

## Women at Warp Episode 132: The Baddest Women in the Universe, Part III

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 biweekly mission to explore our favorite franchise. My name's Jarrah. Thanks for tuning in. Today with us we have Sue.

SUE:

Hidee-ho neighborinos.

JARRAH:

And Grace.

GRACE:

Hidee-ho *cosmic* neighborinos. \*Sue laughs\*

JARRAH:

We have, as usual, a little bit of housekeeping before our main topic. Our show is entirely supported by our patrons on Patreon. If you'd like to become a patron you can do so for as little as a dollar a month and get awesome rewards from thanks on social media to silly watch-along commentaries. And *recently* we have adjusted our tiers, sort of a little bonus, so you make more rewards available to more people to thank everyone for their support. And so if you're a long term patron you might want to log in and just make sure that you are at the level you're getting the rewards you want. And if you are not a patron and would like to support us you can visit [Patreon.com/womenatwarp](https://Patreon.com/womenatwarp). That's P-A-T-R-E-O-N dot com slash woman at warp. You can also support us by leaving a rating or review on Apple podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts. And Sue has some fun housekeeping.

SUE:

Yeah! So if you're following us on Twitter or Instagram you might have noticed that back on January 23rd, the Picard premiere day, I posted some photos from the Picard Delta activation in Times Square where CBS was also handing out *exclusive* Picard posters. The people there were kind enough to give me a few extras and we are going to give those away. So we have two exclusive Picard posters to give away and all you have to do to enter that giveaway is send us an email to [crew@womenatwarp.com](mailto:crew@womenatwarp.com). Put in the subject line "Picard poster" and tell us your favorite new character from the series. And if you're not paying for CBS All Access right now or viewing it some other way to tell us something else about the Picard series because, you know, whatever!

JARRAH:

I mean you can always say "Number one" and be right.

SUE:

Yeah, accurate yeah.

GRACE:

There's not really a wrong answer in any way shape or form.

SUE:

So to shoot us that email to enter the giveaway and that will be open until 11:59 pm Eastern time on March 1st.

JARRAH:

Fabulous! So our topic today is "The Baddest Women in the Galaxy part 3." \*starts cackling evilly\*

GRACE:

Dun-dun-DUUUUN! \*singing in a very poor Eartha Kitt impression\* I wanna be evil. I wanna tell lies.

JARRAH:

Yes! Exactly. So, we are returning to our series on women villains of Star Trek and this was something we're like, "We'll do two parts on this." And we did two parts and we're like "We still have several other to cover." So part three! Part three it is. You can look up the Baddest Women in the Galaxy parts 1 and 2 to see a list of who we've all covered as part of this series. And we have chosen to eliminate some from the list that we feel like we've already covered in other episodes a lot such as Intendant Kira, Deela, Ellaan of Trious, although debatably maybe not a villain, The Romulan Commander, Kayla from Enterprise Two Days and Two Nights. So you know some of these folks we've already focused a fair amount on. So we are going to skip and let us know if when we're done, if you think you know, there's someone else we really need to cover. And you know, with more Star Trek coming out hopefully we'll have more for part four in the future.

SUE:

And inclusion in one of these episodes doesn't necessarily mean there won't be a future episode all about that one character.

GRACE:

Yeah. These are just the ones we're covering this time.

SUE:

Kai Winn and Seska both appear in Baddest Women of the Galaxy part one, and each of those should definitely get their own episode in the future.

GRACE:

At some point, yeah.

JARRAH:

A hundred percent. So for today let's start with Kara, since I already named her, and Spock's Brain. She was played by Marj Dusay, who very sadly passed away in January of this year at age 83 and she was mostly known as a soap opera actress. So who wants to go first on Spock's brain?

GRACE:

There's a lot to get into. This, for those of you who don't remember, is the one where aliens steal *Spock's Brain* and it's because they're part of a species where no one is smart except for occasionally when one of them can be smart so they steal a smart brain, which is Spock's.

JARRAH:

It's actually, that is correct, worth adding an additional layer there that it's not just it's not people who aren't smart it's *women* who aren't smart.

GRACE:

It's run by dumb women. And then when they do get smart they do evil things. And I feel like there's something being said there that we could definitely dig into. But I will first say that I love Kara and all of the other bad guys matching little stirrup pants outfits. I just appreciate any coordinated villain look. Theirs is probably the least threatening.

JARRAH:

She's got also, like, the awesome go go boots when she shows up on the bridge.

GRACE:

She's got go-go boots, she's got a lame body stirrup thing, and a micro mini. If that doesn't scream evil to you I don't know what does.

JARRAH:

I guess what was hard for me when I was like trying to look into this episode is that I actually find her, other than the fact that she's the *main* woman, she's totally indistinguishable from all the other women.

GRACE:

Yeah, she's different because we're *told* she's different. Told she's important.

JARRAH:

So it's kind of hard to be like "Who *is* Kara?" She's-

GRACE:

The one in purple. They are just the Fantanas in space. My God.

SUE:

It reminds me a little bit of Zoot in Monty Python and the Holy Grail. \*Grace laughs\*

JARRAH:

So fun background fact is that originally Gene Coon who was the first writer on this episode, although he was eventually listed under a different name. I can't imagine why. \*crew laughs\* But he had originally suggested a world of quote "little men" and quote "little women"-

GRACE:

Planet "Little Women" sounds amazing!

JARRAH:

Yeah, it's hard because the language in the memos is not great. Like, Justman says that what he's talking about are quote unquote "midgets." \*crew makes noises of discomfort\* So, unfortunate language in the memos, Bob Justman said like, "We *could* find some people, but actually how about we go *this* route instead" and said quote "The males on this planet being male naturally need the challenge and have reverted in different direction and have become huge hairy brutes who will lead wild savage lives on the planet's surface. What we ultimately learn is that when the females need a man they capture one and bring him down into their civilized environment tranquilized and use him until it is time to put him out to pasture again."

GRACE:

Good lord.

JARRAH:

And basically then there were a bunch of memos going back and forth about "Yes these women need to be really really gorgeous."

GRACE:

\*sarcastic\* God forbid they aren't, I guess.

JARRAH:

Gorgeous, dumb, and think they're better than everyone. \*crew makes more uncomfortable noises\*

GRACE:

Yeah that that even just adds more to the whole druthers about these lady characters from the get go.

JARRAH:

I mean the book *These are the Voyages*, Marc Cushman talks about how he's saying like "Bob Justman was 14 years ahead of when men are from Mars Women Are From Venus!" and uh-

GRACE:

\*incredulous\* Really? Really?!

JARRAH:

So, I mean that is kind of the message is like "But men need something totally different than women and that women left to their own devices will stop using their brains and they really need men to stay in balance."

SUE:

Ugh boy.

GRACE:

-And men need women to not, you know, go completely feral. Riiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiight. \*transcribers note: this isn't an exaggeration. She REALLY drags it out\*

JARRAH:

And that the women need, like, a male brain to be their authority.

GRACE:

And Spock is brain enough to be man brain for all these women without brains!

JARRAH:

"Brain?"

GRACE:

"What is brain!?"

JARRAH:

"What is brain?!"

GRACE:

So so shall we hop to another one then that maybe has been less...

JARRAH:

Sure. Let's let's jump all the way ahead at, or back depending on whether we're talking chronologically-

GRACE:  
Back-head.

JARRAH:  
Back-head to mirror Georgiou in Star Trek Discovery.

GRACE:  
It's a lot to cover with mirror Georgiou.

JARRAH:  
Yeah she's one of our heavy hitting more recurring characters for this episode, and first shows up in the mirror universe as the Empress- Emperor. Emperor, they call her. Eating Kelpian.

GRACE:  
So she's a literal man eater. We get that off the bat.

SUE:  
She's one of these rare ones where we do have two versions of this character. Right? Because we know Prime Georgiou and we know her as this upstanding officer, this great leader, this most decorated captain in the fleet. But we don't get to know her for long. We really only know her in two episodes and by reputation and then what's *unusual* is that the character we get going forward is the mirror universe version of this character and that's the one we're going to be sticking with. Which is *very* different. You know usually it's the other way around.

GRACE:  
Yeah, usually the mirror version is the one-off.

SUE:  
Right. Or a couple. Once or twice and that's it. And it's very clear that Michelle Yeoh has a great time playing this character. And it's interesting to also see how she has adapted. How mirror Georgiou has adapted to the Prime universe. How she can play the part of prime Georgiou and fool people.

GRACE:  
And that really does make you just wonder more and more about what she got up to in her own universe.

JARRAH:  
And I mean we will definitely have to revisit her because they announced they're starting filming for the Section 31 show that she'll be starring in \*Grace makes excited noise\* soon in lovely Mississauga Ontario. But yeah it's really interesting. I really enjoy mirror Georgiou. I think she brings a lot to the dynamic in the last season of Discovery and, you know, she has this tension because she's definitely unlike prime Georgiou except for this sort of maternal tie that she feels

to Burnham. And it is interesting and I kind of like the interplay and the like, distrust between them.

GRACE:

They *do* have a really interesting dynamic. Yeah.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Like they want to be close to each other but they also don't trust each other.

GRACE:

They want to be close to the versions of each other that they cared about.

SUE:

Mm hmm. And she brings so much more *depth* to the Mirror Universe than we've ever had before.

JARRAH:

And to Section 31. I mean Section 31 previously, I mean especially when it was very first introduced, was almost kind of like a bit of a caricature. And I think the farther its gone along the more kind of nuanced and insidious and like actually kind of a believable, you know, threatening force it is?

GRACE:

Kind of was introduced in kind of a Lovecraftian sense of "Ooh they've done things worse than you can imagine!" "You're not going to elaborate on that?" \*whispering\* "Use your imagination."

JARRAH:

I think she puts a face on it, and they've done a really good job kind of showing the linkages to upper echelons in Starfleet and we have no idea how she's getting back to Section 31 after being in the future with Discovery this season but we're going see. I'm curious!

GRACE:

I think that's also part of what makes her such an interesting character, in both as a villain and just as a character, she's very engaging and you really want to know "What's she going to pull next?"

SUE:

My personal theory is that she's going to steal the red Angel Suit and like somehow harness the power of a supernova or like, one point twenty one gigawatts \*Grace laughs\* and get herself back to the future or back to the past. I guess as it were.

GRACE:

\*ala Doc Brown\* "Michael! Michael we gotta go back! Back to the past!"

SUE:

That's not informed whatsoever, and that is 100 percent like what's happening in my brain.

JARRAH:

So around that, like, you know a conversation we talked a little bit about this I think in our discovery Season 2 Episode? We talked about one thing about like this idea of "is Georgieu redeemed?" or can she be redeemed? Does she need to be redeemed? Can we have a Star Trek series that is focused on someone who still thinks genocide is probably OK?

GRACE:

Well there's also the fact that we've still, for all the progress we've had in television, there's still a really weird tenuous relationship with women who aren't good guys. My favorite example still being the comparison that you get between Weeds and Breaking Bad in that Weeds kind of fell apart because people realized "Oh we don't support what this character is doing and she's just doing really bad things to people left and right." But people absolutely stuck with that for Breaking Bad. Right. Again two very different shows but that's just the quick gist of my argument here that the media still isn't all that down with following women with sort of conflicted..

SUE:

Antiheroes.

GRACE:

Yes. Women antiheroes, we don't get the same way we do men.

JARRAH:

Like what if they did, because I have no idea how the spinoff show is gonna go so I'm just gonna I'm going to suspend some judgment and you know try to remain cautiously optimistic because I like the character and I like Michelle Yeoh, but what if it was like that show Damages with Glenn Close? And you have someone within Section 31 who could be, maybe another woman, who could be more like playing the conflicted idealistic character who's challenging things from within? And Michelle Yeoh like running the show, that could be cool.

GRACE:

Aw! And then they pull like a Westworld and make it so that their roles are flipped by the end! And it's the wild card who has to be the one to save them all and the one who is like "I have morals" who makes all the horrible decisions.

JARRAH:

Yeah I don't know. I mean I think it has to maintain some touch with values, but it doesn't have to be necessarily her that embodies them. Yeah. I mean, I guess the other point to note about



Georgieau is that I think of all the women who as we've talked about, I think it's pretty fair to say, that she is the most-

GRACE:  
Sexual?

JARRAH:  
The most, I was going to say, most skilled in combat. In hand-to-hand direct combat. \*crew snickers\* She's the most likely to kick someone in the face.

GRACE:  
I mean I think that goes for both our topics. \*crew laughs\*

JARRAH:  
Although, Tarah. We did have Tarah from Enterprise, who was pretty kick-ass or kick-face kick-chest? She kicked Archer in the chest for sure.

GRACE:  
Combat-wise she's probably our most competent female villain we've covered.

SUE:  
I'm just going to start referring to people as "kick-face." \*crew laughs\*

JARRAH:  
Yeah. I don't think she's necessarily the most sexual. She is *very* sexual. But we also have like Intendant Kira.

GRACE:  
Yeah but we can't really bring up the fact that even 20 years after the whole Intendant Kira thing we've got another mirror universe character and part of their whole "Aaah! There's nothing holding *her* back!" is fluid sexuality and how that's portrayed as a \*pauses\* not so much just a character trait but as kind of a character detractor in terms of \*jokingly offended\* "Aaah! Will she commit to *nothing*?!"

SUE:  
Well thats a straight up mirror universe trait right? And that's part of the issue with the mirror universe. I mean we don't know anything about Prime Georgiou and what she prefers, her preferences, but we definitely, they made it clear very very clear, that mirror Georgiou is definitely fluid and I think definitely implied also promiscuity which is another other mirror universe trait that is a problem.

GRACE:

And another thing that's just very commonly linked in media to bisexual people. So that's not good you guys.

SUE:

I just want to make clear, not that promiscuity is the problem, but that linking it to the Mirror Universe as a *untrustworthy* trait is a problem.

GRACE:

Also, we haven't seen any guy characters do that in the Mirror Universe.

SUE:

Kind of Sisko? \*Grace makes doubtful noise\* I mean he sleeps with Kira and Dax while still married to Jennifer.

GRACE:

I think I meant more in the sense that we don't get that we don't have any of the male characters acting gay or bisexual in the mirror universe. It's very clearly-

JARRAH:

Doesn't she say that like her Culber or her Stamets was pan or something? Like isn't there that part of that scene.

GRACE:

Oh yeah.

JARRAH:

But still, I mean, it's not *seen* and if it is in there it is even more still to be a contrast with the prime Stamets or Culber. I think it's Stamets says something and she says like "Oh don't limit yourself."

SUE:

Yeah Stamets says "No I'm gay." And she says "Not in my universe." And then she also says something like "Stop being so binary."

JARRAH:

Yeah, so again it's like you know this association with the Mirror Universe. That said, I think the characters pretty awesome. And it says something in terms of the like, where we have gone as a society that it's like unlike you know Intendant Kira and stuff, where they have to remain confined in their universe. They're not going to be given their own show. This isn't considered like something that we have to like punish the character for? She's punished for other things. But yeah, as I'm saying this I'm like "but then again she also still supports genocide." So yeah it's challenging.

GRACE:

There's a lot of "Then again"'s with this character.

JARRAH:

I'm still looking forward to more.

GRACE:

Yeah same here.

JARRAH:

All right well. So we originally had Stella from Catspaw on the list but we realized that we actually talked about her quite a bit when we did our rewrite episode of Catsaw called Catsbutt.

SUE:

You're welcome.

JARRAH:

So I don't think we really need to talk about her again but we do have another one-off original series character who is Lenore Karidien from The Conscience of the King.

GRACE:

Yeah. This is one of my favorite original series episodes. I love a good Shakespeare reference and I love how meta and into the theatrical production and sort of the Shakespearean story arcs this whole episode gets and it's \*intense voice\*fuuun as hell. And part of that is Lenore Karidien, who I think it's really cool that we get to see her play a very very much a kind of stock character that we see in TOS of the beautiful woman who's just in a bad situation and is probably going to end up getting like saved from it by Kirk or something but then she gets turned around at the end and I really enjoyed \*stuttering\* I did really enjoy that, I really enjoy how, I just said "I really enjoy that" just three consecutive \*laughs\* times. But I do.

SUE:

You like it a whole lot.

GRACE:

I really really really do! \*Sue laughs\*

JARRAH

Can you remind folks what this episode's about?

GRACE:

This episode is about Kirk and crew getting called out to the middle of nowhere to watch a theater performance \*Sue laughs\* because an old friend of Kirk thinks that the guy who's the

head of the acting troupe may actually be a murdering genocide man named Kodos, Kodos the Conqueror? Kodos the Killer?

JARRAH:

Kodos the Executioner.

GRACE:

That's even worse. That's even worse, and that the other people who witnessed ..who knew what he looked like back when Kodos the Executioner was alive are \*mysterious voice\* suddenly dying one by one and this actor is only on file for the past 20 years or so.\*rediculously theatrical voice\* Could there mayhap be more at plot? \*crew laughs\*

JARRAH:

Kodos also being the namesake of Kodos and Kang from the Simpsons.

GRACE:

We got Kang also!

JARRAH:

And then my friend named his cat after Kodos the alien from the Simpsons and failed to name it Kodos the Executioner which I feel like was a mistake.

GRACE:

"Don't blame me, I voted for Kodos."

SUE:

Excellent cat name.

JARRAH:

But I believe you have some thoughts on her looks?

GRACE:

I have many thoughts on her looks. And I will say that apparently Lenore Karidien holds one of the records for most costume changes of a guest character. Right up there with Ricardo Montalban and I want to say there's another one that's escaping me right now. Oh my God, she has some very strange looks, like more so than usual. Usually with a love interest character you get a one-off "Oh that was weird" outfit and that's it. But with her they really seem to be going out of their way to be like "Oh isn't she lovely? Oh she's so pretty. Look she's wearing a dress that looks like it's just a big fur muff! Oh isn't she prec- OH NO she's evil!" \*crew laughs\* At least that's what I got from it. And that's part of why I like it also.

JARRAH:

Yeah the fur muff with like arm holes cut in it.

GRACE:

She looks like she's a hairy potato with legs. Yeah she wears those same glitter tights multiple times in that episode also, I want to note.

SUE:

And those glitter tights are expensive.

GRACE:

Those glitter tights are uncomfortable. Those will chap your frickin legs. And then we get to see her finally in her Ophelia costume and it's completely ridiculous \*laughs\* it looks like the costume from your middle school play. And oh my God I love this episode. And I love that Shakespeare has survived into the future but so has shitty community theater. \*crew laughs\*

JARRAH:

I feel like we need to remind viewers about the scene between Lenore and Kirk, and particularly some of the amazing dialogue that takes place in that scene.

GRACE:

Absolutely. And this scene is also part of why I love the fact that they're using what we kind of expect from a one-off love interest with Captain Kirk to be. And it's fun to watch it with the hindsight of knowing how it's going to play out and being like "Is she playing him? She's totally playing him!"

SUE:

I think you two should reenact this scene.

GRACE:

\*dramatically\* Shall we? I want to be Lenore.

JARRAH:

OK so the first quote is just a standalone quote to show how Lenore is playing him. So take it away.

GRACE:

\*soap opera voice\* "And this ship, all this power surging and throbbing, yet under control. Are you like that Captain? All this power at your command."

JARRAH:

*That* made it by the censors folks.

SUE:

“Surging and throbbing.”

GRACE:

Hot.

JARRAH:

Yeah. I mean I like that she takes initiative. She's not like some other... you know she's not just like her waiting for Kirk to hit on her.

GRACE:

And I can respect that.

SUE:

To be fair, most of Kirk's love interests *don't*.

GRACE:

‘Cause women just find him completely irresistible for some reason.

JARRAH:

I mean, he's already in love with the Enterprise. So they had to do the heavy lifting.

GRACE:

In love with the Enterprise, he's platonically in love with Bones and Spock. It's the whole thing! He's in love with a lot of people, places, and things. Man!

JARRAH:

For sure. But let's take away this next snippet of dialogue.

GRACE:

And this is one of my favorite pieces of dialogue to reference from the original series. \*soap opera voice\* “Tell me about the women in your world Captain. Has the machine changed them, made them just people instead of women?”

JARRAH:

\*as Kirk\* “Worlds may change, galaxies disintegrate, but a woman always remains a woman.”

GRACE:

\*soap opera voice\* “All this and power too. The Caesar of the stars and the Cleopatra to worship him.” \*crew laughs\*

JARRAH:  
It's amazing.

GRACE:  
When you watch that through the lens of “Oh she’s taking him for a ride! She’s totally doin it!” You just kind of *love* her for that. And being like *\*clearly lying voice\** “Oh Kirk! You’re so very manly and sexual. Please love me.”

JARRAH:  
And then like behind her hand she’s like giggling because she’s like “You know Cleopatra left Caesar for Marc Antony right?”

SUE:  
*\*laughing\** Picard would know that.

GRACE:  
“He couldn’t even tell that I was wearing a furry pillowcase when I showed up!” *\*crew laughs\**

SUE:  
But I’m sorry this idea of like, I know it started in the 60s which is why it annoys me, but this idea of equality making women just people instead of women. Like feminism takes femininity away.

GRACE:  
Which is a dumb fallacy there.

JARRAH:  
Yeah. But it’s also like, what does it even mean “a woman always remains a woman”?

GRACE:  
I think it means that they had a time traveling machine and wanted to put a Billy Joel reference in there. *\*crew laughs\** That’s all I can guess. And that’s the one I’m choosing to believe. So I’m gonna rewatch through TOS now looking for a We Didn’t Start the Fire maybe a Vienna reference just seeing where else it is and how deep the Joel conspiracy goes.

JARRAH:  
Droxine, she’s a real Uptown Girl.

GRACE:  
Ooooooooooooooh! *\*Sue laughs\** “Captain! The engine room! We didn’t start the fire!”

SUE:  
Oh No. “Q Is back. We haven’t seen him for the longest time.” *\*crew laughs\**

JARRAH:

Kirk *does* go with Gillian Taylor to an Italian restaurant. \*all snicker\*

SUE:

There might be, as you might say, some scenes there. Oh we need to stop. This is bad.

JARRAH:

I encourage you to share your Billy Joel Star Trek crossover references in my comments for this episode.

GRACE:

Trelaine is kind of a piano man if you think about it.

JARRAH:

\*laughing\* I mean ultimately the episode it is a little bit, you know, it's definitely not a feminist episode.

GRACE:

Oh hell no.

JARRAH:

Lenore has, you know, a little bit of agency but she's ultimately like defending her father and you know a little bit obsessed with Kirk and unhinged as Ophelia is.

GRACE:

So kind of like Ophelia. There's also that Shakespearean parallel there of, again I like the meta-ness of it, of her being in the costume of a character who's very much in a similar situation as the character she is playing.

JARRAH:

Yeah, but highly entertaining.

GRACE:

Yeah it's definitely one of the best wacky costume episodes I think.

JARRAH:

100 percent. All right, so we have a TNG one admiral Satie played by Jean Simmons but not the one from Kiss. \*crew laughs\*

SUE:

And speaking of costumes her designer was Georgia O'Keeffe. \*crew continues laughing\*



GRACE:

Those costumes. I appreciate that she is in a position of authority and is allowed to wear whatever she wants, but maybe her outfits are proving that she *shouldn't*?\*Sue starts laughing again\* We're going directly into her costumes but we really do have to reference what a great performance Jean Simmons gives.

JARRAH:

I mean OK, The Drumhead I think we can all agree is in the best TNG maybe best Star Trek episodes of all time.

GRACE:

Oh bar none! Bar none for sure! I think we owe a big chunk of that to Jean Simmons performance.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Like, the role of Admiral Satie as an antagonist is incredibly powerful.

GRACE:

Especially because she plays it pretty level headed for so long, as we're going through the episode and *then* goes kind of full cock and then you're like "Whoa okay!" and she makes a great turnaround with it.

SUE:

I think it lets you see how people can come to her position. You know, it starts out rational. They start thinking I guess out of fear. But then it just builds into this place of irrational unfounded hatred.

GRACE:

Also that the veneer between hatred and prejudice, its very thin. Biases are part of something bigger and something more insidious that hides behind those biases.

JARRAH:

Yeah I think it may be slightly undermined by the ending and how she's sort of, like, driven over the edge by the discussion of her father. Because clearly like her father has been gone for a while and she has really built this career for herself in his legacy. But I don't know that she would be able to, just, kind of lose it that easily over that. But that said, I mean it's still a really powerful episode. But I kind of wish that, I don't know, that that was necessary actually.

GRACE:

Still an entertaining episode though, and I think it's also one of those episodes that just really stands solidly as a good indicator of what Star Trek Next Generation is all about. In terms of its, they do have them, but it's less about the battle out on the battlefield and more about the battle

of the mind and the sort of courtroom drama situation. And we get that with a literal courtroom drama episode.

JARRAH:

I think it also stands up really well not just because of the obvious, you know, discussion on xenophobia but the way that Picard reacts to this situation and the way *she* reacts that, you know, she is becoming progressively more suspicious and paranoid. And that she doesn't hesitate to throw under the bus anyone who stands in her way up to and including Picard. And I think that you know sometimes when we are in our current world and we might see someone like more marginalized who is being put in a crappy position and we don't want to get involved because we're worried about our own reputation or our own situation and ultimately that's trying to stay out of it might not even help you. But I think that Picard you know choosing not stay out of it is also just a really powerful example that it's you know we should all try to step in when you might have the power to change something for someone else.

GRACE:

And how if you aren't willing to step into that in a situation like that, you're kind of an accomplice. You're kind of helping it happen.

JARRAH:

Yes. Admiral Satie, she is tough.

GRACE:

She is someone who you really want to, by the end of the episode, you don't like her but you really want to know more about her whole deal.

SUE:

I just wanted to make sure that I got the quote right, "If you're neutral and in situations of injustice you've chosen the side of the oppressor."

GRACE:

Exactly yes.

SUE:

Desmond Tutu, according to brainyquote.com.

GRACE:

That does sound like something he'd say.

JARRAH:

Yeah. I mean she's obviously a pretty big contrast to someone like Georgieu, because she is fighting exclusively with institutional power. And that's often power that is not really wielded by

women in our society but we certainly do have examples of women who have wielded institutional power to the detriment of other women or other marginalized groups.

SUE:

Absolutely.

JARRAH:

All right. Onward and upward to Martia from Star Trek 6.

GRACE:

Yaaaay! I love Martia.

JARRAH:

What do you love about Martia?

GRACE:

I love that she's a bad ass lady on a prison planet, and she takes no guff, and she's played by Iman, supermodel and makeup entrepreneur Iman slash actress, and I like that she's cool looking, and she can shape shift but isn't all emo about it like Odo. *\*reverent whisper\** She's just great.

JARRAH:

That pretty much sums it up. *\*pause\** Next. *\*crew laughs\** Apparently they really wanted Sigourney Weaver originally, or at least the screenplay co-writer Denny Martin Flinn, but they were basically like "We could never afford Sigourney Weaver." But it probably turned out ok anyway. And they said that they wanted her to be like a female version of Han Solo but that you know, it ended up coming out a bit different and they chose Iman not only because she was thought to be a high caliber performer but also because she was quote "Considered to have an appropriate look." Which doesn't actually say what... it kind of rings maybe exoticization to me, but I can't say that for sure by what that's just like one quote.

GRACE:

She is one of the original *super* supermodels. And part of how she was able to make a name for herself is the fact that she visually...she looked different than a lot of the other women who were modeling at the time not just in terms of being a woman literally from Africa but also she has an incredibly long neck in those cheekbones and those bright eyes. And that helped her stand out and make her the model that she was and also helped her get into the acting the way she did.

SUE:

I just can't stop thinking of Sigourney Weaver as Han Solo now.

GRACE:

We've got Ripley! We got Ripley.

SUE:

It's my favorite thing ever. This is what's happening in my head right now. Wow.

JARRAH:

So the other forms of Martia. Other forms were "The Brute" in the cast, and the young girl, and Kirk.

SUE:

I love that scene.

JARRAH:

Debatably, I don't know that we should even say Martia has a gender. We also don't even know that Martia is its name. But you know I think...

GRACE:

We want to know Martias story here! OK?

JARRAH:

Yeah, and because they use a Iman's voice for everything except for Kirk, and you know, Iman is a woman and we read her as a woman. So I think that it's fair for this purposes to include her in this category.

GRACE:

A woman who very seductively smokes a tiny cigar.

JARRAH:

And rescues Kirk and McCoy from big guy with knee nuts. \*crew laughs\*

GRACE:

Is knee-nuts a medical condition? We need to dig into that. We need to have an entire episode devoted to medical anomalies in Star Trek and what we have questions about.

JARRAH:

So I think we did also talk a bit about Martia in our discussion of the classic Trek movies which was way back in like our first year on the job of Women at Warp. But take a look, listen back to that if you wanna hear more about that.

GRACE:

Take an ear look!

JARRAH:

You know it feels like we're moving pretty fast through these. But the reason is because the last one we have on the list is clearly the most significant

GRACE:

It's a big 'un.

JARRAH:

Yeah and that would be the Borg Queen. \*crew celestial chorus harmonize\*

SUE:

Before we get there I'm sorry, Isn't it Martia who says "Not all species have their sexual organs in the same place." Can we just give her props for that? That's one of my favorite lines in Star Trek and they finally acknowledge it. And like Thank you, Martia.

GRACE:

Also it's a non-gendered statement. It's inclusive!

JARRAH:

I feel like it's sort of played for laughs though, because I mean like "You just kicked him in the nuts!"

SUE:

Not that we care about such things in this day and age.

JARRAH:

Okey dokey.

GRACE:

Back to the Borg. Back to the Borg.

JARRAH:

The Borg *Queen*, as it were, introduced played by Alice Krige in First Contact. Controversial decision. So let's start out by talking about this, and did the Borg need a queen?

SUE:

\*sighs\* Man. In general I am anti Borg Queen. Not because of either of the actors who took on the role but because I feel like part of what's so menacing about the Borg is the lack of individuality and the hive mind. And that there *is* no structure or hierarchy, and I don't know the queen concept just doesn't sit right for me personally in the way that we came to know this

villain up to this point. However, I also understand the narrative issues with a villain like that. You know, you need an individual to speak to. Right? We had this with Locutus right? That's why we have Locutus because there needed to be an individual that they could speak to or negotiate with or whatever.

GRACE:

And the enemy needs a face.

SUE:

Yeah but the scary thing is that it doesn't have one. Right? That's me.

GRACE:

I definitely agree with you on that. I think that the more you look into the Borg the less sense than having a queen makes. But again, I absolutely acknowledge that narratively speaking and especially in a series like the Next Generation where it is so much about having an argument and conversation based negotiating and problem solving, you need there to be a person that you're talking to and you need to have a person who's an authority over the bad guys to be your big bad villain in a big budget action movie. So that's part of that also.

JARRAH:

Yeah. We had a comment on Twitter from Jana who said "I thought that her introduction made the Borg less terrifying than they were. I really really liked the idea of a leaderless collective. It was more alien and that's good for a sci fi show, no?"

GRACE:

It also definitely plays into a lot of fears of Communism and Socialism doesn't it? Culturally speaking.

JARRAH:

Do you mean that like you would end up with a dictatorial leader?

GRACE:

No, that you would end up in a situation where everyone is forcibly equal to an extent and there is no actual individuality.

JARRAH:

Oh. Oh yeah. Yeah sorry I meant the Borg Queen in particular.

SUE:

Yeah, I remember reading at some point that this was a decision of "the enemy needs a face" made specifically because it was going to a movie.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Brannon Braga says that “Basically we realized very quickly the Borg aren't that interesting for a feature film for two hours because they don't say anything. They're robot zombies.” And yeah, I mean it would have been pretty probably boring to just see like a whole wall of a cube all speaking in unison for all those scenes. I mean clearly they would've had to redo the design the whole thing.

GRACE:

But in terms of what she's there for, I appreciate the Borg Queen. I appreciate how extra she is. And that in that intro of her getting lowered onto her body is so freakin iconic.

SUE:

It is. And she's very sexual.

GRACE:

Incredibly. And I think there's something to be said for the fact that in a lot of Star Trek we have issues with alien women or monstrous women they need to be *pretty* in some way? And she's *very* sexual but she's also very *monstrous* looking and I think that's an interesting combination there.

SUE:

She's also in a skin tight leather suit.

JARRAH:

But she's very like abject like the clammy, moist skin.

GRACE:

She's got hooks in her chest, stuff like that.

JARRAH:

So I found this academic paper that I think I've referenced a couple times, which was is by Tudor Balinteanu, I'm sorry if I mispronounced that, who has published a couple of papers on the Borg Queen and this one I'm particularly referring to is *The Cyborg Goddess: Social Myths of Women as Goddesses of Technologized Otherworlds in Feminist Studies* in 2007. And that's the one that notes that she's associated with darkness, warmth, and dampness which signify female in mythological settings.

GRACE:

Like Innana in the underworld.

JARRAH:

Yeah. And ultimately he sort of sees it as that she has the potential to be kind of a revolutionary cyborg figure that can unite like nature and culture in a woman's form. But that ultimately

because she has to be tamed or controlled by masculine technological mastery that it doesn't really succeed, it's more like women's potential power being put back under control, but does actually see that you can, you know, you can read the Borg Queen cyborg figure as offering opportunities for empowering re-inscriptions of cultural definitions of women in the fashion of Donna Harroway's argument that the cyborg figure deconstructs the nature-woman identification. So that's like the idea that generally in our society and in our mythology and literature that woman equals nature and man equals cultural or technology. So by having women each equals technology it is destabilising that.

GRACE:

That's really funny because there's recently been a conversation happening about the lack of representation of non binary characters, specifically in the sci fi fantasy world, non binary characters who aren't in some way like robotic or an alien in some way. It's funny that how those things are both true.

JARRAH:

Mm hmm. Yeah good point. But one thing that I also found in research, which I would be interested in your thoughts on, is Ron Moore talks about you know sort of challenges the idea that the Borg Queen is just a personification of the collective and rather says that "We always saw her as an actual person." So what does that mean? Does she have her own *will* and that is her will supreme over all the collective?

GRACE:

That raises so many questions doesn't it? Because she-

SUE:

I mean that's how I viewed her.

GRACE:

Yeah, she doesn't she doesn't talk the way Seven does when she is released from the collective. She talks very naturally, she makes innuendo and all that, she flirts. So we gotta believe that there's some kind of independent thought going on with her.

SUE:

But the drones are doing her will.

GRACE:

Yeah, but how does that help work?

JARRAH:

The way that she talks to Picard and then also the way that she talks to Seven when she's played by Susanna Thompson, and Alice Kriger later, there's at least a few examples where it does seem like she has a mind of her own. Like an Endgame, she says you know "You were



always my favorite.” and un Unimatrix zero she goes to unimatrix zero as like an individual and interacts with people. And she speaks, she uses I not just like we.

SUE:

I always assumed that she clearly had access to the hive mind. But like, if you'll forgive the forced metaphor, like had admin privileges.

GRACE:

Yeah! No, I think that's a good metaphor.

SUE:

You know? Like, so she's part of this network but-

GRACE:

\*southern accent\* Take this collective and shove it.

SUE:

Yeah. She's also above it in some ways, and outside of it.

GRACE:

Which gives her this whole level of hypocrisy in terms of her being like “No, we're freeing them by making them part of this better thing. But *I'm* still an individual to them. You don't want to be an individual Seven. That's *my* job.”

JARRAH:

I just find it interesting. I'm like, I don't know how that would work and then when you die and you're replaced how much does that person's will differ from yours? But we had a particular request from another listener on Twitter, TheA.M.youngproject, who said “Please talk about her relationship with Seven of Nine. Their interactions mirror a lot of parent child abuse. The Borg Queen as a villain works so well because her behavior is often so human. Especially in the Voyager episodes.”

GRACE:

Absolutely. She really does have an unsettling relationship with Seven in terms of her sort of assigning herself a paternal figure role and being like she gets like, \*pause\* she gaslights Seven a lot when they're talking to each other. She's manipulative. She talks down to her and it really does echo an abusive family relationship doesn't it?

JARRAH:

Yeah, I feel like in, it's Dark Frontier where like Seven goes back to the Borg right? And she's like you know, the queen has reached out to her because of her uniqueness. And she's like “We want you to continue to be unique.” And I think this is really the episode that really most speaks to the parent child thing because Janeway is kind of the alternate mother figure at that point.

And Seven is like, trying to figure out who she truly is and she has the Borg Queen who is, like you said, gaslighting her, dismissing her emotions-

GRACE:

Literally planting her words in her head.

JARRAH:

And just keeps like, insisting that "You're really Borg. Don't forget who you are. You need to stop resisting." And she puts her, like Seven is moving a bit towards her but the Borg Queen keeps you know, giving her these tests that she can never pass. To like, "Assimilate all humanity please" that a loving parent would never do.

GRACE:

Yeah. I mean a loving parent and, you know, a benevolent leader would never do.

JARRAH:

It's interesting. And Susanna Thompson I think does definitely play the Borg Queen differently. It's much less sexualized. It's more kind of like flat and robotic. It's like a little bit more... you know ,she's a little bit more attached to Seven and to Janeway near the end of her cycle.

GRACE:

I honestly thought the first time I was watching through Voyager that it was going to turn out that the whole situation with the Borg Queens interest in Seven was that she was like grooming her to be the new Borg Queen or something. That's what I always thought was gonna be the big thing at the end \*laughing\* and it didn't happen.

SUE:

Well she's, Seven, is tertiary adjunct to unimatrix01 right? And we assume that unimatrix 0 1 is the queen. She's like, number three.

JARRAH:

Yeah that definitely makes sense.

GRACE:

And it looks like number two is out of the picture so..

JARRAH:

One of the creepiest moments is the one where the Borg Queen pulls out the drone that is Seven's Dad. That is like "Holy crap!" That is, I mean, the word abusive almost like doesn't seem enough to capture how the Borg Queen is treating everyone.

GRACE:

We straight-up get to have the Borg Queen have a \*angry mother voice\* “You’re just like your father!” moment.

JARRAH:

But she has this cycle of like “I’m going to show you love” and then “I’m going to threaten you.”

SUE:

Grace, if I remember correctly you grew up watching Voyager as your first Trek right?

GRACE:

One of my first Treks. It was on in syndication and it was also on after school so it was one of the occasionally on in the background shows.

SUE:

Where did you first meet the Borg Queen? Was it Nemesis or was it-

GRACE:

It wasn’t until I was an adult and I watched the TNG movies.

SUE:

OK. I’m just, in our discussion of this we’re obviously going in like air date, if you can call it that, order. I’m just curious for the take of someone who met the Borg Queen first with Voyager. Someone who started with the Voyager and knows that version, what is the take if you then go and watch First Contact contact?

GRACE:

My take genuinely is like “Oh well they *had to* sexy it up for the movie.” That was how I took it.

JARRAH:

I actually didn’t know they had recast. Like, I was the age I was when I was watching Voyager, I did see First Contact before the Borg Queen made an appearance on Voyager, but I had no idea that it was a different actress and I didn’t clue in that there was a different approach.

GRACE:

It’s kind of hard to tell with all the makeup and prosthetics but she does act a lot less sexual on Voyager. She isn’t blowing on anyone’s skin or anything.

SUE:

You could always chalk that up to it being on TV rather than in the movies.

GRACE:

So, you got to wonder if those episodes were kind of kept out of syndication as much as some other ones also. But mostly part of that was that I got to see her in on the big screen in terms of

she's not just trying to manipulate these individual characters, who are in a position of authority or control over Starfleet, and in this situation she's also just a manipulative person in general and this is how she operates and that is what she will inflict on other people and will inflict on humanity.

JARRAH:

One thing I noticed in the difference between the Voyager and First Contact, that I really like actually, there were a lot of visual changes one is that like all Borgs or the Borg and their environment is way more green in Voyager. But the Borg Queen and Voyager, both the Susanna Thompson and Alice Krige ones, their throat like where their like larynx is.

GRACE:

They've got an alien looking situation there.

JARRAH:

Yeah it looks like it might be like a coil underneath skin or like something, like mechanical underneath skin and it looks like a tubing of some kind and it looks super cool and I just want to shout-out that small detail.

SUE:

I mean, couldn't that be a canonical reaction to her fate in First Contact.

GRACE:

It could be! It could be, couldn't it?

JARRAH:

What part? Oh, because she-

SUE:

They snap her neck.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Yeah. Except for like, she also assembles differently in Voyager and then when-

GRACE:

She snaps together, like when you've gotten an action figure that's made of the pieces that came with different toys.

JARRAH:

Like a Kinder Surprise Borg Queen where you have to like find her arm and stick it on.

GRACE:

But instead of chocolate it's ennui and lack of individuality.

SUE:  
Oh my...

JARRAH:  
I don't know. I mean I just think it looks cool. I don't know if they actually put thought into it. Like, the back of her neck looks fine or like this it looks the same.

GRACE:  
Honestly the hindsight thing, when I found out that it was a different actress with Voyager was because I thought "Oh! They got a *new* Borg Queen since the movie." And then they bring Alice Krige back, who's fantastic but kind of kills that theory.

JARRAH:  
Well apparently they're supposed to be just like, they always have a queen and they're always identical. So that's why, like it seems like they should be like maturing a queen at all times like so that they have a replacement.

GRACE:  
I'd like to think they've got a farm out there, like where you teach a kid to fish, it's just a pond with little neonatal Queen Borgs floating around in it for whenever you need to fish one out and put it in charge of the Borg. \*laughing\* And that was your visual image that I've gifted to you all. The Borg Queen pool. Go for a little swim get yourself a little dictator.

JARRAH:  
The Queen being like a very sexual woman villain is not is not very novel. She's like a demonic seductress kind of trope that is, you know, threatening to men and that's like women's sexuality being threatening to men is not new and is not necessarily progressive. That said, if it had been women's sexuality like obsessed with Janeway and Seven in that way, but you'd only see like a very small hint of that in Endgame with Seven and the Alice Krige Borg Queen where she sort of caresses her face.

GRACE:  
Yeah. Krige Queen.

JARRAH:  
But then like, that could have been a little bit more interesting to explore. But as it was it didn't really challenge anything, I think.

GRACE:  
She doesn't challenge anything, she doesn't make a lot of sense, but I still enjoy that she's there.

JARRAH:

Yeah I do agree that like the Borg felt more threatening before the Borg Queen was there. But I enjoy having that powerful of a female antagonist and the potential even if we didn't always get fully explored.

GRACE:

And I'd say she's one of the most threatening villains of any of the Star Trek movies.

SUE:

It's definitely fair.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Cool. All right.

GRACE:

Well now we get to hope that there's many many lady figures who are villains who are not necessarily sexual villains in the future.

SUE:

Fingers crossed.

JARRAH:

Yeah I mean we got a whole other season of Discovery coming, we've got Picard and we'll see where it goes.

GRACE:

And there's gonna be Section 31! Anything could happen.

SUE:

And Lower Decks, and the Nickelodeon cartoon.

GRACE:

There's potential!

SUE:

Like apparently two more live action shows that haven't been announced yet.

GRACE:

Whaaaaat? So much potential!

JARRAH:

Well we'll be back then, with Baddest Women in the Galaxy part 4 when we have enough to make up a whole roster. But for now, Grace where can people find you elsewhere on the Internet?

GRACE:

You can find me on Twitter @Bonecrusherjenk. You can also find me at Emerald City Comicon in March. It's going to be exciting where I'll be paneling about Star Trek and just wandering around looking very confused because crowds are overwhelming.

JARRAH:

And Sue?

SUE:

You can find me on Twitter @Spaltor. That's S-P-A-L-T-O-R and the first week of March you can find me on the Star Trek cruise.

JARRAH:

And I'm Jarrah, and you find me @Jarrahpenguin on Twitter. That's J-A-R-R-A-H-penguin. And to learn more about our show or to contact us you can visit [Womenatwarp.com](http://Womenatwarp.com) or find us on Facebook Twitter or Instagram @womenatwork. You can email us at [crew@womenatwork.com](mailto:crew@womenatwork.com). And for more from the Roddenberry podcast network visit [podcasts.Roddenberry.com](http://podcasts.Roddenberry.com). Thanks so much for listening.

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