

Episode 63: Cupid Be a Fickle Archer

Jarrah: Hi and welcome to Women at Warp: A Roddenberry's Star Trek Podcast. Join us as our crew of four women Star Trek fans boldly go on our biweekly mission to explore our favorite franchise. My name is Jarrah and thanks for tuning in. Today with us we have crew members Grace...

Grace: Hey everybody.

Jarrah: And Sue!

Sue: Hidey-ho neighborinos!

Jarrah: And we also have a special guest, Heather!

Heather: Hi guys. I'm so excited to be here. Thank you so much for asking me to join you.

Grace: We're so happy to have you out.

Jarrah: Yeah, we're super excited. Heather, why don't you tell our audience a little bit about yourself and how you came to be interested in Star Trek.

Heather: Oh, fun, fun, fun. I'll try to make it short because it could be really long. So I have only been a hard core Trekkie since about 2009. It wasn't quite the new movies that got me into Star Trek. I had watched Enterprise live; that was my first Trek. Yeah, as you can imagine it really wasn't the best introduction to Star Trek and I lost interest around the second season. I did watch all of it but I didn't pay a ton of attention. And you know a lot of people think that the third and fourth season are the better seasons, you know, but it still has a little bit of a soft spot because it was my first Trek.

But when the J.J. Abrams movies came out, the 2009 film, I decided that it would be really fun to go to a Star Trek convention and Google led me to Creation's Star Trek Las Vegas which is the biggest Star Trek convention in the US. And I went and I have gone every year and since my fandom has completely evolved.

I've watched all of Star Trek, although I've got three episodes of The Animated Series left, but it's really been connecting with the fans and the community that has just fueled my love of Star Trek. I love the franchise itself. I love all of the lessons that we get from the series, but the passion of the fans and just the quality of these people. I've just met so many amazing people, including all of you. And so that led me to create the Shore Leave Podcast, which I co-host with my friend Jeff Hult on the [Tricorder Transmissions network](#). And that is my Star Trek story.

Jarrah: Yay. Well we are thrilled to have you. And before we get into our main topic, which is Enterprise-related, we just have our usual housekeeping announcements to do. So first of all I want to remind you about the Women at Warp Patreon. We are a listener-supported show, which means we rely on you to, you know, get this show audio- and web-hosted and tried to get out to conventions to do promotion and to get materials printed and things like that. So if you're able to support us, you can hop on over to patreon.com/womenatwarp and pledge a small monthly donation. In exchange you get access to exclusive bonus content. So that's that's one of the things.

Another housekeeping item is another way you can help us, as a show, is to leave us a rating and/or review on iTunes. It helps people find our show! And so if you're able to leave us a reading or view on iTunes, thank you. And thanks to everyone who has done so already.

Sue: Just real quick we don't mention it a whole lot but we are also on the Google Play store and on the stitcher app.

Grace: Yes we are all over the Internet, if you know where to look for us.

Sue: And there are places to leave ratings and reviews just about everywhere you can find us.

Jarrah: Yes. And then the final item of housekeeping for this episode is that it is convention season! Grace and I will be heading to Star Trek Las Vegas, along with Heather!

Grace: Vegas is the less terrible version of Risa.

Jarrah: Yeah we're still waiting for, you know, the schedule and the full details in terms of where we're going to be in terms of panels and meetups and things. But if you are following our Facebook page, we will be posting the information there for sure. And I would love to connect with you listeners at some point at Star Trek Las Vegas! And Sue, you have some conventions you are hitting up as well.

Sue: Yeah the biggest one coming up for me is Dragon Con and I was just recently confirmed as an Attending Professional this year.

Grace: Aww, yeah!

Sue: Yeah, it's pretty cool. But basically what that means is that I will be searchable in the app, so you can look for me and see my full schedule of panels. And yeah, that's exciting, that's Labor Day weekend. And then there's some smaller stuff that I'll be doing with some Star Wars fan groups in the fall heading up to New York Comic-Con.

Jarrah: Amazing. Any other housekeeping that I missed?

Grace: We're recording on my birthday so I am holding onto the right to be completely insufferable.

Sue: Yeah, it's Grace's birthday.

Grace: Yeah!

Jarrah: And because we thought, you know, what better present could we offer Grace than to make her rewatch quite a few episodes of Enterprise involving Captain Archer and romantic relationships.

Grace: Let's be real: my disdain is the gift that keeps giving back.

Jarrah: So yes, this is a continuation of our series "Oh Captain, My Captain."

Grace: I believe it's pronounced (in a sultry voice): "Captain."

Jarrah: I don't think I can say it that way with Archer.

Grace: How about (exasperated voice): "Captain"?

Jarrah: And so this is where we take a look at the captains and their, well in most cases, lady loves. And so we invited Heather on as a little bit more Enterprise expert than the rest of us. And we're going to talk about Archer's love interests and, you know, he doesn't have a ton. I was actually kind of surprised, like you know there was a lot of effort made to kind of sexy up Enterprise after Voyager, but Archer doesn't really have a lot of like making out with green skinned spacebabes - like once in four seasons. At least with green skin. But the first one comes on pretty quick, which is Riann in the early season one episode "Civilization."

This is the one where she's the apothecary on the planet where the future guy is like irradiating people with technology or something.

Grace: Rude.

Jarrah: Did anyone have any thoughts on this episode?

Sue: Well this felt very much to me like they were trying to like Kirk-ify Archer, right?

Grace: Not very well, also.

Sue: No, realized almost immediately that that was not the way to go with this character.

Grace: Yeah I guess we're lucky in that respect that they did realize that.

Sue: Well yeah but it felt the whole thing from, like, "Well we shouldn't interfere with this planet but we're going to do it anyway," to like every point of this plot felt very TOS.

Jarrah: I was just going to say that I think like Riann is actually one of the better ones in this list in that they repeatedly talk about how advanced she is compared to what they would expect for her civilization's stage of development. She's an apothecary but she's using these advanced forensic techniques. She's got...basically she's sciencing and investigating on her own. She's putting herself in danger to try to basically be an epidemiologist. And so I thought that she was kind of cool as a character.

Heather: Yeah I completely agree with both sentiments here. It felt very TOS to me. I did think that out of the few choices love interest that we had she as a character was certainly the most appealing to me. I liked their chemistry together. I felt she was a pretty strong character. She was so assertive. I love that she just started asking him questions off the bat and he would ask her a question and she would respond with a question. But, we have a certain scene in this episode that took that all away from me, and that would be the kiss that happened. How did you guys feel about that kiss?

Jarrah: The "Hey my translator's not working" kiss?

Heather: Yeah.

Jarrah: That felt very Kirk-ian to me, even though I think Kirk might have actually had like more respect for the situation.

Grace: Gosh, what does that say also when you're saying, "I just feel like Captain Kirk would have taken this more seriously"? That's very telling of the scale we're working on.

Heather: It was, it was unfortunate. And when I was doing some research on this episode, I think it was on Memory Alpha, they were like, "Well, she didn't object to it." And I was like, well she tried to actually say something and then he just kissed her again to shut her up. And then he said, no she didn't object, but she was kind of like, okay? She wasn't like, oh yeah I'm totally into this, either.

Jarrah: Oh yeah. I mean he lies about what happened. He's like, "Oh I saw someone and I had to, you know, think fast," instead of, "I had to think fast because I'm actually an alien from the future who can't speak your language and I'm masquerading as one of you and I've been lying all along."

Sue: Can we just get rid of the kiss as a silencing tactic trope?

Grace: Yeah, it's pretty nasty.

Sue: Just erase it from all of media please? Because it's terrible.

Heather: It's just so unfortunate because I thought she had potential. I mean she was a scientist and she was assertive. And I I liked her character. But then that happened and then of course in the end she just like, "Oh yeah, sure." And then off he goes and that's the end.

Jarrah: Yeah. So that was a little unfortunate for sure. I mean, you know, you run into these questions about, you know, I would say you can probably assume she's attracted to him, but if she doesn't actually have any idea about who he really is, and he's actually outright lying about who he is...

Grace: It's kind of coercive.

Jarrah: Yeah, or manipulative at least. But yeah, I mean, maybe the problem was that she was *too* smart...

Grace: Let's go for that!

Jarrah: ...because almost the first scene in this episode is basically Archer and Trip being like jocks making fun of the nerds.

Grace: That's something that we can never get enough of!

Jarrah: Yeah, because they're basically, you know, T'Pol's like, "Oh, we should go look at the supernovas," and Archer's basically like, "Pfft. Science? Lamé."

Grace: "Nerd alert."

Sue: Because making fun of nerds is definitely something Star Trek fans can identify with.

Jarrah: Well it's just really a contrast, because I just watched "The Q and the Grey" where they are on the bridge basically applauding, like giving a standing ovation to a supernova because they're so excited about science.

Grace: Bit of a whiplash there, isn't it?

Jarrah: Yeah, like let's, you know, let's go dramatically U-turn from where we were wit Voyager and let's just have the captain and the tactical officer and the engineer just like hating on science 'cause it's so dumb.

Grace: Brah, we went to space to escape from the science, brah.

Heather: Well, I will say that I did enjoy her making the tea, and kind of telling him what to do and then he's like, "Oh, what have I made?" She's like, "Tea."

Jarrah: Yeah it was I don't know. I mean I thought when I did my first watch of season one, I was like, this episode was not the worst. So yeah go, ahead of her time lady scientist. And she wasn't like super overtly sexualized or anything. Like she wasn't walking around in like super sexy clothes or whatever, it was just like, this is it.

Heather: And she and T'Pol have some dialogue together, which is great.

Jarrah: Okay cool, so we have a couple of options for where we could go next. There are a couple that I don't even think we really need to discuss because they are not ever shown; they're just mentioned. So there's a couple like Archer's past loves mentioned: Margaret Mullin and Caroline, but I don't think that they really show us anything about him.

Grace: For the record, though, Margaret Mullin totally sounds like a fake name you would pull out of your ass to be like, "Yeah, I've had plenty of exes...there was...Margaret Mullin, and Katie Katherton and...Allie?"

Jarrah: Sue Smith? Jessica Jones? Ok, that's a superhero.

Sue: We don't know anything about the women but we do learn a little bit about Archer, at least for him when he's talking, I think it's about Margaret. That's the one he proposed to.

Jarrah: Oh yeah.

Sue: So I mean we know that at least at one time he was interested in having, if not like a family with kids, at least a wife, a partner, in his life who - it made me roll my eyes a little bit - didn't want to be a "Starfleet widow."

Heather: Didn't we all roll our eyes at that one?

Jarrah: Yeah, "Starfleet widow," oh geez. I mean I guess there's that kind of sentiment a lot in the Original Series, this idea that, you know, you wouldn't really have a partner on a ship. The only time you see like a married couple is in the one where they get married at the beginning in "Balance of Terror" and then the guy is dead by the end of the episode. So I mean I guess they're trying to sort of hearken back to that, but it's kind of it's weird.

Sue: Well the salt vampires are married, too.

Heather: I think if anything that probably that probably speaks to the fact that it was the beginning when the ships were going out and things were still very dangerous and hadn't been explored.

Grace: Wait, the ships were going out too? Oh my gosh everyone's pairing up.

Heather: But you know maybe there is just there was riskier and and what not. That's the only way I could really take from that.

Sue: It's just the, you know, the terminology that that is used feels very like it was the Great War, you know?

Grace: Back in Ye Olde Space Days, it was different.

Jarrah: I'm totally an Enterprise/Columbia shipper. I think it's technically slash.

Grace: The important thing is that we all have ships to ship.

Jarrah: So then chronologically we have Keyla in "Two Days and Two Nights." Oh ye,s I was going to say, so like Archer doesn't get married. He does get a dog, which helps helps him meet Keyla, who also has a dog, in "Two Days and Two Nights."

Sue: Even though how does she have a dog, because she's never heard of Earth?

Jarrah: Yeah but it's like one of those weird hairless-y ugly dogs that completely could be an alien.

Grace: So it's supposed to be a space dog?

Sue: Then why didn't they put the dog into a unicorn costume?

Grace: See, they weren't even trying.

Sue: We all know that that's what space dogs look like. We have been given a raised bar from the Original Series on the amount of silly stuff you're willing to put on a dog to make it look like an alien. And this just backtracks so far, it quantum leaped back!

Jarrah: Yeah, it's kinda interesting, it's like, well we learn what Archer really wants is a lady who also has a dog who happens to be close in proximity to him.

Grace: That's what he wants: convenience.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Grace: My God, he's got the dating criteria of Liz Lemon.

Sue: See in this episode Sam Beckett leaps to Risa, where...

Jarrah: Where he basically hides out in those corridors until he happens to meet this woman who then like, I don't know, I don't find her particularly interesting. She turns out to be a spy. But like that's it.

Heather: Yeah. There's not much to her character and since she's a spy we don't learn much about her. Once the dogs go...you know, by the way with the dogs, how did her dog even get up there?

Grace: Yeah it's a teleporting dog because it's an alien, clearly.

Heather: It must be.

Jarrah: I feel like she must have obviously put the dog there so that she had an excuse to come over. Except for like how didn't he know that? Or he didn't care. (

Grace: I will say you know, based on her the, "Oh, she's a spy," thing, I've got an elaborate theory that I'm actually really fond of for this episode. She's not actually a spy. She just really went out of her way so that she wouldn't have to talk to Archer anymore. It was just kind of like, "Well this was fun for the first couple of hours but I'm a spy! It'll never work. Bye, don't call me."

Jarrah: Wow. Well that's definitely a new technique that is possibly more effective than the fade-away.

Grace: Some people ghost. Some people make up a secret cabal to whisk them away, that they can never contact people outside of.

Jarrah: Yes, I mean I think part of the thing was they were setting her up to be some player in an alien dispute but then that dispute never materialized into a larger story. So it just kind of got left.

Grace (sarcastically): Are you saying that there were other concepts that wasn't followed through with on *Enterprise*?

Jarrah: Ouch.

Heather: I'd say the biggest thing I took away from this episode was T'Pol giving Archer the copy of the Teachings of Surak, which I think speaks of their relationship, which we'll talk about later.

Jarrah: Yes, also dog-related.

Heather: But I was so distracted by the other storylines going on, like can we just talk about Hoshi's story?

Sue: So much of this episode is so upsetting.

Jarrah: I think we can declare a three minute break in our main topic to just like get it out about "Two Days and Two Nights."

Grace: Oh my god, it's so...ugh.

Sue: Trip and Malcolm are so transphobic; it makes me so angry and they're so super gross in the bar and then that guy who's picking up Hoshi. And again there's the the kiss trope. It's just, it makes me so mad!

Grace: Also can we just acknowledge that the guys are just being the most obnoxious tourists ever, kind of? It's like oh my god, guys, have you never traveled in your life?

Heather: Yeah.

Jarrah: Yeah, but like literally they're like, "Oh, that's a super attractive woman," and then basically their banter indicates that it would be more socially acceptable for one of them to be attracted to, like, an alien with multiple eyes than another man.

Grace: Nice going, writers. You really gave us that progressive future we were all looking forward to.

Yeah.

Jarrah: And then at the end they like get seduced by these women who turn out to be men, and it's like this biggest humiliation that we must never talk about.

Sue: Yes, they're not humiliated that they were robbed, they're humiliated that they were, like, lured...

Jarrah: Seduced by men.

Sue: ...and seduced by men.

Grace: Yeah. That's one of those things where at the end of the day if you did find out about that you'd like guys I'm so sorry to tell you this, you're idiots!

Sue: They're the worst.

Jarrah: I mean at least Hoshi got to have like a hot one night stand.

Grace: Good for Hoshi.

Sue: I think I still think her alien guy was gross.

Heather: Yeah, there's still something very weird about that. And I think it's very much lacking an actual woman's perspective. So yeah it's you know, I'm glad that she got laid, but that there was just not a great way to do that story.

Grace: There's a lot to be disappointed in about this episode. But at the end of the day I'm just disappointed at myself for sitting all the way through it.

Jarrah: Well yes. I wrote a review of this episode for Trekkie Feminist called "Dudebros in Spaaaaace!" if anyone feels like checking that out. But for now let us move on to more significant love interests. I would say that there's only really a couple really significant ones. And even then they only really are significant in a couple of episodes, but probably one of our more controversial ones is T'Pol, who we first learn Archer...well I mean there are there are a few occasions of him asking her to go to the movie nights and sort of joking that it would be a date, which again like more creepy boss behavior, but in "A Night in Sickbay," which is the time where Archer's dog gets really sick and he decides to screw diplomacy because, damn those aliens who got his dogs sick, and Phlox...

Sue: Why did you bring your dog on a diplomatic mission anyway?

Jarrah: And then Phlox is like, "Actually you really just want to go bang T'Pol, and then Archer has weird fever dreams about making out with T'Pol after his dog's funeral."

Grace: Good God.

Heather: This is the one...so it opens with a decon scene and then there's more decon scenes later. And again this is why Enterprise being my first Star Trek was just not...Thanks for making me feel very uncomfortable. And I've had men tell me, oh well you know, Captain Archer's there in his underwear.

Grace: Yeah, but it's Captain Archer!

Heather: I have to say that what I've really taken away from this and all the episodes is that Archer's greatest love is Porthos.

Grace: Pretty much.

Jarrah: Clearly.

Heather: But yeah, this, oh gosh I don't even know where to start with this episode. It makes me want to throw up in my mouth a little bit. Maybe someone else should start and then I'll jump in.

Jarrah: I would say like, you know, this whole episode there's a lot of cringe-worthy moments for Archer, when you're...you know if anyone was going to take him into a "Who's the best Captain?" match, you wouldn't want to have someone raise this episode, because it's like the number of times that he decides that his dog, who he brought down to the planet you know, took the risk to do so, is more important than repairing the ship.

Grace: You know I feel like this entire episode would be shown like during his court martialing. This is part of their clip show for that.

Sue: Yeah, I mean I'm not about to claim that I would choose the the ship over my cats, but I'm also not captain, nor would I take my cats on a diplomatic mission to an unknown planet.

Jarrah: Yeah and just the amount of disdain he has for the hoops they're making him jump through. Instead of, like, fascination with new life and new civilizations.

Grace: He has a very "your culture is different and therefore stupid" attitude.

Sue: He even gets mad at Phlox because they don't have pets on Denobula.

Jarrah: Yeah. Like, "You just eat your animals, what do you know?" And you know, Phlox is the one who basically kind of gets him thinking about T'Pol and kind of suggests there's been some tension there before. But also there's this undercurrent of sort of what we talked about in the past, this idea that like, you're upset - all you need is a good lay, which is usually something that's put on women, but in this case is kind of put on Archer.

Grace: And still just pretty dumb and also kind of diminishing a lot of people and saying that they can be reduced to their sex drives...it's really insensitive. If have to see that used as a plot point one more time of oh, "They're a jerk but they really just need to get laid," no. Sex is not a magical cure-all for personalities.

Jarrah: And then you know you're going through this episode and more and more just being like "Whyyyy," and cringing and then it gets to the end and like you actually have him being like, "Yes think that would be breast...I mean best," and you're just like, "How did someone read this and it actually got filmed?"

Grace: There are so many things about this episode where you have to just kind of pause it and think to yourself. Hang on, someone thought this is an idea and then wrote it down, other people said, yeah okay. And then they got other people to act it out.

Sue: I think they just printed out a fanfic. And acted it out. But I feel like that's the kind of like fake Freudian slip joke that makes it into like parody fanfics, for real.

Jarrah: Yeah, like I don't know that that happens in that obvious a way in real life.

Heather: I've never had that happen to me, but this did make me think about my own personal situations and when men have had sexual feelings towards me and have just been weird around me. And at the end of those, like T'Pol's response to him, it's almost like suggesting that, oh well you know there could be something. And I just can't imagine any woman receiving like ,having that happen to her, having someone make those slips, being well aware of those slips and then responding in kind.

I'm just I'm not an Archer/T'Pol shipper. I very much feel that they are more similar to Kirk and Spock, and I know we have Kirk and Spock fic in another world and it's not...I always feel like oh I'm just saying this because, you know, she's a Vulcan and Spock was a Vulcan. I just feel like they have much more of a kindred very close friend relationship. And so when this episode came up it just it made me feel so uncomfortable myself. And then it made me feel uncomfortable for her and I just did not understand why they would decide that that kind of response from her would be warranted or something she would do.

Sue: Well it just seems so out of character for him, too. He's not like, you know, the young kid on his first mission who's nervous around girls.

Grace: He's not Wesley Crusher, dammit.

Sue: Right, exactly. He's clearly had past relationships. He has proposed so someone in the past. He is supposed to be this great leader. Are we really supposed to believe that he'd feel such sexual tension or such feelings around someone that he'd get tongue-tied in a work situation and not be able to speak to them coherently? I just don't buy it.

Grace: I feel like that speaks to Archer as a character, though. He's *supposed* to be this great leader.

Heather: Maybe he was just very stressed out because of Porthos.

Archer: You don't understand, guys, my dog was sick!

Jarrah: Okay, we're, like, real animals lovers here and I don't know about youm but I was not empathizing. I was not buying the amount of empathy they were asking for here.

Heather: I was really bothered by the fake Porthos. Like, how dumb do you think we are?

Grace: It's a little like one of those creepy real baby dolls, but a dog.

Heather: Yeah.

Jarrah: I will say though that like on that I think that's a really interesting point about Kirk and Spock versus Archer and T'Pol. I think that I agree with what you're saying about the...they both have like a really deep friendship, and I see that with Archer and T'Pol. However, I think that Kirk and Spock, throughout the whole run of The Original Series, come across a lot more as equals, even though Kirk is the captain.

But like T'Pol is not only literally his subordinate, but he spends a lot of the early episodes like putting her down, trying to get her to change, like, insulting her science stuff as interesting enough. And so to...

Grace: Being a racist to her.

Heather: For sure.

Jarrah: Yeah insulting, like you know, wanting her to be more human and less Vulcan. So to see her have feelings for him, I find it kind of disturbing, and that is even more so in the next episode, which is "Twilight," which is the one where you find out that he lost his short term memory saving her. And so she's decided to nurse him for 12 years, and like every day have to explain to him what happened, and is basically totally in love with him and quit her job to nurse him.

Grace: I never thought I would say this in a million years but I found the Adam Sandler movie more tolerable.

Sue: I think the other thing that's going on with T'Pol and Spock and the difference is, there is Spock being half human, you know, seems though to have a better control or better rein on his emotions. Right? We know he has them. We know that Vulcans suppress them. But, like, he can be sassy and he knows what a joke is. And he's he's in on it, and T'Pol is still like, especially before they find the Kir'Shara, and these are like before the Vulcans that we know from TOS.

I feel like we see her struggle a lot more with what she's supposed to do with her emotions and what she's not. And you can see it in a lot of these episodes where she is showing this emotion and being berated by the Vulcans and still being told by Terrans that she's not showing enough emotion. So she is in a much more conflicted spot, I think, than Spock ever is and feels, you know, Spock is the perpetual outsider. But I would argue that T'Pol is even more of an outsider on Enterprise.

Jarrah: Yeah, absolutely. Grace, do you have the outline in front of you and do you want to read the last Facebook comment?

Grace: Sure. I'm excited to read this one because I feel like I get to emote in order to read it. Sarah on Facebook says: "I HATED the episodes where they tried to make something between Archer and T'Pol. Particularly Twilight. It was so untrue to T'Pol's character. A Vulcan woman in the prime of her career, giving up everything to care for a disabled boss who had always ignored her or dismissed her input (usually with some patronizing explanation of why he was morally superior to her). And the reason the writers gave was that she felt guilty he was injured while trying to save her, which goes completely against her Vulcan character. Angry face! 😡"

Jarraah: It's like an angry-cringe face. So thanks for that comment and emoji, Sarah. Thoughts. More thoughts on "Twilight?" Actually "Twilight" was the only time that I bought chemistry between Archer and T'Pol. I actually felt emotionally connected to what was happening in the episode, even though.

Sue: It was so *Fifty First Dates*.

Grace: Yeah.

Sue: Meets *Frame of Mind*.

Heather: Yes. I wondered if this was actually like the perfect relationship for her, and that while she struggled so much, like he forgets everything.

Grace: One where he's completely and totally dependent on her?

Heather: Yeah.

Sue: Well and really she can determine what their relationship is every day.

Heather: Exactly.

Sue: Even if she doesn't want to deal with him one day she's just...

Jarraah: It'd be cool to see some of the other days where she's just like, "Captain Archer. I am the President of the Universe. You are my manservant."

Grace: "You have been declared dog boy of the universe. Bark for me, dog boy, bark!"

Sue: Not that that would be ethical.

Grace: Unless they're both into it.

Jarrah: Yeah, it was a little bit sad and disturbing. I mean it's not unprecedented. You know it shows that same kind of loyalty that we see from Spock towards Pike in "The Menagerie," that is also problematic, but this idea that you know, especially if the captain sustained that type of an injury for you, that you would feel guilt.

Absolutely. But this idea that she's like sort of pining for him but he can never love her back because he can't, he won't remember it, is like it's just very sad.

Heather: I think it's interesting that they use Phlox to keep, to just be the one who talks about these things. He's the one that was, you know, all "Archer, how long has it been since you've been laid?" and now he's you know, talking to T'Pol like, "Oh well, I know what you're feeling, are you going to tell him about your feelings?" et cetera.

Sue: Oh he's the one who's supposed to be more open, right? And I guess objective.

Jarrah: Yup.

Heather: I don't know if they do that because he's the doctor so he's also the psychiatrist here, guys.

Sue: He's also the one with, what, there are 70-something relationships 48 of which have sexual possibilities, something, something?

Jarrah: Yeah. I mean so, yeah, I have mixed feelings about this episode. I actually, like I can buy the relationship, but I don't really like why - I don't like their motivation behind it. Like, to have a relationship stemming from guilt and that can never be fulfilling on the other side is deeply tragic.

Heather: She does do a similar thing though in "Home," I noticed as we did watch that episode, and she, you know, basically was going to, you know, agreeing to this arranged marriage that she didn't want to be in, in order to get her mother reinstated into, was it the Academy of Science? I don't remember. So that's really the only the only reason that I would buy her, you know, becoming his caregiver, is because we see something similar there. But again I really didn't read it as as, you know, pining after him.

You know in the beginning I suppose it was just the guilt and her loyalty to him and I suppose that if you're with someone for that long, oh well, you know feelings might grow, but...

Grace: The aging up worked pretty well, actually, for this episode, just showing how the progression of time worked, you know.

Jarrah: Everyone with beards and longer hair. And some people with whiter hair.

Grace: And we get to see T'Pol changing looks over the years.

Heather: I don't buy that beard on Reed, though.

Jarrah: No, I didn't really either. It's the mirror universe! Sue, do you want to read the Facebook comment from Janet?

Sue: Archer/T'Pol shippers make their case by saying that Archer is better for her because he's less emotional than Trip. But Archer is also not as observant of people. More importantly, he and T'Pol have a very hard time letting others close to them. Erika is the only one I can see getting past his walls but even then, it's an open question. They don't spend a lot of time working through his problems in "Home."

Jarrah: So we'll get to Erika Hernandez in a second but any other concluding thoughts on Archer and T'Pol? What do we think, what does this say about him? We've talked a lot about what we think it says about T'Pol but I'm curious what your thoughts are on, what does it say about him?

Sue: I've just never really understood it, and whenever it's talked about in Enterprise it's talked about as a sexual attraction. It's not talked about as an emotional attraction or a romantic attraction, which I think I would buy... I'd buy more that it's just a sexual attraction because I couldn't see them together. Those two characters. Me neither.

Jarrah: Yeah, in the Memory Alpha article on Archer's relationships it talked about the episode "First Flight," which is when he recounts the story, when his friend A.G. Robinson dies, and he tells the whole thing to T'Pol and it says she basically like offers him a shoulder to lean on. She's certainly very loyal to him. But I don't really see chemistry between them, either romantic emotional or sexual.

Heather: I have to agree. I've just, I never bought it. I see a deep friendship there and I very much respect the friendship that they have, and while he is seemingly one that doesn't open up, once he stops talking down to T'Pol, he does develop that relationship and trust with her. And "First Flight" is a great example of him opening up and telling telling her a story that's difficult for him. But I just don't buy it unfortunately. I do buy T'Pol and Trip but that's another episode.

Jarrah: Yeah. And I mean we didn't get any comments from people who were defending Archer and T'Pol so if you're listening and you're like, "What?! Archer and T'Pol are the best couple ever," write us and let us know your feelings about that because like obviously there are shippers out there. So I would be interested and try to keep an open mind about that because, you know, obviously some of the writers thought there was some potential there too. So yeah.

Grace: And the writers thought that we would buy Phlox as some kind of paragon of non judgemental guru-ship, so...

Jarrah: Before we get to Erika, I just want to quickly touch on the other less significant one, at least for our episode, which is Navaar from "Bound." And the reason I'm saying less significant is partly just because we've already talked about her in our Orion Women episode and I'm pretty sure I remember talking about "Bound" at least one or two other times because...

Grace: We got a lot to say about it.

Jarrah: Yeah. Yeah there's there's issues there. So this would be the Orion woman who sold to Archer and then wants to please him and then they find out is actually a bad woman like the other women and trying to take over the ship.

Heather (sarcastically): But they're not really the slaves; it's the men that are the slaves, guys.

Grace: Therefore, the whole thing was okay!

Jarrah: So I guess what we learned about Archer from this episode is that he has not a ton of ethical qualms about accepting sex slaves. He doesn't actually, you know, intend to do anything without their consent. But once they just like verbally assure him about it, a couple of times he's all like, yeah I'm game.

Heather: He still accepts them as a gift. There's nothing there about actually giving them their freedom.

Jarrah: Well and this is after the episode where T'Pol is like traded in the Orion market.

Grace: That lovely shot where she is dangling like a rag doll.

Jarrah: Yeah, so like they know these guys are no good, and they're still just like, sure, hot women? We'll take those off your hands.

Heather: All of these episodes are just episodes that were not written with women in mind.

Grace: No. I feel that with a lot of Enterprise.

Sue. You know I'm not even sure we can classify her as a love interest so much as like a sexual encounter.

Jarrah: Sex interest?

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Heather: I would I would put her in Keyla kind of together.

Jarrah: I was going with women he kissed or almost kissed.

Sue: Well, if that's the definition...

Jarrah: All right, well we can move on, so let's talk a bit about Erika Hernandez and then maybe to end off we could talk about like what would we *like* to see if we got to make a love interest for Archer that would have been better than watching weird T'Pol-Porthos fever dreams.

So Erika Hernandez and we talked a little bit about her in our Women Captains episode. She's the captain of the Columbia and really like she's in a few episodes but the most important episode in terms of the love interest-ness, because they don't really do anything romantic in the other ones, is the episode of "Home," where they go on a romantic mountain climb.

Grace: Although let's be real. Which mountain climb isn't romantic?

Sue: Well as long as you have your magical gravity boots.

Grace: That's what makes it romantic, yeah!

Jarrah: Any thoughts on Erika Hernandez?

Sue: Erika is like the bright spot of Enterprise for me.

Heather: I think I could have had an Erika Hernandez Captain show and then Archer could have just been her love interest.

Jarrah: Yessss.

Grace: He could've just shown up once a season and been like, "Hey everybody, it's me, Guest Star Scott Bakula. How you doing?"

Jarrah: Yeah, like she takes trip onto Columbia and then Enterprise blows up, but not before like Phlox and T'Pol escape and maybe maybe Mayweather and Hoshi too because they didn't get a lot to do, but you know maybe not Reed.

Grace: Is it bad that every time I think the phrase "Trip goes to Columbia" I imagine him in Bio-Shock Columbia? The imagination is a wonderful thing.

Jarrah: Whatever works.

Heather: I still struggled with this episode some because, you know, it's great we have a female captain and we haven't seen one since for well, gosh, I think there was a mention of one beforehand. I can't remember. I'm terrible.

Jarrah: There's a mention of how there weren't any women captains beforehand and then they kind of decided like, yeah there were.

Grace: We lied.

Jarrah: Take a listen to our Women Captains episode for more background.

Heather: So you know we meet her, we learn that she's a captain so whoo! And then the next thing we find out is she's single and she's married to Starfleet, which at least she's married to Starfleet. But you know right away we set up that she's available for Archer and I understand that this is part of the story in the episode. I was just like yay and then, oh, really?

Sue: I felt like the whole relationship line was kind of a throwaway line. This is why our relationship didn't work, because blah, blah, blah.

Jarrah: Well she was his subordinate and now, and then she's like, "Well, I'm not your subordinate anymore. Let's make out on this mountain." And I mean I get it: he's Scott Bakula climbing a mountain.

Grace: Why is Scott Bakula climbing a mountain?

Heather: Why is he climbing a mountain?

Jarrah: To embrace the Erika Hernandez.

Heather: I like that she invited herself.

Jarrah: Yes. I mean, I also like that they didn't cast like a drastically younger woman.

Grace: That was definitely appreciated.

Jarrah: Yeah. They also cast a woman of color and she's the only other warp five ship captain out there. I think that was a really big missed opportunity. And in "Home" we get to see her like checking out the bridge, and she's like asking him about officers, but he seems really reluctant to kind of empower her. He's like, he's really he's very much Debbie Downer about the situation, having gone through this tremendous loss and it's like her, she's the one who's having to give him a reality check and almost the whole episode she's kind of just playing this role to emotionally support him, and like help him find his optimism again. So I thought that...

Grace: What's in it for her? Yeah.

Jarrah: Yeah, I mean Scott Bakula in a tank top.

Heather: As a love interest you know, ok but she also felt motherly sometimes too and that was just kind of weird to me.

Grace: I think we found a new version of the “manic pixie dream girl” here: the “I just want to mother and help you” love interest.

Heather: Yeah exactly.

Jarrah: It did feel a little like that, especially when she says like maybe, he's like, “I lost something out there” and she's like, “Maybe I can help you find it,” like that felt ver“manic pixie dream girl” to me even though in all other respects she doesn't really fit that...

Grace: We've got the level-headed, strong woman dream mother.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Heather: And then she's the one that's bringing up, “Oh why did we ever split up” and like you know, why did that have to be her?

Sue: Well I know this aired in 2004 but it feels very much like a reaction to 9/11 in the immediate aftermath to me, which a lot of later Enterprise is, let's be real. But like this episode in particular, and I think they were trying to give Archer this like heavy story of like, there's so much loss and you don't understand what it's like out there, and like that's real and that's important, and that's a worthy story to be told. But it's like couched within this whole like, “Oh, let me take care of you. I still care about you” sort of frame and it's not great.

And then sorry but the rest of the episode and the excuses for xenophobia and the violence and it's just, man it could have been done so much better. Like the what they're trying to do in this episode, I think the intentions were good and it just failed for me on a lot of levels.

Heather: Ultimately I think I would rather have just seen her as a colleague without any romantic involvement with him.

Sue: For sure.

Grace: Yeah.

Heather: I did really appreciate that that he does say that, you know, she inspires him in a way and that, you know, she is she reminds him of what he used to be. And I thought that was a nice compliment. But, I don't think they needed to have this romantic connection.

Grace: No, agreed.

Jarrah: I did like how she didn't let stuff get to her, like he was throwing out all this like, serious you know and valid concerns, but because of like, the power differential between them in terms of like her being a former subordinate, her being the second captain, her being a woman, I found it a little annoying. And then she's just like, "So what? Space is dangerous, you know?" So she was really like kind of unflappable and I liked that about her. Grace, do you want to read the Facebook comment from Chris, which sort of mirrors a bit of what Heather said?

Grace: Absolutely. Chris on Facebook says "Captain Hernandez was interesting enough on her own to stand up without needing the Archer romance to make her work. They could have cut that completely, except then they'd have no visible personal link left between the two captains. Except Archer never needed to have fondled A.G. Robinson, or Duvall, or his other male captain-peers. It was accepted that they'd just have engineering and spaceflight experience in common. But they just didn't write that shared professional experience in for Archer&Hernandez. We get to hear fairly little of her early career, and nothing else that strongly ties her to Archer."

Heather: Hear, hear.

Jarrah: Yeah, good point. I was like yeah, I don't actually know anything about her except she used to serve under Archer. They used to have a thing and she's now qualified to be captain.

Grace: Do you think that Archer just fondles a lot of other captains?

Jarrah: I don't get that sense.

Sue: "I bet you say that to all the warp five captains."

Grace: Ha ha ha.

Jarrah: I think that his first loves are Porthos and Enterprise.

Sue: But Porthos first.

Jarrah: Yeah, probably Porthos first.

Grace: You can only ride on one of those though. Not the dog; that would be terrible.

Jarrah: Cool so before we wrap up let's have a little brief chat about what would have made a better love interest for Archer, or maybe also what would have made Archer better for love interests.

Grace: Someone who he was on equal footing with. Because again. We have this thing with both Hernandez and T'Pol where they're both women who weren't, who are or have been in a position underneath him where he's got a level of authority over them. And that's just creepy. Not really cool to have a character who keeps pursuing relationships with women who are not in a position where they can 100 percent comfortably just give him the brush off. It's really uncomfortable and I think a character like Archer really could have stood to gain something from a character that he could...I don't want to say butt heads with...someone who he could sort of emotionally match wits with on equal footing.

That could have been cool that could have been, you know, brought the character's ego down to size a little more. There could have been potential there.

Heather: Archer meets Janeway.

Grace: Yeah!

Sue: Archer lives in this kind of in-between space, because they tried to make him like the cowboy type like Kirk was, but also like a little more military leader. And I feel like the characterization wavers a lot depending on the episode, so it's hard to say it like what would make him a better partner, like stability?

Heather: Figure yourself out.

Grace: A captain who's consistently written?

Jarrah: Right. Yeah I'm I think that's a good point. I'm having trouble thinking of anything too and I'm running through other captains, being like does he need to like to go back in time and then have to let die the woman that he falls in love with.

Sue: But there are some things that Archer, like we talked about in our episode on "Fusion" and "Stigma" where like in one episode Archer is a really great ally, like my crewman said this happened to her, she said he did it. I'm on her side. That's it, period.

Jarrah: And in the next episode he's super selfish.

Sue: Right, and like the next minute, the next episode, he could be like, you know, screw the prime directive that we don't quite have yet. Let's go down to this planet and dress up and infiltrate and like just the the morals and...not necessarily the moral, but just like you never know what he's going to do next. He's a loose cannon in a lot of ways.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Grace: Unpredictable but not intentionally unpredictable.

Sue: Right.

Grace: Just in a way that makes him seem a little..unstable.

Sue: His personality is whatever it needs to be for the plot that week.

Grace: Yeah, a little.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Heather: I think it's a sad tale of how much Enterprise really suffered from from having, you know, good writers and new stories and just a cohesive vision behind it. Although I do have to wonder if the tables were reversed and if Archer was a subordinate what would happen there?

Grace: Good question.

Jarrah: I mean I think that they could have done Archer and Erika more...better.

Heather: You know if they had brought her in more frequently and given us more of her development I think there would have...

Jarrah: The show wasn't around long enough, but also like if they had brought her in also as a captain flying her own ship before you saw that mountain climbing, that might have also just played a lot differently.

Sue: Or even if one of the things they talked about on the mountainside was like, "Remember that time in flight school where we got into this situation?" and we got some kind of history of connection between them.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: Yeah that was a good point. Cool. All right well we're about at time. So are there any final thoughts before we do the wrap up?

Heather: Team Porthos. That's what I have to say?

Grace: Trying to pick a favorite love interest for Archer is kind of like trying to decide between, again, what flavor is your mouth scalding mouthwash going to be?

Sue: Cinnamon!

Jarrah: All right, well if anyone else has differing opinions or similar opinions, any opinions really, we'd love to hear from you. You can e-mail our show at crew@womenatwarp.com or you can comment on our Facebook or our Twitter [@womenatwarp](https://twitter.com/womenatwarp). Or you can visit our website <http://womenatwarp.com>. So Heather, thank you so much for joining us. Where can people find you elsewhere on the interweb and find your podcast?

Heather: My podcast is at <http://shoreleavepodcast.com>. And if anyone wants a shout out on Twitter I'm [@LLAPawsper](https://twitter.com/LLAPawsper).

Jarrah: And Grace?

Grace: You can find me on Twitter [@bonecrusherjenk](https://twitter.com/bonecrusherjenk).

Jarrah: And Sue?

Sue: I'm on the tweets at [@spaltor](https://twitter.com/spaltor).

Jarrah: And I'm Jarrah and I'm on Tumblr at trekkiefeminist.com. So thanks so much for joining us everyone and we will talk to you in a couple of weeks.