

Women at Warp Episode 6: Oh Captain, My Captain (Kirk) Transcript

GRACE: What is it this thing you call love? - A question of the ages pondered by poets and philosophers, by everyone from beggars to kings, At once a pursuit of the deepest truth and a dalliance of biochemical urges. How can we forget the character who showed the world the single greatest response to such a question? That answer of course being, "Let me show you, baby."

Kirk is notorious for boldly coming on to any bust with a bouffant, but his wide net does give us a galaxy of love interests to explore. So let's take it down a few notches, smear some Vaseline on the camera lens and get into a little song I like to call, "Oh Captain, My Captain...Kirk."

hums "Careless Whisper"

I'm providing my own sound.

ANDI: I don't think you need it, I just love it so much.

GRACE: I'm Grace and I'll be your moderator for today. Welcome to Women at Warp. Jarrah, I believe you have some fan mail for us?

JARRAH: Thanks, Grace. So the first one is a note from Solveig and it says: *Hi I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciate your podcast. The first two episodes were great. I look forward to following you through the Trek verse. I'm so grateful for your work and dedication to the women of Trek, though I'm not able to join in on the conversation. None of my friends or family understand my obsession of the show and the Star Trek community here in Iceland is rather small. The feminist part of it even smaller. so it feels good to be included and I thank you for that.*

And then she said some things in Icelandic so I'm not going to try to pronounce that. But thanks very much to Solveig.

GRACE: It's nice to know we've got a far-reaching audience.

ANDI: In my favorite country that I've never been to.

JARRAH: And I have another note, which was posted on our blog <http://womenatwarp.com> from Karen and it says: *As a long-time Star Trek fan I need to say that this is an idea that not only has great promise but is long overdue. Really enjoyed the first podcast and look forward to hearing many, many more. Sci-fi has mistakenly been treated as a male-dominated genre with largely teenage boys for viewers. It's time our voices started to be heard from the female perspective. I first started watching Star Trek many years ago when TOS first aired. I was just a young girl but I was instantly hooked. It wasn't until many years later that I learned that Star Trek: TOS was originally approved for production by none other than Lucille Ball. Obviously she was a woman way ahead of her time. Best of luck on this new endeavor.*

And that's from Karen, so thanks, guys. We love hearing from you and if you want to get in touch you can email us at crew@womenatwarp.com or you can send a message or post on our Facebook or on our site at <http://womenatwarp.com>.

ANDI: And now we get to introduce our favorite person ever: Kayla, who gets to be our first guest ever because she's a very important person.

GRACE: So special.

ANDI: I picture "very important person" being all capitalized, like caps lock.

JARRAH: I picture that Kayla is like stepping off the transporter pad and there's a guy there with the boatswain whistle going "toot."

Kayla is our awesome first guest. I first met Kayla when we did a panel on women in Star Trek at Star Trek Las Vegas last year, in which I learned that she is a volcano scientist, which is super, super awesome, and also does a variety of geeky writing. So can you tell the listeners a little bit more about where people can find you?

KAYLA: Sure. So you have done writing for a lot of groups, professionally for NPR Science Friday. I used to write for Geek Magazine. Now most of my geek writing happens on TrekMovie.com, which is a website that I've worked for since, oh gosh probably 2007, that I help run. And I write Science News and other just general Star Trek news. I'm also pretty active on Twitter @kaylai.

JARRAH: She also made a really epic Spock environmental suit costume at the convention last year. So basically I am admiring forever.

KAYLA: Unfortunately I have to say that the bucket head did not survive the trip home on the airplane, so it was unfortunately a one-time experience.

ANDI: No.

KAYLA: Yeah.

ANDI: I'm really glad you're here to talk about Kirk love interests today. We actually got a lot of feedback on our Facebook and actually to our Twitter when we asked people what their favorite Star Trek Kirk love interests were.

GRACE: We did. This is a titillating topic.

ANDI: Absolutely. And I think it's one that is relevant now because you know Kirk is being re-imagined for the new J.J. movies. So this idea of his love interests and what they mean to the show and to that character I think is as relevant now as it was in the 60s, to be honest.

KAYLA: So I'm curious when people say were their favorite love interests?

ANDI: I would say that number one was Edith Keeler.

KAYLA: Yeah, of course.

ANDI: She's actually my favorite too.

GRACE: Yeah. Hard not to like her.

JARRAH: I have her action figure. She comes with a teapot. It's great.

ANDI: That's amazing. And I need it, immediately need to buy that obviously.

JARRAH: I love Edith Keeler because she's...I mean she's basically an activist. She's day-to-day helping the homeless but she also has a bigger vision for the world and is just working to make things-make the world a better place. And Kirk is really attracted to her partly because of that spirit and vision.

GRACE: She's an activist she's also super into Futurist concepts, which is pretty cool too.

ANDI: Yeah. I mean I think she's the first love interest they had in the show that actually caught my interest, you know...

GRACE: The first interesting interest?

ANDI: Yeah, exactly, because I've been watching TOS and like starting to get sick of this whole Bond Girl phenomenon, where they would just have a beautiful woman on for Kirk to make eyes at for an episode and then they'd leave, and most of them didn't have a purpose to be in the episode and they didn't have much of a personality. And then we get to "City on the Edge of Forever" and Edith Keeler,

and she had a reason to be in the episode. She had her own arc, she had her own personality and I feel...

GRACE: She is the basis for the episode.

ANDI: Exactly. I mean she just was really interesting and then I just thought the chemistry between her and Kirk was the first one that I actually bought. If that makes sense.

KAYLA: And it was something, like their chemistry was driven more by them getting to know each other and understand each other's personalities rather than, "Ooh, you're hot. Let's make whoopee," which all the other all the other, you know, love interests for Kirk. I might say she might have been the only one that I like could take seriously as a person rather than just a hottie.

ANDI: Yeah, you can tell that she has a personality and the personality is what is attracting Kirk. rather than, you know, just the fact that she's beautiful.

KAYLA: I feel we, like as the audience, we could actually see Kirk being with Edith long-term.

ANDI: Which of course makes the end of the episode and the basically the whole emotional arc of this episode so devastating. So we finally have a relationship that, for Kirk anyway, that we have put some actual feelings into and care about and they stomp on those feels pretty hard.

GRACE: Yup. Those feels get hit by a truck.

JARRAH: Literally.

ANDI: And it's kind of an interesting ending because I think it's a very pessimistic one and most of Star Trek, even if terrible things happen in the episode, at the end they usually end on like this optimistic note, which is great because I think that the original series is supposed to be optimistic, right? But it added an extra kind of melancholy to this character and to this this, you know, relationship that I don't think we've seen in any other episode.

KAYLA: Yeah I'd say it wasn't maybe so much pessimistic as it was tragic, because you know Edith Keeler has to die for the world to be as it became. You know, her ideals were too ahead of their time. I guess the idea was that because it hinged on this whole activist movement where if she had been able to live she would have convinced the people to all be pacifists and not enter the war and so things would have turned out much differently in the United States than it did in the Second World War. So you know you knew that she had to die for the world to be set right. So I guess that's why I'd say tragic rather than...

GRACE: Yeah

ANDI: They're pretty Star-Crossed.

KAYLA: Yeah. It's a very Romeo and Juliet kind of tale but...

GRACE: Well they're literally star-crossed because, you know, all of that space around.

ANDI: Yeah. I mean they're never even supposed to meet. Like if everything had gone the way it was supposed to, I mean Kirk would have never met her. So to meet her and then lose her that quickly, it is it's really sad.

GRACE: I thought it was a great performance from Joan Collins. Was it Joan Collins or Jackie Collins?

ANDI: Joan.

GRACE: Joan Collins. It was a great performance from her, I thought. Very subtle, very sweet.

ANDI: I mean she is one of the few actresses that has turned into a really big movie star.

GRACE: Oh yeah.

ANDI: And I can think you can see that talent kind of shining through. As an actor, she was a cut above the guest stars that you would usually have.

Jarrah, Yeah. So one of my favorites actually, who is another one that I think is, at least the audience gets to respect as a person who's a competent professional, even if Kirk doesn't totally, is Areel Shaw from "Court Martial," which I just watched the other day, and she's certainly like one of the most clothed of the Kirk love interests.

GRACE: She is definitely in the top three most clothed.

JARRAH: Yeah, I guess second to Edith Keeler. You know right when she comes in everyone acknowledges she's gorgeous, but she's really focused on her job and doing her job well. Even though she's holding a candle for Kirk, she's like, "I'm a lawyer. Got to prosecute you. It's too bad. I'm going to help you find a lawyer." You know he keeps being like, "Let's not talk shop, let's just focus on us," and she's like, "You're not taking this seriously. This is your reputation. This is my job." And I think that she comes across as a skilled lawyer and she would totally win her case if it weren't for Spock playing a bunch of chess games against the computer.

GRACE: Just no winning against the Spock defense.

JARRAH: Yeah exactly. I guess it's only like a little bit undermined because at the very end...I like how she leads with what she wants, which basically she's saying goodbye to Kirk and she's basically like, "Can we kiss on your bridge?" So I like that. But then everyone was watching the kiss and Kirk kind of goes up to Spock and McCoy and is like, "Well, she's a very good lawyer," and they're like, "Yeah, she totally is." And it kind of implies that she isn't because they're kind of joking about how Kirk just kissed her, so that's a little gross.

GRACE: Or undermining the importance of you know her being very competent at her job.

ANDI: I didn't really realize this the first time I watched it through, but now that I'm thinking about it, Captain Louvois is much the same to the point where I'm thinking that maybe TNG was trying to do a little bit of a reference there. I mean we have, well she's a judge in this case, but still someone who is in a position of authority and who is working against a Captain that she had a previous relationship with. And Captain Louvois is awesome. And I think you're right that this is one of the episodes where we actually see somebody being brought on to do a job and then do that job competently. Because unfortunately they make up a lot of sciencey titles for a lot of these women and then have them do nothing with them or perform them terribly, which undermines them as characters tremendously.

GRACE: Yeah

KAYLA: I don't know if you want to segue at all but we talked about Uhura and Rand?

ANDI: Yeah absolutely.

GRACE: Sure, why not?

KAYLA: Just like, when you started talking about how they bring on these women, give them titles, and then don't let them do their job, Uhura immediately comes to mind, and you know a lot of people will pick her as like an example of, you know, a strong woman. She's a black woman on the bridge and blah, blah blah and it's like yeah, but you know, I mean maybe in the 60s, like I appreciate that was really forward thinking, but to me she was like a glorified secretary.

And she's literally in the back taking Kirk's calls, right? And any time she makes any kind of suggestion you know, it never seems to be taken that seriously. Kirk or someone will ask her to do something that you know they'll say, you know, "Why can't you get this transmission to come through?" "Sorry, sir it's just not coming in." "Oh, move aside, let me try that." "Nope, it's not coming in." I mean it's like, don't

you trust her to do her own job? And that happens a few times in the series and yet she's supposed to be the shining example of strong women from TOS.

GRACE: Comparatively speaking for the time she was.

KAYLA: Right. That's another thing that that I always struggle with looking at TOS through a modern lens is how much slack do we give it for being a product of the 1960s and how much of it wasn't as forward thinking as we like to say it was?

JARRAH: I think that it's important to still critique it from a modern perspective because like Andi said, it's still being used to draw on to create new material. And it's just important not to be dishonest about it. Like I think that, you know, we can say this was problematic and still say we're fans, but we shouldn't say, you know, we're fans to such an extent that we're going to just pretend none of that stuff ever happened.

KAYLA: Oh, for sure.

ANDI: There are a handful of times where they give Uhura something to do and it always stood out to me. One of my favorite moments and I don't know the episode but there is a time when something goes wrong with the console and she's actually underneath it with what to me as a Whovian looks like a sonic screwdriver. She is, you know, sitting there and there's this beautiful blue light on her and she's working at this panel and Spock comes in and he is like, "When is this going to be done? Hurry up." and she's like, "Do you trust anybody else to do this?" And he's like, "No, you're the best person for this job," and he leaves her and she just continues, and I really wish that we could have seen more than that because that is one moment in you know three seasons' worth of moments where she is undermined by the rest of the male crew and basically is usually just there and, you know, opening hailing frequencies.

JARRAH: So what did you guys think about "Plato's Stepchildren," because that is the only episode where Uhura is really paired off with Kirk?

GRACE: It is weird to see her...it doesn't feel quite right say diminished, but relegated to the capacity of hottie of the week just for this episode. It's weird to see her to move from, you know, one of the guys, part of the crew to...well no wait, she's a pretty girl for this week. That's kind of how it felt to me.

ANDI: I got the impression when I was watching it and you all have been in the Star Trek fandom for a lot longer than me so you can let me know if I'm wrong, but I got the impression that most people think "Plato's Stepchildren" is bad but I actually really, really liked it.

I thought it had really interesting ideas on what power is. Actually the Uhura/Kirk and Spock/Chapel kiss in that episode really highlights that theme for me. And I think is done really well in that for Spock and Chapel especially, because Chapel love Spock. This is what we've been told. And in any other circumstance she'd be really excited to be making out with him, but because they took choice out of it, it became something terrible and something that was being forced upon her. And how much power, or the lack of power, can turn something beautiful into something ugly.

And then having the first kiss for Kirk and Uhura being this infamous interracial kiss. It was interesting to me that it's not romantic, not even a little bit.

GRACE: That's a good point.

ANDI: Yeah it's been forced on both of them. At no point are we thinking that Uhura is into Kirk or Kirk is into Uhura They're being forced to kiss. And actually what Uhura does she uses her platonic love for the Captain and her trust in him to kind of get through this traumatic moment for her and just trust that everything's going to be OK, because Kirk has always made it OK in the past. And I just thought that was really lovely, but kind of interesting that we hear this—especially me, I had never actually seen it, or you know had any perspective on it, and tell you know just a couple of weeks ago hearing over and over again about this impressive and infamous kiss and then having it not be romantic.

JARRAH: Yeah I think that's a really interesting point. I mean I think that if it had been a situation where it was just the women who were being controlled, it would have reinforced more of kind of a damsel in distress situation, but because everyone was being controlled, maybe it can invite people to sort of imagine and empathize with a situation where you are not consenting to something.

ANDI: Uhura is ver,y very specifically saying that she's thinking of something else that will comfort her while this is happening.

KAYLA: Yeah I'm remembering now that you're saying it; I remember she has some line. Is that like as they're about to kiss, or...?

ANDI; Yeah. Just before they're about to kiss she basically says something along the lines of: "I'm just, you know, thinking about all the times that I've heard you on the bridge and your voice and I knew everything was going to be OK." It's kind of like trust she has in the Captain for always saving the day and it's not romantic, right? It's the kind of trust that you would have in an authority figure.

JARRAH: Like a father figure.

ANDI: Yeah exactly. I just thought it was very beautifully done. I mean we're talking about Uhura not being used very much. Nichelle Nichols, I mean how do you waste an actress like that?

GRACE: Yeah.

ANDI: She was so beautiful and she had such spirit in this role and yet they never really gave her much to, you know, put her teeth into. But when they did she was just transcendent.

KAYLA: Yeah, I think that speaks to her strength as a character, like you're talking about Uhura being able to say to Kirk, "Don't worry about this. We'll get through it and then, you know, we'll be cool with each other after. Because I'm strong enough to handle this. You know we can both handle this." So she gives him a bit of strength probably too in that moment.

ANDI: Yeah it's very, it's comforting almost. It's, she's comforting herself but she's also telling Kirk, "Don't worry."

KAYLA: Yeah.

ANDI: You know, I just, and when I was live-tweeting it, you know, people will tell me whether or not, "Oh you're about to watch a really good episode or you're about to watch a really terrible episode." This was one where they were like, "It's terrible." And I actually, at least the last third of it, thought it was extremely interesting and extremely well acted and I ended up I wouldn't say loving it, but liking it. And people were very surprised by it, and it's basically because of that scene that I think really has a lot of levels. And the acting is great. And then we get to Rand. Poor, poor Rand.

GRACE: You mean Chapel?

ANDI: No, I was thinking Rand.

GRACE: Oh, yeah.

ANDI: I've always had an issue with how they portray Rand. Am I the only one there?

GRACE: No, definitely not.

JARRAH: Not remotely.

ANDI: Yeah I mean, I think she, that kind of echoes what she was, Grace Lee Whitney was dealing with behind the scenes as well. Am I the only one that heard the stories about this?

GRACE: Can you elaborate for the rest of us?

ANDI: Sure. So apparently Grace Lee Whitney was going through a lot of stuff behind the scenes at the same time that her character was kind of being sidelined in that she, at least she claims was being sexually harassed by a producer.

And then also was getting a lot of pressure to keep her weight off and actually was one of the reasons that she says that she started having drug problems, is they basically gave her the miniskirt and they were like if you can't continue to fit into this you can find a new job.

GRACE: Yikes.

KAYLA: Yeah. I don't find that hard to believe at all.

ANDI: And then it kind of goes into, you know, what happens to her onscreen. She's—I mean do we get a good Rand episode? Not that I can name.

GRACE: Yeah.

ANDI: I mean every time she's used she's used as a victim.

KAYLA: Or she's like a peripheral.

ANDI: Yeah she's bringing, she's bringing Kirk food.

KAYLA: Right. Exactly. She's like, she's like set dressing.

JARRAH: Yeah, so in *These Are The Voyages: TOS Season 1* by Marc Cushman they quote Grace Lee Whitney remembering Gene Roddenberry's description of Janice Rand to start off with. So it says: "She would be as *Gunsmoke's* Miss Kitty was to Matt Dillon. The marshal could always talk his problems over with his favorite saloon girl. She knew him better than anyone else. That was the relationship Roddenberry wanted Rand and Kirk to have. The Captain could confide in her, be warmed by her and secretly love her, but he would never openly admit his deeper feelings. Not even to himself.

GRACE: So she was supposed to be kind of the Girl Friday of the bunch?

JARRAH: Yeah this is a quote that she attributes to Roddenberry that says, "Because of your duty you can never openly express your attraction toward him. There will always be an undercurrent of suppressed sexuality between you that will come out in very subtle ways. You're to be as beautiful as you can be and as efficient as you can be and you are to love the Captain."

KAYLA: Wow.

ANDI: No wonder she never got anything good.

GRACE: No kidding.

KAYLA: I could have seen her being used in that kind of a role though, like as they say, I guess as his confidant, as someone you can go and talk to about stuff that he can't talk to with anyone else. But we never saw that.

ANDI: No I mean basically she brings in food when he needs food, which I guess is sort of comforting. And then every once in a while she'll make a comment about, "Oh, Captain." And there'll be that kind of sexual tension, but it never seems very returned.

KAYLA: Then it would have made a lot more sense if we had seen the Captain acting flippant to her: "Oh, thanks for the sandwich," or these subtle love things between them would have made more sense to me if I knew that there was this other, these other two characters, that were—where Captain Kirk was confiding in Rand and then they had to be different people when they were in public, but when they

were in private talking to each other that he could open up a lot. That would make more sense to me the way he acts towards her, if I had known that that was supposed to be happening behind the scenes.

GRACE: And it would have opened up new interesting dynamics for both of the characters to know that there was that level of sort-of sub-interaction between the two of them.

KAYLA: Yeah, exactly.

JARRAH: Yeah, definitely, because I think as it was it just came across as well, "Kirk is so studly of course she loves him."

KAYLA: Right, yeah totally.

ANDI: Well Kirk is so studly even the computer fell in love with him for an episode and started hitting on him.

GRACE: My goodness.

ANDI: That is how studly Kirk is. One of the other names that kept coming up in our comments was Rayna...what episode was she from?

GRACE: "Requiem for Methuselah"?

ANDI: Yeah that one, as a favorite. I mean people actually really responded to her. I didn't get it, really.

JARRAH: I sort of did. I just literally watched this episode today. I think it's really actually kind of cool for The Original Series. I mean the whole premise is that--so she's an android who's been created by this guy. And if you compare it to Andrea in "What Are Little Girls Made Of?" it's a huge, incredible leap forward, because the whole story is about how she's basically becoming sentient and able to choose for herself.

So even though the idea that she has been created by a man to be a perfect woman is obviously kind of problematic, the whole story is about how she's developing the ability to choose and that having human rights means that you can choose to be free, even if you were created by this person. The scene where she is saying like, "I choose!" and sort of exercising that voice is really powerful, so I can really appreciate it even though there's still some problematic aspects in the story.

ANDI: Yeah it was hard for me to get over the shot where you realize that there's like 20 versions of her and how creeped out I was by that.

KAYLA: Yeah.

ANDI: Because at first I was like, "Is he cloning her? What?...what's going on?" and I was just like, "This dude's a creep." And it was hard to get back from that, but I really do like that last monologue she has where she's like, "I choose!" and I did really like that. Kayla you wanted to talk about "Gamesters of Triskelion."

KAYLA: Oh yeah. That's just one of my favorite moments. I mean when someone says Kirk womanizing the first thing I think of is that scene from "Gamesters of Triskelion" where he's with Shahna and they're embracing in this passionate kiss and it's best of course when played out of context so if you find the YouTube clip it's the best way to watch it.

GRACE: Of course.

ANDI: When you say Shahna do you mean the woman that looks like Lady Gaga that was forced to fight in an arena? Or is that different.

GRACE: No, it's the gladiator-looking chick with the Jiffy Pop bra.

KAYLA: Totally.

ANDI: I always felt bad for her because they made her run and she clearly had no support.

GRACE: Yeah. That whole thing just looks so uncomfortable.

ANDI: I just felt bad for her. They made her fight.

KAYLA: A lot of double-stick tape.

GRACE: And if you look, like even when she's just standing in the background, she's still got like her Barbarella power pose going and she's keeping it the whole time. It's like, wow that's got to be really rough to be standing still in.

KAYLA: But the best moment of course is after the embrace and the kiss, Kirk pulls away from her and suddenly socks her in the face with a very nice punch just knocks her out.

GRACE: Just socks her right in the face and knocks her out.

KAYLA: Right in the kisser.

ANDI: I mean I like that the reason he leaves her in that episode is because he's like, "You haven't learned self-determination yet. Once you figure that out, we can be together, baby."

GRACE: "Later, babe. It's been real,:"

KAYLA: "Call me when the Women's Lib movement hits your planet."

JARRAH: That's kind of part of the thing in "Requiem for Methuselah" too, that the way that Kirk initially approaches Rayna is he's super comforting, and I found that actually pretty cool, like he is not going too fast with this. He just sort of like hugs her at first until she is like, "Yeah I'm totally into this" and so I think he has this—he definitely seems to have a theme where you know, Kirk can be characterized as just like going through women. But I think that he does value independence and you know self-confidence in a woman.

GRACE: Right.

KAYLA: Yeah. Talking about Kirk as a womanizer, I think you could very easily make the argument that he's not a womanizer at all, and that it's the fault of the women that he appears to be. I mean there's women that are throwing themselves on him constantly and that's, you know, the writing staff making these crazy, you know, what did we say? Hottie-of-the-week characters.

GRACE: Yeah.

KAYLA: But a lot of times Kirk doesn't want that. And so you can point out a lot of examples where he's actually, he would prefer a woman who is independent and free and could, you know, would *want* to be with him because there was actually a relationship there, rather than just, "You're hot," you know, "Let's get it on."

ANDI: That's probably why both Rayna and Edith Keeler, you know, are two of our most favorite that come up because they are independent from him.

KAYLA: I noticed that in the show notes where you guys listed some of the "Worst" and "Best" love interests that Deela from "Wink of an Eye" is under best.

GRACE: I was curious about that too.

ANDI: Yeah I wasn't sure where to put her, to be honest, because we sat down and we were, like, trying to work out how we were going to go through it. Like usually what we do is like the best of and the worst of. And I didn't know really what to do with her because I really—OK so Deela is from the episode where they're like, in a different time stream or something. Like they're going really, really fast and everyone else is going really slow in "Wink of an Eye."

KAYLA: Yeah.

ANDI: And first of all I have to give her props for the most hideous dress I've ever seen in my life.

GRACE: And with Captain Kirk's love interests, that's a special accomplishment.

KAYLA: That's saying a lot.

ANDI: I mean it's even worse than the woman who had to wear a pantsuit made out of scarves. She shows up on the bridge, and I wouldn't say that I really particularly liked their relationship so much as I like how dismissive of him she was. Like she treated him kind of like a new pet.

KAYLA: Like a pet, yeah. Like she wanted to use him.

ANDI: Yeah and as much as I don't think that's, like, a good relationship and I don't want that to be, like, what we're calling a memorable, good love interest, it's also totally different from the way that everybody else is. You know she's very patronizing. She's very much like, "Aww, you do what I say now," and I just thought that was an interesting reversal, because Kirk has a tendency to be pretty condescending to a lot of these women.

GRACE: It is really interesting to see those roles kind of reversed there on Kirk, which definitely is part of what makes it an entertaining episode.

ANDI: Yeah, I mean he shoots a phaser at her and she basically like steps in the side and laughs at him, like, "Silly man with your silly weapon!" in that hideous, hideous LSD, pink, terrible, one-legged creation, and I just I have I have a little bit of affection for that. I agree that she probably is—she is definitely not on the level of, say, Edith Keeler. Definitely, definitely not but...

GRACE: Oh, hell no.

ANDI: ...in comparison to some of these, at least she brought out something interesting.

JARRAH: Yeah. Like I think one of the ones where he's most condescending—actually this is a toss up but I'm sure we're going to talk about both of them—but I will bring up first "Elaan of Troyius."

GRACE: Oh lord.

JARRAH: Where, like, literally he's trying to teach her how to use cutlery and it is so, so frustrating. I mean the episode is basically *Taming of the Shrew* in space.

GRACE: That's exactly what it is. Except with some unfriendly Asian stereotypes thrown in also.

JARRAH: Yeah, definitely. I mean I think that France Nuyen who played Elaan actually does a really good job for what she's given. But yeah, it does lend itself to these stereotypes about, like, exotic and kind of homogenized Asian-Arabic cultures because she looks like she's got sort of like a Cleopatra wig as well.

GRACE: She's got a bindi on, sort of.

JARRAH: Yeah, right. It's like all the cultures in one and all of them are alien.

GRACE: And it's kind of sad that supposedly this is one of the first times we got to see an actor of Vietnamese descent on TV on a network show. And it's good that we got to see that and it's interesting

that we saw that through *Star Trek*. But it's sad that it was on this role. That's just a little bit of an ouch moment.

ANDI: The biggest problem I had with her is that they basically, the episode treats her like she's a child.

GRACE: Yeah.

ANDI: They keep calling her a brat.

GRACE: Yeah. He threatens to spank her.

ANDI: Exactly, like this whole spoiled brat thing implies that she has the mental capacity of a toddler. They treat her like that. But then they also super sexualize her at the same time, which is really gross to me, like choose one! Like either she is a child that you're patronizing or she is a sexual being that you're sexualizing. But putting them both together is even worse.

JARRAH: And it's really weird because, you know, if this was a story about humans, like I can't picture Kirk being like, "Yes, we will totally make you marry this person that you hate and you should just feel grateful because you're rich," but that's basically what happens. Like she says, you know, "I will not go to Troyius. I will not be made into a Troyian. I will not be humiliated. I will not be given to a green pig as a bribe to stop a war." And he goes, "You enjoy the privileges and prerogatives of being a Dohlman, then be worthy of them! If you don't want the obligations that go along with the title then give it up."

GRACE: He essentially just tells her to suck it up doesn't he?

JARRAH: Yeah totally. And, you know, she actually is being pretty rational given the situation she's forced into, which is, like, a pretty awful situatio—to be forcibly married to someone that you don't know and probably won't like.

GRACE: Aside from the knife-throwing in the tantrum she is being pretty reasonable.

ANDI: I would stab someone too, to be honest.

GRACE: If they made me wear that dress, I would.

JARRAH: And yet you get this part where, you know, Spock and Kirk are talking in the hallway afterwards and Kirk goes, "Mr. Spock, the women on your planet are logical. That's the only planet in the galaxy that can make that claim."

KAYLA: Yeah that's such a horrible line.

GRACE: Women, amirite?

JARRAH: Yeah I think with a lot of these episodes it is really about, like, the way that the women characters have been written poorly. But there are episodes where they're both written as perpetuating, really, out and out sexism. because that line is a sexist line. But a lot of times with the other episodes like with "Requiem for Methuselah" the overall narrative has issues, but the way Kirk is behaving is actually a pretty good.

ANDI: One that I think probably most people don't think of but really, really, really disturbed me was in "Bread and Circuses" where Kirk sleeps with Drusilla who is the female slave. And she's basically brought to his room and she's like, "I'm here to please you." And he actually sleeps with her!

GRACE: You don't even get any, like, moral ambiguity there. Not him being like, "No I don't want to do this to you." It's just, "Nope, she's there."

KAYLA: He's like, "Well when in Rome."

ANDI: From Shanna, where he was like, "You need to learn self-determination," this woman has no ability to consent. She is a slave. And he sleeps with her. And they actually don't address it even at all. It adds nothing to the story.

GRACE: Just hottie of the week.

ANDI: Yeah, it's just Kirk sleeping with someone and I don't get that at all. And I think it's really, really problematic.

JARRAH: Absolutely.

ANDI: Also up there with worst is Miramane from "The Paradise Syndrome."

JARRAH: Oh god.

GRACE: Good lord.

ANDI: That whole episode is hugely, hugely bad because of the racial stereotypes we have here. This kind of like. "noble savage" kind of stereotypes that are gross.

GRACE: It's so hard to watch it without just wanting to pull all your hair out.

JARRAH: Yeah, there's a really, really awesome book called *Indian Stereotypes in TV Science Fiction: First Nations Voices Speak Out* by Sierra S. Adare. And basically she's a professor who put together a study where she showed episodes like this episode, "The Paradise Syndrome" and some of the Chakotay-centric episodes of *Voyager* and other science fiction episodes about First Nations people to First Nations people and then got their reactions.

KAYLA: Oh god, they made Native Americans watch this episode?

GRACE: Oh man, that's painful just to think about. I'm so sorry. I'm sorry for TV.

JARRAH: So yeah I think it's, well it's a really interesting book and it does, you know, help show, in First Nations people's voices, why it's so problematic. But two of the stereotypes that are brought up is the "children of the forest" stereotype, which is basically the idea that "Indians" never progress beyond their "primitive state." This idea, like technically you're saying that these people were brought eight hundred years into the future and haven't changed? Except for—there's a participant in the focus groups who had this awesome quote that says: "At first I decided the Preservers must have pulled the stunt like Kirk did in the fourth *Trek* movie *The Voyage Home* when he slingshots the Klingon vessel around the sun in order to go back in time and get whales. Only the Preservers got Indians instead of whales. How else could you find Native Americans running around in buckskins in the 23rd century? But even time travel can't explain away Miramane knowing nothing of preserving food until Kirk teaches her. Where do you think jerky and popcorn came from? Our ancestors knew how to preserve food long before any white people showed up. That bizarre mixture of peaceful tribes, who didn't all wear buckskins by the way, must have come from an equally bizarre parallel universe like in 'Mirror Mirror,' because people who don't know how to preserve food don't live long."

ANDI: That's amazing.

GRACE: No kidding.

ANDI: Yeah and I mean she's a—her character basically exists for Kirk to fall in love with, impregnate and then die. That is what she does. There's, like, no growth there. Kirk doesn't learn anything.

GRACE: She's pretty much a prop, isn't she?

ANDI: Yeah and it's especially gross because, you know, of all the racial stereotypes is piled on to this really one-note character that basically—and I remember that moment when I found out she was

pregnant, and I was like, “No!” because there's no way to get out of that.

GRACE: Nope.

ANDI: He can't bring her with him. He can't leave her and the kid because people will react poorly to him as a character if he does that.

GRACE: Unless they're lizard babies. Just sayin'.

ANDI: So the only way for them to go forward then is for her to die. And so I knew she was going to, the second she was pregnant I knew she was going to die, because there's no way to end that story with Kirk being the hero unless she dies.

KAYLA: So I've got a good idea to try and test whether or not we think each of these women is like a real character or set dressing/two-dimensional. I think if you can successfully describe the character without saying what they look like or what their job is, like who is Miramane besides being a Native-American woman?

JARRAH: Uh...she is...

GRACE: A baby maker.

JARRAH: No, yeah.

GRACE: Yes!

JARRAH: She's portrayed as incredibly stupid. It's really offensive, like that her and her people think Kirk is a God basically because he's white. It's absolutely ridiculous. And I mean that idea of like a white man falling in love or being tempted by the “Indian princess” stereotype has been used in Hollywood for a long time before this and it almost always ends in the woman's death if they can't get out of that situation some other way, because of the taboo around miscegenation in Hollywood.

ANDI: I mean this is this is a problem that actually has very real world consequences in that Native American women are, like, number one with a bullet for rates of rape and murder.

GRACE: And domestic violence.

ANDI: The amount of sexual violence that Native Americans face is far higher than any other racial group. And to have episodes like this, and that I mean not just this, but like this whole media narrative that with built up around a sexualized “Indian princess” that then is usually killed horribly adds to actual real-life consequences for real women. And that's why it's not merely gross it's actually damaging.

KAYLA: Whoa.

GRACE: Yup.

ANDI: So another character that I think is really interesting is Marlina from “Mirror, Mirror.” And one reason why I think she's interesting is because we see her in a different universe where things are even worse for women, where it's very clear that she actually literally says to Kirk that her power comes from being with the strongest man.

KAYLA: So what does that say about her character? I mean she's the Captain's woman, right? She— whoever she sleeps with is the guy in charge. But she uses that, like you said, the world around her is this horrible kind of place where that's what she does to stay alive and to stay on top, so you know, is that a feminist thing for her to do is to use that, use her femininity and her sexuality? Or is that detrimental? I don't know. I think that you could argue both ways.

ANDI: Yeah and I think that's why she's so interesting is because this is the path forward for her for power. And she knows that. And she uses that and she plays that very, very smartly. I mean she

obviously is a very intelligent woman. This is another love interest we have that actually has chemistry with Kirk, which is rarer than you would think. It feels like she is very frustrated with the fact that she is limited in this way, and you can kind of feel like she wants to be in a world where she can do what she wants without having to attach herself to a man, or at least that's what I felt for her. So I actually think that yeah, I would argue more to the feminist side of things in that this is this is the world that she lives in and she's doing her best within the world that she lives in.

KAYLA: Yeah I think I'd put her under the category of best love interests.

ANDI: Me too.

GRACE: Or definitely one of the more interesting ones.

ANDI: She's one of the few that actually gets some really cool close to wear.

KAYLA: Oh totally.

GRACE: Yeah.

ANDI: Which, you know you would be surprised at how much that endears me to someone.

JARRAH: I think it's cool, like I agree with what you're saying, like she is doing what she needs to do in her society and she doesn't really know there's any other way to do things until at the very end and then she wants to go back with Kirk but she can't. But she is super strong and classy about that and is like fine I'll just keep kicking ass here, basically.

ANDI: Yeah and then we see our universe Marlena and she is bringing stuff to Kirk to sign, which is a huge step up, apparently.

KAYLA: Yeah in our great, perfect world, that's where this very strong, badass woman ends up.

ANDI: Yeah. I mean that whole thing where—I have lost count. I started taking screen shots for a while and then it just—there are too many. All of the women that just walk up to Kirk with a clipboard of some kind, he signs something, and they walk away. It's ludicrous numbers.

KAYLA: You could have a single subject Tumblr just on women who hand stuff to Kirk.

ANDI: Just like, here's the woman of the episode who wears a short skirt looks pretty and hands something to Kirk to sign so he can look, I don't know, captainly, and I want to know what he's signing all the time. He never reads it. He doesn't look at it.

GRACE: Autographs.

JARRAH: Well a third of the Enterprise crew is supposed to be women. And we only otherwise really see Rand, Chapel and Uhura, so I guess all of the other ones are getting Kirk to sign things and bring him coffee.

GRACE: He has a secretary brigade or something.

KAYLA: Is the one-third women—is that actually the canon?

JARRAH: It's in *The Making of Star Trek* by Simon Whitfield and Gene Roddenberry.

KAYLA: Cool. Which is kind of great, but also so not enough, like one-third kinda sucks.

JARRAH: I did hear somewhere that they were pushing for 50 per cent but that there was some controversy that there would be too much fraternization, but they were not going to go less than one-third.

KAYLA: Wait, are you serious?

GRACE: Wow.

KAYLA: There would be too much fraternization. That is hilarious.

ANDI: Yeah, some of the behind-the-scenes facts that Jarrah tells us about shock me. I mean they don't really shock me because it makes sense but then I'm also just like, "Really? That is that really...Oh gosh no. No." And then it starts to make a whole lot more sense why we have some of the problems we do in The Original Series because if this is the kind of way that they were thinking of things, you know, behind the scenes, of course it translated into the way they saw things in the universe.

KAYLA: Also just going back to Marlena when you watch the fan series at all but she does make reappearance in *Star Trek Continues*.

ANDI: Oh, she does?

KAYLA: Yeah. So in their third episode they revisit the Mirror Universe. The entire episode is set in the Mirror Universe and the story that happened in the Mirror Universe after our Kirk came back, and after our people came back to our universe. So it's like Marlena carrying this on and Mirror Spock having this idea that he could change things like Kirk gave in that final speech as he was leaving, like you have the power to do to make things different.

ANDI: That sounds really interesting.

KAYLA: Yeah I think it's actually good to see that play out and she features quite heavily in an episode which is pretty cool.

ANDI: I think the Mirror Universe in general is really interesting and "Mirror, Mirror" is one of the better episodes of Star Trek for The Original Series And actually this goes to something that I say a lot because it is so true: when your female characters are better, your episode is better.

KAYLA: Yeah, well when your characters are better regardless of gender.

ANDI: Exactly, and you know when you have more diverse perspectives and when you have more more relationships and different kinds of people in those relationships it makes your story richer. Yeah, there's an episode where there is someone at the helm—a woman at the helm and she's awesome. She actually figures out the problem before Spock does.

JARRAH: Lieutenant Radha, which a white woman in brown face, so problematic.

ANDI: Oh no. Yeah, so they do have a female crew member that does something other than bring Kirk stuff to sign and it's in "That Which Survives" and she actually gets stuff to do in that episode and she actually figures out the problem before Spock. And he, you know, praises her.

GRACE: Oh, quite an accomplishment.

ANDI: Yeah I make note of it whenever it happens so rarely. I was like, wait a second.

GRACE: It's noteworthy.

ANDI: Yeah it is. I mean, just seeing a woman at the helm at all was—I think she's the only one that we ever see there.

JARRAH. Other than the time that Uhura takes over the helm, I think so.

ANDI: Yeah just I don't think she's in any other episodes. Just too bad.

ANDI: Oh, I see what you're saying.

JARRAH: Yeah, she's supposed to be playing a South-Asian character but she's a white actress.

ANDI: Why, why do they ruin things?

GRACE: Because they are willing to make an effort just as long as it was the most half-assed effort possible.

ANDI: I think we should save our worst for last. Which is Janice Lester.

GRACE: Oh good lord.

ANDI: I finally saw "Turnabout Intruder" guys.

GRACE: I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

JARRAH: I was trying to find an appropriate trophy to get for you but I couldn't find...

GRACE: How about the golden crying Kirk?

ANDI: I mean since I started The Original Series, no joke, people have been tweeting me like—there is actually one of my friends, Phillip, started tweeting me two seasons ago like, "I'm just waiting for you to get to 'Turnabout Intruder.' Like everything else, whatever, I just want to see your reaction to 'Turnabout Intruder.'" And I think he was a little bit disappointed because instead of getting really ranty and angry I actually just got really depressed, because it's so horrible and at the end of it I just was tired.

GRACE: It's pretty irredeemable.

ANDI: And I just can't believe that that is how they ended the series, especially with the line at the very end.

GRACE: "She could have been happy like any other woman," or something?

JARRAH: Yeah, it's like something like, you know, "If she had just accepted her woman's life. She could have had as full of life as any woman," or something like that. It's horrible. "But if only, if only."

GRACE: Silly ambitious ladies. Don't they know they're only screwing themselves over?

ANDI: Yeah I mean basically what I take from this is the entirety of this episode is 1) Women shouldn't be in charge of anything because they're terrible at being in charge, but 2) They should also be happy with not being in charge because if they reach too far they'll go crazy.

GRACE: Because you know we're all hysterical.

ANDI: Yeah and they actually use the word hysteria in this episode, which I really need anybody who doesn't know the history of the word hysteria to just do a quick Google search on "female hysteria." Because, I mean, this this is what men used to literally lock women away in mental asylums for anything from having sexual desire to having migraines.

GRACE: It just meant that your womb was loose and wandering about the body all willy-nilly.

GRACE: Basically if you were a woman that had any problems at all—mental illness, headaches—that couldn't be explained—you know, a little too emotional—they called that hysteria and they put you in a mental asylum or they sidelined you from society and they just called it that. And that is what the word hysterical comes from, and why we hate being called hysterical, because there is a historic context for that word that is really troubling. So I really enjoyed it, that it was used in this episode.

GRACE: It wasn't even until post-traumatic stress disorder started being a thing that they even had a male equivalent term for it, and they just called it being shell-shocked. And that was the closest kind of equivalent they had for a long time. For women it's just being a "crazy lady." For guys seeing the horrors of war that for us, that's just, you know, standard everyday day-to-day wanderings of the crazed female brain like it is.

ANDI: Yeah I mean that the moment in the episode where Scotty and McCoy basically turn on who they think is Kirk, Scotty actually says to McCoy, he's like, "I've seen the Captain angry. I've seen him sad. I've seen every emotion under the sun but I've never seen him red faced with hysteria." and I'm just like, "Yup, there it is. Women can't be in charge: they're too emotional."

KAYLA: Yeah there's even that line at the end right where Lester says, "Your world of starship Captains doesn't admit women."

ANDI: Yeah, which, by the way when did that happen?

KAYLA: Yeah it's one of those weird things that people are like, "Is that really canon?" Does she really mean that women are not allowed to be Captains? Does it mean...

GRACE: Well soft canon, like the novels and stuff, establishes that there are female Captains at that time, so...

JARRAH: We do get more into depth on this in our lady Captains episode. So if listeners want to dig more into that, I suggest going back and listening to that. It's definitely an interesting and a very annoying topic arising from that episode.

ANDI: So do we understand why Janice Lester and Kirk would have ever gotten together in any universe?

GRACE: Um, the crazy hotness scale? I don't know.

JARRAH: Yeah, I'm assuming that at one point she was ambitious but not yet too big for her britches and realized how hot he was and just kind of fell all over herself.

GRACE: Like ladies tend to do around Kirk.

ANDI: Yeah I mean from the very beginning when they establish that they've had a romantic relationship and they actually establish that it was a fairly long romantic relationship, I just I didn't see it. They had no chemistry. There didn't seem to be any affection between them. So I don't understand what brought them together at all.

KAYLA: But isn't it also implied that was quite some time ago?

ANDI: Yeah, it was like when they were in the Academy.

KAYLA: Yeah, I think so. I can kind of see that. I mean it's like your college days, you know, versus...

ANDI: It is true that I have some pretty bad exes from college.

GRACE and KAYLA: We all have that one ex.

ANDI: But none of them tried to body swap me, and then, you know, take over my life, so I'll count myself lucky.

GRACE: I hate it when that happens.

JARRAH: One of mine did turn out to be an android.

GRACE: You too, huh? So rough being a woman these days.

ANDI: So just really briefly do we want to talk about the J.J. Abrams version of Kirk? because this version of Kirk lives on in the new movies.

KAYLA: I would love to talk about that. I've got a lot of thoughts on.

ANDI: Ooh, go for it.

GRACE: Why not?

KAYLA: So yeah, there's a couple of interesting things that happen in the J.J. movies with Kirk where, as you pointed out at the beginning of our discussion, they're trying to carry on the character that William Shatner created as Kirk and bringing these—and also the stereotypes that the audience has about Kirk, whether or not they're true. If you go back and watch the show. Sometimes being that he's a womanizer, he sleeps around a lot, that you know, he just kind of chasing women all the time and so, you know, you see him in a couple of times he's in bed with the two Catians, which is a nice shout-out to the Animated Series.

GRACE: Odd place to get a shout-out in, but yeah.

KAYLA: Right. But hey, I'll take it. Him chasing Uhura. And then there's another moment that I also want to bring up, which is the Carol Marcuse scene in *Into Darkness* where Carol Marcus drops her clothes in front of him. And I think that, you know, a lot of people defended that moment saying that, "Oh, it's just Kirk being a womanizer," you know, "It's his character, it's just funny," You know, "Don't get so upset about it.

GRACE: It is possible to be an ethical womanizer though.

KAYLA: Well, when he's in bed with the Catians, like he was having sex with some women in his in his dorm room, and when he was, like, interested in Uhura, he wasn't really doing anything wrong. There is a girl that he liked. And they just, you know, they sort of, you know, show him as kind of suave and full of himself. But I wouldn't call him a womanizer at that point. I mean, you see him in bed with the Catians, he's like in a private setting. He's not doing anything wrong. And even here in this scene he is, kind of, at least when I was watching it I thought he was caught off-guard. So he walks, he walks her to the shuttlecraft and she's like, "Oh, I just have to change because we're going to go beam down." Actually I don't think she even says that, I think she says, you know, "Don't look," or something. And he looks up, like, "What?" You know. And she's like, "Oops, my clothes fell off. Oh how dare you see me in my bra." You just said don't look and then started changing in the back of a shuttlecraft whose door is open like for no reason. She didn't even need to change your clothes.

ANDI: Yeah I think that that is definitely a issue with the writing rather than her character.

JARRAH: Definitely, yeah I mean the scene is kind of awful. I don't think it makes her necessarily any worse, although I think that it would've been better if the writers hadn't written her saying, "Don't look," because then he looks. I know it's clearly, like, an accident but it's still a problem. But the very first scene or we meet Carol Marcus in *Into Darkness*, literally she introduces herself and Kirk looks at, you know, her resume and says, you know, "She's a doctor of applied physics specializing in advanced weaponry" and Spock goes, "Impressive credentials but redundant now that I'm back aboard the Enterprise," and Kirk goes, "And yet, the more the merrier." So like literally they agree that Spock could do everything she could do. And Kirk just like, "Who cares? She's hot." So I just I mean I just have serious issues with *Into Darkness* Carol Marcus as opposed to *Wrath of Khan* Carol Marcus, who is all the awesome.

KAYLA: See, I felt like she could have been, because I thought that up until the point where she goes: "Oops, my clothes fell off" that she had the potential to be the strong female character in the movie. People have—a lot of people feel very strongly that Uhura is very strong in the JJ-verse, although to be honest it hasn't spoken to me at all. I don't see her as being a strong character; I see her as spending the time being emotional about Spock, so she's just like a bounce-board for that. And then all of a

sudden we have this one female character who's a scientist. She's smart, she's capable, independent, and then all of a sudden she throws her clothes on the floor. And it's like, great. Thanks, guys. That was, like, the one woman I could relate to. And you just took that away.

ANDI: Yeah. For Uhura it felt more like they didn't know what to give her to do, so they just gave her a romantic arc for her to have something to do, which is pointless, especially in the first movie, because Spock already has a very resonant emotional arc. He does not need a romantic partner and Uhura just doesn't get to do anything but be his, like, I don't know, a way to get Spock to show emotion. Humanize him?

KAYLA: Yeah. Yeah, exactly.

ANDI: And plus I have to say that after seeing The Original Series and finally watching the new movies it really creeps me out to see Kirk hit on Uhura and I can't tell you exactly why. As you said, there's nothing wrong with the fact that he you know was interested in a woman and started a conversation with her. That's totally fine. It's just something about seeing Kirk hit on Uhura just was like, "What? No, that's not right. What's wrong?"

JARRAH: I think part of it is the atmosphere of the reboot movies, because you can argue that the atmosphere Starfleet that's set up is actually like less diverse than what we see in The Original Series like there's the you know the infamous-now conference scene in *Into Darkness* where you see basically everyone important in Starfleet and they're all men.

KAYLA: Also they're all in the same place. Great job guys.

JARRAH: Yeah. But if you look back to the TOS movies, you know the conference room scenes like that are far more gender and racially-diverse, and even some of the TOS episodes like "Court Martial." I was watching—the panel of judges is all men, but there's four different races and there's a woman lawyer, there's women of color being interviewed as witnesses. So the fact that the JJ-verse Starfleet administration is so heavily white male, I think it makes Kirk's flirtatiousness almost more problematic because you can see it as like an outcome of this power structure.

GRACE: A majority exerting its control.

JARRAH: Yeah and that it might be harder for women and people who aren't in that power structure to resist that.

KAYLA: Now that you're mentioning that, I'm also starting to realize that the people behind the scenes of Star Trek seem to be all white males too, at least for the JJ-verse.

GRACE, ANDI and JARRAH: Yeah.

KAYLA: Where are the strong female people producing or writing anything? I mean maybe I'm missing something.

JARRAH: Excellent questions. We've definitely had a lot of requests to talk more about the JJ-verse on the podcast. I think we're planning on doing an episode on that in the future and I'd definitely love to explore the behind-the-scenes stuff more.

KAYLA: Yeah, I guess I might be missing people. You know, I don't know, I haven't looked into that, but they're all—the first people you name are JJ, Orci and Kurtzman.

ANDI: Damon Lindelof.

KAYLA: Yeah Lindelof—they're all white guys.

ANDI: I mean part of that is too, is that J.J. Abrams has like this crew of writers and directors that he closely works with all the time. So he's worked with a lot of these people before. But yeah it does

translate to some pretty tone-deaf moments. I mean Carol Marcus dropping her clothes is definitely—they got a lot of flak for that and rightly so.

KAYLA: Yeah, rightly so.

ANDI: So in general do we think that Kirk is a womanizer? That's kind of the million-dollar question isn't it?

GRACE: Depends on your definition of womanizer.

KAYLA: I would argue that he is not a womanizer, but I would also say that the stereotype of if you walk up to someone on the street and say, "Tell me about Captain Kirk," that that's one of the character traits they would list, but whether or not that reflects what was actually the content of The Original Series I think is not so straightforward.

JARRAH: Yeah I think it's mixed. I think it has more to do with actually how the women were written in The Original Series than it does with Captain Kirk, because there are many, many episodes that reflect the same patterns, only it's like the woman who's in love with Spock that episode, or the woman who's in love with Scotty or the woman who's in love with Chekov, and I think that it's more about the fact that Kirk was a Captain and supposed to be sort of the epitome of masculinity that this just happened a lot more often.

But I mean, I think that it's a problem when he's clearly being really condescending to them and when they're sometimes portrayed as like less than intelligent. It's not so much a problem in the cases where the women clearly have free choice. They're independent and their relationship is being honestly communicated. So it's not like, you know, he has to want long-term relationships with everyone and that would be better, it's just about, you know, being honest about what's happening and respectful.

ANDI: And making sure that the female characters aren't there simply to sleep with Kirk or be a plot device.

JARRAH: Yeah, they're usually there to sleep with someone. It's not always Kirk.

ANDI: I think it's interesting though, you were saying kind of like Kirk being the Captain, and you know, I think that there was definitely a very strong feeling in the 60s that, you know, this like male hero and it kind of goes back to why, when I started watching The Original Series I called them Kirk's Bond girls, basically. It's a way to show that your hero is like virile and in charge. I don't know. They use it as a shorthand to make him feel more heroic, which really doesn't work as well as I would like, at least not for me.

KAYLA: He's the guy who gets the girl, you're saying.

ANDI: Yeah, exactly.

GRACE: Except it's a different girl every time.

KAYLA: Right.

ANDI: Yeah. The hyper-masculinity and the numerous women, because he is so heroic that women are drawn to him kind of thing, and I think that's a pretty common way of writing male heroes, especially at that time, and to be honest even now we still have heroes that are written that way.

JARRAH: So we should probably try and wrap things up.

ANDI: Yeah.

JARRAH: Oh, the only additional thing I was just going to say was that sort of the definition of womanizer I think implies deception, and I'm generalizing but I think that most of the time when Kirk uses deception in terms of seduction, it's when the woman is evil and he's using it as a weapon. So for

example in "Catspaw." So I don't think that's an issue, it just highlights a double-standard because when women use sexuality as a weapon it perpetuates a huge stereotype about women as, like, black widows that you can't really trust.

So, I mean, I don't see it so much as a problem, except for what it implies about women when they do that, and what it implies about women that they can't resist the amazing charms of Captain Kirk.

GRACE: He's irresistible, dontcha know?

JARRAH: But I think most of the time when he's actually interested in even having like a fling with someone he is pretty upfront and respectful and not forceful or manipulative or deceptive.

GRACE: He is what we call in some circles an "ethical slut," endearingly.

ANDI: Yeah, I mean I don't, just in general I don't have a problem with the idea that Kirk sleeps with people. I mean why would I? He's an adult. He can do what he wants. Except for I think only one—was her name Helen? There aren't any crewmembers that he sleeps with, or current crewmembers. So I don't really see why it would be a problem if he wanted to have sexual relationships outside his, you know, his workplace. I just wish that they had allowed him to have more interesting love interests than the handful that were cool.

GRACE: That would have been nice.

JARRAH: And I wish that we occasionally got to see women in the same situation instead of more often what happens when women do that, that they're just judged really harshly.

KAYLA: Yes I do agree with you guys. I would not call Kirk a womanizer. I would say that there are moments where he has bad one-liners when the attitude is sort of, "Women are such a bother." And I think that stems more from inconsistent writing of his character and I would say overall if you looked at Captain Kirk as a character aside from those one-off moments, that I would argue don't really fit. I think you're right that he's not, you know, forcing himself upon women when he does use his sexuality. Like you say, it's against someone who's evil, or it's justified.

GRACE: Yeah. Do you guys want me to go into my summation?

ANDI: Oh god, I'm going to laugh again.

GRACE: In summation, we've established that Kirk has hooked up with a lot of women, and in turn a lot of women have hooked up with Kirk, and there's nothing wrong with that. What happens when a pair of consenting adult humanoids meet when crossing the vast expanses of space is their own business. They set neither a standard or substandard by doing so, as long as they treat each other like people. Maybe the important thing is that we need to clear the Vaseline off the lens of pop culture to see a clearer picture. A female character can be more than a conquest, but that doesn't mean the conquest is any less of a character.

ANDI: I love it.

GRACE: This is my first time writing it an outro, OK?

ANDI: No I loved it. I'm really excited that we got to have such an epic first guest. Thanks for coming, Kayla.

KAYLA: Oh thanks for letting hang out with you guys. It's been fun, like, chatting about Star Trek with you.

JARRAH: We'll have to have you back for sure.

KAYLA: Yeah, I'd love to.

ANDI: Well thanks everyone for joining us for our discussion on Kirk's love interest. If you're interested in finding out more about Women at Warp you can check us out at our website, <http://womenatwarp.com> or follow us on Twitter @womenatwarp. If you have any questions or suggestions for upcoming episodes, feel free to email us at crew@womenatwarp.com. And lastly, feel free to join our discussion page on Facebook called, you guessed it, Women at Warp, where you can talk to other fans about Star Trek in general, and any thoughts you have on our show. I'm Andi. You can find me on Twitter @FirstTimeTrek, where I'm live-tweeting my first time through the Star Trek universe.

GRACE: And I'm Grace. You can find me on Twitter @bonecrusherjenk and you can find my writing on the Mythcreants blog.

JARRAH: I'm Jarrah, and you can find me at <http://trekkiefeminist.tumblr.com>. Thanks for listening.