's like, "Well, no. Shan't do that. It's evil." She's like, "It corrupts your soul. If you die in the World of Dreams, then you won't be reborn in the reincarnation cycle." Like, it's kind of like I wish someone would make this comparison, but it's kind of like the reverse of what's happening to Birgitte. You know? and what's happening to Birgitte is pretty unambiguously not a good thing. We may not call it *evil* necessarily, but what Perrin is, uh, opting to do is also definitely not *good* for him.

SALLY: Yes.

EMILY: Perrin's reasoning is that he absolutely has to fight Slayer. This is kind of out of nowhere because Perrin and Slayer sort of had their interaction at the end of *Towers of Midnight* and then, I guess just because we haven't had many Perrin points of view since then, it's been kind of like, uh, what makes you think he's still out there, you know?

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: That he definitely needs to be defeated. So... and it's like the Last Battle is going on currently. It doesn't seem, it seems like you have bigger fish to fry.

SALLY: Yeah, then this freak who hasn't bugged you in a while.

EMILY: Yeah, so it's like, okay, sure, I guess. But Perrin's like, "Pwease tell me how to do that because that's how Slayer is so much more powerful than me in the World of Dreams because he's there in the flesh and I need to be able to match him." And Edarra's like, "No." And Perrin's like, "Rats."

SALLY: Shoot.

EMILY: Shoot. Ends that interaction. Next, we get Egwene actually on the front lines in the battle at Kandor and this is just straightforwardly like here's what the Aes Sedai are doing to

fight. They do big channeling. They all have *angreal*, *s'angreal*. It is... Trolloc Meatgrinder, one might say.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But, uh, it's not really characterized that way as like the horrors of war. They're, like, dudes throwing up and all the Aes Sedai are just like, "Yeah, all in a day's work." And I'm like, I don't believe that.

SALLY: Yeah, like the Aes Sedai don't fight. [clears throat] You guys might remember that one of the three oaths is to not fight, effectively.

EMILY: I don't believe most of these Aes Sedai have experience with, like, blowing limbs off.

SALLY: Yeah, and just, like, piles of, you know, mutilated bodies, blood and guts and other human fluid, or Trolloc fluids flying around. Like it would smell disgusting. It would look disgusting, and it would just be, like, viscerally upsetting. But Aes Sedai are so like cool girl that they're like, "The horrors of war are nothing to me." And it's like, that's not a good thing, actually.

EMILY: That's incredibly weird. Like I do believe it of Egwene because she has been in incredibly violent situations.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: That she would be, like, pretty cool headed about this. But, you know, some of these other Aes Sedai, I'm like, they're not fucking fainting away?

SALLY: Yeah, they can faint when Egg gets war powers, but no one's fainting at this? I don't know.

EMILY: It is a little ridiculous.

SALLY: It's whatever. It's fine. It's just, like, not to take the side of the Trollocs, but it is unfortunate that everyone's just like – this goes back to the perpetual thing in fantasy where you have the orcs, you have the Trollocs, you have some sort of faceless horde of a monster. So, we don't have to feel bad about killing them because they are so far from human that it's not like we're facing off and against an army of other people. But it's just like, I think, really depressing and heartless that nobody is like, "These are creatures and it kind of is horrendous what we just did to them."

EMILY: Yeah, they are living creatures. So that's fucked up, you know?

SALLY: Yeah. Like, where's your respect for – [laughs] Sorry to draw this comparison. We're watching *Dungeon Meshi*, *Delicious in Dungeon*, which is doing like really interesting things

about what it means to be in harmony with an ecosystem, even when the ecosystem is inherently violent, like a dungeon.

EMILY: Yeah. Out to get you.

SALLY: And I think it's just been such an interesting meditation on like the value of lives that might not have any inherent value to you. They are eating all the monsters, so they do have some value to the main characters. But I just think about – that take has been really interesting to see out of a fantasy text, like some actual respect for...

EMILY: Life, generally.

SALLY: Life and the monsters that we kill. So.

EMILY: Yeah, it is incredibly interesting. And the, like, idea that, yeah, we're killing and eating monsters, but bigger monsters will kill and eat us. And we are therefore still part of a sustainable ecosystem.

SALLY: Yeah, exactly. We are part of the chain. We're not breaking the chain.

EMILY: Really interesting.

SALLY: It's a good little show and incredibly funny.

EMILY: Yeah, recommend. Highly recommend. Um, the dub also is very good if you are not a...

SALLY: Subtitled anime person.

EMILY: Subtitled anime person. So you have our recommendation.

SALLY: Oh, you're so cringe! [laughing]

EMILY: [laughing] Ugh! You're so cringe. Incredible. Um, we get an Elayne point of view meeting with her advisors and generals, Bashere primarily, who updates her on, like, okay, they have been fully pushed out of Tarwin's Gap. Now the retreat becomes more complicated because they're going to encounter cities and they decide, okay, we're going to evacuate populations and burn cities as we, as is required so that the Trollocs can't just post up and have fortifications. Meanwhile, they, of course, are struggling in the woods, generally. And Bashere's recommendation is that they, like, leave the woods and retreat... You know, he has all these little strategic stop gaps along the way, but generally retreat, uh, in the direction of Cairhien. And Elayne's like, "This is really frustrating because the initial plan was we're going to just eradicate the forces in Caemlyn, coming from Caemlyn, and then we can split our forces to back up the other battle fronts, but that is not happening and clearly is not going to happen." And Bashere's like, "Yep, that's war, baby, it sucks." So, Elayne's like, "Okay, I guess we, that's what we have to do." Then we go back to Perrin, who, um, is talking to Tam, and he's [laughs] like, they're like

talking about the new plan, and Perrin's like, "Yeah, kind of sucks. Good luck with it, Tam." And Tam's like, "Excuse me?" And Perrin's like, "Yeah, you're in charge now." And Tam's like, "No, I'm not." And Perrin's like, "I am promoting you." And then he promotes him in front of everyone, so Tam can't – He's like, "No takesies, backsies. You're general now." Tam's like, "I hate this."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And I hate you. You bastard.

SALLY: That was exactly how I got promoted, by the way.

EMILY: [snorts]

SALLY: Not in a forest [laughs].

EMILY: With dead Trollocs all around.

SALLY: With dead Trollocs all around. Yeah, my boss was like, "You're in charge now and..."

EMILY: No takesy, backsies.

SALLY: No takesy, backsies is one hundred percent what happened.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Metaphorically, it felt like I was in a forest surrounded by dead Trollocs bodies. That's what it's like working in local government [laughs].

EMILY: I'm sorry.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: You and Tam al'Thor. Under incompetent leadership, aka Elayne.

SALLY: Elayne.

EMILY: Ahhh! Anyway. Um, Perrin – Perrin's like, "Sorry guys, I gotta leave." So he gets Neald to make him a gateway to the Fields of Merrilor so he can go find Rand. Everyone's like, "Bye!" But then...he like [laughs]. Oh. Oh. So, Perrin's about to leave when Bornhald, Dain Bornhald trots up to him and is like, "I just need to wreck your life real quick." Perrin's like, "Great." And Bornhald is like, "I just need you to know that it was not Trollocs who killed your family. It was actually Whitecloaks under command of Padan Fain. Perrin's like, "Okay. Thank you so much for this information that I can do nothing about."

SALLY: Did he say it was Whitecloaks? Did I miss that? I thought it was Ordeith, Padan Fain himself. Am I an idiot?

EMILY: He says, "It was Ordeith. Your father insulted him. He tore apart the family and we blamed the Trollocs." So it's not necessarily Whitecloaks personally, but more that they stood by.

SALLY: Gotcha, gotcha, gotcha.

EMILY: Yeah, it wasn't, like, Padan Fain – you're correct. I mischaracterized that. Padan Fain didn't, like, order the White Cloaks to kill Perrin's family. It seems that Padan Fain personally killed most of the family, which is wild because there were, like, twenty of them.

SALLY: Yeah!

EMILY: [laughs] And the White Cloaks were just like, "Ugh, that was fucked up. We better blame the Trollocs instead of admitting that we have Jack the Ripper in a position of authority over us."

SALLY: As if everyone in the Whitecloaks isn't Jack the Ripper.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Maybe not quite that violent, but...

EMILY: Rand, sorry, Perrin is like, "Okay, I am not going to deal with this right now."

SALLY: Yes, which is a totally fair use of compartmentalization, but it was cracking me up earlier when Perrin was like, "I've already dealt with this. I did a lot of processing [laughs] about my family's murder."

EMILY: We're like, "You what?" [laughs]

SALLY: And I was like, "Literally, when did you do that?" There was one scene where you cried into Faile's boobs.

EMILY: You kind of broke down once.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And then were like...

SALLY: That is all it takes to heal grief.

EMILY: That sucked, you know, no sort of ups and downs in the grief cycle.

SALLY: One breakdown.



EMILY: One break, one down, and then it's all uphill from there, baby.

SALLY: So. Yeah.

EMILY: So, yeah, that is incredibly wild. He's like, Perrin's like, "I'll have to reprocess it some other time." And I'm like, what will you do? Shed a single tear?

SALLY: Shed one tear and be like, "It's so sad that that man killed all 27 members of my family."

EMILY: [laughs] All 58 members of my family slain at the hands of Padan Fain.

SALLY: Oh, no.

EMILY: Oh, no.

SALLY: It's not like I ever knew their names or thought about them at all in the narrative. I don't know a single member of Perrin's family.

EMILY: Yeah. So, this is wild from – speaking of setting up villains to be in contrast to our heroes. This is wild because narratively it's setting up now Perrin to have some sort of vengeance arc against Pain Fain. Padan Fain has had minimal interactions with Perrin in the series. You know, there was that sort of intersecting moment in the Two Rivers, but I don't believe they ever even came face to face in that era. Primarily, Padan Fain has been out to get Rand.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: He also has a connection to Mat via the dagger that they both used. So having it kind of be like we're setting up a Perrin v. Padan Fain thing is kind of wild. Perrin v. Lanfear is also kind of wild.

SALLY: Yeah, it feels like we're foisting off inconvenient villains onto Perrin because there's not really a whole lot else for him to do.

EMILY: Yeah, Perrin had...not a good but a very complete arc throughout the series, ending with his creation of the Magical Hammer. You know, that was a very sort of apotheosis moment.

SALLY: Yes.

EMILY: And so, yeah, Perrin has very little to do here.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So I guess we're throwing him into the World of Dreams to hunt Slayer, a villain who should have been defeated long ago.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And also Lanfear and also Padan Fain, maybe.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Keep an eye on that.

SALLY: Okay, I will, I guess.

EMILY: [sighs] You have no choice [laughs].

SALLY: Rats.

EMILY: Perrin's like, "Bye, Bornhald. Every single one of our interactions has been *stellar*. Love this ongoing affair of ours." Uh, but he goes to the fields of Merrilor, accompanied by Gaul, who's like, "I am your sidekick, one hundo p of the time." And Perrin's like, "Good to have you, buddy." And I'm like, "I wish Gaul was in charge of this story."

SALLY: I know. Gaul is so gorgeous and hot and sexy, and I wish he was my boyfriend, not Perrin's boyfriend. It's a little rude.

EMILY: Perrin doesn't deserve him.

SALLY: That Perrin gets the best character in the series, but it is incredibly iconic that Gaul is the most ride or die character of all time.

EMILY: Yeah, Gaul's like, "You saved me from that cage, and now we're attached to the hip. Don't know – We're kissing with tongue."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And also I will go where you go. I wish I could cite the Bible scripture [laughs].

SALLY: What, First Corinthians? [laughing] Love is kind.

EMILY: No! The one with fucking Ruth and Naomi.

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: I grew up *Christian!* I know what I'm talking about...Everyone shut up.

SALLY: No, I grew up a heathen, so I don't know.

EMILY: “Entreat me not to leave you or to turn back from following after you, for wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God.” That's Gaul.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And it's hot.

SALLY: Yeah, it's hot.

EMILY: I'm not gonna lie.

SALLY: I want a man not dedicated to me.

EMILY: Gaul is the sexiest motherfucker out here. Anyway, Perrin and Gaul go to the Fields of Merrilor, track down someone who tells them where Rand is. He's apparently just, like, sort of near Shayol Ghul surveying the wilderness [laughs].

SALLY: Yeah, they're like, “They're doing reconnaissance.”

EMILY: Yeah. But Perrin goes there. There's like Cadsuane, Moiraine, Nynaeve are all standing around. Perrin's like, “Hey guys.”

SALLY: The meanest women you know.

EMILY: Yeah [laughs]. Perrin's like, “Hey, I have to talk to Rand real quick in *private!*” [laughs] Rand's like, “Hey, what's up, dude?” And Perrin's like [whispers], “I have to do a sacrilegious thing.” And Rand's like, “I love that.”

SALLY: And Rand's like [whispers], “Cool. I love doing those.”

EMILY: Tell me more about it. He's like, “Ooh, sexy.” Perrin's like, “I need you to put me in the World of Dreams for realsies.” And Rand's like, “I gotta tell you, bud, not great.” And Perrin's like, “I know, but you're the only person [laughing] I could trust to be stupid enough to do it for me.”

SALLY: Yeah. Yeah.

EMILY: And Rand's like, “You got me there. So good luck out there, I guess.” Perrin – they arrange for one of the Asha'man to, like, open a gateway so that he and Gaul can leave at some point. Perrin also mentions to Rand, he's like, “I think whatever – I think there's something happening in *tel'aran'rhiod* that is related to the Black Tower.” We of course know he's correct, but that's a pretty wild leap of logic.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Because we haven't heard, we haven't had Perrin, like, hearing the news that there is no traveling in the Black Tower. Presumably, Rand has tried to send people to travel there and that's how he knows, but we're kind of missing the links between those two, uh, points A and B. And Rand and Perrin hug, Perrin's like, "I guess this is goodbye, you know, you're going to Shayol Ghul next." Rand's like, "Yep, see ya, dog."

SALLY: Yeah, this is so funny too, because Perrin tells Tam earlier, he's like, "I have to leave because I have to be there to support Rand." And then he just immediately is like, "I'm supporting you by being so far away from you on an entirely another plane of existence."

EMILY: Yeah, Rand has cited – sorry, not Rand, Perrin has cited, like I feel the *ta'veren*, like, tugging that our characters have so often mentioned of like Rand needs me.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: And so really, we're just, like, getting not a lot of setup here in terms of what Perrin is doing and why he is making this decision, which is wild, primarily because it's Perrin.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Who overanalyzes everything, thinks things through very thoroughly before taking any action.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And I understand that the authors had sort of limited page space, as always, trying to nail out an entire finale with so many plots to wrap up in just 800...909 pages, [laughs] you know? But also, maybe you could have cut back on all the Lan death talk in order to focus on, like, Perrin making this decision or even, you know, because I know from reading the book that Perrin doing stuff in *tel'aran'rhiod* is related to protecting Rand.

SALLY: Sure.

EMILY: Ultimately, that is where Rand needs him to be.

SALLY: Right.

EMILY: Uh, but like what, what instinct is telling Perrin this?

SALLY: Yeah. Like he doesn't even say beyond Rand needs me, that there's any instinct drawing him or *ta'veren* pull to the World of Dreams. It's just like Rand needs me and I'm making this unbelievably weird intuitive leap that that means killing Slayer.

EMILY: Yeah. Rand needs me. I hate Slayer. Therefore, World of Dreams physically.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Like, okay, guys, this equation is not adding up.

SALLY: Two plus two equals ninety-four.

EMILY: What?

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Ninety-four dead family members of, of—

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: The other absolutely wild and out of character thing here is that Faile is not mentioned once.

SALLY: Gaul is his wife [laughing] in this plot.

EMILY: You're right. But Perrin is like [laughs], "I am going on a suicide mission. World of Dreams." No mention of Faile.

SALLY: [crosstalk] My bossy wife.

EMILY: Yeah. Are they interacting? It seems like they just parted.

SALLY: Where is she? Yeah.

EMILY: We're getting all of these long Rand parting with his various girlfriends scenes.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: I've got to have date night with Elayne. I've got to fuck Aviendha and get her pregnant, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." And it's just like, okay, I guess Perrin and Faile have said everything they need to say.

SALLY: Yeah, Faile's off getting the Horn of Valere, I guess? [laughing] But we don't know that. I don't know.

EMILY: Or something? It's just wild for Perrin to—I they're so co-dependent that it's like how can he not be in the same room as her and be normal?

SALLY: Yeah. Exactly.

EMILY: It's so wild. Um, but that's those three chapters. That's what we read.

SALLY: Yeah. I just need to restate again. I think it is soooooo sexy and cool and gorgeous and hot and wonderful that Gaul is like, “I too will commit a sacrilegious atrocity for no reason at all.”

EMILY: It's unclear how much Gaul realizes [laughs] that this is a sacrilegious atrocity.

SALLY: [laughs] He probably doesn't know at all.

EMILY: Perrin's like, “I'm doing necromancy,” and Gaul, a guy who's never heard of necromancy, is like, “Sounds great.”

SALLY: Okay!

EMILY: “What do you need help with?” And you're like, “Oh, Gaul, you sweet idiot.

SALLY: You beautiful, gorgeous dummy. Never change.

EMILY: I love you *so* much.

SALLY: He's perfect.

EMILY: Uh-huh. Next on the docket is going to be Perrin and Gaul in *tel'aran'rhiod*. That's sort of, like, initial sequence.

SALLY: Slay.

EMILY: Interacting with, um, Androl in the Black Tower. You know, Perrin's, like, “I gotta go do stuff in the Black Tower.” Androl's stuck in basement time, so, so that's what we've gotta do.”

SALLY: Androl's stuck in basement time.

EMILY: Yep. Basement time with Androl. So how will we get him out of that damn basement? Um, then we will have an unfortunately sort of long, uh, chapter with Mat getting into the palace to find Tuan. Uh, but I hope with that to finally just air all our grievances with Mat and Tuan and...

SALLY: Be done?

EMILY: Be done. They'll still be interacting throughout the rest of the book, but let's just get it all out there [laughs].

SALLY: Let's just get it all out there in one incredibly negative, bummed episode.

EMILY: Yeah, and then say, every time it comes up in the past, be like, please see episode two hundred eighty...eight.

SALLY: Yep, I'm gonna – you're probably gonna have to have a spray bottle here to remind me not to complain about them because they will piss me off every time.

EMILY: They're pretty, they're pretty bad.

SALLY: But yeah, we will prepare next time to be in the Hater Zone. This will be the Hater Zone.

EMILY: Oh, and Rand, Rand! Rand will have a pleasant chat with his dad.

SALLY: That's nice.

EMILY: So, a more normal conversation after the last one they had on screen.

SALLY: Sure.

EMILY: Where Rand almost killed him [laughs].

SALLY: You know.

EMILY: So just some normal stuff.

SALLY: Almost killed Papa. RIP.

EMILY: Almost killed Papa. But that's what's up. Thanks for listening, everyone! Um, thanks to Glynna Mackenzie for our theme song. Thanks to our patrons on Patreon and our followers on social media.

SALLY: Hell yeah, baby.

EMILY: Anything to add?

SALLY: Um, I don't believe so.

EMILY: Okay. Do you have a sign off?

SALLY: Yeah. This one comes from my friend, uh, Brianna. She did not submit it as a sign off, but she was telling me this. You guys know, um, *Holes*, the most iconic movie of all time has that –

EMILY: Yeah of course!

SALLY: Yeah, exactly. [laughs] Yes of course! Why *yes!*

EMILY: Why *yes!*

SALLY: Has that incredibly iconic scene, um, where, uh, Sigourney Weaver as a child is digging holes and she says, “I’m tired of this, grandpa,” you know? And that’ll –

EMILY: That’s too damn bad!

SALLY: [laughs] Exactly. Brianna was at work the other day and she has a lot of coworkers who are, like, our age, later, so, you know, late twenties, early thirties, and she said – she was doing something and she said, “I’m tired of this, grandpa,” the way people do. And everyone, almost everyone else in the room said back, “That’s too damn bad,” you know? And one of her colleagues who I think is younger was like, “Haha, it’s so funny that you guys know that internet meme.” And everyone in the room was like, “It’s not a meme” [laughs].

EMILY: What the fuck are you talking about?

SALLY: And she’s like, “You guys only know that because it’s famous on the internet.” And they were like, “No, we know that from *Holes*, the best movie of all time.” And this coworker just, like, refused to be like, “No, you guys stop lying. Like you know it from the internet. Like *Holes* is not that iconic of a movie.” Or something like that. And everyone was like, “Child” [laughs].

EMILY: *Holes* was that iconic of a movie.

SALLY: I know! *Holes* is everything to me.

EMILY: God, we, like, watch it regularly. It’s in our cycle [laughs].

SALLY: A good movie! It’s such a good movie. So for this disrespectful, uncultured...

EMILY: Yeah, if you young whippersnaps haven’t seen *Holes*, go watch it. It holds up. It’s an indictment of the prison industrial complex.

SALLY: Hell yeah, baby.

EMILY: It’s an indictment of racism.

SALLY: Yep.

EMILY: You know, has a powerful feminist message.

SALLY: I need Kissin’ Kate Barlow to shoot and kiss me. You know what I’m saying?

EMILY: Yeah, who doesn’t? And Just some great characters overall.

SALLY: It’s so good when Dulé Hill...

EMILY: Oh my god.



SALLY: [sighs] He's so sexy in that movie.

EMILY: I can fix that.

SALLY: I know it's just such a...

EMILY: Shut up! AAAHHHH!

SALLY: Everyone's screaming. I'm twirling my hair, kicking my feet [laughs].

EMILY: Okay everyone. Go watch *Holes*.

SALLY: It's so good. I'm tired of this grandpa.

EMILY: Have a good week. Bye!