

## Women at Warp episode 131: Short Treks, Season 2

JARRAH:

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 bi-weekly mission to explore our favorite franchise. My name's Jarrah. Thanks for tuning in. Today with us we have Andi.

ANDI:

Hello!

JARRAH:

And Sue.

SUE:

Hi there.

JARRAH:

And before we get into our main topic we have a little bit of housekeeping to do first. As usual our show is entirely supported by our patrons on Patreon. If you'd like to become a patron you can do so for as little as a dollar a month and get awesome rewards from thanks on social media up to silly watch-along commentaries. *And* we've also recently adjusted our rewards tiers to try to.. I guess just balance a little bit better. Make more of the exclusive content we're creating available to more people. So if you visit [Patreon.com/womenatwarp](https://Patreon.com/womenatwarp) you'll see that there's been some discounts on our Patreon tiers and so you can now get access to things like exclusive episodes on non-Trek topics, like Star Wars or Supernatural, without paying as much as previously so yeah. Anything else to say on that Sue?

SUE:

Yeah I mean, basically *obviously* we are so thankful for all of your support on Patreon but we also know that recently specifically there have been a lot of worldwide natural disasters. There are wildfires, and there's earthquakes, and there are I think a volcano just today as we're recording. And I just want to say I think we all agree that you know if you're you're strapped if you are making a decision of who to support we would much rather that you support relief efforts than support us if that is an issue for anybody out there listening.

JARRAH:

You know it's really kind of cool to see some of the things that Trekkies are doing around the world to try to raise money and awareness around these types of natural and humanitarian and ecological disasters. We showed something on our social a couple weeks ago about a Trek-athon that two of our listeners in Canberra were putting together for an Indigenous youth Environmental Justice Initiative. And yeah, so it's really cool and we're pleased to be able to support. And if you're able to, like Sue said, and you're choosing to we're totally cool with

forgoing us to make that choice. But if you do have the ability to support us our Patreon is [Patreon.com/womenatwarp](https://Patreon.com/womenatwarp) and, like I said, we have made more of our rewards available at lower levels. So take a look and see what those adjustments are. [Patreon.com/womenatwarp](https://Patreon.com/womenatwarp). You can also support us by leaving a rating or review on Apple podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts. All right so, as this episode is about to drop we will have just seen the first episode of Picard but none of us have seen it yet so we're gonna talk about the last thing which is the season two of Short Treks that for us just wrapped up with Children of Mars. So let's just start, let's go through them. There are six. Starting with Q and A, which is the one with Number One and Spock in the turbolift. First impressions of Q and A. I know Andi you did this one, that you watched first time today?

ANDI:

Yeah. So I banged em out today. All of them, so they're fresh in my mind. My first question is. Are we supposed to want them to bang? \*crew laughs\*

SUE:

No.

JARRAH:

Do we?

ANDI:

Because I couldn't tell if that's what they were Tryin-there were a handful of times that felt a little shippy. I mean, Number One telling Spock to get on his knees will stick with me for a while \*Jarrah laughs\* and there's that moment where she asked for a boost and he puts his hands on her waist and it's just kind of weird. And I dont know, there's lots of eyes. You know, they're making a *lot* of eyes at each other.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Like when he's looking at her being pulled up at the end.

ANDI:

And when she lands on him his hand is inexplicably on her thigh for a long time. \*Jarrah laughs\* So I just have questions. That's all I'm saying, I have questions about how I was supposed to be feeling about this and if it was intentional that they did all of this kind of...uuuuuuh shippy shit. That's my first question.

SUE:

I think, in my opinion they were probably trying to make those shared glances "We understand each other." But I totally see the shippy glances as well. Also just you know because Andi probably won't be able to cut all of this out, my cat is in an e-collar right now and she is licking it so that's what the weird noise is in the background. \*Andi laughs\*

ANDI:

Hey, I get dinged on social media all the time for taking out the cat noises so if people want to complain I'm just going to point to all the people who go "No. Don't take out the cat noises." and just say that it's their fault.

SUE:

Well that's because people think cat noises are cute. They must not have cats.

JARRAH:

So I think that there is a lot to *like* about this episode. But then there were a couple things that really annoyed me *\*laughs\** so it was less those and some of them were pretty tiny. But first I really dislike the model of the turbo lift layout and that it kind of looks like the inside of a Death Star.

SUE:

Why is there that much empty space on the Enterprise?

ANDI:

OK I have thoughts about this, and I think it's like my gaming computer in which there's like nothing in the tower so it won't overheat. There. *\*makes dusting off hands noise\** Sorted. That's why.

JARRAH:

Maybe because it's like an older ship? I guess? It just felt a bit weird and unnecessary and I definitely saw some people being like "Why couldn't they just beam out of the turbo lift." But I mean I guess they were like "Well it's almost fixed. We'll just hang out and ask personal questions." I did like her, like, sassy mentorship style kind of thing. I thought it was, I mean, it was more of Number One than we got to see all season in Discovery and I thought it was sort of a neat rounding out of how Rebecca Romijn and the writers saw that character. And there were also some really neat details, like the lighting panels behind them in the turbo lift have this really kind of intricate pattern that has like Delta shields on it. Which I didn't notice until like a second watching but it's just an example of again how Discovery has really kind of upped the detail level in things. How do we feel about Gilbert and Sullivan again in Star Trek?

ANDI:

She did a good job with it.

SUE:

Sure. Yeah. That's not the issue. *\*laughs\** But like "You're Freaky" is light opera? *\*crew laughs\**

JARRAH:

I mean, it would be freaky if I did that at work.

SUE:

Probably less so if I did that at work. \*laughs\*

JARRAH:

So I think it is fun that this apparently came out, actually like it wasn't just them deliberately dipping into the same well that Star Trek has already gone a couple times to HMS Pinafore particularly, but that Rebecca Romijn said that she she got a text from Alex Kurtzman and he was like "Hey do you have any special skills?" and she had no idea what he's talking about and was like "Well I play badminton. I speak some languages. And I sing Gilbert and Sullivan and.." And she knew all the words to the song and was super excited about it. And so like she didn't even need to be taught the song again. So I think that's cool that they interjected that partly because it was *her* thing but I think it's really suspicious that we're expected to believe that like all the Starfleet people know Gilbert and Sullivan in the future. And that it's a little bit colonialist.

SUE:

Starfleet computers only carry royalty free music. \*Jarrah laughs\* I mean, I think there was a lot that, for me especially, to like about this episode. Like I loved her interactions with Spock. For the most part. I enjoyed the way that they made clear, you know for those in the know, that Spock's character what he became was supposed to be what Number One was going to be. That was convoluted, but you know what I mean. That in the original conception of Star Trek she was the, I guess, cold logical unemotional one and he was supposed to be a scientist and then they combined those characteristics when they remove Number One from the show and just put them all into Spock. But I don't know what the message of this is supposed to be. She says to him "I would never ask an officer to hide any part of themselves. But hide this part of yourself." and you're saying this to Star Trek fans.

JARRAH:

Yeah, I think the message was "We're both the same because we're forced to do this." And like "Me as a woman and you as an other, as like a half human half Vulcan, is that we're both forced to hide how smart and weird we are to be able to command." And I did question that, but I think like in today's world it's a very real message. I guess I would just hope that you would be allowed to be a little freakier here in the future, especially when like freaky is just being really smart or knowing Gilbert and Sullivan.

SUE:

Or smiling.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Also there's another sort of like little nod to the fact that Number One is maybe into Captain Pike.

SUE:

Oh yeah.

JARRAH:

Where Spock makes the like, "You've made a very careful study of the captain" and then she's like awkward about it. Which, I've never been a fan of her being into Captain Pike. So you know I don't love it, but whatever you know. Overall I think there was a lot of cute. There was a lot of good moments in this episode.

ANDI:

There's a moment where they're getting out and they take the top off and they do a shot with them looking straight up. That is very clearly like an homage to the Kirk Spock picture that is exactly like that. And it was kind of freaky like for one eye blink I was like "oh my!" like it looked exactly like Leonard Nimoy. It was in the colors and everything and I was like being transported to that still I guess for a second. And it was good, and subtle, and a nice little nod to that photograph which I enjoyed. I *do* think it's hilarious that they basically did a Short Trek based on fanfic tropes. \*crew laughs\* "Trapped in an elevator", really? Although I will say that Star Trek in general and Spock specifically have had a hand in so many fanfic tropes that I find it kind of amusing and like a full circle moment. Like "f\*\*k or die" is 100 percent from Pon Farr, and "sex pollan" is 100 percent from Spock being sneezed on by that weird flower. And now they're trapped in an elevator and I just think it's funny.

JARRAH:

Nice. Also fun fact about this episode is that this was the 763rd piece of Star Trek franchise, like movies/episodes, and it was the first one score with the music scored by a woman who is Nami Melumad. And the second one is the episode Ask Not which we'll get to you in a minute, which was scored by Andrea Datzman. So Star Trek has exponentially increased its number of women composers in this one season of Short Treks.

SUE:

I mean, bout time. I don't know how to react to that. \*laughs\*

JARRAH:

Yaaaaaay! You know, I think we should celebrate the achievement of those women and hope that the ratio continues to improve going forward.

ANDI:

I do like the exploration of Spock, always pretty much, and the idea that what's going on underneath Spock's surface is so much more than what he shows on his face because that's kind of the essence of Spock really. So it's kind of cute to have a younger Spock, like seeing him before he has so many of those walls up is interesting.

SUE:

You know, I was actually scrolling through Instagram earlier today and I saw a comment and I truly don't remember what the original post was or who the commenter was but they wrote that "One of the greatest mysteries of Star Trek is why Spock smiles in The Cage" and I don't know if this is a person who like *refuses* to watch Discovery, but I feel like Discovery addresses that the Spock we see in The Cage is not the Spock that we see in the original series and, especially this episode I feel like, begins to address that and how Spock deals with or copes with or even unfortunately hides parts of himself.

JARRAH:

Also I need a gif of Number One saying "I find that problematic". \*crew laughs\* Anyhow. All right. Well let's go on to episode two, The trouble with Edward.

ANDI:

This episode's *bleak* y'all. It is bleak. It is bleak and yet its like everything about it is supposed to be funny. It's like very clear that they like, thought it was funny but it's also, it's actually horrifying?

JARRAH:

Yeah, I think it's a very polarizing episode. The groups that I watched it with were all like uniformly like, "I love it" or "hate it."

ANDI:

They had a whole like conference room scene in which they discussed eating the meat of tribbles.

JARRAH:

\*laughing\* Sorry. I thought it was really funny. \*continues laughing\* And the cereal ad! Did you watch the cereal ad? Cuz some people missed it because it was after part of the credits.

SUE:

The cereal ad makes me uncomfortable. I do *not* like it.

JARRAH:

\*laughing\* I'm sorry! I was super into it. So I guess this would be an example of that. I mean to be fair, I totally acknowledge it was super bleak and I know it is probably supposed to be canon but I'm just kind of choosing to treat it as like more like fanfic because to me it felt more like a parody.

ANDI:

It felt like crack. \*crew laughs\* If we're you know, if we're still using fanfic tropes "Crack" is what we call silly beyond silly. Like it's supposed to be so silly that no one takes it seriously.

JARRAH:

Yeah that seems accurate.

ANDI:

When she was like “Do we know if they have intelligence?” and he was like “Well I can brain damage them.” I was like “Bro what? What is happening right now?!”

SUE:

\*laughing\* I find that problematic.

ANDI:

I don't know what...I don't know...like the whole time my mouth was just open I was like “Okay there's wildly differing tone issues here” \*crew laughs\* where like the music and the performances are obviously made so it's supposed to be humorous, but I'm also like “What!? this is a Starfleet dude and they're letting him experiment on things??!”

JARRAH:

OK. And they've got like the tribble vacuum cleaner that looks like it was created by Dr. Seuss. I mean that's my favorite part, but I think it's interesting to, beyond the fact that I just found it really funny, but I think it has an interesting dynamic of like H. Jon Benjamin who will be better known as Archer also from Bob's Burgers as like he's kind of playing like an Archer-esque character and this like dynamic with this much younger woman Rosa Salazar who's in charge and not super experienced but like is kind of doing generally the right thing as a Starfleet commander. And then he's like sending in reports about her like trying to get her removed and all this kind of stuff like it was, I mean it definitely could have been done with the super dark tone and really really like would not have been able to skate by, I think, *any* Star Trek fans. But I think the fact that they wrote it in this way and performed it in this way somehow had alchemy for some people.

ANDI:

OK., there is a bunch of like montage scenes in which they're like shooting tribbles and that one woman's like being crushed to death \*laughing uncomfortably\* Like, I don't know how to feel about this. I feel really weird right now.

JARRAH:

Well and you didn't even see the cereal ad at the end, where basically it's like these two kids and their mom in a Starfleet uniform who's pouring them a bowl of tribbles that are like “Edwards brand like tribble cereal and it's like “Now in spicy ranch!” and they're like “Mmm furry!”

ANDI:

Nooo!

SUE:

Veto! And they're meat! "Here's a bowl of furry meat!"

ANDI:

Everything about this episode disturbs me. Also why do they not have an H R? Their H.R. protocols SUCK.

JARRAH:

That is true.

ANDI:

And where's the counselor?

JARRAH:

Definitely take that kind of behavior more seriously earlier on.

ANDI:

Like, that dude needs counseling. Like a lot of counseling.

SUE:

But Devil's Advocate right? You're in a conference room with your new boss who in front of everyone you work with is just like "You know what? What you're doing is not an important thing. So we're going to stop it and take it away from you and put you on a team that you don't care about." That's also pretty shitty. Like she's not a good boss.

ANDI:

Yeah but for some context, what he was doing \*crew laughs\* was offering to brain damage living creatures.

SUE:

True. Yes.

JARRAH:

I thought it was kind of like, because I mean, the other tribble episodes are also like humorously ridiculous but not *dark* and I thought it was kind of poking fun at like the unanswered questions in those episodes.

ANDI:

That is a really generous reading of that. \*crew laughs\* You may be completely right because that would make it better. Because one of the things that's always bothered me about The Trouble with Tribbles, which is obviously a phenomenal episode, is at the very end Scotty sends them all to die *horribly* and it's like a pun.



SUE:  
L.O.L.

ANDI:

So that would actually make me like this episode a lot better. But if that's what they were going for it did not come through as clearly as they needed it to.

JARRAH:

Yep. Well *maybe* one of the *boldest* episodes of the season though.

ANDI:

You know what actually, that conference room scene? You know what it reminded me of? It reminded me of that Debbie Downer sketch. \*crew laughs\* When they're at Disneyland or whatever. \*Sue laughs intensely\* "My cat has feline AIDS" like, they were like all the "Aw the tribbles are so cute!" Like "If you remove the hair!" and like all their faces. Like \*makes sad trombone noise\* So there were genuinely instances where I did find it like, *that moment*, was pretty funny. I just feel like the conflicting tonal problems just made it really surreal and I don't know what the episode is saying. What is that episode saying?

JARRAH:

I don't think it's saying anything. I don't think it has a message.

SUE:

But I think it's interesting that the people I saw complaining about this episode on social media were complaining that the tribbles were retconned \*crew laughs\* like that is the *least* of my issues with this. How about like the way these Starfleet officers are treating and talking about each other?

JARRAH:

Can we start there?

SUE:

Can we? How about "Oh yeah I lost my first command like a week into it, and killed a crew member because he was an idiot." I guess *she* didn't kill the crew member "and lost a crew member because he was an idiot." That would not fly at Starfleet Command.

JARRAH:

No. I guess so then like, is there a question about like is this going to be a type of humor we're gonna see on Lower Decks? I don't know but if so is that going to be a problem? I also don't know. Is canon being shaped to be like, the fifth sixth tier of most important ships in the Federation, do they just behave like this?

ANDI:

Like The Office in space where almost everyone is incompetent?

SUE:

I know we're talking about the Short Treks but that is like the *one* issue I have with *all* of them. What's out there with Lower Decks right now is that they call this ship unimportant and like it's just one word but it irks me.

ANDI:

Well one of the things that I've always really liked about Star Trek is that it's about competent people solving problems. That's something I absolutely love about it. And I mean, I don't think we need to take this Short Treks super seriously but also like that was definitely a lot of incompetent people causing problems.

SUE:

Well they say that Edward is a brilliant scientist but he has interpersonal issues. But you know what, that's the same descriptor that they use for Stamets.

ANDI:

Or Tilly. Huh. So I think we we can't be too. We can't just like throw this character out the window without at least recognizing that like, he is a brilliant scientist who apparently doesn't want to be there. Stamets is exactly the same, he is a brilliant scientist who doesn't want to be there.

JARRAH:

Yeah I think the difference with this guy is he's like a more of a Victor Frankenstein type. Like he has no ethics.

ANDI:

Yeah. My problem with him is not his incompetency, although at this point I could say that that's pretty vast, it's his moral compass I guess. But like how much of this could have been avoided with a more caring and understanding and *\*pauses\** experienced manager? And I don't even think anything she did was like *that* out of the realm of possibility for a leader. That final moment where she called somebody idiot doesn't land the way I think they thought it should or wanted it to. Partly just because of the language, which is very ablest, but it just doesn't *quite* because like all these terrible things happened. "Oh just because he was an idiot OK." But like some of the other stuff, this is what I go back to with the H.R. thing. Like a comment on HR protocols would have saved them so much. Like if you make a complaint against a superior officer even if it's a really unprofessional and clearly personal complaint, how do you like, she *immediately* retaliates. Anyways we're *definitely* going deeper into this episode than like it can hold up to. *\*crew laughs\** I was just very taken aback by it. I guess.

JARRAH:

That's totally fair. OK. Let's go on to Ask Not, the last of the \*pause\* Enterprise.. Discovery

SUE:

Disco-prise

JARRAH:

-era. Yeah. Thank you.

ANDI:

This is another H.R. nightmare!

JARRAH:

Yes. Oh my God. I have issues with this one.

ANDI:

Seriously they need someone who works at H.R. in the writers room of Star Trek. I am telling you!

JARRAH:

If anyone doesn't remember which one this is it's the one with Cadet Thira Sidhu who's played by Amrit Kaur and she is-

SUE:

Put through a psychological torture experiment

JARRAH:

- with real Pike to prove that she can be on the Enterprise and it is *messed up*.

ANDI:

I don't even really have words for this. Like first of all, how the hell do they have the bandwidth to do this for every dang Cadet and Ensign and like random person that comes on to their ship?

JARRAH:

Maybe it's just that Pike insists on doing it. Like maybe no one else in the Federation does this.

ANDI:

Except for it's still hundreds of people. So like, how would you have the time and energy to do this, like, messed up social experiment on each one of your crew members and no one ever talks about it again, so like nobody knows it's coming? It just doesn't make any like, from a purely logistical sense, it doesn't make any sense. But then you add in how completely messed up it is like-

SUE:

He tries to manipulate her with “let’s make sure your husband doesn’t die this time too.” And they bring in Tholians, like any little thing they could use to possibly like upset or trigger her they use. And not to mention that those panels she was working on *actually* exploded. What if she had been more seriously hurt because that sure looked real. She had debris falling on her head. What is happening? And then right at the end she, well not the exact end, but they beam onto the ship and Number One is just like “Hi. You’re welcome. That was all me. I’m going to torture you.” Like, what?

JARRAH:

Yeah. And like make her think that her husband’s going to die and that’s like all this stuff. And I think what differentiates this because like we have seen Star Trek put people through stupid and arguably messed up tests before, but in almost every other case I can think of they knew it was a test. Like you know Troi and the bridge officers exam, and like Wesley like they sort of messed with him on the test where he’s trying to get into the academy but like he still knows it’s possible.

SUE:

He knows a test is coming, but he hasn’t like entered an exam room.

JARRAH:

Yeah, I mean arguably that’s as messed up.

SUE:

And it’s the situation, it’s the almost the exact situation, for how they lost his father. Super messed up.

JARRAH:

Basically this whole season of Star Trek made me really question Starfleet and the Federation’s educational systems. But yeah, I don’t know, I haven’t watched that TNG episode in a long time but this to me felt like very messed up and not justifiable. And she also recovers way too quickly. Like if that happened to me and then they were like “Oh no no no it was all just a test!” and then like “Oh also your husband’s fine and you’re posted to the Enterprise.” I would be like “What the F. Like, it’s going to take a while for me to trust you again.”

ANDI:

Well she reacts like she’s on Candid Camera. She’s like “No! Really? \*crew laughs\* “You *guys!* You got me good!” It’s really weird. In one of the like, structural problems of this episode are stories run into this when they’re trying to trick the audience, so they’re trying to do two things which is trick the character and trick the audience at the same time. And you can run into troubles with that in which it doesn’t actually make sense *unless* there’s a third person observer. And they run into that with this. Like I don’t even understand. Where was she?

SUE:

She was- I had to watch this. I recap this for our blog. I had to watch it multiple times to even understand it all. And it's what, eight minutes long? And I paused it a whole bunch because the descriptions and the explanations were very confusing. I think she was in like a Transporter room on the station right? Where the enterprise was docked and... I don't know. The more you listen to the explanation like the reason he's arrested is because he was trying to help a ship that the Admiral on board ordered him not to help, but the Tholians were taking over the ship, like it's very convoluted and then all of the coincidences. Like, "Oh you survived a Tholian attack!" "Oh your husband's on that ship!" I'd like, from the second one I was like "Oh this isn't real."

ANDI:

Well I knew that Pike was not like \*stutters\* there was something shady about him, because he wasn't acting like Pike. By the way the fact that like the tension in this episode is them yelling regulations at each other is objectively hilarious. Like \*petulant voice\* "No that is not correct! "According to you know this regulation of this bludduh-blah!" "According to this number you are not correct!" The fact that that was supposed to be our attention is hilarious.

SUE:

However, I do really like I think my favorite part of this whole thing is when she said "I don't do loopholes."

ANDI:

Yeah. Well she seemed like a cool gal. Like, if we're talking pure character. Like, we learned who she was pretty quickly and she seemed like a solid stand up person. I just don't understand the point of this and I don't think it.. like if you start questioning the underlying what is like logistically how did this even work. Like how, how is a random transporter room set up for this kind of simulation? It doesn't make any sense. \*laughs\* It doesn't make any sense from a logistical perspective and then it also doesn't even make any sense from a character perspective and the whole thing at the end of the day is pretty pointless. And so yeah. Great job guys! \*Sue laughs\*

JARRAH:

I feel like, you know if this is a setup for a Pike series, well I think that it did make me excited about possibly seeing that character in a bigger more fleshed out role in the future. But definitely made me.. I don't know that that was the story in which to do that.

Okey dokey. So we are on to the animated episodes so first up we have The Girl Who Made the Stars, in which a young Michael Burnham is told a story by her dad.

ANDI:

It's beautiful. The animation is really really beautiful.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Definitely. There are these behind the scenes videos made for some of the Short Treks and there's one for The Girl Who Made the Stars where the director [Olatunde Osunsanmi](#) said that they started by looking at photos of different parts of Africa and different tribes and they wanted things to be drawn from reality but also maintain kind of a glow-y magical feel. And they show some of the work, you know, modeling Michael Burnham's face from Sonequah Martin-Green's face and back and stylizing it and stuff. And I thought it was kind of cool and definitely did feel kind of magical. And another thing that some people actually noticed was that the night beast? Night monster? Is the thing that Spock draws on the tablet that jumps out at Michael in Discovery. So that's kind of cool. A fun link there.

ANDI:

It was interesting to see someone else be Michael's dad, because she gets so integrated into Spock's family. It was just kind of cool to see that other relationship be front and center. Especially since her dad ruled. \*Sue giggles\*

JARRAH:

Also this is like the first Star Trek that we've had that's like targeted at kids in a long time. And certainly, you know, some of the comments about Discovery has been like that it's harder to share with your children but like here's like a little snippet of it that's very targeted to kids and the director said that his favorite part when making the Short Trek was "showing my daughter and watching her watch someone who looked like her and just seeing the expression on her face." \*crew awws\* So *that* is cool. I feel like this could be like a really powerful story for a little girl or a little kid.

SUE:

Yeah we don't know any of the really any information about what the Nickelodeon animated show is going to be, just that it is in development. But we do know that neither of these animation styles for this one or the next one are going to be the same animation style as Lower Decks. So I don't know. I would certainly not mind seeing more of this style on a Nickelodeon show.

ANDI:

It's very magical. It's almost fantasy-like instead of sci fi-like.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Did you know what the, like there's this being that comes and gives her the light ball at the end. Was that supposed to be something in particular?

SUE:

I was trying to figure that out because, I mean, surprisingly that's where the story differs from the one that Michael actually tells in Discovery. Right? Her story in the live action, in Discovery, is that she throws a bunch of sand into the air and becomes the stars. In here we have this alien

entity giving her knowledge essentially and warping away. So I don't know. There's no like canon connection that I could think of.

JARRAH:

To me it vaguely resembled the Red Angel in like the way that its head kind of looked and the fact that it has these projections, but the projections look more like kind of tentacle arms than like mechanical wings. So I don't know if there is meant to be a connection there or anything. But anyway. Well if anyone else knows. Shoot us a note. Shall we move on to Ephram and Dot?

SUE:

This was my favorite one.

ANDI:

Mine too, by far.

JARRAH:

And mine three. Yeah. \*laughs\*

ANDI:

It was adorable. And if you never knew you needed a animated Lincoln in space, now you know!  
\*Sue giggles\*

JARRAH:

Oh my gosh. Also not sure, I just noticed on re watching today that the toy that Burnham has in the girl who made the stars is the Tardigrade Ephraim.

SUE:

Oh yeah.

JARRAH:

Yeah. I didn't notice my first two times. It's a very cute tie-in. So this is the one where the tardigrade tries to lay her eggs on the original, the Enterprise no bloody a b c or d, but gets stopped by a cleaning maintenance robot named Dot and hig-jinks ensue as well as many many many easter eggs.

SUE:

So one of the complaints I saw about *this episode* was that the clips, or I guess the references to the original series, did not take place in order. Which like, OK if you want to be mad about it be mad about it. But we also know that the mycelial network track-tr-"transverses", that's the word, space and time. So there. \*Jarrah laughs\* and also that the ship at the end, when it blows up, is *incorrect*.

JARRAH:

Yeah. I saw also that like, the blanket but Khan is under isn't the actual color of the blanket in Space Seed. But like, this could also be a good argument for why maybe not all of these are supposed to be *canon* canon, or at least maybe they're not supposed to be like ret-conning things that have gone before like they're more like explorations.

SUE:

I just.... who cares?

JARRAH:

...Yeah.

ANDI:

I just have to say that there are people that dearly care about these small details and I'm not gonna say that you can't or that that's a bad thing. But when it's actively making it so you can't enjoy the story, that's a problem. Or at least its making it so it's hard for you to enjoy things. And the point of Star Trek and Star Trek fandom is to have fun first and foremost. And I feel like they treat canon as like a bludgeon and they just bludgeon all the fun out of it. \*laughs\*

SUE:

You're absolutely right. I should not say "Who cares?" because some people do care. But you're also absolutely right in that. Like if these little things prevent you from enjoying the wider story. I don't know, it just... that makes me sad.

ANDI:

You're putting yourself in canon jail as what I'm saying.

JARRAH:

Well and I think it's more if you're like you know, using it to try to tell other people they shouldn't like something or you know that kind of stuff. Because there are you know, there's people who are just like canon enthusiasts and want to talk about it a lot. And that's totally fine and if it's like "This really personally bugged me." you know I don't have a problem with that. If that's like.. there are weirder reasons why I've been particularly bugged by something in Star Trek so-

SUE:

-But like, this *ruined* Star Trek?

JARRAH:

Yeah yeah but if it gets like "This ruined it." And then devolves into like personal attacks on the creators and the people who you know are saying they like it and like, that's not cool.



ANDI:

But yeah, this animated short is not...it's supposed to be a cute ten minute thing. It's not supposed to replace the original series for you.

JARRAH:

No, like it clearly is lovingly done in reference to the original series. Also the narrator is Kirk Thatcher a.k.a. the punk on the bus from Star Trek 4. \*crew laughs\* So I thought that was pretty awesome. It's super, like, joyful and also heartfelt. Like you think she's going to lose the eggs and you're going "Noooooo!" and then like \*smitten voice\* but then Dot saves the babies and they're all-Oh my gosh I love it!

SUE:

I feel like there were way more eggs than babies.

JARRAH:

Yeah probably but-

ANDI:

Don't bring us down Sue. \*crew laughs\* They *all* survived. They all survive.

JARRAH:

Like, salmon would be super stoked! Salmon biology joke there. \*laughs\*

ANDI:

One thing that a lot of these episodes have in common is concentrating on the background rather than the foreground. So like in this case our main characters aren't even human. It's a little robot. Like a Wall\*E type of robot and a tardigrade and all of the human shenanigans are the backdrop and a lot of these other shorts have that in common too. They're all characters that we wouldn't normally be focused on which I think is kind of cool. Or like characters that we might focus on but there are interactions that might not be focused on and I think that's cool and I like that this tardigrade is having the adventure of her life and while she's doing that Kirk and Spock are like running around \*laughs\* having numerous adventures of their lives too. And never the two shall meet. It kind of reminded me of the Buffy episode The Zeppo, in which Xander is having a really intense like adventure and in the background there is another apocalypse. But like they never interact in any way. It's a storytelling device I enjoy is what I'm saying. And the animation is adorable. It's so cute.

JARRAH:

It's so cute. Yeah. It is definitely my favorite, yeah. And yeah so many *so many* Easter eggs. Definitely like I'm sure that the choices that they made in terms of the timeline or in terms of things like the color of the blanket were made artistically. And to me that's fair artistic license. Like it wasn't out of a desire to destroy or to undermine the source material because clearly the creators really really loved it. It's space Abraham Lincoln animated!

ANDI:

So good. Cool. All right. Well that brings us to our final installment, Children of Mars, which is the only Picard tie-in and is the one that has two little girls who are going to preppy Starfleet school and don't like each other very much. And then at the end learned that their parents are probably dead because of an attack by quote "rogue synths" on Mars. So what do we think of Children of Mars?

ANDI:

I really could have done without that song. It was so distracting.

JARRAH:

Yeah me too. And I will freely admit, because I wrote the recap for this one, and a couple people were like "Oh you do know that that's like a David Bowie song covered by Peter Gabriel?" and I was like "Nope! I did not catch that." But I also don't know that would've made me like it more?

ANDI:

Well I mean I know the song. I love the song.

JARRAH:

\*in shame\* I didn't know the song.

ANDI:

Well here we go. To those people I say, I *did* know the song and I *didn't* like it. The pace was slowed down so much that it just got kind of eerie. Which is fine except for it was really distracting from the story I thought. Music's supposed to enhance it's not supposed to distract.

JARRAH:

Well and because it's so slow you really focus on the words which I also didn't think were related enough to what was happening. It just felt like someone really wanted to use that song.

ANDI:

It's a great song. I really like it but it just didn't-I don't feel like it worked in this context.

JARRAH:

Also, questions about Starfleet schooling system. So kids wear school uniforms. Got to say I was disappointed that they didn't also have kids in little blue and yellow blazers.

SUE:

They're only supposed to be 12 years old so maybe they just haven't picked specializations yet?

JARRAH:

OK. And it seems like this is on earth. Like I read a couple other reviews that also assumed that they're on Earth and their parents are at Utopia Planetia on Mars right? So if that is the case I'm not sure why they all get a shuttle to school instead of transporter pads, also where the school is. Maybe we don't need to know any of that. But I was more like, do I want to believe that Starfleet or that the Federation has kids all go to school in uniforms in this weird, sort of to me, kind of dystopian looking Academy that has these like "Grow" and "Achieve" weird messages and teachers that all look kind of like a vaguely religious in black and white?

ANDI:

That Vulcan also was kind of creepy staring.

JARRAH:

Yeah, he was Sarus dad from Discovery, the actor.

ANDI:

Oh OK.

JARRAH:

Random. Yeah. I don't know. I like to think, although you know this is part of the debate about Picard is, is Picard like showing us you know sort of a regressed Starfleet? Like a Starfleet and a Federation that's regressed to more like maybe authoritarian or just like a less enlightened way of doing things? Because I just generally I'm not a huge fan of like schooling of like forced conformity in schooling and like in how students appear in that kind of thing. So to me I was like not super-like that doesn't mesh with my vision of future schooling. But maybe that's just me. Also how much does Lil's dad suck for not coming home in a year when she's just on earth and he's on Mars?

SUE:

So I read that the same way you did the first time through. But then I started thinking what if they were talking about a specific event and it was "I'm not going to make it home this year" in parentheses for Christmas, for your birthday, for whatever. Not like "I won't be home for 365 days."

JARRAH:

OK, that would make more sense. It definitely confused me. It's like "Sorry I've already been- figured out I'm going to be too busy to-"

SUE:

"for the next year."

JARRAH:

Yes.

ANDI:

"Booked! Booked and busy!" I don't know how I felt about this one. I was kind of iffy.

SUE:

I'm gonna take it overall, high level, and say a lot of people are saying how powerful this was and how emotional this was. And I mean, unpopular opinion: I did not care for it. It could just be like the emotional state that I have been in lately. But to me, you don't just like immediately forgive your tormentor because something bad happened.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Like, someone replied-I think actually I just saw a tweet by someone saying that they found this really powerful, and it reminded them of 9/11 and being at school and like turning towards all these other kids that were experiencing this news for the first time and feeling like all kind of shocked together and not really sure what to do. And yes, so that was interesting and certainly you know I've seen a lot of people again I guess this is a polarizing episode. A lot of people saying "This spoke to me in so many ways" and that's awesome. It didn't really do that for me. I think back to-I mean just taking like 9/11 as example, I mean I obviously wasn't as directly affected as the girls in this episode were but I certainly felt very emotionally impacted that day and it didn't change my relationships with the other kids at my school. And I didn't start to like... If anything I distrusted people more than I would like trust someone that I had previously distrusted.

SUE:

And whatever unity comes from that kind of event like, sure there are feel good stories about it but that doesn't last.

JARRAH:

Or if it does last it's built. It's not something that you just decide in the moment. Like it lasts because you are sharing your common experience over time and like building a new relationship with that person. Yeah, I don't know, and also they beat each other up for like quite a long time before anyone intervenes in Federation schools.

SUE:

These teachers are terrible.

JARRAH:

Man! 20th century high school.... I mean maybe some school, but I don't know that seemed excessive.

ANDI:

The subtext of some of it is that they were both feeling real raw because they were seeing their parents and so that's why they went zero to beating the shit out of each other that quickly. But it

still was like, girl maybe don't go that hard core. \*laughs\* It felt like the kind of tension release that you'd get after six months of torture. You know what I mean? If you are bullied in school, and I was, I did have like a moment where I just was like I lost it and we fought, but it was like over the period of several months before I got to that point. And in this case it was like she tripped you, so you're gonna beat the crap out of her.

JARRAH:

Yeah. And also I wasn't clear because, to me like, it sort of seemed like Lil was more of the bully. But I also think they were trying to make it seem like it was that they were maybe more equal, more or less. like Lil was more aggressive because her dad wasn't around, but that they were both doing things to each other. And I don't know. It didn't, to me, read like a familiar bullying dynamic. Just like not something I've encountered really in my experience.

SUE:

And it seemed to me like it was a random person that she chose. Right? There's no indicated history there of issues between these two girls.

ANDI:

Well the other thing is, the thing that tips it all off as she bumps into her. It didn't look to me like she did it on purpose. It looked to me like she wasn't paying attention.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Or maybe she, did but it was like plausibly a mistake.

ANDI:

Yeah. And then the second time she clearly wasn't trying to get her in trouble she was trying to make peace. So I just, I don't know! It just- it seems like very intense considering. It didn't need to be that intense. And I do totally get that like small things can feel like disasters when you're already feeling bad because of something that's happening in your life. So I get that. It just seemed like a little over the top.

SUE:

So can we get into the spoilers and speculation part?

JARRAH:

Sure. Although by the time that this episode airs we will have answers to some of this. *But* what did we learn about Star Trek Picard from this Short Treks?

SUE:

Well there are rogue Synths, Picard is an admiral. The attack on Utopia Planetia is interesting. And now here is where, Jarrah and I have been reading the IDW countdown comics. At the time of this recording there are only two of them.

JARRAH:

Yeah. They actually held the third one until after the first episode of Picard airs, which makes me wonder whether it was too spoiler-y or whether they just didn't have it ready.

SUE:

They made it sound like they didn't have it ready. But, I'm going to mention some content from those so if you don't want to know it skip ahead a little bit. But we know that from those comics that Geordi is *running* the Utopia Planetia shipyards. And he is building up a fleet to help evacuate the Romulans before the supernova, that we learn of in Star Trek 2009. So this is pre, I think, twenty three eighty nine is when that supernova happens. And I know a lot of people picked up on the Discovery era ships. I'm thinking maybe they're refitting those, those existing ships they already have in order to do these evacuation missions and that's why we're seeing these much older ships at the beginning of Picard.

JARRAH:

Yeah. That would make sense, because some people got really upset about those. I think it was a deliberate choice.

SUE:

This also implies, to me, that Geordi is dead. And likely- I mean I would not expect the Picard that we know to up and quit Starfleet because Geordi died, but after completing these evacuation missions he might. Who knows? But I certainly think it's putting us on that track.

JARRAH:

Well, and maybe it's not so much that Geordi died that is the reason he quits, but it's that he's like upset about the way Starfleet handled something. Some part of this.

SUE:

Especially assuming that the synths have something to do with Data.

JARRAH:

Yeah yeah. So there's been speculation on like, are the synths like Soong androids? Are they a different kind of Android? Are they more like ex-Borg? Is like, Starfleet going to react really badly to this situation and like take it out on legit androids? You know, what's going to happen? So I don't know. I don't think we have enough to answer those questions yet, but seems-I think one thing is interesting just at least from the comics and *this* put together is that it doesn't seem like his retirement to his vineyard is actually that *long*. That I think like, the comic book has him going on a mission as an admiral like, eight months before the start of the series. But I don't know, maybe I'm wrong and that is just-I'm just confused by the timing.

SUEE:

So my understanding is that twenty five years have passed since Nemesis. Nemesis takes place in twenty three seventy nine, and the Romulan supernova is in twenty three eighty nine. So that's something ten years apart assuming that is shortly thereafter that Picard retires. That means he'd be retired for about 15 years.

JARRAH:

OK. Maybe then I'm confused about the timing and the comics, which is- maybe won't be resolved once we see the rest of the comics. Cool. All right. Well any final thoughts on children of Mars?

SUE:

I don't know. I just-it felt empty to me. I feel like that Star Trek and CBS played this up so much as a prelude to Picard. And it was eight minutes long with almost no dialogue. And everything we actually learned about Picard from it was in the trailer for the Short Trek.

JARRAH:

Yeah. I mean it certainly I don't think-it gave us clues to the premise of the show but it didn't really. I think you're right, that we didn't learn like a hell of a lot new compared to like the trailers and the other things. And I don't know. I think you know some people definitely thought that it was successful in creating like a moving atmosphere. And I think we're probably going to you know, we should also maybe mention like there's a big interview with Patrick Stewart that came out in Variety recently that has been getting a lot of debate. That he's saying, you know, he wanted when he first got invited in to talk about the series he was going to pass on it. But Alex Kurtzman really like, you know, impressed him with their ideas and he said he wanted to, you know, get aspects of Brexit in there and things like Trump and you know things that are not going well in our world today. And you know, some people have-there's different reasons for not liking that. Like some people are like "This isn't what Star Trek is to me. Star Trek is supposed to be apolitical and not talk about problems in our world." Ane we're like "No that is not true." \*crew laughs\* There are some people who are just like "Star Trek is supposed to be *hopeful* and this doesn't sound like it's going to be very hopeful." But I think we don't know really yet how that's going to go because we don't know how it's going to end. So I don't know! I'm cautiously optimistic. I mean I'm definitely one of those people who's been like "I would love Star Trek to show us how we get past these things." So if they're going to do that, awesome!

SUE:

Well, by the time this drops we will have seen the premiere episode of Picard.

JARRAH:

I'm sure we will be back to you with more Picard thoughts as the series progresses. All right! So Short Trek Season 2 is done. And Andi, where can people find you elsewhere on the Internet?

ANDI:

Easiest place to find me is on Twitter: @firsttimetrek.

JARRAH:

And Sue?

SUE:

You can find me on Twitter, @Spaltor.

JARRAH:

And you can find me on Twitter @Jarrahpenguin. Thats J-A-R-R-A-H-penguin. And for more from our show and to contact us you can visit [womenatwork.com](http://womenatwork.com) or you can find us on Facebook Twitter or Instagram @womenatwarp, or you can e-mail us at [Crew@womenatwarp.com](mailto:Crew@womenatwarp.com). And for more from the Roddenberry podcast network visit [podcasts.Roddenberry.com](http://podcasts.Roddenberry.com).