

Episode 295: Candlemaker Seppuku

Release Date: July 22, 2024

Running Time: 41 Minutes

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: Apologies in advance if Ed sneezes seventeen times directly into the microphone. Um, he, when – I don't know if you know this, if you're not a cat owner, but when they're, like, sick, a little bit sick, they sneeze a whole lot. If they've got, like, a little cold.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And Ed...is an animal, so he does not [laughs] direct his sneezes to the most convenient place, and in fact has sneezed on this book.

SALLY: Yeah, several times while I was reading it.

EMILY: He will just walk straight up to you and sneeze at you.

[Ed purrs loudly into the microphone]

EMILY: Like as – he weaponizes his sneezes. Yeah. He's also purring right now, right next to the microphone, which does not mean he's happy, it means he's needy and...

SALLY: He thinks if he purrs and looks adorable, we'll pay attention to him.

EMILY: [laughs] That we'll –

SALLY: And he's right.

EMILY: [in a baby voice] Bring him outside and feed him cookies, and Ed, yeah, nine out of ten times you are right, but we're not going outside, pal. It is like...200 degrees out and the air pollution is bad, so that's probably getting you sick.

SALLY: [in a baby voice] Yeah, it's probably why you're a little sickums. It's why I'm a little sickums.

EMILY: Yeah, who can blame?

SALLY: What if I sneezed on you? [fake sneezes]

EMILY: You would hate that, Ed. You would think it was the worst thing that ever happened to you. So why can't you use the golden rule?

SALLY: Ed's like, "I – that doesn't apply to me."

EMILY: Ed's like, "What?"

SALLY: I can't read.

EMILY: Because I'm better than you.

SALLY: Um, because you're a loser?

EMILY: Because you're my servant.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: I could have you beheaded at once [laughs]. Oh, Ed, you are...our favorite guy. One of our two favorite little guys.

SALLY: Two favorite little guys?

EMILY: Um, hey, y'all. This is Everybody Hates Rand, your friendly neighborhood *Wheel of Time* podcast. I'm Emily Juchau.

SALLY: And I am Sally Goodger.

EMILY: Um, we actually read three chapters today because what happens in the course of these chapters is fairly repetitive in terms of what's going on on multiple battlefields. [Ed is purring in

the background]. Um, I think in the last section or maybe the one before that, but, like, Elayne decided that Bashere is a Darkfriend.

SALLY: Right.

EMILY: Based upon the *sabotage*.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Saboteurs, um, that is happening to the army that is under his command. And independently from one another, Lan and Matt slash Egwene kind of will come to the same conclusions about their respective generals on the battlefield. [laughing] Ituralde is the only one who doesn't have to suffer suspicion because he's only been fighting for, like, two days. So he hasn't had a chance to do any major sabotage.

SALLY: Yeah, at least Lan recognizes that compulsion is a possibility.

EMILY: Yeah, that's pretty funny. Elayne immediately concludes, "Bashere is a Darkfriend." And Mat also is like, oh – what's his name?

SALLY: Gareth Bryne.

EMILY: "Gareth Bryne must be a Darkfriend." And Lan is like, "I'm placing you under arrest, but that does not necessarily mean I think you're evil. I think you might be being mind controlled because that's a perfectly reasonable thing to assume." Um, yeah, it is disappointing when Lan is the smartest person out there.

SALLY: It's just kind of frustrating that our Channeling people weren't like, "Remember this Channeling thing we can do to people?"

EMILY: Yeah, I was gonna say, I don't fully expect Mat to –

SALLY: Yeah!

EMILY: Cop onto the idea of compulsion because he is not experienced with Channeling, but I would think Elayne would, perhaps.

SALLY: I guess Lan's been working with Aes Sedai for like a hundred years or whatever. So.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: At least, I guess he's got the education.

EMILY: Yeah, and Moiraine famously is like “forbidden section of the library constantly.”

SALLY: Yeah, Moiraine is like –

EMILY: This is an illegal weave. Don't use it. [laughs] Balefires six different people.

SALLY: [laughing] Yeah. Moiraine –

EMILY: [laughing] Do as I say, not as I do.

SALLY: [laughing] Moiraine's the type to be like, “Lan, will you practice letting – ? Will you let me practice doing compulsion on you just so I know how to do it and what to look for?”

EMILY: And Lan's like, “You got it.”

SALLY: And yeah, Lan's the type of ride or die bestie to be like, “You bet.”

EMILY: [laughing] Lan's like, “Mi familia. Yes, of course I will.”

SALLY: Of course you can mind control me.

EMILY: Fuck up my brain, please.

SALLY: Yeah. Yeah.

EMILY: Wouldn't that be such an iconic, um, revelation?

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: [laughing] If we discovered fourteen books later that Lan's been under compulsion this entire time, just sort of botched compulsion, and that explains his entire personality.

SALLY: It's not actually that he's like that or anything. He just, Moiraine was trying to make him...

EMILY: *New Spring* comes out, you know? And we are like, “Oh, he was like a happy-go-lucky, lovely...”

SALLY: Yeah. Charming little himbo.

EMILY: [laughs] Yeah, just a delightful man. And then this happened.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Then he got lobotomized. Um, [sighs] no, that would have been funny, and we don't believe in being funny unless it's Brandon Sanderson trying to make Mat do jokes. Yeah, there's also the fact that, like, after one person has accused their resident, uh, general of being a Darkfriend, that sort of loses its punch.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Like, the revelation of what's happening with the generals has come as four separate revelations. You know, we've got a Perrin's plotline, Mat, Lan, and Elayne. Rather than anything that is sort of, like, tied together, which, um, A) reduces the narrative impact. It's clear that Brandon Sanderson wrote this book to be, like, read more or less in one or two sittings, just super, super fast, so that you didn't have a lot of time to think like, "Wow, people are still figuring this out?" The way we are. But I just think it also stretches the believability a little bit because these battlefields are supposed to be in near constant communication with one another.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: But I don't know.

SALLY: First of all, did anybody read this in one sitting?

EMILY: I read it in two.

SALLY: [softly] *Wow*.

EMILY: My, the good old days. Those were my pre-compulsion days.

SALLY: Sure.

EMILY: Back when I was a bright-eyed, bushy-tailed nineteen-year-old.

SALLY: Wow. Impressive, truly. Amazing. Um, yeah, nothing to add. Just like you said, it doesn't really have narrative impact. Um, I lost what I was going to say because you – I'm so impressed. Uh....carry on [laughs].

EMILY: [laughs] Uh, anyway, just going point of view by point of view. Lan is getting more and more suspicious and decides to go confront Agelmar about it. He also... Like, it's just impossible to either track or narrate the specifics of what – it's impossible to track or narrate the specific logistics of what is going on on these battlefields, so I'm not going to try too hard. But Lan basically suspects that Agelmar slash Evil are setting up some sort of trap, and so he sort of, um, is able to bely that, so it won't happen before he goes even to confront Agelmar. Um, we see Loial fighting. Just, that's it, Loial's fighting on the battlefield where Elayne is struggling. Mat decides he's going to go inspect the battlefield, which obviously he's not supposed to do as a high-ranking Seanchan noble person, and also arguably as the general. This is a break in Mat's general-like character, in that every time we have seen, um, him in charge of a battle previously, he has been either behind the lines deliberately or [laughs] attempting to get behind the lines. You know, the only time we see him in the thick of it is like that long sequence in *Fires of Heaven* when he is accidentally drawn into the battle and sort of starts the Band of the Red Hand.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Every other time he's like, "I am aware that I am too valuable as the general to go into a fight where I could get stabbed."

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: Not even on purpose, on accident. That's the sort of thing that happens [laughs] in melee combat. Um, so it's very weird that he decides to join it, but I guess, uh, I'm getting ahead of myself a little bit there. He's just said he wants to go, like, look over it. This Seanchan are like, "Wah!" Min's here too, now wearing a fancy outfit. Mat talks to Min and is like, "Just think Rand would love it if you were here." And Min's like, "I guess you're right." We argued last time that this should have been sort of like preemptive.

SALLY: Should have been the point.

EMILY: Yeah, it shouldn't be like an afterthought that Mat has to come up with. I would also appreciate it if, like, Min was capable of critical thinking here.

SALLY: [snorts]

EMILY: And not have to be told by a man [laughs].

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: What she should do. But what do I know? Mat goes along with an entire, like, giant coterie, because Tuon decides to come also. We cut to Egwene on the battlefield having the same Lan realization. Something isn't right! Oh my God! She's now being guarded by both Gawyn and Leilwin. And she's like, "It's pretty funny. They're competing with each other." And I'm like, that is funny. And I would have been delighted if Leilwin, if this was like an arc earlier, and we could just have Gawyn and Egeanin, bodyguards competing against one another. I think that's a funny...

SALLY: I do, too!

EMILY: Subplot. [laughing] And I think it would give Gawyn an outlet for some of his weirdness.

SALLY: Yeah, yeah.

EMILY: Like if he's just like, "I have to be better than this specific person, not everyone." Then I think he would be a little bit more normal.

SALLY: Agreed.

EMILY: So it's really tragic that Egeanin [laughing] didn't get here sooner, I guess. Uh, we get to Lan directly confronting Agelmar, um, putting him under arrest and being like, "You're probably under compulsion." Agelmar himself kind of gets talked into, like, realizing that he's been making irrational decisions and has been sabotaging stuff. So he tries to commit Seppuku [laughing] and Lan's like, "No. You're a soldier, man! Act like it!" And I'm like, "Do you think, like, kids were committing Seppuku?"

SALLY: [laughing loudly]

EMILY: That was very much a soldier thing.

SALLY: It was actually something that the candlemakers [laughs] were doing on a routine basis when the candles were shit.

EMILY: The guys who made barrels –

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Are like, “This is a shitty barrel. I have to kill myself.” No!

SALLY: I've dishonored the whole...

EMILY: I, like, literally laughed out loud. [laughing] I was like, “You are a soldier. Act like one.” I'm like –

BOTH: He is!

EMILY: Within his cultural context, which is just Japan.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Sheinar equals Japan.

SALLY: [sighs, laughs]

EMILY: [laughs] So that was extremely funny. But Lan's like [laughing], “No, don't kill yourself. You're too pretty!”

SALLY: You're so sexy!

EMILY: You're so sexy! Don't kill yourself. Algemar doesn't kill himself. And he is like, “Oh my gosh, I've set up Tenobia, the Queen of Saldea, to get fucking merked.” [laughs] And Lan looks across the battlefield and sees, like, [vocalizing].

SALLY Yeah, Tenobia's little angel going up to heaven.

EMILY: [signing] One day more! Um, yeah, he's like, “Well, [laughs] that's fucked up.”

SALLY: Rip.

EMILY: Rip my good bitch.

SALLY: Well, she's gone now, I guess. Doesn't that make Davram Bashere the King of the Saldaea?

EMILY: Yeah, if you're keeping track of the Saldaean line of succession, [laughs] that does mean Perrin and Faile just moved up a rung.

SALLY: [clicks tongue] Click.

EMILY: Bashere, who is also a “Darkfriend,” in quotes, is now, um, next in line for the throne. And Perrin is in the Dreamworld and Faile is...

SALLY: Gone.

EMILY: It has been MIA from the narrative for fully, like, 300 pages.

SALLY: Yeah, she doesn't exist anymore. No one's thinking about her, not even Perrin.

EMILY: I know, Perrin has not thought of Faile, which is extremely uncharacteristic of him, to just be like, “What? My wife?” I'm like, what? Who are you? Are you under compulsion?”

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah, Graendal was like, “This is so annoying, I gotta get rid of this.”

EMILY: My god.

SALLY: [laughing] This is enough – I've had enough.

EMILY: That's the real revelation. Everyone is under compulsion, but Graendal is only sabotaging some people. Mostly she's just making them less annoying.

SALLY: [laughing] Yeah.

EMILY: Or more annoying, in Mat's case.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um, yeah, I think Faile will reappear pretty soon, but we'll talk to that – talk about that when we get there. Mat goes and looks at the battlefield. He notices the little Demandred circle. He's like, “That's Demandred?” And they're like, “Yeah, he's yelling about how he wants to duel the Dragon Reborn.” And Mat's like [laughs], “Okay, so he's fully off his rocker.”

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah, it's the only funny – genuinely funny thing Brandon Sanderson Mat has said. What does he say? “Demandred, eh? Has gone a bit dotty or what?”

EMILY: [laughs] I was like, “Okay, dotty? I thought we were American.”

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Brandon's use of cockney slang at random.

SALLY, then EMily joins in: [singing in a bad cockney accent] 'ow do you do? My name's Gavroche.

EMILY: [laughing] How many times can we make the Gavroche joke in...?

SALLY: Two episodes. Um, yeah, so Mat being like, "Okay, well, he's..."

EMILY: Well, he's fully lost the plot.

SALLY: Bananas. Yeah.

EMILY: Like, okay, whatever. And just, like, moves on from that.

SALLY: It's pretty funny.

EMILY: It's incredibly funny. Uh, but Mat is like, "What are we doing? There's an entire force of Seanchan Reserves here that's not being used when it could clearly be used." So he trots off to go talk to them. Happily for us, I guess, is that it's not a new character. It's a character we recognize. Tylee, who, uh, was part of the Perrin-Seanchan union a couple books ago. The Perrin slash Seanchan marriage.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Um and it's like, he's like, "Let's go Tylee." And she's like, "No one can even find Gareth Bryne." And we are like, "Oh, well, we saw him moving around camp being like, 'I shan't be assassinated if I just keep moving.'" And we were like, "How's anyone going to fucking find you then? How are the good guys going to find you either?"

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So nice to see that come back. Um, but Mat's like, "Let's just, like, get in there." Um, he swaps with a random guy to get on armor, which we've never seen him wear before.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Again, because he's usually really far back.

SALLY: Not fighting.

EMILY: And I'm just like, "Oh, OK, so this guy is not going to fight." [laughs] How did they decide?

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Hey, Greg.

SALLY: Hey, Greg!

EMILY: You're not even going to use that armor.

SALLY: Greg, you're pathetic.

EMILY: Greg, you suck.

SALLY: The best thing that will happen to you is giving your armor to the Prince of the Ravens.

EMILY: Yeah, you get to wear his stinky coat.

SALLY: Yeah. You're *welcome*.

EMILY: You're welcome. And Greg's like, "Thank you, my lord!"

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah. [panicked] My liege.

EMILY: My liege! Um, anyway, they join the battle. It's an action sequence. Uh the only important things are that Mat gets attacked by a Sharan Channeler, which obviously does not work because of his medallion. And he then takes her captive. Again...should have just killed her.

SALLY: I know.

EMILY: At least he doesn't, like, narrate this with a like, "She's a woman, I can't possibly kill her." That would be incredibly annoying. It just kind of, like, seems like that's what happens.

She gets knocked out and then taken captive. Um, Hh then, like, does this whole thing where he cracked one of his nails while he was fighting. So he kind of, like, gets the nail edge off and,

like, flicks it aside or whatever, while he's talking to some guy. And apparently that's a Seanchan ritual to raise someone into the lower nobility, which I'm like, "You have to break your own nail to do that?"

SALLY: Yeah, it would be one thing if the Seanchan were all rocking, like, acrylics.

EMILY: Yeah, you just, like, peel one off and toss it.

SALLY: But to be like, you have to bite or rip your own nail off.

EMILY: [gagging noises]

SALLY: And throw it at somebody?

EMILY: Disgusting.

SALLY: His feet, excuse me, you're not, like, knocking them in the head with it [laughs].

EMILY: [laughs] I will kill you with my toenail.

SALLY: [laughing] It'd be a lot grosser if it was toenails.

EMILY: I mean, yeah.

SALLY: [laughing] You have to get down on the floor and gnaw off a toenail.

EMILY: I mean, the length of some of these fingernails means that they are basically stabbing weapons at a certain point. But.

SALLY: I love that.

EMILY: They're like that lady in *X-Men 2*, excuse me, *X2*.

SALLY: [sighs]

EMILY: [laughing] *What?*

SALLY: [laughing] Excuse me, *X2*.

EMILY: [laughing] That's what it says on –

SALLY: I know. You're so cute.

EMILY: On the DVD case.

SALLY: You're so cute.

EMILY: *Se-seven-en. X2.* I believe that we should...[laughs].

SALLY: Emily believes in reading, unlike the rest of us.

EMILY: No, I just believe that we should make movie makers suffer by referring to their movies by the proper names. They deserve it. Anyway, Mat then leaves and goes back to Tuon. Um, this is when he's like, we need to take command from Gareth Bryne. He's like, "Tuon, you need to give me the entire command of our armies, not just Galgan over here." And he's like, "Min needs to go warn Egwene." So Min gets sent off to do that. Tuon informs Mat that he has boosted himself in the eyes of the Seanchan A, by raising that guy to the nobility and B, by taking a Channeler captive, specifically a Channeling woman. I don't know what they would have done if it was a Channeling man.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: That would have been funnier, in my opinion, if Mat was, like, instead of having to deal with the very, like, sexist BDSM connotations that already exist with then, within the *damane* system, if Mat had, like, a weird little Channeling man running around with him. Obviously I do not approve of the brainwashing and everything, but I think it would be just funnier.

SALLY: Yeah, it would add to his sort of, like, canon of mystique, you know?

EMILY: Mm-hmm. Everyone's like, "Oh, he's the only guy who has a male *damane*." And then they could...fuck nasty, you know? [laughs]

SALLY: Yeah. Obviously.

EMILY: [laughs] Um, whatever. Tragically, no one in this book believes in having a good time. Tuon does give Mat command, though, so Galgan is no longer a relevant actor.

SALLY: Bye!

EMILY: So again, I don't know why this just didn't happen a few chapters ago, but here we are. Cut to Per-rin! Who is running around the World of Dreams like, "Hey, what's going on? I don't fucking know what's going on." He talks to a wolf who turns out to be Elyas, which I think is incredibly funny.

SALLY: I mean, I'm not gonna lie. I thought Elyas had died [laughs].

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: We haven't heard from Elyas. I don't know. I'm just like, "In all the keeping track of wolves, I was like, okay, Elyas is dead now? And he lives in the wolf dream as a dead wolf?"

EMILY: Sure. Yeah.

SALLY: But then they're like, "No, Elyas is still alive." And I was like –

EMILY: He's just sleeping. Yeah.

SALLY: How am I? What?

EMILY: I mostly was like, "So you have been able to come here this entire time totally without issue and you couldn't, like, spare five minutes of training for Perrin?" No. Oh, he had to get Hopper to do it? Absolutely not.

SALLY: Elyas was busy.

EMILY: Elyas?

SALLY: Not being dead.

EMILY: [laughs] Elyas is kind of iconic to me. He's literally just like, "I will swoop in, say something, quote unquote, "profound" to Perrin and then leave and you'll never see me again." And I'm like –

SALLY: [laughing] My work here is done.

EMILY: My work here is done. You've done nothing. I love that for him. Um, anyway, Perrin witnesses Graendal messing around in Ituralde's, um, tent and he and Elyas presume that she's sabotaging all of the four generals. Perrin's like, "Elyas, you have to go back to, you have to wake up and tell everyone." So word is starting to spread. Meanwhile, Slayer, um, goes to attack

the Pit of Doom. Perrin's like, "He's already tried to attack it, like, three times, but the wolves just turned him away. But now it seems like he's getting serious." So who knows what's going on there? Then we cut to Rand, who is literally doing a sword fight with Moridin. Can't emphasize enough how hilarious this is. Um, Rand says something intriguing [laughs] to Moridin, which is, "You thought you were the Dark One, didn't you? Has he punished you for that?" Referring to Ishamael's actions in the first three books when he was referring to himself as Ba'alzamon, a name we know for the Dark One. Um, so this incredibly late stage confirmation that Ishamael wasn't, like, cunningly evil. He was just fully –he just also had fully lost the plot.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Way too little, too late, but also very funny to me. It's, like, okay, he was just very mentally ill.

SALLY: Just having a little delulu summer.

EMILY: Yeah, he's just like, "I am Satan." And it's like, yeah, that is the most...like, that is the most typical delusions, one of the most typical delusions for people experiencing psychosis, to be like, "I'm Satan or I'm God or whatever. Delusions of grandeur."

SALLY: Yeah. Sorry about the delulu joke, that feels a little out of taste. But.

EMILY: He does seem to have been incredibly mentally ill.

SALLY: Yeah, a psychosis for sure or something. His answer is pretty funny though. In his sort of...

EMILY: [laughs] Yeah, Rand's like, "Did he punish you?" And he's like [laughing], "He brought me back from the dead!"

SALLY: And we're like, "Okay!"

EMILY: Okay, Edgelord.

SALLY: We get it!

EMILY: You don't want to be alive. Why don't you commit Seppuku then?

SALLY: Well, he's not a Candlemaker. So that's not available to him culturally. It would be cultural appropriation [laughs].

EMILY: [laughs] You can't stab yourself. It's appropriation! In this fight, Moiraine and Nynaeve are, like, literally clinging to some stalactites, which is, like...

SALLY: Like a little koala bear.

EMILY: Like they're getting blown away in the fucking tornado that got Dorothy's house. And I'm like, why is this only affecting them?

SALLY: It's so – I like to – [laughs] In my mind, it's a very anime visual. Like these two guys are fighting *so* hard that they're creating...

EMILY: Oh? A whirlwind?

SALLY: Gale force winds.

EMILY: Incredible.

SALLY: And so Nynaeve and Moiraine, the useless women who have to be there because it's an anime.

EMILY: And they're just batteries.

SALLY: And they're just batteries and they just have to cling to the rocks.

EMILY: I'm so mad, by the way, speaking of Nynaeve, that, like...it'll be – it's important that she's here and whatever. I guess we'll get to that later. But, like, it would – she has also been doing work in the last few books with compulsion and, like, undoing compulsion. So this would have been a great time for her to be, like, accessible.

SALLY: You know?

EMILY: Or for her to have passed that on to someone in some way. Or, like another Aes Sedai to have taken up the cause. Because, like, now what? Now they're just under compulsion perpetually? Like are Bashere and Bryne and everyone else just off the board entirely? They have to be locked up.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Who knows? Uh, anyway, while Rand and Moridin are fighting Rand accidentally touches the Dark, the capital D Darkness. And we don't really know what goes on.

SALLY: [singing] Goodbyyye!

EMILY: Yeah, we're just like, "Whoa." It says, "All went black." So I guess the Dark One ate him you guys and that's it.

SALLY: [chomping noises] Like Pac-Man.

EMILY: Yeah, close the book. It's over.

SALLY: [Pac-Man noises]

EMILY: He touched the thing you weren't supposed to touch. Over with Elayne. Her people are getting beat up. She's like, "well, we're all going to die." And then what would happen? But the Asha'man show up. Logain is like, "Hello, I'm here." And it's like, I don't know why just them showing up couldn't be enough. Yeah, but then we had to do like, Androl do some stunts with gateways and lava. Just because Brandon Sanderson is really horny for his special guy.

SALLY: It's actually, like, embarrassing. Like, even if I was dying on this battlefield, I would be like, "Overcompensating! Cringe!"

EMILY: Cringe! What is going on?

SALLY: You don't need to do – you already have magic. Why don't you just use the mag – ? I don't understand why they aren't just hurling their own fireballs. It's so silly.

EMILY: [sighs] Yeah, I think the sort of Androl obsession that Brandon Sanderson has is that he, like many of us readers, was like, "Wow, there are so many creative things you can do with gateways that are not being done." You know, this is a magic system that did not have, like, good rules placed upon them. Um, so, that by the time we get to Books 10 and 11, when Channeling is - when Traveling is in more widespread use, we're like, "Damn, why are these people so stupid about this? This should be the most OP ability of all time." Um, and like, I get that urge. I really do. But by giving it to just one guy whose capital T Talent is Traveling, what you make it seem like is that everyone else was just too dumb to think of these things. Like, and that Androll is just the smartest boy in the world. The smartest, most creative, uh, most innovative person. Like, I think, Brandon, you should have just sort of resigned yourself to working within the limits that Robert Jordan kind of non-canonically placed on Traveling.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And just sort of been like, “Yeah, I'm probably gonna get put through the wringer by fans for being like, ‘Wow, nothing creative ever happens with Traveling’”. But that's Robert Jordan's fault, not yours.

SALLY: Yeah, and it would be way less embarrassing on you than *this*.

EMILY: Yeah, this makes it look like you are just, like, jerking off in a narrative sense.

SALLY: Yeah, it's very Mary Sue.

EMILY: Yeah, a little awkward. Um, Logain also waltzes onto the battlefield and is like, “I've spent the last... I don't fucking know how long [laughing] it's been. I've spent the last X amount of time reading Mazrim Taim's secret notes, so I already know about the compulsion planned on the Four Great Generals.” And I'm like, “What?”

SALLY: Then pick up the phone.

EMILY: Then, yeah, what? This was so late.

SALLY: What are you doing?!

EMILY: What the hell? You have Mr. Traveller here.

SALLY: Yeah, you should have been like, “A sticky note that says idea? Question mark compulsion on the Four Generals.” And then you should have been like, “Ring, ring, ring. I'm on a party line with all four battlefronts.”

EMILY: Hey, guys. Hey, guys.

SALLY: Hey, guys. Something I need you to check on.

EMILY: Could someone, like, do a quick x-ray? Lobotomy? CT scan?

SALLY: [laughs] We got to get – can I get the CT machine.

EMILY: [radio noises]

SALLY: [radio noises]

EMILY: Bring in the MRI. Um, no, yeah, it's insane. Logain's just like, "I value my dramatic entrance way more than actually being of assistance," which at least is true to Logain's character.

SALLY: Yeah, fair enough. [laughing] Gotta respect the authenticity.

EMILY: Logaine is a character who is – um, has negative rizz, but fully believes that he is the most charismatic person in any given scenario.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: He's so, he's so overhyped himself.

SALLY: Yeah, he's giving Prince Charming from *Shrek*.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: [laughing] Except very ugly.

EMILY: Logain waltzes on, has a hairnet [laughing] that he takes off. He's like, "Don't worry, I've been, I've just been in makeup for the last two hours, getting ready to save your asses." Like, it's nice to finally have the Asha'man on the battlefield.

SALLY: Seriously.

EMILY: It is a little insane because we sort of left off that plot, like, 300, 200 pages ago, at least.

SALLY: I know, and like legitimately what – I know you guys were, like, fighting Mazrim Taim or whatever, but you were in Andor when the Trollocs came and burned Caemlyn. Like, you're pretty close to Caemlyn, so, like, how is it not a priority for you before now to check on that situation?

EMILY: Yeah, Logain is like, "We could have gone to any of the battlefields, but of course we stand with the Lion of Andor," and I'm like, oh, that would have been nice when you guys were actually in Andor.

SALLY: Yeah, what the?

EMILY: But now you're in Cairhien, so...

SALLY: You... [sighs]

EMILY: Yeah, the timelines are becoming more and more incredibly warped. Perrin's like...Perrin's like, "I've been in the World of Dreams for hours," which is insane. He's like, "Rand's been in the Bore for hours, maybe even minutes." Insane. He's like, "The battlefield at Tha'kandar, five days." We're like, okay. Everywhere else, he's like, "Even longer!" And we're like, okay, what is even longer?

SALLY: Yeah, I'm gonna...

EMILY: Days, weeks?

SALLY: I need some sort of, like, ticker across the bottom of this book.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Like they have at the stock exchange.

EMILY: Like, did every Asha'man at the Black Tower just fully, like, pass out for three days?

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: After all, they were fighting and stuff, and that's why...they have been out of commish.

SALLY: They – Logain thought it was a really good time for a team retreat. You know, just to kind of boost morale before going into battle.

EMILY: [laughs] And like, why did Mazrim Taimm and the other Forsaken just leave them there to regroup?

SALLY: And read all of Mazrim Taimm's secret notes! [laughs]

EMILY: Yeah, Mazrim Taimm was like, "I've never heard of teleporting in my life. I'll just leave my secret, my secret diary."

SALLY: Yeah, my secret diary that you open it and it's like: Evil Plans.

EMILY: Yeah, evil plans. He hasn't even read it in code. I mean, Logain says he has, but I choose to believe that that's just that there was one of those [cutsey voice] itty bitty little padlocks [Sally laughs] on it with a little key like you get at Claire's.

SALLY: Mm-hmm. The diary is all pink and sparkly.

EMILY: It took two days for Logain to get through that because he's the world's most, most pathetic...disgrace of a man.

SALLY: Yeah, and he was like this confounded technology.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Um, what they do is form a circle with men and women Channelers, and Androl makes the *biggest* gateway in human history and channels the lava out of Dragonmount onto the Trolloc army.

EMILY: And I'm like, is that going to have any effect ecologically?

SALLY: Oh, my gosh. We could talk about the freakin – Mat keeps talking about how the Seanchan and Sharan Channelers are just, like, exploding the landscape. Anyway.

EMILY: Yeah, it's just going to be pitted.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Wastelands.

SALLY: But yeah, you have to be like, “Okay, now there's just going to be, like, lava fields outside of Cairhien for the rest of forever?”

EMILY: Yeah. Like, what does that look like?

SALLY: Also, [laughs] it's just, like, not to keep calling it embarrassing, but it is embarrassing. We've talked before about how Androl's arc could be read, um, as one of impotence, of male impotence. And so for his, like, climactic moment to be... [laughs]

EMILY: Stop. Stop. I don't want to hear it.

SALLY: [laughing]

EMILY: This is not our *Ice Planet Barbarians*.

SALLY: Just to be so, like, *phallic* with the Dragonmount and the whole, like, [laughs] ejaculating lava. [laughs] It's just a [whispers] little embarrassing.

EMILY: Yeah, it doesn't help that...

SALLY: [closer to the mic, whispers] It's a little embarrassing.

EMILY: Okay [laughs]. It doesn't... Yeah, Andral comes all over the page. What do you want me to say?

SALLY: It's just, sorry – I had an English degree, and I had to talk about this thing in classes that I paid for.

EMILY: That's true. Yeah, we did have to talk about, you know, phallic resonances and shit, like, that a lot. Fuck you, Freud.

SALLY: I'm only using the training that I received.

EMILY: [laughs] She flicks her hair back.

SALLY: To tell you what you should be thinking about when you read about the lava gateway.

EMILY: Yeah, that's embarrassing, partly because it's not even in Androl's point of view. It's in Elayne's point of view. And she's like, “Oh my God, this is legendary. This is incredible. I've never seen something this incredible.” And I'm like, Are you sure? Like, like are you sure? You saw the Bowl of the Winds used. You've seen a lot of incredible shit in your day. You saw Mat Cauthon breaking the Stone of Tear.

SALLY: Single-handedly.

EMILY: Which was way sexier than anything Androl has ever done. Yeah, just sort of insane. And then, like, the fight's not even over. That just gave them time to retweet. Retweet [laughs].

SALLY: [laughs] To retweet.

EMILY: To *retreat*. And I'm like, okay, if you were going to do the [mocking] *most amazing, legendary* thing of all time, it should have just decimated those Trollocs.

SALLY: Yeah, you should have just won then.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: What was the point, Androl?

EMILY: You can't have it both ways. He's like, "I bought you an hour's time." And I'm like, *that's it?!*

SALLY: Right?

EMILY: *An hour?* How many Trollocs are there? I know numbers become meaningless at a certain point, but even the lack of numbers is becoming meaningless at this point. I'm like, how many? How many are there? How many can there possibly be?

SALLY: Well, good thing there's more lava to Channel, I guess.

EMILY: I really wish that we had seen this entire chapter from the point of view of, like, some random guy on the walls of Cairhien. You know, some civilian, some shoemaker, as it were, who's just, like, sees a giant door open in the middle of nowhere into a volcano, into a live volcano, and is like, "Cool. So cool, cool, cool, cool, cool." And it's, like, coming right at him. And he's, like, oh, so they've just sighted scorched earth literally. So I've been betrayed. Is that it? [laughs] Oh, ho, ho.

SALLY: And yeah, just sort of imagine confronting that power in the universe and how, like, small you feel and how like, yeah, replaceable. If Elayne, commander of your country now, is so willing to just let people burn the fields around Cairhien. And I know people keep saying, like, it's the Last Battle and we have to pull out all the stops or whatever, but it's not a very sustainable mindset.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: You know, someone's got to be thinking about the future generations. And that person is *me*.

EMILY: Mm-hmm.

SALLY: And this guy on the wall of Cairhien.

EMILY: And this guy we've made up.

SALLY: Gavroche.

EMILY: This might be our last time making up a guy. [laughs] Yeah, it's Gavroche, but he's grown up [laughs].

SALLY: [laughs] Mr. Gavroche. Thank you very much.

EMILY: Excuse me. Mr. Gavroche. He didn't die in the French Revolution, which I guess would have been round about Book 2 or 3.

SALLY: He lived to tell the tale.

EMILY: He lived to tell the tale.

SALLY: Now he makes shoes. He's a cobbler.

EMILY: Mm-hm. Well, those are those three chapters. Yeah. That's how I feel also.

SALLY: Couple of stinkers.

EMILY: A few stinkers. That's for sure. Yeah, our next few chapters are just going to, like, keep us edging toward the sort of next stage of this, which is where inevitably Mat will be in command of all the armies and the battlefields will be consolidated. We might check up on Faile at some point, but IDK.

SALLY: Why would we? It's not, like, she's been a major character for the last 10 books. That would be ridiculous.

EMILY: [laughs] Fuck her!

SALLY: I have to think – I have to see what Min, Min is doing as the Doomspeaker.

EMILY: It really does feel like Brandon Sanderson, like, internalized the wrong reviews, you know? Which is like, “Oh, everyone hates Faile.” And instead of being like, “Oh, that's because she's the center of a plot that people universally hated for reasons sort of beyond Faile's...personal character.” He just was like, “Oh, yeah. Well people don't like Fail, I guess. So I shan't write her.” And instead of being like, “Wow, traveling is sort of a systemic issue that Robert Jordan built in. I'll fix it.”

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Like, dude.

SALLY: Um, yeah.

EMILY: Anyway, that's that.

SALLY: That's that.

EMILY: Do you have anything to add?

SALLY: Ummmm, no.

EMILY: Okey dokey. Um, thank you to Glynna MacKenzie for our theme song. Thanks to our patrons on Patreon and our followers on social media. Do you have a sign off?

SALLY: Oh, let me think. I'm sure we have one. Oh, this is a little bit of a whimsy to add to your life. Um, uh, Family Lake Vacation has been referenced for the past...time you've been listening to this podcast. Every summer, go up to the lake, um, and there's a soft serve ice cream machine where you can get ice cream, which of course my, uh, five year old nephew loves, wants to have a big chocolate ice cream cone several times a day. He is allowed one a day.

EMILY: And he will lick it three times and then it melts.

SALLY: Yeah. It's infuriating actually.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Um, cause then he'll often just hand me or whoever the nearest adult is his disgusting melty ice cream cone.

EMILY: Desiccated.

SALLY: And I'll be like, "Okay, I'm going to throw this away." And he'll be like, "No, you have to save it for later!" And then I have to explain the concept of melting [laughs] to a five-year-old.

EMILY: Yeah, dude, you don't understand. Ice cream. It goes away.

SALLY: But anyway, in this, one of these instances where he took, you know, a few licks of his ice cream cone and then decided he needed to go play on the beach, he'd set his ice cream cone on the, like, ice chest on the beach. And I look over at one point and a squirrel has fully picked up the ice cream cone and was just going [laughs] crazy on this thing. And so I get up to, not that I'm going to give it back to my nephew after the squirrel eats it, but I'm like, the squirrel probably shouldn't have – It was, like, the full little crispy cone and, like, a decent size of scoop of ice cream left.

EMILY: And that squirrel was just like, “It's crack cocaine, baby.”

SALLY: [laughing] I was like, “I don't think this is the thing you should have.” The squirrel, in his super strength, just lifted up this ice cream cone and scurried away with the whole ice cream cone.

EMILY: Carried it to his lair.

SALLY: And I was like, “Okay, it's yours now,” and then he was up in the trees and I would look up occasionally and there he was.

EMILY: Wow.

SALLY: With his little ice cream cone. So I hope that squirrel's okay [laughs].

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Mentally, best day of his life, probably.

EMILY: [laughs] Yeah, maybe he went out with a bang. We never know. Yeah, the squirrels and chipmunks at the lake are incredibly-

SALLY: Very friendly.

EMILY: Domesticated in a way. My sister had one jump into her lap at some point.

SALLY: Yeah. Yeah.

EMILY: And she was just like, “What do I do?”

SALLY: She wants you to feed it to, Sarah.

EMILY: She was like, “What? I just have a chipmunk now?” Yeah, they're funny. Weird little guys.

SALLY: They are close.

EMILY: Ugh, the pictures of that squirrel are so funny. We'll have to post them.

SALLY: Yeah, he just... fully holding it in his little hands like a little person.

BOTH: [chewing noises]

EMILY: Okay, everyone. Thank you.

SALLY: Bye!

EMILY: Have a good week. Bye!