

## Women at Warp Episode 43: Book Club: Born With Teeth by Kate Mulgrew

Robert Picardo: This is Robert Picardo, and when I'm not aboard the Federation Starship Voyager I spend my free time listening to Women at Warp.

\*communicator sound\*

Kate Mulgrew: Actresses. What a bunch of sad saps we are, I thought, madly in love with the child, madly in love with the craft, trying desperately to forge an alliance between the two and constantly failing. If I were a man, I said to myself, none of this would be in question. My children would respect me. My wife would honor me, and everyone would exalt the work, but turn the knife just slightly to the left, and what you have is a harried woman sneaking out before dawn, cracking the whip for 16 hours on a soundstage, creeping back home under cover of night, forever explaining, forever apologizing, forever in conflict. Picasso wasn't in conflict, you can bet your bottom dollar on that.

\*communicator sound\*

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. Today I am here with Andi.

Andi: Hi

Sue: Grace.

Grace: Sup nerds.

Sue: And our special guest Amy

Amy: Hey everybody.

Sue: She's back.

Amy: Yay.

Sue: So before we get into our main topic today which is Kate Mulgrew's memoir *Born With Teeth*, we have a little bit of housekeeping which is, as usual, we want to remind you about our patreon. We are completely listener supported here at Women at Warp, and every little bit helps to allow us to do Convention reporting, and have business cards printed, and upgrade equipment, and sound better, hopefully, we have some big plans in the works. So, if you are interested in supporting us on a monthly basis head over to <https://www.patreon.com/womenatwarp>

Grace: Support us, see what works we have in store.

Sue: And there's some content too that gets up on that Patreon feed, that generally doesn't get released into the iTunes or Google Play feed.

Grace: Such sites we have to show you.

Sue: So there is some special stuff there, too. In terms of conventions, our convention season is pretty much over the day this is released will be the last day of New York ComicCon where Amy and I will be, and the last day of Geek Girl Con where Grace and Andy will be.

Andi: Look at us rocking out all over the place.

Grace: From one coast to another!

Sue: And Amy you have a special event coming up as well. Do you want to tell us about that?

Amy: Yes I do. I will be at the Brooklyn Historical Society on October 24th, that is a Tuesday. It's at 7:00 p.m., I will be doing a panel called "Nerd is no longer niche".  
[<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/nerd-is-no-longer-niche-an-influential-industrys-growing-pains-tickets-26806781806>] It is where Susana Polo who founded The Mary Sue [<http://www.themarysue.com/>], Jill Pantozzi of The Nerdy Bird [<http://thenerdybird.com/>], Cynthia Francillon of Black Girl Nerds [<http://blackgirlnerds.com/>] and it's hosted by Angélique Roché of Ms. Foundation [<http://forwomen.org/>] and also Black Girl Nerds. So, we're going to be talking about how women are represented in nerd culture and how we're still asking for a representation even though it has moved into the mainstream or perhaps because it has moved into mainstream.

Sue: That sounds super awesome. But why don't we jump into it and start talking about *Born With Teeth*. Where should we start. There's so much, normally in a book club episode we would give sort of a general summary of the plot of the book. However, seeing as this is a memoir the plot is Kate's life, so there's not really a plot summary to be given, but there are certainly...

Grace: Not a plot but, definitely a story.

Sue: Yes, but there is certainly some some themes that keep recurring. And I think a great place to start is family, and her relationship to her mother and then as a mother to her children.

Andi: Yeah, I mean, I feel like the book is mostly about... to me the book becomes more about like families, white religious families in the Midwest, is how I feel it's about. And I see a lot of parallels when I was reading it, I see a lot of parallels to people in my own family and kind of my own family experiences which was nice to see it was... it resonated. It resonated a lot.

Amy: Andi what is your heritage? Kate is obviously Irish all the way.

Andi: I'm super, super Dutch, like ludicrously Dutch, like there's footage somewhere that I hope I have buried properly, of me doing the klompen dance, you know with the big wooden shoes and the hat with the corners on it...

Sue: How do I get this?

Andi: Yeah I think I hid it from my mom and I think it's somewhere in my apartment, but maybe...

Grace: Folks, we were just talking about Patreon content.

Andi: So that's my answer, super Dutch, klompen dance Dutch

Amy: That's insane, I thought I was German, yo, but that is just...

Andi: Well the thing is is my mom and my grandma, when and when my mom was growing up they were living in Holland, Michigan which is like the largest population of Dutch people out of sight of the actual Netherlands.

Grace: Now you don't say, in Holland, Michigan...

Amy: Now that's really funny because I'm from Holland, Pennsylvania. That was our little town in Bucks County, and I'm not from, from there, like where I got to my teens, Holland, PA we had all of these very Dutch road names near us so like the whole Pennsylvania Dutch thing is also very strong.

Andi: Yeah, west Michigan in general, I mean, when you get to the V's in the phone book it's like 20 pages long with all the Vans and the Vanders. So yeah that's the background, and my family up until my mom who became the hippie black sheep, was super conservative and super religious, so I think the Irish thing that Kate is describing, I think there are some cultural differences but a lot of them are very similar. So, it was kind of cool to read about her childhood and just think about how much it reminded me of the women in my family.

Sue: Well I would say that it sounds like Kate's mom might have been a bit of the black sheep in her family, as well, she was definitely...

Grace: And possibly just kind of a black sheep in general.

Sue: But especially for the time that she's described in she's definitely like not the average Irish housewife if you know what I mean.

Andi: You know, she seems super smart and super rebellious and super aware...

Sue: And definitely encouraged her children to be the same way.

Grace: Yeah she sounds like a wild card.

Amy: Considering she had so many children I think it just seemed like she was born like out of time you know like in the wrong era.

Grace: Yeah but the same can be said for a lot of women of that era who were just kind of like well this is what I've got to do. But definitely she's the one who took the ending of having to be the baby machine the best, I think, because we got that great little bit in the book about her her having her final child and what she does with her ovaries, decoration wise, I really appreciate it.

Sue: That's one of my favorite stories I think in this book, the pickle jar with the ovaries in them and the piece of tape on it with it written "from whence you sprang" up on the mantle. It's amazing and I want to know what happened to it. Is that an heirloom that's still in the family?

Grace: Oh it wouldn't surprise me. I feel like there is a time honored tradition of holding on to a family body parts You don't know fun until you've introduced someone to your grandma's teeth.

Amy: My mom has my baby teeth but no other organs, thank you.

Andi: Yeah I can't say that we collect body parts in my family, thank goodness.

Amy: Just cornered hats and wooden shoes.

Sue: My family just passes them around.

Andi: What??

Sue: My dad has my sister's kidney!

Amy: That's okay, that's a good one then, passing them around, I like that. So, I think that the women having control over their reproduction, you know, having that ability, especially in Kate's generation, you know that speaks to the difference between her mother's generation and her generation where she was, you know, and we now in this generation are given the opportunity to control whether or not we get pregnant and it can spare us a lot of heartache and it can also spare a lot of issues, you know, something that we might not necessarily want if we want to still be like sexual beings which Kate obviously is. She got on stage in Vegas and she was like, "Let's talk about sex" and I was like "okay!"

Andi: Probably the most time honored and traditional way to control women is through pregnancy.

Amy: It's true.

Sue: And definitely for her mother's generation, I think it was a time of well you get married, and then you're a housewife, and then you're a mother, especially if you're Irish Catholic

Amy: Especially then.

Sue: And it's amazing the difference that there is in just one generation along those lines

Amy: And also having grown up Catholic, and I think I might be the only one of us four that did, There's this whole push in the church, you know, especially if you attend Catholic school it's like you have to be pro life you have to like support the church's teachings that I know a lot of us girl did not, and I know we had some really great teachers who were not nuns, I had a couple nuns in high school I went to an all girls Catholic high school, and thankfully I had a health teacher who said now go close the door so I can tell you that it's okay if you need to go Planned Parenthood or go get, you know, get a birth control and be smart about not getting STDs and all that.

Sue: Good for her.

Andi: Teenagers will always have sex, always. You cannot stop people. You cannot stop teenagers from having sex so you should just throw as many condoms in their direction as possible and try and make sure that they're doing it as safe as possible.

Amy: Agreed, agreed.

Sue: Prohibiting something is the surest way to make sure that it happens.

Andi: Yes

Amy: I know, right. Yeah this gets kind of interesting to see how Kate kind of bucked that tradition even though she was clearly very entrenched in it.

Sue: Well she did, I guess we'll we'll talk about it right now. She did get pregnant very young.

Grace: That's true,yeah.

Sue: And decided to give that child up for adoption, and then spent quite a long time trying to reconnect with her, or just find out anything about her daughter.

Amy: So, yeah, clearly some of that... I mean, you know, she called her mom and her mom said "Well, go to Catholic Services". That was the option I guess your mom didn't see any other option, but that probably influenced her to, I mean, you know, that's what happens when you have a traumatic situation if your mom is alive and somebody you can talk to you you're probably going to call her.

Grace: Who you gonna call? Catholic services!

Andi: Please don't. Not based on Kate's experience anyway

Amy: Not based on mine, either.

Grace: From all I've heard it's not a great way to go. But yeah, you especially have an experience here.

Sue: Right after this book was published a little over a year ago, I feel like there was a lot of criticism from some feminist reviews about the book being pro life, and I'll just say that I don't read it that way. I feel that Kate is relaying a very personal decision and saying that she could not have had an abortion, and that's you know it's her decision to make, that's what being pro-choice is, that is her choice.

Amy: She is definitely pro-choice. She is not pro-life.

Sue: Well, see I had heard that as well, but according to some research she has been awarded by a feminist pro-life organization, but whatever the case is I would say that the book does not push an agenda, it's merely relaying her experiences. So, if you had heard that anybody out there and didn't pick it up because of what you heard, I don't know how much stock I put in that.

Amy: I agree. Well, talking about adoption and Catholic Services is partially why I'm here on this podcast, as I'm adopted. I was adopted through Catholic Services and it made for a very interesting experience to know that Kate had gone through kind of the inverse of what I had gone through. I tried to find my biological family about five years ago now, took a couple of years for them to get their act together and it was kind of a fluke that I that I even managed to find them, but I found some family on my biological mother's side, so that was that was an interesting experience going in and reading Kate's book then, because this is somebody obviously I've admired since I was young, I knew she had given up a daughter, I did not know any of the circumstances, nobody knew any of the circumstances surrounding it until they read this book. But just having that personal experience is...I feel like it connected me to somebody who I found to be my personal inspiration in a whole other level. It was it was really kind of touching and I felt like I wanted to give her a hug, because she was so upset, you know, and she sounded like it was something that had really plagued her and weighed on her conscience.

Andi: Yeah, I'm not surprised to hear that. My mom actually gave up a baby as well and around the same time she was 19, I think her and Kate are about same age. And, when I was probably six, or seven, eight, that area, my brother reached out and connected with my mom for the first time, and I will never forget that phone call because I didn't even know I had a brother, and she had just kind of been letting this this big thing weigh her down for years and years and years and didn't feel comfortable talking to me while I was still a kid,

but always wanted to meet her son, always was worried that, you know, was he happy, was he being taken care of, did she make the right decision, and then not knowing was just crushing her. And she finally got that phone call and she turned to me and she was just crying and she was just like, "I feel like a huge weight has been lifted off me." And it was it was intense. You know first of all I was like, "Say what?" And I was just a kid you know so I didn't handle it all that well all the time. I was kind of like "what do you mean I have a brother?" I mean I didn't react as well as I might have, I'll give myself a pass because I was under 10, but yeah, I mean that was hard for me to find out that, you know, I wasn't my mom's only kid because we were like a pair, you know, we were single mom and single kid and that's what I had known my whole life, and then suddenly I was like "hey you have a brother," but I'm really glad that they got a chance to reconnect and really glad that my mom got a chance to, I don't know, heal from this because it was really hard on her, and being able to meet her son and then later on, you know, it took him some time before he was comfortable really having a relationship with her, but then now they're in our life and so you know he has a daughter so she gets to be Grandma and she's just over the moon about it. So, it's lovely to see you know, it was hard on her and she she got that chance and I'm glad Kate got that chance because not everybody does.

Amy: No, I agree. I think it's great that you're also like really happy for her, and you can kind of see that from her perspective too I think it's hard for us to be like kind of outside that thing for our parents or you know especially for our moms.

Andi: Yeah really I was just confused, it was like, it came out of nowhere for me, but he brought... he was smart, I don't know, he didn't know me yet, so I don't know how he knew, but he brought me to Sister Act on VHS as a present and I was like, "okay you're cool."

Grace: Ah. Yeah that's... That is one good peace offering right there.

Sue: So. I did some Googling and as far as I can tell this... Kate was honored by the organization Feminists for Life a pro-life feminist group in 2001.

Amy: Okay that was 15 years ago.

Sue: Right. So, her outlook may have changed in the last 15 years, I'm not going to claim that it has, and I'm not going to claim that it hasn't.

Grace: All right. Yeah.

Amy: What you were saying Andi about how your mom, you know, really wanted to meet your half brother and how, you know, she finally reached out and he was like kind of wary of it at first, like I totally felt that when she gets the phone call in her trailer and she says you're going to talk to your daughter and she's like "I'm coming to visit this week". I was like "oh my God" it took me over a year to be up, and I would call periodically and we'd chat, took me over a year to meet my biological family on my mom's side.

Andi: I mean my mom was like that too. She was very much like "when can we meet, let's meet right now," and David wasn't completely ready for that. They met once briefly, kind of just to see each other, and then you know it took them a couple of years after that before he was ready to start building something, and it's only been in the last, I would say five years, that they've really built a really strong relationship. So, it does take time, it's an intense situation it's a little bit awkward, it's a little bit weird, but in the end if you're just honest with each other and willing to respect boundaries it can be an amazing thing, you can suddenly have family you didn't expect to have.

Amy: Yeah, that's a great way of phrasing it, "willing to respect boundaries," I think that's like the most important part because, you know, I also feel like this is something that is often left out of the woman's experience like the narrative people have of adoption, and society is weird and mostly incorrect.

Grace: And and it just generally a very negative perspective isn't it?

Amy: It seems to be, and I mean yes there's people who have had negative experiences for sure, but there is also a lot of us that are perfectly okay with, like I was okay with it, my parents and I have had our challenges, but I think they always handled adoption really well. You know I had a little poem on my wall growing up, a little adoption poem, saying you didn't grow under my heart but in it, so that was nice. No I was never, I mean they could have easily lied to me. They're all like you know dark haired white people and so am I. It's like being in a room of people who are super nice that you happen to be related to, because you didn't grow up knowing them so you don't know them.

Sue: It's one of those things where, when you really start to examine the language around it you can understand why there's the sort of negative connotation to it all the time.

Amy: Yeah it's like a dramatic experience.

Sue: But even just how people say "oh well she gave up the baby, she gave it up for adoption". Oh it's like a micro aggression.

Grace: It really is.

Sue: Because that's, it's not an easy thing to do for anyone involved.

Grace: No it's not a choice that's made lightly for anyone.

Sue: And I don't have any direct experience with it, obviously, but what you were talking about a little bit before is that we saw that Kate was really excited when her daughter found her, and Andi your mom was really excited, I feel like most of the stories I've heard about an adoptive parent and the child reconnecting there is always one party that's a really, really excited, the one who's been looking for a lot longer and somebody else who's a little more anxious and maybe you know feels a little bit more trepidation about it.

Amy: Yeah, I mean sometimes it's a case where you can't actually, like even if your bio mom wants to find you, like Kate wanted to find Danielle, they have to agree to it. So, you kind of have like a little preparation, but you know usually if, like in my instance you know if the adopted child is doing the approaching and I feel like it usually goes better. Does that make sense?

Sue: Yeah.

Amy: And I asked Kate and her book launch, you know, they got up and I said you know I'm... the whole spiel, adopted, Catholic Charities, blah blah, and she was like really interested in that, and I was like, "No I don't want to talk about me, let's talk about you."

Grace: That must've been pretty cool, though.

Amy: It was awesome, I'm not going to lie about it. Just being able to say that, and she said I was brave and I had to sit down and cry afterward. But, I asked her, I was like, you know, "what is your opinion of the

Catholic Church being involved in this kind of thing” because I really thought they handled it poorly on my side and that was like you know I'm a little, I guess I'm a little younger than her daughter, like five years younger. So, they kept really shitty records back then and, so I was like that's really ridiculous. It was a very old fashioned irritating process, and I asked her if she thought you know the Catholic Church should be involved in that anymore and she said “no, I don't think so.”

Grace: Well I can't say I blame her after her experience, sounds pretty awful.

Amy: Yeah, I mean if you're already going through the trauma of giving up a kid and you say okay well I'm going to at least be able to pick the family that the baby is going to go to. And then they give it to somebody else!

Grace: I mean that's gotta be like the one comfort you get out of that, to have that taken away from you, sounds like such a horrible slap in the face.

Amy: I know, I mean I think a lot of it is they want to punish the woman for having had sex, honestly.

Grace: It definitely doesn't surprise me since we culturally see the whole, “you can't keep your baby, that's your problem and you screwed up” kind of thing. Unfortunately.

Amy: They still have that attitude about sex which is not winning them any more any more people following the church. People are leaving in droves I wonder why.

Grace: Oh my... Seeing some opinions here.

Amy: Yes, angry Catholic opinions. No, I mean the church is... the institution of the church and the faith of the church, in my mind are way different.

Andi: For my mom her main goal was she didn't think that she could give him a good life at that time. She didn't think she was old enough, she wasn't financially settled enough, she thought that he would have a better life with a different family, so, for her is more like she was trying to figure out the best way to care for her child and she decided that this was the best way. But, you know, I understand like from the other side of that how you could be like, “How come you gave me away. How come you didn't want me.” And it's definitely, at least for my mom, it was not that she did not want him, you know, but then we meet and I'm 10 years younger than him and it's kind of like this little thing, like “why did she keep you and not me.” And the reason being that she was 35 at that point, and you know financially stable, and had a house...

Sue: And at a totally different place in life.

Andi: Exactly and finally felt like she had the tools to take care of a child, but you know when it comes to high emotions like this, I mean this is something that can really hurt and you don't always feel rational about that.

Amy: It's interesting you bring that up because I am part of the Kate Mulgrew fan group, and they recently linked to her daughter Danielle's blog. And she had blogged when the book came out, she had blogged about what it was like to go through meeting Kate, and from the other side, so I really kind of, you got that dual sided thing, and she actually said she had a lot of anger toward Kate. I was surprised because, I like personally have an experience that as an adopted child, so I obviously, I can see maybe why you think, like you said Andi, on the whole why did you give me up, why did you have two other kids, why didn't you give them up, that kind of thing. So, it was interesting to read it from her point of view. I think she was really brave in meeting Kate, like five minutes after she found out, and her whole family came, which also was probably



overwhelming for Kate too, like her whole family went out to dinner, like with her whole family, like after the initial meeting.

Sue: I wonder how different it would have been if she wasn't a famous actress.

Amy: Yeah. I think, I don't know if she even would have gotten the information she needed because she was at some sort of Gala Event and this nun was there representing a charity.

Sue: That's right.

Amy: And I feel like it was kind of, you know, well this could get real public, or you could give me the information I want, which I mean hey she's Kate Mulgrew I would be scared of her. I'm not about to say no to that woman

Grace. She is a woman who has no trouble wheeling and dealing. That's one of the things that I genuinely enjoyed reading the most about her in her book, just she has a very, she seems like a very quick thinker and someone who is very keen to get what she wants.

Andi: Very driven.

Amy: I love that story about the agent. She was like, "Oh I met him in the Hamptons," and it was a total lie.

Grace: And they know it but they're like, "We like your moxie anyway."

Andi: Well she had the talent to back it up.

Amy: Like Steven Spielberg, like pretended he worked on a lot, he pretended he had an office.

Andi: There's a lot of hard work, and a lot of luck, and a lot of creative thinking that goes into making it in Hollywood, and that's if you have the talent

Sue: And that's why I think that Kate's career is so impressive because she goes to New York to do theater and gets right away *Our Town*, and then *Ryan's Hope*, like immediately.

Amy: I know, right? Who does that?

Grace: She does apparently!

Sue: And she does them at the same time which is absolutely ludicrous.

Amy: She wasn't even finished with Stella Adler's class because she was like adamant that they not take any jobs until they were done and she was like "too bad, I took one".

Grace: She took two!

Amy: Took two, yeah.

Grace: Way to overachieve, Kate, make the rest of us look bad.

Amy: I actually saw her picture on the wall at Stella Adler.

Sue: Really?

Amy: Yeah, it's there.

Andi: That's funny.

Grace: That's very cool.

Andi: I'm not sure that Kate sleeps.

Amy: Oh God, I know.

Sue: Well, she definitely didn't during *Voyager*.

Grace: And apparently not during *Mrs. Columbo*.

Amy: She worked so hard.

Andi: Yeah, I mean, between doing a play, while doing a soap, and then the *Voyager* schedule, and then even now I remember when I saw her at Chicago Star Trek Convention, she had like flown in for three hours to talk to the convention and she had to leave. It was right as the new season of *Orange Is The New Black* had dropped, so she was right in the middle of a publicity tour for that while still maintaining a convention schedule, while still having a show. I mean it's just, it's so much. I'm really impressed, I would collapse. I couldn't handle going to a convention much less like numerous conventions to speak. I get tired sitting in the audience.

Amy: I think she finds a lot of energy in the audience, like a lot of actors always say that the live audience really propels them, you know, and like drives them to do better, and be better and also just like be more, you know like, be like kind of on, you know what I mean, like her personality is all turned on and and she's like rockin' it.

Sue: I think it's really interesting to hear the Trek actors talk about what their day to day was in their own words, because I feel like, even when it was on you would see the articles in like Star Trek Magazine or whatever, about how long and arduous these days are, and how much time was in makeup. But to hear someone put it in words of like, "I got up at 3:30 in the morning, this was my 45 minutes at home going over my script, and then I went to the studio, and then I sat in makeup, and then by the time I got home my two kids were already asleep, and then I went and did the same thing the next day.

Grace: For seven years.

Sue: For seven years. And it really like puts a new perspective on it, because, I don't know, I guess it just makes it feel more real, or maybe it feels more real because when this stuff was airing I was not part of the workforce, I don't know.

Amy: Plus she has this, she talks about all the dramatic, kind of, romantic upheaval, and like family stress.

Sue: Right, because not only is the work day really hard but that makes literally all of your personal relationships really hard, because you're never not at work.

Amy: That's why she didn't marry that Italian guy.

Sue: Like imagine being her sons. It's terrible.

Amy: No, but yeah that's why that Italian guy didn't want her to keep working, he wanted her to marry him and have babies, and she was like "gotta go!"

Sue: And I know it's the way she describes it, we only have her part of the story, but it was just so creepy. How it was so clear that this guy thought, "Well as soon as I get her to marry me I can control her more."

Grace: Yeah that was so uncomfortable, just to read, I can only imagine how uncomfortable it was to live it.

Sue: Right?

Amy: I saw this great sticker that somebody stuck on a pole outside St. Ann's Warehouse in Brooklyn when Gillian Anderson was there doing *Streetcar*, it said "Don't belong to no city, don't belong to no man." I feel like that's very applicable to Kate, also.

Grace: Yeah. Sounds like something she'd do.

Amy: I feel like Kate's like that too, it's like you can't hold her down.

Grace: Yeah. Which is a very admirable quality.

Sue: And she's had a lot of stuff thrown at her.

Grace: No kidding, and she can spin a good yarn out of it which is a skill.

Andi: Well let's take a second and talk about that, because we've talked a lot about some of her stories but the writing itself is incredible. It's extremely lyrical, it's almost poetic, and yet she still maintains an almost neutral tone talking about things, like we talked about how she didn't really have an agenda when it came to talking about her adoption she was pretty straightforward about this is what it was like, and this is what I chose. She does that throughout the book. The most striking for me was when I was reading about her sexual assault and she didn't even really write about her feelings about it, she was like this is what happened, and then this is what happened after that, and this is why the look on his face was, you know you almost get more insight into the feelings of her attacker than we do for her. She's just very almost clinical except for the fact that the language is so beautiful that it's still artistic but also straightforward.

Grace: Well that is how a lot of women deal with the idea of coming to terms with their own sexual assault it's to sort of detach themselves and be like this is what happened, this is what happened afterwards, and it happened. It's over. And for some women that's kind of the best way for them to handle it. But again that shows up so much in her writing this level of well that happened, here's how it happened.

Andi: Now I'm moving on.

Amy: I have to say, not knowing about that until I read the book, someone I think it might have been kind of mentioned in like a press summary somewhere, like very fleetingly mentioned.

Sue: If I knew about it before I read the book the first time, I definitely didn't remember it because I was shocked and kind of stunned.

Amy: It was very upsetting.

Grace: It's brutal, yeah.

Amy: And having loved her for so long and then see, like reading that she went through that I was upset, I cried.

Andi: One of the reasons though that I think it's so important and obviously it's up to every survivor to decide how open they want to be about their experience, but seeing an actress like Kate talk about it, I think makes it more real for people who think it doesn't happen all that often. So, the statistics alone...

Sue: And people who think "well it's not going to happen to me."

Andi: Exactly, like the statistics alone mean that you know someone that's been sexually assaulted, without a doubt, someone you love has been sexually assaulted.

Grace: Remember that next time you make an off color joke, just remember.

Andi: That's basically exactly where I'm going like it becomes a lot harder to push aside and dismiss if you start thinking about the loved ones in your life that might have dealt with this. And there's such a culture of silence around it that I'm sure that there are people out there that have never told their loved ones that they have gone through this.

Grace: You cannot see how hard I'm nodding right now, but I'm shaking the table.

Andi: So like Kate talking about this in her book and kind of putting a face on it for maybe some of the fans that didn't think about this very much, and then like maybe we don't know her but we feel like we know her you know.

Grace: It's an intimate story the entirety of her book is so intimate that she kind of forces you to take the good with the bad and be like "yes this happened to me if you're going to listen to the rest of it you have to listen to this too."

Andi: Yeah, absolutely. And I'm seeing that too with when it comes to the Nate Parker allegations having Gabrielle Union speak out and talk about her sexual assault, I think has added a much needed human element to it because...

Grace: And is incredibly brave of her as a public figure and as a recognizable one like everyone has seen something with Gabrielle Union in it. So it's hard.

Andi: And I just I don't want people to feel like they have to do that. But I do think it's helpful for people to hear those stories.

Sue: Absolutely.

Amy: At her at her book launch, I have never seen her nervous, and I have seen her a lot, when she's on stage she's owning it, she's there afterwards, you know maybe she's a little tired, but she's so kind of like "whew I just did this". And Augusten Burroughs was the person who interviewed her the book launch...

Grace: Speaking of dramatic biographies...

Amy: And, in Union Square, and you know she said right before they came on stage, she was like, "what have I done? I've told everybody everything!"

Grace: Which is such a personal risk to take emotionally and just in general.

Andi: I think it makes a huge difference though and that's why I'm so happy that we do have these survivors that are so brave and willing to speak out.

Grace: Yes, thank God right?

Andi: Look at Brock Turner, okay? Brock Turner's situation had gone through and we hadn't had that absolutely amazing open letter making the rounds on the internet, do you think that story would be as big as it is? No, no way. That kind of stuff like the way the criminal justice system just totally does not get justice for victims, happens every day all the time, but because we had this person, this amazing person that wrote this open letter and a beautiful essay about her experience people were drawn in by that and they started to empathize with her in such a strong way.

Grace: There was no ignoring her after that.

Andi: Exactly.

Grace: Which is part why it is so important that we give survivors a voice.

Andi: Yeah I'm so glad that this this culture of silence is beginning to be broken down because I think that we can't defeat rape culture without doing that.

Grace: No, we've got to be loud.

Amy: It's a shame that we still have to be loud about something that seems like it should be obvious by the year 2016. Kate does get political, I mean you know, she was married to the Ohio county commissioner. She been a lot more political in recent years than I think you know in her younger years for sure.

Andi: Well Las Vegas who's talking very candidly about Hillary Clinton.

Amy: And how Hillary invited her to the White House because Janeway was a great influence for women in science, it's kind of hard to not support Hillary now knowing then she and Chelsea were like down with Captain Janeway every week which is awesome. That's right. Hillary has seen *Voyager*, you guys, if there's no other reason to vote for her than that, that would be it.

Andi: I do want to talk a little bit more about motherhood. Because I think she frames it with motherhood. So, like the beginning of the book is all about her mother and how she related to her mother and how, she talks about feeling like she wanted more from her mother, but also grateful for what she got from her mother and then the end of the book is wrapping up while she's kind of looking back on whether or not she thinks she has been a good mother to her sons and also her daughter that she gave up for adoption. And I just think that's a very interesting but also powerful way to frame that.

Sue: It's interesting the relationship she describes with her mother, because she says that she's the only one in the family, or at least the only one of the children in her family who really understood her mother.

Amy: It must be hard to be her sibling and to read this book.

Sue: I mean maybe they feel the same way, who knows, because she's described her mother as pretty eccentric and a little bit weird.

Amy: And as an artisté

Sue: Yeah. But she also says that she wanted more from her mother, and talked about, I don't think she calls it depression, but her mother's battle with depression, and then with dementia.

Amy: And also how her mom expected her to like mother her.

Sue: How she wanted to change places.

Amy: Not to mention that puts so much stress on her. I think you know she mentioned that at the beginning of the book about how she hated having to care for her younger siblings. So, she likewise was like "fine I'll put cold water in this bottle"

Grace: And then is stuck with even bigger sibling in her mother.

Sue: She resented having to take care of her baby sister instead of being able to go play and be a kid.

Amy: While she was four, I would be resentful too.

Andi: I also don't understand why you'd let a 4 year old take care of an infant but that's just me.

Sue: But, there was also the story she tells about someone in her career saying to her well you'll never be a natural mother.

Grace: Yeah that was incredibly messed up and something you would never hear someone say to a father who was working.

Andi: Yes, there's a lot to unpack there. First, I want to know what a natural mother is. Are we talking about you know, stays at home cleans and cooks, like what does that even mean? I don't know. Like my mom was not, I guess what you would call the "natural mother" if we're going for this like archetypal idea of like the perfect mom. But she also gave me everything I ever needed in terms of support and love. So, I consider her a pretty awesome mother. So, like this narrow definition of the ways that you can parent, and like this pressure that we put on parents, but especially mothers, to be this like Paragon when they're just human and they're just trying to be themselves and take care of another person. It's interesting to me. You're right Grace, they would never say that to a guy, never.

Grace: Nope, nope, you would never hear that.

Amy: What's interesting to me, because my mom did stay at home, and she was really trying really hard to be the perfect wife and mother. And it really just wound up in her unhappiness. You know she also suffered from depression, and also like you know wasn't very happy, I thought, and we could tell, my brother and I could tell from the time we were young that she wasn't very happy.

Grace: You hear that world let's stop trying to force people into a system that's crap.

Andi: Well yeah I mean there are some people that want nothing more and really thrive.

Grace: And if that's what makes you happy and that's what you want, more power to you, but don't assume that that's what everyone needs to function.

Andi: Exactly.

Sue: I really like the phrase that Amy Poehler used in her book which is "good for you not for me". Essentially you make whatever choice you think is best for you and I'll make whatever choice I think is best for me, and let's just support each other while we do it. That's really good for you part comes in.

Amy: Yeah there's always this whole like the mommy wars or whatever and, you know Kate talks about her kids like resenting her and hating Star Trek and neither of them watched it and like...

Sue: A lot of the Trek kids have said stuff like that.

Andi: It makes sense, they lost their parents, like huge chunks of their parents lives, to a TV show. That's cold comfort, you know, I mean we love Star Trek and we are grateful for this art, but when you're just a kid and you want your mom, like you're not going to watch an episode of Voyager and be like "this was worth it."

Grace: It's got to be a huge insult to injury also to know that there's just thousands upon thousands of people out there who totally love your parent for a time where you didn't get to have a parent that's gotta hurt real bad.

Sue: I know we're talking about Kate Mulgrew today but I really think that the documentary that Rod Roddenberry did deals with this whole idea really well because he's trying to come to terms with this thing that so many people love that he sees as taking his father away from him.

Amy: So is *For the Love of Spock* Adam Nimoy is like same exact way. Yeah, he was processing this whole thing, dad has to go be a star and he can't be dad right now.

Grace: Like do you think they call each other the Trek orphans or something?

Amy: It's a club, a very specific club...

Andi: They have brunch every month.

Sue: It's nowhere near the same thing, and I'm not claiming that it is, but my dad was a pastor in our small community when I was growing up and my mom was an, you know, small town elected official. So, both my parents had this like public service aspect to them and knew everybody. And so often...

Grace: That had to be fun.

Sue: I mean it was so often they were dealing with things that that weren't the family you know. And so whenever it's, again two totally different levels between my parents and actors, but whenever there's some sort of like public facing, public service aspect to something in your family you begin to I think resent whatever that is that is taking their time away from you.

Grace: You know you do hear about that from the children of politicians, from the children of teachers. It's hard to you know...

Andi: Share your parents.

Grace: Yeah that's it that's it right there. Imagine sharing them with an entire television audience.

Sue: So, I think there's another big like heartbreak in this story that we haven't touched on even though we have talked a lot about family and that is Kate's sister Tess, who developed a brain tumor and just, the doctors determined they couldn't do anything for her, and her mom was just her caretaker for the last several years, and she lost her sight, and this was the sibling that Kate describes as being the closest one to her and having all of these inside jokes and them just being so close. And while her her sister is suffering in this bed in this back room is when Kate is leaving to go to New York for the first time and to start working as an actress.

Grace: Which is such a painful juxtaposition to imagine someone living with

Amy: Not to mention that they were like, when she passed away, one of her younger sisters was there visiting her, while she was doing a play and they said, "oh you don't have to come home." It's like what?

Grace: What a massive disservice to the both of them.

Sue: Yeah, they were just like it's it's done it's over. Don't come home, the funeral's tomorrow. Don't worry about it.

Grace: It sounds like they were both really robbed of closure there.

Andi: I feel like this is something that I don't know if it's just my family and Kate's family. I'm going to guess it isn't. But this idea of family going through traumatic experiences and not dealing with them and not talking about them and just kind of soldiering on that reminds me so much of my family. I mean there were big huge things that just are never talked about, even now, even when the younger generations are where we have gotten to the point where we know that talking about things is a good thing like there's still just this this idea that okay, bad things happen and you keep going, and nobody needs to talk about their feelings. That's a waste of time.

Grace: It's not healthy, though.

Andi: No, it's really not.

Grace: It's something we're taught to do for the sake of pride, and pride isn't going to pay for your therapy.

Sue: Well I think it's also not just pride, but privacy.

Amy: Everything's very like, and that's a lot of cultures, that's the Irish, I'm Irish and Germans so, that's like the Irish is like we're not going to talk about it, we're not, we're gonna sweep it under the rug like a good Catholics.

Grace: Oh my God I'm Jewish, our entire culture is based on something bad happens to us, we won't shut up about, that's how we deal.



Andi: I like that idea better to be honest.

Sue: I remember asking my parents for family stories and them being very tight lipped about it, and just when I was told something if it was could even be perceived to have been an embarrassing story about someone in my family it was "Don't tell anybody." "Remember this doesn't leave this family." So, there's there's a very like, I feel like it's very protective, you know and very private. And it feels to me like a very cultural thing in like the conservative Christian Catholic sense. I'm not sure if it extends outside that community, but I feel like people within that community often have that same kind of experience.

Andi: My impression of my grandparents, my maternal grandparents, has always been that they were quietly miserable for like 30 years and just never never felt like they could do anything about it

Amy: Like in their life circumstance or like their marriage or all of it?

Andi: All of it, all of it. I mean towards the end of her life my grandmother did get a little bit more open with me, but you know it wasn't talked about very much. I never got the impression that my grandma wanted to do anything that she ended up doing in her life. She grew up during the Great Depression, and then she got a job in a factory, and then she met my grandfather, and she was like "okay," and they got married, and then she had kids, and then she raised her kids. She never got higher education, she never got to travel. And I always feel like she missed out because she was an extremely smart woman, and she, I don't, she never came out and said it, but it was always this feeling of if she had had a choice, if she had had a wider range of choices, this is not how her life would have been, and she was extremely talented person, and, you know, it's not like her life was meaningless, or empty or anything like that. But I never got the impression that she was happy with my grandfather, and I never got the impression that she was happy with her life, but she was not the type to complain. You know they didn't complain about it and they didn't talk about the depression that was throughout the family or their drinking problems or anything like that.

Sue: And I think that's what it boils down to is that you you weren't supposed to complain you were supposed to put on this veneer of everything being perfect.

Grace: It's pretty incredible that we can just look back on generation of generation, of intelligent women, of talented women, of all kinds of women who just were told this is what you do.

Amy: My grandma, so my dad is 100 percent German, and he's the first generation.

Andi: Is he super German?

Amy: He's super German. My German grandfather was 14 years older than my grandmother and he never let her learn to drive, or he was a very controlling guy from all accounts. He died before I was born so I never met him but that was what he was raised like he didn't know any other way that was the example he saw from his parents, that the woman wasn't permitted to do certain things so he would let my grandma do certain things.

Andi: When I read *A Room of One's Own* by Virginia Woolf, this idea of, to create art or to be successful women and people in general, but especially women, need to have their own space, and their own life, and like the ability to support themselves, before they could make art. And it just starts to make you think about like what would my grandma have done if she had been born today. Would she have been a great writer because I've read her writing it's spectacular. Would she have been the next Virginia Woolf, who knows? How many scientists, and artists, and amazing, amazing women that could have changed the world just

never got the opportunity because of when and where they were born. It's really frustrating if you start thinking about it.

Amy: Indeed it really is. People wonder why we have to celebrate women's contribution to culture, because it has only been acknowledged for like 50 years.

Grace: Yeah we're still fighting that fight.

Andi: And then how many women were extraordinary and their contributions were lost. Like history doesn't remember them because they didn't bother.

Sue: They got Rosalind Franklin'ed.

Andi: Exactly.

Amy: That makes me enjoy the picture of what's her name standing next to all that code that got the astronauts to the moon...

Andi: Margaret Hamilton?

Amy: Margaret Hamilton, thank you. I know I wrote about her, I blanked on her name.

Sue: I think that's what's really cool about right now is that there is kind of a push to uncover these stories and there are books that are coming out.

Grace: I think it's fabulous.

Sue: There is, what's the new one? It's like *The Girls of Atomic City* [by Denise Kiernan], I'm not sure if that's the full name of it, but it is about the black women who were doing the math behind the atomic bomb. But there are several out there, there is I think there's another one called *Rocket Girls* [*Rise of the Rocket Girls: The Women Who Propelled Us, From Missiles to the Moon* by Nathalia Holt] maybe there there's one about the women who were working in medical labs, and it's it's often doing calculations and doing a whole lot of math and coding.

Grace: The grunt work.

Amy: It's also like have you read *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* [by Rebecca Skloot]?

Andi: Yes.

Sue: Which is fascinating, yes!

Amy: Everybody read that book.

Andi: There's also a lot of really cool shows that are coming out, or have been coming out. There's *The Bletchley Circle* [ITV] which is an English show about codebreakers and World War II, that start solving crime. There's *Bomb Girls* [Global Television Network] which is a Canadian show about the women in World War II who were building bombs in the factories.

Sue: I love *Bomb Girls* so much.

Andi: Yes. There's a lot of really good stuff out there. I love the idea of us taking these women back.

Grace: Reclaiming history.

Andi: Reclaiming them, yes and putting them back into our art, being like they were there. Their stories were amazing.

Amy: Not to mention their families are probably like finally!

Grace: Yeah, in a way that's kind of what we get in this book, we get to hear Kate talk about a mother who was undervalued by her time and creative and smart and funny and we get to hear her spoken about with all those qualities.

Amy: It made me so mad when I read about her father cheating and then wanting her to keep it a secret.

Grace: Ah yeah.

Amy: She said she only wrote this book after her parents died. I can see why.

Grace: Yeah. Yeah. But yeah we get to see her, sort of, it felt like an attempt to give her mother full credit and that was very beautiful.

Sue: You can definitely see her mother's influence, right. There's, even from that very early story of the the poetry reading, you know and she told her you can be a mediocre poet or you can be a fantastic actress, and encouraging her and never saying, "well you need a backup job." How many of us who wanted to pursue anything in the arts heard that.

Amy: I heard it. I heard it all the time.

Sue: You need a backup job.

Grace: I actually once had musician Holly Golightly tell me that.

Andi: My mom keeps telling me that to quit my job and become a writer. So she's kind of the opposite.

Amy: But yeah, I saw Roxane Gay at the Brooklyn Historical Society and she said, "you know you need a full time job if you're going to write." That's why she's a professor.

Grace: So just wait till you've got tenure, and then you can do whatever you want.

Sue: I think it's really cool that people are going back and finding *Star Trek: Voyager* because of *Orange Is The New Black*.

Amy: I know!! She's your prison mom, but she's also your captain.

Andi: She could be both!

[Laughter]

Amy: Actually Nicky makes a great quote he says, "I thought I was like, you know, your Spock or something" like, you know, she makes the Trek reference to Kate. I was like, "That's right. They did that on purpose."

Andi: Overall I'd say we all enjoyed this book.

Sue: Yes.

Grace & Amy: Yeah.

Amy: I read it in the day because I was seeing her the next day and I was like I got to know all of it.

Andi: I also read it in a day. Once I started reading it I could not put it down, and I want to throw out to you that if you're if you finish Kate's book and you're like oh man that was awesome I'd like another one should read Nichelle Nichols's book, too [*Beyond Uhura: Star Trek and Other Memories*]. It's a little less literary, but it's still really fascinating, she has some cool stories too. And her exploits at NASA are amazing.

Sue: Yeah. And Kate revealed at Star Trek Las Vegas that she's working on two books.

Amy: She's working on it yeah. She's working on what she thinks is going to be a novel and also be a second memoir.

Andi: Well she only got to *Voyager* so there's lots more to go.

Amy: It's really funny because I interviewed her backstage, and my interview is not out yet, maybe by the time we post this podcast it will be. She was like, "do you want to hear about my time on *Voyager* in a book?" I was like "oh yeah". She was like "but why?" and I was like "I think you, people are always like all about the gossip, and what was going on, and who was sleeping with who, or whatever. I don't care about that shit, I just wanna know what it was like to embody Captain Janeway while it was happening." I told her that she was like "oh okay." Like this had not occurred to her but that we all want to know.

Andi: But when we're all reading Kate Mulgrew's Janeway book we'll know Amy is who to thank for that.

Amy: No, I really, I think she like maybe underestimates a little bit her popularity. How can she, all these women come up to her at conventions that are like, I'm a scientist because of Janeway.

Sue: I don't know. I mean, I think it's really difficult to overstate the importance of that character in pop culture. But also I mean her writing is beautiful, just her style and I think that comes from, we hear how much she reads and how much of you know classical plays she loves to do and I think that that's all a bit of an influence there. But, if you have read the book or not read the book and haven't heard the audio book which she reads herself, it is absolutely stunning. So, I highly encourage you to pick that up if you're interested in it or at the very least listen to the sample that's up on <http://www.audible.com/> [<http://www.audible.com/pd/Bios-Memoirs/Born-with-Teeth-Audiobook/B00U1R4O04/>] so you can just get a taste for it, and see if it's something you might be interested in, because to hear her tell these really personal, really intimate stories in her own voice, in her own inflection you can hear the emotion in her voice and how she wants these stories to be heard and understood. As you're listening to them and it's just so lovely

Andi: Yeah. I listened to the first six chapters on audio book before I switched to reading. And it was lovely.

Amy: I think hearing her, I have heard the book, I didn't listen to all but I just listened to like a couple of chapters like you did Andi, and I think hearing an author read their own work is like the next level. It's so cool.

Sue: But you're also getting an insight into how they're thinking it as they're writing it. Like where the inflection should be and what the most important part of that story is and it's just fascinating. Well before we head down this rabbit hole completely. Is there anything anybody else wants to add about *Born With Teeth*?

Andi: It's good read it.

Amy: It's good I mean it's got pictures of her life, which I thought was nice that she put in from her personal collection.

Sue: Oh I love that in memoirs.

Amy: I do, too.

Grace: It has bite.

Amy: Bite, I like that.

Sue: Awesome. So we're going to wrap it up for today. Amy where can everybody find you on the Internet?

Amy: Ahh on the Internet I am many places these days. I am tweeting <https://twitter.com/lightstar1013> because Shoes and Starships doesn't fit into a Twitter handle. My blog is <http://www.shoesandstarships.com/> I am also posting with <http://legionofleia.com/> and I also write for <http://screenprism.com/> although I've been really naughty about that lately.

Sue: All right Grace what about you.

Grace: You can find me on Twitter <https://twitter.com/BonecrusherJenk> and sometimes on Tumblr <http://graceheartstartrek.tumblr.com/>

Sue: And Andi?

Andi: The easiest place to find me is on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/FirstTimeTrek>

Sue: Awesome and I'm Sue. You can find me on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/spaltor> or over at <http://www.anomaly podcast.com/> And if you'd like to get in touch with us here at Women at Warp, you can find us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/WomenAtWarp> on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/womenatwarp/> by e-mail at [crew@womenatwarp.com](mailto:crew@womenatwarp.com) or by leaving a comment on the blog at, wouldn't you know it, <http://www.womenatwarp.com/> and I think that's it for us today. Thanks for joining us!