



Episode 41 - “xoxo Gossip Girl”

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Emily: Goodbye.

Tybalt: (meows)

Emily: Sweet prince.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: He reminds me of Gollum when he gets it in his mouth.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He has this little, like, snail that is his best friend, but he’s ripped it apart, and of course --

Sally: It’s really sad. (laugh)

Emily: Um, and when he gets it, it’s like Gollum with the dead fish in his mouth --

Sally: I know.

Emily: Just, like, capering around, singing. That’s exactly what he looks like to me. (laugh)

Sally: There’s like a hole in the snail.

Emily: Yeah, he’s just slowly --

Sally: Shredding it to bits.

Emily: Slowly dissecting it and --

Sally: I had to take the stuffing out of the snail, 'cause he kept eating it. So --

Emily: He's just so ...

Sally: Anyway.

Emily: And why does he like that one so much? There's a whole other one.

Sally: Yeah, that one is -- I think it's 'cause that's one he got the first night he was here. So it's like a point of comfort that he insists on eating alive.

Emily: He's literally just rolling around, jumping on things, with the snail in his mouth.

Sally: (laugh) OK, anyway.

Emily: Like a psychopath.

Sally: That's enough of the cat update. Um.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: What are you reading these days?

Emily: Uh, what am I reading these days? I keep losing track. I'm mostly reading a trashy YA series by -- I might be mispronouncing this name -- but I think it's Cinda Williams Chima? This is the one that I originally read when I was, like, 14. So it's nostalgic although it's also not very good at all. That's what I'm reading. What are you reading?

Sally: Uhhh. (laugh) Well, your girl's back on her bullshit. I started A Crown of Swords.

Emily: Hell yeah.

Sally: Yeah. I read like 60 pages.

Emily: Way to go.

Sally: And then it came to a Perrin point of view, and I was like, "Ugh."

Emily: (laugh) It was like --

Sally: (laugh) So --

Emily: "I have to brace myself for this."

Sally: Yeah. And that was, like, last Sunday, so it has been a little bit of a stalling out. Plus I have to read City of Bones, so.

Emily: Ugh.

Sally: So that's what I've been doing.

Emily: For our other podcast, We Don't Watch Outlander.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Currently we're reading a City of Bones.

Sally: Where we don't --

Emily: It's terrible.

Sally: Watch Outlander.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Oh, I know, this morning I was like -- I found an audiobook to, like, play on the way to the movie, to, like --

Emily: Oh, no. For City of Bones?

Sally: Yeah, 'cause it was just, like, on YouTube --

Emily: (gasp)

Sally: Just to, like, get a little bit more of it, 'cause, shocking: I'm behind. And it was, like, hilarious.

Emily: It -- was it a man or a woman?

Sally: It was a woman.

Emily: OK.

Sally: Just, like, reading the terrible dialogue. And you, like, don't necessarily register, like, how bad it is when you're reading it because you're like, "Oh, whatever," like it's a visual thing more than -- like, it's -- you know it's bad --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: But then you hear it read out loud, and I was like, "Jesus." (laugh)

Emily: No, yeah, when I was, like, a kid -- when I was a kid reading this for the first time, I was like, "Wow, like, a lot of it is really bad, like the plot is --"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "But at least the dialogue is fun."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And now I'm reading it, and I'm like, "People don't speak that way."

Sally: Yeah, people don't speak like this.

Emily: Nobody speaks like that.

Sally: Especially not a bunch of 16-year-olds.

Emily: I hate when, um, authors -- John Green does this, famously -- he's like, "You're just, like, not giving teens enough credit if you're think -- you're saying that teens don't talk that way." And I'm like, "It's not that I'm saying teens *can't* talk that way."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Teens can talk that way. There's a very specific subset of pretentious teens --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Who do talk that way. I'm saying teens *don't* talk that way.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: If you want a stellar example of how teens talk, watch American Vandal.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's the most hysterical --

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: It captures all the quirks of teen language, like always referring to each other by first and last name --

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) It's just so good. So that's my two cents.

Sally: Yeah. No, it's really awful. Oh, man. We'll talk about it, obviously, at length on We Don't Watch Outlander, but it is, like, physically painful to read because I'm cringing every syllable.

Emily: Aw, it's so cringey.

Sally: It's like -- (makes shuddering sound)

[Clip from "Tubthumping" by Chumbawamba plays]

Sally: OK, anyway! Theme song played! Welcome to Everybody Hates Rand, your friendly neighborhood Wheel of Time podcast.

Emily: You stole my line.

Sally: I said it first! You've been saying it so much. Friendly neighborhood Wheel of Time podcast is my slogan, and you've stolen it right out of my mouth.

Emily: I'm sorry --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I just thought it was 'cause I was the one who said: Title. Y'know, like we are We Don't Watch Outlander, and then it just rolls off the tongue. I'm sorry for stealing your catchphrase.

Sally: It's OK. I don't mind, obviously because this is a shared piece of art that we're creating together as a shared consciousness, but I haven't got to say it for like six weeks.

Emily: OK, do you wanna have, like, a -- a long turn, where you just say it?

Sally: No. That's fine. It's fine. I have not communicated my stress about it.

Emily: OK.

Sally: But I just stole -- I had to take it because I missed it.

Emily: Yeah. Well, being assertive is a good thing, and I appreciate it.

Sally: It's -- I'm not usually that way.

Emily: Yeah, but I'm super proud of you for being assertive.

Sally: Thank you. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) I'm Emily Juchau.

Sally: (laugh) And I'm Sally Goodger.

Emily: Here we are. (laugh) Just airing our dirty laundry in front of you.

Sally: That was not that dirty. Last week we had a fight on air.

Emily: Yeah, we did.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: I think I deleted it, mostly.

Sally: (laugh) OK, probably for the best.

Emily: Um. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: People are always like, "You have such great chemistry."

Sally: Oh, I know.

Emily: "You can tell you're such great friends." And I'm like, "We are good friends. We're also a married couple, so we fight a lot." (wheeze)

Sally: Yeah, I know, we have the sweetest review on iTunes where it's like, "You can just tell that they like each other so much," and I'm like, "Ha, bitch, where?" (laugh)

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: Just kidding, I like Emily so much.

Emily: We do like each other so much. Um --

Sally: I just watched Love Actually.

Emily: Oh.

Sally: YeWhich is like -- I know it's garbage, guys, but I love that stupid movie so much --

Emily: No, Love Actually is, like, the iconic piece of garbage that everyone loves because it is so charming.

Sally: Yeah. But, um, so I'm like a little lovey-dovey.

Emily: Oh, that's nice.

Sally: And then I, of course, had to watch it with my two good friends, Brie and Veronica.

Emily: So now you're just like -- (makes sobbing noise)

Sally: Yeah, no, and --

Emily: "Love is so good."

Sally: Yeah, exactly! But we also got in the car, and Brie is, like, a film person, so she immediately was like, "Would you guys like to hear my analysis of Love Actually?" (laugh)

Emily: Yess. Oooh.

Sally: And it was really funny. But --

Emily: Does she have any hot takes?

Sally: It was mostly just about the individual storylines, and since this is not a Love Actually podcast, although I would love to host that -- (laugh)

Emily: But God, I wish it were.

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: Especially when we have to talk about three Rand chapters.

Sally: Oh, I know.

Emily: OK, uh, this is your spoiler alert: We will talk about spoilers, probably. No way of knowing for sure. This is not a scripted podcast. Um, 'kay, we've got three kind of plot-heavy chapters where Rand and co. -- co. being Loial, Hurin, and the random coterie of Cairhienin soldiers --

Sally: Yeah ...

Emily: That they've just picked up --

Sally: Picked up --

Emily: Along the side of the road --

Sally: How many do you think it is?

Emily: He says, like, 20?

Sally: What the fuck?

Emily: That's a lot of men.

Sally: I always imagined it would be like three.

Emily: It's just, like, a lot of dudes. Y'know?

Sally: Yeah, it's too many dudes.

Emily: Like, a lot of boys.

Sally: Too many dicks on the dance floor.

Emily: Yeah, exactly. Probably -- and Loial just, like, wants to read.

Sally: Loial's like -- (inaudible)

Emily: He's just, like, surrounded by men in armor -- he's like, "Please. Die."

Sally: "Please, God."

Emily: "Please, God --

Sally: Where's the light?

Emily: "Save me from this prison."

Sally: Yeah. (laugh)

Emily: Um, anyway, they arrive in Cairhien, which is, uh, basically France.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Just in terms of setting. We're immediately told that the king keeps his people happy by entertaining them, which is a very Louis the 14th thing to do --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And this, uh -- this is a city in a country that has just really recently been the site of a major war, the Aiel invasion.

Sally: Mm-hm.

Emily: Which, um, y'know, no war is ever justified, but the Cairhien did insult the Aiel in a major way, so, like -- if anything, the Aiel are just like, "Fuck you --"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "We're gonna burn your stupid towers down."

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: But the countryside's been maimed so much that now all the food is coming from external sources, so there's these barges of grain, and there's, like, mentions of how if the grain barges ever didn't arrive, then the people would just immediately start guillotining the folks.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So that's kind of the setting we're walking into.

Sally: Yeah. We've got some bread and circuses stuff going on here.

Emily: Yeah, yeah -- (inaudible)

Sally: At, like, Foregate or whatever they call it.

Emily: Yeah, Cairhien is a walled town, but, uh, it's got, y'know, kind of the, uh, major -- where the major mass of the population lives is outside the wall, just kind of, like, milling around. It used to be just kinda like villages outside each gate --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But now it's just sort of expanded into a whole outer ring.

Sally: Yeah. And inside the city it's like Salt Lake.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: It's like a grid system. (laugh)

Emily: It's like a grid system. Everything's organized, and everyone's sad.

Sally: So it's exactly like Salt Lake.

Emily: It's exactly Salt Lake City.

Sally: Um, one time when I was in New York, someone asked me about -- everyone -- whenever you're from Utah and you go outside, they're like, "So, Mormons," and I'm like, "Yep, sure. Great."

Emily: Yeah, sure, yeah.

Sally: I don't know why, but he was asking me specifically about the temple, and I'm like, "Oh, yeah, like the temple's like -- all the grid system is, like, based around the temple, and, like, the original streets were wide enough to turn, like, a four-horse team around."

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: And he was like, "What the fuck? How wide are your streets?" And I'm like, "Oh, they're pretty big."

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: But he was like, "A four --" He's like, "Utah's crazy." So there's your Utah fun fact of the day.

Emily: No, you know what, New York is crazy. I have driven out of New York City at rush hour during the rain, and those streets are so fucking narrow --

Sally: I know, it's like --

Emily: I wanted to literally kill myself --

Sally: I know, Emily's so brave and strong.

Emily: I just want some room for this very small U-Haul.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I just want to not hit people's rearview mirrors, which I think I did once.

Sally: We did. He was like -- he was really mad, and I was like, "I'm sorry that these streets are the size of --"

Emily: I was like, "I'm sorry I haven't driven in two years, and now my first experience coming back to this is a U-Haul in the rain."

Sally: She did so good, though.

Emily: I wanted to die.

Sally: I'm really proud of her. And I owe her everything. So I shouldn't steal our slogan from you. You can have it officially.

Emily: (laugh) It's your slogan.

Sally: I gift it to you.

Emily: It's your slogan, apparently.

Sally: For driving us out of New York City. I gift it to you!

Emily: OK. Our second fight on-air. Anyway, so, yeah, there's this sort of sharp contrast between the Foregate, the outer ring, which is where just all the peasants are wandering around in their really colorful clothes, and there's all these forms of entertainment, y'know, there's, um, there's these little, like, parades of people who are kinda like -- these are our first, uh, I dunno, dramatists --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: People who are dressing up as characters and putting on plays --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which as we'll hear from Thom later on, he has a great deal of disdain for that.

Sally: Yeah, Thom is a pretentious bastard.

Emily: He's like, "How dare you."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "You can't create the drama out of the words." Then --

Sally: I know, he's basically J.R.R. Tolkien.

Emily: (inaudible)

Sally: Did you know that J.R.R. Tolkien was against theater?

Emily: Um, I didn't know that, but it kinda makes sense.

Sally: Yeah. Well, he wasn't necessarily, like, against theater. He was against, like, adapting written texts.

Emily: Portrayals.

Sally: Yeah, because he, um -- which is the same reason he was, like, against allegory -- he didn't ever want to, like, proscribe what the viewer or the reader would be thinking, and like --

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: When you write imaginatively, of course the whole thing with fiction is that people get to sort of, like, spin the tale on their own. Of course there are words in front of them, but the idea is that the reader meets the author at the halfway point. But adaptation does a lot of that for you by nature. It has to obviously, like, clothe the actors and put different lines in their head -- in their mouth -- and do all sorts of different stuff, and it kind of has to pull different themes with different music and everything, so he was against adaptation.

Emily: I wonder how he'd feel about the Lord of the Rings trilogy.

Sally: I know.

Emily: Like, if he'd just hate it on principle or if he'd see it and be like, "This is genuinely a good piece of art," because it is.

Sally: I think he would be of two minds. I think J.R.R. Tolkien was a man who enjoyed hating things on principle. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) Yeah.

Sally: I think that was just kind of the man he was.

Emily: He'd really like walking out of the theater and being like, "Well!"

Sally: Yeah. "Well, listen to what I have to say." But I also think that it is a really good adaptation, so.

Emily: Yeah. He'd have to respect that.

Sally: Anyway --

Emily: He would hate the Hobbit, though, because that's --

Sally: We all hate the Hobbit, though.

Emily: The worst, yeah.

Sally: They took, like, one book and made, like, 67 movies.

Emily: Oh my God.

Sally: Did they make three or four?

Emily: Three.

Sally: OK.

Emily: I think it was gonna be four for a little while, but then they were like, “You know what? We’ll just do this thing where we make the third movie literally three hours of just non-stop warfare.”

Sally: Sounds exhausting.

Emily: It’s really terrible. What I hate about those movies most of all is that they do have some genuinely good sequences --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: The sequence with the dragon is very, like, compelling.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It’s really good. I remember being, like, scared in the theater. ‘Cause the dragon’s so good! It’s an amazing piece of art.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, but then it’s like, immediately you have, like, Legolas running through the streets of the river town just, like, shooting people --

Sally: I know.

Emily: Like a fucking martial artist.

Sally: OK, but what about that barrel sequence, though? When they’re --

Emily: Exactly! The barrel sequence is another good sequence, I think!

Sally: (laugh) Yeah.

Emily: It’s fun!

Sally: It’s really fun.

Emily: God, some of it is so good, and some of it -- most of it is just genuinely terrible.

Sally: Yeah, plus Martin Freeman is in it, so.

Emily: Yeah, plus Martin Freeman, who I hate.

Sally: He's gross.

Emily: Ugh.

Sally: Anyway. Um, buh buh buh. So that's your, uh -- uh -- traditional Tolkien sidebar.

Emily: Yeah, exactly.

Sally: Um --

Emily: We have to have one of those per episode. So then they go up to the gate, and Rand's like, "Why don't we just stay out here?" and they -- Hurin's like, "You can't do that, my lord."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Everyone will talk. The gossip will be --"

Sally: Gossip girl.

Emily: "Gossip girl -- xoxo Gossip Girl. That'll be you."

Sally: Who do you think would be Wheel of Time world's gossip girl?

Emily: Well, I haven't seen Gossip Girl, so explain to me what you mean by that.

Sally: OK, so the premise of Gossip Girl (laugh) is that it's at a rich boarding school on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, and at this school, there's like an online blog or, like, text message service -- it's like this weird thing called Gossip Girl, who, like, spreads the gossip about things going on at the school and, like, around the lives of these teenagers --

Emily: OK ...

Sally: And, spoiler alert: it turns out that Gossip Girl is our, um, scholarship student from Brooklyn, Dan. So Gossip Girl's actually a boy.

Emily: OK.

Sally: Um, but basically Gossip Girl just always chimes in, like, when all these plots have been webbed, it'll be like, oh -- plot -- like, Gossip Girl notification: Dan and Serena were seen macking out in Central Park or whatever. So.

Emily: Yeah, that's a good question, 'cause we don't have very many characters who just, like, live for the drama of it all, you know?

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: I guess it would be Thom. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, I guess you're right. (laugh) Gossip Girl's voice is Kristen Bell. Kristen Bell was Gossip Girl --

Emily: Oh my God.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I freaking love Kristen Bell.

Sally: I know. She's the best.

Emily: Kristen Bell's current renaissance in the Good Place --

Sally: I know.

Emily: Is just, like -- (kissing sound) Peak.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um --

Sally: So it would be Thom.

Emily: I just love Veronica Mars. Yeah, it would be Thom 'cause he's enough, like, removed from the major drama of it --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: That he could offer, like, commentary, y'know? Like, he's the last piece of the fellowship to come in --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He's not really part of it, but he makes himself a part of it --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Yeah, and he does, uh -- he doesn't spend lots of time with Perrin, but he does spend enough time with, like, Rand and Mat and the girls to offer good perspectives there.

Sally: OK, so Thom is Gossip Girl.

Emily: Yeah, Thom would be --

Sally: XOXO Gossip Girl. Hello, Upper East Siders. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) Which is relevant, 'cause we get Thom back in these chapters.

Sally: I know!

Emily: So good. Um, anyway, so, uh, there's just some, like, Great Game drama that Rand doesn't want to be a part of. Eventually they ditch the soldiers and go find an inn. Um, where Rand's kinda immediately like, "I'm gonna go out and walk around, does anyone wanna come?" Or, he was -- he wants to, like, look for Selene, I think is his deal. Something like that.

Sally: Yeah, something dramatic and straight.

Emily: Yeah, ugh. And Loial and Hurin are both like, "Uh, we're terrified of leaving this inn for good reason, so you just go do your thing." And Rand's like, "OK." Um, and he gets, like, some invitations to some parties, which he just throws into the fire, which is like a really dumb political move --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But I get -- like, it's what I would do too, probably?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So.

Sally: Um --

Emily: Mmm.

Sally: I wanna talk about the Game of Houses for a second.

Emily: Yeah, go for it.

Sally: Um, so there is -- I have tragically lost my phone briefly, so I can't Google whether or not this is the correct first name, but I think his name was Jeremy Bentham -- I also wanna say Stanley, but I think that's -- I'm pretty sure it's Jeremy.

Emily: I can Google on my phone.

Sally: But Jeremy Bentham, um, was a philosopher and other stuff, and he, um, wrote about, uh, a hypothetical prison called the Panopticon. Um, and the idea of the Panopticon is it was a prison that was built on a circle, and all of the cells had, like, glass walls on the outside, or the bars were on the outside so that there was a guard tower in the center, but -- and so the guards could see the prisoners, but the prisoners could not see -- was it Jeremy?

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Hell yeah.

Emily: Good for you.

Sally: Um, so -- OK, so it was a prison in a circle and, like, the cells faced a tower in the middle, but the prisoners couldn't see whether or not there was actually a guard at the top of the tower, so the idea was that there could be a guard watching you at any moment and you would never know. And so the idea being that there wouldn't even necessarily have to be a guard in there, and the prisoners would police themselves.

Emily: Right.

Sally: And so this is the theory behind, like, a security state, which -- I mean, I think it's fair to say that like every nation in the world at this moment is kind of living in a security state in some way or another.

Emily: Right.

Sally: Depending on who's in power. Like, the idea is that -- you know, at least in America, to use us as an example, like, the NSA is monitoring your internet activity and stuff and, uh, it's super freaky. But you -- the idea being that, like, you police yourself. Because you don't want the government to see any nefarious activity, and it -- like, this becomes particularly strong in, like, totalitarian states where you never know if someone is secret police or not. That's the whole purpose of secret police, um, is to sort of put people in line due to their fear. And I was thinking about that a lot when I was reading these chapters because, like, Rand starts to get so tangled up in this, like, Game of Houses, and it seems like -- and he comments all the time about how people seem to be watching him all the time, and everybody -- and Hurin talks about how everybody plays it, and everybody is constantly, like, thinking about their selves in terms of their, like, political actions. So it's just, like, this really weird monitoring of behavior in Cairhien. And of course it's, like, to a certain, specific political end, but I feel like so is, like, security.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: So. Anyway.

Emily: Yeah, no, that's super interesting. Like, it's this -- Cairhien is this very weird setting --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: I feel. Like, especially in these first few chapters, when we're already -- like, these first few chapters where our characters are there, I mean -- when the sequence in Cairhien, the apex of it is going to be when they -- um, Darkfriends steal the Horn out from under them and burn the inn down. And there's, like --

Sally: (laugh) I forgot that's how this ends.

Emily: Well, there's this hilarious sequence where Rand just, like, sits down on the curb and starts laughing his head off.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: 'Cause it's like, everything's just blown up in his face?

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And, like, that's where Perrin and Mat and Ingtar walk up --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And are like, "OK. Well ... things are progressing --"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Really, really well, we see." So it's just kind of like, um -- I dunno, this, like, paranoia. You feel like you're in a noir movie, almost --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Especially when you get this sequence of Rand and Loial wandering around the streets at twilight and, y'know, some of the puppet Trollocs aren't actually puppets, they're really Trollocs --

Sally: I know, that scene is so cool.

Emily: It's very freaky, yeah.

Sally: Yeah. I love that scene. When Loial's like, "I don't think that's a puppet," and then it's like "Blaaagh."

Emily: "I don't think that's a --" and then it's like, "Myaaah!"

Sally: It's so awesome!

Emily: Yeah, it's super cool. It's a great action sequence.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: But anyway, it's just weird because a lot of our, uh, a lot of the most interesting intrigue for the rest of the series will take place in Cairhien --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: There's a lot of, uh, y'know, secret letters delivered and passed on, and there's a lot of betrayals and traitors and, just, stuff like that, and it's all gonna happen in Cairhien. So this is a very interesting introduction to it --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Where we're just being thrown head-long into -- yeah, this really kind of totalitarian state where the king is above everything -- he's never even actually introduced as a character before Thom murders him off-screen --

Sally: What a unit.

Emily: But he's got his hands in everything because it seems clear that, like, since the Aiel War, the king has taken these, uh, turns to try and control the country and that's resulted in the Game of -- the Game of Thrones, I almost said.

Sally: That's basically what it is, though.

Emily: (British accent) The Game of Thrones! You win or you die! (normal accent) The Game of Houses --

Sally: You win or you die.

Emily: Yeah, you win or you die. It used to be, apparently, a little less, uh, bloodthirsty, but now it's just, like, people getting their throats slit left and right.

Sally: Drama.

Emily: Yeah. And we'll talk about how annoying it is that the, uh, physical manifestation of that is Thom's much-younger girlfriend getting her throat slit, like -- OK.

Sally: I can't roll my eyes hard enough.

Emily: I just love fridging! Ha ha ha!

Sally: I can't roll my eyes hard enough that Thom even needs to have a girlfriend in this.

Emily: Yeah, God.

Sally: What if Thom was just, like, "I'm happy in Cairhien, where my skills are best put to use: juggling and spying."

Emily: Yeah, Exactly.

Sally: Cairhien was built for Thom Merrilin.

Emily: Cairhien -- (laugh) literally.

Sally: (laugh) That's what the will -- the Wheel weaved. I can't even say it.

Emily: 'Cause it's a tongue-twister, Robert Jordan, you fucking psychopath.

Sally: The path the will wove.

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: The -- weevils wobble. (laugh)

Emily: Um, anyway, so Rand goes out and about, and he goes back out into the Foregate and is, like, looking at all this entertainment, all the bread and circuses, he sees, like, a lady doing a magic show, and everyone's like, "Come and see the Aes Sedai!"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Rand's like, "Rather not, thank you."

Sally: (laugh) Yeah.

Emily: And then he's, like, walking around, and he hears, like, a familiar voice, and he's like, "It can't be." (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: But it can, reader.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: It's Thom Merrilin, telling a fun story. And he's, like, basking in applause --

Sally: I know.

Emily: And then he sees Rand and is like, "Go to the backstage, you fool."

Sally: (laugh) Yeah. Record scratch.

Emily: Record scratch. (laugh)

Sally: You might be wondering -- (laugh)

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

Sally: We are, Thom.

Emily: Rand's like, "I am!"

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: "Tell me more!" (laugh) Um, so --

Sally: Do you know what I want? I want Taika Waititi to direct the Wheel of Time adaptation. Yeah.

Emily: I want Taika Waititi to play Thom Merrilin.

Sally: Ah! Could you imagine?

Emily: My mom just paid -- OK, guys. Guys.

Sally: Kay. We're -- I'm ready. Lay it on me.

Emily: I just looked down at this notification, um, my -- from Venmo. "Becky --" that's my mom -- "Paid you 25 dollars." It is labelled "Souvenir from Europe."

Sally: (hysterical laughter)

Emily: My parents spent 10 days in Europe --

Sally: (laughing)

Emily: And couldn't be fucking bothered to go personalized shopping for us. They were like, "We'll just give them cash money."

Sally: (laugh, cough) I'm gonna die.

Emily: Joke's on you, Becky. I'm immediately going to use this for food.

Sally: I'm gonna lose my mind.

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: (wheeze) You can't make this shit up, people.

Emily: I hate them. (laugh) They're the worst.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Oh my God. OK. So --

Sally: Kay.

Emily: That's the Juchau family interlude. There has to be one of those.

Sally: Yeah, play EHR bingo. I'm gonna make us a card.

Emily: Oh my God, you should. I -- EHR bingo. (laugh) "Juchau family interlude." Um. "Discussion about our weird cat." OK, anyway, Rand has this, like, brief conversation with

Thom where Thom's like, "Do you have my fucking instruments?" And Rand's like, "Yeah, I do, but how are you alive?!" And Thom's like "It's no big deal."

Sally: "Doesn't matter. Where's my harp?"

Emily: "I'm just a spry old man. You just need to trust me." And Rand's like, "OK, but I'm just, like, fucking elated that you're here. I'll go run and get your instruments, grab -- drag Loial along, and come back and meet you at your inn." Which is what happens. And Rand really is in this, like, state of euphoria, which is just kind of like another nod to what's going on with him. He is really going into these euphoric --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And depressive states, and they're a little more subtle now than they were in the first book --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I think, but they are still happening.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: As he's kind of easing into channeling.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Which is, y'know, just a fun little -- super fun little thing that's going on. But it's a nod to Robert Jordan's excellent craft here, I think.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, so they go to Thom's inn, and the innkeeper is like, "Yeah, you can go wait upstairs. Dena will let you in." And Rand's like, "Who the fuck is Dena?" And Dena is a fucking -- (laugh) teen bard who's sleeping with a 65-year-old. Which, like ... to each their own.

Sally: Yes.

Emily: But it's really annoying that Thom constantly has much younger lovers.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He can't be that hot.

Sally: No.

Emily: Or that interesting.

Sally: No.

Emily: If I met Thom Merrillin, probably the last thing on my list of reactions would be attract-- sexual attraction.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: There might be, like, a level of emotional attraction --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Or, y'know, like, mental attraction, like -- Rand says, "Hey, you're a guy who really knows about the world, and that's something our little crew could really --"

Sally: Use.

Emily: Use? 'Cause we're a bunch of naive idiots."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Hurin's never been out of his house, as far as I can tell. Loial is a teen runaway who just wants --"

Sally: Teenage dirtbag.

Emily: (laugh) Yeah.

Sally: My name is Loial. (laugh)

Emily: Loial is not a teenage dirtbag!

Sally: It's OK to be a teenage dirtbag. I wish I was a teenage dirtbag.

Emily: Yeah, OK, I do too -- OK, I don't wish I was teenage. I wish --

Sally: I just wish I was a dirtbag.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: I just wish I was a little more dirtbaggy.

Emily: Loial's, like, not a dirtbag, though. He's like a bag full of potted soil.

Sally: Plant soil?

Emily: Yeah. For good, happy things to grow because he's so good and pure. I love him. What's Loial thinking this entire time? Loial -- from Loial's perspective, he walks in, there's this girl who's, like, juggling --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And she's like, "La dee dah dee dah, I'm gonna be a woman gleeman." And Loial's like, "That's great and progressive. Cheers for you."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And then Thom walks in, and Loial's like, "THIS is Thom? This is the man you're sleeping with?"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Uhhhhh."

Sally: I know.

Emily: "I hate this."

Sally: I just wish this entire series was from Loial's point of view.

Emily: Exactly. And then Rand's like, "Loial, I need you to leave so Thom and I can have some mysterious chat," and Loial's like, "OK, I'll go downstairs."

Sally: Then he gets cheated out of all his money.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: 'Cause he's so good.

Emily: Just trying to play dice.

Sally: I know.

Emily: And Dena's like, "This is a lesson for you," and cheats him, and he's like -- 10 minutes later -- "Do you think she cheated?" How could he have -- how has he been watching Mat this entire time --

Sally: I know.

Emily: And doesn't know what cheating is?

Sally: I know, he's so good.

Emily: Does Mat cheat?

Sally: No, Mat just wins, baby.

Emily: Yeah, but not until this point.

Sally: All I do is win.

Emily: (laugh) I'm gonna die.

Sally: By Mat Cauthon.

Emily: No one man should have all that power.

Sally: Yeah, exactly.

Emily: Um, anyway, so setting aside the issue of Dena, who --

Sally: We'll deal with --

Emily: The way she dies --

Sally: We're just gonna pack that up in a box and put it in a drawer for a later episode.

Emily: Yeah, we'll, uh, fridge that.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: As she will be. Um -- ew. There is a hilarious part, though, where she runs to greet Thom, and they just, like, make out for a minute --

Sally: I know.

Emily: And Rand's like, "Should I fucking leave?"

Sally: Rand's like, "Do we need to leave? Do you guys need to, like, fuck before we have this conversation?"

Emily: Rand's like, "Are you gonna have a quickie in front of us? What's going on?"

Sally: Yeah. Gross.

Emily: "How -- how? Ew. Hate this. Don't you need Viagra? What's happening?"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Gross. OK. That's all I'm gonna say about that. So the meat of this, I dunno, sequence -- these three chapters -- is Rand chatting with Thom, trying to convince him to come along. He's like, "Thom, we've got the fucking Horn of Valere, like, you should come along," and Thom's like, "I don't think it's the Horn of Valere." And Rand's like, "Moiraine says it is." And Thom's like, "OK, well, then it's the Horn of Valere --"

Sally: (laugh) I know.

Emily: "I believe you. She's a smart lady." He's also like, "OK, but why do you have the Horn of Valere? What's going on?" Rand's like, "I have to take it back to Shienar," and Thom's like, "What -- what the --"

Sally: "Why would you do that?"

Emily: "Why would you take it to Shienar?" And Rand's like, "Cause I know who to give it to there," and Thom's like, "There's all these fucking authorities in Illian --"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Who are just waiting for the Horn of Valere." Um, so -- it's just wild. And Thom has, like, this throwaway comment where he's like, "I guess it was Mat or Perrin that she was after," kind of indicating that Thom knew that it would be one of them was channeling.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Um, and he mentions, now explicitly, that he kind of got involved because his, uh, nephew was stilled for channeling. Gentled, excuse me. Um, but then later, it seems like he kinda picks up on the fact that Rand is a, just, ball of chaos here and emotional drama and it's so -- I'm a little bit unclear as to whether Thom, by the end of this sequence, is like, "Oh, it actually is Rand."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Yeah, 'cause there's a lot going on here. Rand is like, "So tell me about the, uh, Prophecies of the Dragon," and Thom's like, "OK ... this seems like a weird topic for a young man, but I'll just --"

Sally: No, but then he also launches into, like, a full lecture about it. He's like --

Emily: A full academic discussion.

Sally: "If you do it in High Chant, it doesn't translate, blah blah blah. It doesn't --" He's actually -- he says it doesn't scan very well.

Emily: (whisper) He's so weird.

Sally: Like some type of pretentious Shakespearean professor --

Emily: I know.

Sally: He's like, "It doesn't scan -- it's not, like, exactly in iambic pentameter, but, like, I did my best." (laugh)

Emily: Thom Merrill is like Mark Matheson if you made Mark Matheson chaotic neutral --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Rather than --

Sally: Lawful good.

Emily: Lawful good, yeah.

Sally: Mark is beyond D&D categorization --

Emily: Yeah, he really is.

Sally: He's the platonic ideal --

Emily: He's a fallen angel.

Sally: Yeah, of good. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) He's not even a fallen angel; he's a descended angel.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He's gracing us with his presence.

Sally: He came down on purpose. He walked down the staircase of heaven.

Emily: He was like, "Here I am."

Sally: "Here I am to teach Shakespeare to the youths."

Emily: Yeah, exactly. Thom Merrilin is, like, the actual ascended devil version of that.

Sally: Yeah. Exactly. Thom Merrilin is his --

Emily: Counterpart.

Sally: Yeah. His mirror.

Emily: His foil, as it were.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Um --

Sally: When I was but a young high school student, my teachers were teaching me this term "foil," and I did not know that was a type of sword, so I was like, "Like aluminum foil?" (laugh) Because I was an idiot. But then I learned that it was a type of sword.

Emily: (laugh) I think I first learned it with Hamlet and Laertes, which is like --

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: The classic foil example.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And then they actually do duel with foils for --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: A little while, so that must've been how I picked up on it, but yeah. Easy mistake to make. Foil.

Sally: I mean, I was an idiot, and I don't know anything about weapons or fighting.

Emily: I know a weird amount of -- about weapons, but I'm abnormal and --

Sally: You're not abnormal, you're perfect.

Emily: I am abnormal. In the sixth grade -- Cambria will remember this; I'm sure I've mentioned this before -- in the sixth grade, I did a report on castles. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, that was legendary.

Emily: I did another report on pirates.

Sally: That's also legendary.

Emily: So those have been my two obsessions from day one, pirates and castles. Just fuckin' love 'em.

Sally: Nice.

Emily: Anyway. Does Thom say anything of major interest? We do foreshadow book three here, where Thom says, um, "We'll know it's the Dragon Reborn when he gets Callandor from the Stone of Tear --"

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: "But, like, no one gets into the Stone of Tear. No one can get there. Like, it's safe, so. Definitely the Dragon hasn't been reborn." And Rand's like, "I'm just gonna put that on my distant to-do list."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: One book from now.

Sally: To-do list for December: (laugh) Get Callandor.

Emily: (laugh) Get Stone of Tear.

Sally: Conquer Tear.

Emily: Conquer Tear.

Sally: Glass sword.

Emily: Glass sword? Question mark?

Sally: Question mark. Is it made of glass?

Emily: Is it? I don't know.

Sally: They say it always looks like glass.

Emily: Yeah, it's one -- it's one of those, like, fancy Age of Legends materials.

Sally: Yeah. It's just a particular niche of mine. Whenever they mention glass in Wheel of Time, I'm like --

Emily: I know, you do love glass. Is it possible to blow glass in the shape of a sword?

Sally: You'd have to mold -- like, use a mold. But yeah, you can, like --

Emily: It would be a very ineffective sword.

Sally: Yeah, blow.

Emily: I cannot emphasize this enough. That'd be a terrible sword.

Sally: Oh, no, it would be a terrible sword made of glass. It'd also be really, like -- I mean, I know swords are heavy, but it would be, like, weird to hold because it'd be slippery and have -- and be fragile. Obviously.

Emily: Um. Yeah, ultimately no good, glass sword.

Sally: Does he ever, like, sword fight with it? Or does he just use it for magic?

Emily: Um, good question. I can't recall a time when he sword fights with it. Actually, I think he might, in A Memory of Light.

Sally: Cool.

Emily: But there's a lot of, like, magical dueling going on there too, so I can't actually recall if there's actually sword fighting happening as well. Um. Yeah, good question. It's definitely not a good sword.

Sally: It's kind of a shitty sword.

Emily: Yeah, kind of a shitty sword. Um, what the fuck else happens with Thom?

Sally: Oh, Thom's basically like, "No," and Rand's like, "Please?" And Thom's like, "No."

Emily: (laugh) Thom's like, "No."

Sally: "There's a woman who loves me, against all odds," and then he's like, "Against all odds, I love her too," and I'm like, "Peak of romance, Thom Merrillin."

Emily: Yeah, peak of romance. Way to go.

Sally: (gagging noise) Disgusting.

Emily: Some real --

Sally: Some real humdingers there.

Emily: Real lovey-dovey stuff going on. Put this storyline in Love Actually. God. So Rand gets some information here. Thom also gets some information. Rand is like, "Oh, yeah, I've learned that whoever blows the Horn of Valere, the heroes will have to obey them," like, it can be a Darkfriend and they'll come calling, and Thom's like, "OK, didn't hear about that, but good to know, I guess."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, but ultimately, Thom's like, "Listen, we're breaking up. I don't want to see you again. Here, you can keep the flute. And --" Does he say he can keep the flute?

Sally: I think so.

Emily: I can't recall.

Sally: I can't recall.

Emily: Yeah, I think he's like, "You might have to play for your supper again." Which is also foreshadowing. Uh --

Sally: Does Rand play for his supper again?

Emily: Ummm, it's kind of -- I think it happens -- you -- you'll see.

Sally: OK.

Emily: He has a -- he has a few of, like, little stranger in a strange place plotlines.

Sally: Stranger in a strange land.

Emily: Going on. Um, it's really weird how Rand idealizes that time of playing for his supper, like by the end of the series, he's like, "Wow, simpler times. Me and Mat on the run from Darkfriends. Me: playing the flute so I could eat."

Sally: "Mat: dying."

Emily: "Mat: dying. Wow, I really wish I could go back to those times." (laugh)

Sally: Mat's like --

Emily: Mat's like, "I don't recall."

Sally: Mat's like, "I -- who is she?"

Emily: "I have no memory of this place."

Sally: "Guess what? Guess what? I don't recall."

Emily: Um. But anyway, they leave Thom and are wandering around in the dark and, uh, what should they come across but some Trollocs and Darkfriends? Padan Fain has found them. And there's a little fight where Rand uses his sword and then Loial has to kill a Trolloc --

Sally: Which is really upsetting.

Emily: And it's really sad. Yeah, poor Loial.

Sally: Loial's like, "I've never killed anything before."

Emily: And Rand's like, "Yeah, well, you did it in self-defense, so cry about it, bitch." And Loial's like --

Sally: And Loial's like --

Emily: "Well, I am crying."

Sally: "It's really upsetting, Rand."

Emily: "I just love nature so much."

Sally: "I don't wanna kill anything."

Emily: Aw, Loial. Secret badass.

Sally: So good. I know, he's just -- pfft, into a wall.

Emily: He just yeets the Trolloc into a wall so hard that it dies. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Which is iconic.

Sally: That's been Emily's verb of the month.

Emily: I love the word "yeet." Anyway, so they just go running around (laugh) -- they're kind of getting herded out of the city --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Eventually they're, like, on the outskirts of the city, and the only thing they can see in the distance is a -- what looks like a little manor house. Um, and then Selene just pops up out of nowhere. Yeah, in that pose exactly.

Sally: (laugh) Yeah. I'm just holding my arm up.

Emily: (laugh) Like the Statue of Liberty.

Sally: Yeah. That's what Selene does. Tits out.

Emily: Yeah, like, the dress, artfully draped over one tit to --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Expose the nipple. (laugh)

Sally: Exactly.

Emily: She's just constantly nip-slipping.

Sally: Good for her.

Emily: Is what I think. Intentionally. Yeah, of course. Um, and she just is like, "Hey, so I guess we're doing this right now," and Rand's like, "How the fuck did you get here?"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And she's like, "Don't worry about it," and he's like, "OK, I won't worry about it," because he's stupid.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: What the hell is happening?

Sally: He's just too dickmatized.

Emily: He's so dickmatized.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Anyway, they're like, "Well, I guess we'll just have to run for this building," which is the Illuminators' chapter house, and Loial's like, "Uh, I don't think that's a good idea," and Rand's like, "Shut up, Loial." And they go and run to it, and they find a door, and Rand's like, "Alright, I guess we better go in here," and Loial's like, "I really don't think this is a good idea," and Rand's like, "Shut up, Loial!"

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: And they walk in, and Rand's like, "Well, I guess it's better to face, like, some human guards than Trollocs," and Loial's like, "That's what I was trying to tell you. They'll kill us if they find us."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Rand's like, "Damn, Loial! Why didn't you mention that before?" And I'm like, "Die, Rand al'Thor."

Sally: He's such a piece of shit in this, like, chapter in particular.

Emily: (cough) Mm-hmm. Anyway, so there's this little sequence where they're running around some fireworks.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Rand has the iconic sidebar about how he doesn't know what's inside fireworks except that one time Mat opened it and no one except Mat's own mother would speak to him for a week. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) I know.

Emily: (laugh) Which is so funny.

Sally: (laugh) I know.

Emily: Imagine that week of him just --

Sally: I know. The whole village is just so mad that Mat would --

Emily: Ostracizing Mat Cauthon.

Sally: Open a bomb. (laugh) Which is hilarious, 'cause he does the same thing in, like, the next book. (laugh)

Emily: Immediately after -- the second he gets a hold of some more fireworks, he's like, "Gotta see what's inside."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And Thom's like, "What the fuck is -- are you doing?! Those can explode on contact with oxygen!" And Mat's like, "Never know till you find out!" Like --

Sally: He's so stupid. But could you imagine that week in Emond's Field?

Emily: I know. I just wanna -- yeah. I want that.

Sally: Do you think that includes Rand and Perrin? Do you think they were like --

Emily: Yeah, I think they were just like, "We can't speak to you."

Sally: "Everyone else is doing it."

Emily: Like, during this sequence, I want the Taika Waititi version to have a flashback --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Immediately, and it's, like, surprisingly recent. Like -- (laugh)

Sally: Yeah. (laugh) It was, like, the week before Moiraine showed up. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) Rand's like, "I remember this time Mat just opened a firework and then no one would speak to him," and Loial's like, "Were you, like, seven?" And Rand's like, "No, we were 18."

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: And then there's a flashback to Mat, like, trying to buy shit or something --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And no one will speak to him.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: God, I love the Wheel of Time.

Sally: I know. It's so funny.

Emily: Anyway, so this is -- we'll -- we'll actually peripherally meet Aludra, who's the only important Illuminator that we ever meet -- um, she's, um, going to be instrumental in the -- in Mat's storyline and in the creation of cannons. She's the actual, like, science side of that.

Sally: Rad.

Emily: Like, the one who has the idea and is like, "Hey, I can maybe use this for warfare." And Mat's like, "OK, well, I've got a hefty pocketbook and a lethal curiosity for exploding things, so --"

Sally: "Let's do it."

Emily: "Let's make this work." Yeah, business partners. And Rand, actually, at some point in this chapter, like, uses a firework as a cannon? So it's just this, like, interesting little foreshadowing to Mat, but it's Rand using it, but, like, he has mentioned Mat --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Explicitly in this chapter, and Mat, of course, will do the exact same thing one book from now, where he uses fireworks to make things explode? So it's just, like, hilarious. Rand does this once and is like, "Well, never doing that again." Mat does it and is like, "That was fantastic."

Sally: "Make it bigger."

Emily: "Fucking fantastic."

Sally: "Why do I feel so alive?"

Emily: "Bring it into warfare. I love this."

Sally: "I've never felt so alive."

Emily: "I've never felt so alive. Adrenaline is my drug."

Sally: "Adrenaline and money."

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Although we could argue that Mat gambles for adrenaline.

Emily: I -- yeah, I think at this point.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Especially 'cause money's not really on the line. Yeah, he really -- really is a little adrenaline freak.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: God. Weirdo.

Sally: Remember when he climbs the Stone of Tear and then just blows up the side of it?

Emily: Unintentionally.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He's like, "Maybe I'll make a small hole," and then he, like, makes a huge hole, and he's like, "Ohhh my God."

Sally: Oop.

Emily: I fucking --

Sally: Whoopsies!

Emily: He's like, "Uh, that wasn't me. Who're you talking to?"

Sally: Wasn't me. Yeah.

Emily: And the Aiel are like, "My God --" I want that scene from the Aiel point of view --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Y'know? Like, they leave Mat after attacking him and are like, "OK, that was a weirdo," and then they're like, "La dee dah, how are we gonna scale the Stone of Tear?" And then, like, in the distant -- like, behind Rhuarc's silhouette -- you just see this major explosion.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And they kinda, like, look around, over their shoulders, and Rhuarc's like, "OK. These fucking white people." (laugh)

Sally: You're -- Rhuarc is a white people. (laugh)

Emily: I know, just -- (laugh) general --

Sally: You're making me really excited for the Wheel of Time adaptation, except I think it will not have this level of humor.

Emily: It won't be that good at all. No, they'll take themselves too seriously.

Sally: I know. Wheel of Time is so funny, though, so I am upset.

Emily: It's so funny!

Sally: I would be upset if it took itself too seriously, but.

Emily: No, the only good Wheel of -- Wheel of Time adaptation is borderline comedic --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: At all moments.

Sally: (laugh) Rhuarc, just --

Emily: (cough) Rhuarc's like, "OK."

Sally: Looks into the camera. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) That's all I want from Rhuarc -- (trails off, inaudible)

Sally: I know, he's, like, constantly like that vine where that guy's like, "What are you looking at? It's a wall." And he's just --

Emily: Looks at the camera again.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: Another Wheel of -- Wheel of Time adaptation that I would be behind is a documentary style Wheel of Time adaptation --

Sally: Oh my God. Where everybody's, like, talking.

Emily: Where Loial's the filmmaker.

Sally: Oh my God!

Emily: Oh my God ... (sigh) God, I'm such a genius. I wish -- (inaudible)

Sally: I know, I wish we were in charge of the Wheel of Time. I want Emily to do the rest of it, and I'll do the music.

Emily: (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) I think I would do a really good job, guys.

Emily: I think you would too, yeah.

Sally: Thank you.

Emily: Um --

Sally: Be a lot of slutty pop music.

Emily: Ah. Hell yes.

Sally: Mat's theme would be, like, the first 30 seconds of London Bridge by Fergie.

Emily: (whisper) Oh my God.

Sally: Where it's just like, "Oh, shit!" (laugh) Have you seen that -- that Haikyuu video where Kageyama --

Emily: Yeah. (laugh)

Sally: (laugh) OK.

Emily: OK, we're seriously off-track --

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: But honestly, like, that's the best thing that happens in this chapter is there's the use of fireworks --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: As weapons.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Um, and Selene appears and then immediately disappears because she's a fucking lunatic.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: She talks more about, like, "Oh, I just wanna touch the Horn of Valere," like, "Look at me, look into my eyes. Smell my scent." And Rand's like, "Oh my God, it's like I don't have a brain."

Sally: But at least there's, like, one moment in this chapter where he's like, "I wish she wasn't so -- like, I wish she'd --" I think he says, like, "I wish she didn't smell so good," which is creepy --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: But you kind of get the sense that, like, he's first starting to recognize that maybe it's not totally, like, a natural thing going on.

Emily: Yeah, there's some level of manipulation going on here --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: That is not just, like, a really pretty woman --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Manipulating a dumb young man.

Sally: So at least he's becoming a little more cognizant.

Emily: Yeah, he's like, "Damn, I wish I could think straight --"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "But she just smells so good." And then he's like, "Mmm, not gonna really follow that train of thought."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "I'll just, like, let that slide."

Sally: I also just, like -- I'm curious about how seduction is always about, like, smell.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: Because I don't ever really, like, think about how people smell.

Emily: Yeah, it's very rare that I'll meet someone who has the right level of smelling good.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Y'know? And that'll be, like, an attractive feature --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: In them.

Sally: You always smell really nice.

Emily: Thank you. It's the --

Sally: (laugh) It's the Old Spice --

Emily: The Old Spice 2-in-1. (laugh)

Sally: 2-in-1 hair and body wash? Yeah.

Emily: I told that to my friends on Thursday, and they were like, "You're a demon, you can't use 2-in-1," and I'm like, "I do, and I have perfect hair, I don't know what to tell you."

Sally: I know. It's actually really upsetting. I use very, very expensive shampoo, and -- (inaudible)

Emily: I know, I was like, "Sally's always mad at me for it," and Niki was like, "Sally has such beautiful hair too!" And I was like, "I know, and she has to, like, use all these fancy --"

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "Products."

Sally: My -- one bottle of my shampoo costs, like, 40 dollars.

Emily: Jesus Christ.

Sally: Yeah. It's from Israel.

Emily: Wow ... OK, well.

Sally: And it still looks like shit.

Emily: No it doesn't.

Sally: Cause Utah weather is so mean on everybody's hair and skin.

Emily: That is true.

Sally: My hands are just, like, cracking. I just have, like, raw open sores for hands right now.

Emily: OK.

Sally: On all levels but physical, I am Adam Parrish. (laugh)

Emily: (laugh) Is there anything else to talk about? Sorry we're just kind of short on time.

Sally: Yeah, we got, uh, we got a little bit off the rails.

Emily: Surprise! Surprise, surprise, when we try and cover three chapters ...

Sally: Um, no, I think you did a good job summarizing that. Yeah, there's a lot -- it's a lot of Rand running around Cairhien --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Being tall and stupid.

Emily: This is kind of, like, an action-y sequence --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: So, as usual with that, there's not much academic to talk about. But, um, yeah, there's the foreshadowing stuff going on with the fireworks. Of course, major foreshadowing whenever we talk about the prophecies involving the Dragon. This is kinda like -- I dunno, Thom himself is just an interesting character because --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: He's one of the few characters who consciously resists, a couple of times, the pull of *ta'veren*.

Sally: Mm-hmm.

Emily: Like, he's like, "OK, I really wanna do this, but I'm not going to." And then he just keeps getting yanked back in.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: To the point that then, when Mat finds him in book three, just, like, drunk in an inn --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: In Tar Valon, Mat's like, "Come with me," and Thom's like, "Well, this might as well happen."

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: "I guess."

Sally: "I guess."

Emily: "Can't get away from these stupid boys."

Sally: I know, that scene is -- I can't wait to talk about book three, especially Mat's, like, blurry gambling spree across Tar Valon, where it ends with him and drunk Thom pole-vaulting onto a boat. (laugh)

Emily: Another scene that could be absolutely --

Sally: I know.

Emily: Hysterical in the adaptation.

Sally: I know, it's so funny.

Emily: Like, especially if we just got, like -- y'know those sequences where people just do the person's face --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: And then it's all blurred around them?

Sally: Uh-huh.

Emily: If they just did that with Katy Perry's Waking Up in Vegas (laugh) blaring --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: In the background.

Sally: Or Lady Gaga's Poker Face.

Emily: Exactly.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Either one of those.

Sally: Both. A mash-up.

Emily; OK, one, then he meets Thom, and there's a brief interlude, and then the next. (laugh)

Sally: Yeah, so it can -- (laugh) But yeah, I -- ugh.

Emily: God, book three.

Sally: When they just pole-vault onto a boat.

Emily: I know, it's so fucking good. Anyway.

Sally: The fact that Mat can pole-vault at that point?

Emily: He's such a lunatic.

Sally: Yeah. Skeletor over here. (laugh) I cannot WAIT to talk about the Dragon Reborn! I love that book so much!

Emily: (laugh) We'll get to it. Um, but anyway, that has been three chapters of Rand point of views. Next sequence we'll get, uh, I believe --

Sally: I think it's Perrin.

Emily: There's a Perrin -- yeah, there's a Perrin where they meet some Aiel, and then I think we jump over to the west coast, back with Bayle Domon and the Seanchan, which will be an intellectual --

Sally: Seanchan!

Emily: Exercise 'cause then we'll have to talk about the Seanchan as characters for the first time and not just as a malevolent force on the horizon. But I think that's about it. Sorry, not too academic today, although we did get -- what was it, the -- ?

Sally: The Panopticon.

Emily: The Panopticon.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I was just gonna call it the Opticon, like a -- Doc Ock's going on.

Sally: Pan, like around.

Emily: Yeah, it's really cool.

Sally: Opticon, like seeing.

Emily: Um --

Sally: Interesting stuff.

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: Also, you can play the Stanley Parable, which is an interesting game in and of itself 'cause it does a lot of stuff with narrative, but it deals a little bit with the Panopticon too, so.

Emily: Any housekeeping?

Sally: Not that I can think of.

Emily: OK.

Sally: Um, check us out on Patreon if you're interested. Um, we'll be getting new microphones any day now. We need to just find time to go and, like, get them.

Emily: Yeah. Roll into Best Buy and get them.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: We've had a busy couple days.

Sally: Yeah. It's been -- but after that, we'll, um, I'm hoping, raise money to get a better website for you guys --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: That's just a better resource about the podcast. Um, so. But you can check us out on Patreon, where we'll be continuing the City of Bones discussion for --

Emily: Oh boy, guys.

Sally: The opening -- 'cause I have so much to complain about.

Emily: I have so much to say.

Sally: (laugh) Like, I was -- like, another preview, I was reading a chapter, the chapter where the demon comes --

Emily: Yeah.

Sally: And she's like, "The canvases are all torn. It must have been knives because canvas is impossible to tear with your hands." I'm like, of course it was knives, you stupid ho! That's, like, slit down the canvas!

Emily: Literally every sentence in City of Bones, I can find something to complain about. If I had been the editor in City of Bones --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: I would have ripped that motherfucker apart --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: Because dear God.

Sally: The sentences are awful.

Emily: It all -- literally -- OK, we can't talk about this now.

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: We WILL talk about this. Join -- continue this conversation --

Sally: Yeah.

Emily: On Thursday.

Sally: We Don't Watch Outlander.

Emily: (sigh) Sign us off.

Sally: OK, you guys. Today, it, like, snowed a little bit where we are in Salt Lake --

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Sally: So it was, like, a little, uh, frosty and icy when I went out to my car to go to brunch this morning, and I was, like, looking at all these cars with ice and snow on them, and I'm like, "Ha, look at these losers, my car's in a covered parking, so I won't have to do this," and then I immediately, at the end of that thought, ate shit so hard on a patch of black ice, it was like --

Emily: (laugh) Oh, no.

Sally: Hands, elbows, both knees, just, like, skidding across the ice. And then I, like -- luckily nobody saw me, 'cause it was at, like, 8:45 in the morning, and so I, like, popped back up, and my car wasn't even under the covered parking. I had parked somewhere else. So karma came for me today. 'Cause then I turned around immediately and fell again on the same patch of ice.
(laugh)

Emily: Car-ma? (laugh)

Sally: Car-ma, yeah, exactly. C-A-R dash M-A. Car-ma came for my whole ass today. (laugh)

Emily: I'm so sorry.

Sally: I have, like, this huge patch of skin on my --

Emily: Awww.

Sally: And I'm pretty sure I just, like, bled into these jeans, but what are you gonna do? I had to go to brunch. So.

Emily: What're you gonna do? You had to go to brunch.

Sally: (laugh)

Emily: That's where we're leaving off.

Sally: Bye. (laugh)