Episode 105: O Captain, My Captain (Sisko)

GRACE: Hi and welcome to Women At Warp: A Roddenberry Star Trek podcast. Join us as our crew of four women Star Trek fans boldly go on our biweekly mission to explore our favorite franchise. My name is Grace and thanks for tuning in. With me this week we've got Jarrah,
JARRAH: Hello!
GRACE: And with us today we have Sue.
SUE: Hello.
GRACE: Now before we get to our main topic we have a little bit of housekeeping to do first. Our show is entirely supported by our patrons on Patreon. If you'd like to become a patron you can do so for as little as a dollar a month and get awesome rewards, from thanks on social media up to silly watchalong commentaries. Visit www.Patreon.com/womenatwarp. You can also support us by leaving a rating or review on Apple podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts. Anything else before moving onto our main topics of the day?
JARRAH: *serene voice* May you walk with the prophets. My child.
GRACE: May we all walk with the prophets. May we profit from walking with the prophets.
JARRAH: Mm hmm. Ferengi Bajoran religious mash up. *Sue laughs*
GRACE: I know. You see what I did there? I made it a very deep space nine <i>centric</i> philosophy.
SUE: DS9 loved that pun.

We're getting back to the drawing board with a topic that's very near and dear to our hearts, and the hearts of our listeners and that is the love interests of our captains in the series we like to call *sensual voice* O Captain My Captain. *Sue 'ooh's* Yeah *laughs* I was hoping someone would make a reactive noise.

SUE:

sexy voice Sisko.

GRACE:

silly sexy voice Oh Captain! *Sue laughs* This week we're covering the Deep Space Nine captain, *whispers* Captain Sisko.

JARRAH:

Although I guess technically during at least some of these he's still a commander.

GRACE:

Commander Captain Sisko. Jennifer Sisko is our starting out character, played by Felicia Bell. She shows up in the pilot episode Emissary, and then again in a couple flashbacks, a mirror universe episode. Is that correct?

JARRAH:

Yeah.

SUE:

Yeah. Two mirror universe episodes.

GRACE:

Yeah. So we don't really see a lot of her as a character, aside from Sisko's various musings about the wife he once had and her *dying*.

JARRAH:

Yeah. She sort of like, starts out being his motivation for not wanting to be in the federation. So in this case she's not really driving him to the job that he ends up getting, but she's driving him to really *resent* being given that job. And being really mad at Picard.

SUE:

She's kind of pre-fridged. *laughs*

GRACE:

Yeah, that's what I was wondering. She gets fridged before the main plot of the show even starts. *Pre-emptive* fridging.

SUE:

She- and that reaction to her death is what defines Sisko, for at least the first couple of episodes, because he's angry at the loss. He's still- it's still fresh, but we also see him right from the start resenting Starfleet and specifically resenting Picard.

GRACE:

Which is a fun way to start your series, with the new main character like having it out for your old main character.

JARRAH:

Yeah it's interesting. And it also- I mean is related to defining him as a single dad. And I think that aspect, I mean obviously he remains a dad for the whole time. But when Jake is young he's particularly concerned for his well-being, worried he's going to be sad, worries he's gonna be lonely and not be able to deal without his mom. That, I think, is a common feature of Sisko being protective of Jake for the first- quite a while.

SUE:

And I know we've mentioned it before, but Avery Brooks was very adamant about Sisko being a good representation of black fatherhood. *noises of agreement*

GRACE:

And he definitely is. He's a power Dad.

JARRAH:

Yeah. I mean, he is like- first episodes like picking up Jake from fishing on the holodeck, and you know, talking about they're gonna go play baseball, and there's clearly all these things they do together, and then clearly love each other, and that love definitely persists throughout the series.

GRACE:

It's like an ad for the Boys And Girls Clubs ideal role model class, that they probably have. But you know he's already a dad. So Jake doesn't need one! Good for Jake.

JARRAH:

So the thing though with the fact that Jennifer Sisko is basically dead from the first episode, and so we only see her in these flashbacks, and we know that Jake really misses her, is that she really is *flat*. Like she has no dimension. We don't know who she was other than a good wife and mother. And well, we see like their first date. You see them on the beach, we see them having a picnic, but she really sort of feels like this angelic absent mother, which is very much a trope.

It doesn't give a lot of depth and dimension to her as a character. But I guess she isn't so much a character as she is a stock figure.
SUE: Yeah.
JARRAH: Yeah. It's kind of unfortunate. I feel like they had maybe some opportunity to do more with that? Or maybe they could have done less with it. Like they could have made her deceased further.

Yeah. It's kind of unfortunate. I feel like they had maybe some opportunity to do more with that? Or maybe they could have done less with it. Like they could have made her deceased *further* back? I don't know if having Sisko like, have that conflict near the beginning, maybe that was really important. But yeah. I don't know. I'm trying to think of like other characters who experienced loss in Star Trek, and the only one jumping right to my mind right now is Stametts. But in *that* way like, we're not done seeing what happens there. But I think they're doing more to explore the loss than we actually get to see with Sisko.

SUE:

Yeah we do have Picard losing his family in the movie.

JARRAH:

Oh! Yes yes.

SUE:

But again, it sort of gets left behind for a "There is a bigger plot at hand."

GRACE:

Yeah. It's secondary.

SUE:

Whereas this is part of Sisko's character and part of his, you know, early season, "I don't want to be here. I'm done with the Federation. I'm just waiting for my replacement to show up."

JARRAH:

Yeah. And I mean with like Picard and his family, the only reason they have more dimension is that they were in an episode. But if you hadn't seen the episode and you just saw the movie you would just be like "Oh there are some people in an old-timey photo album."

GRACE:

They mean nothing, yeah.

JARRAH:

Yeah. That died in a horrible *laughs* fire. It's not funny, but *kind of* funny.

SUE:

I mean you guys, Picard never mentioned he had a brother before Season 4. *laughs*

GRACE:

Or a nephew, by extension.

JARRAH:

Well I mean you didn't really- he wasn't really cool with his nephew its just like *uncomfortable voice* "Uh awkward kid. Let me wait until he is old enough for me to have an intellectual conversation with him." *all laugh* I know, because that's me.

SUE:

I was just trying to make the Discovery joke.

JARRAH:

laughs Oh. I just got it. *Sue laughs*

GRACE:

So unlike some of our other captains that we've covered, Sisko really doesn't get as many love interests. And our next one doesn't come along until the next season. And that's Fenna, played by then Salli Elise Richardson now Salli Richardson Whitfield. Who is pretty frickin fantastic, I got to say, as Fenna in the episode Second Sight.

SUE:

Yeah. And they make a point of Sisko saying directly that this is the first time he felt, I believe he uses the phrase "drawn to someone" since Jennifer died.

GRACE:

He would go out of his way to say it dramatically too, "I'm drawn to her."

JARRAH:

Yeah. For those of you who don't remember, this is the episode where he meets the alien lady in the red dress, and she is like *airy voice* "Show me your space station."

GRACE:

She's actually a pretty positive version of the Manic Pixie Dream Girl, which I appreciate about her.

JARRAH:

And then weirdly, he meets a woman who looks exactly like her who is the wife of this weird arrogant Terraformer. And then it turns out that the woman that he's been hanging out with and kissing is actually just a mental projection of the wife, who's really unhappy in her marriage but can't leave him because she's sort of like Famke Jannssen in Perfect Mate, and is like bonded for life.

GRACE:

Bonded for plot's sake. Yeah, we really should cover that in an entire episode at some point. *Sue laughs* Just the *consistency* of us having women characters who are defined by being in shitty marriages.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Yeah. Because it is more than those two. But I think those are the only two that it's more than just "You're marrying for an alliance" like Elaan of Troyius, and there's some other ones in there where like it's a royal person who's marrying for an alliance, but like they technically do have free will, they just choose the like crappy option for the sake of their planet. But in both of these cases they like, once you're there you literally can not break your marriage.

GRACE:

They don't really say if it's like a biological thing or just a societal taboo, they just say that her species "mates for life." Which feels like a bit of a cop out.

JARRAH:

It seemed like it was biological, because like I mean the guy could have divorced her if it was just that like it was her culture. I mean I don't know. Maybe he thinks her culture is so strongly ingrained that he had to commit suicide for her to feel free?

GRACE:

Spoiler: Yeah.

SUE:

Well who knows what the taboos are? In her culture right? Maybe divorce means exile.

GRACE:

For what little we get to see of her as Nidell though, you really get an idea that she is a restrained person possibly coming from a really restrained background.

SUE:

The Terror-former gar- ooh words!

GRACE:

The Terra-firma-guy! *singing as a themesong* Terr-firma guy! He fights with the ground. *Jarrah laughs*

SUE:

speaking carefully *Terra-former guy* implies that they used to be happy. But also that quote "all of his marriages used to be happy" *laughs* but he could divorce everybody else. He just couldn't divorce *her*.

GRACE:

You're going to marry this guy? And you're going to be with him for the rest of his life, which in theory is what people say when they get married. *skeptical voice* But it's *kind of gone south* a lot for him before. Feels like, I don't want to say she should have known better, but it feels like there was warning there for both of them.

JARRAH:

Yeah. I mean it's also possible he doesn't want to live without her, cause she's like the only woman that's I don't know-

GRACE:

Stuck with him. She stuck with him because *laughs* she's literally stuck with him though.

JARRAH:

It's hard to say. Like Ira Steven Behr he said he felt the episode really didn't work because that Sisko and the audience they don't really respect Seyetik, that's the scientist dude, and said his suicide felt like a wacky stunt when it was intended to be like actually really powerful. And it did kind of. It was like "Oh that weirdo!"

GRACE:

That's accurate. He does get his "Witness meeee!" moment at the very end.

SUE:

Yeah well he- so this guy this guy, *laughs*

GRACE:

wacky comedian voice "This guy, guys"

SUE:

He does have that scene where he's like "I keep having to one up myself and there's so much pressure and what am I going to do next?" But he does it in such an arrogant way that you don't care? And he spends so much of his other time being arrogant that you don't care. And then right before, I understand the joke, but right before he suicides into the dead sun he yells "Let there be light!" really? Guy?

GRACE:

laughs Arrogant jerk.He's re-lighting a sun, but still.

singing Sue's scientist corner. *all laugh*
SUE: Yeah. Also, I thought about that science for half a second. *Jarrah laughs* I thought about that science for half a second, and I was like "I'm pretty sure this is not a thing, *laughs* but I just don't have the mental energy for it."
JARRAH: Yeah. So what do we think about Fenna?
SUE: Yes.
GRACE: Well, I'd really want to say about Fenner and Nidell, we really do see a really good performance from Salli Richardson and- although I'm biased because she was Detective Elisa Maza and therefore I will love her forever.
JARRAH: In Eureka?
GRACE: *offended* Gargoyles man!
JARRAH: Sorry! Aw man. I like, "she's in Eureka but I don't know what she played."
GRACE: She was good in Eureka.
JARRAH: Man, I just lost major geek points in that exchange. *Sue laughs*
GRACE: Eureka, Stitchers, CSI: Miami. She has got a long and *pauses* I guess I can't say varied, but she has got a long illustrious TV career.
JARRAH: Cool.

And I think she does really good at being both this kind of restrained woman who is stuck in an unhappy situation, and this projection of the kind of woman she wishes that she could be. And I think she has a really good job with both those sides of this one person.

JARRAH:

I do like that her mental projection is just like in this awesome ball gown.

GRACE:

It is a ball gown *jumpsuit* which just adds to it. And can we talk about how the costumer was just really into jumpsuits with strappy tops? Because I love that. *laughs*

JARRAH:

Why not?

SUE:

So, I think it's really interesting that Nidell is aware of Fenna. But Fenna is not aware of Nidell. And yet, Nidell doesn't have any of the memories from Fenna's projection.

JARRAH:

Oh that's interesting. Yeah.

SUE:

Because it also was a little bit creepy towards the end when you know Fenna is gone, and Nidell is quote "free" and is talking to Sisko when he says "Well she was just like you. And I was in love with her." And Nidell is like "Well I don't remember any of that. *Byyye*."

GRACE:

I read that scene kind of more as like a "She was just like you" in the sense that Nidell could definitely *be* Fenna.

SUE:

I'm sure that was the actual intention, *laughs* but it was-

JARRAH:

But it is interesting, because I mean I guess you're supposed to think it's like subconscious and she can't remember it, or she maybe thinks this was a dream or something. But she's basically mental projecting like *a sentient being*. Then the only thing that *can remember* is the projection. So that is very fascinating. I wonder if like, you mind-melded with her if you could find- figure out- like recover somehow.

SUE:

It's just locked away somewhere?

Yeah cause like, it must exist within her if the projection doesn't exist constantly, and she brings it up repeatedly, and it maintains the memories from the previous time.

GRACE:

And apparently this episode's original pitch from Mark Gerard O'Connell- Gehred O'Connell, originally the episode concept was this would be *Bashir* in Sisko's role here. And it's an *abused* woman that he's kind of trying to unravel what's going on here as more of a mystery thing rather than a romance thing.

JARRAH:

Oh so more like the woman Serena from the like super intelligent people later on?

GRACE:

I guess.

JARRAH:

I mean in that case she's not abused, but that's a well debatable. It's a very questionable treatment of people with mental health issues.

GRACE:

But we're also still at the point where Bashir is a little insufferable, so this episode probably would *not* have worked so well if that had been the direction they'd gone in.

JARRAH:

Yeah and they really wanted to use this because they felt that Sisko was they- just weren't really sure who Sisko was still by this point. And Ira Steven Behr says that he and Michael Piller "had conversations about making Sisko the builder, on establishing the difference between him and Picard, the explorer. Sisko is a builder, he stays with a project until the finish. That helped us to see Sisko in a whole lot of different ways. He's a guy who's solid and real and human." The writers felt that giving Sisko a romance would help them to better define the character and would help the audience to better connect with him on an emotional level.

GRACE:

So far the only building he's done is that weird clock.

JARRAH:

laughs So did it help you connect with Sisko on an emotional level?

GRACE:

Sure! Why not?

I guess I'm still sort of stuck on this episode with like, how would you define Fenna other than freer and with bad ass dress jumpsuits?

GRACE:

She's more impulsive, she's not nearly as quiet. She is so much more carefree. Like I said, a little bit of a manic pixie dream girl but not in the sense that I was annoyed by her or that it felt like she was being fun and precocious just for the sake of the guy she was with. She was someone who you genuinely felt like she was there to have a good time.

SUE:

Yeah I would say also I got maybe optimistic, inquisitive.

GRACE:

Also clever. She had some really good conversational one-uppage with him.

JARRAH:

Yeah. I mean, that's true. I just feel like overall I didn't see her as like a challenging figure to Sisko really? Like I saw her as fulfilling- like a fantasy.

GRACE:

She's his rebound girl, I guess. That's what she's looking for probably.

JARRAH:

Yeah. I mean, I wouldn't say it's like- it's definitely not anywhere as explicit or problematic as Perfect Mate. But it sort of felt like she shows up, and then she disappears mysteriously, and like she is this fantasy of his, even though she has some more agency but because she's like not tangible and she-

GRACE:

"She's naught but flame and air"

JARRAH:

Her interests are very much aligned with his. It felt like just kind of- I don't know.

GRACE:

I just realized just kind of his Dulcinea and her actual self is the other- *noises of approval* Except in this case Aldonza is straight-laced and has a stick up her butt- kind of stretching that metaphor there.

JARRAH:

Yeah. And Sisko is all like "I must find her. This woman!"

Sisko voice "She was wearing <i>rrred</i> !" *Jarrah laughs*
SUE: The mystery certainly seems to be a great deal of the attraction.
GRACE: Yeah. Which, let's be real, we kind of see that a lot with love interests just in TV in general. *dumbstruck teenage boy voice* "Who is that girl?"
JARRAH: This is the A plot. Like, the B plot is about the terraforming stuff. So it's like, it's kind of hard. I mean I guess, I would say I think they could've made a more defined character. But I think you know, it is a "woman of the week" episode.
GRACE: Deffos.
JARRAH: It's entirely romance focused, and it's about trying to define Sisko. So it is what it is.
SUE: I don't know if it helped me connect with Sisko more, but it helped me like Jake more. 'Cause I thought it was super like, I guess healthy for him to say like "It's okay if you like somebody else." Instead of like "You have to pine after my mom until you die" you know? Which is the opposite of what Next Generation did right? Because you know 10 years after Jack Crushers death apparently Beverly hasn't been on a single date.
JARRAH: Well-
GRACE: Bummer.
I mean-
SUE: if you believe the Naked Now.
JARRAH:

-Scottish ghost candle. Oh sorry!

SUE:

laughs I'm talking season 1, not season 7. The ghost candle happened later.

JARRAH:

laughs Yes. Yes.

SUE:

And she really didn't start to date until after Wesley left the ship. So that's messed up.

GRACE:

Yeah. I do think this establishes a lot about how Jake and Sisko have a healthy relationship, and that they are communicating, and that they understand each other, and that they're giving each other free reign of their own lives.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Also I will say Sisko and Fenna is probably still healthier than Crusher and the Scottish ghost candle.

GRACE:

Oh definitely! By miles.

SUE:

Grandma's Scottish ghost candle. *all laugh*

GRACE:

So a hell of a lot better than the next couple we're going to examine, which is the mirror universe version of Jennifer and the mirror universe version of Jadzia, which Sisko *uncomfortable voice* *kind of* has stuff go on with. Not in the best way though.

SUE:

I mean, so recap: in the mirror universe we find out that Sisko and Jennifer are still married. Jennifer is still alive but they have not even spoken to each other in five years and Jadzia is his mistress.

JARRAH:

And that Mirror Sisko is dead. Like after the first mirror universe episode. Or *presumed* dead. So Smiley goes to the Prime universe, and gets prime Sisko, and says "We need you to convince your ex-wife in the mirror universe or your, you know, your separated wife who hates you too- is it, I forgot to share a discovery with the rebellion? Or to-

SUE:

I don't remember. She was so boring. *all laugh*

JARRAH:

It's something like, she's working on this major project for the Klingon Cardassian alliance, and I forget if it's just like sabotage the project, or not to work on it, or if they want them to like give the research to their rebellion instead, or it's one of those things.

SUE:

Yes she's got a giant Terran emblem on her dress.

JARRAH:

Yeah, Because-

GRACE:

A little obvious don't you think?

JARRAH:

Because they're supposed to be like stars. Like that in the mirror universe the- like way that they talk in DS9, the way they talk about the Terrans and make them all wear Terran emblems on their chest, and you see that one likes a Smiley and Bashir, or not Smiley, when *Miles* and Bashir in the other episode are like put to work in that ore processing unit in the first mirror universe episode. That's like a very strong parallel that's drawn, about like the enslavement of the humans, or the Terrans. And so like, she's wearing that because she's lesser than the rest of the people.

GRACE:

My gosh so it really is like the stars on thars for the sneetches. So this is the sneetches meets the 1990s rom com with Sigourney Weaver, Dave. But in the mirror universe.

JARRAH:

And the only reason that she gets to like not be working in the ore processing unit is because she's smart. But she's also one of Intendant Kira's pets.

GRACE:

Creepy. And then there's the situation with Jadzia, which is *even creepier*. In that apparently, mirror Sisko is sleeping with mirror Jadzia. And then when prime Sisko shows up he just kind of sleeps with *uncomfortable* mirror Jadzia to keep up the facade pretending he's mirror Sisko.

SUE:

In the second episode she does smack him and say "Yeah this is for sleeping with me under false pretenses" but like-

I'd've done a lot more than slap.
SUE: -that's the end of it.
JARRAH: Yeah.
GRACE: Yeah, it's really "What the hell?" Sisko, we did not bring you up that way.
SUE: That is not informed consent.
JARRAH: No. That's also like your best friend and you didn't even blink.
SUE: He didn't blink about a lot of stuff. He didn't blink about "your wife is alive." *laughs*
JARRAH: Yeah. No, I mean he is surprised by that, and you can tell he has anticipation around seeing her and how he's gonna feel. But like he's so worried about not breaking his cover that he can't tell one woman he doesn't want to have sex for one night. Like he's only there for one night. It's like-
GRACE: I call shenanigans.
JARRAH: -seriously?
GRACE: Play the "I have a headache card or something."
JARRAH: And it sucks cause she doesn't get anything else to do. Like she doesn't come on the mission with them. So that's really all she has to do in that Through the Looking Glass episode. In the second one she gets stuff to do-



Okay. Quick check break. Okey dokey. So Jennifer Sisko liked camping. *all laugh*

GRACE:

"Jake I want you to have it, it's your mother's lumberjack boots."

JARRAH:

Yeah. You know, it doesn't even say. *Grace laughs* So, according to the Star Trek encyclopedia Jennifer Sisko was a federation scientist, and in the novelization of Emissary she was a Starfleet officer with the rank of lieutenant. But neither of those were actually established in the series.

GRACE:

You'd really think someone would have gotten around to this, like at some point?

JARRAH:

Yeah like, "She's a scientist just like Mom!"

GRACE:

It's not like you didn't have a chance. There were seven friggin seasons.

JARRAH:

But if anything, like she actually is supposed to be *just like her*. Because she, first of all, realizes that Sisko isn't who he says he is because he's too nice. And he sort of admits "No I'm not. I'm not your husband."

GRACE:

Again, just like in Dave.

JARRAH:

And then in Shattered Mirror Jennifer comes through, and wants to see Jake, and Jake is the one who's really like driving that they go back to the Mirror Universe and he is like "She's just like Mom" like "She's just like her." And it is again-

GRACE:

Boring?

JARRAH:

Yeah it's a little boring. Because prime Jennifer was boring, and they don't put in anything new. Like they could have made her- I don't know. A comedian? They could have made her like-

Make her a hardcore lumberjack if she likes camping so much. Just do something!

JARRAH:

Like, I don't know, an adherent of some weird practice? Or they could have made her like-

GRACE:

Or a mommy blogger. There's so much you could have done. Just do anything.

JARRAH:

She could have been like- right. She'd be like "I want to be a mommy blogger. I need to meet my counterpart son. So I guess-"

GRACE:

"I need a child so I could exploit them for monetary gain and internet fame."

JARRAH:

Yes. She could be working with the resistance, more than just helping Sisko with this one thing. She could be like hardcore bombing things? Who knows. Like, there are just a lot of options they didn't use and instead she just gets-

GRACE:

Jennifer Sisko: the mad bomber what bombs at midnight.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Instead she just gets to be like the absent mother. Or like, dead mother again. And be this martyr character, because she sacrifices herself to save Jake in Shattered Mirror.

GRACE:

Just sucks that in the long run, Sisko's *grief* over her is more important than who she actually was.

JARRAH:

Yup. And we will never know who that was.

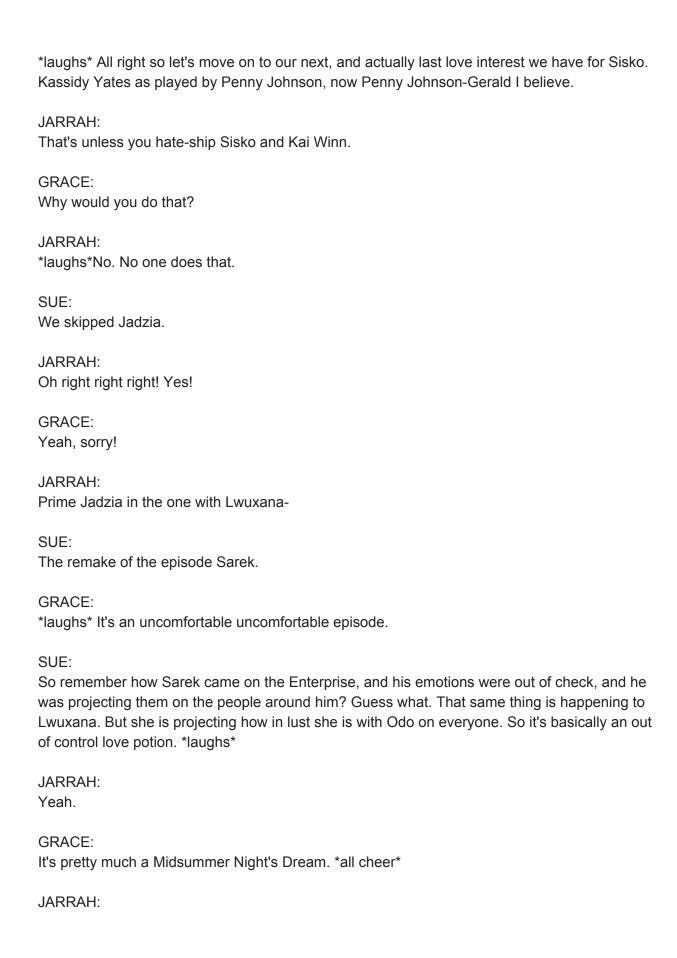
GRACE:

Brutal.

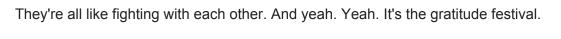
SUE:

So is this the first example of a character in the Prime universe, who does not and has never existed in the mirror universe?

Oh do you mean Jake?
SUE: With Jake, yeah. Yeah. Because we have, you know, Jennifer is dead in one alive in the other, but she at some point existed. Jake was never born in the mirror universe.
JARRAH: Yeah.
GRACE: I guess, yeah.
SUE: I think that's the first time Star Trek has done that.
JARRAH: Yeah I think you might be right about that, because certainly it didn't happen in TOS and there's only been two DS9 mirror universe episodes by this point.
GRACE: There's a lot of questions to be asked about the mirror universe *laughs* and its alignment to the prime one.
JARRAH: We do have an episode on the Mirror Universe, which Grace named, called-
GRACE: You don't say!
JARRAH: Yes. It's called Ripped and Machiavellian. So you can go check that if you want to hear more of our mirror musings.
GRACE: Our reflections, if you will.
SUE: *laughs* That was terrible.
JARRAH: That was great.
GRACE:



But worse. *all laugh*
SUE: We have Jadzia relentlessly pursuing Benjamin throughout this episode, and it's so terrible.
JARRAH: Reminds me of like, the bimbo Dax when she splits into two and it's Bashir's fantasy. Like, she's not that dumb in this episode, but she's pretty dumb. It's like when she becomes infatuated you're just supposed to think like she will put all intelligence aside.
GRACE: No no no. We've established when she becomes infatuated with another <i>main cast member</i> . Because we've seen her go after guys before, and she doesn't act this dumb.
JARRAH: No, she's normally fine. Yeah, I mean and everyone acts weird in this one. And like Bariel is in love with Dax, *ugh* which is also weird because Bariel.
GRACE: But Jake is in love with Kira.
JARRAH: Kira and Bashir are in love with each other, which made sense at the time. Oh and then- what's going on with the O'Briens again?
GRACE: I think Quark is in love with Keiko.
JARRAH: Right right. That part's funny, kind of.
SUE: And they're also just fighting.
JARRAH: Yes. Yeah.
SUE: Like always.
JARRAH:



GRACE:

Peldar joi, I guess.

JARRAH:

What can we say about this really? I mean-

GRACE:

I feel like the less said the better.

JARRAH:

I mean, I guess we can reflect a little bit on like, how cool it is until this point that Dax is his old friend "old man" in a young woman's body, and there really hasn't been any indication that there would be a romantic interest. Which is awesome because we very rarely do see strong opposite sex friendships in pop culture, and there's even like, you know, people still will say like "you can't really be best friends with someone who is like of the gender that you are sexually attracted to because it will always get in the way." And that's clearly not true.

SUE:

So, I think it's really unfortunate that they added to the exposition that Lwuxana says that there must be some latent feeling for the person that you went after. *uncomfortable noises* Even if it's unconscious, because it would've been so much better if it really were just the next person you saw. Because now you're telling us that Jadzia is at some level attracted to her old friend.

GRACE:

At some level we had established that the entire crew is just horny on main.

JARRAH:

Well and it also doesn't make sense, because why wasn't Quark going after Jadzia? We know Quark has latent feelings for her. And why wasn't Bashir going after Jadzia?

GRACE:

It doesn't make a lot of sense.

JARRAH:

Yes. So anyway, it's also kind of unfortunate because this sort of like Betazoid menopause, and this like idea again that like women's reproductive cycles make them crazy and-

SUE:

Destroy everyone around them!

Yes but it affects "older Betazoid women" only.
JARRAH: Yeah.
GRACE: Great. If you're over 40 and a woman in pop culture you can't catch a break.
JARRAH: But luckily Jadzia and Sisko go back to just being best friends after this.
GRACE: Good. So <i>now</i> we can move along to our final love interest, Kassidy Yates!
JARRAH: Kassidy Yay-tes!
GRACE: Kassidy Ye-Yates as portrayed by Penny Johnson-Gerald. She's introduced in Family Business in a b plot that is- it's adorable and so much better than the A plots.*laughs*
JARRAH: I mean OK. I just- I have to defend Family Business for a second here. It is way less unsettling than the full back nude Ferengi makeup that Andrea Martin wears *all laugh* in that episode, and the fact that she needs to wear it to make Rom feel comfortable. But Andrea Martin as Ishka, she was amazing. And it is sad that she was so frustrated by the makeup that she didn't come back.
GRACE: Yeah, I really love the idea though of this being the first episode of any Star Trek series that someone watched and they get to be just like "What the hell is going on here? People go to conventions for this?" And don't get me wrong I love me some Combs, We know this, but this episode's A plot it's just really it kind of puts all the weirdness and inconsistency of Ferengi culture as it's been written on full display. *laughs* Although I do like the insistence that everyone is just really intense about tipping on the home planet.
JARRAH: *laughs* Yes.
GRACE:

Well I mean, it's like it is actually supposed to be a virus I think that she has?

But that's our A plot. And we're talking about the B plot which is great and that-
JARRAH: B for baseball. *all laugh*
GRACE: Jake has this great lady he wants to introduce to his dad, and everyone else who has met her is like *eager voice* "Are you going to meet her Ben? She's really great. You should meet her." And so of course he goes like *noncommittal noise*. And then he finally meets or is like "Baseball?" "Baseball!"
JARRAH: It's like when all those people were like "You should read Harry Potter" and it was like "oh it can't be that good."*laughs*
SUE: I kind of love that they get together because they both love an outdated sport.
JARRAH: Yes exactly.
SUE: I think it's adorable.
GRACE: Yeah. How many of us have ended up with someone because of a super niche interest?
JARRAH: Yes.
SUE: Look at where we are right now.
JARRAH: Yeah. Also brief, just because I have to throw some shade at Enterprise here. I refuse to accept that there is a future where baseball dies out but people are still really into water polo. *Sue laughs*
GRACE: Yeah that's dumb as hell.
JARRAH:

Yeah I say that is not even a fan of baseball. But yeah it's adorable. They're all like, into these obscure like teams that are playing on the Luna colony- and it's just. And her brother plays and also she's a like a freighter captain. So she's a civilian but she's also, like you said, you see her at different times like you know working on repairing the ship and stuff so she knows stuff about this ship systems and engineering.

GRACE:

So she's a builder and Sisko's a builder.

JARRAH:

Yeah. And she's like not in Starfleet, but she's doing this cool other role that's not really conventional for- I mean, we would see like women in that role in our society very infrequently. Like, you know, women truckers women other types of like cargo delivery.

GRACE:

And we get to bring back that Star Trek trend of giant hair in her introduction.

JARRAH:

Oh yes.

SUE:

It's also nice to see more humans who aren't in Starfleet.

JARRAH:

I also just love that she doesn't really care that much about Starfleet. Like she isn't like "Oh my God! You're the captain. Wow!" Like she just is like "Yeah. You're a person, I'm a person"

GRACE:

She's not impressed by his title.

JARRAH:

Yeah.

SUE:

Yeah. She's also a captain. "Who cares? I got stuff to do."

GRACE:

And we definitely get to add some dimensionality and her character the next time we see her in For The Cause. We find out that Kassidy is smuggling to *spooky voice* the Maquis! And we get to see a whole bunch of dimensionality added to a character rather than just being the love interest.

Yeah. This episode has my absolute favorite Ben and Kassidy shipping scene, which is when she gets up to go on her cargo run and he rolls over and smells her pillow. *swooning sound*

GRACE:

Mmm. Diesel.

JARRAH:

So sweet.

GRACE:

I think this is one of the only times in pop culture I can think of where we have the whole case of being like "You're a criminal. I have to turn you in" and like "Oh, but don't you love me?" "I do love you." "OK, I'll take it." And then being like "All right I'm just I guess I'm just gonna serve my time and then come back to you."

JARRAH:

Yeah. So what do you guys think about this episode?

GRACE:

I found that *interesting* but unlikely.

JARRAH:

Yeah. I mean certainly when we talk about the next episode *laughs* I have some more thoughts on that. But even with this one, I was surprised they didn't really remember how much she like, outright lies to his face. Like I think I 100 percent understand why she's doing what she's doing. I have always been someone who would like sympathize with someone who's delivering medical supplies, even if it's to people who weren't necessarily on the right side of an issue. And the Maquis we know, is a complicated issue and the staff, and like Miles is standing up for them in this episode, and other people are having a problem with it. It's complicated, but I think what would damage the relationship even more than that is the number of times she lies to him.

GRACE:

Yeah. It does really say something about how she used her professionality as a captain versus her relationship with Sisko, and which one she prioritizes at this time.

JARRAH:

I also don't really remember them like, laying too many seeds of her being like a particularly passionate activist before this point which- I mean maybe because you really don't want to- you really want to have it be a surprise. But they reveal pretty early on in the episode that she's under suspicion.

Yeah. This whole episode just kind of comes out of nowhere doesn't it?

SUE:

I mean if you're part of what the federation is considering a terrorist organization on a Starbase operated by a federation Captain, how loud and passionate are you gonna be about that activism?

GRACE:

Okay, that's fair. Yeah.

JARRAH:

Yeah I know, but like how did she get recruited? Like we don't really learn that much about it "Oh there's someone told me we needed medical supplies." And like her crew's in on it, presumably, and they don't really talk about what happens to them. But there's like there's numerous times where he asks her what she's doing where she's going. Even like right *before* he knows that she's under suspicion, and then definitely afterwards and she lies throughout all of it. And then at the end I think the worst part is when Eddington and Odo want to do an inspection on the cargo stuff and she basically messages Sisko to say-

GRACE:

She does the "My boyfriend is the Captain."

JARRAH:

Yes she does, and she's like "I hate to play this card but I really need to go-"

GRACE:

"-but I'm totally playing this card."

JARRAH:

Yeah. "You know how the Tholians are" or whatever whoever she was gonna go meet and he sort of goes along with it, because he doesn't want to believe she is guilty and-

GRACE:

Even tries to kind of give her the "Hey, let's go away to Risa for a while. *strained* It'll be fun."

JARRAH:

Yeah. Like it's hard because you know it would hurt him, but he actually doesn't seem that hurt is the weird thing. And I mean, I think part of it is that he, by the end of that episode, you find out that he's been betrayed by Eddington and then like he goes into the whole Les Miserable-

He has the whole bloody emotional "from hell's heart I stab at thee" speech for Eddington, but not for his girlfriend to betrayed him.

JARRAH:

He kind of seems to like blame Eddington for the whole thing, because Eddington like threw Kassidy under the bus so that he could get away. But he doesn't really like seem to hold Kassidy that responsible for what she did.

SUE:

Sisko is used to dealing with a sort of moral and ethical gray areas based on just where he's stationed. And I can totally believe Sisko sympathizing with the Maquis. But he's also duty bound to send his girlfriend to jail.*laughs*

GRACE:

Yeah and this whole situation is made even weirder by kind of the lack of reaction to it in the next episode, Rapture. She comes back from jail and they just are like "Okay we're immediately picking this up where we left off."

SUE:

Yeah. They only seem to really mention it in the teaser where Jake is like "Are you gonna get back together?" and Sisko's like *noncommittal noise*

GRACE:

And this whole time when the plot of the main plot of the episode being Sisko is obsessed with this ancient Bajoran city, and its kind of destroying him and he's like telling Kassidy and Jake "No this is something I will die for. I have to see this through." We don't get to see her at all play that "I just got out of doing time for you" situation. Like she doesn't at all say "I've been in jail!" Can we also talk about how this shows primary black woman character is a character who "does time" because of her boyfriend?

JARRAH:

Well I mean, she did time because of her own decisions. Like she deceived him, like it's just that he didn't help her escape.

SUE:

Yeah. She's like, not taking the fall for him.

GRACE:

Yeah. I just feel like there's something to be said about that. I don't fully know what.

Yeah it's some- I mean but I thought Rapture was weird.

GRACE:

I re-watching it, I was just fast forwarding through it to the parts with Kassidy because the episode itself, even beyond the sort of B plot to it, is just really odd.

JARRAH:

Yeah. This is the one where he basically has these visions that-

GRACE:

He turns into Richard Dreyfuss from close encounters of the Third Kind. Even down to playing with his food and shit.

JARRAH:

He goes so far as to like, he's prophesying to random Bajorans on the promenade, and he falls like stumbles into the signing ceremony for Bajor joining the federation is like *dramatic voice* "You can't! The visions tell me! Bajor must stand aloooone." And the admirals are all like "Oh you're so lucky you're the friggin emissary man!"

GRACE:

laughs "You would be so fired otherwise."

JARRAH:

Yeah. So Kassidy's *just* come back, and she's basically, as well as Jake which was even harder to believe, asked to accept that he would rather die. And she's doing this whole like "You need to be here for your son. How can you tell us that this vision you're having in the future of Bajor, that's in your head because you're sick, is more important than your son who's standing right in front of you?" and he's just like "It just is."

SUE:

Whiney voice "I'm the Emissary. Let me do what I want."

GRACE:

"No! You're being a dumbass emissary."

JARRAH:

I love this like, relationship because their communication is so honest. *After* she comes back from jail. Other than the episode where she lies to him for a whole episode about smuggling from the Maquis like, their communication is actually I think a really good example of a sort of honest communication in a relationship. And her being like "I can't believe you're doing this" and him saying "This is what I need to do" and this goes on throughout the whole rest of their relationship.

Yeah I like how we see it in Badda Bing Badda Bang also. She's the one addressing him being like "What is your problem with going to the 60s holoprogram?" and he's like "I'll *tell you* what my problem is and I'm not going to sugarcoat it."

JARRAH:

Yeah yeah you're right. That is a really good moment I think. But they also have fun together, as they do in that episode. And there's more occasions like the baseball episode where they get to go do fun things together. But when push comes to shove like, neither of them is going to stay silent and pretend like nothing's wrong.

GRACE:

Yeah. They call each other on their bullshit, which is an important part of a relationship.

JARRAH:

Yeah.

SUE:

So you're saying Sisko's finally in love with a well-rounded character?

JARRAH:

I like Kassidy. I like that she had so much screen time and different relationships with other people too.

GRACE:

Yeah. She's a full character and not just the love interest and you get to see that so rarely.

JARRAH:

And that she kind of like effortlessly falls into this relationship with Jake, because he's the one who set her up. But it's not, I mean, again like Jake kind of awesome in this respect to not being all weird and resentful. Yeah maybe it's unrealistic he wouldn't have more complicated feelings, but it's been a while since his mom died. And I'm sure he wants to see his dad happy because that would make him feel more secure.

GRACE:

Yeah and then things get real dramatic on Deep Space 9.

JARRAH:

So Penumbra.

GRACE:

Penumbra.

He's like "We totes have to get married, you know?"
SUE: *laughs* Yeah that's exactly how he proposes.
GRACE: But he does it with such gravitas-
JARRAH: Yeah. And she says "Totes Mcgoats."
GRACE: -especially the *gravitas voice* "Totes" part. Which I guess, is a thing that happens in times of war. People are like "We don't know what's happening tomorrow, let's get married today." Or at least that philosophy.
JARRAH: And then they get married.
SUE: *uneasy noise* Except it's not that easy.
JARRAH: Yeah.
GRACE: *mock shock: A-wha?!
SUE: In come the prophets-
GRACE: *resigned* Like they do.
SUE: -and the prophets are like "Well, listen. Don't do this. She is bad for you."
GRACE: The prophets are just here to piss on his parade aren't they?

SUE:

No, but really they say "You're meant to walk your path alone. If you get married there is only going to be sorrow" and like for half a second he calls it off. He tells Cassidy the truth and exactly what they said. And he's like "We can't do this" and then she gets out and leaves. But then, you know, kind of at the urging of Quark later that "You know what? screw it. F those prophets. We're getting married anyway." I mean, his persuasion is "These diamonds are real expensive." *Grace laughs*

JARRAH:

Yeah. And he's sad. And he doesn't want to hurt. And I get that he could see that. Like you know, Kira is like all "The prophets have never put you down the wrong path." He's like "Well not yet. This could totally be the time." Like he's trying really hard to rationalize not listening to them, because he doesn't want to hurt, and you can see making a decision like that because it will make you happy now and you don't want to hurt the person you love, even though it might not be good down the road. And so he just goes to Kassidy and she's like "Don't do this to me Ben. Like if you're not sure don't do this." And he's like "I'm sure. And I don't care. We're just gonna go, we're gonna get married right now! We're not even having a Bajoran wedding because darn those prophets keep trying to wreck my happiness-"

GRACE:

Piss on his parade. Yes.

JARRAH:

So they have a mopey wedding with Admiral Ross.

GRACE:

laughs A mopey wedding is just a really good description of it; it's like the opposite of Worf and Jadzia's wedding.

SUE:

And what does he say? Like *laughs* "It's the honor of any high ranking officer to perform a wedding"

GRACE:

What?

SUE:

Like, this because he's not a captain. Because he's not a captain and they're not on a spaceship. I guess? It's so awkward.

GRACE:

They have a shotgun wedding before she's even pregnant.

Yeah pretty much. They elope into the arms of Admiral Ross. *all laugh* And then he has morehe like in the middle of the ceremony has a "No, you aren't doing this" vision from his mom Sara-prophet. Yeah. Sarah-prophets like "I'm not happy, but take care of yourself my son. Because shit's gonna get hard."

SUE:

And it's like right before his vows.

GRACE:

It's the final season, he *knows* it's gonna get hard.

JARRAH:

Man. I mean, I just feel like- Okay so first of all, if I was Kassidy I would not have made it through Rapture in that relationship. So I guess props to her.

SUE:

I'd be like "Look I just got back and you're gonna go build a temple? OK bye." *laughs*

GRACE:

To get through Rapture, to get through Bada Bing-

JARRAH:

But I mean the first part, the like "I've just discovered where this temple is, let's go excavate it together." I'd be like "Cool that's fun and adventurous." But the part where you're like "I need to die now if it means seeing the whole universe like I saw my baby son" that's when I'd be like "OK peace out."

GRACE:

Also just how hard would you have peaced-out if you had him be like *intense voice* "That baby I saw. But now it's the *entire universe*" miming holding a baby. It's just like "Oh wow okay. Going back to my ship now. I'm gonna come back once you've worked your own shit together."

SUE:

laughs Yeah, just leave with Jake.

GRACE:

"Jake, we're going to your aunt's for a few days."

JARRAH:

So by this point, I guess I'm not surprised that she would accept when he's like "I can't get married to you. Oh wait I can." Like, I guess I'm not surprised if she stuck with him through the other stuff. And they do have a lot of amazing moments. So it's more to the relationship than the weird vision. Yeah.

GRACE:

And I guess it's a good thing they got married when they did, because the next-

SUE:

-later that season. Just a few episodes later she is pregnant.

GRACE:

She is in a family way. And we discover some weird things about birth control in the future. It's a two person thing. Which on one hand, that's neat. Put some responsibility in the guy's corner. But on the other hand, why is it the responsibility of both parties?

JARRAH:

Yeah. That's ludicrous.

GRACE:

It's weird. Yeah.

JARRAH:

They have a line that says like "I guess one of us forgot to get our shots or something" and Sisko sort of says like "Yeah. Oh crumbs, I did not see Dr. Bashir." And apparently, yeah both people have to go get like inoculated against baby making from Dr. Bashir.

GRACE:

Either that or she was being super catty and like "One of us forgot it, and it wasn't me."

JARRAH:

I also feel like, it's silly that in the future we don't have birth control that you can self administer. Always, it seems worse than what we have now.

SUE:

I don't understand how that would even work.

GRACE:

Again. I want to believe it was just her being super passive aggressive going "Well one of us didn't do what we said we were-

SUE:

laughs that works for me.

GRACE:

-what we agreed on."

JARRAH:

Yeah I mean, maybe it wasn't literal and she just meant "You were the one who was supposed to be getting contraception." In which case, that's actually a really bad thing. If he was responsible for it, and didn't get it, and didn't tell her.

GRACE:

Yeah. Either way, she havin a baby now.

JARRAH:

whispers And it's gonna be cursed.

SUE:

Oh no.

GRACE:

The baby is cursed?

JARRAH:

Well no. But the whole you know, despair happening thing. Yeah, the baby is not specifically cursed. In fact, Sisko promises her the baby will be fine despite the prophets saying sad ominous things.

SUE:

dramatic whisper Sorrow.

GRACE:

And then she gets left as a single mother. Which is not great.

JARRAH:

Well it could have been worse? Originally- so at the end of the finale Sisko has plunged into the fire caves with Gul Dukat, as you do. Because they're nemeses and you have to end things.

GRACE:

He was having the Sherlock Holmes Moriarty dramatic jump.

JARRAH:

Yeah. *like dramatic yelling* Raaaaaah.

GRACE:

Right. Yeah. That was his "Raaaah"-chenbach fall.

JARRAH:

Yes. And you know a whole like clash between good and evil. I think that the episode where Kira and Jake fight it out on the promenade was a more effective Pah-wraith prophet battle, but that's just my opinion. Anyway so he's done that, and then vision-comes back to Kassidy's saying like "Hey, I'm gone but I'm coming back sometime" because originally he was gonna say he's a prophet and he can never return. But Avery Brooks said- he was like "No this is a really bad stereotype about black men leaving their pregnant wife alone. And therefore I have to say that I can come back. I just don't know when."

GRACE:

Yeah. And that would definitely be kind of counteractive to the work that Avery Brooks put into making sure his character is, you know, a present and good father to counteract that stereotype, if they undid the whole thing just at the end.

JARRAH:

Yeah, it doesn't totally counter the stereotype.

GRACE:

No. That's really unfortunate also.

SUE:

Yeah. But it also makes me wonder, I mean the episode where we find out she's pregnant is the next to last episode. And then he leaves in What You Leave Behind. Why was it even necessary?

JARRAH:

You know, re-watching a bunch of these season seven episodes and there's a lot of stuff that I like about Deep Space Nine pushing the relationships between characters, but sometimes I feel like their use of pregnancy especially verged on soap-operatic. And this and the whole like, Jadzia trying to get pregnant just before she dies thing, I think are really good examples of that. Like it doesn't really add anything. Other than to make it like *sighs* supposedly like more of a loss, or more dramatic, or more sad.

GRACE:

Yeah, to just up the emotional ante kind of cheaply. Yeah. Which is unfortunate because there is that thing that you see happen with a lot of male writers where they think "Oh I can't think of something I can do with this female character. How about pregnant?"

Yeah. I felt the stakes were high enough because we already know and love Jake and Kassidy. And like that last scene with Kira and Jake looking out the observation deck at the wormhole, like *that's* what makes me cry. It's not the fact- like knowing that Kassidy is pregnant.

GRACE:

Yeah, it was pretty unnecessary. Well, at least we know that from what we've seen of Kassidy she's very tough, she's resilient, she's gonna be able to take care of herself and a kid.

JARRAH:

Yeah. In the novels that come immediately after DS9, the novels are Avatar book 1 and book 2. Okay, so both of the books are by SD Perry, who's actually one of my favorite Trek novelists. She also wrote my favorite installment of the Terok Nor trilogy, and has co-written- she co-wrote that and she has written some other novels and has like Jake basically determined to go find his father, and sort of like exploring prophecy for indication of like when Sisko might come back. And Kassidy's raising the baby and trying to figure out if maybe the baby is significant in the prophecy. And it's pretty interesting.

GRACE:

But not a great note to end your series on when it's the first black captain, primary captain.

JARRAH:

Yeah I mean, I like the idea that they would have a family. That is- although I think they are a family with Jake, but like Jake's clearly time to- Spread his wings? And fly a little more? Baby Jake. I also like the idea that like, you can have a grown kid and then still have another kid, in like Kassidy and Ben like are not too old to be parents. I think that even though they're only married for like five episodes and it's very fraught with prophet drama, their marriage and their whole relationship was still way more functional than the O'Briens. *all laugh*

GRACE:

Oh definitely! That's not hard to do though.

SUE:

I mean they're already set up much more as equals than the O'Briens. Even in some of these episodes we re-watched this, we saw that.

JARRAH:

Yes definitely. I think it speaks really highly of her, because that would be *hard*. To be in a relationship with the Emissary, and we see that at several points. But I think if you imagine being in that position that would be *so hard*. But the fact that she is always grounded in what she does, and her own career, and sense of fulfillment is I think what saves it.

So while we establish that Kassidy is the superior love interest, theirs is not the most ideal relationship.
JARRAH: Accurate.
GRACE: Even if it's pretty good.
SUE: It's definitely one of the better Star Trek relationships overall, I think.
GRACE: So Sue, where can people find you online?
SUE: You can find me on Twitter @spaltor. That's S P A L T O R.
GRACE: And Jarrah, where can people find you online?
JARRAH: You can find me on Twitter @JarrahPenguin or on my Website Trekkiefeminist.com.
GRACE: And I'm Grace, and you can find me on Twitter @BoneCrusherJenk. And to contact our show email crew@WomenAtWarp.com or visit us on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram @womenatwarp. And for more from the Roddenberry podcast network visit podcasts.Roddenberry.com.
SUE: And remember, now that we're back in season two of Discovery we'll be doing weekly recaps on the blog.
GRACE: Discover Discovery with us.
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