

Episode 125: Trans-ness in Trek

TERRY "OH DAMN IT'S DAX" FARRELL:

Hi this is Terry Farrell and you are listening to Women at Warp.

GRACE:

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:

Hello.

GRACE:

And we've got special guests, we've got Mara

MARA:

Hi.

GRACE:

And we've got Elissa.

ELISSA:

Hello.

GRACE:

And 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 up to, you know, high quality upper echelon improving experience of watching commentaries that we do ourselves. 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. Now today's topic was suggested by Mara and also by our patron Serena.

JARRAH:

It's a great topic, very much looking forward to it.

GRACE:

Definitely one we've been wanting to do for a while. So let's start. In the past 50 years of Star Trek as a franchise we've seen visions of the future beyond prejudice where humanity is past the biases and xenophobia that we as the audience have always known. But even when you start off centuries in the future a lot can change in 50 years. People grow, communities grow, and hopefully society grows. A culture can gain insight into a misunderstood aspect of human

identity and gain terminology for concepts that previous generations might not have even been willing to address. This is how we progress as human beings. So what happens when the progress of the *now* outstrips the portrayal of the *future*? This week we're finally getting to talk about Trans-ness and trans representation in Star Trek. Now we briefly touched on this before we started, but are there any hard and fast definitions that we really want to get out of the way before we have this conversation?

JARRAH:

You know, I think there isn't really a super easy hard and fast definition because things have changed over time. But I think broadly speaking, we are going to take a fairly broad definition so we're not restricting the discussion of trans representation to, you know, like an older understanding of like a medical process, but you know more about characters in Star Trek who either change gender over the course of their life or their character traits or who embody gender in a way that's different from the way that they present or different from the actors gender. Things like that. That sounds sort of accurate? *noises of approval*

GRACE:

It sounds like our starting off point.

JARRAH:

All right. So maybe before we get into the topic it would be awesome to hear a little bit more from Mara and Elissa. Just tell us a bit more about yourself and how you got into Star Trek. So maybe can we start with Mara?

MARA:

Yeah hi! I'm Mara. My first words were literally "Space The Final Frontier" *Everyone awws* I've been watching Star Trek since three days out of the hospital, so it's been my entire life. It's the core of my nerdiness, and I maintain that by doing theory and build work for Star Trek Online on Reddit.

JARRAH:

Cool. And Elissa?

ELISSA:

I think like, I started watching Star Trek because TNG reruns were playing when I was young so I'd always like sneak out even if it was past my bedtime to watch it like late on Sunday night. And I actually work as a game developer and so I think Star Trek in a somewhat sort of- what at the time seemed like a very utopian view of the future was something that I really liked. And it's definitely affected a lot of my interests in sci-fi and media. So it's been informed by kind of like as I grew up it took me a while to sort of realize that a lot of the things that Star Trek showed were not just kind of utopian, but sort of at odds with a lot of what was going on in the world. Like it just felt normal to me.

JARRAH:

And you, I believe, are our first guest in more than a hundred episodes from outside North America and certainly the one who is actually recording this where it is a different date where you are.

ELISSA:

I'm a time traveler. *laughs*

GRACE:

You're a time traveler!

JARRAH:

So thank you for making the time. Don't let the temporal police know.

ELISSA:

Yeah, it's currently Sunday morning here in Sydney Australia.

JARRAH:

Saturday night here. All right. We have a fairly long list of characters and episodes but I think it's fair to say that there are a few that are very important for us to focus on and one that, we can talk about it, but we have done a whole episode on the episode Cogenitor from Enterprise so we may not spend quite as much time on today. But if you are listening and you're interested in that episode you can take a little look back to our episode on that. So what we can do is we can sort of round-robin it, if that works? And kind of go around and pick a character or an episode you really want to highlight.

ELISSA:

Yeah sure.

MARA:

Sure.

JARRAH:

Okay! I guess start with Elissa.

ELISSA:

So there was the big list that we had, and I went through and I watched certainly all of the TNG ones. Although there was one or two that I'd actually watched quite recently and I didn't watch much of the DS9 because that was fairly fresh in my mind. And I could not bring myself to watch Profit And Lace. *crew makes noises of agreement* that's kind of that's got to be one of the worst Star Trek episodes ever made. For myriad reasons. But I mean, it was really quite

interesting because some of the TNG episodes I actually- like I transitioned about *pause* I began transitioning about four years ago. And so a lot of a lot of the TNG episodes I didn't really think too much about any of the sort of gender or trans related content in them until I was watching them again. And I actually found quite a few of them were, even though there are 30 years old and contains some dubious stuff sometimes, they were actually really emotional. I found there were a few episodes that kind of hit me really hard. And one of them was The Outcast TNG episode. And yeah, I duuno is that a good one to start on?

GRACE:

Oh absolutely. Can you refresh the audience's memory on what the basic outline of that episode is?

ELISSA:

So The Outcast sees the Enterprise being tasked with helping a group of somewhat kind of xenophobic outsider averse aliens that do not have a concept of gender on their planet. So everybody is well agender. However, it turns out that there are people who are occasionally born on that planet who do have an internal concept of gender, which apparently they used to have at some point in the past and it sort of got- they moved beyond it. And it's kind of ambiguous. It feels a bit like what they're kind of saying was it was an intentional move like that whole planet sort of banned gender effectively? And yeah. So it deals with of course Riker ends up in a romantic relationship with someone who has decided that she identifies as female. And it of course involves him trying to save her. And then there is the really uncomfortable but also uncomfortably believable thing of her being found out and being taken to what's effectively kind of a rehabilitation camp to try and fix her problems and you know change her concept of gender. And that's kind of the gist of it. But it has a really downbeat ending as well.

JARRAH:

Absolutely.

GRACE:

Definitely not an uplifting episode.

ELISSA:

No. I was really quite surprised how well it dealt with some parts of it. There are other parts that were amazingly clueless like there's a bit where having it explained to him that they're all agender Riker doesn't understand what kind of pronouns to use. And is "Well, what do what do I call you? It?" *Grace groans* And it's just like, come on. Like "they" has been in use like for an incredibly long time. We use it casually in conversation like "Oh we found someone's cell phone. We better get it back to them before they miss it." Like it's it feels like a really weird oversight and an odd thing that even something 30 years old would sort of get wrong.

JARRAH:

Definitely something we also talked about in The Cogenitor episode. Yeah it seems like, you know, Star Trek waits until it is in the Merriam Webster dictionary. So *hopefully* that wouldn't happen today, but yeah. How did the episode make you feel? Like did you feel like it did a good job representing trans issues or perspectives or at least some of the feelings that come with feeling like not being recognized for being who you are?

ELISSA:

A little I think. I mean the bit where she actually comes out to Riker I quite liked because when I suddenly realized that's what was about to happen in the episode, like I knew that's where it was going because I had seen it but many many years ago, and that part kind of hit me a bit because I found myself thinking "Oh wow this is a coming-out scene. I don't think I've really seen that on almost *any* TV show." And that kind of- yeah that sort of made me tear up a bit. But then of course, that very ending and *all of that* just had me like knowing that that was probably the way the episode was going to end, because I couldn't quite remember. I definitely sort of found myself sinking a bit going like "This actually feels like it's probably a pretty good representation of what a lot of this stuff would have been like if you came out as trans." Well, when the episode was written and aired.

JARRAH:

Mara, do you have thoughts on The Outcast?

MARA:

Yeah. It's really funny and watching the dissonance between the coming-out scene being very much about your gender identity, and Soren the woman character having her big moral speech in front of the council that's condemning her, turning it entirely into being about essentially a metaphor for gay relationships in the 90s. And it's I think that's where we come into that point where, you know, the reason why they were so clumsy with Riker knowing pronouns was because I don't think the writer's intent there was to represent trans-ness in that scene. So it's kind of all over the place. It was super powerful. Like I did the same, similarly to Elissa I adore the coming-out scene. And even at the end of the scene where she was being condemned like I rewatched it with my roommate last week and I cried. Like this stuff is super on point. It's like "This is what it's like."

JARRAH:

Yeah. When we did our episode on The Outcast we called it "A Very Special Gay Episode" because I think-

GRACE:

It's how it felt!

JARRAH:

That *that* was the intention as well. Although, you know, certainly there's been discussion since about "Did it undermine this by having a cis woman actor play someone who ends up being a woman?"

MARA:
Oh yeah.

JARRAH:
And like in a race of people that are all played by cis women actors, and also then entering into what reads to us as a heterosexual relationship.

GRACE:
There is a *lot* to dig into there.

MARA:
So much to unpack.

ELISSA:
Definitely.

MARA:
Like let's talk about how the bad guys are the agender non-binary. *crew makes noises of discomfort*

ELISSA:
That certainly occurred to me. That this whole thing of like, I mean you can definitely read that episode if you wanted to as kind of like you know that they've erased gender and now it's illegal to have a gender and that's kind of the sort of moral message, and that was a bad thing and it's oppressive. So you could certainly read it that way.

GRACE:
Kind of reminds me of how every couple of decades we get a straight white guy sci-fi writer writing a story about how *edgy voice* "what if it was illegal to be straight?!? *crew laughs* WRAP YOUR HEAD AROUND THAT! Whaaaaaat!"

MARA:
Yeah. I think this is definitely a case of Star Trek doing what Star Trek does which is "Let's examine a social issue in the context of things that aren't real" and they kind of-

JARRAH:
Cough Angel 1 cough. *all groan*

MARA:

And they didn't really consider that non-binary and trans people are a thing? *laughs* Like *whimsical voice* "Yes it's fanciful! A society without gender how futuristic! how sci-fi!"

GRACE:

"How *alieeeeee*!" * self-indulgent guffawing/crew laughs*

ELISSA:

Its kind of funny, I mentioned on Twitter that I was re-watching a bunch of episodes like as a run-up to like doing like talking about this kind of stuff and someone comment was basically that, I mentioned one of the episodes I don't know which one, and the reply from this person was just kinda like "Well it sounds a little like Star Trek comes- like brushes up really close to *almost* actually being progressive *crew laughs* and doesn't quite manage it." Yeah well, I feel like a lot of them the most sort of intense feelings I had watching some of these episodes, and the same is true in a lot of sci-fi, is actually not for me when they explicitly talk about something that is really clearly about being transgender and is instead about something that just happens to have a lot of overlap. And I don't know. I think in some ways that those episodes end up being better, because at least with this it's a bit difficult because there were certainly things that were right in their other bits where you kind of like you know putting your whole fist in your mouth in horror going "Oh gosh what are you doing?" *crew laughs* I think I definitely preferred some of the episodes that were a little less on the nose.

MARA:

Yeah. Going back on the things that hit home because they're overlapping, in the coming-out scene at the end of the scene when Soren describes her childhood experience of witnessing someone like her have something awful happen to them, like that that struck me so hard. When I was maybe 13 or 14 I didn't know I was trans yet, I mean I knew but I was raised in a very Evangelical Environment. I didn't even know that trans was a thing. But there was a trans person joined our church and eventually she was thrown out and my parents were part of that and they were *very* proud of having done it. And I remember it just hitting me on such a deep instinctual level of how *wrong* it was and I was terrified for some reason and I didn't understand why. *takes deep breath* And that scene with Soren. That's what made me cry. That when she's talking about the kid who she went to school with who got bullied and then the officials took them away. Like that's the real stuff.

ELISSA:

Yeah. I think, because for me most of what I saw when I was growing up was it was almost all homophobia and racism. Like that was kind of the thing that was really obvious. There's just- especially in like suburban Australia, that was just everywhere. I didn't think I was even vaguely aware of the concept of someone being trans except for in media. And in media it was always *really* poorly done. Like they were- like trans people were villains or whatever. Like Ace Ventura is always going to stick in my mind as that was a massively- like that stuck in my head as "This

is a freakish and terrible thing and you should bury feelings down.” But I think like there's a discomfort, I think, that I certainly felt because of media representations that were so bad. Where if I did see someone who was kind of gender nonconforming in any way my mind kind of rebelled against it and I found myself uncomfortable around them. But yeah for entirely different reasons to what some people might be sort of- it would kind of force me to confront something of it. And that some of the stuff in that episode kind of- it's interesting it's so it was all very this is something that we saw in person. Which to me wasn't that relatable except for in the idea that for me it was always about media. Media was the one telling me that “This stuff is wrong” or “This stuff is right.”

MARA

Absolutely. Mara, did you have an episode or an example that you wanted to throw in at this point?

MARA:

I very much want to talk about Profit And Lace.

JARRAH:

Yeah. I think we should probably get that out of the way.

ELISSA:

Oh gosh.

GRACE:

Address the elephant in the room.

MARA:

So I want to preface this by saying that I have a somewhat *controversial* opinion of this episode.

GRACE:

intruiged Oh?

MARA:

I *don't hate* it.

GRACE:

Oooh. OK, well tell us about that!

MARA:

All right. So like top-level? This episode is horrifically sexist, it's abusive, and awful like it is. But the scene- the first scene we have with Quark as a woman, and let's get this out of the way Quark in this episode is not trans. Quark is what is wearing the costume of a woman to get a goal and that's *awful*. It plays into the stereotypes of the “trap” of the trans person being

deceptive. That's awful, and it's horrific, and it upsets me even to still watch the episode. *But* that one scene where he's adapting to womanhood its really sort of like the first five months of transition in 30 seconds. Like everything that happens in that sequence is so on point. And like there's a there's a line- I actually have a script here because I wanted to read off a line. It's not important, it's where they go "There go his hormones" and Rom immediately chirps in and goes "*Her* hormones." So good job Rom. *crew chuckles*

ELISSA:
Oh wow.

GRACE:
Aw! Roms an ally.

MARA:
I want to talk about Rom in the scene too, but we'll get to that in a second because I have a really interesting head canon about him. But Quark is immediately emotionally unstable and you go on *laughs* and when you're starting out on hormones and HRT it's all a *wild ride*. You don't know how to feel about anything anymore. And it's wicked. Like when you start getting your hormone cycle, and the way you react to things starts to change so violently, it was so easy to relate with Quark going through 30 different emotional states in the state of two minutes. And it's top-level it's like "Yeah woman be hormonal" but like no it's not. That's a fresh experience for a trans woman transitioning. That's super relatable.

JARRAH:
That's super interesting.

ELISSA:
Yeah. I mean like I said, I couldn't bring myself to rewatch it but I do remember that bit now. But that certainly does feel like something that- yeah it's *laughs* a pretty accurate description of like, I think I called it hell month yeah. *mix of laughter and sympathetic noises*

MARA:
Yeah. And then immediately start talking about how Quark is walking. And so it gets into the performative aspect of transitioning where you're not doing things *like a woman*, you're doing this *wrong*, and you look like a man when you walk so you need to walk *this* way. And then it's like "Oh my God please stop!" *laughs* And it's so on point of just like what the expectations are, not even internally, because internally you're just worried all over the place if you experience it. But then just the external pressures of people looking at you and expecting things out of you like. "We're looking for your progress" even among friends even among close allies like there's still that expectation and it's stressful.

ELISSA:

Yeah. I mean the performative aspect is kind of interesting because I found, for me, it was more not performing because I'd really like- in my case I was really self-conscious and I always felt like an imposter before I transitioned. I couldn't escape that feeling, like as in I would get panic attacks going into men's bathrooms because I could not escape the feeling that I was in the wrong place and I was gonna get found out. And that's something I don't feel anymore which is weird. Like, I had no idea that you weren't supposed to feel terribly stressed going into a public toilet. *laughs* Yeah for me I found that like I was performing *before* more than anything else. So things like I would actually artificially deepen my voice rather than anything else like I would try to talk an octave lower. And one of my friends at one point had said and this was a really awkward conversation and it wasn't spectacular but he said "You know I was really uncomfortable around you at first, but then when your voice started to change.." and I'm like "What?" was it like he'd just presumed that my voice was changing because of hormones whereas in fact it was more just I think it's like I was just no longer trying to sound masculine I guess?

GRACE:

Turning off the affect.

ELISSA:

Yeah. So it was more like not performing which suddenly he was reading as performing femininity.

JARRAH:

That's super interesting. Thanks for that.

MARA:

Yeah. I was the opposite. I built like an ultra masks shell around myself so it just sort of became a default state. Like I *could not* be a woman. Like I could not. Like I abandoned long sleeve sweatshirts because I would chew on them which read to me in middle schools as a feminine act. So I just stopped wearing long-sleeved shirts. Like it's all weird stuff. *Immediately* after that moment, and this is why I love Rom in this scene. Rom demonstrates how to walk correctly and everyone sort of looks at him funny and he starts to freak out for a second as if he's been found out and I'm reading this whole scene as Rom's *genderqueer*.

GRACE:

Oooooooh! I love that headcanon!

ELISSA:

Yeah I like that idea. I mean Roms a fantastic character generally, but like that would also explain some of his-

MARA:

Yeah.

GRACE:

Makes Rom and Leeta an even cuter couple. Oh my God.

MARA:

Like I don't want to read too hard into it, but I like I read him as like genderqueer aigender. Like does that seem off?

ELISSA:

No like it actually it does sound kind of right. And it's also one of those things where if he's in a culture that is *that* gender binary and that well ..unique *Jarrah laughs* in that regard. Then you know also his intense anxiety also makes a lot more sense. Not that there's anything wrong with him just naturally being an anxious person or having anxiety as a distinct mental health issue or anything. Yeah it actually kind of makes a lot of sense especially it can affect or it can manifest and appear like social anxiety if you're dealing with some form of dysphoria or even just feeling out of place.

MARA:

Yeah and like his whole backstory of being a poor businessman and trying to do businessman things and getting screwed doing it because he's bad at it, but having other forms of capabilities when Ferengi culture is so focused around your business acumen to the point where it takes the you know "You don't have the balls. You don't have the lobes for business" it's all about the masculinity and he shies so far away from that. And right down to just in this very scene and you can pick it out across DS9 where he's got more feminine affectations to him. Well not feminine, but feminine you know stereotypical. Where he's more sensitive, and he's more caring, he has that much lighter touch.

GRACE:

He's a single parent.

MARA:

Yes very much.

GRACE:

And supportive of whatever Mom wants to do and all that.

MARA:

But yeah in that scene like there, his reaction to being found out it very much struck me as someone who didn't realize that that was weird. And now everyone's judging them and like "Oh my god I'm different."

ELISSA:

The funny thing is as well, thinking about it, like Rom sort the other way you could read it potentially is just that Rom is an incredibly emotionally attuned person who notices things like that. Like he's not just- that he notices the way people walk, and mannerisms, and affectations, and that's just something that to him was natural. And then in contrast you could you've got Quark who has no idea and just had never really looked at it. Probably never looked at, holistically, at that women. And just as well, eye candy and Dabo girls.

MARA:

Yeah. And Leeta's line sells this whole concept for, me right after that where and when they're talking about how weird it was that Rom did that she said something along the lines of *checks script* here it is. "You're so adorable and complicated." *all laugh*

ELISSA:

I've got to admit I kind of wonder with some of these episodes. Because you watch these moments where you feel these little bits that, even in a bad episode that just get so many things wrong, you get this little bit that's kind of right and you kind of wonder was someone on the writing team like trying to slip this stuff in or was fighting for more of it? And this is like the best that they managed?

GRACE:

You gotta wonder.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Or is it just like you're going to be right like one time out of 30. Just by chance?

MARA:

Yeah. And I think it might be the broken clock issue, because immediately after Quark starts going into "There's too many numbers! I can't remember all these facts and figures." and tries to start seducing Zek to get out of having to do the mental labor. But I find this *fascinating* because again it gets back into performative stuff. Quark is sliding into Quarks perception of what femininity is. And like, I can tell from my personal experience and from talking to a lot of different trans women over the last few years, your early attempts at being a woman are very much colored by your social experience and the biases and stereotypes and bigotry that you're surrounded in. And so you're trying to figure out how to be a woman and you're sorting through the things that are wrong that are just beaten into your head. And so that like that moment where Quark starts being a sexist caricature of a woman automatically rings super you know clear in my head. Like early on I was always super worried like "Is this affectation that I'm internalizing because of a sexist idea that's in my head? Or is it just who I am or who I want to be?" and it's that big confusing ball.

ELISSA:

But I don't think it's something that's necessarily exclusive to trans people either, because the perception of like what womanhood is in media, especially in the past has often been really

superficial and toxic. And if you're like obviously this is outside my experience but it wouldn't surprise me if this is the kind of thing that sometimes feeds into like how young cis-girls begin to sort of see themselves or when they did they sort of do that.

GRACE

Absolutely! And it's something that you're kind of taught by older generations also. But that's a whole conversation for another time. But yes that's very real. Internalized misogyny is very real.

ELISSA:

Yes very much. And actually as a slight, just because it relates exactly to what you're saying, I feel like I'm kind of an odd edge case in that regard. So I was like- I had a bunch of really stupid ideas when I started transitioning and one of them was that like I really hated the idea of sort of I didn't want to feel like I was performing femininity in any way? Even if it was in an attempt to kind of be more socially safe by passing. And so I was desperate to like try and keep a lot of my affectations like I refused to try skirts or dresses. I didn't try makeup even though I always had my hair long like I kind of I think I kind of got stuck in this weird No I'm gonna be like "I'm interested in very nerdy stuff so I must be a tomboy" so I kind of fell into this weird idea of like that my interests had to fit my physical presentation in some way? So rather than kind of over-perform femininity or have this weird internalized kind of idea of it that was very wrong. I found myself kind of like almost underperforming it. Yeah. And just like, really I think I kind of went through because I certainly knew that girls like this growing up who were like desperate to not seem too girly because they sort of considered that weak. And I think I was doing that too.

MARA:

Yeah for sure.

GRACE:

I've definitely been there.

MARA

Yeah. And the last thing I want to say about this scene is I really really love Zek in this scene because he ends the scene with his little dialogue with Quark about "I find you attractive. weird innit?" and he's just super positive and affirming about the whole *Jarrah laughs* thing. He's not negative he's like "Eh. You're hot." *crew laughs* The last line of a scene is *in a dead-on Zek voice* "Has anyone ever told you that you have lovely eyes?"

GRACE:

impressed That's a good Zek.

ELISSA:

Yeah, that's a really good impression.

MARA:

Thank you. And so yeah, that whole scene like I kind of really love. 'Cause I mean, again it's awful, it's toxic, from a top meta standpoint this whole thing's a train wreck. But that scene through the eyes of you know a trans application of queer theory is really amazing. *laughs*

GRACE:

I'm really glad that we got to have got to find something positive in that episode.

ELISSA:

Yeah. I wasn't expecting that.

MARA:

Yeah. And then the rest of the episode is mostly awful. *crew laughs* The only other thing is that one brilliant line from Brunt where once Quark opens the vest and shows off the goods *as Brunt* "I swear that is not a female!" Like yes, I read that every day thank you. *laughs*

JARRAH:

So I feel like we should finish off with Dax, so maybe lets throw in a couple more examples before we have our Dax. Elissa, did you have another one you wanted to pull out?

ELISSA:

Well, I think that there are two episodes, that I think are actually out there kind of. It's a bit of a stretch to talk about them in a trans or gender context. But they hit home for me in a fairly uncomfortable way and I think they're kind of both worth talking about almost in the same breath which is Genesis and Identity Crisis.

MARA:

stoked Yeaah!

ELISSA:

And the reason why those two were so interesting- I don't know why they were put on the list specifically, I can guess because obviously I want to talk about them. But birth episodes in different ways deal with like forced physical change and that can-

JARRAH:

Can you just maybe remind the audience which ones those are? They're both TNG episodes.

ELISSA:

So Genesis is often on a list of like worst TNG episodes, if you're looking up *Grace laughs* like bad Star Trek episodes it's often up there. And I don't know why. Because it's bad but it's also kind of good bad?

GRACE:

Is it so bad it's good? Or so good it's bad?

ELISSA:

Well I mean it's not good. *Grace laughs* But I mean, the premise of Genesis is that Data and Picard leave the ship because Worf made a mistake, and it's kind of funny watching Worf deal with his own hubris in that scene. And they go away for a couple of days, they come back and there's this, as a total aside, really brilliant scene where the Enterprise is actually listing and stuff and they have to match orientation with the shuttle to dock which you've never actually seen before in Star Trek really. But they get there and discover the whole ship is a mess and something's happened and it's actually a mistake that Crusher made as well, sort of, that resulted in everybody's like DNA reverting back to like a previous form in some way that they have some like locked away genetic something or other. So you've got Troi's become more of an amphibious creature and like she needs to be in water to survive. Worf has of course become like an eight-foot-tall armored like I don't know Bebop or Rocksteady type sort of character. *Grace laughs* And in a really terrifying bit of body horror Barclay has become a spider that's like infected, kind of this Jeff Goldblum The Fly kind of like creature that's infected the engine room. And we get to see Picard emotionally start reverting back into some kind of, was it a lemur? *all laugh* and it's kind of comical watching that performance but, yeah. And of course they basically it's kind of a "Creep through the Enterprise" and there are weird monsters that they don't want to kill because they're actually sort of, you know, crew members to try and find a cure. And like yeah that's about the entire episode. And Identity Crisis is about one of Geordi's- like a bunch of Geordi's old crew members who all went on the same away mission have started vanishing and they begin to realize that they're actually physically changing and sort of having this urge to go back to this planet. And they're physically changing, they're getting like and I think was like he had webbed kind of fingers, and becoming- gaining the ability to sort of become invisible, they have like weird glowing veins all over them, and then sort of become another species. And yeah it's kind of a like scary mystery sort of thing dealing with body horror and I think yeah the body horror aspect of both of those is something that I think is particularly kind of relatable because, for me at least, going into puberty is like it was every change felt horrific and there was this sense of like I went from not thinking about my body too much to really being disgusted by it and feeling it kind of happening was really quite *pauses* unpleasant to put it mildly. And so that was part of what I related to is that in those cases, even though it only deals with a tiny bit, but things like well you get to see the slow changes in Identity Crisis that kind of hit me pretty hard because like I've kind of developed this really intense fear of body change and body horror I have trouble watching it on screen. So even those episodes actually found quite uncomfortable, which is not a fun fear to have when you're transitioning. *laughs* But yeah that's the reason why those two I thought were kind of interesting.

JARRAH:

So Mara did you have thoughts on those episodes as well? I think you actually put them on the outline or suggested them for the outline.

MARA:

Yeah. Elissa kind of just hit the nail on the head. Any sort of transformative theme in sci-fi always hit me super hard on this you know primal gut level. You know, you're watching it and you're like "This is wrong. It's all wrong. Why am I feeling like this?" So it's that weird sort of finding representation of your experiences without realizing it. Like when I was very young, you know, watching TNG when I was like eight.

JARRAH:

Did you have another episode you wanted to throw into the mix?

MARA:

I suppose we could very briefly and awfully go over Turnabout Intruder.

GRACE:

We absolutely should. Yeah.

JARRAH:

You know I sort of- like I almost hesitated putting it on the list because I feel like almost- because it is like it's the earliest one on our list. And that said, it's like more that it's about I guess like reinforcing fear at- fear and like essentialist views of gender. That you are like, you're swapped into this body and then instantly like manifest all the stereotypes.

GRACE:

Also that "woman" is a personality. *crew laughs*

MARA:

And like there were huge *huge*, I wouldn't even call undertones, unintentional overtones of trans masculinity. Just for those who don't know the episode is about a former lover of Kirk, because of course it is, *Grace laughs* who is jealous of his captaincy and his power and wants to be a powerful man. So uses an alien device to switch bodies and tries to kill Kirk and, in her former body, to end it and become a powerful commanding man that, you know, if we're taking in a trans context *he* wanted to always be. And so as you can imagine in the 60s it's *not great*. There is a lot of just blatantly sexist stereotypes. There's not a single good line in the whole thing that's like redeemable. But there are moments where Janice Lester expresses some very real gender dysphoria, and of course not intentional. But the Janice's- I don't remember any specific lines but there are moments where she's talking about you know why she wants to be Kirk and it's not about being Kirk, it's about being a man. And it's about being- part of it was about doing things that as a woman she was not allowed to do, like command a starship because apparently you couldn't back then in Starfleet? I guess?

GRACE:

There are a lot of things about this episode that just don't make a lot of sense.

MARA:

No but it's like a really interesting early glimmer of accidental trans-masc representation.

JARRAH:

Yeah that's kind of cool.

ELISSA:

I'm kind of curious about the representation, however accidental, of gender dysphoria there with that because like it's something like dysphoria or adjusting to major body change is something that almost always seems to, to me, feel wrong when done in sci-fi, even modern sci-fi. And it's weird because there are so many people around the world who have had to deal with sudden major body change, either intentional or not, that it feels like it's not too hard to find people who can, you know, give you an idea of what that can be like.

GRACE:

Yeah if you actually try and ask someone who's gone through it. They'll have a lot of thoughts.

ELISSA:

Yeah, there was a show I watched recently, which I'm obviously due to the subject of the podcast not going to go into too much, but like I stopped watching it because it dealt with like I guess body shift stuff. And I felt like it was not even slightly relatable to me because like that's not how it feels and that's like- I don't- this doesn't feel like it's in any way believable to me. So I just kind of stopped. And I think that's generally been the case with almost everything I've seen. Probably the only one like, the fact that it seems to be fine right away for Trill is a different subject, but it makes sense given the context of the how like what happens with them specifically.

JARRAH:

Awesome. Well before we get into the Trill I just have a couple of really quick examples that I think are worth just throwing out there and if people have comments we can do that. One of them is- I think maybe- like you know an audience member at the time may have been like "Oh that was nice!" was Data's toast to "ladies, gentlemen, and invited transgender species" in Star Trek Nemesis.

ELISSA:

Yeah, I watched that recently with a friend because we were having an argument as to whether Star Trek 5 or Star Trek Nemesis was worse. And so we watched both of them, *laughs* and that took some wine. But that particular line was something neither of us were expecting. The friend I was watching with is quite genderfluid and we both just kind of turned to each other and were like "I forgot that line entirely." And it's an odd one because not only like it felt like "Well that was really cool to have included that" but then my brain also as it sometimes does goes to like "Okay, I'm aware that there are conservative people who watch Star Trek for some reason" and like yeah and then I keep thinking "Okay so that line if you were trying to read it in a different way you could say invited transgender species" so is the implication that only certain

species can be transgender? and that's sort of *all laugh* but yeah that's reading way too much into it. But that's certainly something that got discussed.

MARA:

Yeah. And because Data is reading it deadpan you can obviously cast it as a joke if you want to.

ELISSA:

Yeah exactly.

JARRAH:

Like I mean first of all it implies that there's not transgender *people*, like humans.

ELISSA:

Yeah exactly.

JARRAH:

Just species in the larger universe. And also just is not really accurate. Like it's I don't even know what. I think it's maybe meaning more like its meaning to say like androgynous or agender species would be probably more accurate.

ELISSA:

Yeah. Which is why it feels kind of like again, It's really hard to tell "Okay, did the writer sort of intend it one way? Was it literally just a throwaway line?" That that I'm sure he thought was funny. Or was it in fact something that like "*that* was what was intended as a species who don't have- who doesn't exist on a gender binary or that transcended species?" Well no. But sure.

MARA:

It definitely smells to me like well-meaning cis. *Elissa laughs*

GRACE:

Yeah.

JARRAH:

There are also a couple of mentions of men who are pregnant in Star Trek. We did an episode on pregnancy and we talked in a fair depth about Tripp Tucker in Unexpected *noises of disapproval* which is very much treated like a joke.

GRACE:

Yeah, I put that on the list and to tie it kind of back to talking about you know bodily change and how it's treated in media. I thought this episode is really interesting in hindsight considering it came out in the early 2000s and I want to say it was just a few years later that, I want to say his name was *pauses* Thomas Beatie? Or a name similar to that, was one of the first openly trans men to make his pregnancy public. And having gone through a transition from being assigned female at birth, to identifying as male, and saying "Yes I would like to carry a child," and

deciding to go through the process, and choosing to go on Oprah and all that and talk about it publicly to try and demystify the whole thing. Both you know to family and friends, and to the community at large to be like “Hey we're out here. And I as a trans man am choosing to have a baby.”

JARRAH:

And you're right about the name. It is Thomas Beatty.

GRACE:

Yes!! remembered my Oprah! Anyhoo. I thought that was really interesting to kind of tie this depiction to in terms of there are in fact, now multiple, cases of trans men who have transitioned and identify as male but who do say “You know what? I've got the factory I might as well bake the bread.” if I can use a really old-timey analogy there. And I know that a lot of them have to deal with a lot of judgment within their communities both for talking about you know their identity as trans and the fact that parenthood is still, even for either parent, is still considered pretty gendered in terms of if if you're a single man you're considered kind of a Mr. Mom situation and this is someone who is a man saying “But I'm willing to do this considered feminine part of it as part of the process to make it happen.”

ELISSA:

Oh I was going to say that part of the whole gendered parenting thing in that regard is something that came up recently because talking to a friend of mine who has a small kid and wants another one. And there was a discussion about a whole bunch different things including like with her being queer. The discussion of if she had another kid with like with a female partner. And the subject came of like she- it hadn't really occurred before with the idea of “Wait a minute. So potentially like both of us could breastfeed that would make life so much easier.” And like that prompted a discussion of like “Oh yeah a trans woman can breastfeed too” it's like it's totally doable. And that was an interesting conversation because it suddenly popped up the whole thing of feeling that there are certainly still aspects of parenthood when it comes to having your own kids that are still very very gendered.

GRACE:

Yeah, I definitely am thinking about the graphic novel Pregnant Butch, and not necessarily the same thing, but being very masculine presenting and saying “But I want to have a baby” is definitely treated as an oddity even in the cis community to say nothing of you know trans people and the fact that they're actively going into something that could potentially be very emotionally difficult and very dysphoric for them. And the fact that that is a decision that is only theirs to make should be respected.

ELISSA:

Yeah I saw that a bit. I mean most of my friends these days tend to be queer and a couple of my friends who're cis lesbians were talking about having a kid at one point and there was a

discussion about which one of them should have the kid. One of them was more interested in being pregnant and giving birth and the other one was kind of not. But there were a bunch of medical reasons why that probably wasn't going to happen that way. And there was a not particularly *with it* kind of cis-girl who was a bit drunk in there and overhearing part of his conversation. And she was really confused that the one of them who was most likely going to carry their kid was quite butch presenting. Like *confused voice* "But-but you're the man!" And I was like "Oh my gosh"

GRACE:

Oh Lord. *uncomfortable laughter*

JARRAH:

Yeah. I mean and then in that Enterprise episode I think at the end Archer evens like basically "You're in the history books now because you're the first one!" It's just so cringe-y. And I mean to be fair to them, Thomas Beatie had not yet been on *Oprah* but..

ELISSA:

It's been a while since I've seen that, but I seem to recall that like a lot of those things like because sooner he went and had unprotected sex and came back-

GRACE:

No. I just want to establish he did not know that he was having sex, he was coerced into that shit and that's not okay. *noises of agreement* And treating it like a joke is not okay either.

JARRAH:

He just thought he was sticking his hand in a bowl.

ELISSA:

Aw jeeze.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Two days And Two Nights was another one on the list where very much like- and it's not the only one there's a few of these episodes where it really falls into that whole "Trans people are deceptive" and like "They're there to trick you into sex with them" or in this case seduce you into robbing you and then you're like humiliated and emasculated because you found out that they weren't that women you thought they were.

ELISSA:

And the funny thing is like, and I think the reason why Enterprise deserves even more sort of lashings over this kind of stuff is I keep thinking from some of the stuff we've seen from TNG. You can imagine if *that kind* of thing had happened on Risa to prompt that kind of line and it involved Riker and TNG you could imagine Riker going like "Eh, cool, whatever."

GRACE:

as Riker "I'm still with it!"

ELISSA:

Yeah exactly.

JARRAH:

Well you know because we're coming up on an hour we do want to give Dax some time and some love.

GRACE:

Daaaaaaaax!

ELISSA:

Yeah. Dax: the most amazing character.

GRACE:

Yes. Dax was the character that prompted this episode wasn't she?

ELISSA:

Yeah.

MARA:

Yeah.

JARRAH:

Yeah. So who wants to go first? I know you both have a lot to say about this. Elissa wrote an awesome article for our blog, if you haven't read it yet, called *When I Transitioned I Looked To Dax* and we'll share that in the show notes. And Mara, Dax was the example that *you* shared. So do you want-

MARA:

Oh, I think call it the person who wrote the article speak. *crew laughs*

ELISSA:

Well, I don't know where even to *begin*. There's, unlike the other episodes that are single things, this is something where they certainly consistently go to a lot of this stuff right. Like with limited exception there's just so much of it that's amazing and is relatable. And the thing is that like at the time I was first watching as I didn't think of Dax as a trans allegory. 'Cause wasn't really thinking about trans stuff. But as I wrote in the article when I began to transition suddenly all of these experiences that were new to me a lot of them I'd seen depicted really in retrospect quite accurately in *Deep Space Nine* with Dax. And it kind of made it a bit easier because like I'd seen a character that I loved go through some of this. It just made it a bit easier, looking at some of this stuff. But the funny thing is a lot of it was in a lot of it wasn't actually, I think, the stuff that

they necessarily- it was often throwaway things like being gendered correctly the bit where is it Martok? Meets Dax, and it's that whole thing of "Curzon my old friend!" "Oh it's Jadzia now." "Jadzia my old friend!"

MARA:

That was Kor. *all make 'oh yeah' sounds*

ELISSA:

Yes that's right. Yeah. And like just stuff like that. Just that without a beat and also no needless torrent of apologies just switching.

JARRAH:

And just like you in the first episode. Just you know "Old man."

ELISSA:

Yeah. And that's kind of a very strange one. Because like at the same time I keep thinking "that might be uncomfortable" especially because the context of being Trill is a little different to someone, you know, transitioning like in a real context. But at the same time it is something that still kind of happens. Like one of my oldest friends still uses a masculine term of endearment for me sometimes. And while it would normally make me uncomfortable with him it kind of doesn't. It's like the context there is *stutters* it's yeah- it's not exactly Old man but that's one that sort of felt a bit like- I can imagine there being situations where it doesn't feel weird. And so that bit kind of worked for me.

JARRAH:

Yeah, I mean she certainly never seems to be like annoyed with Sisko, but that's a good point. That, you know, ultimately it should be like "What do you actually want to be known as now?"

ELISSA:

Yeah. And I guess the last thing that I'll mention briefly, before we can go into more detail about different things, so I remember when I first watch it I found it really uncomfortable but in retrospect because I did rewatch a couple of episodes Ezri is actually one of them. Ezri coming in is actually one of the most painful and relatable things I've ever seen in Star Trek, because Ezri comes in. Everyone, including the audience, instantly kind of resents her and it's something- the idea that people actually do grieve the loss of the person you used to be is actually something quite real. So in the case of Jadzia she actually died. But it is for a lot of people whose friends transition. The emotional response is a sense of grief because you have lost one friend even if the other friend is still the same person but also not. And that part was done incredibly and it was something- like the bits where Ezri sees people that she used to know who are suddenly cold to her or uncomfortable like that just made me cry because it's stuff that I've experienced.

MARA:

Yeah. I mean I think my only quibble with the Dax character as a whole is that Ezri wasn't male. That was the only thing that really I thought could have been done better. It's not a negative-

ELISSA:

It's just it would have resulted in much more interesting conversations to be had in that way. Especially because like Worf is really quite homophobic so that would have been a really- I mean-

GRACE:

He's all about being a manly man. So that would be *very* interesting.

ELISSA:

Yes. Worf: the perfect example of toxic masculinity portrayed in Star Trek.

MARA:

Yeah. I'd also kind of wished that they'd done more with Ezri's lack of training and inability to sort of get a handle on the past lives where it would have been really interesting to get some sort of nonbinary undertones to her character dealing with all of the different aspects of her past.

ELISSA:

Yeah, I mean there's a lot that they could have done I suppose. But yeah, just most of the time, I think, they consider it they still managed to get the bits that they did do quite right or quite relatably I think.

MARA:

We got a little bit of it when, I forget the name of the episode where

JARRAH:

Facets? I think, are you thinking of?

MARA:

Where she visits her family.

GRACE:

Oh yeah.

JARRAH:

Mm hmm.

ELISSA:

Yeah, I mean that would be kind of strange. So I think like I think part of the reason- so I mean for some people, obviously, physically transitioning is a slow process and physical changes might often rely on medical intervention at various points but I'm kind of an odd case which I guess it comes from in large degree a huge amount of privilege. But like so one of my whole like "No no no. I must like act like hypermasculine." kind of things as a coping mechanism before was that I always wore a beard. Like so nobody had seen my face for like I think at this point fifteen years or something. So the result is that when I started hormone therapy, first of all I was quite lucky and my body really took to it very very fast. And secondly, right before I started I suddenly became clean shaven. So for a lot of my friends the change seemed even more intense than it might be otherwise. I know my face softened. I looked completely different, even if it hadn't softened it probably would have looked totally different. So it meant that a lot of the stuff with just suddenly looking like a completely different person really must've been what it was like for a lot of my friends because I kind of vanished for six months and came back just looking female. And it's interesting because I think a lot of the conversation that I'd seen about transitioning was about some of the difficulties and in that regard, and for me it was you know I guess through a lot of luck extremely fast. It was also really uncomfortable. Nobody told me how uncomfortable growing breasts would be, but oh wow. So it's so therefore like Ezri's sudden shift, even though it would've been much more interesting if Ezri was male, It was something that hit really hard because there were people who just literally don't recognize me. I was even last night at a party with someone who I know I'd met about 10 years ago we'd had some conversations and she had no idea who I was and I didn't even feel like explaining that.

GRACE:

That sounds like a very specific level of emotional labor there.

ELISSA:

Yeah.

JARRAH:

What do you think of an episode like Facets? I'm curious. Where like you meet all the other hosts kind of embodied in the other main characters.

ELISSA:

That's interesting because I think that's a little harder for me to relate to, because I don't feel like I'm the same person at all that I used to be. But at the same time I can't imagine interacting with my past self in any meaningful way. And I still can't really imagine that person being separate from me. I feel like that's just an aspect of my past. So the very idea of that kind of interaction, it's an interesting thought experiment. So I suppose the idea of that episode is quite fascinating but it certainly wasn't something that I think I can really say- it didn't hit me in any relatable way it's just like "Oh that's an interesting idea."

MARA:

I on the other hand *can*. Over the course of my journey with, you know, living with dysphoria without knowing or understanding it I've had some dissociative aspects pop up and I could definitely see confronting and talking to yourself in the way you thought and felt and why. Because like it's not super hard onto like trans-ness but it's- I think if anything else in that episode the thing that stands out would be Curzon Odo fusion. I don't know what pet name we could give it. Like

GRACE:
"Codo."

JARRAH:
"Curz-odo?"

MARA:
Codo, I like Codo. Yeah cause that really- that blending of things really struck me because I'm me? And I say to my friends now, I'm like seven months into my transition so things like really starting to happen psychologically and physiologically, and like "I'm more me than I've ever been." I'm a completely different person but I'm still also me. It's this weird sort of amalgamation of the aspects of my personality that I cherished and throwing away the toxic shell that I'd built around myself to stay alive. And like seeing, you know, Codo as like this "I am so happy now!" When they talk about how happy they are, they've never like apart- different like without that they'd been what they were. But as this they're so happy and that's the one that struck me from that episode.

ELISSA:
That's interesting. Yeah, all of the trans people I've spoken to the experiences are always so varied and it never ceases to be like really interesting to me, especially contrasting when people's experiences where they diverge. So I mean one thing that I am quite conscious of especially after years of talking to my psychologist like disassociating is actually not something that I did but almost every other trans person I know did that as a coping mechanism. But that wasn't really something I did. So I think like it's weird because I know I'm clearly an incredibly different person. But even to the point where I think if I'd like ran into someone who was like a perfect clone of me 10 years ago, oh my God I would hate that person. *laughs* There's no way we could even slightly relate. But I also feel like it's almost like the memories are fuzzy like they're there and I know I did things and said things but it feels like that almost wasn't me and I can't imagine talking to that person. It's almost like, I dunno. I keep thinking of like Blade Runner and going like "It's almost like someone gave me the wrong memories. I don't understand how that could have been me."

MARA:
That's actually really interesting. I can see how that would happen.

JARRAH:

Are there any other sort of particular Dax moments or traits that you found particularly awesome?

ELISSA:

I think the episode where Dax interacts with a former lover is particularly interesting. I mean it just made me cry because of course they still love each other and they can't be together and that's- yeah. I think the thing that resonated a bit with me there was more the sense of I'm still friends with quite a few of my exes from before I transitioned and a few of them are straight. So it's not so much the whole thing of them not being able to be together as that bit felt a bit interesting because there's when I talk to some of my exes that realization of they're talking to someone that they used to date but is now quite different and they're no longer attracted to them in any way. I dunno, it's an odd experience and I imagine it's even weirder for them than for me.

JARRAH:

How about you Mara?

MARA:

I can only echo it. That episode was- hit me really really hard. Especially considering, without getting into all the technicalities, I mostly identify as lesbian. So that episode and The Host, at the end of that episode though they both struck me really really hard especially with the threat of a gender change of The Host. Like I was like my young pubescent lesbian, without knowing it, brain was screaming "No go for it!" *all laugh*

JARRAH:

Definitely better than Riker.

MARA:

"No! She's so pretty now. Go for it!"

ELISSA:

Yeah. And they all they love each other so much.

GRACE:

Go out there! Be gay! Be free!

ELISSA:

You know it's- actually I don't know how this ties into any of these episodes particularly, because it's not me they really explore too much with with Dax because she's clearly Pan or Bi or however she sort of identifies.

GRACE:

So sayeth Terry Farrell.

ELISSA:

But for me- so I'm pretty much only attracted to women but that actually wasn't the case before I transitioned. I was in deep denial about it but in retrospect no I really crushed on men quite a bit. I was definitely quite bi but for some reason, and hormone therapy doesn't usually change your sexuality. It's like everyone I've spoken to it doesn't seem- like at most it'll might be somebody becoming a little bit more on the bi end of the spectrum. But for me it was actually kind of weird 'cause my sexuality, like all sex drive even the concept of being attracted to someone just kind of vanished for months. And I think probably just due to the very very high amount of hormones that I was put on right from the start *laughs* thanks to my endocrinologist. But then when it came back everything felt different and my attraction for people felt different. So there are still a couple of friends of mine, male friends, who I distinctly remember being really physically attracted to and I just can't feel it anymore. It's a bit surreal and it's something that I really I don't think they ever really touched on that with Dax or any other sort of trans allegory sort of characters and I kind of wish they did because it's a weird feeling.

MARA:

Yeah and like, I'm actually in the middle of this *right now*, what we can talk about right now, I'm dating someone who I knew years ago as female when I was male and they're not and I'm not. *laughs* So like I'm actually thinking about it like I'm living that episode with Dax and her ex. Yeah it's just just super weird.

ELISSA:

Yeah I was kind of dealing with something kind of similar the other year. I started dating someone, and like around the same time that we started dating they came out as non-binary and shortly thereafter began masculinizing hormone therapy and so that kind of like- we spoke about it constantly. And we're still really good friends but eventually we broke up. But it was kind of odd because I suddenly felt like I was on the reverse end of what it might have been like for my longtime partner at the time that I first came out. To a very small degree because this was a much more casual short term thing. But it's interesting when you're dealing with a lot more fluidity and the idea of people changing stops being so foreign to you I suppose.

JARRAH:

Or alien, as it were. And maybe a good question to sort of wrap up with, because we still, you know, we're into Discovery, now we're getting Picard. We still haven't seen a trans or non-binary human character. But is that something that's important and, you know, either way what else do you think Star Trek could do that would be awesome in terms of representing trans-ness going forward?

ELISSA:

I'm really quite torn in that regard, because on the one hand that's a representation that can be really important, but also the inner- the Star Trek nerd, sci-fi brain me is going "Well their medical technology is amazing." I would say there's an incredibly good chance that based on statistics a handful of characters over the years in Trek have probably *been* trans but most likely

it was something that, especially if society were a bit different, they probably weren't repressing it like many of us do these days and therefore it came out earlier. And between their technology and just transitioning earlier, like if you transition earlier in life even with current hormone therapy and medical stuff it changes a lot. Like one or two of my friends transitioned at about 17 or 18 and that's before your bones have set, so their experiences they've never really experienced the whole being forced to live in the gender that they're not. And I suspect that would probably actually be the case in Star Trek as well. So unless there was a specific reason, like they were on a planet where that wasn't the case and they had a transition later, I suspect. In reality you probably wouldn't know that someone was trans. It would be a footnote on their medical file somewhere.

MARA:

Yeah. And even if we did have that kind of representation like, I'm kind of in a place where like, I don't want a character whose whole, you know, defining aspect is being trans. I just want a trans person doing Starfleet things and have it be completely irrelevant to the rest of their character. Just be something we know.

JARRAH:

We definitely do not want the trans Chakotay. *all laugh*

ELISSA:

Yeah. I think like I would probably if I had to- like if someone gave me the choice to go "Okay we're going to put a like a transgender or nonconforming character in discovery season 3. Who is it going to be and what would you do?" I think if I had a choice I would probably say "Have a genderqueer or non-binary person and just don't make a thing of it." Just *that's it*. I think that would probably be, even though I'm not either of those things, to me that feels like it's probably something that I would be most interested in seeing.

JARRAH:

But I think generally speaking, Star Trek is ready to do more. A lot of what we've talked about, even the good stuff, I don't think it's been exceptionally planned or intentional or with really a lot of input by trans people. And so it's awesome that some stuff has turned out really great and that there's been things that people can really seize on to as, you know, powerful or relatable. But there should also maybe just be some more thoughtful representations.

GRACE:

They've got a lot of balls to pick up that they've dropped.

ELISSA:

I was just going to say in the very latest Star Trek episode, The Trouble With Edward? Was it Edward? Yeah, In the background of one of the shots on the Enterprise there is a guy wearing a scant which we haven't seen since the first season of TNG.

GRACE:

YEAH! The scants are baaaack!

ELISSA:

Yeah they're amazing. I do actually own a scant uniform.

JARRAH:

Cool. Well we should wrap up, I know this has been lovely talking with you. Yeah. Any final thoughts before Grace leads the outtros?

ELISSA:

Yeah I'm quite looking forward to where Star Trek's going now, because there's at least enough of it that I feel even if I'm not a big fan of some aspects of it like I feel like I'm finally getting a lot of interesting Star Trek again.

MARA:

Yeah I mean we're getting a lot more intentional representation and it's just gonna be a matter of time until they start getting it *actually* right. *Grace laughs*

GRACE:

All right. Before we wrap up Elissa, is there anywhere where people can find out more from you on the Internet?

ELISSA:

Yeah pretty much just live on Twitter because that's what I do. I'm expectproblems on Twitter because I'm an optimist.

GRACE:

And Mara where can people find you?

MARA:

You can find my work on our sto builds. I post under Sizer714.

GRACE:

Excellent. And Jarrah, our listeners probably know where to find you, but where one more time?

JARRAH:

I'm @Jarrahpenguin on Twitter, and I'm @trekkiefeminist.com.

GRACE:

And you can find me on Twitter @bonecrusherjenk and out beyond the stars. 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 podcasts.Roddenberry.com.

JARRAH:

Thanks for listening.

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