

audio clip from Star Trek: Deep Space Nine - Rejoined (S4E05)

Lt. Commander Jadzia Dax (Terry Farrell): What's wrong?

Dr. Lenara Kahn (Susanna Thompson): I just had the most unpleasant conversation with my brother. He thinks that there's something going on between us.

Lt. Commander Dax: Oh. And what did you tell him?

Dr. Kahn: Well, I told him that that was ridiculous. That there's nothing going on between us that you and I are just friends

Lt Commander Dax: Well then that should settle that. Maybe we shouldn't see each other. It would just give people the wrong idea.

Dr. Kahn: We'll give them the right idea.

begin WAW

Sue: Hi and welcome to Women at Warp. Join us as our crew of four women Star Trek fans boldly go on our biweekly mission to explore our favorite franchise. My name is Sue, and thanks for tuning in! With me today are crew members Grace...

Grace: Hey Everybody!

Sue: and Jarrah!

Jarrah: It's been so long since I've seen you!

Sue: A whole two weeks!

Jarrah: And yet I still feel inextricably drawn to you.

Sue: And we are joined today by our special guest Lisa, who writes at The Prolific Trek, <https://theprolifictrek.wordpress.com/>. Hi Lisa!

Lisa: Hi guys.

Sue: Do you want to give everybody an introduction to you and what you do and your relationship with Star Trek?

Lisa: Well, I grew up watching Star Trek. I watched TNG growing up, and it was kind of what I would do with my dad. So, I've been a fan basically for as long as I can remember. And at the beginning of this year I had the crazy idea to decide to watch all of Star Trek, even the animated series, from beginning to end in a year. And so, that's what I've been doing and

that's what my blog is all about. It's The Prolific Trek. So, it's been going well, I'm on Season Five of DS9 right now, and just plugging along!

Sue: Awesome! And today we're going to talk about a season 4 episode of Deep Space Nine. But quickly before we get there we do want to remind you about the Women at Warp Patreon. The Patreon is what allows us to do things like cover conventions, and have things printed, and promote the show. And if you'd like to help us out you can do so over at <https://www.patreon.com/womenatwarp>. And also, we have some more conventions coming up in early October. Andi and Grace will be out at Geek Girl Con in Seattle.

Grace: Yeah!

Sue: And that same weekend I will be at New York Comic Con here in the city. So, if you're in town and planning to attend any of those, come say hi! And we'll get right into the episode now we are going to be talking about Deep Space Nine, season four episode, "Rejoined". And before we start our analysis Jarrah why don't you give us a synopsis of this one.

Jarrah: Sure. So, in this episode a Trill science team comes to Deep Space Nine, and it's kind of a potential problem because there is a woman on it who hosts a symbiont that used to be married to one of Dax's previous hosts. And there is a Trill taboo against reassociation, which is to say picking up where you left off with someone that you had a relationship with, as a previous host. Nevertheless, Jadzia and the woman Lenara Kahn, fall in love and face an unfortunate dilemma about whether they're going to challenge this serious taboo in Trill society, because it's a really big deal. If you reassociate you can be banished from the Trill homeworld, which means that not only do you die when you die, but your symbiont also dies it will never be placed in another host. So, it's a pretty high stakes situation. In the meantime they're also running an experiment on the Defiant to open a first artificial wormhole, and so that's that's the work situation that they're working together on.

Grace: It's science-y. So we're assuming it's good.

Sue: Yeah, so Lisa it was your idea to talk about this episode. Want to tell us why this was top of your list?

Lisa: Well, I think this is such a fascinating episode as far as the questions it raises, as far as LGBTQ issues, but also just gender issues I think in general, because we see Jadzia still in love with, or falling in love with, a woman who one of her previous hosts, Torias, had been married to. And it's a taboo, but it's a taboo in such a different way and I think I love seeing how far this society has come that Kira just simply can't wrap her mind around the fact that if these two people are in love, then why can't they be together. I just think it has a lot of things that our society could look at, and focus on.

Jarrah: Yeah definitely. I was doing a little bit of digging into just the background for this episode for some context. I mean those of you that have listened to the show before, we talked a bit about some of the episodes, like I think we've talked a little bit about "The Outcast" [TNG S5, E17]. "Rejoined" was another attempt at a show that's an allegory for societal taboos about LGBTQ equality, but in a way that you know is showing, like you said Lisa, like no one cares about this in the 24th century, and yet the audience is confronted with

this. And so, initially the idea for the script was actually a Michael Piller idea that was going to bring back a former lover of Dax, the symbiont's, but it was going to be a man. Then Ron Moore says he's basically driving in the car one day and he's like "You know what would make this amazing is if we did it with a woman" and that they basically had to sell it all up the chain to Rick Berman in the studio and in the end everyone went with this. But, it was a little bit fraught, the reception.

Grace: Which is incredible because TV wise it's pretty tame. The relationship, I think we only see them kiss even the once.

Sue: But there are some pretty smoldering looks that pass between the two of them.

Grace: Oh yeah, it's hot stuff, definitely.

Sue: Yeah I guess before we get to the reassociation taboo and diving into that why not just start with the, I guess the gender discussion, with the Trill, right. Because that is one of the most interesting things I think that we can talk about when we talk about the Trill in general. There is no issue with a symbiont going from host to host regardless of gender. It doesn't seem that the Trill homeworld whoever makes these decisions cares about that at all. And, as far as we can tell, and I think this is confirmed by Memory Alpha, is that the symbiont itself is actually genderless. So, the gender of the joined being is determined by that of the host.

Lisa: It really does kind of make you wonder though. Could you look at this society and in a way and ask, "Is gender necessary?" or is gender just this arbitrary constructs that they've kind of got going on here. Considering you can have the same personality sticking around in your body, in multiple bodies for multiple lifetimes. What if it goes on to a male audience and "I still feel pretty female". I mean there's a lot to think about there.

Jarrah: Yeah. So I mean Terry Farrell said at the time, I believe that this is on the season four DVD special features, that "I like the idea of sending people a bigger message that they're used to seeing on TV something that makes them think and gives them something to talk about. I think the show is so appropriate for Dax, more appropriate than for any other character on television. That's because Dax always had this duality. She has been a man and a woman several times. Any entity that has that duality is going to have some controversy surrounding it even though the story is not about a gay relationship."

Grace: Which is definitely true. There's a potential with the character of Dax, you can play it and say straight up and yes this is a gay relationship or you can play it in kind of a safer tone and say no but they were male and female when they knew each other... *wink*.

Lisa: Well I think that that's kind of, at least the out put the Star Trek writers had, for television was to say well they were husband and wife in their previous lifetime together. So, I think it makes it perhaps, feel a little bit less controversial because you can always rely back on that, which I think, is almost unfortunate. You know, I would have liked them to go all the way with this idea. It was, 1993, 1994 at the time, so...

Sue: It's still kind of a shame though, that they had to sell this idea so much even though it's a very sweet, it's a very complicated, it's very interesting, it's a story you want to see. But, the gay aspect alone of it was what added the level of complication to selling the idea.

Jarrah: Yeah I don't think that it was that much of a cop out especially not compared to something like "The Outcast" where you have you know casting all women as this androgynous species and then end up having Riker basically just kissing a woman. And I feel like this was able to make a statement without making a statement. And we had a comment from Moira on Facebook who said, "Only a fan who was committed to willful ignorance missed (or denied) that this episode was about gay rights. In retrospect, the writers did some twisty things to what we knew about the Trill in order to get their point across, but at the time this was a big Valentine to Star Trek's gay fans." Not saying it's perfect!

Grace: No, definitely not

Lisa: But, it is a huge improvement on something like "The Outcast" where you say they cast a woman to pretend like they're being progressive. Whereas here I mean they really were, it is a sweet love story. And that's not something we get very often even today.

Sue: And how much does that say that it's been what, 13 years since this episode aired, more than that. Yeah. And this is still a pretty good benchmark as far as Star Trek goes for gay representation. Well, up until recently.

Jarrah: I would still say that this is maybe a more significant. I don't know. I mean yeah ok so "Beyond" also as well is pretty significant but given that this was what do we say 96? 95. So more than 10 years earlier, I still think it's pretty cool. When I mentioned, sorry, that the reception was fraught, what I was referring to was that apparently it had a similar response to when "Plato's Stepchildren" had this interracial kiss that there were actually affiliates that rejected it from their schedule. And there was also sort of an attempt by apparently "Entertainment Tonight" wanted to like come film the kiss on set and Avery Brooks refused basically saying like we don't want this to be like the sensationalized lesbian kiss like let's watch two hot women kissing. We want it to be a love story that sensitively done.

Sue: I still feel like that's how it was marketed though.

Jarrah: Oh yeah, if you watch the trailer. Absolutely. But I think we could probably dive a little bit more into this whole like Trill society thing. And I was wondering if Lisa, if you had any thoughts on, I guess like if we imagined what life on Planet Trill is like based on this episode how do you think that the Trill define their own sexuality?

Lisa: I think at least what we get from "Rejoined" is that I don't think sexuality, as far as, you know, gay or lesbian or gender matters as much in Trill society, because no one seems to care that Jadzia is a female with another female. The issue is entirely the relationship between their symbionts in a prior lifetime. And so, you know, I had hoped to think that Trill society has moved beyond those issues. But then, I know in later episodes and probably in episodes before this, Jadzia will often talk about, "oh, I've been a man once" and "I've been a woman," and talking about, you know, planning for a wedding in very stereotypical terms, as far as, planning a wedding from a man's perspective and from a female's perspective. So,

you know, they seem to have moved beyond an issue of gender, but then for a cheap line, I think the writers will throw in those stereotypical concepts.

Jarrah: Yeah for sure. We had a comment from Heather via Twitter, and she was saying, "After returning from Star Trek: Las Vegas where Dax's sexuality was described by Terry Farrell as pansexual, "Rejoined" means even more. Although the hetero-origins of Torias, the Dax former host, and Nilani, who is Kahn's former host, although their origins over the relationship is mentioned, the relationship between Jadzia and Lenara is never questioned. Jadzia and Lenara's genders don't stand in the way of their love, sad their relationship wasn't explored, but thankful Star Trek tried." So, I just I want to throw that in there because she mentions that Terry Farrell at Star Trek: Las Vegas described Dax's sexuality today, well I guess like so today 2016, as she would consider her pansexual which is having attraction to people regardless of their gender expression or gender identity.

Sue: Yeah, and I could see that as being the norm. If you can even use that word in a Trill society.

Jarrah: It certainly seems like it! Like you would feel like people wouldn't be so freaked out about the possibility if they were so... Of the possibility of them reassociating if they were convinced they wouldn't get together because they're women now.

Lisa: Well, and I wonder if that's a difference between joined Trills versus not joined Trills. If I remember correctly, the number of joined Trills because of the number of symbionts that are available is very small percentage of Trill society. So, I wonder what a non-joined Trill, their gender identity and their gender issues how that relates.

Jarrah: Yeah, and I don't know that we really ever get to see that, other than maybe people in relationships in Ezri's family, but we really don't ever meet like Dax's parents, or sorry, Jadzia Dax's parents.

Sue: And, we don't know if the other two Trill on the mission are joined or not, I don't think. But what's nice about this episode too, it's not just with the Trill, it's you've got the other characters on the station talking about this relationship between Jadzia and Lenara and nobody mentions anything about their genders. It's just a discussion of "well if they want to be together why can't they be together?" and the issue is this reassociation law. But, we've seen that in the past with with Jadzia talking to Pel. Right? She realizes that Pel is in love with Quark before she realizes that Pel is a woman, and that's not a big deal to her. Whether, Pel the man is attracted to Quark, or Pel the woman is attracted to Quark, doesn't matter. And, I think that is something that DS9 in particular tends to do really well with this sort of thing is that none of the characters even give it a second thought.

Lisa: Yeah it's absolutely fantastic to see it just played as a complete non-issue.

Grace: Oh yeah well it's moved on so much from what they did in TNG, with Crusher, and when the Trill was originally introduced in "The Host" [ST:TNG S4, E23] where gender was a very big deal.

Sue: Well, this is a little head canon-y for me. But the line that Crusher has at the end of the host is not "I can't be with a woman," right? It's "I can't handle the constant change" and it might be a bit of a cop out but, I'd like to believe the words that were said in that line and that it's not, "I'm super afraid to be with a woman, I'm freaked out by it" but, it really is like, "I don't know if I can deal with your totally different culture." Which is still an excuse, but it makes me a little less sad about the representation in TNG.

Jarrah: I don't think like the issue, you know there's not an issue with Crusher, per se. The issue that I had with "The Host" is this like, perhaps it's a human failing, and maybe like perhaps someday our ability to love won't be so limited, and maybe she is talking about just like the change but I feel like it's sort of implied that she's also saying that humans have an inability to like switch between loving people in different genders, and that's not really accurate, but I mean again influenced by the time and at the time I still think they thought they were doing something edgy, but I think "Rejoined" is a more progressive step.

Sue: Absolutely. I totally agree. But let's get into this reassociation law. Because nobody on the station or on Deep Space Nine cares about the gender of these two people there has to be some sort of conflict, right? The conflict is that it is a Trill taboo, not technically law, but that doesn't make sense because they'll exile you.

Lisa: You can be exiled based on something that makes people mildly uncomfortable, apparently.

Sue: That two symbionts in new hosts, cannot pick up an old relationship.

Grace: Except for Dax being, you know, best friends with Sisko apparently.

Sue: There's actually a lot of that right because Odan still wants to be with Crusher, and Ezri is on the station with Worf. So, maybe it's just Trill and Trill. It's that only if it's with a joined symbiont that you used to have... It's very weird and convoluted, and it doesn't carry through. And it also doesn't make a whole lot of sense because the reason that is given in this episode is that the whole point of the joining is for the symbiont to have new experiences. But when the symbiont is with a new host those experiences would be inherently different anyway even if the same other symbiont is there, because that's I mean there's also another host I'm just saying the same words over and over.

Grace: So, you have wonder about who the taboo keepers of Trill are.

Jarrah: So, I mean I think there's a couple of things that you guys raised. One is that what's behind this whole thing and at least Michael Piller's said that he felt there would have to have a taboo in order to avoid an "aristocracy of the joined". That's from Rene' Echevarria said that Michael Piller said he thought the Trills would have to have a taboo in order to avoid an aristocracy of the joined, because they would only want to hang out with each other and their old friends from 500 years ago, and it would become a really screwed up society, because there are so few of them that are joined. I think it's a fair point that that could be a problem, but I'm not sure why a taboo was formed to prevent that. I think that we kind of we have to acknowledge but then just kind of set aside the continuity and canon issues, because it definitely disrupts the canon from the host that you know the Odan keeps coming

back to Crusher, and it also later like you pointed out, is disrupted by Ezri. We had a comment from Tara on Facebook who said, "I agree that the writers used the previous heterosexual relationship to temper this one, however they sort of retroactively raise the possibility that there was more to it than that. When Ezri and Worf are drawn to each other they think it is because the pull of the previous relationship but once it's implied they've had sex they are pretty much eh about the whole thing. It's certainly not a perfect depiction, but it paints it more as the draw to someone can come from a previous life, but the continuing desire comes from the current life." I thought that was cool and I think that's reinforced in the scenes where Dax and Lenara are talking about science and how you know we actually have more in common than Torias and Nalani did. And those scenes I think show that it's about more than just Dax and Kahn.

Sue: Yeah agreed. I thought it was interesting that they made a very strong point of them being closer than their former hosts ever were.

Grace: Yeah that just makes the whole thing is so much sadder though, at the end.

Lisa: It's heartbreaking

Grace: If only they were meeting for the first time now.

Lisa: Well I've often heard the comment that the relationship is exclusively driven by the symbionts in this episode. I have heard that on several different places where people are saying, "oh it's just the Dax and the Kahn symbiont, and it's not Jadzia and Lenara. I think what you guys are pointing out and what I always see when I watch it is that, it really is Jadzia and Lenara, and I think there's a pull from these prior lives but, it's clearly so much more than that.

Grace: Previous relation is the base, but the two of them, they gotta the spice.

Sue: I think that's part of the rewrite from TNG too, right, because the impression we get from "The Host" is that the symbiont personality sort of takes over the personality of the host. But, in DS9, it's even been stated that it is much more of a joining. That having the symbiont changes the host, but it's not just the symbionts personality either. And that's part of Ezri's struggle. Not to get ahead of ourselves, but you know so much of her story is trying to figure out who she is in relationship to the symbiont and all of the former hosts.

Grace: Now I really do want to see them run into a society where like there's an entire group of people who only ever interact with other people in that group. So, then I remembered I live in America, it's already a thing.

Jarrah: So, they have this taboo. They are basically able to exile you. So, this implies that there is like a government system backing this up, if they're able to prevent you from returning to Trill. There must be like an immigration authority or something that's preventing these exiled Trills from returning. So, that sets up a huge issue and it makes you kind of wonder why were the trial even granted Federation membership if they have this taboo given that we see other situations where planets that have human rights issues are urged to

change things before re-allowing people. But, I mean maybe it didn't come up that you're going to be preventing people who love each other from loving who they love.

Grace: Maybe it was one of those things where they were just kind of like “they've got this big social problem but they live for like ever and that's just really cool.”

Jarrah: Or, like they have a strategic dilithium reserve or something.

Sue: Or they just didn't know about it.

Lisa: Well yeah. Do we know when the Trill between a member of the Federation? Because I mean in TNG in “The Host”, Starfleet didn't know that Trill were a joined species. So I mean if Trill became a member of the Federation before that, then they became a member of the Federation without the Federation knowing exactly what was going on, which raises all sorts of questions about Federation membership.

Jarrah: I have no idea. I'm looking it up but I'm not seeing anything.

Sue: Everybody seems to have the same question.

Grace: This episode raises so many questions.

Sue: Also, when did they go from a bumpy headed alien to a pockmarked alien?

Jarrah: When Terry Farrell was too pretty to put bumps on her head.

Sue: When we needed the main character to be a woman, that's when. That is the real reason.

Jarrah: Yeah, for anyone who is not familiar, they did like a makeup test with Terry Farrell with the bumps on her head and they were like “whoa she's too pretty for this.” And then they came up with the spots that they stole from Famke Janssen in “The Perfect Mate” [ST:TNG S5, E21].

Sue & Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: I want to talk a bit about Sisko's response to the situation, because I think it's interesting and I know that when I first saw it surprised me a little bit. And this is a mix, it's definitely like fully a friendly response it's not a Starfleet response, but I just kind of wanted to segue into that if people are cool. I don't know. Any thoughts on how Sisko responds to this situation?

Sue: I think it's interesting that he, at the very beginning of the episode, Sisko knows enough about this. When nobody else does. To call Dax in and let her know. And I... Am I wrong? I read that as as nice.

Jarrah: I don't know if it was me I would be slightly...I would feel slightly condescended to but, like it would depend on the relationship and she certainly seems to respond to it as a

kind gesture. He calls her and he's basically like, "Lenara Khan's coming to the station. Why don't you take some leave so that you're not put in this awkward situation." And she says, "No, I'll be fine, but thanks." So, she like thanks him for giving her the opportunity. I don't think she would say that if she didn't feel it was kind.

Grace: Yeah it really does feel just like Sisko looking out for her.

Lisa: I think it's when we get to that second interaction between them, I think it's after the kiss between Lenara and Jadzia, Sisko starts coming off as very paternalistic and controlling in a way that almost makes me uncomfortable. I know he has good intentions, and ultimately says, "Oh, I'll support you whatever you do," but the way he goes about it feels... it feels icky to me almost

Grace: It does kind of feel like he's feeling like he has a horse in this race in the sense that he got a second chance with Dax once, and when he lost his friend, and then had his friend kind of essentially come back from the dead. He know that if Dax makes this decision to you know, be with the woman she loves that chance is not going to happen a second time, and there will be a point where Sisko genuinely has to say goodbye for good.

Jarrah: I also felt a little bit uncomfortable with it in that I was surprised to see Sisko's first reaction be like, "no don't do it." He says all the reasons why she shouldn't do it and uses the words of Jadzia and Curzon on to rationalize why this is a bad idea and why the commitment to the symbiont has to be paramount. But then he then he kind of throws like "I get that this is really difficult for you," but it doesn't seem like he really is trying to understand how she feels at the beginning and it feels like, you're right, in a way that's a little bit paternalistic and if I was her and then had this person who was in a position of power, who was best friends with Curzon, say these things to be like, "but I'll back you all the way whatever decision you make." I don't know if I would 100 percent believe it.

Grace: 100 percent all the way... but conditionally.

Jarrah: Yeah I don't know. I think it would have been nice to maybe see him like supporting her closer to the end. I'm not sure how that would have worked. Maybe, it would have not worked well but have him... And, also I kind of wish he would have questioned the taboo at any point like the whole time he's just like, "no you guys have this taboo and you have to go with it, because the symbionts more important" and no one ever kind of suggests the idea that maybe if we challenged the taboo other people might challenge the taboo and we could like be the impetus for a greater societal change.

Grace: Yeah. Even in "The Outcast" that we kind of get that call the change at the end with this it's just kind of like, "Yup, that's how it is."

Sue: I still can't wrap my head around this taboo and the like the logistics of it which I know is not the point, but if the... okay how do I phrase this... If the population of symbionts is really that small, that everything in this society is done to protect the symbiont.

Grace: Apparently it's 300 symbionts.

Sue: That's ridiculous. Okay so 300, it really is that small, such a small percentage. Everything is done to protect these symbionts. And yet, there is always, so it seems at least in our experience, this pull towards people this symbiont knew in with a past host. Why create this taboo? That means that literally all of them are at risk to never being joined again.

Grace: Again this set up just raises so many damn questions.

Jarrah: So Grace and I's friend, Oren who we all know from when he used to co-host All Things Trek, Oren was thinking about how this taboo would have to be propped up by a system on Trill, some kind of official system to enforce the taboo. And made an RPG one shot where you're a federation away team that's called to rescue a stolen symbiont, and then you find out that the Trill have these sort of rehabilitation symbiont pools, where the symbionts from the the host who attempted reassociation are sent to like be sort of wiped of those memories, so that they can be put in new hosts. So, just one way that it's been imagined that things might go on Trill I guess sort of extending the metaphor to sort of talk about like conversion therapy allegory.

Grace: Oh that wacky fun Oren guy

Jarrah: Yes. But Ruth on Facebook says, for about this episode, "I recognize it as being of its time. Remember back then when it was a big deal that Ellen came out on her sitcom? I sure do, and that was a huge deal that my whole community watched together. She got to be a theoretical lesbian though. No sex on primetime. I think the triple taboo is stupid but necessary. I wish it could have been something else, but Trek was a syndicated show in many markets, and for the time and place it's pretty good that they did this. In a more modern reading, this is not just about same sex taboos in our society. it's about a lot more, and my reading of DS9 and Dax and gender fluidity and fluidity of attraction comes a good part from this episode." Mostly throwing that in for the whole stupid but necessary about the taboo which is kind of what I feel like it doesn't really make a lot of sense. I forgot to mention it goes against a blood oath where she ends up like doing Curzon's blood oath with the Klingons.

Sue: Oh that's right.

Grace: And she gets tried for Curzon's crimes at some point. There's just lots of inconsistencies.

Jarrah: Yeah but I think that ultimately the effect is worth it.

Grace: Yeah definitely gets the job done story wise.

Lisa: Yeah I think the taboos, like you guys have pointed out, are pretty much ridiculous, but it allows us to have this story without making it a "ooh they're lesbian" story. Which, I think, makes their relationship mean more.

Grace: Honest to God, when I first heard that that was the plot of this episode the first time I watched it I was so worried that was what it was going to be and I was actually pretty

pleasantly surprised because, honest to God, who hasn't seen something that I thought was going to be a good representation turn into, "oooooh look at the gays!"

Jarrah: Yeah and that was I guess like not that long before the Will and Grace with Madonna, and there was the Britney Spears kiss, and all but it was very much a salacious look at two sexy women kissing kind of situation. I feel like the scene was pretty sensitively done and I think Avery Brooks as the director deserves some credit for it. I know that Susanna Thompson, who played Khan, said that, "It was my first time working on Star Trek where a director wanted me to come in prior to the first day you start shooting. And so he got Terry and I together I felt very safe with him and being an actor he understood all the technical ramifications that you're sort of distracted with on any given day. But he also knew that this episode was going to be a little controversial because there was a same sex kiss. He was so good at keeping us safe and protected but also giving us such a great space to be brave."

Grace: "A great space to be brave", isn't that just a great term.

Lisa: Well I think that reflects that Avery Brooks was probably the right choice to direct this episode. I don't know much about Avery but, I kind of get the impression that he understood what he was doing with this episode, and wanted to make it matter. And so him trying to make Susanna and Terry comfortable with each other, and bringing their insecurities to the forefront so that they can have this episode happen, I think really speaks highly to Avery Brooks as a director.

Grace: Yeah absolutely.

Sue: I think it's interesting, too, that they definitely knew what they were doing, and sort of we've talked about a little bit, how how Star Trek pushed boundaries and then sort of backed off of them for a little while, and in that memo that was sent to Rick Berman about this decision by all of the writers it was quoted as from, Ira, Ron, Rene', and Robert, they said, "We think it's an important story and we very much want to do it. Star Trek has prided itself on having TV's first interracial kiss for almost 30 years now. It was controversial at the time and it took some boldness to do it but now you look back on it with a certain amount of pride. If we do this story and we do it well we will one day look back on this story with an even greater sense of pride." And of course we all know that was the first interracial kiss on American TV.

Jarrah: Yeah definitely. And I I do think that it has held up better than some of the other attempts like "Cogenitor" [ST:ENT S2, E22], because I think it does portray a genuine relationship and a genuine feeling love story and something that people can relate to because of their looks, and their the you know the catches in their voice, and things like that. It's really well acted and I think the scenes between Dax and Kahn are very well written even though the whole like taboo and some of the science-y stuff going around isn't necessarily the best.

Sue: What also feels really accurate to me are the people who are there who don't want this relationship to happen, who have such an interest in it, and keep watching and sneaking

around and won't take their eyes off of it or talking about it like they need to have some control over these other people's relationship.

Grace: I love so much that scene when they first meet up at the party, because who hasn't realized that they're about to run into an ex and you're like, "I'm okay with it," but everyone around you is like, "ooooh what's gonna go down??"

Jarrah: Oh absolutely. One thing I was wondering about is, because re-watching it again I was like, "Were they trying to say something with Dax and Bashir doing magic tricks?" Was that supposed to be connected in some way or was that just kind of a comic relief thing?

Lisa: I think it was a very poorly done exposition for reminding us that Jadzia has been joined before, and that she keeps certain aspects of each of the individuals who the Dax symbiont has been joined before.

Sue: That's how I read it as well.

Grace: Although I would have liked to see Quark get to take more stabs at guessing how magic tricks work.

Sue: I could do a whole episode of that.

Grace: Yeah I'd like have him do his own Mythbusters show.

Jarrah: The Worf quote in the party is a really classic Worf humor moment where he talks about what do Kingons dream about.

Grace: "Things that would chill your spine..."

Jarrah: But I mean Bashir is a lot more obnoxious earlier in Deep Space Nine, towards Dax and by this he's actually even kind of...

Sue: He's a pretty good friend in this episode!

Grace: He deserves an award for being the patron saint of third wheels everywhere. Let's hear it for the boy.

Lisa: You know as great as Bashir is in this episode, I still always find myself disappointed by the lack of Kira in the episode.

Sue: I know she's only really there for that one scene of exposition, isn't she?

Lisa: Yeah, and one of the things that I went to the Dallas Convention and Terry Farrell was there and she talked about always being disappointed that Jadzia and Kira didn't have a deeper relationship, than what they had. You know they were always just talking about boys and gossiping, as opposed to recognizing that Kira is a terrorist and Dax is an old man and, they could have had so much more in their relationship and I think that this is one of those episodes where I think Kira should have been the one saying, "No, this is this is crap. This

taboo is crap. You know you guys love each other” And I wish it would have gone the other way and I think Kira is the one who we should have seen that with as the person who Jadzia really could be the closest to on the station.

Jarrah: It would be awesome if we had got to see Jadzia talking to Kira and Sisko at the same time, and Sisko was like, “But Curzon said this and you said this and I need to remind you of your own words” and Kira’s like, “That’s all crap! Like what matters is how you feel now and why do you care what other people think?” Yeah that would have been, I don’t know... I would have loved that.

Grace: Definitely.

Sue: The interesting part about that discussion with Sisko is that he’s clearly speaking to Jadzia. Right? And not necessarily Dax because he keeps saying, “Your symbiont won’t blah blah blah blah.” But she is the symbiont as much as she is Jadzia. Right? And if she has made this decision where she is willing to risk never being joined again, part of that decision is Dax’s. It’s not just like a 20 something deciding that she wants to throw caution to the wind for this relationship. This is also her hundreds of years old symbiont you know...

Grace: Starting to throw caution to the wind.

Sue: Exactly.

Jarrah: Yeah, I mean Lenara Kahn sort of insinuates that it’s Curzon who’s making this rash decision to want to break the rules. So, in that case it’s also partly Curzon who’s Cisco’s best friend making that as well. So it’s part of Dax, but it’s also part of Curzon, and part of Jadzia.

Grace: Also can I be the first one to make a wrath of Khan joke? Annnnd... done.

Jarrah: How do you folks feel about the ending, I mean it’s obviously sad, but how do you feel about Lenara’s decision and whether it’s satisfactory or what you’d like to have seen going forward in terms of exploring this further or as either the reassociation taboo or just Jadzia as relationships.

Lisa: Well, they at least put enough stock into the taboo, and of establishing Lenara Kahn as her own character to be like she’s got her own life she’s she’s allowed to make her own decisions. She’ll do what she will, and even if you’re not happy with her decision at the end you at least respect it.

Sue: She’s also the one I think with more to lose, because it’s not just never being joined again, but she works for the Trill government in the sciences and she’s on the verge of the big breakthrough with this artificial wormhole.

Grace: Her life is very much centered around Trill.

Lisa: Well, I think this makes the allegory to modern day LGBTQ issues, probably even stronger that she does make this decision in that, when you have all these societal pressures

regarding who you should love and who you should be with, and the decisions that you should make. Sometimes it's a really hard decision, and while we have Jadzia who has a little Curzon in her and is willing to buck tradition. Lenara's more traditional, and it's hard for her and I don't think anybody can doubt her sincerity in her love for Jadzia. But, she ultimately gives into society and that's painful and heartbreaking, but I think it makes it more real.

Sue: I mean nobody's personal relationship should ever affect whether they can be hired, or keep their job, or get health care coverage, but in too many cases that is the, case even today.

Lisa: Exactly it's a very good reminder of the fact that it's not always as simple as just saying, "Follow your heart do what you want." It's bigger than that.

Jarrah: And your family relationships that there are still you know people who are keeping their identities secret because of the risk of family rejection and people who are rejected and disowned by their families for just being who they are and loving who they want to love.

Grace: This episode is a great example of a fantastic concept that is very rooted in a harsh reality which really says a lot about what Star Trek as it will do.

Lisa: I think so. I mean I think, you know, for as ridiculous as the taboo is when we look at it with anything remotely resembling a critical eye. That's, you know, kind of like so many of the taboos we have regarding these issues in today's society. You look at them and you're like, "Seriously that's that's going to be the sword you are going to fall on?" So you know it's the power of Star Trek.

Grace: It's a beautiful thing. Are we all just totally bummed out now?

Jarrah: I kinda am, yeah

Grace: Well, if you're feeling too bummed out just remember that if we were to ask Jadzia about this, she'd just say, "This is all about me, dealing with the issues of life." Which is what me and my roommates were doing all the way through the re-watch of this, because we're adults.

Jarrah: Well and that it's showing us a future where none of this stuff matters, except for the Trills. And in that case it's not about gender. Oh Trills, you thought you were so cool with your spots and your symbiotic relationships and your sciencing. But no.

Grace: I guess the universe really is greener on the other side.

Jarrah: Yeah. So I mean it's important Star Trek and I'm I'm sure that you know watching something like "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield" [ST:TOS S3, E15] at the time that it aired, talking about that could have been really depressing to you, or even you know talking about racism today, but past tense. Yeah. Exactly. And it's good that Star Trek went there.

Sue: I think this is the best one they've done.

Jarrah: Yeah I would agree.

Grace: Hands down.

Lisa: I know. I hope Brian Fuller takes a page out of this book and really gives us something in the new series that lets us move forward with this. You know these sorts of issues. I think he's the right choice for that.

Grace: Oh for sure.

Sue: So, is there anything else about this episode we haven't touched on that that anyone would like to touch on.

Grace: Those earrings are fantastic! And they're clip on!

Jarrah: There's also a pretty great quote in the Star Trek Deep Space 9 companion that it wasn't really attributed, but it said, "There's a story regarding a man complaining about his kids seeing the kiss. It was a production assistant who took the call. After hearing the man's complaint, the P.A. asked if the man would have been okay with his kids seeing one woman shoot the other, when the man said he would be okay with that, the P.A. said you should reconsider who's messing up your kids." So, I don't know if it actually happened, but it's certainly, I mean this is another issue that is ongoing in Hollywood today. The fact that you're going to see more censorship of same-sex sex and physical attraction then you are going to see of violence.

Lisa: Absolutely.

Grace: It's pretty bananas.

Jarrah: You should totally watch "This Film is Not Yet Rated" if you have not done so and you're interested in this discussion.

Grace: It will make you angry, informed and angry.

Jarrah: Let's go change things because things could totally be better.

Sue: So I think those are all the topics that were on our list why don't we go around and do some final thoughts on the episode and we'll start with Lisa.

Lisa: You know I think we talked about most of the issues that come up to me in this episode, but I think we've really hit on this episode, for me, is what Star Trek is supposed to be all about. It's taking an issue that shouldn't be a big deal. You know I think it's Deep Space 9's or I think this generation of Star Trek I think it's their "Let This Be Your Last Battlefield", it's a powerful allegory for a modern day issue that you know if we could all take it to heart, I think we'd be in a better place.

Sue: Totally for sure. Grace?

Grace: It definitely again raised the bar for how we're able to discuss modern day issues and societal issues and Star Trek. And I really would like to hold this up to a lot of people who say Star Trek isn't supposed to be about introspection it's supposed to be about you know space fantasy and gunfights and junk. No, look at this. In short I give it 8 out of 10 boss ass Klingon earrings.

Jarrah: Oh right, we have to rate it.

Grace: We don't have to, but we can, if you feel the need to yes

Jarrah: I will give this eight and a half out of 10 artificial wormholes and just say that it's, I think a really successful example of a Trek message episode. I think that it still has a relevant message today and even if we were passed out which would be awesome but the acting would still hold it up. And so I like it. Could've been more Kira. That's about it.

Sue: Yeah I think it holds up really really well. I think this is also one of the episodes that makes the Trill so fascinating and why we are prompted to ask so many questions about them, but it is just a really fantastic episode. However, I do want to finish my final thought with by quoting a tweet from TrekCore which is, "No, Star Trek didn't already cover the gay thing just because Jadzia kissed a lady back in 95."

Jarrah: Yeah it doesn't mean it's done.

Sue: But as Lisa was saying we want more. All right. And I think that does it for today. Lisa, where can everybody find you on the interwebs?

Lisa: Well in addition to my blog which is again <https://theprolifictrek.wordpress.com/>, I am on the Twitters at @Trekkie_47 and that's about it!

Sue: Grace?

Grace: You can find me on Twitter @BonecrusherJenk or you can look at my forays into Star Trek Tumbling at <http://graceheartstartrek.tumblr.com/>

Sue: I'm really sad that it's not like gymnastics set to star trek music because that's what I picture when I see Star Trek tumbling.

Grace: Well maybe one of us should try.

Sue: Jarrah, what about you?

Jarrah: You can find me at <http://trekkiefeminist.tumblr.com/> or on Twitter at @jarrahpenguin

Sue: Awesome! And I'm Sue, you can find me on Twitter at @spaltor, or over at <http://www.anomalypodcast.com/>. And you can reach the entire crew if you'd like. by e-mailing crew@womenatwarp.com. You can also find us on Twitter at @WomenatWarp. Or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/womenatwarp/>. Thanks so much for joining us.

clip from DS9 promo trailer for "Rejoined"