

Women at Warp Episode 96: Lwaxana Troi

Grace: Hello, and welcome to Women at Warp, a Roddenberry *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 Grace and thanks for tuning in! With me this week we have Andi.

Andi: Hello.

Grace: And Jarrah!

Jarrah: [imitating Lwaxana Troi] Hello, little one.

Grace: Oh... Jarrah you're like the Lwaxana Troi of this podcast, I think.

Jarrah: Thanks?

Grace: In the sense that you're wise and knowing and kind of motherly to us all.

Jarrah: Yeah, I just can't rock those dresses.

Grace: I'm not even sure she could sometimes. All right, before we get into our main topic we have a little bit of housekeeping to do first. Our show is entirely supported by our patrons on Patreon. If you'd like to become a patron you can do so for as little as one dollar a month and get awesome rewards from thanks on social media to silly watch-along commentaries. Visit www.patreon.com/womenatwarp. You can also support us by leaving a rating or review on Apple podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts.

Jarrah: Also, news! This is exciting. As of today...

Grace: This IS exciting.

Jarrah: Yeah. If you have an Amazon Echo you can direct it to play our podcast by saying "Alexa" or whatever you named your Amazon Echo, "enable Women at Warp" and it will play our latest episode or offer you the opportunity to skip or turn back through catalogue. So, yay!

Grace: How cool/creepy is that? It's like we'll be in your house.

Jarrah: Definitely, and we posted a video on it on our social media so you can check that out if you want a sort of tutorial.

Andi: Next we're going to conquer the DJ Roomba market.

Grace: It's a slow moving market but we think it's got potential.

Jarrah: And then after that we're getting our own Netflix special.

Grace: Yeah. [dramatically] Then the world!

Jarrah: I thought that basically was the world.

Grace: It's a multi-step plan. World is end game. Netflix special is high up on the tail end of the list. You know it's end game adjacent, definitely.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Grace: So today we are going to be talking about the mother of all *Star Trek* topics that is Lwaxana Troi. Now, let's take a little minute here and see if anyone can off the top of their head remember her full title and then we'll look it up and see who got closest to it.

Andi: I can't. Something about the Chalice of Rixx.

Jarrah: Yeah. Yes. Holder of the Sacred Chalice of Rixx, Keeper of the Nine Holy Rings of Betazed, Daughter of the Fifth House.

Grace: Oh, you got it all. But out of order.

Jarrah: Tell us what it is.

Grace: Lwaxana Troi, Daughter of the Fifth House, Holder of the Sacred Chalice of Rixx, Heir to the Holy Rings of Betazed and eventually Ambassador to Betazed..

Jarrah: Someone needs to make a mnemonic of this.

Grace: I'm betting someone already has. I mean considering the pre and early Internet years and they couldn't Google this stuff as easily as we could. I'm sure someone has a handy mnemonic device. If not we're open to crowdsourcing it from our listeners.

Jarrah: Yeah. Or a flash card set. Either one.

Grace: [laughing] A flash card set: "Baby's First Memorization of all the titles of *Star Trek*".

Jarrah: Yes. You know baby Deanna had one.

Grace: "Baby's Guide to Fictional Politicians".

Andi: Was the Chalice of Rixx actually just like, a baby toy?

Jarrah: Don't they say in one episode it's like, an old vase or something.

Grace: It's an old wooden cup or something.

Jarrah: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Because there's on where Deanna's like, "Mother, the Chalice of Rixx is an old... something."

Grace: So is the Holy Grail! It could be the Holy Grail of Betazed, we don't know. We're not here to judge them culturally or religiously.

Jarrah: Yes.

Grace: That's not our game, man. It's not our game.

Jarrah: Except for naked weddings might be your game in which case... cool. No judgment.

Grace: That's you. More power on you. Don't invite people who are very clearly not going to be comfortable with it. Or let them know what to expect ahead of time.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Grace: Just keep an even keel there. So anyway for those of you who somehow haven't sussed it out yet, Lwaxana Troi is the character who is the mother of Counselor Deanna Troi on mostly *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and a few episodes of *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*. Does anyone else have anything to add to that description there?

Jarrah: No, except for I did just confirm that the Sacred Chalice of Rixx is an old clay pot with mold growing inside of it.

Andi: That doesn't make it not important, Jarrah.

Grace: It could be sacred mold.

Jarrah: Yeah. It's probably very ancient.

Grace: It could be valuable. I mean, you don't know, Deanna. Self loathing Betazed there. Betazoid.

Andi: If I am asked to explain Lwaxana Troi to somebody who is not a Trekkie I describe her as the space Auntie Mame.

Grace: The space Auntie Mame is pretty apt. She is loud, she is flamboyant and a snappy dresser and you wouldn't be totally caught off guard if she burst into song.

Jarrah: Yeah, and they created her with that brief, basically.

Grace: That was essentially Gene Roddenberry's pitch of the character to Majel Barrett who played the character.

Jarrah: It's like, "Yeah, I got a role for you. You don't have to act."

[laughter]

Grace: Sweet gig, right? You get to wear giant wigs, you don't have to actually act, and people treat you like you're a space queen.

Jarrah: I guess if Auntie Mame is like outside your cultural reference frame...

Grace: Then you're deprived, for one thing.

Jarrah: She definitely starts out as sort of a stereotypical overbearing mother-in-law, although as we will talk about, that evolves. But she's also a telepath. And she's also, in addition to meddling in her daughter's business, very interested in... in men.

Grace: She a flirt. Which is apparently a thing that's societally we're told older women aren't supposed to be. With older guys that's just natural. With older women [exaggerated whine] it's uncomfortable. That was my, "that's stupid and whiny" voice. So, to start off with the character as we've already described her, the phrase "stereotypical mother-in-law" comes up, why don't we address, just right off the bat, a few reasons why a lot of people really dislike this character. And that being chiefly, one of them, one of the excuses I've seen people bring up before that they don't like just the naggy older woman concept with her.

Jarrah: Yeah. I mean a lot of our listeners had comments about especially the first time watching "I found her really annoying" especially like, people watching as kids.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: And especially in her early episodes and listener Benjamin said his impression of her in the early episodes was quote "the stereotypical crazy sitcom Mom turned up to 11". But a lot of people's opinions evolved later on. But yeah there's a lot of I think resentment about older women taking up space.

Grace: Absolutely.

Jarrah: Especially like in like white western society, feeling like your parents should just get out of the way and let you live your lives. And you know the idea of having your mom turn up and flirt with your boss is... would be like, pretty embarrassing.

Grace: Yeah there's definitely an Endora factor to her, of her sort of main purpose in showing up is to be loud, overdramatic and to emasculate the male characters there. And a lot of people just instantly, you know, dislike that.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Grace: And again this is something that we are taught to view rather differently with male characters who do similar things. Like if an old man... we have this recurrent trope of older men showing up and you know hitting on everything that moves and we're just like, "Ohhh, that old dog." But if a woman does it it's where it's treated as just creepy and impossible to deal with.

Jarrah: Yeah. Like, "Oh, the outrageous Okona" That dude was sure charming and handsome.

Grace: Well, I mean specifically with like father characters. With older men we're taught that being kind of a hound and a scoundrel is just a charming thing but with women we see it barely represented and and when we do see it it's treated as this kind of ick factor.

Jarrah: Yeah. I think it's also just like, the age of the audience member that sometimes it's easier to put yourself, you know as someone who's not been older than my current age, watching *Star Trek*. Easier to put myself in the shoes of the main crew members than their parents.

Grace: Yeah, I know this is the oldest I've ever been.

Jarrah: Yeah, but I mean we've also heard from, in our episode we did about Majel Barrett, The First Lady of Star Trek, talked about how she got a lot of really positive feedback from middle aged women watching this show because they could really relate to her and thought it was awesome that she was brash and just doesn't take any shit.

Grace: I recently had my mother and most of my aunts enter middle age all within a couple of years of each other and the massive consensus I've heard from all of them is that, as soon as you become a middle aged woman people expect you to just kind of fade into the background. You are ignored, you are just looked at like you're a freak of nature if you so much as raise your voice in public, even if it's to get someone's attention.

Jarrah: And she... I mean, I think it's a testament though, the fact that they did keep bringing her back shows that there was a big... if not like people who... I'm sure there were people who wholeheartedly loved the character, but then also people who just thought that she was fun, or like a fun foil for some of the like, stuffier *Next Generation* crew.

Grace: Definitely! If she is a character trope, then she proves that that's a foil that people have liked seeing. And we mustn't discount the fact that she was married to executive producer.

Andi: And from a writing perspective she's a way to push boundaries and push characters out of their comfort zone.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Andi: I can see why writers would have wanted her to come back because she gives them a starting point.

Grace: She definitely... most of the time we see her act as a blocking character. And a lot of the time we automatically assume that blocking... assume characters who are blocking as being antagonistic. For one thing.

Andi: It's fun to see more straightforward and stiff characters like Picard or Worf have to deal with her. It's pretty funny.

Grace: That said, you can probably tell really clearly that we like this character a lot. And so did a lot of our listeners, from the comments we gathered. So we wanted to just elaborate a little bit on what we like about the character and what people seem to positively take from her, aside from interesting and well rounded portrayal of an older woman. In a position of authority no less.

Jarrah: Well, I mean that kind of sums it up.

Grace: [laughing] Got it in one!

Jarrah: I like that she is really kind of brazen? And funny. Like, "Mr. Woof!" And you know like on the one hand, you know I realize that you know, she is a telepath, she knows she's making people uncomfortable, she likes making people uncomfortable. That isn't necessarily like a positive trait or like a healthy trait but, it works I think, because you know that she is like mischievous and deep down she's a good person and that if anyone actually was like comfortable enough to tell her, that like, they'd like her to stop this, she would.

Grace: Yeah, it's more about her testing people's politeness boundaries of who's willing to tell her to stop.

Jarrah: Yeah, and like her culture is obviously way way more... liberal.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: Naked.

Grace: To say the least.

Jarrah: Sexual.

Grace: Open minded, one might say?

Jarrah: Yeah. So like she, she doesn't I think, take that as seriously as we would take it. Like, it's helpful to people, to be more open.

Grace: And as we mentioned earlier, she gets some wild ass outfits and what's not to love there? According to Robert Blackman, the costumer for a lot of the *Star Trek* series, Lwaxana was the character that he just really got to have fun with, because nothing was too big or over the top.

Jarrah: Mm-hm. And also she's got Mr. Homn, who's pretty fun.

Grace: Mr. Homn!

Jarrah: Yeah.

Grace: More characters just need manservants.

Jarrah: Valet.

Andi: I never remember his name. I always think of him as Lurch.

Grace: Same actor! So why not?

Jarrah: Armin Shimerman's head in a box.

Grace: What?

Jarrah: In Haven.

Grace: Oh my god, you're right!

Jarrah: Which is the only non-Ferengi role he's ever played.

Grace: Oh my gosh. Do you think he puts that on his resume?

Jarrah: Probably?

Grace: Head in box. 1988.

Jarrah: I mean, he stole that scene.

Grace: That's true. Well, yeah. I mean it's Armin Shimerman.

Jarrah: So should we talk about Haven a little?

Grace: Let's!

Jarrah: First appearance.

Grace: Let's talk about it! Who wants to summarize the episode for us. We can all try.

Jarrah: So, we find out that they have arranged marriages on Betazed. This is season one, and Troi is engaged to marry this human guy named Wyatt, who's got really really supple hair, and...

Grace: It's very Danielle Steel cover looking.

Jarrah: Yeah. And she's totally going to quit Starfleet and marry this dude and then like his parents are on board and her parents are on board and there is like, you know, *Meet the Parents*-type sitcom situation.

Grace: Comedy gold, don't you know?

Jarrah: And then Wyatt's like, disappointed because he's been like, dreaming of this lady that one of our commenters referred to as his "White Snake video dream girl".

Grace: [laughing] Oh, that's apt.

Jarrah: And he thought it was Deanna, but then when he met Deanna, it was a different woman.

Grace: You're not blonde!

Jarrah: But then through like telepathy they meet the blonde lady.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: And he goes up with her.

Andi: If we're talking about badass outfits you can't get much better than whatever that was. It's not even... what would you even call that? It's not quite a crop top, like both her stomach and her shoulders are completely bare.

Grace: I think that makes a bandage top.

Andi: Oh-kay.

Grace: Yeah. Let's go for that.

Jarrah: And Lwaxana has like a pet snake plant thing, which is awesome, and it's basically like Dharma and Greg. His parents are super stuffy, she's embarrassing everyone, she's hitting on Picard. A lot of our listeners weren't really super fond of this. It's a pretty bad episode.

Grace: And it does play into a ton of tropes.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Grace: Like, there are many that you see just coming a mile away.

Jarrah: Yeah, but listener Ann said, "I thought she was presented pretty well. She was funny, over-the-top and embarrassed the hell out of the captain which I enjoyed. But she also showed she can be serious and thoughtful when Wyatt," that's the guy with the nice hair, "came to her for help about his White Snake video dream girl."

Grace: Good lord. You've got to appreciate the different levels of hair quality throughout the years. Just purely represented by *Star Trek* alone.

Jarrah: Mm-hmm.

Grace: So we have our introductory episode there. Can anyone give us a brief refresher on the next episode on our list, Manhunt.

Jarrah: I mean if you don't mind me going again, I did just watch this.

Grace: Go for it. Go for it.

Jarrah: Oh man, this is a slow episode.

Grace: It's very slow.

Jarrah: They're delivering these Fishman delegates to their planet, diplomats, and for a summit. And one of them is Mick Fleetwood. They've got awesome costumes. They're called the Antedeans.

Grace: Again, can we just go back and acknowledge though that one of them is Mick Fleetwood. Oh my gosh!

Andi: Dressed up like jiffy pop.

Grace: He's like a jiffy pop with a fish head on top.

Andi: Amazing.

Grace: Fish on top jiffy pop.

Jarrah: It's amazing.

Grace: A-mah-zing. That right there is the high point of the episode.

Jarrah: Totally. Lwaxana is there because she is also a diplomat and she is also really jonesing for a guy.

Grace: She's on the prowl!

Jarrah: And so she is trying to hit on Picard. Hard. Yeah, she's like setting up... saying she's organizing diplomatic dinners but then only inviting Picard and trying to make it a romantic dinner. So Picard basically takes off and goes and hides in the Dixon Hill program.

Andi: That's what I would do.

Jarrah: And... not a lot else really happens until the very end, well meanwhile like Lwaxana's hitting on Riker, hitting on Worf.

Grace: She is having a full K. T. Oslin moment. Younger men are catching her eye.

Jarrah: Yeah. And the best part is when she basically tells Wesley like he's not mature enough.

Grace: Well he isn't. Nobody is that hard up. "I'm a child!"

Jarrah: So naive. Geordi hasn't talked to him about glands yet.

[laughter]

Jarrah: Lwaxana's like... basically accepts that no one's going to go out with her. And she also uncovers that the fishmen are going to blow up the summit and thwarts the plot.

Grace: You summarized the episode so much better than I would've. I would've quit at "Mick Fleetwood Fishman".

Andi: [laughing] That's really... that's the high point.

Grace: It really is. That and the reveal at the end of Lwaxana getting to go, "Oh and obviously these guys are assassins. Get them out of here." I just love her flippancy about it. Yeah, but we don't... other than being flirty and making people uncomfortable she doesn't actually do much this episode, does she? Aside from catching assassins at the very end.

Jarrah: No. She mostly... she's proposing to Riker and going around and telling everyone Riker's going to marry her. I do think it's cute when she ends up in the holosuite, or holodeck, and the characters in the holonovel think that she's like, Picard's sugar mama. And they're all like trying to dance with her and stuff because they know that she's wealthy. Then like, she can't read their minds and doesn't realize they're holograms and so she's like, really entranced with them and she's like, "Oh, this is so refreshing."

Grace: Why doesn't Deanna invite her to like holodeck mother/daughter parties more often? That would be so fun for them to do.

Jarrah: That sounds horrible for Deanna.

Grace: Horrible for Deanna but fun for Lwaxana.

Jarrah: Yes. But yeah, I don't find this one even as interesting as Haven so it's a bit of a challenge and I can't help but like feel really uncomfortable by just the amount of pressure she is putting on like doggedly pursuing Picard and later Riker. I feel like it goes beyond just like momentary discomfort. And is... more than I would like.

Andi: Yeah, I mean, we were talking earlier about how it's more socially acceptable for older men to be kind of like, "hardy har" but... I don't know if that's always true, like if we had a male character I would probably... and I don't hesitate to call it sexual harassment as it stands, but it would probably be way more... it would feel way more uncomfortable and feel way more predatory, I think, if it was a man and not a woman.

Jarrah: 100 percent. Like, y'know when she first comes on in this episode and at the end she goes like, "Oh, Jean Luc! Clear away those naughty thoughts!" or whatever. So she's basically like pretending she's reading his mind and that he's thinking dirty things about her. To like all of his subordinates and stuff. And even though, you know like, he is not totally disempowered he can't really say anything because she's a diplomat in this situation and it's not even like, where it's like "my subordinates' mom".

Grace: This is also the one where she checks out his shapely calves, right.

Jarrah: Yes.

Grace: Yes. Lest we forget.

Andi: I mean, they are shapely. Yeah.

Grace: Well, yeah. I mean in those tights too. Mmf.

Jarrah: Yeah. So, I like that she's an older with a sexuality but it is definitely worth reflecting on, like just those gendered double standards and...

Grace: Definitely.

Jarrah: You're totally right if it was like, a super old diplomat creeping on... like coming on board and claiming like he was reading Captain Janeway's mind that she wanted to sleep with him like that would seem pretty... like, really gross.

Grace: You would probably get treated as comedy still though.

Jarrah: Yeah, maybe.

Andi: Yeah, the way it's presented with Lwaxana is always comedic and I think part of... not just a gendered issue but part of the reason that it works is because she is such an excellent comedic actor. Because it genuinely is funny so often, that you don't really... most of the time you're like forgiving in your mind, even though it's not really acceptable behavior.

Grace: Our next episode is one that people tend to remember a lot more, I would say. *Ménage à Troi*. The one where Deanna and Lwaxana get kidnapped by Ferengi and are y'know, forced to wear wacky outfits and then Picard quotes Shakespeare at them. A lot happens in this episode.

Jarrah: Yeah. It's not boring.

Andi: I've always found the Ferengi part of this episode extremely uncomfortable.

Grace: Yeah. Because again it's going off of this early idea of... well, both this early idea of what the Ferengi are and this idea that these guys who are taking women you know as things is still laughably funny in its backwardness. And it's just uncomfortable and creepy.

Andi: Yeah, and the fact that Lwaxana's play is like, use sex. I get that. And it's not even really a bad plan but it's super creepy. And, I mean you can't really say that she can consent because she can't get away. So even though she's like enthusiastically like, deciding that she's going to play them. It's still coercive because she is a prisoner. So... blegh. I would say that two things I like about this episode are the very beginning, which is very romantic Riker and Troi shenanigans.

Grace: [laughing] I love how you describe their romance as "shenanigans".

Andi: Well, it is. And then, at the very end with the absolutely iconic, legend, Patrick Stewart doing Shakespeare.

Grace: To try and convince the Ferengi captain that he and Lwaxana are in a relationship.

Andi: That really is though, a master class.

Grace: It is a hysterical scene, yeah.

Andi: Because there are so many layers of like, what he's conveying in that. It's like actually well done Shakespearean like, sonneting but then like also the amount of like, "oh God I've got to sell this."

Grace: Do they ever actually establish that Picard was in a theatre program or something in school cause I feel like they need to establish that for it to make full sense.

Andi: Well, and you know there's always kind of a "nudge nudge, wink wink" when they make Patrick Stewart do anything Shakespearean and they do make him do it a lot. And it's kind of... it's fun to me it's like, "here we got this bad ass Shakespearean actor and we put them in your space show. Have fun."

Grace: "We made him wear onesie. Enjoy!"

[laughter]

Andi: But, yeah I mean this episode's worth it alone for that.

Jarrah: Also, fun fact on the first scene that I found out when I was researching for this episode is that on the TNG Season Three Bluray, Ronald D. Moore says that he remembered Gene Roddenberry performed a rewrite on *Ménage à Troi* and added a questionable description of fruit during the picnic scene on Betazed. He says, "Mrs. Troi reaches into the picnic basket and brings up an oskoid which is a long cylindrical piece of fruit with veins going down the side and offers it to Riker to take a bite."

Grace: Good lord. I mean, I know it's supposed to be like kind of a bedroom comedy thing going on there but...

Jarrah: Yeah, it would've been super weird if that happened.

Grace: Dude, no! Dial it back a couple notches.

Andi: Just a few.

Jarrah: It would have been totally in character, but...

Grace: Why not just give it a totally phallic name too while you're at it? I mean if you're going to make up a name for it and put it in the script.

Andi: Spore.

Grace: A penisoid.

Jarrah: A pallas.

Grace: An eggplant.

[laughter]

Grace: All right. Our next episode goes in a much more serious direction with Half A Life and help me... I'm going to try and summarize this as best I can. This is the episode where Lwaxana meets and falls in love with a scientist only to find out when he reaches a certain age, his people commit ritual suicide, correct?

Jarrah: Yep.

Grace: I was trying to remember if that was the one to connect with this title, because Cost of Living and Half A Life both sound like they could be the title to the episode. This one is a heady one and you wouldn't expect that for a character feature episode with a character like Lwaxana, would you?

Jarrah: No, and many many of our listeners said this was their favorite Lwaxana episode and the one that changed the way they see the character. It's my favorite Lwaxana episode. I also just loved David Ogden Stiers.

Grace: David Ogden Stiers and Majel Barrett have excellent chemistry in this episode and they work off of each other very well and it showcases both of them as actors so nicely.

Jarrah: I always cry in the scene where he's explaining to her that he loves her but it's not and then she's like, "it's not enough. You have to go do... I understand that you're telling me you have to go do what your people expect of you."

Grace: This episode is really good, guys.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Grace: And again with a character like Lwaxana, as soon as you know she's in the episode you don't expect it to be a serious one do you?

Jarrah: No! And I mean even at the beginning it's like, "oh there's Lwaxana showing up with her new boyfriend" kind of thing. And I mean there's still moments of humor in it but, she's deeply in love with this guy. He's really in love with her, and he loves her passion for life and it's kind of... I think it does a good job of bringing back to that theme about how like, people who are older than the average cast member of a *Star Trek* show have a lot to offer and this episode sends a big message about... that it's a tragedy when people are sort of put out to pasture before they've been able to bring their all... what they have to offer to their society.

Grace: Definitely.

Andi: Which fits right in with the theme of this episode. Meta!

Grace: Meta, meta. So after we get this very serious, very emotional Lwaxana episode the next one we get a Cost of Living. Anyone else want to summarize that one?

Jarrah: This one's fun.

Grace: Yeah. It's wacky.

Jarrah: Yeah, basically Lwaxana is going to marry this dude whose kinda stuffy and he's mad that she wants to do the naked Betazoid traditional wedding and she's totally going to go along with what he wants and what his people want. Meantime, she meets Alexander who's still kind of like adrift, not really sure where he fits on the ship and he's sad about his mom and dad. And Deanna has been sort of helping him. But Lwaxana kind of takes him away to the mud baths on the holodeck and becomes like a grandma.

Grace: Don't take someone else's child to a mud bath.

Jarrah: And basically like, "I need to teach how to fun cause neither my daughter or Worf is particularly good at that."

Grace: This episode is as close as we get to a pretty literal interpretation of the Aunt Mame in space thing.

Andi: Yeah. On LSD. But like, not good LSD, like bad LSD that makes you like, freak out.

Grace: It's grandma's LSD that you found in the back of the freezer.

Andi: It's scary, man. This episode scares me. There are some really genuinely terrifying and disturbing visuals this one, and I'm not even talking about Lwaxana in the mud bath. I'm talking like, just eerie, creepy shit.

Jarrah: Yeah, it's a weird place to go for fun. But I mean, I guess circuses are weird so...

Grace: It's always weird to see *Star Trek* try and... what am I trying to say? Try and portray whimsical. Light hearted and fun and just be really freakin' creepy.

Andi: Yeah, like that disembodied head in like the bubble is scary. Okay?

Grace: There are many examples of times when *Star Trek* tried to be whimsical and just went straight to Terror Town.

Andi: I do like parts of this episode though because, I like the fact that Lwaxana is like dealing with her own stuff so poorly that she's like, "Well, I'm going to fix Alexander because I can't fix me".

Grace: And that is the thing that people do and that makes sense as being something this character would do.

Andi: And I always love episodes in which we remember that Worf is a horrible dad.

Grace: We won't be forgetting that anytime soon.

Andi: His best selling book: Worf's A+ Parenting.

Grace: Take your kid to a shooting range, have the safety turned off. Bring in all your friends! Make out with friend.

Andi: I do like that he is not a good dad. Like, I don't like it in the sense of if it were real it would be bad but I find it very interesting because I don't feel like we see that very often? He's a heroic character that we all love who absolutely sucks at parenting and like we're watching him screw up his only child like right in front of us and it's simultaneously fascinating and horrifying and I just find it really interesting.

Grace: It's like watching a shuttle crash in slow motion.

Andi: Like, there are times where he'll say something and I'll just like wanna throw shit at him. Like, noooooooooo! Bad! Read one book! Read one book on parenting!

Grace: Dr. Spock, he ain't.

Andi: And then also I like that it gives Troi counseling to do, which is something we always like.

Grace: And let's be real Alexander is going to need a lifetime worth of counseling.

Andi: So bad! It's so bad! He simultaneously ignores him and put so much pressure on him. It's really quite an impressive feat.

Grace: You wouldn't think it be possible but there is. We've also got a great comment from one of our listeners Dana who says about this episode, "She gave me one of my most favorite quotes, 'one of life's true gifts is the capacity to enjoy enjoyment'. When people ask me what I'm up to on the weekends I often say 'enjoying enjoyment'."

Jarrah: I like that.

Andi: Yeah! And that is such an Auntie Mame kind of thing because her famous quote is like, "Live! Live! Live! Life is a banquet and most poor suckers are starving to death!" Like that is Lwaxana in a nutshell. And that is her whole vibe in this whole episode is just, get out there! Have fun! And you know, enjoy your day to day life. And I think that's a good message it's just not one you should you know use on a child without his parental supervision.

Grace: Don't take a child to a mud bath!

Andi: Don't do it, guys, don't do it! I know you were tempted. And you were planning on it but we're going to stop you right now. That's a bad idea.

Jarrah: Any other kid would've been just like splashing everyone with mud.

Grace: Yeah. You're in a tub full of mud.

Andi: Alexander is such a weird kid.

Grace: *Star Trek* has a weird weird weird thing with kids.

Jarrah: I think we do have to mention though, the last scene where she decides to go to her own wedding naked and scandalizes her groom to be. And I like it. It's funny.

Grace: You can almost hear the monocles dropping.

Andi: I'm going to be real real with you guys. That wink makes me feel things. It's just so confident. And like the idea of being able to walk into a room full of people naked and be like, "What!?"

Grace: It's a great example of how confidence is the sexiest thing anyone can wear.

Andi: It's so great. It really is. It's lovely. I love that whole scene.

Grace: That said being naked and winking at a child is a bad bad idea.

Andi: So if you're listening you here are two things Women at Warp does not recommend: mud baths with children and winking at them while naked.

Grace: We support the philosophy at work here not the methods.

Jarrah: I mean I think in this context like it's very clear that it's you know like she's... It's like her body is not sexualized to this kid it's like this is just how a naked person looks. It's just a body.

Grace: I am a firm believer in non-sexualized nudity happening more in the media.

Jarrah: Yeah and it's just about like... about confidence and showing Alexander to like, stick with what your gut tells you is what you want.

Grace: And also to really think before you get that weird tattoo.

Andi: And also don't marry dudes that do not fit you, at all.

Grace: If someone sees you naked and his first reaction is gahhhhhh! Bad, bad vibe. Don't do it.

Andi: But yeah, I know this episode isn't quote unquote "good" but I have a soft spot for it.

Grace: Yeah, it's not necessarily bad. But again we've got this pattern of you know kind of wacky episode. We're going to have a wacky count going for this episode, that's my word of the week... of a lighthearted episode followed by a really kind of emotional and heavy one with Dark Page.

Andi: Which is my favorite Lwaxana episode.

Grace: Yes, this is the one when Lwaxana comes to visit Deanna and starts behaving very oddly and when Deanna tries to read her mind she finds there's a huge part of her mind that she's just kind of blocked out so she won't have to address and that's how we find out that Counselor Troi actually had an older sister who passed away when she was just a baby and that her mother is still really traumatized by that.

Andi: I just find this episode to be such a great exploration of trauma and also such a great exploration of mothers and daughters and like the complicated, fraught relationships and history that can build up between them. And I also love what that says about Lwaxana's character.

About like, she carries this deep deep pain but she's always smiling. And yeah I really like this episode.

Grace: I really appreciate how... there's this cultural history of vilifying mourning mothers like you see it in just about every one of the old fairy tales, if there's like an evil queen it's because she lost a baby or some crap like that. But with this we really do see it's not treated as a "how dare you not tell me I had a sister" thing. It's a "mom why didn't you tell me". And it's treated very very tenderly as it was just too painful for her to deal with.

Andi: And I like how they kind of showed that in a cinematic way. The way that they're kind of going into Lwaxana's mind and like peeling it all back. I just think it's really well done.

Grace: We also get very very little Kirsten Dunst.

Jarrah: Who's adorable.

Grace: Yes. Of course she is. She's going to be adorable until the end of time. She's going to be an old woman and we're still going to be like, "look at those lil cheeks!"

Jarrah: Yeah, I love this episode. Someone pointed out in our mentions to, that like there aren't a lot of mother/daughter relationships in *Star Trek*. And this is really I think a high point.

Grace: Yeah! Especially in the portrayal of mother/daughter relationships as being something that's complicated. It's not purely good, it's not purely bad. There's a lot of in between and sometimes that means accepting that there were things that your mother wanted to keep from you. Or there are some things that you weren't ready to address just yet and talking about how sometimes that's what you need to do.

Jarrah: Yeah, I mean I think there's definitely some interesting stuff between T'Pol and her mom and B'Elanna and her mom but I think nothing that really shows the sort of powerful bond you can have.

Grace: And I don't think we really see the same level of acceptance either between the two characters of, "this is how you are. This is how I am. We are what we are."

Jarrah: You've been driving me crazy for the last seven episodes but I still love you.

Grace: Yeah. So then we get to see Lwaxana make the jump from series to series. We don't even get to see some of the main characters do that. So we've got in Deep Space Nine she shows up in the first season episode The Forsaken. Who wants to tell us a little about that one?

Jarrah: Lwaxana turns up on Deep Space Nine and becomes interested in Odo.

Grace: She decides he is her kind of mucus man.

Jarrah: Yeah. And honestly I don't even know that we need to talk about the entire episode. The really important part is that this was probably the most mentioned favorite Lwaxana scene for our listeners. It was the scene with Lwaxana and Odo in the turbolift where he... they're stuck in a turbolift, he has to go back to his liquid state and he's very uncomfortable about doing that. And she takes off her wig to show him that she also is like hiding vulnerability underneath and lets him puddle in her dress.

Grace: it's such a sweet moment too. It's kind of the high point of the episode. And it's such a high point for the character too after we establish her as being flamboyant and kind of vain her just taking this guy who she only kind of knows and just being vulnerable with him because she knows it's what he needs right then.

Jarrah: Yeah and just like sort of from a gender perspective I thought there was an interesting quote in this *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* companion from Jim Trombetta who says about Odo, "It goes back to the Renaissance and the characters referred to as gentlemen. They had to be hard warriors with a hard shape like armor. There was an anxiety if men become soft. They become helpless, baby-like. Men don't like that. So here that caption works very vividly. Odo's a constable and a very tough guy but he has to undergo that process and allow someone else to help them. He has no choice." So she literally makes him soft.

Grace: Awww! And carries him in her skirts.

Andi: The acting in this scene is tremendous.

Jarrah and Grace: Yeah.

Andi: From both of them.

Jarrah: Yeah. So we have lots of listeners like Misty and Brandy and many others say that this was their favorite Lwaxana moment, that it showed a whole other side of her and that also really helped show Odo's vulnerability. But we also had some listeners who didn't appreciate Lwaxana's approach to Odo in this episode or I think, Fascination the next one. Abby said, "Odo is so clearly uncomfortable with her and she refuses to back off. She follows him around declaring they're going to picnic together and doesn't seem to consider his opinion on the matter. In the elevator she does take off her wig to show Odo he can trust her. But it seemed to me that she only did that so he would change his mind about how he felt towards her. Odo was in a bad situation because he needed to become liquid again and to me it seemed like Lwaxana was taking advantage of that." So, just another perspective.

Andi: I agree with her when it comes to like the larger problem. With how she kind of pursues Odo, who... I remember when I was First Time Trekking this, there was like screenshots where I

was like if this... if the genders were like switched here? Odo is like leaning as far back as humanly possible and all of his body language is incredibly uncomfortable and it's just really obvious that he is... he doesn't enjoy anything that's happening.

Grace: I was totally imagining Odo leaning back as far as inhumanly possible because he can do it. Nope nope nope nope nope nope stretching back out of the room.

Andi: Yeah exactly. But I mean I get that. The thing that the elevator scene... I feel like she's sincere and I feel like that scene is a good example of why we let her slide on this, or when I say we I mean the larger audience usually. And that's because like she has a kind heart and like when the chips are down and he really is vulnerable she likes makes him a safe place. But does that excuse her other behavior? I don't know that it does.

Jarrah: Yeah, I was going to say and like as someone who wears a wig I can tell you that like, it for me is a really big deal if I'm going to show someone that I don't have hair so I tend to read that is like a good faith moment. That that was something really difficult for her to do that you know she isn't going to like just go up in the middle of ops and take her wig off for everyone. That that was like actually taking a risk of being rejected for what she really looks like and does sort of go a bit of the way to closing that gap between her and Odo.

Grace: So, pedalling back to Lwaxana and some kind of uncomfortable behavior. The next episode we have is Fascination where pretty much Lwaxana magical psychic menopause makes people fall in love with each other.

Andi: That episode is weird and uncomfortable.

Jarrah: I think this is way more uncomfortable, yeah.

Grace: I think it's also really weird in the fact that Lwaxana is turned into a plot device. She doesn't actually get to do a lot else with the episode she flirts with Odo and causes people to start hitting on each other left and right.

Jarrah: This is another one where she's like basically grabbing him and trying to dance with him and he is like cringing and trying to like not move and I find this one a lot more uncomfortable, because you don't see... I don't see any real connection between them in this episode it's like she confronts him, makes him uncomfortable and then continues to make him uncomfortable through the whole episode. There's isn't like an epiphany moment.

Grace: The whole episode is uncomfortable also.

Jarrah: Other than she realizes he's in love with Kira. And then you think she's going to leave him alone. But not.

Grace: Nah.

Andi: My bigger problem with this episode is it feels like it works backwards from “we want to have some weird couples.”

Jarrah: That's totally what they did. They wanted it to be *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in space.

Andi: And it doesn't work because it's not saying anything.

Grace: Yeah. More like a midsummer night's... dumb.

[laughter]

Grace: Yeah, I said it.

Jarrah: Yes. If we wanted to pull out the hidden gem from the fact that this episode was made... in the original script, it didn't make it in, Lwaxana mentions that Admiral Nechayev is quote “the sister I never had” in a conversation where she tells Odo that she found out about his people being the leaders of the Dominion. And now I just want my Lwaxana/Admiral Nechayev buddy movie/fanfic.

Grace: What do they get up to together?

Jarrah: I'm assuming it involves stealing a runabout.

Grace: I love it. It's like *Thelma and Louise* except they realize “oh wait, this thing can fly” at the very end.

Jarrah: Yeah. No, there's no tragedy. It's all happy. Yes.

Grace: So Andi, if you want to plug your ears and hum real loud I can summarize the next episode in one sentence.

Andi: Alright. Go for it.

Grace: Start humming. Start humming.

[Andi softly humming]

Grace: OK. She's humming. Odo/Lwaxana shotgun wedding.

Jarrah: Pretty much.

Grace: That's it. That's it. Andi! Andi!

Andi: Yeah?

Grace: You're good.

Andi: Okay, good.

Jarrah: I feel like this episode is a really unfortunate last episode for Lwaxana that really just does a disservice to this character who's really been pretty much on top of her shit and her plans the whole time and then like has to basically come to Odo looking for help from a situation that she really like, you can't really believe she would have gotten involved in after the first attempted marriage of the douchecanoe.

Grace: Yeah, we just really have her as a character kind of backslide for this wacky scenario of the episode. And you don't really believe it, considering the growth we've seen from her.

Jarrah: Yeah, then we're supposed to believe that like Odo genuinely loves her at this point. It's weird and I just didn't believe it.

Grace: I believe that there is a genuine affection between the two.

Jarrah: Yeah, and he is more talking sort of like her meaning to him as like a really close friend and someone who's seen him at his most vulnerable and accepted him. But yeah I just feel like it's really unfortunate that you know she comes there having to be rescued.

Grace: I really think that there was no intention in writing this episode to be like this is going to be the last appearance of this memorable character that a lot of people like. We're going to send her out, proper. Nope, nope. This is how it ends.

Jarrah: I mean I'm sure they planned to bring her back again and it just didn't happen, or they just didn't think about it. It's just an unfortunate coincidence possibly that that ended up being the last one.

Grace: Oh well.

Jarrah: Plus that whole other subplot with Jake in the psychic.

Grace: Yeah that's hella creepy.

Jarrah: That was also terrible.

Grace: Space succubus. Don't do it. Don't do it.

Jarrah: But luckily we got some pretty cool representations of Lwaxana in the expanded extended universe. Yeah one of my favorite is in the novel *Q-In-Law* where Oksana gets endowed with Q-like powers.

Grace: Baller!

Jarrah: And at one point is like literally Q fighting with Q and owns him. And it's amazing. So check that one out if you're looking for a good Lwaxana novel. I know she also features prominently... she's in the *Imzadi* novels I think, at least as a supporting character, and she's also I'm thinking *The Battle of Betazed*. But if anyone else has any novel or comic recommendations you should let us know in the comments.

Grace: Please. Please do. Because we are always ready to spread more love for this character. K, now do we each want to share a listener comment? Because we got a lot of listener response for this episode. I mean I know it was one that people had asked us a couple times we were going to do.

Jarrah: Yeah, I just pulled up some sort of like all around summary comments for people's overall impression of Lwaxana.

Grace: So we got one from another Grace! There's more than one!

Jarrah: Are you commenting on our podcast, Grace?

Grace: Not... like in the unexpected way, only as myself. So other Grace says, "In addition to being a truly lovable funny and interesting character Lwaxana brought out the best in every actor she worked with on Trek. Some of the best scenes with Picard, Worf, Troi and Odo featured her."

Andi: That's true.

Grace: We went back a few times saying that she had some excellent chemistry with other actors and really highlighted their skills by being there.

Andi: We had a comment from Naomi that said, "I loved how she refused to go quietly into her quote unquote "golden years" like society says we are supposed to and instead stayed loud, strong, colorful, and opinionated. I love that she remained sexually active and flirtatious as an older woman turning that stereotype of aging women on its head too." Hear, hear.

Jarrah: We had a comment from Beverly who said, "I loved her so much. She was my favorite character and she reminded me of my grandmother. My granny loved bright colors, gaudy jewelry and she was confident. She was motherly but not in the same way other grandmothers

are. She was fabulous and gave great advice. I think the episode that I love the most is the one where she's stolen by the Ferengi and Picard quotes Shakespeare to help get her back.”

Grace: It is truly a beloved scene. And finally we've got a comment from Nina saying, “I love that she's unabashedly loud and talkative. She walks around with a sort of dramatic grandeur to her. She's theatrical, has a big personality and takes up space. I see myself in that. And until Lwaxana I never saw that part of myself represented in a woman on screen. Seeing Lwaxana told me it was okay to be a woman and take up space.”

Jarraah: Word.

Grace: Which is definitely a big part of why we like this character.

Jarraah” Yeah we got a lot of comments, which was awesome. So thank you very much to everyone who responded.

Grace: Yes. And do we have any final words or final thoughts we want to share on this character?

Jarraah: Go forth and enjoy enjoyment.

Grace: Wear your biggest and brightest wigs and brag about that jar you have full of mold. Cuz it's yours, and you're worth it! All right that's going to wrap it up for us for this episode. Jarraah, where can people find you online?

Jarraah: You can find me on Twitter at [@jarrahpenguin](#).

Grace: And Andi where can people find you?

Andi: Easiest place to find me is on Twitter [@FirstTimeTrek](#).

Grace: And you can find us on Twitter at [@WomenAtWarp](#). You can find us on Stitcher, iTunes, what else I'm missing here?

Jarraah: Facebook, our website [womenatwarp.com](#). You can e-mail us at crew@womenatwarp.com. Basically anywhere you get podcasts, Instagram. Just look up Women At Warp, you'll find us, wherever you are.

Grace: Google us, you'll find us eventually.

Jarraah: Yeah, GPS us. I don't know where that will take you but you can try it.

Grace: That will take you to Womnapworp, Pennsylvania. The weather isn't great but I would highly recommend the chowder. And I'm Grace and you can find me at [@BonecrusherJenk](#) on Twitter and in your nightmares.

Jarrah: And for more from the Roddenberry podcast network check out podcasts.rodtenberry.com.

Grace: Anddddddd.... scene.