

Women at Warp Episode 90: The Many Faces of Suzie Plakson

INTRO MUSIC

Sue: Hi, 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 a biweekly mission to explore our favorite franchise. My name is Sue and thanks for tuning in! With me today are Jarrah...

Jarrah: Hello!

Sue: And Grace.

Grace: Hey everybody.

Sue: And today we are going to be taking a listener request and talk about Suzie Plakson. Of course four roles in Star Trek, Dr. Selar, K'Ehleyr, the Female Q, and Tarah from Enterprise. So, that'll be a lot of fun, but before we get into our main topic we have a little bit of housekeeping to do as usual, 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 per month and get some awesome rewards from thanks on social media, up to some silly watch along commentaries most recently we watched "The Game" [TNG Season 5, Episode 6].

Grace: Ooooh you've got to be a good sport to watch "The Game".

Sue: So, if you'd like to join us over at Patreon you can do so by visiting <https://www.patreon.com/womenatwarp>. You can also support us by leaving a rating or review on Apple podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts. Also, this weekend if you're listening to this on the release date or shortly thereafter it's Star Trek Las Vegas!

Grace: Viva Las Vegas!!

Sue: I have a panel on Thursday afternoon. Grace has a panel on Friday afternoon and on Saturday there will be a Roddenberry podcast network panel in addition to our table in the vendors area will be near the Roddenberry booth again. So, come say hi if you're at Star Trek Las Vegas and we hope to see you there.

Grace: Please do we like knowing that you exist in the real world and not in our imagination or on the Internet.

Sue: And of course we're recording a little bit early of the release date so double check the schedule to make sure none of that information has changed.

Grace: Yeah no con schedule is ever set in stone.

Sue: Absolutely. And speaking of cons if you are in New York in mid August I will be at Flame Con and if you're in Atlanta over Labor Day weekend I will also be at a DragonCon. So, it is con season for myself.

Grace: Hopefully you're not feeling the wrath of Khan.

laughter

Sue: That'll be after New York Comic Con in October.

Grace: I'm sure, yes.

Sue: All right so let's talk about Suzie Plakson.

Jarrah: Yes let's.

Sue: Jarrah, do you want to give a short bio?

Jarrah: Sure. Suzie Plakson June 3rd, 1958 in Buffalo, New York the birthplace of many an amazing thing like buffalo wings? Is that where buffalo wings came from I don't know...

Grace: Yes, that's where the buffalo earned its wings.

Jarrah: Suzie Plakson is an American actress/singer/writer and artist. She grew up in Pennsylvania and went to college at Northwestern University. She began her career on the stage in theater performances. Of course, in addition to the Star Trek roles we're going to be talking about she's played a wide range of characters on TV, including the hard bitten sportswriter Meg Tynan in the sitcom Love and War. But, probably more memorable for people of our generation, she did several voices on Dinosaurs as well as had a recurring role in Mad About You and one in Everybody Loves Raymond. She's also been in some movies as well.

Grace: And let's not forget her doing a dead on Minnesota accent on How I Met Your Mother.

Jarrah: Oh yes... As a singer/songwriter Plakson just recently released the alternative country rock album "Didn't Want To Do It" and she also sculpts and writes, samples of both are viewable and readable on her website, <http://www.suzieplakson.com/>, and I highly recommend checking it out because there is a lot of really, I mean my view, pretty cool writing there. I am a fan of her style.

Grace: And she often sometimes has her sculptures for sale at conventions.

Jarrah: Neat.

Grace: Check them out if you get a chance.

Sue: So, let's start with Dr. Selar, who seems to be referenced all the time but only appears in one episode, and that's the Season 2 Episode "The Schizoid Man" [TNG Season 2, Episode 6].

Jarrah: So, I re watched this one again today and I think this is one that...

Grace: And you had some opinions didn't you?

Jarrah: I did not... This is one that I have not re watched a lot, and then I was like oh I remember why, although basic... Okay so the the thing is, but I'll start saying is that Suzie Plakson is by and far the highlight of this episode.

Sue: Which speaks very much to the fact that not much is happening in this, because it's a pretty standard Vulcan character.

Jarrah: Yeah, and actually when she got the role like she wasn't really familiar with Star Trek or Vulcans and her brother was a big fan, so she took it kind of to make her brother happy, and he was like oh no Vulcans don't like smile like that, Vulcans don't do that. When she was reading her lines to him. But, I think it's the look that she gives.

Grace: It's not quite a "smize" [<https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Smize>] but it definitely is some communication with her eyes that she does very well that's very Vulcan.

Jarrah: It's like the Vulcan shade look, that she just kind of gets instinctively like she puts her head down and her eyes up a little bit and it's like this sort of penetrating stare.

Grace: It's like an eye sneer. It's like an a sneer that's all in the eyes or just a, yes, self contained reaction, but all within the eye area.

Jarrah: Yeah. So, I mean one thing that was cool that she said about her audition for this was she had been called in because the casting director Junie Lowry saw her in a solo show and invited her to audition to play a doctor, and Suzie Plakson said in an interview with <http://www.startrek.com/>, "I go in and I'm so amazed and heartened by the fact that they're all different ages and races of women auditioning to play this doctor which you just didn't see and still don't see. I thought fantastic. That's so cool. And I got cast then I got a call from my agent saying "they want you to come in next week and get measured for your ears' which is not something you generally hear when you've auditioned to play any guest spot, I said 'what's up with that,' and that's how I found out I was playing a Vulcan"

Grace: Hell of a way to find out right?

Sue: I love that.

Grace: I love the fact that you have to get measured, that your ears need measuring, that there isn't like a one size fits all earpiece.

Jarrah: I remember reading in Leonard Nimoy's book "I Am Spock" about the early ears they had for him and how they really fit poorly and looked really terrible and that he had a prosthetics person was like, "No we need a measure you can make these properly," and it made a huge difference. And I mean having tried on those like plastic generic ears that sort of cover the whole year that you can buy like through licensed merch, those don't work very well. So, I can see how having something that's more like close to your actual size of your ear is probably a good idea.

Sue: I've always thought that was why Vulcans kept pieces of their hair in front of their ears was to like cover that line.

Jarrah: Yup. Well, that's what I do when I'm wearing the prosthetics because I don't really... it's hard to blend things at the side of your head, like I can't see that with mirrors very well. So, I just like I put the hair over it.

Grace: Vulcans are also masters at contouring I guess.

Jarrah: But when we first meet her in this episode it's cool because Pulaski is off doing something else really important and is like...

Grace: Pulaski is off... doing something... we don't know what, as per usual.

Jarrah: it's like curing some a bunch of sick people...

Sue: Yeah there's like a whole ship a ship full of sick people.

Grace: She's got a lawn darts tournament.

Jarrah: And so she's like send Dr. Selar, Lieutenant Selar has my full confidence and she says it's like three times that like she's super awesome doctor. So, that's already like a strong vote of confidence which is pretty cool.

Grace: Backup doctor has a backup doctor.

Jarrah: Especially when like the mission is to make sure that this genius scientist isn't dying and Picard actually says "you must protect his health at all costs". So, they are putting a lot on her shoulders. And then they go down to the planet and genius scientists dude is like I'm a genius, I

hate doctors, they're pretty much not people. And Troi goes "I don't know, I mean I think doctors are people" and Selar...

Grace: You heard it here first folks Doctors are people too.

Sue: Oh it gets better.

Jarrah: Yeah. And then he's like "well you know patients wouldn't all agree with that, ha ha ha." You know kind of funny, but then he's like but at least for a doctor she's hot, like at least she's a good looking woman.

Sue: Yeah.

Jarrah: And...

Grace: Geez la-freaking-ouise

Jarrah: Yeah, geez, I know. And and then he goes...

Grace: What a charming person.

Jarrah: Yeah no kidding right.

Grace: I hope he lives forever.

Jarrah: "For a doctor you're not a bad looking woman", well, well, well, he looks at Troi what have we got here? Another fine specimen of womanhood.

Grace: Oh wow.

Jarrah: And then as if that weren't enough, cause like their mission is just to save this dude because he's a genius, a very stable genius...

Grace: And genius excuses all other shitty behavior, if there's one thing we know for sure it's that...

Sue: He's definitely a very stable genius.

Jarrah: Then Troi's like but women are people too, and he's like women aren't people, women are women and kisses her hand and she's just like ha ha ha. And it's basically me too in space.

Sue: So TOS....

Jarrah: It is so TOS, it is.

Grace: Uncomfortably so.

Jarrah: Yeah, and like he's also like romanticizing his young assistant which shows up in another few episodes of TOS and TNG with like these older scientists who are like in love with younger women.

Grace: Well, gosh golly that sounds like an uncomfortable work environment.

Jarrah: Yeah, and then you know instead of you know maybe viewing him with a degree of caution because he's clearly has no respect for women at least they're like Yeah how about you hang out alone with Data who's another like other character...

Grace: Data who's a young and impressionable robot.

Jarrah: And they're like we totally trust this guy, he's a genius, Starfleet said so. And Troi's like Oh he's totally in love with you assistant and the assistant's like oh if only I was older I could totally see that happening. And he's known her since she was a little girl...

Grace: Ahhh, no!

Jarrah: Yeah, it's super creepy, but Dr. Selar's cool.

Sue: Yeah.

Jarrah: Yeah. She also gets a cool thing later where like the is trying to figure out what's going on with Data because gross scientist puts himself in Data's head. And he asks like Dr. Selar what you thought about this guy who also by the way named his planet after himself.

Sue: Yup.

Grace: What a douchy move... He's just gonna M. Bison this whole thing of planet named after himself, name the currency after himself, wear a funny hat?

Jarrah: Totally. Yeah.

Grace: That was your Street Fighter reference there.

Jarrah: I thought you meant like a hat that would be embroidered and say Make Graceland great again.

laughter

Jarrah: But...

Grace: That's even more horrifying!

Jarrah: Anyway. I may be stretching the analogy here somewhat, but Picard calls Selar and Troi, and Selar is like "oh he was brilliant, arrogant, and chauvinistic" and everyone's like oh yeah sounds like how Data is acting right now. Maybe we should have caught on when he started leering at crew members asses.

Sue: Yeah.

Jarrah: Yeah. But I like Selar, I think like she does, Suzie Plakson does Vulcan really well and it would have been cool to have her on more.

Sue: It sure felt like they could have, because they really do reference her all the time.

Jarrah: Yeah. They always are like calling her to Sick Bay and stuff.

Grace: They want to have that character you know continue in the show just they don't want to pay Suzie Plakson again I guess.

Sue: But they paid her plenty more times!

Grace: They just don't want to recognize they're using the same actress over and over again.

Sue: Which is weird because for the most part she doesn't have a lot of makeup on.

Grace & Jarrah: No.

Jarrah: They sent her home with the ears the first time and they didn't want to pay to have new ears made?

Sue: Maybe.

Grace: She did like Liv Tyler and accidentally left them in the car and they melted.

Sue: Well her next character on her return to Star Trek, I think is the one that most people would recognize her for maybe the most popular one, and that is the role of K'Ehleyr.

Grace: Poor dead K'Ehleyr.

Sue: Of course we talked about K'Ehleyr in our Klinge ladies episode...

Grace: All the Klinge ladies...

Sue: But we're gonna do it again. K'Ehleyr is pretty great, I think it's interesting to put her up against Worf when he's you know the full Klingon who was raised by humans, but cares so much about Klingon tradition and honor and whatever and she just DGAF.

Grace: She don't give a whaaat...

Jarrah: Yeah...

Grace: As far as Klingon-ness goes anyway.

Jarrah: Definitely when we asked our social media followers which character was their favorite K'Ehleyr showed up a lot....

Grace: Everybody loves K'Ehleyr.

Jarrah: Some people were like "yay a Klingon woman without a boob window." I mean we love the boob window but I also like the option to not have a boob window.

Grace: The real boob window was in her attitude.

laughter

Sue: I don't even know what that means but I love it.

Jarrah: If the attitude that goes like I don't bite, no that's wrong I do bite. I mean, and Suzie Plakson points out that you know part of the reason you know fans come up here and like "Oh you're my favorite Klingon woman," she's like well partly that's because I wasn't a good Klingon woman like I was I was half human and I just didn't have time for all that stuff.

Grace: It is pretty great to have anytime you have a, I want to say a culture that isn't totally fleshed, out or keeps getting fleshed out in different directions kind of inconsistently, to have a character come in and say "Guys this is ridiculous." And, I love that it's K'Ehleyr who we get to have play that role of just being like yeah, Klingons, they're wacky. Definitely.

Jarrah: And I like that she gets that bonding moment with Troi where they bond over being half race aliens, and feeling sort of like not able to fit and Troi's counselling her on that basis, and it's kind of cool in that's in "The Emissary" [TNG Season 2, Episode 20] the first episode with her where she shows up and she's going to do all the diplomacy. Then she gets it on with Worf.

Grace: Like you do...

Sue: No, she gets fridged.

Jarrah: Yeah, that's in the next episode.

Sue: Yeah, well sorry, I jumped ahead.

Grace: It's a short saga.

Jarrah: I mean before that she like spars with Worf on the holodeck because that's the height of foreplay.

Grace: It's a very sexual sparring.

Jarrah: And she's also like no I don't want to marry you like what do you think this is, we each have stuff to do.

Grace: Which is cool. You don't get to see women turn down a lot of proposals on TV.

Jarrah: Yeah, and like I don't feel like even despite her ending I don't feel like she's shamed for having slept with him or anything.

Grace: No. Or for turning him down she just doesn't want that out of life right now.

Sue: No, the perceived shame is that she has a relationship with somebody who's been dishonored in the empire not whatever they've done together, or rather that they've...

Grace: It's not that there was sex, it's who the sex was with.

Sue: Yes.

Jarrah: Yeah, but I still feel like at the time it was still a bit of a challenging narrative to have a woman go and have sex for pleasure with a man, like, I mean clearly they do love each other to a degree, but doesn't want to commit to like settling down with him. Has a kid, doesn't...

Grace: And let's be real who would settle down with Worf, at least at this point in his arc...

Jarrah: And like has a kid and raises it by herself for like at least a few years. And, that was still like not super, super acceptable.

Sue: Was it more acceptable because they're Klingon and not human?

Grace: Maybe.

Sue: Like I mean to the general audience.

Grace: I'd like to think that we'd be at a point in the future where you know we've gotten rid of all these illnesses and people are no longer weird and judgy about having children out of wedlock, I would hope we'd reached that point.

Jarrah: I can see being like a little judgy about not telling Worf, given that I don't think that there was like a danger or any other type of factor that would be like really threatening about telling him, but...

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: But the whole having a kid thing, and clearly she's... I don't know she just exudes like capability and confidence, and I feel like she was probably an awesome mom.

Grace: Maybe we should have called her K'Epablar. [For those not listening, think K'Ehleyr and Capable mashed together]

laughter

Jarrah: I mean clearly she had more parental skills than Worf.

Sue: Yeah, well.

Grace: Well that's not hard is it?

Sue: Wof doesn't even try.

Grace: He's not exactly an A+ parent.

Jarrah: The first thing he does is say "I'm gonna send you to my parents bye."

Grace: I know you're just suffered an incredible loss but really I can't deal with that right now, so you're go into Earth.

Jarrah: Yeah...

Grace: Byeeeee.

Jarrah: We had a fun comment from Kennedy our friend StormTribble from Black Tribbles Podcast, who said, "Through this character I saw strength, humor, and resilience. Also seeing a tall woman on TV not afraid to be tall at a young age was extremely important to me." And Suzie

Plakson on her website talks a bit about how being tall made acting... acting made her feel right at home because she felt like super out of place in the world, and then she figured that like being on stage you got to be larger than life, and she got to feel more at home in her own body because of that.

Grace: That is definitely how she rolls as a performer, also she is very much about being a large presence in the room.

Jarrah: Mm hmm.

Grace: So, her height is definitely an asset to her in that sense.

Jarrah: Yeah, like one of her biggest influences she talks about is the show "Upstairs/Downstairs."

Grace: Oh yeah!

Jarrah: So, coming from that like British dramatic comedy sort of tradition like having watched that a lot and being influenced by that you can see how she brings that kind of energy to some of these characters.

Sue: I think that also speaks to the power of things like drama therapy, where like which helps you learn empathy, but can also help you be more comfortable with yourself by exploring what it is to act with the intentions of another person.

Jarrah: Yeah for sure. But they kill her because Michael Dorn thought that they needed something to make Worf feel something.

Grace: Worf can feel his own shit, God.

Sue: Well they also brought her back and she said, "Well I was wrong I do want to marry you."

Grace: That's a little bogus.

Jarrah: Yeah, so that like makes it harder for him I guess. And then also I feel like that... I don't know that kind of undermines her a bit like in a way.

Sue: Yeah, exactly

Grace: Definitely.

Jarrah: I mean it would be one thing if she was like "hey we have this kid now and we should both be involved raising him and then let's see where this goes," but, Elizabeth J on our

Facebook said, "They had to kill her or that woman would have been running the empire before they knew it."

laughter

Jarrah: Joking, not like they actually had to kill her, but yeah that must have been what they must have thought because...

Sue: Not know thought.

Jarrah: Yes not know. I also love at the end of "The Emissary" where her and Worf are in like the full Klingon gear, masquerading as old Klingons like on the bridge for the time traveler... so that the time travelling people don't know what's going on.

Grace: Doing their Klingon LARP'ing.

Jarrah: Yes!

Grace: Their Klingon war reenactment.

Jarrah: Great. I just love that scene.

Grace: It's great.

Jarrah: She's awesome.

Grace: All right, shall we move on to our next character?

Sue: We shall. That would be Lady Q or the Female Q or just Q on Voyager's "The Q and the Grey" [VOY Season 3, Episode 11].

Grace: The letter Q, but in a girly font?

Sue: Yeah.

Grace: Girly-Q, girly-Q, that's it!

Jarrah: Girly-Q haha yeah cause I mean if you say Male Q, there's like several examples but when you say Lady Q there's Amanda who has another name and her. Yeah, and this is in the exciting episode of Voyager "The Q and the Gray".

Grace: We say exciting the same way a pap smear is exciting, that you can't stop thinking about how you're about to sit through it.

Jarrah: Like "The Schizoid Man," I think Suzie Plakson is also the best part of this episode.

Sue: Oh for sure.

Grace: You can totally tell she's having a blast playing this character.

Jarrah: Yeah. At Star Trek Las Vegas 2014, she said it was her favorite role. She said "I really thought that it was sort of like Oscar Wilde meets Bewitched and I love that I got to play that kind of arch aristocratic board immortal."

Grace: Oh my God. Can you imagine if she played Andorra? How amazing that would be?

Sue: My absolute favorite bit is her scene with B'Elanna, when she says, "You know I've always liked Klingon females. You have so much spunk."

Jarrah: Yes!

Sue: I mean she's basically talking to the second generation of her previous character.

Grace: Yeah.

Sue: It's great.

Jarrah: So she's like, I mean Amanda is a Lady Q, but she definitely is not on equal footing with John de Lancie Q, I think this is the first time we see a woman Q who is like that level of power in the continuum. But, I feel like overall if you just take a step back and look at it, it kind of undermines her that she is basically his ex-girlfriend who is trying to stop him from screwing up partly because she's still kind of cares about him and then ends up having a baby with him at the end.

Grace: Yeah for a multi-dimensional omnipotent being she does play into a lot of tropes.

Sue: Yeah she's... the character is sarcastic and quirky and smart, but her whole motivation throughout the episode is that she's a jilted, jealous ex.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: Yeah. Like she doesn't seem to have any other reason for doing what she's doing. Like she's there because she knows him and at the end of the day she's persuaded by his plan and that involves like them having a baby together.

Grace: Lowercase q.

Jarrah: After he's spent like the whole episode weirdly trying to seduce Janeway.

Grace: Yeah, that's not fun to watch.

Sue: I'm also, like, weirded out by the Civil War allegory here.

Grace: Yeah. I mean...

Sue: Cause like his Q was the... John de Lancie Q was the supposed leader of this breakaway bunch that is fighting for individuality, right, which we should see as a good thing, and yet they're, in this analogy, they're the Confederacy.

Grace: That's uncomfortable.

Sue: Right... and when...

Jarrah: Are they? I thought they were the North.

Sue: No, they're in gray they're the South. Janeway's a southern belle. And yeah. And...

Jarrah: Oh and that's why Janeway's southern belle, okay, yes.

Sue: I know you're Canadian.

Laughter

Sue: But then the Voyager crew shows up and they're in union uniforms. And I guess you don't want to put the Voyager crew in the Confederate uniforms, but like it makes the whole thing kind of uncomfortable.

Grace: Yes! Yes, it does.

Jarrah: Well, I mean... I think like so she, Lady Q, was supposed to be on the continuum side which would be the north in this case I guess because Q John de Lancie Q is like rebelling against the government and trying to support a la Quinn Q's who want to end their own lives and stuff.

Sue: Yeah.

Jarrah: And also like maybe Q's that want racial diversity in the continuum, Q's...

Grace: Then why would you go with the South?

Sue: Right? That's what I'm saying.

Grace: It makes no sense!

Jarrah: Yeah, yeah... no that does not.

Grace: There was not... someone did not think this through.

Jarrah: That's just super super uncomfortable. And like if Lady Q is with the North then that's why they're in those uniforms, and then when they had a baby it brought the two sides together.

Sue: I mean I guess. I mean I understand the choice of like the Q continuum is having a civil war. How are Americans going to understand this? By using the Civil War.

Grace: It just brings it back to that weird whole thing of like we've got all of history and the universe to choose from but we're gonna keep going back to US history.

Jarrah: There are other civil wars.

Sue: But not that Americans will understand.

Grace: I know, but that just makes it comes across as so obvious though.

Sue: Well and so on the surface the choices make a lot of sense like you've got de Lancie's Q people seceding, and they're fighting and they want to bring them back, and Lady Q on the side of the the the old school continuum right, so, like that... fine I get what you're trying to do but there's so much added to it, when you get in to equating...

Grace: There's a lot of baggage with this episode.

Sue: ...yeah equating something with the Confederacy is gonna raise more questions than it answers I think is what I was trying to say.

Grace: And Q would know all this shit.

Jarrah: Yeah, and then like this whole thing is having like galactic ramifications, because when they fire off a musket in the continuum it destroys a planet somewhere in the real universe. Also, if the Q are so bored why did they stop trying kids? Because certainly Q2 is quite a handful. I feel like maybe if you'd kept having kids you would have an easier time dealing with that yourself.

Sue: Yet they act like it's a totally new thing, but we...

Jarrah: No, we really don't. If they're anything like them.

Sue: They act like procreation is a totally new thing, but yet we do have that example in Amanda.

Jarrah: Mm hmm. Yeah. So, Amanda like the novelty wore off pretty quick, I'm gathering, they were like "Oh this is so exciting and rejuvenating to the Continuum." Like 10 years later she's just like, I'm bored. Snap my finger destroy a planet and they're like "Okay, yeah we're back to what we were."

Grace: Yep, she's one of us alright.

Jarrah: And then like certainly I guess the cooling off time is enough because Q2 does not seem to, even with the firm guiding hand of Auntie Kathy, seem like he's really gonna bring a lot new and exciting to the Continuum.

Grace: He's probably just gonna hang out in deep space creating wormholes with his buddies or something.

Jarrah: Yeah. So, it's gonna be he and he's just gonna like go find each Ihceb and bring him back and be like "Hey you want to come hang out with me now?" and they'll just sit on a planet somewhere and make people's clothes fall off.

Grace: He's going to be that rich kid whose dad bought him a condo out on the beach and just hangs out there smoking weed all day.

Jarrah: Yeah pretty much.

Grace: But in deep space with omnipotence.

Jarrah: Yeah, so, that's the other thing is then it's like sort of I guess implied that Lady Q was just like I've had enough of this kid and just bails. And then like Q's stuck with the kid by himself.

Grace: Yeah she's... it's kind of sad to think of her as a deadbeat mom.

Jarrah: Just getting back at Worf... that doesn't make any sense.

Grace: No, not a lot.

Sue: K'Ehleyr was a Q all along!

Grace: Dun dun dun!

Sue: What do you want to bet that there is a fanfic that connects all of these characters?

Grace: If not I want someone to make it so, because I feel like that's something the universe needs. I can promise you there are multiple fics connecting all of the Jeffrey Coombs characters so this is only fair really.

Jarrah: Nice. I mean I don't think it's that hard to put Lady Q in any of the other character's stories. I just don't know how you bring in the Enterprise character.

Grace: I do like this note that we have from Suzie Plakson Lady Q and that the one thing she disliked about that episode was the outfit that they have her wearing during the Civil War bits. That quote there is, "I thought that the Q would not have done the very modest lace collar they had her in. And I was like, no that Q would have had some plunging neckline, Scarlett O'Hara kind of thing she would have never been that demure." And she's absolutely right. I guess they just really wanted that old school Civil War visuals more than they wanted the actual characterisation in that.

Jarrah: I think it would have been way more funny if she came in with it.

Grace: Yeah, definitely. Or just have her straight up wearing a Scarlett O'Hara outfit like her roll in wearing the curtain dress and be like, "Yeah I don't I don't give a crap about American history I saw the movie that's about it."

Sue: Or the Carol Burnett curtain dress.

laughter

Sue: Like, "Sorry guys I got confused"

Grace: She's like, "I saw the skit. I think I got the gist of it though."

Jarrah: She does have kind of like Carol Burnett sense about her.

Sue: Absolutely.

Jarrah: Yeah, just like she's having so much fun and just owning these parts.

Grace: Honestly, I came here to attack people and I'm having such a good time right now.

Sue: Yeah, even like she's on Voyager, like helping them figure out how to get into the Continuum, and dealing with everything that's going on, she seems, as snarky as she's being, she seems to be enjoying herself.

Jarrah: Oh yeah. What are you doing with that dog? I'm not talking about the puppy.

laughter

Grace: Voyager sounds like a nice place to visit, so why not? Wouldn't want to stick around there though.

Jarrah: Yeah it's funny. I also, I mean, I guess okay, so I'm just revisiting this character again and with the whole... the other thing is like Q, she gets sort of a bit of like she... she gets a bit of comeuppance from the Voyager crew that she can't really solve the problem herself. And she hasn't really spent enough time around humans to understand her own limitations, and yeah like how you can't just magic everything. But, I just wish, I don't know, more time to shine, or less of the rest of the episode.

Grace: That's kind of a running theme that we have with all the Suzie Plakson episodes isn't it? Would be better with more Suzie Plakson, please. And I think after this one we've only got one Suzie Plakson episode left.

Sue: Well, it's been a long road.

Grace: Getting from the top of the list?

Sue: Getting from from Selar to Q, but Enterprise... I can't do it... no.

Grace: Back away it's okay, it's okay to call it quits.

laughter

Sue: I should of prepared. Our last character is Tarah in the Enterprise episode "Ceasefire" [ENT Season 2, Episode 15].

Grace: Which is such a fun episode, and I love that we get to have Suzie Plakson with all of her... what am I trying to say? All the personality and energy that she puts into a character, especially with her different personalizations of alien characters, it's so fun to see her get to do Andorian, it really is.

Sue: Mm hmm.

Jarrah: Yeah, and this is a very different character for her, it's like she's pretty much straight up villain.

Grace: Yeah, it's great.

Jarrah: A bad guy, at least. She's not on our side.

Sue: She's sort of second in command to Shran.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: Yeah. And we talked about her in I think Baddest Women in the Universe, Part II [<http://www.womenatwarp.com/episode-78-the-baddest-women-in-the-universe-part-ii/>] our second part of our women villains episode, but it occurred to me that she kind of mirrors, we see this type of character a fair amount in Star Trek, and it's kind of. it's an important character.

Grace: It's a Trek archetype.

Jarrah: Yeah of like the, you know when two people are coming together to make peace there's always people who want that peace not to happen. And she would be like the General Chang or the Admiral Cartwright, maybe more accurately like the person who's trying to sabotage peace behind the scenes.

Grace: But yeah I think that especially with Shran as an established character the two of them have a really good melodramatic chemistry with both her and Coombs' performances, which is just really fun to watch. Because if you're going to be a bright blue alien with antenna you gotta have a little melodrama, otherwise what's even the point?

Jarrah: Sabotage no longer works, she has to resort to kicking Archer in the face.

Grace: Well we've all wanted to do it.

Jarrah: Well yeah, well not really in the face, but she does at one point like sort of swing herself from a bar and kick him two feet in the stomach, and that was my favorite part.

Grace: Watching Archer get gut punched?

Jarrah: It was just the way that it happened.

Grace: It is cool to see her in action. If you have a giant tall lady actress you gotta let her do something bad ass at some point. It took long enough to let her do that since K'Ehleyr.

Jarrah: Yeah I also... okay... I should have known this but I didn't know that they had like puppeteers for the antenna, I felt like it was... like I guess it was... what was it like robotic?

Grace: They were mechanical, so she had that she had to have this rig on her head and just hear them going *Grace makes whirring motor noises* when they moved around.

Jarrah: Okay, yeah, so I mean I sort of did understand that, but she actually talked about the the person controlling them...

Grace: Putting that into the characterization, yeah.

Jarrah: ...as a puppeteer and how that was like they had to work together and she thought it would be super distracting but once you got into it you just were like, "This is my antenna and they're doing stuff" like, you felt like part of the character.

Grace: Yeah. And working that annoyance from the loud noise and hearing them go like *more motor noises* into the character and being like, "Okay as an Adorian, I am aware of things differently in a way that a human isn't. And that's just my antenna picking up stuff going around."

Jarrah: It would have been cool if they had built her up as a character before "Ceasefire" a bit like that would have made it.

Grace: Yeah that would have been cool.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Sue: Well and with the frequency with which we see Shran in the future of Enterprise it would be great if she came along too.

Jarrah: Yeah. I think that they like they didn't super have a plan for those minor characters. I think if they had taken some more time and planned out the episodes a bit better in advance then they could have like sowed those seeds earlier on.

Grace: Maybe if they'd mapped out the road it wouldn't have been such a long road getting from there to here. Character wise.

Sue: Too many detours, man.

Jarrah: Oh well but it's cool and I like her scenes with Shran, and you know being annoyed with T'Pol and things and she's just like you know basically I don't trust Vulcans you know you can't trust them any type of cease fire is a betrayal of our people.

Grace: So having seen Suzie Plakson play a different type of alien in every appearance on Star Trek, what's a type that you would like to see her play?

Jarrah: You know I think I feel like she got asked this at a convention I was at, like would you like to play like a different alien or something, and I can't honestly remember what she said. I don't know, Sue, do you have any thoughts on that?

Sue: The first thing that came to mind was Romulan.

Grace: Oh yeah.

Sue: And I think that takes... I feel like that would sort of combine Selar and Tarah, in a way.

Jarrah: Selah?

laughter

Grace: I want to see her as a giant...

Sue: Not Selah though...

laughter

Jarrah: If you put the names together.

Grace: I want to see her play a giant like scary Ferengi lady.

Jarrah: Yeah she'd be a funny Ferengi.

Grace: She can be Moogie's body person, the bouncer on the way in to see her.

Jarrah: I think she could really kick butt at a Ferengi role, and She definitely has the comedy chops.

Grace: Oh it would definitely be fun to see her where those teeth also.

Sue: Maybe she could be like Pel's friend.

Jarrah: Yeah she can be Pel's publisher of Ferengi romance novels, not to start because it's first a guy to start, then once the Ferengi feminist revolution happens she takes over the publishing company.

Grace: If it's anything like the English suffragette movement she can be like the lady who is teaching everyone judo and self-defense for rallies.

Jarrah: If she was gonna be in Discovery what kind of role would you want to see her as.

Sue: Oh interesting.

Grace: It'd be really cool to see her play a Discovery Klingon, just see how that would go.

Sue: Let her be a straight up Starfleet Admiral.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Grace: Yeah do it.

Jarrah: She could be Tilly's mom.

Grace: No I wouldn't want to see her be mean to Tilly though.

Jarrah: She's got the hair!

Sue: Oh I kind of love that though!

Grace: Mean Suzie Plakson would be so scary!

Jarrah: But we could just see her like separately, like we don't have to see her directly being mean, and maybe she learns through the episode that she's wrong. She could play a Kelpian?

Grace: That would be interesting.

Sue: She has a height!

Grace: She does she wouldn't need the platforms.

Jarrah: That's a lot of prosthetic makeup though so I feel like there's a reason they only do it with people who are very experienced.

Grace: Yeah.

Sue: But real quick, we did have a listener comment from Chris about Tarah, said, "She was a villain, not at all likable but wonderfully acted. She did a lot along with Shran to carve out the Andorian pre-Federation stereotype."

Jarrah: So, by that, did you think it means like what the Federation thinks of the Andorians?

Grace: Yeah or at least the basis for what...

Sue: What the culture was for creating the federation.

Jarrah: Yeah that makes sense. I mean they even like Shran obviously is a lot more reasonable, pragmatic, but they both have that same sort of general pugilistic tendencies.

Grace: *laughter* Pugilistic... they're a pugilistic bunch.

Jarrah: I don't know what other traits would you consider to be important in those two.

Grace: Go to Andor for the snow stay like the pugilism.

Jarrah: Like, they're sly, they're crafty I guess.

Grace: They really like quality leather goods.

Jarrah: Good taste in leather. They don't mind kicking Archer in the stomach now and then.

Sue: Actually I get a lot of Cardassian vibes from the Enterprise Andorians.

Grace: Oh yeah, I can see that.

Sue: Like kind of, not really aggressive, but like...

Grace: They will stir the pot.

Sue: And very politically motivated.

Grace: Machiavellian, kind of.

Sue: Yes.

Jarrah: Yeah they're I think like a lot of the difference has to do not just with the aesthetics but with like the way that the uniforms for the Cardassian force the Cardassians to be like super upright and the Andorians are just like a lot more mammalian feeling, and like their movements are more like humans, but I guess they have a sort of insectoid type antennae so they they feel different for that reason but I like when I think of the Cardassians, I think of Cardassians as being like more uptight than Andorians.

Grace: Yeah, definitely.

Jarrah: I mean maybe she could play an Andorian on Discovery?

Grace: That could that could also be interesting, yes.

Jarrah: I don't know what they would do though.

Grace: Just excited to see more aliens in general on there.

Jarrah: Yeah. Orion. She could play...

Grace: Oh my gosh she could be like the great big Orion Madam.

Jarrah: Yes, she already has the red hair.

Grace: Like crime momma Suzie Plakson.

Jarrah: That would be great. Yeah. I mean I don't know that I want them to revisit the retconning of slave girls again. As we talked about in our Orion Women Episode [<http://www.womenatwarp.com/episode-44-its-not-easy-being-green/>]. It didn't go that well the first time. But you know maybe just like a passing part that we don't really have to think too much about.

Grace: Or something.

Jarrah: Yeah I mean we already saw some Orions and in the end of the last season.

Grace: We're just saying we've had her in this many series chronologically so far it only makes sense to bring her again.

Jarrah: For sure.

Grace: So, that she can get that fifth stamp on her character card.

Jarrah: Yes. We're also working on Photoshopping her into some Deep Space Nine. We're just head canonning her into the Ferengi world of Deep Space Nine.

Grace: If we can dream it we can do it.

Sue: We got a comment also from Sarah Jane who wrote I think all of her roles have been a great take no shit carried... wait no... words. "I think all of her roles have been great take no shit characters that still retain their feminine identity without edging over into too many action girl tropes."

Grace: Yeah definitely we see them actually being interesting proactive women characters without being the stereotypical quote unquote strong.

Jarrah: Yeah, the action Barbie, like fighting F toy. Like, Tarah is the most fighty, K'Ehleyr has some of it, but it's like part of her Klingon-ness and part of her just like general suppressed anger instead of being like an action character, per se.

Grace: The character, the personality, and the drive always comes before that fighting aspect of the character.

Sue: They're also all highly intelligent.

Grace & Jarrah: Yes.

Jarrah: There is none of them... like Selar's the only one that doesn't really influence the plot but all the other ones are pretty key.

Sue: Yeah!

Grace: Suzie Plakson seems like a cool lady.

Jarrah: Yeah, and again if you want to check out more of what she's working on now, you can listen to some of her singing, or look at photos of her sculptures, or read some of her writing, or see more about the acting that she's done on her website <http://www.suzieplakson.com/>.

Sue: So, I think that about wraps it up for us today. It's a little bit of a shorter one...

Grace: But only because they haven't given her enough roles!

Sue: ...and that's okay. I agree. You think she's all over all of Star Trek, but she's only been in five episodes, bananas! Anyway, Grace, where can people find you on the interwebs?

Grace: You can find me on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/BonecrusherJenk> and in the doorways of your mind...

Sue: And Jarrah?

Jarrah: You can find me on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/jarrahpenguin> or in Data's brain...

Sue: And I'm Sue, you can find on twitter at <https://twitter.com/spaltor>. If you'd like to reach out to the show you can find us on Twitter, <https://twitter.com/WomenAtWarp>, Instagram, <https://www.instagram.com/womenatwarp/>, and Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/womenatwarp/>, at <http://www.womenatwarp.com/> for show notes and blog posts, or by emailing crew@womenatwarp.com. And if you are going to be in Las Vegas this weekend, you can find Grace and myself at Star Trek Las Vegas.

Grace: Yeah! Hit us up!

Sue: And for more from the Roddenberry Podcast Network vist <http://podcasts.rodtenberry.com/>. Thanks so much for joining us.

OUTRO MUSIC

[Transcription by <https://twitter.com/carolinalady>]