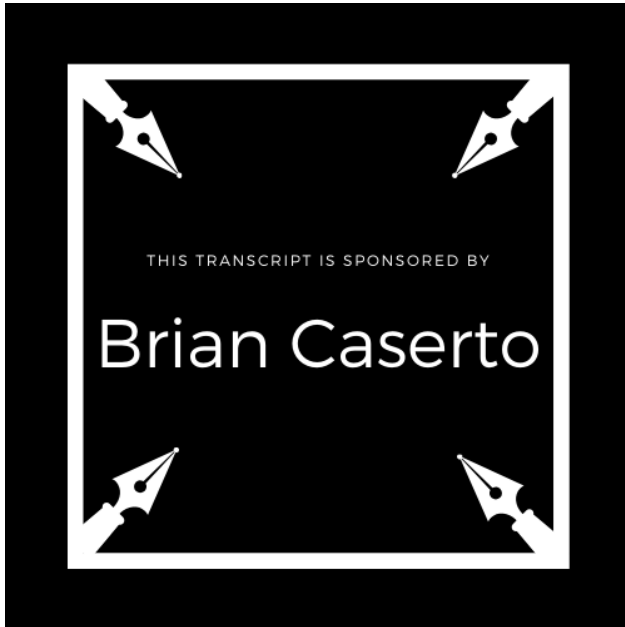


Episode 30 – “**Bodcast: Ninety Push-Ups**”

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EMILY: [groaning]

SALLY: I’m sorry that I love couch sleep so much.

EMILY: I love that about you.

SALLY: It might be the one thing – the only thing I genuinely love in this world.

EMILY: Thanks.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: Guess I’ll die [laughs].

SALLY: Emily, I just love sleeping on couches so much [laughs].

EMILY: I just love sleeping in general so much, so, I guess that’s understandable.

SALLY: Couch sleep always feels like I’ve stolen it. Like, it feels like something I’ve thefted away from life that’s keeping something from me.

EMILY: Like Jack and the Giant Slayer. You climbed up the ladder and stole the golden goose [laughs].

SALLY: Exactly. And so, I’m always like – it’s always so refreshing.

EMILY: It gives you a sense of accomplishment.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Okay, well.

SALLY: Somehow I've cheated life out of something.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: As we're recording, we're in –

SALLY: [snorts]

EMILY: – my upstairs bedroom. And my mom is downstairs hosting book group, which is, like, six other ladies, and they just talk about whatever book they read this month. This month it was *Little Women*.

SALLY: They were all very nice. We went down for cheesecake, and they were very delightful.

EMILY: Anyway [sighs], so book group upstairs, book group downstairs.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Although ours is, as always, a little different. What have you been reading these days?

SALLY: Um, [laughs] like a true dad I have been reading this book that is a collection of John Steinbeck's written correspondence, because he was a really prolific letter writer.

EMILY: Aw.

SALLY: And I really like John Steinbeck. It is my – he's my – that, like, group of lost generation adjacent. Hemmingway, Fitzgerald, Steinbeck.

EMILY: Mm-hmm.

SALLY: All those people. He's the only one I like.

EMILY: For obvious reasons.

SALLY: For obvious reasons.

EMILY: I feel.

SALLY: He just, for the most part, stayed in his lane and wasn't Ernest Hemmingway, so he had that going for him.

EMILY: [disgusted noises]

SALLY: But it's really – I find his writing very charming. So, though it is, like, a thousand-page book and I'll slog through it over the next couple of months, I really like it. So.

EMILY: If you've never read John Steinbeck as John Steinbeck, speaking to the audience.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: A really good book to read is *Travels with Charley*, which is kind of his little mini memoir about going on a road trip with his dog across America. And it's, like, it's a genuinely lovely book.

SALLY: Yeah, I've never read that one, but I really want to.

EMILY: I read it in my freshman year, so I don't know how it would hold up under some of the feminist criticism I've come to employ in most of my life, but.

SALLY: Yeah, he is –

EMILY: I remember being surprised at enjoying it because it's Steinbeck, and he sort of has a reputation for being difficult to read in some ways.

SALLY: Yeah, like, *Grapes of Wrath* is a slog.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: But my favorite of his is *East of Eden*, which I'm –

EMILY: I need to read that.

SALLY: Like, he writes very much about the books that he's working on while he's writing these letters. So, I'm hoping to re-read *East of Eden* while I read his letters. So, that's my big literary project of the year. I usually have...one. So.

EMILY: That's good.

SALLY: What are you reading?

EMILY: Um, right now I'm not really reading anything, because I sort of ran out of both books and steam to read. I've had a really busy week. But on Sunday I sort of read in one sitting, because it's such a short book, *Ella Enchanted*. Did you read that book?

SALLY: No, but I loved that movie and I love that author.

EMILY: Well, if you liked the movie – most people don't, I know but, because it's kind of a bad adaptation. *But* the book is genuinely lovely.

SALLY: I would love to read *Ella Enchanted*.

EMILY: I know. I remember going through a phase in my life where I read a bunch of Gail Carson Levine books, because I'd read *Ella Enchanted* and then I read my other favorite book of hers called *The Two Princesses of Bamarre*, which is on my shelf now. It's between *The Art of War* and *The Knife of Never Letting Go* [laughs].

SALLY: Oh.

EMILY: Um, which is another lovely book about princesses and sisterhood and dragons.

SALLY: [whispers] Nice. All your favorite things.

EMILY: All my favorite things, exactly. And she has all those little fairy tale retelling books, and I just read all of those when I was really little and needed stuff to read.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: I wish I'd figured out earlier, when I was a kid, that I could read above my age group.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Because, there was a point in my life where I was just rereading, like, the entire *Magic Treehouse* book series, which is, like, 900 books. And I was, like, as an eight-year-old or whatever, I was, "These books are all the same and I'm bored."

SALLY: Um, fun fact about me. I had a really hard time learning how to read.

EMILY: Oh, really?

SALLY: Yeah, in kindergarten – preschool, kindergarten, first grade I just – and into second grade, I just...it really was hard for me. And then in third grade [snaps] something clicked, and I just took off [laughs].

EMILY: Damn.

SALLY: [laughing] It was really weird. My teacher was like, "Um?" And I was like..." Mrs. Mitten, I couldn't tell ya."

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs] But I, like, really struggled with it. All my family struggles with, um, learning disorders that are, like, reading and reading comprehension based.

EMILY: Oh, okay.

SALLY: Like, Perry had really bad – Perry was in resource and, like, stuff. And my mom has dyslexia really terribly, so [mutters]. That’s just a random side fact that you can delete from the podcast.

[THEME SONG – “Tubthumping” by Chumbawamba plays

SALLY: But this is not a Harry Potter podcast.

EMILY: Yeah, this is the *opposite* of a Harry Potter bodcast – [laughs] bodcast.

SALLY: Ooooh bodcast. The new podcast about your...health regime.

EMILY: [laughs] *Bodcast*.

SALLY: Welcome to *Bodcast*.

EMILY: Welcome to Bodcast, due ninety push-ups to start.

SALLY: Ninety push-ups?! [laughing] That’s ambitious.

EMILY: I think if you’re listening to Bodcast –

SALLY: [laughing] That’s true.

EMILY: – [laughing] then you’re already in a place where you can do ninety pushups.

SALLY: I think there should be more fitness related things towards people who aren’t at Bodcast level.

EMILY: [snorts]

SALLY: So, you can have Bodcast, and then Bodcast: Aspirant [laughs].

EMILY: Bodcast: Beginner.

SALLY: Yeah [laughs]

EMILY: Bodcast: Novice.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: [laughing] Bodcast: Idiot

SALLY: Bodcast.

EMILY: Do you ever think about how, at this point in the series, Rand is a Bodcast Intermediate?

SALLY: Yeah, Rand is such a fitness bro. I hate him.

EMILY: I know. One of the things that bothers – one fantasy trope I hate is when someone suddenly gets super good at sword work, which basically happens to Rand because most of his training happens off-screen, and in such a short span of time that it's really difficult for me to believe.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Like, you can't just assign such importance to the rank of Master Swordsman, and then have a twenty-year-old pick it up in three months.

SALLY: Right?

EMILY: It's, like, absolutely not.

SALLY: It's, like, Rand has not been training with a sword since he was five, and then maybe I'd believe it, but. But, no honestly, Rand is – Rand gets really into CrossFit, basically [laughs].

EMILY: Rand's, like, [laughs] one of the – I know *Kimmy Schmidt* is a terrible show and has gotten more terrible as it's progressed, but there was that one hilarious episode where she sort of –

SALLY: Oh my god.

EMILY: – you know, wanting to be part of a cult again, got really into SoulCycle.

SALLY: So funny.

EMILY: Yeah, and I just think Rand would be the leader of a SoulCycle cult.

SALLY: Rand would, um, one hundred percent lead Soul Cycle. That episode of *Kimmy Schmidt* was probably the only funny episode of *Kimmy Schmidt*.

EMILY: [laughs] Okay, um, this is Everybody Hates Rand. I'm Emily Juchau.

SALLY: I'm Sally Goodger.

EMILY: Welcome. We are currently discussing *The Great Hunt* chapters four and five.

SALLY: Ooh. Also, we haven't done this in since I don't know since we started season two. What? That was a sentence. But spoiler alert.

EMILY: We keep doing it like twenty minutes later.

SALLY: Yeah. By the way.

EMILY: You keep being like, "Oh, spoiler alert." As soon as we start talking about spoilers.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: We're stupid. BUT.

SALLY: Okay. Okay. Okay.

EMILY: Back to *The Great Hunt*.

SALLY: We get – okay go ahead.

EMILY: What?

SALLY: I said we get our first Moiraine chapter – point of view.

EMILY: [laughing] That's what I was going to say.

SALLY: Oh. Cooool.

EMILY: Well, I mean, Moiraine had a really small point of view at the end of *Eye of the World*, where she was like, [angel noises]

BOTH: "The Dragon is Reborn." [angel noises].

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: "The Dragon is Reborn."

SALLY: Bass drop.

EMILY: Yeah. [vocalizing, eventually it becomes the *Star Wars* theme].

SALLY: Yeah, "Bangerang" plays in the background.

EMILY: Yeah. Bangerang! [vocalizing]. Um [laughs].

SALLY: I thought you were gonna play "Bangerang," and I was like, "Okay." [laughs]

EMILY: [laughs] But anyway, this is our first substantial Moiraine point of view. Um, so, what's there to say about it really?

SALLY: Um, well she, uh, meets some Aes Sedai ladies at her door, and we get our first introduction to one of our baddies.

EMILY: We get a lot of introductions in this chapter to a lot of important Aes Sedai.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: The ones who come to Moiraine's door to summon her to see the Amyrlin Seat, Sivan, are Liandrin, who of course is a baddie.

SALLY: A Black Ajah

EMILY: A Black Ajah, and that will become evident, sort of, by the end of chapter five, I think.

SALLY: But we also –

EMILY: There's also Anaiya, who is a member of the Blue Ajah, who will be important in the Salidar faction of the Aes Sedai, after the White Tower breaks. Like, isn't she one of the main?

SALLY: I have a really hard time keeping the Aes Sedai straight.

EMILY: There's six main Aes Sedai who sort of head up the Salidar Aes Sedai.

SALLY: Oh, Serafelle, yeah I – I... Also, they're spelled strange so I have a hard time holding...

EMILY: Seriously.

SALLY: But yeah, she's there.

EMILY: She's not important as far as I know.

SALLY: Whoever makes these Wikis are truly a gift to humanity.

EMILY: I know. So, we meet Liandrin, we meet Anaiya, who's going to be one of the Salidar six who helps raise Egwene, you know?

SALLY: That's right.

EMILY: Sort of does those machinations. Also, Carllinya, who's seen or mentioned in this chapter. She's of the White Ajah, she'll also be involved with that. Then of course we spot Verin.

SALLY: And Alanna, right?



EMILY: Yeah, Verin who is a goddamn icon.

SALLY: And Alanna who's a magical rapist.

EMILY: Yeah. Kill yourself, Alanna.

SALLY: [laughing] Yeah.

EMILY: Verin and Alanna will both be, like, together for a little while and then sort of separate.

SALLY: Verin is so cool.

EMILY: Verin is one of my favorite characters.

SALLY: And of course we meet Leane and Siuan.

EMILY: Yeah. So just...lots of characters.

SALLY: Lots of Aes Sedai.

EMILY: And not all of them will be important, which kind of annoys me. Because it's, like...

SALLY: Yeah, this is where you introduce – beginning Book 2 this is where you introduce them, Robert

EMILY: Yeah, so, like, at least, Robert Jordan, if you're gonna list a bunch of Aes Sedai here, make every single one of them have an important role later. Not like Serafelle, who is mentioned and never comes up again, you know? Like.

SALLY: Like there's other times for you to expand upon the fact that there are many Aes Sedai.

EMILY: Yeah, like, it's one of those – that's one of my main problems with Robert Jordan writing about the White Tower, is he just used every opportunity to be like, "And here's a new Aes Sedai, and here's what she looks like and here's what she's wearing. Here's how she ranks in her abilities next to Egwene and Nynaeve and whatever. Blah blah blah blah blah. Here's her political affiliation. Here's the date of her birth. Here's her social security number."

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: You know? It's, like, I don't need it, Robert. Give me a few Aes Sedai, and I will believe you that there are more.

SALLY: Yeah!

EMILY: I don't need to meet every single one of them [sighs].

SALLY: Yeah. It's, like, I know there are people – unless you explicitly told me there were only, like, five people in the White Tower, I would imagine there was a significant number.

EMILY: Yeah, like, even if, like, mentioning names is fine. I just don't – I hate feeling, when I'm in the White Tower and Salidar, like everyone I meet might be important later.

SALLY: Well it's like he does the Boku No Hero Academia thing where it's like a cut screen.

EMILY: Oh man.

SALLY: And Mic is like, “Duh, duh, duh. There Quirk is duh, duh, duh.” And that character is not important.

EMILY: Ever!

SALLY: That's what he does with Aes Sedai. Yeah.

EMILY: God, you guys should really watch My Hero Academia.

SALLY: It's really good. Stop this podcast and watch My Hero Academia.

EMILY: It's a delight. Um, anyway.

SALLY: But anyway, that's what Robert Jordan does where he cuts away –

EMILY: With Aes Sedai, yeah.

SALLY: And he's like, “Serafelle, of the whatever Ajah.”

EMILY: Brown Ajah.

SALLY: [mumbling noises]

EMILY: Yeah, it's annoying. Here's what her particular area of study is BLEH.

SALLY: And I'm like, “Don't Care. Um, this isn't Rate My Professor dot com.” Rate my Aes Sedai dot com [laughs].

EMILY: Physical attractiveness.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Honestly, he does that, though. “She's pretty” or “she's not pretty.” “She's handsome.” “She's plump.” “She's skinny.” She's...curvaceous.

SALLY: Robert...has a weird obsession with describing women's bodies in particular. Like, he gives men more or less the same amount of detail, which I appreciate.

EMILY: Yeah, once you get into *ash'aman* he goes pretty hard at describing them, too. It's just he seems to think there's less to describe with me, you know?

SALLY: Because men...are boring dressers.

EMILY: I mean, that's true. And the *ash'aman* do have a

BOTH: Uniform.

SALLY: That's true, I'm being unkind.

EMILY: No, I -

SALLY: The *ash'aman* have a uniform.

EMILY: I just was like, "Men's bodies are as interesting to describe as women's. I want some fat men, Robert."

SALLY: Except for Basell Gil.

EMILY: Oh, yeah.

SALLY: My one true unit [laughs]. Basell Gil.

EMILY: Basell Gil [claps]. The star of the sitcom we never got.

SALLY: [whispers] Honestly. But Moiraine has this hilarious throwaway comment, where she sees Rand hunched over, and she's like, "Obviously that's Rand."

EMILY: They're, like, walking through the halls and she glances over and sees Egwene with some loser following her around. And she's like, "Okay, well." She doesn't even think about Rand. She's like, "If Egwene shows any of the initiative she shows here she'll be Amyrlin in no time."

SALLY: And I'm like [snaps]

EMILY: And I'm like, "First of all, that's true." It's just so funny that Moiraine, like, doesn't even care. She's like, "Do you, Egwene."

SALLY: "Whatever. She's thinking. She's trying."

EMILY: "Okay."

SALLY: “She’s flexing her political mind.”

EMILY: “Do your...okay. Help Rand run away.”

SALLY: “Who cares. I have to go make out with my girlfriend.” [laughs]

EMILY: Just, like, it just puts this weird perspective on the last few chapters of Rand’s absolute panic, ya know? He’s like, “Moiraine’s gonna find me!” And then you get to Moiraine and she, like, isn’t even thinking about it.

SALLY: She’s like, “I don’t...I don’t care.”

EMILY: She’s got so much else to worry about.

SALLY: Yeah. And that’s one thing about the mentor-hero dichotomy. When they inevitably have their annoying separation where it’s, like, Rand is a bad example of this because he’s an idiot about everything, but the mentor causes the hero so much undue stress and anxiety by their lack of communication.

EMILY: It is very annoying.

SALLY: [signs]

EMILY: Like, Moiraine sort of later in this chapter when she’s talking about Rand with Sivan is like, “Oh right now I’m just, for his own good, letting him believe that I don’t want to talk to him. And it’s so he can go off and do his thing, and he doesn’t need me right now.” And I’m like, “He needs you now more than ever.” Or, like, you should – I don’t know. It’s just, why is communication such a problem.

SALLY: That’s the theme of the day.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Communicate.

EMILY: We saw *Crazy Rich Asians* and it was a very good movie, but.

SALLY: Listen, I keep threatening to write an essay about *Wheel of Time* adaptations, in which I would compare it to *Crazy Rich Asians*, which is the best book adaptation I’ve seen, since *Lord of the Rings*

BOTH: Full stop.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs] She knows me so well [laughs].

EMILY: I said ‘full stop’ with her and she, like, whipped around to look at me with awe and joy on her face [laughs].

SALLY: Delighted.

EMILY: [laughing]

SALLY: Uh, anyway, Moiraine. I love this, like, entrance thing where, like, she walks through the Aes Sedai and is like, “Oh, they’re all doing this.” And she goes to see Suan and Leane, the Keeper, and there’s this very formal fake [laughing] interaction in front of Leane.

EMILY: For Leane’s benefit they’re like, “Oh, we have to keep up appearances.” Like, Moiraine’s like, “I have – I can’t talk this way to Suan,” Like, at one point Suan says something, um, I can’t remember what, and – oh. Something about how Elaida went looking for the inn that Rand stayed at in Andor. And Moiraine’s like, “If that bitch touched a hair on Basil Gill’s head, I’ll cut her myself.” And she’s like [whispers], “I’m not supposed to talk about this to Suan, but I am.”

SALLY: “But I am. If she touched one hair on his perfect head.”

EMILY: “Balding head. He only has so many.”

SALLY: “Balding head.”

EMILY: [laughs] “Conserve what he has.”

SALLY: [laughing] “He has major widow’s peak.”

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: “He’s perfect and beautiful.”

EMILY: Um.

SALLY: But, I just think it’s really funny. And I feel like Robert Jordan does a pretty good job of, like – Moiraine as a character, one of her primary characteristics is her ego, so there’s a nice kind of tension where maybe it is just Moiraine being like, “I feel like I have the right to talk to the Amyrlin like this,” but then you just kind of unpack that, on no they’re friends and they’re putting on this show.

EMILY: Yeah, like the second Leane leaves the room, and there’s also an underlying theme in these few chapters of the Aes Sedai having childhood tricks.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Which is interesting. Moiraine talks about how she has her little crystal that she hangs on her forehead -

SALLY: [laughing] To fucking eavesdrop on people.

EMILY: Yeah. And it's basically like you learn how to channel your power as a kid before you know what you're doing. And so, she used it to eavesdrop on people. Whereas Siuan developed a trick as a child to prevent eavesdropping, or something like that.

SALLY: Which is just – we could unpack that for days.

EMILY: Yeah, and Liandrin, on the other hand, her childhood trick is this, like, you know, burgeoning uncontrolled version of compulsion.

SALLY: Yep.

EMILY: Basically, trying to warp people's minds. So, I guess that's a little bit of heavy-handed character, uh, traits going on in Robert Jordan's mind but.

SALLY: Um, so it's like...these childhood tricks, like Moiraine basically – like, the understanding I get is not any other women can connect with another person's, like, childhood tricks, so, like, how is – what's going on there?

EMILY: It's really interesting, because Moiraine talked about how – oh, I forgot to even finish my thought. Sorry, once Siuan has warded for eavesdroppers she and Moiraine hug and really start acting like friends. That's the end of that thought. But, Moiraine talks about how, she's like, "I used to think of *angreal* and *sa'angreal*, and that was what was on my mind when I used this focal piece, and for a long time I thought you couldn't channel without a focal piece." And it sort of calls back to Book 1 when she had her staff and Egwene was like, "Does that channel the Power?" And Moiraine's like, "No, it's just a – it's just a focusing point."

SALLY: Did she have a staff in Book 1?

EMILY: She did. It's very weird. It's on the cover.

SALLY: That's right!

EMILY: Mm-hmm. It breaks really early on is –

SALLY: OH! That's right. Okay.

EMILY: Um, but she sort of has that, and the idea is we never see another Aes Sedai with anything like that. So, I'm always like, "Is that sort of, like, we know how Wilders sort of develop these blocks. Is that this sort of...almost this sort of block that Moiraine has just tied her learning and her channeling with a few of these little habits." And I think all women must have these little quirks, it's just interesting, I guess. I wish we got a little more explanation of that.

SALLY: Yeah. That is really interesting.

EMILY: Because, yeah, usually when women channel they say, “I weave spirit and air or whatever.” Whereas, when Liandrin does compulsion or when Moiraine does eavesdropping, they just, like, do it. So, yeah, it’s a really weird thing. I don’t know.

SALLY: Huh. It’s just interesting.

EMILY: It sort of makes you wonder if something had been done different, Egwene as a child would have developed Traveling just for...

SALLY: Just for kicks.

EMILY: Just for kicks. On accident.

SALLY: I mean, she basically does.

EMILY: Well, yeah. She does.

SALLY: She develops a lot of things. Aviendha accidentally does Traveling, right?

EMILY: Egwene does Traveling pretty quickly after that.

SALLY: Egwene is so cool.

EMILY: I know. Egwene and Aviendha sort of simultaneously develop it. Isn’t there a phrase for that? When something gets developed –

SALLY: Like calculus.

EMILY: Yeah, while Sally Googles that. Anyway, Moiraine and Sivan have a conversation that is – the bulk of their conversation in front of Leane is sort of hinting at the goings on of the White Tower, and sort of the underlying tensions that are going to lead to the schism in a couple of books. Like, first of all, Elaida’s back and that, I think, we’re supposed to pick up on, is leading to a lot of these things. Like, Elaida has a lot to do with, um, some of the machinations going on. But, then, just sort of the Blue Ajah is out of favor with the all the other Ajahs, including Green and Yellow how have always sort of been their allies. And now Red is sort of rising to power, because there have been so many False Dragons, and because the Aes Sedai don’t really know what’s going on and the winter was really weird. Just stuff like that.

SALLY: This literally just says ‘multiple discovery’ or ‘simultaneous invention,’ which feels...

EMILY: No, there’s an actual phrase.

SALLY: Not right...That’s okay. We don’t have to do this on the podcast.

EMILY: We'll figure it out.

SALLY: How was time invented?

EMILY: Beg pardon?

SALLY: But, yeah, we basically have the rise of an alt-right misandrist group.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: In the White Tower. Because Elaida is crazy [laughs].

EMILY: Because Elaida's super crazy. It almost becomes, like – Elaida's an interesting figure. Um, and I unpacked a little bit about her in my most recent blog, and how troubling it is that she is given a lot of, um, traditionally non-feminine traits, and is made a villain for that reason.

SALLY: Hmm.

EMILY: But, sort of putting that aside. She's sort of interesting because she's at the heart of so much stuff that happens. And so, you'd like to think that she's this – has some skills, but the more we interact with her, the more it just seems that she's incredibly incompetent.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And has sort of achieved a split in the White Tower and the Amyrlin Seat only by luck and the help of the Black Ajah in the background, you know?

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Which, maybe is supposed to be the point, but it does weird things to Elaida as villain, or.

SALLY: Yeah, because I mean, for instance, in this country we see incredibly incompetent people rising to positions of power.

EMILY: Yeah, she's –

SALLY: So, it's not unprecedented, but it is, um –

EMILY: Yeah, and the election is rigged.

SALLY: Yeah, and the election is rigged. There's some, some shit going on.

EMILY: There's some parallels. God Elaida is Donald Trump.



SALLY: [sighs]

EMILY: Who would have known? I can't wait for Egwene to come in and kill Donald Trump.

SALLY: [laughs, snorts] But it's especially weird because so often – like, from my viewpoint having just finished Book 6 – six?

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: Six, thank you. Like, so many Aes Sedai are defined by their competence, and how much effort they have put into understanding the workings of the Power, and the workings of the world, and whatever their particular specialty is. Like, you don't – Of course Aes Sedai make mistakes, but you don't often see them doing it on the scale that Elaida is doing, so it's just incredible to see this incredibly incompetent woman foiled by people who are just so hyper-competent. And it just, like, almost doesn't fit in this weird way. You're like, "How did you get to where you got?"

EMILY: Yeah, it makes you just frustrated. Because you're like, "How is it possible that she got here when there's so many competent people in her way?"

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And then how did she manage to stay in power *this long*? When there are so many competent people around her. And the answer is politics.

SALLY: Yeah, and fearmongering. That's what the Republican Party is doing in this country, and that's what the Red Ajah do.

EMILY: I mean, and you talked about how, um, the Aes Sedai are defined by their various projects and their areas of skill. The only areas of skill for the Red Ajah, that we're ever given, is this thing with hunting and controlling the men.

SALLY: Mm-hmm.

EMILY: And for the most part, the Red Ajah that we meet aren't good at that.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Nobody's good at that, as far as we know. We don't ever see any of the Red Ajah in action taking down, like, men who can channel. And, Elaida's sort of one attempt to do that on a big scale when she tried to kidnap Rand in Book 6 –

SALLY: [laughing] Oh, yeah.

EMILY: – is a massive failure.

SALLY: It's so bad. Start to finish.

EMILY: Yeah, one of the few Aes Sedai we meet who does have a track record, we're told, of successfully bringing in men who can channel is Cadsuane, and I think she's of the Green Ajah. And she basically just did that for kicks, because she was like, "I'm going to retire, but I don't want to be bored."

SALLY: What the hell?

EMILY: Cadsuane's an epic figure. I can't wait for you to meet her in Book 7 [laughs].

SALLY: She sounds a little bit crazy [laughs].

EMILY: She's literally just so insane.

SALLY: [laughs] She just brings in men who can channel because she's bored in her retirement.

EMILY: Cadsuane –

SALLY: She's like Helen Mirren in *Red*. Have you seen that?

EMILY: Oh my god. Now I need to. Like I knew that was Helen Mirren's arc, but I now I need to see it.

SALLY: *Red* is a really hilarious movie, actually.

EMILY: Yeah, like old spies? Old people? I love it.

SALLY: It's fun [laughs].

EMILY: Okay. We'll we're going to watch that and *Little Miss Sunshine*. That's our movie list.

SALLY: Amazing.

EMILY: And whatever Tom Holland movie we watch next.

SALLY: [laughs] But yeah, it's – the Red Ajah are just so weird.

EMILY: Yeah, it's just this weird thing, where, like, I don't know. It's, like, Robert Jordan was like, "I'm going to have this group of, like, you know, witch hunters, basically. But they're really shitty."

SALLY: They're just incompetent.

EMILY: Like, the Children of the Light are way better at it than they are.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: They at least have the numbers and the organization.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Anyway, uh, after Leane leaves the room, Moiraine and Suan talk a little more frankly about what's going on. Suan's kind of in trouble – not Suan. Well, Suan is in trouble.

SALLY: Yeah, RIP girl.

EMILY: Politically, but Moiraine's kind of in trouble because [laughing] she hasn't been keeping in touch with Suan.

SALLY: Basically.

EMILY: And they talk about Rand and Moiraine's plan for him, which is basically to send him to Illian.

SALLY: Mm-hmm [chuckles].

EMILY: To deliver the Horn, and she's like, "We just need to heal Mat really quick and then send them off." Sounds great, Moiraine.

SALLY: Yeah, just a super caus (sort for casual) plan.

EMILY: I wish anything would happen the way you planned it Moiraine.

BOTH: Why don't –

EMILY: You have contingencies?

SALLY: [scoffs] See. Moiraine just needs more anxiety.

EMILY: [giggles] She's a little too confident.

SALLY: She's a little too – ego.

EMILY: You were right.

SALLY: Hubris.

EMILY: You were right. It's nice having an egotistical –

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah.

EMILY: Main female figure. It's a nice refresher.

SALLY: Just, "I'm...taking –"

EMILY: "I know best...and fuck you all."

SALLY: [laughs] "I know best. I'm tiny and French." And we're like, "Well, that tracks."  
[laughs]

EMILY: Yeah, okay. Copy.

SALLY: And then there's Sivan, her...gutter rat [laughs] lesbian lover.

EMILY: [laughs] Sivan's such an icon.

SALLY: I know.

EMILY: Um, do they talk about anything else or should we talk about?

SALLY: No, and then [laughs] there's a hilarious – where Moiraine has to look...

EMILY: Oh my god.

SALLY: She has to try and look like she's been disciplined.

EMILY: She's been chatting with Sivan and she's like, "Oh, yeah. I need to look chagrined and disciplined." So, she tries to contort her face but only looks angry.

SALLY: Yeah. And she's like, "That'll do."

EMILY: "Eh. Yeah." [laughs]

SALLY: [laughs]. It's so funny.

EMILY: "Me? Master of disguise? Whomst?"

SALLY: Yeah. "Me, Moiraine? Look sad? About anything?"

EMILY: [laughs] Um, anyway. That chapter ends sort of with no immediate need for Rand to panic. Like, the White Tower doesn't want him to go to the White Tower anymore, although that was the original plan.

SALLY: Yeah, they need to...

EMILY: Sivan's sort of bowing to Moiraine's, uh, plan here. Anyway, then we cut to a really fun point of view from Bornhald, speaking of Children of the Light and witch hunting.

SALLY: [hissing noises]

EMILY: I know, just puke. Yeah, it's...weird. I can't remember what it's like to read this chapter not knowing what's going on, you know? Because we know that underlying Bornhald's very weird orders...

SALLY: [sniffs]

EMILY: Bornhald gets ordered by Pedron Niall, who's the main Whitecloak guy. He gets told to go to this village in the Almoth Plain, and, like, get further orders there. And, like, take an entire legion, which is really big. Like, unheard of. And so, he's like, "That doesn't really make any sense, but I guess I'll do it." Um, and then as soon as he gets there, he meets with – well, he hasn't met with yet, but is going to meet with Carridan, who we know as Bors. And we know –

SALLY: The man who called himself Bors, Emily.

EMILY: Oh, I'm so sorry. Excuse me.

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: I'm so sorry I didn't want to put his alias in question.

SALLY: Alias starring Jennifer Garner.

EMILY: [squeals] What's that new Jennifer Garner movie that we're going to have to see?

SALLY: Oh my god, where she murders everybody? I don't know what it's called, but it looks awesome.

EMILY: Yeah, she [laughs] goes after an entire cartel because they killed her family.

SALLY: What an icon.

EMILY: Jennifer Garner was, like, saw Liam Neeson and was like, "I'm gonna do that."

SALLY: Was like, "I'm gonna do you one better, Liam." Yeah.

EMILY: "I'm younger. I'm hotter. I can do it."

SALLY: True.

EMILY: Anyway.

SALLY: He's going to meet Carridan, who we know is a baddie.

EMILY: Who we know has orders from, you know, the Dark One basically – Or Ishamael, I guess – to cause some sort of chaos on the Almoth Plain. Although, that’s unclear because Bors’ memory of it is unclear. Um, so, Robert Jordan’s cute little trick to leave us with some...tension of what’s going on. But uh –

SALLY: Surprise, bitch. It’s the Seanchan invasion [laughs].

EMILY: [laughs] Yeah, Bornhald’s like, “What’s going on?” And they’re like, “Oh, there’s just –” The Almoth Plain is one of those weird spaces in Randland, for lack of a better word, that isn’t under any actual country law. It sort of seems like, we hear early in this chapter, that Murandy is in a similar situation.

SALLY: Mm.

EMILY: But Murandy has only recently, it seems, developed a governing body, but everyone still thinks of them as kind of just, like...

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Not being governed. Sort of, “Eh, I’m on my own.” But there’s these weird spaces like the Almoth Plain, and sort of like the Two Rivers, which is part of Andor but doesn’t really consider itself part of Andor. And then all of the space around Tar Valon.

SALLY: Yeah, like...

EMILY: There’s, like, the – those aren’t covered by countries’ borders.

SALLY: I know, I was looking at a map the other day, because I was like, “Is Tar Valon in Cairhien? I don’t understand what’s going on over there.”

EMILY: It’s not in any country.

SALLY: It’s just – it’s like the Vatican, I guess.

EMILY: If I’m not mistaken, they’ll talk a little more, um, in this book. When they travel from Shienar on their way to Illian, they’re going to pass through a bunch of unmanned land between Shienar and Cairhien, and I think the explanation is that no one can control that much land, so, basically everyone gave up on trying to control it. It’s just a really interesting, weird thing, because if Robert would have us believe that this is supposed to be 17<sup>th</sup> century Europe, there wasn’t part of 17<sup>th</sup> century Europe that was just...

SALLY: There was barely part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century world that Europe hadn’t conquered.

EMILY: Exactly.

SALLY: And colonized.

EMILY: That wasn't – that someone hadn't laid claim to. Like, you can't have me believe that there's a piece of land, and some Cairhienin nobleman wasn't like, "I want that."

SALLY: Put a flag in it. Have you seen that sketch? I don't remember what it is.

EMILY: Oh, with Eddie Izzard?

SALLY: Yeah. "Put a flag in it."

EMILY: [in a British accent] "I've got a flag." [laughs]

SALLY: "I've got a flag."

EMILY: "What have you got?"

SALLY: "What have you got?"

EMILY: [laughs] Um...

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: [laughing] That's a good sketch.

SALLY: It's really funny. Um, but yeah, it's very...it's very strange. The, like, anti-conquering sentiment that seems to run throughout Randland.

EMILY: Yeah, just, like, it's – I don't know. We can unpack it later, at greater length.

SALLY: When Rand starts to conquer, yeah.

EMILY: Yeah, but at this point, there's just this sort of, um. And we're given that these areas aren't heavily populated. Like, these aren't, you know, really great farmland or anything else. But the Almoth Plain kind of is in a good area, and we're gonna hear about it a lot, in terms of it being between Arad Doman and Tarabon. And there's sort of constantly warfare between the two countries, and so, of course, this is sort of the area where they meet all the time.

SALLY: [laughs] Yeah, it's just like...

EMILY: I guess it starts to feel like, you know, the French countryside between World War I and World War II. It just sort of broken.

SALLY: It's like, what's that thing that's between France and Germany? Is it Alsace?

EMILY: Alsace-Lorraine?

SALLY: Yeah. Al sass. I'm really good at French.

EMILY: Al sass. Yeah, Alsace-Lorraine, did, like, switch sides multiple times.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Yeah, no, that's a good point.

SALLY: It was French. It was German. It was French. It was German.

EMILY: Nobody knows anymore. It just became...

SALLY: Alsace. All sauce, in fact.

EMILY: [giggles] So that's where the Whitecloaks are going, ostensibly because they're like, "There's Darkfriends around and we've got to hunt them down."

SALLY: [mumbling] Darkfriends.

EMILY: And Bornhald's like, "Okay, so we're here with an entire legion to find like..."

SALLY: "Six people?"

EMILY: "Six people?"

SALLY: [laughing] "The six people who live on the Almoth Plain?"

EMILY: Of the ten people that live on the Almoth Plain, if we estimate, you know, if we give it a high estimate, six of them are Darkfriends.

SALLY: [laughing] And we've brought fifty thousand whatever.

EMILY: We've brought thousands of men to kill those six people in particular.

SALLY: We've brought six million men.

EMILY: Of course, they're meeting in a village, that it's implied just everyone in it was killed, because that's the type of people that the Children of the Light, and especially the Questioners are.

SALLY: [softly] Questioners give me bad heebie jeebie vibes.

EMILY: They're terrible! There's going to be so much gore happening on the Almoth Plain later.



SALLY: [gagging noises]

EMILY: And I know Bors is under orders, but like, it's just –

SALLY: [singing] Under orders is not an excuse for war crimes! [laughs]

EMILY: Exactly. But it's like, it makes – there's a difference being under orders, the evil orders, and being under Children of the Light orders.

SALLY: Oh, that's right. I got Bors and Bornhald confused.

EMILY: Heh. Bornhald should step up his game. He's – he knows something is off and he doesn't...

SALLY: I got confused.

EMILY: He tries to question it and then is like, “Hmm. I don't want to get tortured to death, so I'll just, uh, let everyone die.”

SALLY: Yeah, I suppose if you are a lackey of the villain, orders are an excuse for war crimes?

EMILY: I mean, you're still a...a...devil person. But.

SALLY: No, there's no denying that, but his orders – anyway. I'm getting tangled.

EMILY: Yeah, they're –

SALLY: Don't do a war crime.

EMILY: [laughs] The end.

SALLY: [laughs] That's the official moral stance here.

EMILY: Anyway, in this point of view we do get our first hint of the Seanchan, They're mentioned as invaders, sort of. Not by name.

SALLY: This is -

EMILY: And Bornhald is immediately like, “Darkfriends?”

SALLY: [softly] He's like, “Do we get to kill them?”

EMILY: They're like dogs with a bone. They're like my dog when he hears the word ‘treat.’ It's like ears up, has to follow everyone around until he gets the treat.

SALLY: He needs it.

EMILY: They're like, "A stranger? A person I haven't met? Must be a Darkfriend. A person I have met? Must be a Darkfriend."

SALLY: "Me? Must be a Darkfriend." [laughs]

EMILY: "My mother's neighbor? Darkfriend."

SALLY: "My mother?"

EMILY: "Darkfriend."

SALLY: [laughs]

EMILY: [laughing] Let's play a game. Darkfriend or not. Tom Cruise?

SALLY: Definitely a Darkfriend.

EMILY: No, he's in scientology [laughs].

SALLY: [laughing] I've watched the Leah Remini documentary. I've heard some *shit*, okay.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: Sorry, I probably should not swear.

EMILY: Oh, Chris is out of ear shot by now. Um [laughs]. Anyway, that's Bornhald's point of view. Then we switch over to Liandrin, who's also doing nefarious stuff.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Basically, getting information out of the Lady of the Keep.

SALLY: Lady of the House.

EMILY: Yeah, by making her think that maybe she and her brother are under suspicion of being Darkfriends? Which is, again, fearmongering.

SALLY: Yeah, fearmongering. Accusation. The Red Scare. Hey, it's the Red Ajah. The Red Scare.

EMILY: Yeah, and there's a very similar vibe here, of even if you're not a Darkfriend, and even if you know you're not a Darkfriend, the accusation is all that matters to discredit you.

SALLY: It's like you have to accuse somebody else of –

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: It's like, yeah, the Hollywood Blacklist, or whatever.

EMILY: Mm-hmm.

SALLY: Super scary.

EMILY: Um, so that's sort of what Liandrin's doing. And then we get a very short snippet of Padan Fain.

SALLY: [gags]

EMILY: Who's in prison doing his merry evil doing. Whatever.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: And someone comes in, we don't know who, and he says, "Oh, I wasn't expecting you," and that's the end of that chapter.

SALLY: Yeah, and he's down in the dungeon being nasty.

EMILY: Yeah, and that's that.

SALLY: It's it. It's kind of – it's not exactly an expedition – exposition dump, but it's very information heavy chapters that's going to set up a lot of stuff that's happening later in the book and later in the series. So, they're not exactly a slog, but it's a little overwhelming.

EMILY: Well, it's, like, the political stuff in the White Tower isn't going to mean anything to us until two books from now when we start getting Siuan as a regular point of view.

SALLY: When the Tower breaks, yeah.

EMILY: Yeah, and when people are actually in the Tower when it breaks. Because, Egwene and Nynaeve and Elayne are a little low on the totem pole to care about that stuff, or to even notice it's happening.

SALLY: Yeah, know what's going on.

EMILY: Um.

SALLY: Um.

EMILY: Yeah, it's just setting up stuff so that in three books when we get to the schism of the Tower, we're not going to be like, "What?! I didn't see that coming at all."

SALLY: Yeah, it just set up for –

EMILY: Robert Jordan can be like, “But you should have.”

SALLY: Because time in this series is so [laughs]

BOTH: Nebulous.

SALLY: For the fact that time is in the title. Like, has it been eight years, or has it been two days? Who’s to say?

EMILY: Well, yeah, and there’s a whole discussion where Moiraine brings out the broken seal that they recover at the Eye of the World

SALLY: Oh, yeah.

EMILY: And Siuan’s like, “We’re out of time. Like, this is it.” And Moiraine’s like, “Nope, we’ve still got some time.” And it’s just so weird to think of this book being only, um, I guess one and a half, maybe two years before the, basically the Last Battle. That’s *insane*.

SALLY: That’s crazy.

EMILY: Most of the characters don’t even resemble the characters that they were at this point.

SALLY: Yeah, like, imagine changing that much in a year and a half.

EMILY: Yeah, especially when you haven’t – you’ve barely – um, the boys, they don’t even live six of those months, basically, because they’re in that weird portal stone thingy.

SALLY: Oh, yeah.

EMILY: Like, that’s a massive time skip.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: The events of Book 3 up until, um, I think Book 14 are about 18 months.

SALLY: That is insane to me.

EMILY: It’s...

SALLY: It’s almost a little unbelievable.

EMILY: It’s super unbelievable!

SALLY: It easily could have been three or four years and it wouldn’t have made any difference.

EMILY: It's just like Robert Jordan was like, "I have this scope of novels, and I want you to believe that there are this many people, and this much stuff going on, but I also need you to believe that it's happening in this condensed period of time." We all would have believed that it took five years

SALLY: Yeah, *easy peasy*. Because time is so nebulous, I'm constantly like, "Yeah, it's been two years. Mat's been a general for eight years. Who's to say."

EMILY: Yeah, you could have had multiple seasons instead of having your one uber long summer and your one uber long winter, which is basically what happens. What a weird – what a weird series.

SALLY: *Wheel of Time* is so weird.

EMILY: I know. We do, here, get canonical confirmation of Rand's age, which is that he's 20.

SALLY: [snorts] That's right I forgot about that.

EMILY: Yeah, Sivan says something about "twenty years ago when we started this." So Rand is 20 because they started when he was born.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: So that's wild.

SALLY: He acts like he's 12.

EMILY: He acts like he's 12.

SALLY: I mean, I was an idiot when I was 20. I'm still an idiot.

EMILY: By the end of the book they will all act like they're 53. Except Mat.

SALLY: And they're 22.

EMILY: Yeah, they're *twenty-two*. We're both older than they are.

SALLY: That's horrifying. And Egwene's younger than that right?

EMILY: Egwene's supposed to be, like, 17. She's, like, 19.

SALLY: Jesus. The Young Pope indeed.

EMILY: Elayne's supposed to be, like, 16.

SALLY: Ew, really?

EMILY: Yeah. Actually, I can't remember.

SALLY: I don't like that.

EMILY: Let me look up their ages.

SALLY: I really don't enjoy that.

EMILY: It might be Egwene, the one that's supposed to be 16.

SALLY: Egwene, I buy.

EMILY: Elayne. Age.

SALLY: It makes me really upset that, um, Robert Jordan would have a 16, 17-year-old have, like, I know it's a small town, but a 20-year-old man as her love interest. Is really gross.

EMILY: I know. I think that was probably more common – the idea of that is more common in the time period he's trying to represent.

SALLY: Yeah, it just grosses me out.

EMILY: Mm. Elayne, what's your age?

SALLY: How old you?

EMILY: Anyway, I'm not going to.

SALLY: Yeah, anyway, the girls are younger except for Nynaeve, who is –

EMILY: 25 or so.

SALLY: Yeah, 25. 26, whatever.

EMILY: Which makes...[sighs]

SALLY: [whispers] A lot of sense to me.

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: [softly] I think. Just so angry.

EMILY: [laughs] Right there with you, Nynaeve. Quarter life crisis.

SALLY: Honestly.

EMILY: Um, anyway that's those chapters.

SALLY: That's those chapters. Four. Five.

EMILY: What are we reading next week?

SALLY: Let me look at our website. If you guys want to read along with us, we have our reading schedule posted up on our website, which is [ehrpodcast.wordpress.com](http://ehrpodcast.wordpress.com). You can find it under "The Great Hunt Reading Schedule." After chapters four and five, we're reading six and seven.

EMILY: Great.

SALLY: So pretty easy, straightforward.

EMILY: Two chapters.

SALLY: Chapter Six: Dark Prophecy and Chapter Seven: [whispers] Blood Calls Blood.

EMILY: So, some grim stuff going on. Those are the chapters, I believe, when Padan Fain escapes with the Horn and Mat's dagger. So, that will be the inciting incident.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: What's that word?

SALLY: Inciting incident.

EMILY: Okay, it is?

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: Inciting seemed like the wrong word for a minute. Anyway.

SALLY: Our exciting incident.

EMILY: [laughs] It is also an exciting incident. People die.

SALLY: Is this the prophecy or whatever on the wall?

EMILY: Yeah.

SALLY: That's like, "This Luc guy, or whatever." [laughs]

EMILY: In serial killer letters.

SALLY: Yeah.

EMILY: In big –

SALLY: Big serial killer letters.

EMILY: [whispers] Big ol' serial killer letters. Guys, please see *Crazy Rich Asians*.

SALLY: It's really good!

EMILY: [laughing] It's so good.

SALLY: Immediately go see *Crazy Rich Asians*.

EMILY: Um, but that's that.

SALLY: That is thaaaaat.

EMILY: I think we're done. [laughing] What's your sign off, my dude?

SALLY: Um [laughs], on Sunday.

EMILY: [laughs]

SALLY: My brother and I had to prepare an impromptu defense to convince our mother not to euthanize our perfectly healthy cat, [laughing] just because she fucking hates her [laughs]

EMILY: [wheezing] Oh my gosh.

SALLY: It was insanity. Like, the amount of times we simply said, "You can't kill Daisy." I never thought that would come out of my mouth. And then my mom was like –

EMILY: You can't kill her.

SALLY: [laughs] She said something like, "Well, I've been researching it." [laughs] And we were like, "Did you just Google 'how to kill cat?'" And she's like, "No, it's just like, 'does anti-freeze kill cats.'" And I was like, "*Anti-freeze?*"

EMILY: Noooooooo!

SALLY: And she's like, "It does kill cats, but it's very brutal, so I won't do it."

EMILY: It kills most things!

SALLY: Yeah, that's what Ian said. He was like, "It kills humans, of course it kills cats."



EMILY: Anti-freeze kills. Period.

SALLY: Cars, basically.

EMILY: Honestly.

SALLY: So, anyway. The cat is still alive. As of today. So, who's to say.

EMILY: [buzzes her lips, laughs]

SALLY: Jesus.

EMILY: Uh.

SALLY: Have a good week I love you.