

Women at Warp Episode 133: Odo the Constable

GRACE:

laughing 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 our biweekly mission to explore our favorite franchise. My name is Grace and thanks for tuning in. With us this week we have Jarrah.

JARRAH:

Hell-Odo.

GRACE:

And with us this week we have Sue.

SUE:

Hellooo.

GRACE:

And with us this week also we have our special guest Lydia.

LYDIA:

Hi.

GRACE:

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 a dollar a month and get awesome rewards from thanks on social media to our special made watchalong 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. We still have our poster giveaway going on. Our deadline for that is March 1st so if you want to get yourself some free posters so your walls aren't so sad and naked it's the time to have it in by.

SUE:

So I realized after we set our March 1st deadline that that is the first night of the Star Trek cruise, which I will be on. So how about we extend that deadline to March 8th?

JARRAH:

Cool. To International Women's Day.

GRACE:

We have that authority, we have the power, because we're international women.

SUE:

So again we have two of the exclusive posters that CBS was giving out at the Picard Delta activation in Times Square on the premiere date, and to enter that giveaway all you have to do is email us at crew@womenatwarp.com and tell us something you know because we know not everybody is a subscriber to CBS All Access or has access to the show. So tell us something about your favorite thing about Picard in next gen, your favorite thing about the new series. Just we ask for this, we're not judging it on merit, but we ask for a specific thing to make sure that you're actually listening to the show. So tell us something about Picard.

GRACE:

It's a pop quiz!

SUE:

laughing And again now we're now extending that entry deadline to March 8th at midnight Eastern Time.

GRACE:

Now before we get too much further into our main topic our guest Lydia, would you like to introduce yourself to our listeners a little bit?

LYDIA:

Sure. I'm Lydia. I've been listening to this show for a long time and I've been watching Star Trek probably since, lets see, I guess I was a *little* little kid I used to crawl into bed with my dad and watch it with him, and we watched TNG, and for a long time all I really remembered was that Captain Picard Day episode where they're crawling through the Jeffries tubes.

GRACE:

Yes!

LYDIA:

laughing And singing together. Yeah that's like, that's the one I remember the most because I don't know I guess I watched that one a lot with my dad. But my favorite series is DS9. I'm currently watching Voyager for the first time. I'm an artist and I'm in school for art therapy.

JARRAH:

That's neat!

GRACE:

I've got good news for you. If you liked Deep Space Nine, you're in luck because we've got a Deep Space Nine-centric topic today!

LYDIA:

Yaaaaaay.

GRACE:

He's slimy but not *struggling to rhyme* limey. He's *Sue laughs* not Frodo.

SUE:

Oh my Gosh.

GRACE:

He lives in a bucket but he'll never say "ffffff..forget it."

SUE:

overcome with laughter Oh my God.

GRACE:

It's Odo! Everyone's favorite Space Constable.

JARRAH:

Wooo.

LYDIA:

Yay.

SPEAKER: F22

All right, so for some background on the character what we have here is an original writers Bible entry for Odo written in 1992. Would anyone like to give us a quick read of that?

JARRAH:

Well I don't think we have to necessarily read the whole thing but I definitely wanted to pull out one part that talks, you know, not so much about just his back story, about the fact he works on you know Terrok Nor, or in that kind of stuff but said "At first he was sort of an Elephant Man, a source of curiosity and humor as he turned himself into a chair or pencil. Finally he realized he would have to take the form of humanoid to assimilate and function in their environment. He does it but resents it. As a result Odo performs a uniquely important role in the ensemble. He is a character who explores and comments on human values."

SUE:

sarcastic That is so unique in Star Trek. *all laugh*

GRACE:

sarcastic That's something we've *never* seen before really.

JARRAH:

I think what *is* unique is that he resents it. So I mean, We see a little bit of that from Spock maybe but like, Data whole-on embraces it and most of the other characters, like Seven, is in a bit of a different position. So other characters that find themselves in this *pauses* it's a little bit different. Like, they're generally they've chosen to serve with humans and want to be more like them or at least to spend more time with them and Odos just like "Rrrrr".

GRACE:

laughing He's like "Eeeerp"?

LYDIA:

He's that lovable curmudgeon.

GRACE:

He is the most- we love that he is a curmudgeon. We truly do.

SPEAKER: F30

I do like that he can comment on things more *cynically* than some of these other characters and not just like not just sassy. He's not just like a sassy Vulcan but he's a little bit like you know, In DS9 because DS9 has all these gray areas he's often the one to comment on them.

LYDIA:

Yeah for sure. He plays that role really well.

GRACE:

And it does say something when you can have a character who is as a singular entity able to be an outside source and an outside reference on *everything*, on every culture. And that adds a level of complexity both, you know, to your main cast but also having to stop every now and then and analyze the world that you've put them in.

JARRAH:

Mm hmm. It also says that he has adopted child syndrome.

GRACE:

Yeah I was hoping we could share that part too.

JARRAH:

Yeah, searching for his personal identity and basically he says "Although he doesn't know anything about his species he is certain that justice is an integral part of their being." Not sure how that pans out but..

GRACE:

I'm sure it turns out fine. And it's gonna be fine.

JARRAH:

Like basically says that justice feels like a racial memory for him and that's why he became a law man.

GRACE:

singing as a dramatic themesong Laaaaaw man!

LYDIA:

I think there's an episode, I think that's when he first meets the founders where he's like "You know I spent my life looking for justice" and she's like "That is because you want order." *crew makes sympathetic noises*

GRACE:

I love that *that* thing that he believes in so much is taken and then when he gets to find out the meaning behind it it's so sad.

LYDIA:

It is sad because you watered down the concept of justice to this idea, it completely dehumanizes everything about it. It's still kind of similar, in that when you put things in order everything has its place and things you know go the way they're supposed to go but you cut off the emotional element of it.

GRACE:

It's just so sad because for Odo that's his main contribution to the station. He is able to be unbiased but human in the sense that he is paying attention what's going on on an emotional level and you know he considers himself unbiased because he's an outsider. And that's what the Cardassians considered him and that's how he got into his position. And so for him that's the role he fills and that's his greater purpose. And there's that great line in the episode when he's talking about how he was trained to do like tricks for people coming in to see him in the lab and stuff and he's like "There was always like little tricks where I was doing the Bajoran lines on my face or the Cardassian neck ridges. But you know what? No one had to teach me the justice trick. I just knew that that was important."

SUE:

This might be extending the metaphor too far, but when I think about the Founders telling him "You were seeking order" and we also sort of see Odo as a law man. Right? It makes me think of the dog whistle phrase "Law and Order." And I'm not like *Grace gives an obligatory "dun-dun" the show but like, when politicians say things like "We want to return to a state of law and order" its really meaning like things like racial profiling and it sort of... *looking for words* just not

GRACE:

It's not justice, it's control.

SUE:

Right. And it might just be a hint at the sinister nature of the founders.

JARRAH:

Also just in my head I've gone through a list of all the Law and Order detectives that I'm familiar with and I can't see Odo resembling a single one of them.

GRACE:

I mean he's not that great a shapeshifter sooo.

JARRAH:

laughs He's got like, a bit of a Munch cynicism but that's like-

GRACE:

I could totally see him kicking it with Munch. I can see them being curmudgeon buddies.

pause "Curmuddies!"

SUE:

quietly Oh my god.

JARRAH:

But another background thing that I found was in the season 3 DVD special features Ira Steven Behr talks about how Odo was originally going to be "a Clint Eastwood type" and he says "We sent writers off to write him like Clint Eastwood and then I was told that they cast Rene Auberjonois I said, Clint Eastwood? Rene Auberjonois? Clint Eastwood? Rene's Auberjonois? Does not compute! And then I saw what he brought to the role and I had to call up a whole bunch of writers and say, guys I apologize but this is better than we even imagined."

GRACE:

I think that's a really good sort of summation right there of Odo as the law and order character and what Odo uniquely brings to the sort of character archetype you know? And that the sort of Clint Eastwood law man it's always "I am right and therefore anything I do is justifiable" sort of thing. And with Odo it's "I need to be able to justify anything I do" which is kind of the opposite.

JARRAH:

I certainly think that Rene Auberjonois brought to the character I guess more of a thoughtfulness?

GRACE:

Yeah and definitely more likable than Clint Eastwood.

JARRAH:

And I guess also a willingness to put himself in other people's shoes.

SUE:

He seemed to take his role as or his position as being impartial very seriously and sort of with pride.

JARRAH:

Even though he had to wear that brown suit.

GRACE:

Not the best look. But you know what-

SUE:

Can we talk about that?

GRACE:

Let's.

SUE:

Odo is always naked.

JARRAH:

Yes.

GRACE:

Yeah. And I don't feel like the rest of the crew acknowledges it nearly as much as they should.

JARRAH:

There's also a lot of Internet people who do spend a lot of time obsessing about this, including like the fact that he shouldn't be able to use his com-badge. Like does he have the ability to manufacture like a working com-badge that the computer can detect? Apparently so.

LYDIA:

Huh. Didn't think about that.

JARRAH:

Not to mention that you know there's a lot of issues around the science of like shapeshifting and mass. But you know it doesn't make me love the character less it's just-

GRACE:

"We don't have the budget to physically and visually explore that."

SUE:

I mean it also means that like, his sensory organs are just for show. Like his eyes aren't really eyes. All of him is eye.

GRACE:

I love so much the episode where we're seeing him talking to the doctor who discovered him basically and saying he's like "I've never really seen humanoids before." and he's like "Oh but he didn't even really see. He didn't have eyes" and just Odo getting pissed off like *exhausted* "Oh my God you are explaining my personal experience to me. Please stop talking over me."

LYDIA:

Man, that makes me really wonder like, what Odo "sees". How he perceives the world around him. I've never thought about that before.

GRACE:

I mean, we got to briefly see how Geordi sees the world through his visor but what *do* things look like in Odo-vision? Is everyone just really weird and uncomfortably solid looking?

JARRAH:

Well, and when he's turned into a solid in Broken Link it's like he doesn't seem to notice a difference with like how he perceives the world it's just you know we're like he can't shape shift and now he has to eat and stuff.

GRACE:

Wouldn't it be great though if we did see through Odo-vision and he sees like his own reflection and he looks like Rock Hudson and everyone else looks super weird and gooey? So let's get into Odo some more in terms of his story arc and some key moments and episodes. We have his introduction in Emissary when we get him introduced as this character that has a mysterious past and I feel like it's an awkward introduction in terms of it's kind of a throwaway line of him just being like *dramatically* "We don't know what I am. We just know it's from the Delta quadrant." it's just like "That's the whole intro we're getting here?"

JARRAH:

Gamma. Gamma quadrant.

GRACE:

I knew that. I was testing you. That was *stuttering* that was that was a *test* *Sue laughs* because now you know I am not a shapeshifter impersonating Grace. So any way that that introduction always feels a little clumsy to me even though I know when you're having a pilot

you've gotta introduce all of your characters and you have only so much time and only so much story that you can tell in the space of that. So that's my thought on that.

LYDIA:

Yeah I re-watched this episode yesterday, and I tried to take some notes on it so that I remembered because I have pretty bad short term memory recall, but my first thought when he first appears on the screen. I totally forgot about where he was pursuing Nog and a nameless thief and the dude like throws like, a spiked nunchuck at his head and it just goes right through *laughing* to the wall behind him. And I really really wish I remembered like, what my initial response to that was like the first time I ever saw the show but I'm sure it was like "What the heck!?"

GRACE:

I I think I remember the first time I saw it going "Whoa that's gonna be expensive to animate if he does that all the time."

JARRAH:

I know my most recent thought was "Man those Bajoran security officers are not getting paid enough money." *crew laughs*

SUE:

I remember before DS9 premiered that like in all the magazines, or you know Star Trek magazine, all this stuff about "There's going to be this shapeshifter and we're going to see change shapes all the time." And it was one of those things sort of like Voyager landing right? Like I feel like the fan base was just waiting for it to happen and they actually gave it to us right away. But it definitely happened less and less because it was too expensive.

GRACE:

Odo was the separating of the saucer section but in character form. You only need to really see it happen a few times and then we can be like "Oh yeah. That's a thing that can happen. We shouldn't have to show you. You know we told you."

LYDIA:

On that first episode, and like the first I don't know maybe at least first half season, his face is not quite set yet either. So it's a little different than what he ends up as. He looks a little more gaunt.

GRACE:

A little sadder, yeah.

SUE:

But how brilliant of them to write into the script that he's not that great at humans.

LYDIA:

Yes.

SUE:

He's just changing it up.

GRACE:

He's working on it. It's an evolution for him. I remember seeing a convention, Jeffrey Combs was talking about hanging out with him and getting lunch at one point when he was first guest starring on the show and like "Hey let's see what they've got for lunch" and Rene is like "Oh soup. Soup for me." And then he has lunch for him another time he's like "Oh soup for me." Aw gosh, this guy really loves soup. Then he realizes that he can't take the face prosthetic off to eat so soup is the only thing he can do for lunch with face prosthetic on.

SUE:

Aw Rene!

GRACE:

Oh no wonder he's so scrawny.

SUE:

Soup for lunch every day for seven years. *crew "oh no" laughs"

LYDIA:

"Someone just puree me a tuna fish sandwich. Get it over with."

GRACE:

Poor guy.

LYDIA:

That's a very obscure Bobs Burgers reference, sorry 'bout that. *all laugh*

GRACE:

Let's talk about some of his relationships and the friendship with Quark. We get to see some really great dynamic there in terms of him being the curmudgeonly character and- Odo being the curmudgeon character and Quark being kind of rascalion. And we have in our notes that it's considered in a lot of ways an homage to Casablanca with Odo and Claude Rains his role of Captain Louis Renault and Quark as Humphrey Bogarts Rick Blaine.

JARRAH:

Did anyone pick up on that?

LYDIA:

laughing I've never seen Casablanca.

GRACE:

It's one of those things where I've seen it like, be referenced before as like "Oh yeah. It's kind of a reference there." and every time I do it I'm like "Oh I can't believe I didn't think about that" but I never got to *that point* on my own.

JARRAH:

I mean I think that the Quark Rick comparison is the bit more of the stretch than the Odo Renault. Captain Louis Renault character like makes a bit more sense. But you know I had not made that connection on my own for sure. But it's cool!

SUE:

And DS9 is full of those kinds of references. You know I think that the interplay between Odo and Quark is perhaps one of the best relationships if not *the best* relationship on Deep Space Nine.

JARRAH:

Mm hmm.

GRACE:

And it's definitely the major grounding one for Odo.

LYDIA:

They play off each other so well and they *love* to hate each other. It's just really entertaining.

JARRAH:

You know even The Ascent, the one where they're like stuck on the planet you know, like the end of that episode is them basically like "Do you remember what I said" "about like how much you hated me?" "Yes." "Well I meant every word." "So did I." And they're like kind of laughing about it. But then it carries on to like the very finale with the whole Odo insulting Quark and Quark being like "He loves me." *crew laughs*

GRACE:

They have got such an intense and wonderful frenemy-ship. Which I'm not sure how else to say it. They hate-love each other. They love-hate each other.

JARRAH:

Well, and a lot of times in like media where you have two guys who have an antagonistic friendship there is like usually something involving like sexual objectification of women. That's a dynamic there.

GRACE:

I appreciate that there's no love triangle there. Appreciate that very much.

LYDIA:

Yeah me too. There's never really much like *bro voice* "We'll I'm just flexing my muscles because they're bigger than yours." Like there's never any kind of like that dynamic happening. It's usually like "I'm gonna catch you doing something slimy." "No you're not!"

SUE:

They're really just trying to outsmart each other.

GRACE:

I appreciate *that*. Because a lot of the times when we see like antagonistic friendships it's a machismo kind of thing and with them it's just about outsmarting each other and being like "No you like me too much to get me in real trouble."

JARRAH:

And even them not being willing to admit they like each other isn't to do with masculinity it's like to do with this-

LYDIA:

Exactly.

JARRAH:

The thief versus the constable. And this like need to preserve their reputation as a dishonest guy and an honest like an upstanding law man.

GRACE:

Yeah. There's no machismo in it but they are both very image oriented. I appreciate that. So are there any other aspects of the friendship between Odo and Quark that we really need to dig our heels into here and showcase aside from them climbing a mountain together and trying to kill each other while climbing a mountain?

LYDIA:

I will just say I watched this episode, The Ascent, and the whole like sequence when they're in the runabout like leading up to where they end up having to crash land on this planet. They're just ...I was laughing the whole time because they're literally just trying to get on each others nerves the whole time and it was fantastic. But I did love that at the end when Odo really thought that they weren't gonna make it that he makes this like final log and he like specifies that Quark would want his remains back and dessicated and I'm like "There's your proof that he really does love Quark!" Because he respects him enough to be like "He wants this really bizarre Ferengi tradition to be upheld. So make it happens."

GRACE:

"He doesn't want to go on mark-down."

LYDIA:

Exactly.

SUE:

ala Shatner Odo and Quark are climbing a mountain. Why are they climbing a mountain?

GRACE:

Their friendship wants to envelop the mountain...

JARRAH:

...to make oo-mox to the mountain. *all laugh, but Sue totally loses it*

GRACE:

Brilliant.

SUE:

still laughing No.

GRACE:

So if you're a Ferengi and your remains are put like on clearance or mark-down do you go to Ferengi hell for that?

SUE:

Oh my God.

GRACE:

So moving on to another relationship that we have that's recurrent, we have this relationship with Lwaxana Troi. I love their relationship so let's let's dig into that a little bit. Their relationship it starts out in a very kind of Pepe LePew like "Oh I'd just like you so much!" and like "I..no..no." and then it turns into an actual trusting and pretty solid friendship between the two of them.

LYDIA:

Yeah. I love The Forsaken. I love that episode when Odo and Lwuxana first meet, because she has such a strong personality and I am 100 percent on board with her because you just don't get to see that very often with women that are not like the quote young pretty type. And I think it's great. But I just thought it was fun to watch them get to know each other *again* and love when they go into the security office and she is coming on *strong* and our boy Odo is like *freaked out voice* "What is happening? I don't understand. I'm really confused." and to me like I just thought the whole interaction was great because if you had canon that Odo is more asexual and potentially even more agender than he's more confused than anything else at least

to me. He's just like "I don't know why you're doing this. And I'm kind of... you're in my space. Like I don't ...like what is happening?"

GRACE:

"Why do you keep wanting to spend time alone with me?"

LYDIA:

Exactly. Exactly. And she is not picking up on any of that. She's just like "Hey! Let's get to know each other." and he's like "No.. this is too much for me."

JARRAH:

Well yeah. And like he said he really likes control and his routine. Like he gets annoyed when Dax moves all his furniture like couple millimeters.

GRACE:

I mean who wouldn't?

LYDIA:

laughing So mean.

JARRAH:

So you know Lwaxana is really like challenging all that. And then in order to eventually get through to him she has to give him some space to be himself and to be vulnerable and show that she is a safe person.

GRACE:

But I love that we reach a point where their relationship is so trusting and all that that she gets pregnant and he's the friend that she goes to like "I got to figure out what I'm going to do here."

JARRAH:

I'll be honest I don't like.. so there's three Lwaxana episodes and I'm forgetting what the third one is but it's the one with the gratitude festival. I don't like what *that one* and The Muse have to say about her character, but in terms of what they say about Odo's character and especially The Muse I have no problem with it. It's like you know, it's quite touching that he really needs to dig deep within himself to again be vulnerable and in this time in front of more people in order to do this thing that's kind of fundamentally chivalrous which I don't think again Lwaxana should get in that situation. *crew laughs* But I think that what he does is really quite..it's a touching Odo episode.

SPEAKER: F19

He was willing to get shotgun married to Lwuxana.

SUE:

The third episode is Fascination

GRACE:

Oh gosh yeah.

JARRAH:

Oh thank you.

SUE:

And that is also the one where we learn that she is unable to read Odo which is like, I think, part of her fascination with him.

LYDIA:

That would make a lot of sense because if you're a Betazoid and you can read on everybody then it kind of takes the excitement out of it.

GRACE:

Also means that the two of them are on a more level playing field than she's probably used to dealing with, with nonBetazoids.

LYDIA:

Yeah, the whole scene where they're stuck in the elevator in The Forsaken is one of my absolute favorites because I, first of all, I relate to it because that dynamic of him just like wanting it to be quiet and her just being super chatty is like the exact dynamic me and my wife have. So I like, *laughs* and I'm the chatty one, and she's so quiet. But I think it's a good moment that highlights Odo's internal dialogue a lot because he spends pretty much the whole series really trying to belong. Like, he wants so badly to belong and being around growing up around solids and everything, quote unquote, he has done everything he can to emulate them and he can only do it so much to fit in. And so he's so resistant to Lwaxana because he's become like almost desensitized to this idea of like "Well I'm never gonna belong so I'm just not gonna let people close to me." And she really pulls his walls down by being vulnerable with him to the point where she's like "I'm showing you you can trust me because here's me being vulnerable and nobody sees me like this either." So I just thought it was a really beautiful moment where Odo has like this little moment of clarity of like "OK, I can let some people in and it'll be OK." So I like that.

GRACE:

I appreciate that Odo gets to also have a continuing relationship that's platonic but still treated as very loving.

LYDIA:

Yeah me too.

GRACE:

Because platonic love is good and important.

JARRAH:

Absolutely. Can I bring up Dr. Mora?

GRACE:

Yes let's do that. Yeah, that's great opposition to his relationship with Lwuxana.

JARRAH:

Yeah. So I re-watched, and now am gonna forget the name of, the first Dr. Mora episode, as well, and then the second one is The Begotten and they kind of tried a bit of similar ground but it's like "Hey your dad's coming to the station!" "He's not my dad." And I really-

LYDIA:

upset voice "He's not my real dad!" *crew laughs*

JARRAH:

I mean, there's just some really great scenes in *both* episodes and this dynamic that he has with Dr. Mora who wants to be his dad but also like literally first started a relationship with him as a specimen that he did debatable things to-

GRACE:

And was showing off other people. Basically that's what started this whole him feeling like an oddity thing.

JARRAH:

Yeah. And like, in the first episode he keeps saying things like "Oh I can't believe like, look at you! You actually like said that thing on your own!" kind of stuff. And it's just so condescending, and I like that they are not trying to make him you know, a simple character. Like he's not meant to be a character that at the end of the day we all want them to just forgive and forget. We understand why Odo still has issues.

GRACE:

And we definitely are in Odo's corner of it being a complicated relationship where he doesn't *have to* immediately forgive and forget everything that's happened and one of the things that I think makes the scene, with pulling it back, look so powerful when he kind of lets his walls down as it makes you wonder about some of his experiences up until that point. And then when you meet Dr. Mora you kind of have a "Ooooooh!" moment.

JARRAH:

And this is where he gets the hair from.

GRACE:

The terrible terrible hair.

LYDIA:

laughing It's like plastic Ken doll hair!

JARRAH:

But also in *The Begotten* we are also asked to empathize with the challenges of parenting. For Dr. Mora and then you know by putting Odo in that situation trying to encourage the baby changeling. Which I think is important, and I don't think it's meant to excuse some of the things Odo went through, but I think it is it was helpful to be like "Hey, also it's really hard being a parent." As a kid. I was like "Oh. You're right."

LYDIA:

Yeah, I watched that episode like an hour ago and it's one of my favorites, because I'm just gonna go on the record and say I hate "Odo as a solid" arc. My least favorite part of the series. I'm like "Just let him be a changeling please!" And so I really like how it ends. But yeah, the way Dr. Mora is, he's hyper defensive the whole time. And that's really him deflecting because he feels he definitely feels bad about how it happened. But he's doing that thing that people do without realizing it where he's like shifting the blame elsewhere by kind of using these like martyr-y kind of statements, you know? "You know *I smiled* like that the first time you did that." Like when you know the little baby changeling gets shocked or whatever and he's like "Little did I know you'd grow up to hate me for it."

GRACE:

Dr. Mora is such a crap dad. He's so emotionally manipulative and I hate it.

LYDIA:

Yeah. And it's like if you just took a minute, if you guys were in therapy together you would know! *laughs* You clearly are holding a lot of guilt for how things went down. Because he didn't know Odo was sentient at that point. And so up to a certain point you can kind of understand like *pauses* ...to a limit of like why you know he was. Because if you don't know that what you're dealing with is a being that can actually like, if it's not just some you know goo that doesn't have any kind of ability to recognize what's going on. It's just you know single cell organism or something? I can understand why you wouldn't necessarily think about how what you're doing is doing to it. But then as soon as it shows any kind of sentience you would know you should know to stop and re-adjust the way you're approaching the whole experience.

GRACE:

And we get that line from Odo in the first Dr. Mora episode where he's like "Yeah I had to prove to you I was sentient."

SUE:

Do we think that Dr. Mora might possibly be named for Dr. Moreau?

GRACE:

I had not thought of that!

JARRAH:

Let's see what Memory Alpha says.

LYDIA:

I love thoughts like that.

SUE:

It could be coincidence, could be intentional.

GRACE:

I feel like if they're gonna make a Dr. Moreau reference they'd get a lot weirder with it and not in terms of "Scientist who's also a kind of crummy dad" bad science dad.

JARRAH:

It doesn't say anything in that Dr. Mora entry on Memory Alpha but it's possible. It's definitely interesting. So that first episode is called The Alternate, and also has you know basically that kind of twist that like he's been kind of merged with this other shapeshifty thingy, but like it's embodying all of his anger towards him and feeling of being mistreated. And I do like that I think that could actually be a really powerful episode to watch with like a kid or you know a tween to try to you know open up some discussion about emotions?

GRACE:

And lashing out.

JARRAH:

And ways of expressing emotions and yeah, and also validity of emotions.

LYDIA:

That episode is one of my favorites. Everybody loves a montage. And my favorite is this montage of Otto like pouring the baby changeling *Grace gives an intense "aw"* into all these shapes and like the way he's looking at him and talking to him. Love that whole sequence. I'm just like "Yes Daddy Odo yes!"

GRACE:

Let Odo be a sensitive caring dad! He doesn't have to be curmudgeonly if he really cares.

LYDIA:

No that's a great way to think about it too, because you see all this sensitive side of him that you don't get to see very often in the show. So it's fantastic. And he's even super nice to Quark! Yeah, I forgot about that. He goes in the bar afterwards, and he's like "Let's have a drink! Like I'm celebrating! I'm buying you a drink!" It's pretty great.

JARRAH:

It almost makes you forget the rest of that episode is Kira having baby O'Brien. Anyway...

GRACE:

Strange strange B plots. So we did kind of establish that none of us are really big fans about the Odo being turned solid arc. Do we want to elaborate on that a little bit for a minute?

SUE:

"We need to save money." *crew laughs*

GRACE:

Yeah that sounds about right. *bitterly* Sounds about right.

LYDIA:

I just I didn't think it made any sense, really. And I just.. I don't know. Like first of all it bothers me they turn him human. They should have turned him Bajoran if we're going to make them into a solid. Because we grew up with Bajorans and not humans. So *that* bothered me but I'm sure that was just an oversight. I'm sure they just weren't thinking about it because you know humans wrote the show.

GRACE:

And humans are the default species.

LYDIA:

That's right. But I I don't know. Oh! I did want to mention though that the beginning of that episode, of the one with the baby Changeling. There's a total poop joke that is mad.

GRACE:

delighted Oh my gosh.

JARRAH:

Which is...?

LYDIA:

He goes in to see Julian, because his back is hurting, Dr. Bashir. And he's like "Your posture." He's like "Well I have great posture." He's like "You sit, you carry yourself too rigidly. You have a pinched nerve. That's why your back is hurting so much. You need to relax." And he's like "Yeah

well you told me to do that last week.” and he was like “Well yeah. And how did that turn out.” He was like “Well it helped. And so did the prune juice.” *crew laughs* I just died laughing! I’d never noticed that before. Like I laughed *so hard*.

GRACE:

Odo had to learn to poop!

LYDIA:

Constable was constipated! *more laughter* OK. OK. Back though to him being a solid. I just, I thought it was weird. And they did all these kind of weird episodes where they like explored him being a solid, and like I hate the episode where he like has a romantic relationship with this random person. *chorus of “yeahs”* I thought it was really uncomfortable and awkward. What’d you guys think?

GRACE:

I agree. I definitely-

JARRAH:

We didn’t even put it in the list because I didn’t remember it happened. *laughs*

LYDIA:

You blocked it out. It was so bad. You were like “No!”

GRACE:

Kind of like, in the world of Star Trek where we’ve got a very kind of sort of burgeoning free love attitude, why would you need to be solid to pursue romantic relationships? It just feels very silly.

SUE:

I mean it also feels very Ace. And I realize I’m skipping over some of the episodes on our list to talk about, but like when we talk about Odo as potentially representing a sexuality I mean there’s *very much* this like, in my experience as an ace person. I’ll preface it that way because everybody’s experience is different. There is this pressure to perform and have these performative relationships. And he’s just like trying to do what he thinks he’s supposed to do. And it’s awkward and uncomfortable for everybody. Right? So like that that is very much what I take from that. We mentioned it when in his relationship with Lwaxana where he’s just like “What is this? What is going on? I’m freaked out right now.” I have also had *that* experience. *uncomfortable laugh* But like, we see him later develop these feelings for Kira and I have seen some people be like “They’re negating his asexuality.” And I just want to put out there, even though I don’t like that direction in the storytelling. I disagree with that assessment of it. Just under the the asexual umbrella there are, I mean, because it is also a spectrum. There is Gray Ace and Demisexual. And Gray asexuality is like sometimes you feel sexual attraction. And Demisexuality is you feel sexual attraction after already forming an emotional bond with

someone. And like when he has these feelings for Kira, like it leads me in to like “Oh Odo Demi.” That’s what this is you know.

JARRAH:

Mm hmm. Yeah. I mean like go back, think about how long Odo has felt love for Kira and it never... like it takes a long long long time before there is any hint of a sexual connection or even like sexual ideation or anything. And even then I don't even know that you can say he's ever looking at her and being like “You're super super hot. I super want to bone you right now.” Like *starts laughing*

SUE:

I should mention that it might be more romantic attraction. And sexual attraction and romantic attraction while often related are not the same thing.

JARRAH:

So yeah. So I think that you could say he's asexual but not aromantic, but-

SUE:

He could be Demiromantic.

JARRAH:

There are like a couple ones where like you know, he's like zipping up her dress and stuff and it's clearly supposed to be like more of a sexy moment, but it's not clear that we're supposed to be in his body when we're reviewing that scene. If that makes sense. I guess like.. and even so then there's also he has like.. solid sex with the changeling lady during the occupation.

LYDIA:

Oh my God so awkward. “So that's how solids...” I don't even remember what she says. Something like “That's how solids share intimacy.” They're just not even looking at each other like backs to each other.

JARRAH:

They're just like “Yeah that was the thing.”

GRACE:

noise of discomfort I'm uncomfortable.

LYDIA:

Oh it was really cringe-y. I hated that. But I had a lot of negative feelings about the Female Changeling anyway. She was really manipulative and I didn't like that.

GRACE:

I didn't like that they all had the same haircut!

LYDIA:

Yeah. Why did she have the Ken doll hair?

SUE:

She was just mimicking him.

JARRAH:

Also she has linked with Odo too so they also have like a pre-existing intimate relationship. So that also isn't inconsistent with Demi or other ways of looking at his sexuality.

SUE:

Yeah. And I mean, I know we've talked about this before, but like being asexual does not mean that you will not have sex either. That is *also* a spectrum. You know some some ace people are sex repulsed and some ace people really enjoy the experience. So there are many levels of what goes on in this orientation.

GRACE:

So let's dig a little more into the relationship with Kira, since that's come up a few times already. He obviously has a relationship where he feels deep love and affection for her. But takes them both a while to get there. In terms of *eventual* relationship.

LYDIA:

I love their relationship through the majority of the show. I really prefer them as friends and I probably would have been more open to them being ...like having a more intimate relationship than friends if they had really considered the possibility of trying to angle it from an ace perspective. Because I feel like Kira would be open to something like that. She seems like a really open person and really accepting. So I think she would. I don't think that would be a.. I don't know. I don't think it would be a problem for her. So I think it could work. But I just feel like they could have, you know, they could have done it from that angle and it would have been really cool. But I love them as friends and you can see how much they really care about each other throughout the majority of the series. There's one episode that makes me so sad when, I can't remember is it is a Bariell that she's forming a relationship with? Or is it Shakaar?

JARRAH:

Shakaar.

LYDIA:

Shakaar at that point. Where like he's like "I don't think we should do our mourning for," like what is it security reviews? Or something like that and you can just see how much it deflated her and like how much hurts. And clearly it hurts him too and it makes me I'm like "Why? Why would they do that? Why would you stop?" It just bothered me.

GRACE:

I like how, even outside of her a romantic capacity, how important their friendship is shown as being.

SUE:

I think it would have been really interesting if they had had Odo even say to her like "I don't really know how to be intimate the way you are. But let's talk about this." But I mean I'm sure it was not even on their radar because I mean the show ended in 99. And the term asexual really wasn't used for an orientation until like 2001 is the very beginning of like of even really Asexual Visibility Education Network. So it's, in terms of like the larger queer discussion, is a much newer thing.

LYDIA:

Absolutely yeah.

GRACE:

This is also another example of where more diversity in the writers room would've probably been very helpful.

JARRAH:

Also worth noting again just that the difference in like TV then and now and what you could get away with on TV. And obviously like I think you totally could have had a dialogue about you know "I don't know how to be intimate in the way you want me to be" or you know have more a discussion without showing things. But I feel like they were like, introducing these things that they could show partly because they felt they had to? Like "Let's have Odo massage naked Kira." *crew laughs* Like the very few kind of moments that they could get away with. And they were like "We have to use all of them."

LYDIA:

Yeah, like it's the ones that are like..the scenes that are more like heteronormative like sexuality? Those are the ones that really bother me a little bit more just because they feel a little awkward and forced. But all of the other ones where they're just clearly being intimate and like just really sharing a really special bond with each other. I totally love, because they just have a great chemistry together, you know?

JARRAH:

And I think that, you know, even though we don't get that kind of literal discussion that you could potentially draw some parallels with the episode Chimera and queerness, where I was saying before we started recording that I really really loathe that episode as an Odo/Kira shipper. Because it's like "Odo meets cool dude who's kind of a jerk and doesn't like Kira and wants to take Odo away." But fundamentally what comes out of it is that he has been performing for her and he needs more space to be his authentic self and he does and she finds it beautiful and I like that message.

GRACE:

And you can never emphasize enough how important honesty is in any relationship. So do we want to talk about his relationship with the founders and the Dominion? Because we've touched on it briefly as it relates to the other topics, but as a character arc for him what are our thoughts on that?

LYDIA:

I think it's.. I don't know. I like it because you can see him struggle with like wanting to be back with his people but also like really being repulsed by the way that they are interacting with the rest of the galaxy essentially. And so I liked seeing that struggle. It kind of opens up a character's layers a little bit more-

JARRAH:

It's intense.

LYDIA:

Yeah it is intense!

SUE:

He goes from thinking he's alone, to finding his people, to learning that they are like trying to dominate the galaxy, and then deciding he's going to fight against them. Spoilers.

JARRAH:

But then also that he's going to leave his chosen family to go back to his biological family and save their lives.

LYDIA:

He has such a wild ride.

GRACE:

laughing Yeah!

JARRAH:

I think he is the best arc of any of the main DS9 characters. Like I would say maybe next would be Kira. But like you know for Julian it's just like "Julian gets social skills." *crew laughs* O'Brian has no arc.

LYDIA:

O'Brians is just "How many bad situations can we put O'Brien in?" That is his arc. Nog also has a pretty arc. But it's kind of short. His doesn't go through a whole series but Odos really does. It spans from the first episode to the absolute last.

SUE:

I would argue that Nogs does as well.

GRACE:

It *goes*, it's just not, you know, as *active* as it is near the end.

JARRAH:

He's not like a main character in every single episode-

SUE:

Correct. But in some ways I think that's more impressive because we get so many fewer episodes with him. But not the point of today's episode.

LYDIA:

Right.

JARRAH:

There was some good writing, let's just say.

GRACE:

This is a show we enjoyed, and enjoyed discussing it. Let's discuss that!

JARRAH:

I do *really* like this. You know this idea of how powerful the link is and needing to return to the link. And I think, Lydia you are saying that you had read some more of the DS9 novels than I think most of us have, and you had something that was link related you wanted to share?

LYDIA:

Yeah. So, I have read a ridiculous amount of the DS9 specifically reboot novels and I think that-

GRACE:

Are you saying you have dipped yourself into a gooey lake of Deep Space Nine content?

LYDIA:

I have linked myself to the *laughing* DS9 content many times. I've experienced that. Yeah, there's so there's one, like a trilogy, it's called the Worlds of Deep Space Nine. And there's like, two different stories in each one. So the second story in Volume 3 is about the Dominion. And like in the very beginning it's from Odo's perspective of the links, *to self* let me see here. I wanted to read like just a couple of sentences if you guys were okay with that?

GRACE:

Yeah! Please do.

LYDIA:

OK, so he's talking about what it feels like in the link at this very moment. It says "He drifted through the changeling deep not unlike the way the unusual being floated through the air" just in reference to a being that's flying "Odos metamorphic body protracted into countless planes and tendrils, many only a single cell through, stretched through the commingled volume of his people. Part of the whole. Connections formed and dissolved with contact and separation. Passed from one to another, from one to many, from many to one. Fluid shapes arose sporadically in the living ocean, like silhouettes in a lightless room, then slipped away. Shadows uniting with the dark." And there's at least two more pages where he's not *just* talking about the link but like talking about the sensation of being in the link and like being conscious and being separate but also being totally commingled with somebody else. And I think it's really well-written that particular little snippet about what it's like to be in the link.

SUE:

Who's that author?

LYDIA:

That one is David R. George the Third. But Keith de Candida writes the Ferenginar story, which was also really good and that's in this one.

JARRAH:

Cool. We did the one on Andor and *pauses* Trill? Was it? Is that one of them?

SUE:

Cardassia.

LYDIA:

Yes! And I liked that. I liked *all* of the books that were in the Worlds of Deep Space 9. I thought they were all really good.

GRACE:

Sadly, we can't really talk about Odo in the link without talking about the end of the series can we?

JARRAH:

No. But I also did want to say I really do like his resistance throughout the series to the Jem'hadar and and the Weyouns, the Vorta, like worshipping him.

GRACE:

Yeah, and his just not being ok with that at all.

JARRAH:

Yeah one of my favorite episodes is the one where he's with the defector Weyoun and it's just so sad.

GRACE:

Oh that's such a good one.

JARRAH:

So good.

GRACE:

Because he's just like god to them!

JARRAH:

Yeah. And he really disdains them for worshiping him. And that episode he's forced to like acknowledge that they have, you know, thoughts and feelings and emotions and that that's okay. I do really like that overall. That he uses that against them at times but he's very just, you know, *frustrated voice* "Stop. Stop treating me as a god! Just stop!"

SUE:

Especially when he's uncomfortable with how the Changelings got that, I guess, status.

LYDIA:

Right. Because they genetically created the Jem'hadar and I don't remember if-

JARRAH:

Yeah, they clone.

LYDIA:

-they created the Vorta, or if they just genetically manipulated them?

GRACE:

They definitely made them as they currently are.

LYDIA:

OK. I literally never thought about this until just now, but there's actually an interesting juxtaposition of Odo and Sisko. Because Sisko is the Emissary to the Bajorans.

GRACE:

putting two together Oh yeaaaah!

LYDIA:

He's not technically a god, but like he's a link to their gods right? And Odo he, and of course Sisko struggles with that, but he ultimately comes to accept his place, right? But Odo resists it entirely and I think it's really great way to like compare and contrast like how horribly that can go and how well that can go just based on cultural differences. Really interesting.

JARRAH:

And in some way I think his ultimate decision to go back to the link has parallels with some really strong other episodes of Star Trek, like Yesterday's Enterprise. Like, Tasha "I'm not supposed to be here" and I Borg with "Lets send Hugh back and hope that he can teach the bad guys some values."

SUE:

It is a *lot* like I Borg. Except that in this case Odo was making that choice.

LYDIA:

Well, and they explore it a little bit in the continuation novels. I'm always gonna push for those because they're great. *laughs*

GRACE:

Good to know.

SUE:

I feel like my brain just became that meme where it suddenly lights up. *crew laughs*

GRACE:

Oh! You can really say that our perceptions have changed through this episode's recording. They have changed-ling. They have shifted.

LYDIA:

It wouldn't be an episode of Women at Warp without Grace making wonderful terrible puns. *all laugh*

SUE:

Can we talk about when Sisko throws the, what is it, the briefcase? And then it *is* Odo. *crew laughs*

GRACE:

That's pretty great.

SUE:

Or the mouse? Isn't he a mouse or something?

JARRAH:
Yeah, a rat.

SUE:
Where does all the other mouse mass-

GRACE:
It just makes him super small and *really* heavy. like Sisko was having to pump iron for a couple days to be able to lift him as a briefcase.

SUE:
If you try and logic the whole changeling thing at all, it totally falls apart. but I really don't care.
crew laughs

LYDIA:
You could argue that like they're able to mimic other things so precisely because they are able to utilize their entire mass in a way that's really convincing, and less so as larger humanoids.

GRACE:
It makes you wonder if it's really like a thing, that they can't *do* humanoids. Odo can't do humanoids very well or if he's just kind of repulsed by having to fully emulate another person.

LYDIA:
I don't know. I always pointed out that he had fingernails. I'm like "You're gonna give yourself fingernails but you can't make your nose a little bit more..?"

GRACE:
He's down with his look, okay? *Lydia laughs* It's his aesthetic. Respect it.

SUE:
I thought it was humans specifically, and not just humanoids right? Because he does the Cardassian neck trick.

GRACE:
He can do details but he doesn't seem to like taking on a full person's appearance.

LYDIA:
Well it's probably moreso that he can, he's like "I'm not a Bajoran. I'm not a Cardassian." Like so it's almost like his way of like owning his own agency and his identity of a changeling. Like "I'm never gonna be what you are. So I'm not going to show myself to be exactly as you are."

JARRAH:

He probably had years and years of only seeing Bajorans and Cardassian before he saw humans.

SUE:

But the smoothness that they give him in that makeup sort of makes him like a blank slate.

LYDIA:

Yeah I think it's supposed to be like referential to the being something that can continually shift and change.

GRACE:

I would imagine that was an aesthetic choice. In the character design. Before we close out, does anyone have any final Odo moments that they really want to share with everyone? That have meaning for them?

LYDIA:

I mean I love Odo as the umpire.

GRACE:

He's having a great time with that! And I love that he's having-

LYDIA:

as Odo You're OUTTA HERE! So good.

GRACE:

He gets to be, rather than calm and cool and judgmental, he gets to be the LOUD judgmental. *crew laughs* And you can tell he's just living for it.

LYDIA:

Yeah he loves it. It's great. I also love that episode where he turns into a top for the little girl.

JARRAH:

Aww!

LYDIA:

Yes. It's too cute but it's also looks ridiculous too because you can see Rene kind of get into this-

GRACE:

laughing The spinny pose!

LYDIA:

This weird like, spinny type pose and it just makes me laugh.

GRACE:

I appreciate so many of his little interactions with the girl in that episode. Like when she's like "Changeling aren't real. We have stories about them." and she's like telling them and he's like "I know how this story ends." and she's like "...so can *you* turn into a loaf of bread?" and he's like "I could but then you'd eat me." and it's just such a sweet interaction of him being like "If I'm gonna be curmudgeonly at a little girl, I've got to be a little girl friendly curmudgeonly." and I really like that.

LYDIA:

It's definitely his softer side and he opens up he allows himself to be vulnerable again in another situation. And it's a great just juxtaposition of her talking about changlings not being real and then finding out later that she's a hologram.

GRACE:

And so he gets to kind of identify with that other-ness there.

SUE:

We also have on our outline gender expression.

GRACE:

Ooooh! Yes.

LYDIA:

Yes.

SUE:

And I would say that like Odo pretty much presents male right throughout the series. But there definitely have been, you know, fan discussions of like "Does he actually have a gender? Is he agender? Did he decide on this presentation? Is there a trans allegory here? Is there a nonbinary allegory here?"

GRACE:

Well unfortunately.. I would have loved to see that dug into more because there's *so much* storytelling potential there. But this is another case where that conversation wasn't happening at the time that this was being written and aired, or just the people who were having it weren't the people who were in the writers room. So I love hearing fan takes on this. I love hearing the discourse that has come out about it.

JARRAH:

Yeah. People who see themselves in the character

GRACE:

Yeah! That's amazing!

JARRAH:

I wouldn't have trusted DS9 to do that ...sensitivity?

GRACE:

No, probably not.

JARRAH:

After Profit and Lace. *noises of agreement* I definitely did question, because we know that Odo shapes himself after Dr. Mora. So it roughly makes sense that he would shape himself to present as *a man* and that you know given that he's acted by a man we read him as male. But I do think it gets complicated when you look at the female Changeling and does she have a gender or is she presenting that way because we're supposed to read Odo as heterosexual? Which then complicates the whole other discussion we were having before. And I think it's because they're you know they're relying on audience assumptions and that, you know, she will be somehow more insidious if she's a potential like romantic rival or you know maybe just like that ladies be shady? *crew laughs* But yeah, it's really complicated. And I think that the changeling shouldn't, you know, there's no reason that they should *need* to have gender. It would have been nice to see it explored better. But I think we'll have to wait for a newer series to go that route.

GRACE:

Well let's hope we get to see that explored.

SUE:

Gender is a construct, hashtag DS9.

LYDIA:

I mean that's what's great though, about this series, is that it's still so incredibly relevant. It really sparks these wonderful conversations and discussions about gender and sexuality and I just think it's great. So yeah, of course we're never gonna be able to be like "Y know If they only did *this* budda dudda duh better than you know" because it's you know the times and that's wasn't even on their radar like you said before Sue, but I don't know. I think they are still great resources for starting those conversations and exploring those ideas. And I think that they can totally fit into them. You know even without going back and making any changes.

GRACE:

Well that probably wraps it about up for this topic. So Sue where can people find you online?

SUE:

You can find me on Twitter @Spaltor. That's S-P-A-L-T-O-R. And if you will be on the Star Trek cruise you can find me there.

GRACE:

Jarrah where can people find you?

JARRAH:

You can find me on Twitter @J-A-R-R-A-H-penguin.

GRACE:

And I'm Grace and you can find me on Twitter @Bonecrusherjenk. In early March you can find me at Emerald City Comic Con talking about Star Trek and you can *dramatic* find me melted into a puddle in a bucket of sadness when I think about the topics that could have been broached with Odo but never were. *perky* Lydia, where can people find you online?

LYDIA:

I'm most active on Instagram @moon_babes is my personal. I also have an art one that's @LydiaGH.arts. I'm on Twitter too but it's was more sporadic. I don't really get on there very often and it's @moon_babes_ but Instagram is where you'll see me mostly posting Star Trek memes.

GRACE:

Excellent. We are all about that. And to learn more about our show or to contact us visit Womenatwarp.com or find us on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram @Womenatwarp. You can also email us at Crew@womenatwarp.com and for more from the Roddenberry podcast network visit podcast.Roddenberry.com.

SUE:

There is also *new*, the Roddenberry podcast network master feed recently added to iTunes. So if you would like to subscribe to the Roddenberry podcast network master feed and get every episode from every show on the network you can do so now just search in iTunes or your favorite podcast aggregator for Roddenberry network and it should pop right up.

GRACE:

Sue are you saying that our listeners can join with the Great Link of the Roddenberry podcast?
crew laughs

SPEAKER: F32

Oh my god. Exactly! That is exactly what I'm saying.

LYDIA:

That is super fancy. That's awesome.

GRACE:

whispering Link with us. *normally* And on the count of three all together? One two three.

ALL:

whispering Link with ussss. *Grace laughs*

V/O:

closing theme The Roddenberry podcast network. Podcast.Roddenberry.com.