

## Women at Warp episode 70: Kes the Menace Transcript

The actual freaking Robert Picardo:

This is Robert Picardo. And when I'm not aboard the Federation starship Voyager I spend my free time listening to Women at Warp.

\*Intro music\*

GRACE:

Hi and welcome to Women at Warp: A Roddenberry Star Trek podcast. Join us as our crew for women Star Trek fans boldly go on our biweekly mission or our favorite franchise. My name is Grace and thanks for tuning in. With me this morning is Sue.

SUE:

Hi!

GRACE:

And Jarrah.

JARRAH:

He-lou!

GRACE:

Today we're going to be talking about the Voyager episode Warlord but we have a little bit of housekeeping to do first. The 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, up to silly watch-along commentaries. Visit [www.patreon.com/womenatwarp](http://www.patreon.com/womenatwarp). You can also support us by leaving a rating or review on Apple podcasts, iTunes, or wherever you get your podcasts. Is there any other housekeeping we need to remember?

SUE:

There is! We are having a giveaway. Yeah! So we have two scarves from the fiftieth anniversary collection, they're infinity scarves with two different Delta patterns in the original TOS color schemes. So in order to enter this giveaway this is open to everyone. We will ship internationally, as long as the U.S. Postal Service will get you mail we can ship it to you. The way to enter is to send an e-mail to [crew@Womenatwarp.com](mailto:crew@Womenatwarp.com). Put in the subject of the email just "giveaway" so we know what's an entry and tell us, this is how you enter, tell us your- either your favorite part of Discovery or why you're not watching. Your answer has no effect on whether you're a winner when every response we get is going to go into a randomizer and we will pick two winners, contact them, get addresses, and mail stuff out. And we might even compile the responses we get though into a blog post.

JARRAH:

Cool!

SUE:

Does that make sense? So, you're not being chosen by your answer, but your answer might end up in a blog.

JARRAH:

It's like the skill testing question, except for we thought it was more fun than asking you what 8 plus 5 is.

SUE:

Right. And it can be two sentences, it can be-well actually don't write an essay because we will still read it and that's a lot of reading. \*crew laughs\*

GRACE:

We got *lives* here people.

JARRAH:

If you want to contribute to our blog that's a separate thing. Which you should email [blog@womenatwarp.com](mailto:blog@womenatwarp.com).

SUE:

But we will put images of the two scarves in the show notes for this episode as well as write out the directions for entry. So you don't have to, you know, keep hitting "back" and write it all down. It'll all be in the show notes.

JARRAH:

Awesome.

GRACE:

So continuing on with our episode- unless there's more housekeeping?

SUE:

I think that's it.

GRACE:

All right! So who wants to give us a brief synopsis of Warlord?

JARRAH:

I guess I can.

GRACE:

This strange *strange* little episode.

JARRAH:

Yeah. So it starts out, and they rescue a ship that is in distress, and there are three people that they beam off the ship, and this one guy dies in Sickbay, and his companions who were his wife and I guess friend are they befriend Kes, and Kes starts acting maybe strangely? Or maybe totally rationally depending on how you see her breaking up with Neelix. 'Cause she breaks up with Neelix. \*Sue cheers\*

GRACE:

Rational. Very rational.

JARRAH:

Then, probably more definitively strange, she attacks Janeway and the transporter chief and helps the people escape and flee to this planet. And it turns out that she has been possessed by this warlord. The warlord is trying to depose a dude that like, took away his kingdom hundreds of years ago and he has developed technology to jump bodies to be immortal basically. Pretty much yeah. Only like, more creepy and less quirky humorous. So Kes with the warlord, guys name is Tieran, So Tieran with Kes's body goes back to the planet. They kill the dude, I forget what he's called like the chief poohbah. \*Sue laughs\* He has an actual title its like the Anger-Angichor or something.

SUE:  
Autarch?

JARRAH:  
Autarch! Thank you.

SUE:  
Right. They also say "Castellan" a lot but-

JARRAH:  
I thought that like, the Castellan was like the sort of right hand man dude?

KES:  
Right but like Kes, she keeps saying "Castellan" when they use that same word in Deep Space Nine for the Cardassians, and its "Castellon" which I found odd and jarring.

GRACE:  
Guys, I think we need to make a top 10 list of our favorite ridiculous titles. \*sue laughs\*

JARRAH:  
Oh yeah. So anyway the son of the guy who got killed is on Voyager trying to help Janeway get Kes back. Tuvok tries a mission that sort of aborted and Tuvok is held captive. And meanwhile Kes is struggling really hard against Tieran, enough to regain bodily autonomy and at the end of the day is successful. Then it sparks like a sea change in her life. Is that roughly it?

GRACE:  
More or less, yeah.

JARRAH:  
Well there's a lot of interesting stuff to discuss about this episode. One thing, before we get too much into the Kes stuff, this is the first look that we get at the-I always thought it was a Hawaiian holodeck program, but apparently it's a spa on Talax. And this is like-yeah the opening scene is like Neelix is getting his foot rub from a scantily clad Talaxian woman. Uh, how did we feel about this? \*crew laughs uncomfortably\*

GRACE:  
Neelix's feet was what I really needed \*laughing\* to start this journey with.

SUE:  
I mean, obviously these scenes are there for humor in this episode. But it's a little *odd*.

GRACE:  
You say that, but I don't find myself laughing very much.

SUE:  
\*laughs\* I mean, Neelix has invited Tom and Harry to basically experience part of his culture that he's recreated. And yeah, it's like a relaxing part of the culture and supposed to be a spa day. But like Tom just takes it *right* over and makes it, you know, the American idea of paradise. So like- and they just

GRACE:

Does that count as appropriation?

SUE:

It feels very disrespectful and then Neelix is just right *into* it, which is just. \*groans\*

JARRAH:

Yeah there were like two particularly problematic aspects of this. One being, the part where basically like “We need more people!” and what they really mean are like scantily clad women. And then what makes that more problematic is the fact that Neelix- or not Neelix, Kim is like “Bring over characters from my other program” and it’s these three women in like, sheer or like metallic spandex. Like Bikini type outfits and they’re like “Who are they?” “Oh like, they’re a championship volleyball team” and they’re all just like smiling and waiting to go “pat” Kim and Paris.

GRACE:

\*deadpan\* Hot. That’s about as far as Harry’s sexual fantasies go.

JARRAH:

It’s really annoying because like women athletes face a *lot* of pressure to be sexualized or else you don’t get sponsorships, and you don’t get positions, and you don’t get funding to pursue your ambitions to go be at the Olympics or whatever.

SUE:

Do you remember, it was a couple of years ago and I think the Summer Olympics, there was a commentator who made a comment about the women and said they don’t “They don’t have curves. They don’t even look like women anymore.”

GRACE:

Because of the sports bras.

SUE:

And there was a whole response on YouTube about like “This is how sports bras work.” But just the fact that that’s something that we’re *still* dealing with. It is so ridiculous.

GRACE:

Wouldn’t it have been absolutely amazing though if like in the third act of this episode just out of nowhere we have a cutaway to Harry just in a holodeck and these women being like \*angry\* “Harry! Oh my god! Plant your feet when you try to spike the ball!” \*crew laughs\* \*meekly\* “I’m just afraid I’m going to get hit.” \*angry\* “Harry you’re never going to be an athlete with that attitude!”

JARRAH:

Yeah if they had at least been like-if they’d at least got to talk, which I get that every person you pay to talk costs more. So you know I get that from a production perspective. But it’s frustrating that they’re just like the silent babes kind of-

SUE:

In metallic bikinis! They’re not even in like \*pause\* sport bikinis, which is a thing.

JARRAH:

Well I mean we did talk in our sexual agency episode because someone asked about later in that episode B'elanna makes changes to the program to make there be like scantily clad hunks, at least one who's her masseuse, and it's sort of implied like you know, that she would have been offended by having only the women there but you know she turned it on her on its head and made herself a babe guy. But we talked a bit about that in the agency episode about that. Like it's problematic but not exactly the same thing. At any rate it wasn't super funny. There was also the Caribbean band.

SUE:

The only people of color in the program.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Yeah it's like "OK well there's Kim" but you know in that-

SUE:

Yes. Yeah but the only non main-cast People of color.

SUE:

Yeah. And all of the people that were there to be the sexual ideals were white. It's like "Well I guess they can make good music." It was just \*groans\* I don't know. It was unfortunate. Bit reductivist.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Do people want to talk about the breakup scene? Because that's also pretty early on.

GRACE:

There is a lot to talk about there, especially in the fact that it takes Kes being possessed, essentially having a guy telling her what to do and calling the shots, to have her make what is clearly the most sensible decision of her life.

SUE:

Well what's a little bit surprising is that it sticks. Right? Because she was not herself.

JARRAH:

I think at that point she's still supposed to be partly in charge of her faculties, but you don't know for sure. So you could easily write it off. And certainly like Neelix at the end kind of expects. He seems very hopeful during the rescue mission that like "Oh she must not have meant any of it." And a lot of our commenters, *and* Ethan Philips, phrased that they were really disappointed that there wasn't like a closure scene.

GRACE:

But you'd think there would've been some level of closure there, because they were really really trying to sell us on at least their being a believable relationship between these two never really got. It was always creepy.

JARRAH:

Yeah, I would just-

SUE:

You would have expected them to talk about it and say "Is this how you really feel. Is this what we want to continue to do."

GRACE:

That would have been amazing, if we'd gotten a bit of him being like "So I understand that you weren't totally in control.." and she's just like "Oh no. That was all me. It's over Neelix."

JARRAH:

Yeah because like, at the end it's sort of alluded to. She talks to Tuvok and says "You know it's changed my relationships with my closest friends like Harry, like Tom, and Neelix." So it sort of alludes that it's changed things and that she's going to pursue that path. But she never talks it out with Neelix.

GRACE:

Also she's going to join the military. She thinks she can really get behind this warlord-ing thing if she pushes it in the right direction. \*Jarrah laughs\*

JARRAH:

But I really liked the scene itself. I feel like-I was like "Damn Kes. If you were only like this all the time." \*laughs\* Like not the whole thing but that breakup scene where like she's just really honest with him about how he's always trying to insert himself into her plans and gets jealous when she wants to have friends of her own and that she just needs some time to herself to sort things out and-

SUE:

Well and just how powerful is that line of "Maybe I didn't realize relationships could be any different." Like when you've only had destructive relationships. How true is that? My goodness.

JARRAH:

So true. Yeah I mean you know, most of us have to make some mistakes and it is super powerful for her, to see her like stand up for herself and articulate why. I mean she does that in some other episodes like where she gets mad at Neelix for being jealous of Tom but I feel like this is just super valid and Neelix doesn't really examine himself and you know he's just like "Oh I could be different!" but he never, you know, he would never actually try to be different.

GRACE:

Especially considering the fact that Kes's only still like 2-3 years old and she spent a big chunk of that time being Neelix's girlfriend, so her life has been like 80 percent mistakes.

JARRAH:

But yeah, we had our comment on Facebook from C who says "The lack of proper closure on the Kes-Neelix relationship always stuck out like a sore thumb to me. I know there are objections to his occasional treatment of her, and I'm sympathetic to those, but I always expect in Trek that our crew will inevitably come to work out their business and help us see that they are adults who can navigate relationships. It can definitely be argued that "Warlord" is where we see Kes moving into new territory and becoming more of an adult herself. This was a missed opportunity."

GRACE:

That's true. It really could have if they had. We love that breakup scene, we've established that. What if they carried that on to sort of be them having an adult emotional conversation about "This is what I need. This is what you were looking for and those two things don't line up." That would have been- it's actually not only a really great scene of closure to have them have Kes to show growth. It could have been a roadmap and a really good point for character growth with Neelix to have to accept that.

JARRAH:

Yeah I mean, I definitely don't think they should have worked it out. I think that would have also not sent a great message. Like you said, it's basically like she's a child who's never had any other relationships to like model or to learn from and I don't think that, you know, her staying in that dysfunctional relationship that was always kind of felt a little one sided or at least like always was more in his interest would really be good. But yeah I mean, maybe more of a conversation about you know "Well that wasn't me when I was talking to you. But having been through this experience I realize it's still true."

GRACE:

Yeah. There was potential there that was passed.

SUE:

But they do spend another year/season on the same ship together. So in a way they are being adults about it.

JARRAH:

Do we want to talk about the whole Kes and Tieran sharing a body situation? I mean I'll see that the initial idea for this episode involved Kes being unwillingly possessed by the spirit of an antagonist, like a warrior spirit. And Lisa Klink who is one the writers of the time said basically "this seemed like a great thing to do with Kes who is the *least* warrior like character you could think of." And we heard again and again from our listeners that what they really liked was that this episode was able to stretch Jennifer Lien's acting ability and show this whole other side of Kes that you just never got to see.

SUE:

It is definitely the best stuff they ever gave her.

GRACE:

Yep which is very telling isn't it? That they felt that in order to get this great performance out of this actress they had to write kind of the opposite of the character that they were giving her. That feels like something the writers who have been like "...Hang on. Have we been doing her a disservice this whole time?" \*Sue laughs\*

SUE:

What an amazing thing to realize! One thing I really liked about the character design of warlord Kes was, I don't even know if this is intentional but I'd like to think it is, was that they sort of kept her same clothing style and just pushed it darker. So it was like it was *dark* Kes, which could be an indication of her fighting back. That she's still in there and influencing in some way the decisions that are being made even if it is something as potentially small as fashion.

JARRAH:

Yeah. I feel like, particularly at first when she's wearing sort of that beige dress with the cape and the collar. But like as it goes further it gets to feel more like a mirror Kira outfit.

SUE:

But it still has the same cuts and like-it's not color blocking really because it's all dark but almost like texture blocking. That they do in a lot of Kes's outfits.

JARRAH:

I would say though like, it's less feminine. Like traditionally feminine. Like her dresses tend to be very like-

GRACE:

Very girly, very-a little childish. Most of the time yeah.

JARRAH:

Which you know, I think it raises some of the same issues we talked about in our mirror universe episode around sort of like you know, you get to see the like “bondage-light” look in the mirror universe or like when the person turns evil because that's not something we would see in like the utopia of the Federation.

GRACE:

Man the federation is *repressed*. \*Jarrah laughs\*

JARRAH:

One thing I thought was interesting is when she she gives the whole like “Hang my portrait on the wall!” and I thought that was interesting, but it would have been cool if it was a portrait of Kes. It was interesting, like I guess, they just had to pull an old portrait out of storage that was left around from 100 years ago from-

GRACE:

He didn't want to have to sit through another portrait painting, because those things take forever.

JARRAH:

And it's a good thing no one destroys the portraits of the deposed rulers. They just like keep it on hand.

GRACE:

\*Indiana Jones voice\* They belong in a museum.

SUE:

Well I mean, if the whole point is that “I'm the same person” I understand the whole original form kind of thing.

JARRAH:

Well I liked how a lot of the other characters like questioned her ability to lead and she repeatedly would be like you know “I'm not a child. I'm not a little girl.” But not just that like “I'm not Kes” but say like “This body like, she has unique abilities” and it showed how like super powerful Kes could be with the right training.

SUE:

Kes has force powers.

JARRAH:

Yeah for real.

GRACE:

Kes can murder you with her mind. How do we forget that so often?

SUE:

Well like, Kes herself never really tapped into that.

JARRAH:

I think it would have been cool, instead of what we go see a Kes, was more like River from Firefly where- I mean there was just so much more potential. But where the powers were maybe like more uncontrollable on a regular basis instead of just like in a couple episodes and that was an extreme situation and like the rest of the time she is nothing to be afraid of. But like that you know that she's ultimately good she just can't figure out how to control these powers.



GRACE:

\*sympathic\* She's trying damn it.

SUE:

They had such an open opportunity after this episode for Kes to remember everything that she could do. And try it more often and explore that and it really was just..just left that way. I mean they tried at times. But I mean if you discovered these powers were part of your brains ability wouldn't you be thinking about it all the time?

GRACE:

All the time! I would stay up late just thinking \*excited voice\* "I could disintegrate someone into a million atoms. So many things I could do!"

JARRAH:

So one of the ways that we see, actually pretty much the only way that we see Kes- like that we know cKes is still there, other than that we actually get to see like it during a dream sequence of Tierans, is that Tieran really likes flowers now.

GRACE:

Maybe he always liked them and is just like "Well if I'm in this tiny cute little body no one can contest it!"

JARRAH:

Yeah. \*laughs\* I mean I guess it would make sense that if Tieran is working really hard to suppress like the rest of Kes's personality that those types of things would sneak through. because you know he's not going to be on guard against floral preference.

GRACE:

Or if he really did get into wearing her like, little sort of baby doll getups again and people are like "Uh Tieran? Is this... is this you we're talking to?" \*vicious voice\* "Yes. I have always liked these, you just never *let me* like them." \*Jarrah laughs\*

SUE:

So apparently, I realize I'm jumping back a tiny bit, there was a scripted scene written for Fair Trade that was supposed to bring more closure to this relationship and it was cut. Just FYI.

JARRAH:

I mean I guess I could have lived with it. Although part of me was just so relieved by the time I got to the break up that I was like "Yes! Let us never speak of it again." \*crew laughs\* Even if that's not the most realistic storytelling.

GRACE:

Well there's a lot to be said about suspension of disbelief when it comes to Voyager.

JARRAH:

Yeah. The other thing like- so Kes doesn't just have force powers but also just the amount of strength that we see her exhibit in her struggles with Tieran during that dream sequence, is pretty cool. That you know, she's clearly like a little scared, as she says when Tuvok tries to mind meld with her, but she is really like mustering everything she has to keep fighting, and is unnerving him, and calls him out on like you know "I'm getting to you and I'm going to keep doing this because you can't outlast me forever and I'm never going to surrender to you." And ultimately they're like, *that's* what really mattered. So that was pretty cool.

SUE:

Yeah it's clearly indicated that everyone he's done this to previously has not fought back or not been able to fight back.

JARRAH:

Yeah, they say that she's the only one who wasn't a willing host.

SUE:

Yep. And the people with him though say "Don't. She's gone." So I mean think about everyone that's happened to previously. You know they probably weren't.

JARRAH:

Yeah possibly.

SUE:

And they just didn't have the strength and the ability to fight back the way that Kes did because of her, I don't know, physiology? Biology? whatever you want to call it. Brain chemistry?

JARRAH:

I did really like the sort of dinner scene at the end though, when the fleet's coming and the Castellan is like "We have to go fight!" and she's like "We're here to celebrate my wedding!", which we can talk about in a second, but like with the portrait behind her and it actually reminded me a lot of the Patrick Stewart Macbeth where he has like the red portrait of himself behind him, and he's going crazy at the dinner scene. Like the whole- It had a lot of that kind of like Shakespearean vibe of like the hubris and "I'm in charge now and I'm going to make everyone do what I say, but I secretly know that I'm losing my grasp on the power at same time." I thought it was cool. I was into it.

GRACE:

I hadn't thought about that but that there's some very Macbeth-y vibes here. He's even got a lady partner who was helping him keep it all together.

JARRAH:

Sort of. \*laughs\* Shall we talk about that now?

SUE:

Let's talk about that. So the previous host of Tieran was married, or I guess Tieran was married, to this woman. And Tieran in Kes says to her "Nothing's going to change" and then announces that she's going to be marrying like the prince basically. And then like there is this a weird scene about- that feels like they're going to be a trouple. \*crew laughs\*

GRACE:

Why the hell not?

SUE:

And the wife is like "Well are we still married even?" And there's a whole lot of *that* and it's just very awkward and I feel like a little bit clunky.

GRACE:

Are you saying that Star Trek did *not* do a great job in representing a sexual minority? \*Sue laughs\*

SUE:

Well I mean, we did see the possibility of like a a bisexual or even homosexual relationship-

JARRAH:

Possibly a poly bisexual relationship.

SUE:

Yeah. Being because someone was possessed by an evil warlord. \*sarcastically\* I don't know *what* could possibly be wrong with that. \*crew laughs\*

JARRAH:

Yeah I was kind of how I read it too. But I'll just point out that we had a Facebook comment from Michaela. Grace, did you want to read that one?

GRACE:

OK so Michaela says "It's been awhile since I watched it, but the cisheteronormativity in this episode always bugged me (to be fair, it always bugs me). The guy has a female partner already, but when he comes back in the body of Kes, 'she' decides to replace her with a new male partner for no apparent reason. Because 'she' can? Everybody knows it's the same guy with a different body; why anything would have to change never made sense to me. It seemed like a wasted opportunity to address sex, gender, and sexuality. There is also an almost-kiss that, frankly, is downright cruel. Voyager always avoids potentially queer moments, especially romantic ones, but with this almost-kiss it felt like, rather than doing what they usually do and just tell stories where it's never addressed, they actually wanted to show the active avoidance of showing a queer kiss. Does that make sense?" Yes it does, absolutely Michaela. It makes sense.

JARRAH:

That- I mean I guess the way that you could read it that way is that Tieran was still in love with the woman but because Tieran's in Kes's body now they become like a heterosexual female? And therefore wanted to marry that guy? But I read it kind of more like you did Sue, like that it was going to be sort of possibly bisexual possibly poly relationship? Because that marriage scene, basically she surprises her wife by saying "Look I'm marrying this guy now. This is going to be my *actual* husband. But I want us to all be close. I want the three of us to be *very* close." and is holding their hands and so it's- I mean I definitely read sexy undertones into that just going between her and the new husband.

SUE:

But I also definitely read this as a political move. Like this is to help legitimize her position. She has somebody from the royal family she just deposed is now on her side. And you know.

JARRAH:

Yeah definitely. And I mean she- if anything the hesitancy actually seems to be more on the wife's part. Of the wife being like "Things have really changed here. I don't know how this is going to work." and Kes is like "Well you still love me right? You still love me like Tieran?" and she's like "Of course I still love you." So they show like the love persisting despite like a body shift but-

GRACE:

Oh I just realized something! We've kind of got a weird funky funhouse mirror of the Neelix and Kes relationship going on here with "Hey, I'm not getting what I want out of this relationship and you're expecting a lot of unreasonable things from me." In Tieran and his wife's relationship versus Kes and Neelix's breakup they add earlier.

JARRAH:

Huh. But yeah I mean, I definitely take the point that I don't think this was like a particularly positive or nuanced queer representation. I also think it was a bit tied up in the dream sequence where Tieran is saying to Kes basically like "Hey are you getting off on this?" where he's sort of like holding her throat in like a sexual way and saying like that you know "Isn't this power exciting?" and there was like definitely like sexual overtones there. And so there's the same, I think very similar to the Mirror dynamic, where there's just sort of this like power-hedonism-bisexuality kind of thing like "Well if you can have sex with everyone, why don't you?" versus like a legitimate orientation or like preference that you see all the time in real life.

GRACE:

Yeah. Which is a little exhausting you know?

JARRAH:

Yeah, I don't know. What do you think that they could have done better with this dynamic in this episode particularly?

SUE:

I mean they could have made it absolutely clear that Tieran was staying with his wife and found another way to make sure that, I wish I remember the characters name. That- this guy who was loyal.

JARRAH:

Oh isn't it Dave? Demas or-

SUE:

It sounded like Dennis.

JARRAH:

Demmis. I think it's-

GRACE:

I don't know, I like the idea of just out in space there's a guy named Dennis.

JARRAH:

Yeah, let's just call him Dennis!

SUE:

Dennis. Dennis the second son of the Grand Poobah.

GRACE:

aka: the menace. \*crew laughs\*

SUE:

We're so good at this. Yes.

GRACE:

Why are we not writing this?

JARRAH:

I mean maybe you could have had Tieran, when Tieran brings in the husband you could have had the wife also- instead of the wife being phased, because the wife knows that tearin can switch bodies. And you could have the wife being the one who is like pushing for them to still be together and is like "Of course I still love you! Why would anything have changed?" and had like Kes not like weirded out by that, but be like more leery because of political reasons.

SUE:

Well it also brought my brain back to The Host and Rejoined right? And the same question that we have in those episodes of "when the bodies change what happens to the relationships that the people who had those bodies were in?" Right? And the Trill of course, whether we think it's a good idea or a bad idea, have what they've decided is their cultural norm around that. And as far as we know this culture has nothing like that because it's only Tieran who's been able to do this. Which, along those lines this is probably, if he's been doing this for 200 years unless these are really long lived people, this is probably like his fifth wife.

GRACE:

Yeah, they could have like Twilight Zone-ed it to have his ex show up and be like \*old lady voice\* "Hey remember me, Bucko?"

SUE:

I mean potentially, you know, fifth spouse.

JARRAH:

Well also he's the only one who can do it, but yet everyone seems to know about it right?

SUE:

Well it's because of longstanding rumors or something?

GRACE:

A legend?

JARRAH:

It surprises me though that other people wouldn't be trying to like, somehow steal that ability. Or like some more internal- I mean there's already internal power struggle. But it was interesting to me that people weren't trying to stab him in the back because of that.

GRACE:

I know you said internal power struggle but I thought maybe there's one of these guys like every couple generations born who can do this, and he's always a dick that people fight back against. \*Jarrah laughs\* This Isn't the first time this has happened and it won't be the last.

JARRAH:

It's like a two party system of reasonable people and occasional dicks.

GRACE:

And an occasional *immortal* Dick. Oh my God we just reinvent Greek mythology?

JARRAH:

Oh my god is that the United States of America?

GRACE:

\*despondent\* Ooooh my gosh.

JARRAH:

Sorry, too soon? Too political?

GRACE:

Yes and no. \*laughs\*

JARRAH:

Didn't say who I meant. \*laughs\* But yeah I mean, you know if we want this like future utopian Star Trek you would hope that people generally, and I think from the way we see society going in terms of like the viewpoints of children and youth or like you know young teens, that I think like there is gaining-growing acceptance of gender fluidity. That like, there's some pretty significant polling on that in the UK in particular on the attitudes of youth about gender identity. So you would hope that by the 21st century utopian ideals that people would be far less weirded out, at least on the Starfleet side, by people with switching bodies based on gender. It's still a traumatic thing to happen especially if it wasn't your consent. And also just less weird about bisexual or same sex relationships. Yeah you'd hope so, but this isn't *that* society. But it's still the only time we get to see it really. And it would have been good to see the kiss just so we had another kiss to look at.

GRACE:

Oh my gosh yeah like. The three same-sex kisses, I'm counting this one as one cause it's so close to one just for the sake of this argument, of the three same-sex kisses we've had StarTrek we have we had up until recently, all of them were between good looking you know white women, two out of three of them were between the evil alternate version of a character we already know and love. So that feels pretty telling.

JARRAH:

Yeah, this would have at least been interracial.

GRACE:

Oh that's right, yeah.

JARRAH:

But you know, I felt like you know the wife being a woman of color was you know it wasn't *nothing*, but it wasn't like the most notable character there. The Castellan actually like had more character development than she did I think. And he was also a man of color. But still it was generally, you know as they tend to be, generally pretty white episode. Tuvok got a little bit of a role in there. Failing sort of spectacularly at trying to save Kes and then not failing so much near the end. And I mean it was good that like Neelix is the one who ultimately sticks the thing on her face that gets the thing out of Kes's body. But then Kes's the one-

SUE:

Neelix is the one who *shoots* her.

JARRAH:

Oh I thought he also stuck thing on her face.

SUE:

Well he does. But I feel like shooting her \*laughs\* is a little bit more intense than sticking the thing on her face.

JARRAH:

But then Kes is the one who realizes that Tieran is still there in another body. Who is the body of the \*pauses\* Prince Dennis. \*Sue laughs\*

GRACE:

\*Regal voice\* Prince Dennis.

JARRAH:

Lord of the menaces. So it was good that, you know, it wasn't like-it didn't feel like there was a damsel in distress situation and it was very clear that like, she wouldn't even be there if she hadn't fought so hard the whole time. And I like the closing scene with Tuvok. I thought that was nice. I like the Kes Tuvok mentorship and I thought it was really nice actually for Tuvok to acknowledge the importance of emotions and like "you're going to have to experience your emotions and not just try to purge yourself of them." That was nice. Like "You're going to have feels. You've got to go through them to continue on your path and it's going to be awesome because we know now you're super powerful." Let's just pretend that it ends there.

GRACE:

I just really wish we could have had like a Let It Go/Defying Gravity musical number of Kes being like \*singing\* "I am super powerful! I can destroy anyone I want. I just gotta be confident and I can rip them all apaaart!"

JARRAH:

\*To the tune of Defying Gravity\* "That's why I'm defying Neeeeeeelix!"

GRACE:

\*continuing tune\* "Gonna take my eeex and shove him in a heeeeeelix!" \*Sue laughs\*

JARRAH:

\*fondly\* You guys. I want this to be a thing now. So in the Discovery panel, I'm diverging a little bit, but in the Discovery panel at PaleyFest this weekend they were talking about how you know how TV has changed and that it's not so serialized. So when things happen in Discovery they have consequences and the characters are being changed by one another and those changes are permanent. And then Wilson Cruz from the end of the row grabs Anthony Rapp's arm and goes "That's a song in Wicked!" \*crew laughs\* And I died.

GRACE:

Because once you've been a theater nerd-

SUE:

I mean that he basically said like "That's your comment from the musical theatre section of the stage."

JARRAH:

That's adorable. Why don't we go around to do a of final thoughts. We can also share some final thoughts from our listeners. Sue, did you read the comment from Valondar on Twitter?

SUE:

Valondar writes "I really like it; it's a rare episode where Jennifer Lien gets to act beyond Kes's naifish-ness and she just goes for it." Now in this tweet it says "naifish", N-A-I-F-I-S-H. And we're not sure if that means naive-ish or waifish-ness but we're expecting that it was an autocorrect spelling issue.

JARRAH:

And either way it still makes sense.

SUE:

The point is there, yes.

JARRAH:

Similarly Tanya H on Twitter said "Jennifer Lien did a terrific job. Probably her strongest episode. The script had its problems but gave her an all-too-rare challenge." and Murray on Facebook said "This is perhaps the episode that best makes the case for Jennifer Lien as a tragically squandered resource." Yuup.

SUE:

Well I think it's really interesting, we have a quote actually from Jennifer Lien talking about this episode saying "I've never played any role quite like this before but I enjoyed being so strong and determined." And I mean that's a great thing about this episode, but you sort of like reverse engineer that, means she's never-she hasn't felt like she's played a character before this that has ever been strong or determined and that's upsetting.

JARRAH:

Yeah I mean, I think Kes as a character, and we'll come back and do a full episode on her at some point, but I think she's pretty determined. Like we see her determined to do a lot of things. She's from the very first episode where she's like living on the surface, and she helps Voyager people get in and out in the super dangerous situation. But strong? I think a lot of her strength gets overshadowed by her being like super super kind and super super young

GRACE:

Both of which are seen as sort of weakness of character in a lot of media unfortunately.

JARRAH:

Yeah and she just doesn't stand up to Neelix-not just Neelix. It's very rare to see her stand up to people. And you know the episode, it's occurring to me, the one Partuition where they-she does basically yell at Neelix and Paris for fighting over her. But then at the end they both almost die and she's just like "I'm so sorry I was mad!" even though she had every right to be mad because no one ever asked her how she felt. So yeah there's a lot of I think her getting overshadowed and overpowered by the men in her sphere The Dr., and Neelix, and Paris.

SUE:

But it also serves the false equivalence of strength and aggression. Or determination-

GRACE:

And masculinity.

SUE:

Which I mean is something that we definitely need to break because it's not accurate.

JARRAH:

Yeah, because we definitely see like strength in B'elanna and like to an extent like strength in Janeway if not like you know- Janeway could handle a rifle, don't get me wrong. But Kes is like also very-she's the most traditionally feminine of those three. So yeah. It's interesting and I think it's cool to get her to challenge that. I do think this episode challenges that slightly for all the times that Tieran defends his use of Kes's body, that like "This body is no less capable than a man's."

SUE:

Right. It is \*pause\* not nice I guess that he wants to stay in it. That he's so determined to stay in it because of its quote "unique abilities."



JARRAH:

Any other final thoughts?

GRACE:

Again, I just find it really unfortunate that, again, we see Kes acting *very sensible* and that's the first sign that something is *very wrong*. \*Sue laughs\* That feels so telling both about how Kes as a representative of characters who are you know kind and a little naive are treated as, you know, being weak of character and also of Kes herself treatment as a character by the writers. And again, that it takes a man in control of her to make her make some good decisions. \*laughs\*

JARRAH:

Yeah. And also to make her realize her own potential. That throughout the series it's really men who are helping her realize her potential. I mean Janeway is a mother figure, absolutely. But in terms of like, her nursing abilities, her psychic abilities that's really Tuvok, and I like that relationship there but I feel like other than giving her like a hydroponics bay Janeway is more like a nurturing figure versus like a mentor figure to Kes. Like she helps her-

GRACE:

When we get Seven we get to see her be a mentor. With Kes we just kind have her be kind of her part-time Mom.

JARRAH:

Like she helps her really beautifully in Elogium, but I don't really remember a lot of her you know help- like Paris teaches her shuttle piloting, and The Doctors teaching her medicine, and Neelix is just mansplaining a lot. \*crew laughs\*

SUE:

It's really like they didn't know what to do with her, especially because they were like aging her in cat years. \*laughs\* And like how young is she really supposed to be? She's only I guess maybe- it's season 3. So like four years old?

JARRAH:

Yeah maybe a little less than that? Because Voyager was a little condensed on the time frame during the beginning. So maybe like 3 and half?

GRACE:

There's a whole 'nother conversation we could bring up about how- Kes being representative of how women are forced to you know grow up quicker and are sexualized faster than boys are.

SUE:

Oh for sure. But they, for where she is in her lifespan at this point, they're still treating her like a young young child.

GRACE:

Yeah definitely.

JARRAH:

I don't even really like that Janeway lets Neelix go on the mission. Like he's basically like "I have combat training sort of almost. And basically I love her and want to protect her and so I'll do anything in my power" and

she's like "I know you will. Of course I'm going to let you go." And I was like "I feel like that's the wrong decision." Like I don't think that-

GRACE:

Doesn't that count as being emotionally compromised?

SUE:

Lil bit.

JARRAH:

Wee bit, yeah. We've talked about cases where like sometimes being a good ally means you recognize that someone's emotional bias is a strength. I don't think it is in this case. I also don't think he needs allyship. In this case he's not like experiencing oppression. I just think that it's kind of a liability in terms of his own safety and the safety of the rest of the away team. Sorry Neelix. Not sorry.

GRACE:

No, not sorry.

JARRAH:

But overall though, I'm a decent fan of this episode? Shall we rate it?

GRACE

I rate it four out of five childlike bowl haircuts suddenly turned weirdly Hitler Youth-esque by context. \*crew laughs\*

SUE:

Wow.

JARRAH:

I will rate this three point nine out of five ostentatious dictator portraits.

SUE:

Oh you took mine!

JARRAH:

I'm sorry.

GRACE:

Guys guys, it's OK. You can never have *too* many ostentatious dictator portraits.

JARRAH:

I mean as long as it's only one at a time.

GRACE:

Maybe its like in ancient Rome and it's just the same portrait, but you can peel the face off and stick a new one on it?

SUE:

\*laughs\* Well how about seven out of ten warlord sticky faced ghost traps? \*crew laughs\*

GRACE:

Yeah I'll take it! I'll take it.

JARRAH:

Do you want to do outros Grace?

GRACE:

Sure! Sue where can people find you online?

SUE:

You can find me on Twitter @spaltor, that's S-P-A-L-T-O-R.

GRACE:

And Jarrah, where can people find you?

JARRAH:

You can find me @Jarrahpenguin on Twitter. That's J-A-R-R-A-H penguin or at Trekkiefeminist.tumblr.com.

GRACE:

And you can find me in deep space breaking up with boyfriends I shouldn't have had in the first place. Also on Twitter @Bonecrusherjenk.

JARRAH:

And if you'd like to contact our show, such as to enter our awesome giveaway, you can email crew@womenatwarp.com. Other ways you can contact our show, you can find us on Twitter @womenatwarp, on Facebook by looking up Women at Warp, and you can also find us on \*pause\*

SUE:

Patreon!

JARRAH:

On Patreon.coms/womenatwarp, and our website Womenatwarp.com where you can leave comments and you can also read or review us on Apple podcasts, or wherever you listen to podcasts.

SUE:

And don't forget to check out the blog on Womenatwarp.com.

JARRAH:

Yes! And our book club at goodreads \*crew laughs\*

SUE:

We're in all of the places and all of the things.

JARRAH:

We're in every quadrant.

SUE:

Really quickly we are, just as a reminder since you mentioned the book club, we are reading Rogue Saucer right now. It is one of the TNG novels and that is an episode we're planning around the holiday season.

GRACE:

Not to be confused with Neelix's cookbook Rogue Saucier. \*crew laughs\*

JARRAH:

And not to be confused with an accident involving Hikaru Sulu's teacup in Star Trek 6.

SUE:

Aw. So sad.

GRACE:

*That was a rogue saucer.*

JARRAH:

Yes. You can find our book club, If you go to [goodreads.com](http://goodreads.com) and search for Women at Warp under groups. Thanks so much for listening.

\*outro music\*