

## Women at Warp Episode 129: We've Got Mail

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, thanks for tuning in. With us this week. We have Jarrah.

JARRAH:

Hello.

GRACE:

We have Andi

ANDI:

Hello.

GRACE:

and we have Sue

SUE:

Hidee-ho neighborinos.

GRACE:

Perfect. \*singing\* It's our last episode recording of the year! Do we have any housekeeping this week?

JARRAH:

Well I mean, as usual we have to remind folks that our show is funded entirely by donations from our patrons on Patreon. with just a monthly donation of around a dollar a month or more you can get access to some super cool exclusive content that we make like watchalong tracks, and also I understand that friend of the show Jonathan and Grace are going to do an Ira Glass-off at some point.

GRACE:

Damn right we are.

JARRAH:

Battle impressions.

SUE:

In honor of Jarrah's recent appearance on NPR's All Things Considered.

GRACE:

Can we all just freak out over that for a second?

JARRAH:

It was pretty cool, not going to lie. And what the donations help us to do is to keep the show up and running, pay for our hosting, support our equipment needs, and get out to conventions to do some convention reporting as well as we use it to produce some things to give away at conventions, and patrons often get some access to those items as well. So thank you to everyone who supported us in 2019. And if you would like to support our show in 2020 we would *love* that. And another thing you can do to help our show is to leave us a rating or review on Apple podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts to help people learn about our show.

GRACE:

Keep circulating the U.R.L., keep spreading the signal, let people know we're out there!

JARRAH:

That's [Patreon.com/womenatwarp](https://www.patreon.com/womenatwarp), [PATREON.com/womenatwarp](https://www.patreon.com/womenatwarp).

GRACE:

*\*whispering\** Tell your friends. *\*crew laughs\** Well jumping back into it, this is our last episode that we're recording of the year.

JARRAH:

Go 2019!

ANDI:

2019 blew. I'm glad it's over and I'm really hoping 2020 is better.

GRACE:

Yeah we're seeing in 2020 vision already. And you know what? Part of getting into a new year is looking back on what we've learned and reviewing some of the things we needed to look over that we did not, like fan mail. *\*crew laughs\** That's right! It's a fan mail episode!

JARRAH:

Yeah. Believe it or not when you e-mail us, especially when you e-mail us really long e-mails with lots of really good questions, we like to file those for future mailbag episodes. So apologies if we don't always provide you a thorough response in a timely manner but usually it is a compliment that we want to address something on the show.

GRACE:

It means that your questions or your thoughts were just too good for us to not share with everyone else.

JARRAH:

Exactly.

SUE:

And if we missed any we apologize.

GRACE:

And considering the amount we get we will miss a few, unfortunately.

JARRAH:

Yeah I mean it's like the courthouse in Miracle on 34th Street up here.

GRACE:

\*laughing\* but instead of letters to Santa they're letters to us. And instead of a mall Santa we are people who talk on the Internet. But we do in fact live in the North Pole, that's the ironic part.

JARRAH:

And we are also real.

GRACE:

\*whispering\* you just have to believe.

JARRAH:

Amazing.

GRACE:

So do we want to do this by each going around and picking a letter that we would like to share?

JARRAH:

Sure.

GRACE:

All right! Jarrah would you like to go first?

JARRAH:

Cool. So I'm just gonna go with the first one here which is from Michael via email. And Michael wrote us an e-mail with a few questions and pulled out one that was an episode idea that he talks about. Vic Fontaine and also the doctor on Voyager and says "When you look at them they're certainly self-aware, but are all holograms self aware? If not then why not? Where can the line be drawn? Do they become self-aware if their programs are left running long enough?" and basically asks that you know we talk a little bit about the questions that are raised about holographic or computer rights, which is addressed in The Measure Of A Man and also in Author Author a bit. But you know, what does it mean to be human? What is life? This seems like a great place to start this discussion. \*crew laughs\* We can just *bang* out the answer to this.

GRACE:

Yeah we can cobble together an answer on sentience and existence right?

SUE:

I mean this is what Star Trek wrestles with, right? This is the whole point of why we have this show and I think that it shows us that we don't really know, because 50 plus years and however many series later we're still asking the same question.

GRACE:

And we are getting literally into an exploration of artificial intelligence and the rights *held* by artificially intelligent beings and we're still trying to figure out what that means and how we define those in real life. So even finding those in fiction is still a challenge. We got our work cut out for us.

JARRAH:

It definitely seems like self-awareness is a key factor, on the Star Trek side of things, to term someone eligible for "human rights" in quotes. But I don't think we're supposed to get the sense that they all become self-aware if their programs are left running long enough. It seems like the times that that happens there is like something that they've put in a holograms programming for that to happen and certainly would be massively problematic if not.

GRACE:

Yeah, like with Moriarty we get the statement that there's something special about him. So it's *not* common for other holograms to just notice "Oh hey, this whole thing- there's an arch and there's a ship. What are we in space? Are we in space?" That's not something every hologram could do; it just makes Moriarty special.

JARRAH:

I mean Author Author does challenge that, as Michael points out with you know the EMHs working in the mines and you know if all of them were given this opportunity they could achieve that level of, again quote, humanity.

GRACE:

Would really hope that there would be a difference between just a holodeck hologram and an emergency medical hologram in terms of self-awareness and *competence*? I mean I'd hope there'd be a difference there.

SUE:

There's already an issue in the holodeck. As we've touched on before, with especially when creating holodeck characters of people you know and then like imagine that being compounded by those holograms also being self-aware like by default.

GRACE:

Also "Delete the wife."

JARRAH:

Oh God.

SUE:

But I think- potential spoilers for Picard. So if you don't wanna hear any of this skip ahead a bit. But I've seen some fan theories that this is what we're gonna be dealing with in Picard as well. That we're going to have- remember how they talked about an army of Datas in Measure Of A Man? They think they're going to have, some people think, there's going to be an army of Datas and that's why Picard is getting back into this. He's trying to *stop* that from happening.

GRACE:

He's got to protect his boy.

ANDI:

The most interesting question for me is "Where does it come from?" Does it come from the programming? So is it then something that someone else creates or does it come from the hologram, or the Android, or whatever you want to think, does it come from them internally like a spark?

JARRAH:

Yeah. Like, is it artificial intelligence? Is it learning? "Is it capable of learning" I think would be a test that you could apply. And certainly when you look at like the difference between Data versus say like, the you know the bartender at the place where Dixon Hill hangs out. Like there's going to be like- I think the main difference would be like the ability to learn and change. And that it seems to me like the bartender is more like Siri.

ANDI:

Right. But like, what I'm thinking of is- take the Doctor. Did the doctor become sentient because whoever programmed him did something different than all of the other EMHs? Right? Or did the Doctor do that himself? Somehow? "Did it come from within or without?" I guess is what I'm saying.

GRACE:

Or was it a combination of both?

ANDI:

I think it's different for a lot of them. But that's the thing that's most interesting to me, because a lot of these are allegories for like creators right? God essentially. So if you're taking that allegory

all the way to the end “Do people- does our free will, does are soul, does our sentience come from within or did somebody create us to be sentiment?” Is the question.

GRACE:

Our free will and our self actualization, our ability to find what makes us happy and makes us feel whole and achieved. I'm not sure we could hammer that out in a \*laughs\* single episode.

JARRAH:

No, but one thing I would like- I think it would be cool to explore in a future episode, would be some of the intersections of gender and computers and things like you know the fact that as in Star Trek as in our world today the computer has a female voice. Things like that are, you know, how is technology gendered in Star Trek in ways that maybe aren't like immediately apparent to an average viewer?

GRACE:

Well by gum Jarrah, I did a panel on that very topic a few years back.

JARRAH:

Amazing!

GRACE:

I know!

JARRAH:

So stay tuned for that episode.

GRACE:

Because we *got* to come back to that. Okay. Anyone else have one they want to share?

SUE:

Yeah I'll take the next one- is actually two. They came in from Jason via patreon and actually- so when we have patrons who get to suggest episode topics as their reward we ask for a few options and Jason sent *several* good ones and the one we chose to do a full episode on was actually the last episode the one about toys, collectibles, merchandise, that sort of thing. But I thought that the other two he sent along were also really interesting to talk about. So the first of those is “Star Trek fandom: Is it easier to be a woman in Star Trek fandom today than it was in the past? Are cons friendly and how do you address the gatekeeping?”

GRACE:

It's definitely a more accessible fandom, I would imagine, in like an internet age than it would be you know where you needed to send out for stuff via mail and have a literal pen pals to talk about Star Trek with.

SUE:

Yeah, it's hard for me to address *ease*. Because I only, you know, we only have our own experiences to go by. But I think one thing that is special about Star Trek fandom is that, as we've talked about a lot on the show, it has always been driven by the women in the fandom. Creating the conventions, creating the scenes, and just organizing and putting things together. And that to me is something very special about Star Trek fandom, so I would like to think that it was never a fully hostile place but I'm sure people have had experiences that say otherwise. I have had a few experiences at conventions that if blown out of proportion *\*laughs\** could say otherwise as well. But I think in general right now cons are pretty friendly, especially Vegas. Vegas is a very friendly event to me.

ANDI:

Well I was thinking about the "How do you address gatekeeping" question and all I can answer is for myself, and myself I ignore it. And occasionally I stop ignoring it enough to make fun of it. And then I ignore it again.

GRACE:

It is definitely a means to address it: non-addressing is an address.

JARRAH:

So, I certainly haven't experienced the kind of gatekeeping that I've seen women experience in other fandoms. Like very *very* occasional comments. And usually I think, as we've talked a bit about on the show, more often we get you know "Why do you do this show if you just hate Star Trek?" *\*all laugh\**

GRACE:

*\*sarcastic\** 'Cause clearly we're doing this out of *sheer loathing*.

JARRAH:

It's more like this sense that, you know, if you're critiquing gender relations, or race, or other sort of social issues in Star Trek that that is somehow like *negative*. But if you're talking about timelines, or technology, or you know continuity then that is expressing your love? So I don't really get that distinction. I think it's mostly just that some people it, maybe, makes uncomfortable? But we're never telling people you shouldn't love Star Trek, as obviously we do too. Just maybe, you know, let's take a critical look at it because there's still more Star Trek coming and we need to think about what could be done differently going forward to make sure things keep pace with the times.

SUE:

I do just want to say, that we all *here* at the very least firmly believe that all you have to do to call yourself a fan is like the thing.

GRACE:

That's it!

SUE:

If you've seen one episode of Star Trek and you enjoyed yourself you can call yourself a fan. As far as we're concerned. If you've seen every episode of Star Trek and you like it you are also a fan. No Gates to be kept here.

GRACE:

There's no hierarchy.

SUE:

So! Star Trek comic books \*Grace makes 'Eee!' noise\* was Jason's next suggestion. He wrote "There have been a few over the years." A few "And there's a new one coming out about what happens after the Discovery Season 2 finale, featuring our mother L'Rell. Good? Bad? Indifferent?" So in general, Star Trek comic books over the years. Good? Bad? Indifferent?

GRACE:

Oh my goooooosh! So the thing about Star Trek comics that you have to realize is that there's a lot of exciting things happening right now, which honestly I personally feel like I could be better at providing content and talking about, and I probably should. But again there's *50 years* worth of content from the past to look through also. And we are running the whole gamut of good, bad, and indifferent and poorly colored. And that's part of the beauty of a separate medium. It can run in all directions and I would absolutely love it if we could at some point do a further deeper dive just on how wide the range for Star Trek comics are, in terms of how much some of them get creative and stand on their own versus how much some of them really adhere to the concept of Star Trek as a show and stick to the formula there.

JARRAH:

Also just like you know funny facts, like in the original Gold Key comics when they were very first drawing them they wanted to have the comics really ready to hit the shelves as soon as the original series aired. But they only had given them black and white publicity photos and so when they color them you end up with things where the characters are not the races of the actors and also the person just assumed that Janice Rand's hair was actually like a hat on top of her hair. So there's like a big red beanie on top of her blonde bob and it's amazing.

GRACE:

Yeah. There's just, as with just with the world of comics in general, there's so much you can get into there. And so much I would *love* the chance to get into. Especially because there are so many people out there who are doing amazing creative indie comics these days who of course are freakin Trekkies. \*singing\* Where my Trekkie cartoonists aaaaaat? And as with pretty much any pop culture medium, Star Trek has its fingers in the comic book pies and there's a lot to look into there.

JARRAH:

Have you read the Star Trek Discovery aftermath comics that he's talking about? I think like, I generally wait for the trade. And the trade isn't out yet, so I haven't. I think that the single issues are out.

GRACE:

That's my rule of thumb. I wait for the trade because I can't afford and don't have the space to collect single issues. That said I've got *lots* of opinions on some of the more recent comics and they're a lot worth checking out. I've got a review of one on the blog. I've got my review of the Star Trek Transformers crossover because that was too ridiculous for me to not read and have opinions on.

JARRAH:

Oh you also did an awesome one for the series that has like the two different stories each issue.

GRACE:

Yes! Yes yes yes yes yes yes!

JARRAH:

And it has a story about Archer and Porthos I think?

GRACE:

Yes, I did a couple on those ones. It was in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary IDW put out a series that was an anthology skipping around through different Star Trek iterations and \*pause\* I hate that I can't remember \*laughs\* what it was called right now.

JARRAH:

Yeah. It wasn't Boldly Go, that was a different series. So apologies for that. But on L'Rell I did read the series that came out after last season, that was called The Light Of Kahless. And it was mostly about like T'Kuvma and Voqs backstory. But it was told as if L'Rell was telling it to Voq about like how T'Kuvma became the Klingon Messiah. And it was really pretty good. I kind of wish they got more into how he, you know, began this cult that was obsessed with Klingon racial purity. That part felt like kind of missing and it was super interesting to me, but it had all these amazing special touches like, you know how in comic books where they have like the onomatopoeia words like "Bang" and "Pow" they had like two blades together and they spelled the clang K L A A N G. \*Grace makes an 'I see what you did there' noise\* It was amazing. So that was by Kirsten Beyer with Mike Johnson doing the art. \*T/N written by Beyer and Johnson, art by Tony Shasteen\* So I feel that if you're into Discovery comics

SUE:

Grace, If somebody had never really read Trek comics before, what would you suggest they pick up? Do you have a favorite or two that you you'd recommend for people?

GRACE:

I feel like that alone is an entire- either an entire episode or an entire blog post that I would love to put together. But off the cuff I would honestly say Starfleet Cadets it's such a fun one. Anytime you go into the old stuff, in like the golden- silver age comics era Star Trek comics you're going to find something fun there, and \*frustrated noise\* oh there's just so much to get into with it. Because there's such a wide width and breadth. So basically I'm going to leave it at "To be continued." \*laughs\* That was a cop out answer, I know, but it's what I've got right now.

JARRAH:

And it was Waypoint.

GRACE:

Yes!

JARRAH:

That was it was the series that had the different stories every- and like was great because until that point the IDW comics had been pretty solely JJ-verse. So this let them bring in all the other series and there were some great great issues there.

GRACE:

If I may take the next question, we've got an interesting one. I'm going to actually just read this one verbatim because I want to make sure we're getting the nuance of it and it's from Vanessa who sent this in to our Web site. "You mentioned in your most recent podcast that the idea that sexual promiscuity was almost always a characteristic of an evil character. I'd like to point out that my favorite Enterprise episode Stigma. So much good (Trip, Phlox and his wife) and so much bad (TPol and her mind meld sickness). The way Denobulans approach sex and marriage and relationships is so underrated. They just get that people are people, sex is a part of life, and if a Denobulan woman offers you a rose bath you take it! I would like to see more Denobulan ideas - does it matter the gender? Loved you guys! This was my first podcast and I can't wait to go back and listen to all of them!" I definitely included the last part just for our egos because why not? But it's true we do, we do get a lot of stuff implied about Denobulan culture and specifically Denobulan's views of sex that we don't really get to dig into as much that would be *really* interesting to dig into.

JARRAH:

I think that we do get this glimpse at this culture that is practicing like ethical non monogamy and like-

GRACE:

Polyamory.

JARRAH:

Yeah. And that is, you know, would have been really interesting to see more. It would be interesting to see like "Does this work for everyone?" You know if this is the way the Denobulan culture is, are there people that are on the fringes of that culture? But yeah I mean it was definitely a refreshing break from some more of the "Promiscuity is morally suspect" tropes that we see.

GRACE:

Yeah. I mean like take a look at all of the portrayals of the mirror universe. Everyone is super sexual and that's supposed to be part of their eeeevil-ness.

SUE:

I remember we spoke a little bit about this when we covered Fusion and Stigma early on, and my biggest issue with it- I mean like Feezal Phlox is wonderful. She's such a fun character. She she has a lot of the same points as Lwuxana in a lot of ways. But the only issue that I really had with it is that it is played for comic relief. That you know, the rest of the characters and by extension the audience is not supposed to be taking this seriously it's supposed to be funny and weird and I mean that's really the only disappointing part about it in my opinion. I think it would be great for them to explore a little bit more and they do a little bit in the books. \*laughs\* I feel like I say that all the time.

JARRAH:

Yeah, it feels a bit because, you know, Trip is kind of a stand in for humans. It's like "Oh this is an alien weird funny thing." Instead of like something that humans actively do.

GRACE:

And the straight white man is the avatar for all of humanity, of course.

JARRAH:

But I mean, there are actually a couple of other examples of characters who have got to be I would say more- have more sexual freedom. I mean Dax is a character, I mean before she gets married I mean it's sort of it's very implied that she's more like a serial monogamist.

GRACE:

She has an active sex life and romantic life.

JARRAH:

Yeah, and she's not judged for that. And there are some other, you know, a few characters throughout and definitely I think it's increased as Trek has gone on. But yeah you know, the past was not always so great.

GRACE:

And we're constantly moving towards better depictions of more nuanced views of sex and marriage and relationships. The one thing that always strikes me about the relationship as portrayed in *Stigma* with the Denobulans is that so much of it is "Oh my gosh! Can you imagine people who have relationships with multiple people? that's so *out there!* Can you even *imagine?*" And much in the same way like with *The Outcast* it's like "No, those people are out there. There are lots of them and they have been for a very long time."

JARRAH:

Like what happened in the past couple hundred years that made you forget that?

GRACE:

Yeah, did things get really prudish real quick and then and then we're like "oh no that didn't happen." How much history was rewritten?

JARRAH:

Maybe Archer's dad was like a secret social reformer \*all laugh\* and then we just don't see that story.

GRACE:

It wouldn't surprise me.

SUE:

People getting really prudish real quick is kind of historically accurate. Sooo Andi you want to take the next one?

ANDI:

Sure. I wanted to choose an email we got from Rebecca that her question was pretty interesting. It's "Please describe your journey to becoming the knowledgeable Star Trek feminists you are today. What kinds of studies have you pursued post-high school? How do you stay abreast of current topics that are relevant to feminism, classism, racism, gender studies, queer theory, etc.? And, what have you done (besides watching the shows) to become knowledgeable about Star Trek behind the scenes?"

GRACE:

It's a good question!

ANDI:

Yeah! For me, I studied international relations in school which, you know, turns out I didn't use that for my job at all but I still really enjoyed studying it and I learned a lot about different

cultures and different languages and stuff. So that has been helpful for me, kind of taking a look at a lot of different Star Trek topics. There's a lot of history involved in that. Learning a lot of different kinds of history, especially across the world and not just in let's say Western civilization. I'm using quotes there because I hate that term. Yes. So that's that's what I pursued post high school. And staying abreast of current topics really is \*pause\* the biggest thing that changed for me was Twitter actually, it was a good way to kind of puncture the bubble I was in. I'm from the Midwest and I went to a super white school and I grew up in a super white city and it was kind of seeing people from different walks of life talk about how feminism impacted them. And that piqued my interest. And that made me read a lot of different books from people I'd never heard of. And it kind of snowballed from there. Yeah, I just thought that was an interesting thing to ask because we talk a lot about Star Trek and we talk a little bit sometimes during our discussions of Star Trek about what personally for us, you know, it means to us or you know something that has happened to us in the past has impacted how we see something. But I don't know if we've ever all sat down and been like "This is what I studied in college."

JARRAH:

Yeah. I think like it was quite a ways before I knew more about your education Andi, and certainly I think it helps us that we didn't all pursue the exact same path. But you know, we always are also trying to broaden and bring in guests and hear from folks to make sure that we're continuing to stay on top of things. I took gender studies and sociology in university and after that I was working for elected officials and I ran a feminist blog called Gender Focus that was just kind of a generic Canadian feminist blog. And we had I think over the course of the seven years I ran the blog we had like more than 80 contributors who submitted various numbers of pieces. So that was also a way of having to be up on a whole bunch of different topics that are relevant to feminism and social justice and also volunteering with some on the ground groups doing awareness raising on violence against women and things like that. And I am also a big reader. I basically have like a Star Trek reference library right beside me. And in terms of learning more about the show I recently did most of the first part of- the Smithsonian has these three Star Trek courses through EDX that you can take and they have little videos and suggested reading list. And it's not really like a heavy burden, you're supposed to write like one blog post for each week of the course and if you do the free version and you have a certain limit on how long you can take to complete it if you pay a small amount then you get grades and you can take longer. I found it a little bit basic because I had already read so many of the books. Like everything on the suggested reading list I had already read, but I do really recommend it if people are saying like "Oh what's the deal about this Star Trek thing and the influence it's had on our culture and technology." It's I think, a nice way in and connects you with other people who are also interested in learning about those topics.

GRACE:

And me, I actually went to college studying fine arts and literature which involved a lot of criticism and critical thinking on both fronts and I went to a school where there was- uuuuh. I-I'm gonna just say it was kind of a tumultuous environment of school politics. So there was a lot of questioning what the teachers were teaching us and what the agenda of the different individual

faculty members was, which was great because it means I got to learn *double* criticism right there. In terms of learning about how we view and analyze art and being critical of how we do that. And I really appreciate that I had that opportunity and it's still something I absolutely love to do as well as giving me a background on classical arts and literature. And that was about actually when I got into Star Trek also. I was cursed with an opinion on every form of pop culture. I was just born, I came out holding a golden apple and saying \*baby voice\* "Angel was better than Buffy." And they knew I was doomed from the get-go. So basically I started getting into Star Trek at that time. And of course because of this interesting criticism I had and all these opinions, I had a lot to say about it, which is actually how I got into podcasting also. That's how I got in touch with my friend Oren Ashkenazi who asked me, because he thought I was bringing a unique perspective conversationally and as a woman with him running an all male podcast, they wanted me on there to offer that unique perspective. And it's really funny because actually when I started doing it I said "I'm not a Star Trek expert." They're like "Yeah, but you've got opinions and you know how to say them. So you like Star Trek and you've got that that's all you really need." And from there it all just kind of snowballed. I just kept learning and reading as much as I possibly could about Star Trek and soaking up as much critical pop culture theory that I could, and I'm still continuing to do that and I will say it can be really hard to keep abreast of the current topics relevant to everything that we go over *and* in Star Trek because it's a lot to take in. And it's a lot to weigh on your mind when you're trying to go forward in what is a flawed world when you're trying to recognize what is flawed and what you're trying to appreciate in that flawed world and it can get really heady. And I do recommend taking social media breaks as needed every now and then. But honestly just trying to stay aware of current events and listening to as much critical theory as you can, that will teach you so much. And thankfully it was through Oren and being on All Things Trek that I met Jarrah and we ended up starting this little show here.

SUE:

So I was the math and science kid-

GRACE:

\*mock shock\* Really?!? What are the odds? Wow.

SUE:

Surprise! My degree is in peer and applied mathematics with a specialization in chaotic dynamics. I don't do that now. \*laughs\* But so I really like credit Star Trek with keeping me interested in math and science at a time when a lot of girls leave those fields of study around middle school and early high school because I had that reinforcement because I came home every week and I saw, you know, Janeway and Seven working out some problem or B'Elanna fixing the warp drive or something going on. Because Voyager was the show that was on when I was in high school, but in college as well I think is when it really started to dawn on me, you know, in the in the larger world and coming from a very religious household that "Oh, I don't intend to be offensive but I'm gonna say it anyway" that Christianity doesn't always practice what it preaches. And I sort of started seeing things a little bit- I would say probably a little bit more as

they are. And I think that like, attending a liberal arts college you really did sort of burst that bubble that Andi was talking about. Maybe just like a little bit of the bubble \*laughs\* if that's possible, because the continued presence on the Internet I think is really where a lot of this theory these ideas come from. And I, of all places, I feel like I learned a lot in the early days of tumblr. And I feel like I- actually I know I figured out my sexual orientation because of Tumblr. You know, I finally found a word for what I am because of this microblogging Website. Like what? And then I think Twitter takes it further. Twitter is how you keep, or at least for me, is a lot of how I keep aware of news. A lot of how I keep aware of different ideas. I think the most important thing to do on social media is to make sure that you're following people who don't have the same experiences as you. And that's how you learn what different communities are talking about. That's how you learn what is important to different communities that you might not belong to. And it's just it's the perfect place to get information and to read and to listen. In terms of Star Trek- I hope all of that made sense- \*laughs\* In terms of Star Trek I was also growing up I was also a theater kid in addition to math and science. So I was always attracted to the behind the scenes information. I ate that stuff up. I was reading you know Star Trek magazine for any little tidbit I could get, for as long as I've been watching the show and it's yeah, it's just reading. It's like *devouring* every bit of information I could get my hands on for such a long time. I remember when my local library got The Nitpickers Guide To Star Trek The Next Generation. And I took it out and I read *every word* because I wanted to know \*laughs\* everything about it. Yeah. But like, I want to say like when we are talking about specific episodes or when we're talking about different themes in Star Trek know that we did our research here. This isn't coming off the top of our heads. You know we each have reference libraries, we each have references online that we head to. So please don't think that all of the information that we say on the podcast is just stored in our brains somewhere because at least for me it is definitely not.

GRACE:

Yeah there's homework done on our end.

ANDI:

I just thought it was an interesting question, because when we're talking about Star Trek we try and I wouldn't say keep the personnel out of it? But we do try to keep the focus on what we're talking about and not have so many personal asides that it gets distracting. So there are probably people out there that I've been listening to our podcasts for a long time and don't know very much about us personally. I imagine that anybody who follows us on Twitter might know more but...

GRACE:

That's what the Twitter is there for I guess.

ANDI:

I just thought that was interesting, that somebody actually asked us "What did you study in school."

JARRAH:

Yeah you probably know our cat names and that's it. Can I read the next question from Judy?

GRACE:

Yeah absolutely.

JARRAH:

So Judy on Facebook asks for advice on finishing TOS. She says "I am halfway through season two and am really struggling with motivation to finish it. Any suggestions for making it more enjoyable and less of a chore? I feel like I SHOULD watch it, but it's just lacking for me."

ANDI:

OK. You should not ask me this question. \*all laugh\* Because I can't do things I don't want to do. My only advice is to take breaks. So I also had trouble with some of TOS, I would get upset by some of the episodes and then I would watch something else, something comforting and then go back. Because if you've already seen TOS you know which episodes are comfortable. Like some of the TOS episodes are really good comfort food you know? But you don't know when you're first watching it you don't know which episodes are gonna be upsetting and which ones are going to be fun. So watch something you know is gonna be fun and then go back. That's the only advice I have.

GRACE:

I definitely understand what our listeners are saying here because there are parts of TOS that *do not* age well and that they're just incredibly dated. So my advice always if you're trying to get through a show is to have had a group of people or have a buddy who you watch it with. That way you get kind of a sounding board of "Wow that was weird!" or "What do you think of that?" That honestly makes a lot more palatable for me if I'm needing to watch something that I'm not really enjoying and that way you can make fun of it together.

JARRAH:

Yeah you can also do like, you know, people have made like TOS bingo. So you could find on the Internet some like bingo cards that people have made and you know check off a box or do a drinking game or every time you know McCoy says "Dammit", or every time Spock makes a Vulcan hand sign, or something to the like gamify it a little bit. That could help.

SUE:

Yeah. I would also just say if you really don't want to complete it, don't feel the need to watch every single-

GRACE:

Yeah it's not an assignment.

JARRAH:

There's no pressure. If you don't want to watch them all, don't watch them all. And if you have that completionist streak, which I understand because I have that, and you're like "I must do it!" You know you don't have to watch in my opinion. You don't have to watch TOS in any particular order. You know this is not a serialized show so you can go find short descriptions or see how people rank the episodes and maybe put them in a different order. So you know you're hitting a good one and a bad one, alternately.

JARRAH:

Don't end on Turnabout Intruder.

GRACE:

Don't. It'll just leave you angry.

SUE:

But I mean if you're doing this because you want to do it, great! If you're doing it because you think like there's something telling you that you have to, I would disagree. You don't have to watch all the episodes if you don't want to. It's OK.

ANDI:

We won't kick you out.

GRACE:

No, you're still in the club. Don't worry. Do you guys mind if I read the next one? We got this from Francis via Facebook who after watching Voyager and DS9 and TOS started watching Enterprise and isn't really digging it. If I can share the quote here "All the arrogant white dudes, the smart Vulcan woman always being wrong, the decontamination scene, no women among the decision making for Starfleet. Does it get better?????" \*Sue laughs\* Francis to this I gotta say it's a long road getting from there to here \*Sue laughs\* and it's a reeeeeally long road getting from here to there. Enterprises is a *tricky* show. It definitely in my opinion suffers from trying to be tragically hip and really trying very hard to be sexy and appealing to an audience that is *definitely* not of the group of people deciding what is hip and sexy. \*all laugh\* Which very distracting for me and very much just like "Oh my god. Old dudes wrote this didn't they? This is what old dudes think that young people find sexy."

SUE:

I am of the opinion that there is some really good sci-fi in seasons 3 and 4 of Enterprise. As for whether those seasons are better, about like gender stuff? To be honest I have not watched them straight through in a really long time. But I think the answer might be *a little?*

JARRAH:

I think off and on they are. Like I think there's more interesting dynamics involving women recurring guest characters, particularly Vulcans. But there is also, you know, Bound in there and stuff too. So I mean, my advice if you do want to continue with it would be like maybe even, you

know again, if you feel completist, great. If you don't feel completist I think it's totally acceptable to take a list of like, you know, what are the five must watch episodes this season and you know make sure that you cover off those high watermarks. That would be my approach for you know if I had a friend that I was guiding through this.

GRACE:

Enterprise is one of the series that the Wired blog has a binge watching guide to, along with all of the must-watch episodes, and the ones that you need to see for understanding the continuing plot. And usually I find those guides pretty helpful if I just do not have the time or patience to sit through an entire show.

JARRAH:

Yes. Like I mean, even the shows that I think have a better reputation have you know a few turds of episodes.

GRACE:

Even the West Wing has its crappy episodes.

JARRAH:

Oh it so does. Yeah. I was thinking particularly of X-Files, I was gonna do a re-watch now that we're leading into the newer ones. And I was like I got through the first three seasons, and I was like "Oh I forgot all these weirdly racist episodes."

GRACE:

YUP.

SUE:

The X-files opens a whole 'nother can of worms. \*all laugh\*

ANDI:

Supernatural has an episode in which they build a subdivision on an old Indian burial ground. And then Sam and Dean get attacked by bugs but the bugs are very clearly rubber bugs. It's both horrible and amazing.

GRACE:

Supernatural has an episode where they fight a racist truck.

ANDI:

Yes, and it's called Route 666. \*laughs\*

GRACE:

It's just so very very bad. Like do you remember some of the season one episodes of TNG and how much they made you just want to stop? You do get the opposite, even a crappy show sometimes has a few good episodes and that's worth looking into sometimes.

JARRAH:

I think when we got Enterprise part of the problem was that people weren't as starved for Star Trek as they had been when TNG started. But then the, I think, more significant problem was you had the same writing team that had just come off like three back to back series. And was feeling in their own words you know "pretty tired." And they talk in the 50 Year Mission about just not being really sure how to innovate, you know, new stories and concepts and after being just kind of burned out.

GRACE:

\*creepy voice\* "Have them rub glitter on each other."

JARRAH:

When the creative team changes in season 4 and they also kind of knew they were going to get canceled then they just didn't care as much. I think it actually got much better.

SUE:

I think I mean, the way we watch TV changed though too. From 1997 to 2001. Right? Between the first episode of Next Gen and the first episode of Enterprise. You know Next Gen essentially had an entire season of 24 episodes to find its feet. Right? And it had this backing behind it of like a fan base and existing fanbase who really wanted it to succeed. And I think Enterprise, as you sort of said, it had a fan base behind it that was a little bit burnt out perhaps.

JARRAH:

Or the creative team. Well, and also the fan base. Yeah. \*laughs\*

SUE:

But it was the fan base as well. But there is also like, shows didn't get as long anymore to really take off. And it's sort of impressive for how poorly people say that Enterprise was doing that it *did* get four seasons.

JARRAH:

And that there are some people who really really passionately love it today.

SUE:

Absolutely.

GRACE:

The one thing that I remember surprising me about Enterprise, was the fact that TNG and Voyager were both still in syndication and being aired as reruns at the time. So it was like “This it feels like overkill.” \*laughs\*

SUE:

Well I remember reading about- Wil Wheaton writing about the first season of Next Gen and talking about you know the mid season and he was like “These were our midterms. We had to ace our midterms.” And thinking about now today I hear people saying like “Yeah I’m not sure about this new show that starts next week. I’ll give it three episodes for it to grab me.” And just how we went from like to the midterm point of like 12 episodes in 1987 to now. Which- Oh my God \*laughs\* 30 years later. But like “I’ll give it three episodes.” There’s so much more out there that’s competing for our attention as well and I think that’s a huge factor in it too.

JARRAH:

Yeah and like a really important metric these days is whether how many people finish a series. So like Netflix and stuff they’re looking at how many people finish the season when they’re making decisions about whether to renew. So it doesn’t count, like all those people that just watched three episodes and decided to peace out. Oh there’s just one more question.

SUE:

All right. So this comes from Chris via our Website. And Chris wrote in response to our Mature Women of Star Trek episode and said, I’m just going to read this verbatim, “ Aside from physical aging, and staging with makeup, I’m curious what you think of the character development brought on with playing a role for so long. Largely, of course, I’m referring to Nichelle Nichols and Marina Sirtis. Both actresses are strong and talented, and I think they each brought a realism, sense of adventure and wisdom to later performances in their respective roles.”

ANDI:

One thing that I was happy that they did with her Uhura is, even though we saw Nichelle Nichols like age throughout you know especially the movies, from TOS to the movies they kept her still recognizably her. Like they didn’t turn her into an old lady kind of caricature you know, like she still was sexy for instance.

GRACE:

It’s funny because, you know, we have Kirk complaining about aging and everything and Uhura is still out there doing fan dancing and stuff. So if anything she’s aging better than he is.

ANDI:

Yeah. Considering how much so many of the Star Trek, the TOS movies, are about Kirk feeling-

GRACE:

Not young and hip anymore?

ANDI:

Yeah pretty much. Like, feeling his age and feeling like “Is the best of his life behind him?” what is his legacy? So much of those films are about aging but they don't really age Uhura, and in a lot of ways I really like that. I still like that they keep her vital and sassy and sexy and all of those things. But I've also kind of disappointed we didn't get to see like, what is that idea applied to the rest of the crew? You know it was really only Kirk.

JARRAH:

And then I guess the question is, was part of that because it's not as acceptable for women to age in Hollywood? Like you have to, like because I feel like Crusher and Troi while I agree that both the actresses show you know wisdom and presence and certainly you know Troi keeps sort of developing more of a sense of humor. I don't feel like they were really allowed to age. Like you know even Nemesis, which is also a bit of a like Picard midlife crisis episode, and you know you can definitely see that the actors are aging but you still have like Troi's scene being- Troi's storyline being about like sexual violence. Which of course is not like linked to aging. But it's still- it was like they couldn't see clear to make there be some other options for taking her or Crusher through that journey. Other than that you know comment about “your boobs firming up” in Star Trek Nemesis- or sorry Insurrection.

GRACE:

Because we've always got to bring it back to the women's physical bodies.

SUE:

Yeah, I think it will be interesting. We obviously don't know how much we're going to see of Marina in Picard but it will be interesting to see what they do with her. Yeah, I don't know what kind of character development comes with playing a character for so long. I think that's a really hard thing to say for the Next Gen actors because especially in the movies they didn't have all that much to do.

GRACE:

And to say nothing of the fact that a lot of the time it feels like when they're going back to these characters in the movie iterations, they're playing kind of simplified and less progressed versions of the characters that got to grow throughout the course of the TV show.

JARRAH:

And certainly I feel like their looks were policed as actors in those movies more than the men. It's very clear that, you know, we know that men also experience weight pressure in Hollywood. But it was clear that they had to be basically the same body type that they were when they were acting on the TV show in addition to you know the wigs and everything. And you know, I just can't imagine that they took the same tack with some of the men acting in those movies.

ANDI:

I have to say that I think this is an area that Star Wars did better, when you're looking at say both Luke and Leia.

GRACE:

They were definitely allowed to age more.

ANDI:

Yeah. And I mean Carrie Fisher was super open that a certain subset of Star Wars fans were unhappy that she was no longer- like she somehow could have stayed the, you know, hot 20 something in a gold bikini. And then like she had the audacity to grow up, and change and her body changed, and her face changed and people didn't like it.

SUE:

She was also very open about the fact that they wanted her to lose weight. To do the new trilogy.

ANDI:

And yet they still gave her new things to explore. You know? In a way that I don't feel like they did that for any of the female characters for Star Trek.

JARRAH:

And they made age part of her storyline. Which, you know, the episode that we did on a mature woman of Star Trek we were largely talking about ones where it is, you know, cases of where age is very apparent and not just like a background factor of a character. And I just don't feel like it happened with a lot of the main characters that you got, you know- I mean there is a little bit with Scotty and Uhura I think in Star Trek five or six. There's I think some comments in there but it just- it wasn't- I don't think \*pause\* It's double edged, because we talked in our Star Trek Original Series movies about how it's cool also that Uhura got to be an older woman with a sexuality, which is rare. Like it's often like, once you hit a certain age you no longer have sex because we don't want to think about that.

GRACE:

Yeah, only people we find conventionally attractive are allowed to have sex lives.

JARRAH:

Yeah but then it's like, but also we will just, you know, try not to mention the fact that you're how old.

SUE:

Yeah I think what, something that the TOS films actually do better than the Next Gen ones in this realm are that we see characters being promoted. You know, they have different ranks when they come back.

GRACE:

It confirms that they have lives outside of the immediate story and plot out of the film.

SUE:

But we also have some of our side characters who come back and are just like in a scene at Starfleet Command, but like briefly referred to as like Lieutenant Rand or something. You know? And I don't feel like Next Gen really did that for us. They didn't give us other than Worf having to be picked up from the Defiant, I feel like we didn't get the impression that time had passed for these characters between the Next Gen movies.

JARRAH:

Yeah that makes sense.

GRACE:

Guys, we got some really good questions.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Thanks folks!

ANDI:

And keep sending them and, you know, a year from now maybe we will answer your questions.  
\*all laugh\*

GRACE:

Keep making us think! Keep making us ask questions of ourselves!

JARRAH:

We take questions through comments on posts, through Facebook Messenger, through e-mails to crew@womenatwarp.com, comments on our blog, comments on Patreon, Twitter. Yeah, and we always love hearing from you and you make us think.

GRACE:

Yeah! Now do we have any final thoughts here as we're wrapping up our 2019 ending episode?

SUE:

Well I looked through some of our episodes from this year, and it really struck me how many interviews we did in 2019.

GRACE:

Oh my God we got some great interviews.

SUE:

We talked to Gersha Phillips, Mary Chieffo, Jacqueline Lichtenberg, Hanelle Culpepper, Jane Brook, Rekha Sharma, Jacqueline Kim, and of course Kate Mulgrew. \*all make excited noises\* We had a great star trek Las Vegas. We had, I don't want to call it merch, but we had some things to give away. We had a bunch of pins and we had stickers. I was able to go to the Discovery season two premiere in New York. What do you all remember from 2019 as highlights of this year for the show?

GRACE:

I definitely remember getting to be on stage and you know kind of representing Women At Warp in the big Women Warriors panel for Star Trek Las Vegas and that was incredible and humbling. I *loved* some of the interviews we got to have. We got to meet some incredible people and hear their take on these characters that they've played that have touched us. It was just- so much happened \*laughs\* this past year it was amazing. I'm still kind of reeling from the fact that it all happened within one year.

JARRAH:

Yeah, I mean it was a really packed year, I think, in terms of podcast opportunities and very exciting. We also were able to use some of the swag we created to raise some funds for the Pop Culture Hero Coalition.

GRACE:

Oh yeah that's right!

JARRAH:

And very recently we also offered our remaining enamel pins with proceeds going to the Best Friends Animal Society which was a charity that DC Fontana supported. And I like when we can, you know, try to use you know some of our space to encourage some giving to some worthy folks.

ANDI:

I'm just glad we still have so many great guests. One of the things that I consider our mission statement is giving a platform for people who might not otherwise get a platform very often to talk about things in the Star Trek fandom. So I want to continue to do that next year.

JARRAH:

Definitely. All right. And I know we have some exciting topics planned for the new year. So you'll have to stay tuned for that.

SUE:

But please, if you have ideas send those our way too.

GRACE:

So, if you want to hear more from me or send me any random comments I'm on Twitter @Bonecrusherjenk. Jarrah, where can people find you?

JARRAH:

You can find me on Twitter @ J A R R A H- penguin or a Trekkiefeminist.com.

GRACE:

And what about you Sue?

SUE:

You can find me on Twitter @Spaltor. That's S P A L T O R, and if you like pictures of cats you can follow my cats on Instagram @noodlebeingapotato.

ANDI:

Yes, and what about you Andi?

ANDI:

Easiest place to find me is on Twitter @firsttimetrek.

GRACE:

All right, and to learn more about our show or to contact us again in general visit WomenatWarp.com or find us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram @womenatwarp. You can also email us at crew@womenatwarp.com. And for more from the Roddenberry podcast network visit podcasts.Roddenberry.com.