

Women at Warp Episode 46: How I Met Your Great-Great Grandmother

Theme Music

Jarrah: 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's Jarrah, and thanks for tuning in. Today with us we have crew member Sue...

Sue: Hidey-Ho neighborinos!

Jarrah: And Grace.

Grace: I'm actually the ghost of Grace's working and fully living voice this week. So sorry. Grace's regular voice couldn't make it.

Jarrah: Okay, amazing. Just before we get into today's topic a usual reminder about our Women at Warp Patreon which we use to do stuff like pay for audio hosting, and transcribing our episodes, and promoting our show, and doing convention recording, so, if you are able to support us for as little as a dollar a month you get access to exclusive online bonus content and you can do that by signing up at <https://www.patreon.com/womenatwarp> . So, today you might have noticed something a little different at the beginning of this episode.

Grace: Something a little louder and more triumphant than usual.

Jarrah: Grace, do you want to give our exciting announcement of what our Patreon fans have allowed us to do most recently?

Grace: We have recently gotten intro and outro music composed by The Doubleclicks. [<http://www.thedoubleclicks.com/>] How cool is that?

Jarrah: It is super cool.

Grace: It really reminds me of the incidental music in Beast Wars so I'm just living off of that right now.

Sue: And totally ours!

Grace: Yeah I know! It's all ours, the music and it's singable, you guys are and have fun with this.

Jarrah: We featured The Doubleclicks I think last year when Sue was reporting from DragonCon, but if you aren't familiar with their other music you should check it out at <http://www.thedoubleclicks.com/> .

Grace: They do good stuff.

Sue: They are awesome.

Jarrah: All right, so, it is exciting that we now have a theme song, and now we are moving into our main topic which is look at two episodes that are pretty similar to each other but from different series. One of them is the Voyager episode "11:59" [VOY Season 5, Ep 23] and the other one is the Enterprise episode "Carbon

Creek" [ENT Season 2, Ep. 2] and both of these are episodes that deal with a look at women ancestors of women on the ships. Does that make sense?

Sue: Yes. Good job.

Jarrah: So I thought we would start with "11:59" which is this Voyager episode. And Sue do you want to give a synopsis of that?

Sue: Yeah. So, the crew is basically prompted by a discussion of Neelix and Tom Paris about Earth history because why not, to discuss their ancestors.

Grace: Is that something that Neelix is apparently an expert on also?

Sue: Right. Well, they're they're trading information and giving each other quizzes, it's weird, it doesn't make sense, but that's fine. So, Janeway is recounting the story of an ancestor of hers who has always inspired her and she believes her to have been an astronaut, and to have helped to build this building/biome in Indiana. Illinois? Indiana?

Jarrah: Indiana.

Sue: Yeah. Right, because I kept making Parks and Rec jokes in my head while I was watching it today. But, so it's not just this building, but there is of course retail space but also you know a self-contained city that was the prototype for the first colony on Mars. So, she's really inspired by this ancestor and throughout the episode finds out, and it unfolds to us as we watch it, that what she has always been told was not necessarily the truth.

Jarrah: Yup, that is accurate.

Sue: So both in this episode in the Enterprise episode we're going to watch the ancestors of Janeway and later T'Pol are played by the same actresses so we see Kate Mulgrew reenacting her ancestor Shannon O'Donnell as she ends up in this small town in Indiana, and she's basically like a flunked out astronaut, like she wanted to be an astronaut but she wasn't quite good enough, but she's still an engineer, but she doesn't have a job and she ends up meeting a cantankerous bookstore owner named Henry Janeway in the plot of what could be a romantic comedy.

Grace: It really is.

Sue: It does feel very "You've Got Mail".

Jarrah: Yes, it really does!

Grace: It's like "You've Got Mail" except if Meg Ryan was living out of her car...

Jarrah: And Tom Hanks was like living in the back of a bookstore referencing Greek literature all the time.

Grace: Be still my heart... I guess.

Sue: No except Tom Hanks was the business owner who wanted to take over the little shop on the corner.

Jarrah: Yeah. But Drew Carey's brother fills that role in this episode.

laughter

Grace: Oh that's right!

Jarrah: But I mean let's not kid ourselves if she didn't end up with the bookstore owner she probably would have ended up with the developer who is going to give her a job.

Sue: That is how romantic comedy works.

Jarrah: Yes. There are only a certain number of options and you always end up in a heterosexual relationship by the end of it. So, but this is not actually a romantic comedy.

Grace: It felt like it was, though, the whole thing. Sitting through the episode it doesn't really feel like much of a Star Trek episode except for the bits with Star Trek characters. It's a trip.

Sue: Voyager did that a lot.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: I'm straying from the episode before we really get started but I had a friend in high school who came to me one day and said, "I was flipping through channels last night and I came across what looked like a period drama and I was watching it for a good 20 minutes before it turned out it was Star Trek."

Grace: Surprise we tricked you into watching sci-fi.

Jarrah: Yeah. I mean I think part of it was they needed excuses to get Janeway out of being Janeway all the time. So, the they found that early sort of period drama Jane Eyre type things that they did weren't entirely successful then later on they had like the Leonardo da Vinci and other kind of holodeck excursions, but they had to give Kate Mulgrew some room to act, but Janeway was kind of limited because she had to be such a role model all the time. So, in some ways like this is kind of an interesting episode because she's playing this character who was a role model to Captain Janeway, only she turns out to be really not as, I guess accomplished, as Janeway would have liked to imagine her.

Grace: It's like having that great grandpa who everyone always told you like invented the spinning wheel or something and it turned out he just fixed bicycles.

Jarrah: Yeah for sure, I guess. Did that happen to you, Grace?

Grace: It's a long story.

Sue: It seems weirdly specific.

Grace: No, I just feel like everyone has some sort of story like that in their family history. Everyone has some apocryphal figure in their family history, if they have a family history where they're like, "oh yeah that was a

cool person,” and that’s just unquestionable, but when you actually look into you like, “oh no wait,” they were just a dude.

Jarrah: I just mostly had a bunch of cranky Scots people, who if there was anything remarkable mentioned it was how good they were at the bagpipes.

Grace: That’s pretty cool. I’m not going to lie. That’s way more accomplished than most of the accomplishments I thought my family had until I started looking into them. Bagpipes are a step up.

Jarrah: Yeah, so, I mean that’s kind of like one of the big themes of this episode is what does family mean. Because, they’re all kind of sharing stories about their ancestors back on Voyager and Kim has some ancestor who like flew a really long mission basically by himself with all the guys in stasis for no reason.

Grace: Because he was sick of talking to them, or alternately they were sick of him.

Jarrah: Maybe that was what gave him his patience not getting a promotion. Like he was being told like you know this guy flew like an entire year with no company, so be patient...

Sue: Poor guy.

Jarrah: And, Seven of Nine is looking into some guy named Sven from her family, and but then like at the end they take a picture of the Voyager crew as family so there’s a bit of sort of a theme of the importance of your biological family but also your chosen family so I thought that that was kind of nice.

Sue: Yeah absolutely. And it’s interesting, I think what Seven says, is that it doesn’t matter if what you believed about this woman turned out to be true or not because the story that you knew inspired you. And it sort of relates to that it doesn’t matter if these people are related to you by blood or not because they love you and they care about you.

Grace: I guess the important thing is supposed to be that you got some meaning from it and that that meaning helped to you even if it wasn’t totally true or was exaggerated. That can still mean something.

Jarrah: We as the audience watching Shannon O’Donnell’s story we don’t maybe necessarily see her as entirely a failure, we just see that her goals are different. Certainly she wanted to be an astronaut, and she wanted to be an engineer, and she doesn’t want to be stuck working in a bookstore in Indiana. But you know we see that she’s driven, that she’s passionate, she’s empathetic, that she’s a good listener and that we, I think, care about what happens to her by the end of it. So, we’re also sort of challenged to ask ourselves like what does it make someone to be a role model.

Grace: Well, and also there’s the element of we don’t see her become an astronaut, and we don’t see her you know do this great thing that’s supposed to be you know world shaking, but we do see a woman go from pretty much living out of her car to you know having a job, and having a place to stay, and having a family around her. We could see one person accomplish a lot for one person, and that’s still pretty cool even if she didn’t you know come up with the basis for the Mars colony or whatever. Well, that’s still something.

Sue: Janeway’s big thing with Shannon O’Donnell I think was that she changed the world. Right? Because she promoted this Millennium Gate. And it turns out she might not have done it the way Janeway always thought she did, but if she hadn’t been there, if she hadn’t spoken to Henry Janeway and if she hadn’t

worked to change his mind things would have been different. You know, they would have build the thing somewhere else and years off schedule, et cetera, et cetera. So, she did work to change the world, just in a very different way.

Jarrah: Definitely. I think that you know when we see at the end that they get this photo of Shannon surrounded by her children and grandchildren, so we see that she also had a legacy through having people she loved and who loved her in return, and those people ended up eventually producing Kathryn Janeway. But, I also thought that that was cool because you know it shows that she had a cool career, but that her value as a person was more than just that. And you know she shouldn't be looked down upon just because she wasn't an astronaut.

Grace: Absolutely not. She still did good things. She had a great life.

Jarrah: And, Sue, now I'm imagining like a version of If/Then with Shannon O'Donnell where in like one track she ends up an astronaut and she's like singing and in space, but I'm happy. And then the other one she's like I didn't become an astronaut and then she sings all these songs like "what would have happened if I had been an astronaut instead of working in this bookstore with this cranky guy."

Sue: Hey, yeah, romantic comedy evening I guess. I don't know.

Jarrah: Slash Broadway musical time. Yes, so, the plot not to the most creative plot on the face of the earth. But overall I have fondness for this episode. I think you know we're talking about this idea of like having a realizing your role models or your ancestors or are fallible, and I think that one of the reasons that this episode works for me is that Shannon O'Donnell is like not really like Janeway. You can see that they have traits in common, like being really empathetic and caring, but Shannon O'Donnell is like definitely more insecure. She's not very sure of herself. She arrives in town she's like slumped over, she has this posture that we don't really see Janeway ever having. She basically rear ends a guy and doesn't have car insurance and can't pay him, and all these things are like things you would never see from Captain Janeway, right.

Sue: She's just worn down it seems like. From the very beginning you get that impression that it's just like another *ugh*, like she's beaten up by life.

Grace: She's the Harry Kim of her own story.

Sue: Poor Harry.

Jarrah: Yeah, but like it's a way more interesting story than it would have been had it been like, "Let's look at my awesome ancestor who was an astronaut who did everything perfectly."

Sue: Yeah.

Jarrah: Because, I mean, I think, you know having role models who did incredible things to aspire to is really important, but it's also important to be able to see how our role models are actually just humans, too. Like I've done a lot of work in politics, and I remember as a kid I was like, really you know, my idea of politics was like the people I didn't agree with were necessarily, like demons or devils or whatever, I'm like "How do you sleep at night?" And then the people that I supported they were like, I don't know, they were infallible I guess. And then I went to like my very first ever political retreat and there was this elected official there who I

had super admired could she had done this incredible filibuster in my province, and I had watched this and I just been like so impressed and inspired by her. And then she got like drunk and just swore the air blue.

Grace: Holy crap!

Sue: Wow...

Jarrah: I just was like gaping. I was 15 and I was like "oh my gosh." It's like a totally different person. And it was just a really big reality check that obviously it's easy to oversimplify people who are in these kind of larger than life public roles, and that it can help to take a step back and realize like everyone had to start somewhere, and they had all these different influences and you got to blow off steam sometimes, and basically that seeing role models as humans can benefit us as well as seeing people as larger than life or super human.

Grace: I actually have a similar situation when I was in high school. A local politician, who I thought was pretty cool, was coming to speak at one of the graduations for the class a year or two ahead of me at my arts high school I went to, and we were all so excited like, "she's going to give the big commencement address is going to be what does she have to say about artists and the future and and what we have to offer." And pretty much what she did was she came up she, I'm shortening this, but pretty much what she said is, "There are people who say artists can't change the world, but you can! Look at Angelina Jolie and Bono, they became famous through being artists and use their money and influence to change the world! Go class of '06!!"

Jarrah: You can all be Bono, kids.

Grace: And It's like, "that's all you really think that art is good for? Wow." And just everyone kind of walked away from that like, "What the hell was that?"

Jarrah: Wow... that's pretty great... Oh my gosh.

Grace: At one point I was talking to one of the graduates from that class and they're like, "Did she write that speech in the car on the way over or what?"

Jarrah: Yikes.

Grace: Yeah. It was just a great thing of also just being there like halfway through the speech realizing how bad it was and then realizing wait a minute I'm in a room full of other people who think this is dumb too and you could just look around and see everyone else just being like, "What is happening here?" I feel like we bonded over that.

Sue: I think it's a little bit different though, when it is an ancestor that you learn about, because even though you're however far removed from them, for some reason we have this thing in us where it feels like you're in some part responsible, in a way, like I don't even know if that's the right word, but like I don't know family embarrassment? Something. I have a friend who is really into Ancestry.com right now and if you're not familiar this is a web site that you know you put in what you know of your family history, and it helps link you to census documents and more information. And being white people from the East Coast of the US with, you know, family from the south we're pretty like how we have the knowledge that it's most likely that our ancestors were slave owners, but my friend recently found the documents that proved it. So, now she knows

definitively that this is in her family history and it was sort of like a personal crisis for a while for her just trying to come to terms with her what that meant for her.

Grace: It's one thing to know that as a person you already benefit from a system that has exploited other people, but to know that your family itself benefited from the exploitation of another group that's got to be really shaking.

Sue: And it's different, too, when you expect it versus when you know it for sure.

Jarrah: Yeah absolutely. I mean, I think this episode it starts to probe that question about like how much does it matter who your ancestors are. You know there's that kind of funny scene with Neelix and Seven where he's like Sven... Seven, there's part of him in you! Actually thought it was pretty cute scene. And she's basically like this doesn't matter at all. And in her case like it probably really didn't that much because she basically has so little memory of her parents and even less of their families. So, there's that question about like how much does it matter, and for me like you know what job my great great great great grandfather has not super important on its own, but absolutely my ancestry is important when I consider the position I occupy in society, and you know I can be almost certain, I mean I am actually 100 percent certain that my ancestors when they came over from Europe, which was like in the early 1900s, were absolutely benefiting from a system that oppressed and continues to oppress indigenous people, and that the privileges that I enjoy today are a result of generations of people my family and other families like not challenging that.

Sue: Absolutely.

Grace: And even if it's not something that you have proof positive of, again you know that culturally you as a person are benefiting from that, but having it actually on paper and in proof has got to be really shaking. I'm trying to remember what the history show it was where they do the thing where they look into people's past and Maya Rudolph was a guest on there...

Sue: Oh the celebrity one!

Grace: Yeah, and found out that one side of her family had actually at one point owned members from the other side of the family.

Jarrah: Wow.

Grace: Yeah. That has to be so very tricky to live with sometimes, but it's important that we acknowledge it because otherwise we just we mean that what has happened means nothing. If we don't acknowledge that bad things have happened. I mean even when it's not bad things, even when it's just being disappointed, the past has happened and we have to live with it sometimes.

Jarrah: Yeah for sure. You know Star Trek has you know a fair number of mentions of these like important family lines, like Paris is a good example of that and he kind of turns his back a little bit on family history because he feels like he's failing to live up to it, at least early on. And I mean Janeway's father was an admiral and we know that you know she says basically like she's impressed with Shannon because she was the first in this generation of, or this line of explorers. And Picard obviously another example of his paintings in his Victorian living room that all have Picard's face.

Sue: That are all just him. In truth Star Trek tradition.

Jarrah: The Picard that fought this battle, the Picard that scaled the Leaning Tower of Pisa, the Picard that, I don't know *laughter*

Grace: I'm the Picard who won the great quilting bee of 64.

Jarrah: The Picard who first domesticated cats!

Grace: Of the Egypt Picards? No way!

Jarrah: That's it! It was spelled differently, it was just a hieroglyphic that was a bald person's head.

Sue: Oh my gosh!

Jarrah: Anyway...

Grace: Boy we turned that conversation around...

Jarrah: Another theme in this episode is sort of the meaning of progress, and I think this is the one that I was the most surprised with when I first saw it, because I'm expecting it to be sort of like the romantic comedy thing where you're like, "oh I love used bookstores" and you're expecting that at the end of the day like somehow they'll manage to you know have their cake and eat it too, and he'll still get to keep his bookstore. But he basically has to agree, Henry Janeway, to give up his bookstore and she hopes she'll be able to find him a space to sell books in the Millennium Gate. And, she, the only thing that convinces him to do that is she sort of offers to make a tremendous sacrifice, that if he wants her to stay she'll stay even if he doesn't give up the bookstore.

Sue: Because they're falling in love.

Grace: And apparently love trumps all, apparently.

Jarrah: Yes. So, it was interesting. I did like how she you know she repeatedly kind of stood up and was like I can't get stuck here. I'm getting a second chance to be an engineer which is my job and I want to take that. But, then at the end she kind of, I mean I get the sense that she kind of knows that if she says, I'll give up the job to stay with you but you have to kind of meet me halfway. That he won't make her give up the job.

Sue: I felt like until the very end, I thought they did a really good job of showing that it isn't a clear cut choice.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Sue: That they're both right. There is a lot to be said for progress in this experiment but there's a lot to be said for knowing where you came from.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Sue: And somehow they have to work together. And I'm not sure that the conclusion of the episode is the best way for them to work together. But it definitely expressed that it is not as easy as we sometimes want to believe, as we often want to believe.

Jarrah: Yeah, I feel like it was fairly unrealistic that the entire town except for this one the guy all supported the Gate.

Sue: And just everything was closed for months.

Jarrah: Yeah. So, there were some things that were fairly unbelievable. Also this is supposed to be happening on the eve of the year 2001. So, obviously now it's like even a little bit harder to look back at it and see it as believable, but...

Grace: Where are the people freaking out over Y2K?

Sue: That was the year before.

Grace: Oh, that's right.

Jarrah: Yeah but they have that discussion where she's like don't you remember everyone freaking out about the year 2000, and you know don't try to freak me out about this year.

Sue: But my favorite part was when she's like we can email every computer in a 200 mile radius.

Jarrah: Oh yeah that was funny.

Sue: It's like, that's not how email works.

Jarrah: This is I guess in the year 2000 and they're working off her like laptop with no wired internet. And I wasn't really sure how that was working, but anyway suspension of disbelief.

Grace: There is a lot of it in this one.

Jarrah: I feel like it doesn't super reconcile that issue about what does it mean to have progress. There's still this idea that what he's doing is like a thing of the past and just that, well we like you and you're a nice guy so we'll kind of like take you with us into the next phase, but you've got to have a better looking shop.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: But it's interesting because I mean certainly the traditional rom com narrative would be like "save the little guy" right.

Grace: We would have ended up with it like at the end of "Up" where it's everything built around this tiny house or, "Batteries Not Included."

Jarrah: Yeah.

Grace: Imagine!

Sue: It's just a hole in the Millennium Gate where this tiny bookstore is.

Grace: Exactly!

Jarrah: I actually kind of wish we had seen that like rather than the end just being like they walked out of a bookstore after he made like a split second 180 degree turn around and decided to close the store and then everyone cheers them that's the end. Well, I mean technically then they go back to Voyager, but yes it would have been nice to see them like in their own little bookshop. It's also interesting that like in the family picture later I don't think he's in it right. Like it's her and her kids and grandkids. Although clearly like she's a bit older than her. His son is an interesting precocious character.

Grace: Who's just kind of there.

Jarrah: Yeah. In the long tradition of realistically overachieving children on Star Trek.

Sue: I thought this kid was the most normal.

Grace: That's true. He isn't like a super genius or anything which is always appreciated.

Jarrah: No, he was just very nice and polite and reasonable about everything.

Grace: Which isn't bad it's just kind of like what is this kid actually adding to the plot here.

Sue: Nope.

Jarrah: So, do we have any other thoughts on "11:59" before we move on to its sister episode "Carbon Creek?"

Sue: I just want to point out how ridiculous it is that Star Trek likes to really, really focus on Ancestry by giving everybody super traditional names.

Jarrah: Yes!

Sue: Like Sven, and Kiernan.

Jarrah: Who is Kiernan?

Sue: That's what Shannon calls the little boy during their photo at the end.

Jarrah: Oh, I didn't catch that.

Sue: Yeah.

Grace: No way! She's related to Kiernan Shipka, too? That's badass!

Sue: We get it. You're Irish. Okay!

Jarrah: I kind of wish that Chakotay had been involved, and then we would have got to hear about an ancestor who wasn't a stereotype, that could have been cool.

Sue: That wouldn't have happened.

Jarrah: They're like, "We already talked about them all they're like Rubber Tree People, what more is there to say?" That's what I guess was the discussion behind the scenes.

Grace: Like Chakotay, don't you have anyone specific? Nope nope nope, we talked about them already! I have a family. I am a human being. And we're good.

Jarrah: Yeah. Also Neelix didn't really participate in this I guess cause his family's all dead and he doesn't like to think about it too much.

Grace: Neelix, his family's dead.

Jarrah: Which makes me just as sorry, total backtrack off topic to the episode "Jetrel" [VOY Season 1, Ep. 15] for a second, is Neelix basically Doctor Who?

Grace: Let's never draw that comparison ever again.

Sue: What made you draw it in the first place?

Jarrah: That he saw that he was like indirectly responsible for the destruction of his entire planet. Anyway... That's more meant in his like motivations.

Sue: Yeah, no.

Jarrah: So, apparently, fun fact, this episode was inspired by an undeveloped Q episode which John de Lancie thought up, which was originally going to be Janeway's ancestor and Q in the year 2000, and apparently they also thought about Janeway's ancestor and Guinan, and that would have been amazing. And I really sad that didn't happen.

Grace: Oh my gosh that would've been so cool!

Sue: Yeah.

Grace: Why didn't we get that?

Jarrah: I'm assuming Whoopi wasn't available. Should we rate this episode now before we move on or should we rate them both at the end?

Grace: I give it three out of seven moldy paperbacks.

Jarrah: I was going to say I give this episode four and a half out of six sweet sweet e-books.

laughter

Sue: Oh one of my biggest problems with this episode is you've got this super cozy bookstore that has zero cats in it.

Grace: Yeah, what's wrong with it?

Jarrah: Fail.

Grace: That just adds to the curmudgeonlyness of the whole thing.

Jarrah: Do you want to rate it, Sue?

Sue: I think that I will give this seven out of ten anachronistic e-mails.

Grace: Okay! That apparently you don't need actual email addresses to send.

Sue: No, you can totally just hit every computer within 200 miles.

Grace: That's how technology works.

Jarrah: She is an almost NASA engineer.

Grace: So, are you saying she hacked it with her crappy laptop?

Jarrah: Maybe...

Sue: And no internet connection?

Grace: She's a good hacker, I guess.

Jarrah: She had advanced technology.

Sue: Which I'm sure the town of whatever Creek was definitely wired for.

Jarrah: Wasn't it something Portage?

Sue: Portage Creek?

Jarrah: No. That's Carbon Creek it was Portage...

Sue: I thought it was Creek.

Jarrah: Oh yeah, it is Portage Creek.

Sue: See!

Jarrah: So...

Sue: Pawnee, Indiana.

Jarrah: Yeah, okay, because everywhere that Star Trek ancestors lived was named something Creek, which is confirmed in the Enterprise episode "Carbon Creek".

Grace: Yeah!

Sue: I'm pretty sure nobody lived in LaBar Creek.

Jarrah: It was La Rivière LaBar, in Le France... Alright! So onto "Carbon Creek" the Enterprise episode. Grace do you want to give us a synopsis of this one?

Grace: Yes, basically during a dinner with Archer and Tucker, T'Pol dropped some knowledge about her having had an ancestor, who landed on Earth way, way, way before First Contact and got up to some shenanigans you know like fish out of water style in like the 1960s.

Jarrah: Yeah. Well it was in the 60s or was it the late 50s.

Grace: Something along along that line, yeah. I couldn't remember the exact date, I just remember there were lots of you know wide skirts, and radios, and people watching I Love Lucy.

Jarrah: 1957.

Grace: Yeah that's the one!

Sue: In a Pennsylvania mining town.

Grace: Even funner! So, the carbon is very literal in their creek.

Jarrah: Yes. So, I really like the frame of this episode actually, like one of the things that irritates me in early seasons Enterprise is this like Archer/Trip boys club, and T'Pol is often kind of like she's supposed to be part of the triumvirate of the three of them as like central characters, but she's always an outsider and I like in this one that she kind of turns it on its head and we get to see like sassy T'Pol being like, "You want me to tell you a story? Well, I said I'd tell you a story, maybe it's real, maybe it's not like do you want me to keep going or not." And...

Grace: I love that this is an entire episode based around T'Pol being socially on top in this situation that makes me very happy.

Sue: It's so rare.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: I mean I think we're led to believe by the end that it's mostly real, but they're still up in the air and she might have just been like stringing them on all night. Regardless, the fact that they don't know is very satisfying. Especially because they start out and Archer was basically like, "I'm doing your performance review" and she's like, "oh I understand I'm been asked to do yours too from the Vulcan High Command."

Sue: That's fantastic.

Jarrah: I think it's really refreshing to see sassy T'Pol. Like, you know, I think Andi was saying in the last episode but like the best Vulcan moments are sassy Vulcan moments.

Sue: Totally!

Jarrah: And, this is a good example of that.

Grace: No emotion, my ass. Smart-aleckery is an emotion. Wait, no, no it isn't. You know what I mean.

Jarrah: So, thoughts on this episode.

Grace: I actually liked this episode a lot more than the Voyager version which is such a trip to say out loud that I like an Enterprise episode more than a Voyager episode. I think I really just liked its emphasis in the fact that T'Pol is talking about someone who didn't exactly make universal history, and someone who didn't change the world exactly, but someone who T'Pol very clearly looks up to and admires. I thought that was neat, you know.

Sue: Yeah. I dig this episode overall though, I'm not a huge fan of the idea that the Vulcans are just checking up on Earth every now and then.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Grace: I like the idea that humans just are trustworthy and need to be checked in on.

Sue: Well, just because you know we're we're told in First Contact that they would have had no interest in this sector if they hadn't picked up this warp signature, right? And this explanation of why the Vulcans are in or around Earth as just messes with all of that. So, it's a little, it doesn't really take away from the content of the episode, but it's a little bit annoying.

Grace: Yeah, continuity it's a little weird.

Sue: Yeah. Another thing that I would call a little bit annoying is our silhouette of naked Jolene Blalock, because you can't go one episode without doing something ridiculous like that.

Jarrah: Is that like when she's changing and you see her through the sheet?

Sue: Yeah.

Jarrah: Oh joy...

Sue: It's a pretty specific outline.

Jarrah: Yeah. I mean so on the first part when I first watched this it actually really annoyed me that they basically rewrote Canon although like I said she's an unreliable narrator, so you can't you can sort of discredit it, if you really want to. I was like "No, First Contact was so meaningful and it just became less

meaningful because the Vulcans were already there and Zefram Cochrane didn't even really need to do this at this exact time for it to have an impact. And then also Vulcans invented Velcro.”

Sue: But, T'Pol makes it seem, in her retelling, you know when they're trying to say we can come back next time if he if you leave now that there is a crew coming by every 20 years or so. So, really? But you know we see her purse, she has the purse at the very end. So, either she made this story up based on this cute purse, or at least some of it really happened.

Jarrah: Yeah that's true.

Grace: Or she just bought that purse, came up with the story it's like they're totally going to find this purse and they'll never know. They'll never know.

Jarrah: So in this episode we have this group where there's T'Pol's great great grandmother. And there's also a funny thing about like how old are you really. Because it was like 200 years ago and was just your great great grandmother. And these two guys Mestral and I'm just going to call him cranky plumber because I can't remember his name.

Sue: His name is Moe!

Jarrah: Okay, right *laughter* So they crash, and she ends up being in charge because their captain dies. And I think what really disappointed me is that she loses being in charge so quickly and we never see her really regain that. Like she's basically just forced to go along with what Mestral wants the entire time. And so for me it was a little frustrating because I feel like we don't get to see T'Pol in charge enough and then to have her great great grandmother, who actually was in command of this mission, but no one really listens to her. I mean like the cranky plumber dude, he has the same end goals as her so he would continue to listen to her, but it's not just because like she's a commanding presence or anything, it's just I think it's because he wants the same thing she does. But then because Mestral doesn't, and he's like, “What are you going to do to stop me?” And she doesn't like try to come up with a better plan on her own, for any of the things that they encounter. So, I found that frustrating that there wasn't really, I didn't find it to be, this character to have really any kind of much power or agency in the scenario.

Sue: Yeah definitely.

Jarrah: It almost felt like a reflection of what T'Pol is asked to go through to like, hey, like humans more.

Sue: Yeah. Yeah, and he basically disobeys her right from the start.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Sue: Like the first order that she gives and then the next time we see them together he's saying, “What are you even in command of, our mission is over, we're stuck here?” Taking any kind of leadership right out from under her.

Grace: It doesn't seem like a very Vulcan thing to say.

Jarrah: No, for sure. I mean I thought it was interesting to see him interacting with people and trying to figure out how they were doing, and being curious about that. I just I was kind of disappointed because I wanted to

see this ancestor of T'Pol's be a bit more kickass. I mean like certainly they had amazing kickass leather jumpsuits.

Grace: Those were fun. You gotta admit those were fun.

Jarrah: Also their hair doesn't grow ever apparently.

Grace: Or they're just very consistent about trimming it.

Sue: But it was it was really his story right? He is the one who's building the relationships with humans and learning more about them, and like possibly a romantic relationship. And Moe is there to be comic relief, and T'Mir, T'Pol's great grandmother, is just also there. Like, she doesn't really even have anything to do other than be annoyed by the situation, until they're just about to leave. And is like creepily stalking her crewmates.

Jarrah: And at the end of the day like what kind of turns her around is that she realizes like, "Hey there's a human who reads books."

Grace: Oh they're not all a bunch of podunk idiots!

Sue: That is your overachieving teenager.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: And, I thought that T'Mir, obviously there's you know a part where we are led to see that she is very wrong where she doesn't want to save the people who are collapsed by the cave in, and you know her objections are understandable from her perspective but they're pretty weak, like what if they see this weapon and she ends up helping. But, basically Mestral keeps being like, "But you know look they're so welcoming and this shows like they're ahead of where we thought they were." And she's like, "Well not if they knew we were aliens." And I was like, "Huh, you know what's interesting that these Vulcans never encountered because they were in Carbon Creek, Pennsylvania. Segregation."

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: So, I mean...

Grace: It makes you wonder what would have happened if they'd landed in the Deep South.

Jarrah: Yeah. I mean it was certainly, that was the only mention there was like there still so much intolerance in society, but we're basically given this really kind of rosy view of the 50s, other than mining conditions, that is I think a little bit unfortunate that it wasn't able to be like a better discussion of you know they don't just have to grow beyond wanting to make nuclear bombs. They also still have to grow beyond racism and all these other things.

Grace: Yeah.

Sue: Yeah. And they make it a point that they're they're investigating Sputnik. But they still land in the U.S. and not anywhere that is concerned about the Cold War. Not anywhere that there is, I don't want to say any

sociopolitical strife because certainly in mining communities there was and there was a lot of poverty and a lot of terrible conditions, but we don't have you know many of the issues that could have been explored in this time period in the U.S. as you were saying, and it it feels a little bit easy way out, but I also do understand that that's not necessarily the story they wanted to tell, but it could have been I think a lot deeper.

Grace: Are you saying that this mining community story could have dug deeper?

Sue: ha ha ha I didn't even realize. Yes.

Grace: You're welcome. Aren't you glad you got me here?

Sue: Always.

Jarrah: We're always glad.

Sue: But, I mean Enterprise does sort of try and deal with like xenophobia a little bit later. And like when when they return home after the Xindi attack, but it just it never quite hits it right for me.

Grace: I think there's definitely a lot more that could have been done with this episode, but I still feel like it works better as a Star Trek episode than the Voyager version, because we have this whole aliens looking at Earth culture, albeit through the very limited lens of one space during a not very open period of time. But at the same time, the fact that he's got this aliens exploring Earth and trying to figure out what they think of it thing, that feels so much more like a Sci-Fi plot that just someone in the future thinks about a relative who might have been an astronaut. I just liked the plot more I guess. I liked it conceptually more.

Jarrah: I do like the the dilemma about well what do you do if you think you're not getting rescued, and how much are you able to hold on to those values and rules, and it's kind of that sort of the dilemma that you see on Voyager, and other times in Star Trek where you know the Federation isn't there to help you, or in this case like your Vulcan leaders aren't there to help you. So, to what extent do the rules help preserve something necessary, and to what extent they hinder you from realizing your full potential and living and fulfilling life.

Grace: Right. At what point are the rules important and at what point are they just kind of a security blanket.

Jarrah: But I thought that this was interesting that both of these episodes talk about our women ancestors, and that is I mean something for people doing searches on Ancestry.com it's often a lot harder for us to find things about whatl women in our past did, because it just wasn't considered as important. And certainly like the character that are you know the role that T'Mir was playing, as you know someone who swept floors and randomly stalked her crewmembers probably wasn't going to end up in the history books. But, it it shows that women in all communities play important roles that do have an influence on history even if they aren't you know being the best in a traditionally male occupation.

Grace: Even roles that aren't acknowledged can be important roles.

Jarrah: Yeah for sure. So we had some comments on these episodes on Facebook and Twitter so I thought maybe we'd read to some of these and then we can rate "Carbon Creek."

Grace: Sounds good.

Jarrah: Okay. So the first one we have is from Anna on Facebook, and Anna says, "11:59 was a character story, Janeway and her understanding of her ancestors. A study of the issues involved in 'progress,' what's lost in order to make change. Whereas Carbon Creek ties into wider Vulcan and Earth history but I think the issues are explored more effectively in *Strangers From the Sky...*" Which is a Star Trek novel that also Anika recommended, which I have not read. Have you guys read this?

Grace: Nope, 'fraid not.

Sue: Nope.

Jarrah: Alright, well clearly we're going to have to read it now. Maybe for a future book club episode. Anyway sorry back to Anna's comment, "Carbon Creek is however an important episode, develops that Vulcan Human backstory. I think the most effective episodes in Enterprise in terms of this were "The Forge" [ENT Season 4, Ep. 7], "Awakening" [ENT Season 4, Ep. 8], and "Kir'Shara" [ENT, Season 4, Ep. 9] as the Vulcan Reformation is key to shaping the future Coalition and Federation. 11:59 was an interesting episode because it moves away from the usual Voyager format. Carbon Creek was interesting to see how the Vulcans tried to integrate, how they became part of the community while maintaining secrecy about their origins. My favorite episode of all time in this time travel type Trek story still remains "The City on the Edge of Forever" [TOS Season 1, Ep. 28]."

Grace: It's a classic.

Jarrah: Yes.

Sue: Do we think that the cap, the knit cap, was an homage...

Jarrah: To Spock in "City"?

Grace: I really hope so, yeah.

Sue: That's such a classic image of Leonard Nimoy wearing that cap.

Jarrah: I do not know if it was intentional...

Grace: But again, I really hope so.

Jarrah: But, I do know that Velcro was invented by George de Mestral, and so that's where they named Mestral after him so that they weren't totally erasing him from history.

Sue: Ahh, interesting!

Grace: I thought that was amusing

Jarrah: I also liked the references to I Love Lucy and Twilight Zone.

Sue: Yes

Jarrah: It's funny when Trip says like this sounds like the Twilight Zone because it totally looks like the Twilight Zone too, like you can just imagine aliens walking around this little town.

Grace: It is actually the plot of a few Twilight Zones.

Sue: Yeah absolutely.

Jarrah: Yeah, exactly.

Sue: And of course Lucille Ball is super important to Star Trek.

Grace: Yeah, making Vulcans watching I Love Lucy even that more entertaining.

Jarrah: So, next we have Lisa who says, "I'm not a huge fan of either episode. 11:59 is a great Kate Mulgrew episode, but it's too 'Hallmark Channel Original Movie' for my tastes. Carbon Creek is interesting, but the retcon isn't something I enjoyed." Sue, do you want to read the next comment from Chris on Facebook?

Sue: Absolutely. Chris wrote, "Carbon Creek was a decent story but it frustrates me that we can't say what parts of it are meant to be 'real.' We know what humans interacting with humans in the late 20th century were like, we can take almost all of that context for granted. That's not meant to be the interesting part of 11:59. But Carbon Creek is different because it's a chance to show us a context we don't know well: How did Vulcans behave as explorers before first contact with Earth? How did we change their outlook and their policies? What would star trek minus humans look like? Carbon Creek could have been a chance to look at what an all-Vulcan Star Trek could have been like, but instead of a deep look, we got a glimpse of what might be just a total illusion."

Jarrah: Yeah that's true because like I mean 11:59 is supposed to be like we're seeing what actually happened and Carbon Creek, it could all just be T'Pol imagining it. But even if it's real, it's still also how T'Pol envisioned it happening. So, we're not we're not viewing like 11:59 like an omniscient look at it reviewing her story of what happened. So, it still was gone through two hundred years of oral history and retelling. And then we have a tweet from Gillian who said "I loved Carbon Creek, T'Pol was such a unique character and I always appreciated getting to peek behind the curtain with her." So, certainly got some divided opinions on this episode.

Grace: I will agree that it is more of a T'Pol centric episode than we usually get, which is unfortunate because T'Pol isn't even the main character in it.

Sue: But doesn't she say that this story is on record with the Vulcan Science Academy?

Jarrah: Yes. And then she just knows that Trip and Archer are never going to go there.

Sue: And that somebody stayed behind and they lied that he died when he didn't really die.

Jarrah: Yeah I don't know.

Sue: I mean she probably has the official reports and the stories from her great grandmother that have been passed out through the family, but still.

Jarrah: Yeah I mean I feel like what we see from the Vulcans at this point in Enterprise if that had actually gone on record that they have lied about this guy dying that her family would just be totally disgraced.

Grace: Yeah.

Sue: Yeah.

Grace: Do you mind if I do mind if I take the final comment?

Jarrah: Yeah, Grace do you want to read the last comment from Cam from Facebook?

Grace: Sure thing.

Jarrah: I mean Cam's not from Facebook, he's actually from the podcast Subspace Transmissions, but he left this comment of Facebook.

Grace: He lives on Facebook? Good for him! So, Cam says, "I think the primary reason they work is also what detracts for some, in that they're both stories delivered by an unreliable narrator. So while 11:59 can come across as feeling like a sappy and over-simplified goey Hallmark Presents groanfest, it's also Janeway's fondly overly romanticized take on the life of her ancestor. CARBON CREEK is more interesting, in that T'Pol is considerably less prone to sentimentalism. But it feels like a tale stitched together from hearsay and fragments of information, hence why there's a welcome thread of intentional ambiguity throughout. After all, how does a logic-driven Vulcan recount a story without the crucial facts? I'd argue the real joy of both episodes comes from how the writers tell their tales from the perspective of these two very different leads, not so much how "truthful" and canonical they are." and I'd say I agree with that and I also love that we've had multiple people compare 11:59 to a Hallmark Channel Movie.

Jarrah: I'm still going to say I slightly prefer it. But yes, so I mean you said you prefer "Carbon Creek," Sue what's your preference?

Sue: I think I very slightly prefer "11:59" but it's close.

Grace: Yeah. And how do we want to rank this episode then?

Sue: I would rate this episode three out of five backwards dresses.

Grace: I would rank it four out of seven awkward Moe Howard haircuts.

Jarrah: Let's say I'm going to give it six out of 10 TV dinners. And that might have actually been a higher percentage than what I said for "11:59" but that's only because I'm not that good at math. I will say like I mean the reason I agree that there's like a sentimentalism to "11:59" and a cheesiness that is thankfully not present in Carbon Creek, but Carbon Creek I think has kind of a bit of a more insidious nostalgia that I don't super appreciate and I, like I said before, I think what makes this less awesome for me, although I still enjoy it, is the fact that we don't get to see T'Mir we're being empowered.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: But it's still a good episode and I like the aesthetics I think Jolene Blalock does a good job and I like like I said sassy T'Pol getting to maybe pull one over on Archer and Trip, or maybe not, but they don't know. So it's cool. All right. Well let's do our outros and then you can hear our outro music from The Doubleclicks. So, Sue, where can people find you elsewhere on the Internet?

Sue: You can find me on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/spaltor>

Jarrah: And, Grace?

Grace: You could find me on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/BonecrusherJenk>

Jarrah: And I'm Jarrah and you can find me on tumblr at <http://trekkiefeminist.tumblr.com/> and on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/jarrahpenguin> and if you want to contact our show you can find us on <http://www.womenatwarp.com/> on Twitter and Facebook <https://twitter.com/WomenAtWarp> and <https://www.facebook.com/womenatwarp/> and you can e-mail us at crew@womenatwarp.com. So take it away Doubleclicks outro music.

Grace: Play us out!

Outro Music