

Women at Warp Episode 18: Voy-o-ween

spooky music

JARRAH:

Hi and welcome to Women At Warp. Join us as our crew of four women Star Trek fans boldly go on our biweekly mission to explore our favorite franchise. My name's Jarrah and thanks for tuning in. Today we have crew members Grace.

GRACE:

Hi.

JARRAH:

And Sue

SUE:

Hey there.

JARRAH:

And before we get started we have a little bit of housekeeping. I'm gonna start off by getting Grace to talk a little bit about Geek Girl Con and.

GRACE:

Yes Geek Girl Con.

JARRAH:

Yes, and about some other news. So go ahead Grace.

GRACE:

Well first off, we had a *great* turnout at Geek Girl con this weekend this past weekend. It was amazing, and I want to thank so many people for coming out and supporting the event, and supporting all of these great guests we had, and some of the wonderful topics that we got to explore together this weekend. Now in sadder news Star Trek original series actor Bruce Hyde has recently passed from throat cancer. For those of you who don't remember him he was and he was, I want to say Ensign, Kevin Riley. And I wanted to bring him up because I love the fact that he's just an incidental feminist in one of the few drunken throwaway lines he gets. He walks into a room sees all the girls at the control panels and goes "Yeah, this is what I like to see! Women getting to work too!" *Sue laughs* And then he gets drunk and hijacks the com system and starts singing Take Me Home Again Kathleen. But that bit always brings a smile to my face, just the one guy who when his inhibitions are lowered he's like "Yeah? Why aren't we doing this thing more? This is a thing we should do!" Which I can really relate to when it comes to my inhibitions being lowered.

JARRAH:

laughs Yes. Incidental feminist.

GRACE:

So, may Kathleen take him home again to greener pastures. *all aw*

JARRAH:

Thanks Grace. I'm also just gonna remind listeners that we have a Women At Warp Patreon, which we would love for you to support. Over the past couple months we've been putting up quite a bit of content, advanced content, and exclusive content for our patrons from Star Trek Las Vegas and Dragon Con. And we had a reading. Melinda Snodgrass who is a star trek writer.

GRACE:

The Snod! What-what!

JARRAH:

We had some extra interviews from Star Trek Las Vegas. So there's perks for you for supporting us, for putting in as little as a dollar a month. And there's higher levels if you would like to support us more. It just helps us do things like upgrade our equipment, and pay for our Women At Warp website, and other things like that. And get materials created so that we can spread the word at conventions and keep bringing you more content from conventions. So if you'd like to support us we're at Patreon.com/womenatwarp. That's P A T R E O N.com/womenatwarp.

GRACE:

Show us some love.

JARRAH:

laughs So initially for this week we had planned to air our show with special guest Diane Duane. But unfortunately there were a few delays in getting the recording happening, so the episode is recorded but it wasn't quite ready to be released today. So we were sitting around and we were like "You know, we haven't talked about Voyager in a while so we should do something about Voyager" and then "Hey, it's almost Halloween. And you know what? There are a bunch of great kind of Halloween-y Voyager episodes."

GRACE:

And God knows we are just giant Halloweenies over here.

JARRAH:

Yes yes. Exactly.

GRACE:

So we're all about that.

JARRAH:

Yes. So we are going to celebrate Voy-o-ween today. Or, happy Hallo-women at warp! *Sue laughs*

GRACE:

Ooooooooooooooh! I love it!

JARRAH:

laughs And look at a few of the slightly, I will say the delightfully terrifying, Voyager episodes as opposed to episodes like Threshold that are just purely terrifying.

GRACE:

Unintentionally. *Jarrah laughs* We assume. We can only assume.

JARRAH:

And so we're going to start out with Bride of Chaotica.

GRACE:

Which is a *super* fun one.

GRACE:

Yeah. You just finished watching it Grace, do you want to give us a little recap?

GRACE:

I did. The gist of the episode is that Harry Kim and Tom Paris have a holodeck program they call Captain Proton where they go on Flash Gordon style sci fi adventures, in the style of old timey.. serial.. movie theater...sci fi shows. That was a very apt description of it. Anyway, unfortunately when they're running the program interdimensional visitors show up and think that the holodeck program is real, and that this is the way they need to make contact with this dimension. So they pretty much have to play along with the entire holodeck program. And they wrote Janeway into it to be the Queen Arachnia, which is so fun to see, so that she can seduce their nemesis Dr. Chaotica. Hi-jinks ensue.

JARRAH:

Yeah. So this was co-written by Bryan Fuller with Mike Taylor. And Bryan Fuller says that they actually sat down and watched a lot of Flash Gordon, which you can totally tell.

GRACE:

You can really tell, yeah.

JARRAH:

The art direction in this is just adorable and impressive.*laughs* And It's really fun.

GRACE:

It genuinely looks like an episode that would have been really fun to be a part of, and fun to make, because it just looks like everyone's having a blast with what they're doing.*laughs*

JARRAH:

Yeah. Like, Kate Mulgrew says in the Voyager Season 5 DVD, "I was the bride of Chaotica, only the funniest man I've ever met in my life. When he electrocuted himself I wet my pants. It was just outrageous! And I to seduce him. It's a cartoon! I was playing a 40s movie star. It was outrageous. It was so much fun and I hope the viewers liked it as much as I like doing it. I loved the double punch, the curve, and when there was a little levity attached to it. Heaven!" So you- and you can totally tell they're having *a lot* of fun in this episode. Even like Tim Russ said that because this was the one of the few episodes that he got to kind of go into- he had never been on that set, and there wouldn't normally be a reason for Tuvok to go there, but because he has to go with Paris to check out the holodeck problems, he gets to go there. And the Doctor gets to pretend to be the president of Earth-

GRACE:

And he's just *loving* it. That's what I love, that he gets the moment to be the total thespian and be like **stoked** "I'm gonna be the president of Earth."

SUE:

And then he just starts throwing puns everywhere, which is *amazing*.

GRACE:

Like he does. That's part of the beauty of the doctor really.

SUE:

laughs Yes, that is part of the beauty of the Doctor.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Did we like, mention that- so like there's these photonic aliens that are- they're basically invading the holodeck. Because they're trying to make contact. Because they're-

SUE:

Because they are photonics, they want to make contact with photonic lifeforms right? That's why they think they have to do it through the holodeck.

GRACE:

And since they're in a 1940s serial they, of course, show up looking like men in black. Which I loved.

JARRAH:

But then Chaotica thinks that these are invaders from the fifth dimension and he starts killing them. And this is like- this was the hardest part for me to suspend my disbelief, because

obviously this is a serious problem that Voyager has to fix. But I feel like they still take the death of all of these photonic lifeforms that they've just made first contact with like pretty lightly. But anyway Chaotica is killing them. And in order for Voyager to escape this like field that the photonic aliens have them in, they have to help Captain Proton and the fifth dimension photonic aliens defeat Chaotica.

GRACE:

What a story! I could spend a whole forty eight minutes hearing about it. *Sue laughs*

JARRAH:

So Sue, what were you going to-

SUE:

Oh. Just that I love a good holodeck malfunction episode. And I especially love it when they're pretending to be in cheesy movies and *then* the Holodeck malfunctions. It's just fantastic. Also who wants to help me make an Arachnia cosplay.

GRACE:

I'll do it. I'm in. *Sue laughs* I mean I'm straight up in all that.

JARRAH:

I was just going to say, so we did have a listener comment from Elizabeth via Facebook on this episode. She says "On one hand it's a really fun episode as a standalone. Kate Mulgrew and the guest stars all seem to be having a blast and it had a pretty fun premise for a holodeck gone wrong episode. On the other hand I can never fully escape the context of the Voyager sole holodeck tastemaker was a white guy who wanted the entire crew to take part in his fantasies of a pretty racist and sexist time. And they never really did anything to counter or acknowledge that. The bit where Seven refused to play the damsel and just ripped out the robot guts, I forget if this was Chaotica or another episode" that was- sorry side note that she said she forgot if it is a different episode. But anyway back to her letter. "So that part was fun, but it came off more to me like 'haha, Seven's a party pooper as always.' Then Tom's being kind of a jerk by asking her to play this boring-ass role. And I can't think about Tom telling Harry he's not allowed to play Captain Proton without having flashbacks to Hal Jordan and the Pie Face and similar unfortunate comics tropes."

GRACE:

uncomfortable noise Yeah. Ethnic minorities *always the sidekicks*. Not fun stuff. But I actually appreciate Seven being kind of a buzzkill in this scenario, cause sometimes you gotta just rain on an assholes parade. It's our duty as killjoys really.

JARRAH:

I definitely like that moment. It *is* in a different episode, and I'm forgetting which one unfortunately. But I think that Janeway's *looks* in this episode also kind of accomplish that.

Particularly the part in the briefing room, and then when she's walking down the hallway and Paris is explaining things to her and she's just making these *amazing* facial expressions about how ridiculous this is that she has to say things like **sultry voice** "I admire your clever fiendishness" and flatter him, and use spider pheromones on him. That-

GRACE:

It's very clear that we have this campy concept of an episode but the whole time there's just this big vein of "You've got to be kidding me."

JARRAH:

Yeah. Yeah exactly. So it isn't explicit what the problems were in terms of the sexism and racism of that media, but I did find that Janeway's taking this as like "I gotta do this but it's super ridiculous" that helped somewhat.

GRACE:

I also agree with the disbelief of Tom Paris being any kind of tastemaker, personally.

JARRAH:

Yeah no kidding. I mean I think- not to get into this but Fairhaven is an even worse example. **all laugh**

SUE:

It is true though, that most of the crew wide recreation I guess on the holodeck is all Tom Paris.

JARRAH:

Do they do like- does anyone else make a thing that they all do? Because like the Luau is designed by him, and Fairhaven, and the Captain Proton.

GRACE:

Oh and the French cafe thing.

SUE:

Yeah. He's almost like you know self-appointed recreation socialisation officer based on-

GRACE:

Oh my God. Tom is trying to steal Neelix's role. **Jarrah laughs**

SUE:

Right?

JARRAH:

Yeah. I mean DS9 certainly has some issues on that as well. And I think- we have to talk a little bit I think about the romanticizing these like sexist and racist media narratives.

GRACE:

Wouldn't it have been just great if Ben Sisko had just showed up like "Hi folks, let me tell you everything that was wrong about this period that we're not acknowledging here."

JARRAH:

Yeah. I mean you're referencing Badda-bing Badda-bang in Deep Space 9, obviously. Which I think is a great scene, where he's basically pointing out you're totally overlooking all the racism of this time and I'm not going to pretend that didn't exist. Which is awesome except for no one ever says a lot about the sexism. And Ezri and Kiras only job is to seduce guys in that episode.*laughs* And I think the worst example of this is Our Man Bashir, where you actually have like-

GRACE:

Yeah. The straight up James Bond parody.

JARRAH:

Yeah. And Dax is like Dr. Honey Bare, and there's *never any* acknowledgement that this is problematic. And even in this episode, in Bride of Chaotica, Harry and Tom have sort of a bro moment where Kim complains "Hey, I thought you said there were slave girls in this chapter?"

SUE:

That was so upsetting. Totally unnecessary.

JARRAH:

I know. And then Tom's basically like, well after we infiltrate the fortress we'll free Chaotica's Harem, and Noo. Like-

GRACE:

It's going to turn out they're already being freed by Furiosa *Jarrah laughs* and it's gonna turn into 'nother holodeck program. It's gonna be great.

JARRAH:

Yes! Captain Proton Mad Max mash up!

GRACE:

Let's do it! *Jarrah laughs*

SUE:

You know what else was totally unnecessary though? In their conference room after she reluctantly agrees to play Arachnia, she leaves the room by throwing out the comment. "I'm a size four."

JARRAH:

Ew. I totally missed that. But yeah. Ew

SUE:

Like what? And not even a scene later Tom is giving her costume specifications. So like he's not going to order her costume anyway? *Jarrah groans* It's like-

GRACE:

Don't trust this dudes fashion and costuming advice. I really don't.

SUE:

But it's just so pointless. Like why is that even there?

JARRAH:

I'm thinking they'd have that on file too. That is really-

SUE:

Right?

GRACE:

This feels like something that Janeway should at least be allowed to do on her own.

SUE:

It was something I definitely didn't *remember*, but it definitely got my attention re-watching it this week.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Ugh. That's annoying. Because that strikes me as really un-Janeway. It feels like- like Janeway has never seemed to be someone who's very preoccupied about her appearance, and we know that Star Trek doesn't really do a good job on body diversity. But for them to basically have the captain like trying to, I don't know, subtly brag about her weight is weird. I mean, overall I think Janeway- it's cool that she definitely has the situation in hand, so even though at this point she gets restrained by Chaotica's restraint field, or whatever it's called, she gets out of the situation. And by the time Paris gets there Paris is basically like "Oh, I guess you kind of had this under control so-"

GRACE:

Well, she *is* the captain so.

JARRAH:

She *is* the *queen*.

GRACE:

She's the *real* captain.

JARRAH:

The part where Paris is like "Remember, you're the queen!" is so cute.

GRACE:

I just want to keep that as a motivation every morning when I wake up, *as Paris* "Remember, you're the queen!"

JARRAH:

Yeah. Then at the end- so then he, you know, he's like "Oh I guess you had this under control" and she's like "Well, I am the queen."

GRACE:

does vaudeville finale music/all laugh

JARRAH:

So that was definitely *it*-yeah. Because like, at the beginning we have Constance Goodheart like tied to the table screaming, as like a very typical damsel in distress. Than Janeway is obviously not at all that. So it does- I think it does challenge some of those- the tropes of that era of media, even though there's no one directly saying "Hey guys, this media is pretty problematic" because we're totally ignoring the fact that you're all like *"pervy laugh"* Yeah, slave girls."

GRACE:

Yeah, it's true that this episode is based a lot in looking at that and being like "Hey aren't these silly and ridiculous?" but at no point do they really stop and be like "Hey isn't this kind of messed up?"

SUE:

I don't know. I think that's kind of a trope too. Because in old stories like this, in like those classic science fiction action tales, you had the damsel in distress but really the only other woman you ever got was a villain. So it's okay for the women in these old stories to be really strong and outspoken and ambitious and going after-

GRACE:

But only if they're the bad guy.

SUE:

But only if they're the villain.

JARRAH:

Yeah. I mean she *is* the black widow trope. She is queen of the spider people, and she is using her pheromones to disarm men, and let their guard down so that she can suck the life out of them. And that is very very much an embodiment of that trope.

SUE:

Her to the pheromone thing was brilliant though.

JARRAH:

Yeah definitely. And because she is at the end working with Proton, so she is- she's a good guy in disguise, so it doesn't totally dismantle that. It more has fun with that, and shows that it's a bit absurd. I mean I would say Constance Goodheart does as well, like the way that she's- her screams and stuff are portrayed is very much showing this is absurd.

GRACE:

It's very over-the-top, it's very self-aware.

JARRAH:

All right. Any other thoughts on Bride of Chaotica?

GRACE:

Love the costume.

JARRAH:

Yeah.

SUE:

And love Robby the Robot.

GRACE:

Yees!

JARRAH:

Oh my God.

GRACE:

Actually when I showed up I had an idea. I realized that it would kind of be an ingenious Data cosplay if someone went to a convention just covered in tin cans with like Data's face painted on the head. I think that would be very funny and I want to see it now. Just intentionally bad cosplay.

JARRAH:

I'm also like- I've been trying to keep an eye out for Halloween costumes, 'cause I still haven't figured mine out. And I'm like "Maybe I should go as Satan's robot?" but it would be kind of hard to sit down I think.

GRACE:

laughs That's always the problem.

JARRAH:

Awesome. Well, another one that Greg on Facebook asked us to touch on, which is definitely sort of more I would say even more Halloween centered-themed than *Bride of Chaotica*, is *Haunting of Deck 12*. Which when I suggested this is an option, I think Sue you were like "I don't remember this episode" I'm like "Me neither, except the name." So, went back and watched it, and I didn't really find it incredibly much more memorable but it had some cool points. Basically it's not a new *Trek* story by any stretch of the imagination. It's basically there's an alien life form doing scary things on the ship because it's misunderstood and trapped, and people think it's a-

GRACE:

It's a monster story really.

JARRAH:

Yeah, for sure. But the only thing that's new about it is that it's put in this frame of Neelix telling a ghost story to the Borg kids. I really don't know who in the writers room was like "I know what we need. We need an episode where at least two thirds of it is Neelix giving exposition to the Borg children." *laughs* But anyway, it is kind of a fun idea. I just don't know that it works very well for an adult.

GRACE:

It's not a bad idea. It just could have been carried out better.

JARRAH:

Yeah. So basically he's telling the kids about all these malfunctions that are happening, but right off the bat someone sort of implies it's a monster and Icheb's like "Oh, it's not a monster. It's an alien life form" and they start speculating on what kind of alien life form it is. And Neelix goes "Yeah, but we didn't know that at the time" so they kind of cut the suspense out from under it, because you know that they're all gonna be okay, and that it's not really a monster, it's an alien life form. I don't know. But I mean, I did really appreciate Janeway in this episode. I remember as a kid being really scared in a couple parts. Like when the aliens start kind of suffocating her, but she basically kind of, hitting on all the episodes we're going to talk about, she basically owns the situation. And they are kind of trying- they take over the voice of the computer, and they're trying to order her around to different places on the ship, and finally she's just had enough and

she's like "No, I'm not your servant or your prisoner, rather" she basically is like "you're gonna have to kill me." And they start trying to kill her and she doesn't give in, because at some point she's basically just going "I'm not going to live subject to your whims. I've tried to help you and you kind of need to help yourself."

SUE:

Yeah I think this was a good Janeway episode, really. I mean she spent a lot of time just with Majel's voice *laughs* I guess. But *laughs* this is such a ridiculous sentence to say, for the number of times that entities have taken over the ship's computer *laughs*

GRACE:

We've got a tally going at this point.

SUE:

laughs I mean it's at least once a series right? But seriously, for all the times that something like this has happened on Star Trek I feel like this one was probably one of the most well done. I really liked the you know, "Access this database to be able to communicate with us" then "Captain Janeway report here." "Captain Janeway report there." And how it used- It didn't so much talk through the computer, as much as it used the typical commands that we hear as a form of communication. And I just- I thought that was pretty creative.

JARRAH:

Yeah I agree. And I like how other people are clearly a bit unnerved, and she's never really unnerved. She's just "I've got to be in control of this situation. There must be a logical explanation." It has some of her good science-y-ness, which actually in *Bride of Chaotica* to just to quickly mention there is a really great scene with her and B'Elanna and Seven of Nine where they're science-ing the shit out of the situation.

GRACE:

The boys are playing make-believe, but they're the ones doing the actual science. Can we appreciate that? *Jarrah laughs*

SUE:

That's pretty much *Voyager* summed up right there. *all laugh*

JARRAH:

But it's cool, because like after *Seven of Nine* comes on you don't get to see as much of B'Elanna and Janeway, it's like there's- it gets kind of split up between Janeway and Seven and Janeway and B'Elanna. And so it's cool to see all three of them *together* doing science. And Paris is just kind of there. He's like *resigned voice* "Yeah, I maybe need to answer a question." But they're really having this intense discussion. So that was a cool part to that episode. But yeah.

GRACE:

I just like the idea of ghost stories in space.

JARRAH:

Yeah.

GRACE:

Even if they're not actually ghosts.

SUE:

The whole Neelix Borg children thing just kind of fell flat for me.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Honestly, I'm not a big fan of the Borg kids. I'm sure we'll have an episode where we talk about Borgor kids or something *Sue laughs* and we can get more into that. But I don't find them all that interesting.

GRACE:

What the hell happened to that Borg baby?

JARRAH:

Yeah. *laughs* And I am more a fan of Neelix dealing with adult situations. *all laugh* I don't mean like *all laugh* having sex.

GRACE:

Ew!

JARRAH:

Sorry! Oh, I just mean that I think Neelix's best episodes are actually his serious episodes. Like the episodes where he's grappling with mortality and-

GRACE:

I'd agree with you on that one.

JARRAH:

- and the legacy of his people. And I think that the times that they tried to make him into a comical character just didn't really work that well.

SUE:

Ethan Phillips has some real acting chops, and they just made the character a goofball more often than not. And it kind of did it disservice to him I think.

JARRAH:

Yes. But this also reminded me of a scene I forgot from *Bride of Chaotica*. Which-

GRACE:

We just keep coming back to it.

JARRAH:

Sorry. *Grace laughs* But that's the one- the great Neelix Janeway scene where she comes into the mess hall and won't talk to him until he's given her coffee.

SUE:

Yes that is a scene that is screen capped *all over* the Internet.

GRACE:

Iconic.

SUE:

And it is important to get the coffee first. *laughs*

JARRAH:

Exactly.

GRACE:

She just takes a big sip, waits sort of for it to kick in, and is like "OK now I can talk."

JARRAH:

Yeah exactly. I think it's because it reflects how a lot of us feel in the morning when we get to work. Like, no people before coffee.

GRACE:

Otherwise it would just be cruel.

JARRAH:

Anyway, so moving on. The final episode we're going to talk about, I think actually has some common threads with the other two episodes. And that is, it's one of my favorite Voyager episodes actually, is the Thaw. Which is the season 2, I think, episode with the *scary clown*.

GRACE:

Yes, played by Michael McKean of Spinal Tap fame.

SUE:

Apparently, I need to re-watch Voyager again. *laughs* Because I didn't recognize this one at first either, and even when you told me "No, the one with the clown" I was like "What are you talking about?" *laughs*

GRACE:

The one with the *murder* clown, remember?

SUE:

So I watched and I was like “Ooooh! I remember this.”

GRACE:

You have to make the distinction between clown and murder clown.

SUE:

Took me a minute ther. *laughs*

JARRAH:

Yeah. It's a bit of a weird- It's a weird episode, and it has very mixed reviews, and at the time it aired I think it had even more mixed reviews. But over time, I think people have come to appreciate it because it is creepy and imaginative and has a powerful message. For example the director, Marvin V. Rush, he influenced the script and was really passionate about directing it because he had had personal issues with phobias, and he wanted to show that fear, who was represented by the clown, can sometimes be a useful thing. Because it reminds us of our own limitations. But also that we can- it is something we can overcome. So I think that kind of comes through.

SUE:

Yeah that's really effective actually.

GRACE:

And I know it definitely played on a lot of my phobias. And we have the scene where he's talking to Harry, and just starts cataloguing Harry's phobias, and starts kind of making them real. That part always gets to me, just “*shudder noise*. Oh I'm uncomfortable watching this!”

JARRAH:

Totally. Before we get too much more into it, Sue, do you want to give a sort of mini synopsis?

SUE:

Oh sure. So this is the episode where Voyager, I think, it's just going along, and they happen across this planet. And their presence or their scan triggers an automatic message that's like “There was a disaster. We're in stasis. We're gonna come out in” I think it's what 15 years? 18 years? something like that. “Please leave us alone. Don't do anything that will interrupt our stasis.” And based on the date of that message and the current date they realize that these people should have come out of stasis years ago and they haven't. So Janeway makes the decision to go and try and figure out what is going on with them and see if they can help. What

they find is that these people are hooked in, in their stasis pods, are hooked into sort of like a virtual reality. And in that virtual reality is where this character, this clown character, of fear has essentially come to life and is holding them hostage. So even though they know they're hooked up to virtual reality, if he threatens them or is threatened, you know, acts like he's going to do them harm like cut off their head they're having real fear reactions in their physical bodies that are in stasis. And I think a few of them, maybe two or maybe more by the time Voyager got there, had already died of heart failure from fear. So Janeway and the crew take it upon themselves to find a way to defeat this fear character and bring these people out of this virtual reality, get them out of these stasis pods so that they can go and live on their planet again. Also Harry and B'Elanna get trapped there. But mostly Harry.

GRACE:

Yeah. This is really about Harry being the damsel in this episode. *Sue laughs*

JARRAH:

Yeah, that was kind of- I mean I thought that that was a good flip on the trope that worked because- so Harry and B'Elanna get pulled in because they're trying to investigate what's going on in this virtual reality. And it's basically like a circus, or it's supposed to be. Like they actually cast a lot of Cirque du Soleil circus performers as the background actors.

GRACE:

And this would've come out right when Cirque du Soleil was getting big and getting popular, so it would've been so very trendy.

JARRAH:

Yeah. And obviously B'Elanna is like, he can't intimidate her. And he feeds off other fears. So it makes more sense to him to keep Kim when he has to send someone back with a message. And also because he thinks that Janeway is more going to be more maternal and protective towards Kim, because B'Elanna can clearly take care of herself.

GRACE:

He's still kind of the kid of the crew, let's face it. Naomi is there, but we all know Harry's the real kid.

JARRAH:

Although there is another, similar to the Chaotica thing, there's another Paris Kim bro moment in this episode. I would say-

GRACE:

Always with the bro-ing.

JARRAH:

It bothered me a little bit less. But basically the beginning Kim has a date with Niccoletti and Paris goes "Lieutenant Niccoletti? The one I've been chasing for six months? Cold hands, cold heart." And then Kim goes *suggestively* "Not when she plays the oboe." *all groan*

GRACE:

Can we please stop using bro-ness as a shorthand for male friendship? Because we can do better.

JARRAH:

Yeah yeah. I mean, I still feel like- even like Bashir and O'Brien didn't get that like bro-y talking about- well, I mean partly because O'Brien was married. But yeah, I don't know. Okay, I take that back. Bashir was definitely that bro-y early on in Deep Space 9. But he was like supposed to be not very good at it, whereas I think Paris is still supposed to be good at being a womanizer.

SUE:

Yeah.

GRACE:

Yeah. We aren't past the point where Paris is just for some reason good at everything.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Yeah, exactly. So that gets taken on a bit later in the show. But Kim is supposed to be a little bit more inept, but still *ugh*. They're basically just like, they've sized up the pool of eligible straight women on the ship, because everyone is straight in the future. So *laughs* all the straight women on the ship-

GRACE:

I find that hard to believe.

JARRAH:

laughs Just in Star Trek apparently. And like, they all- it's almost like they're like scoring them the way they're talking about them. So that's kind of bleh. Overall, the episode gets quite a bit better. So one other thing I want to say though about this sort of like circus sort of background situation, is one of the other performers, other than the clown, who has lines is a character who's referred to as "The Little Woman" in the credits. So she's played by Patti Maloney who's an actress with dwarfism, and she is really really great. And she's actually played a ton of roles in TV and movies.

GRACE:

She plays this one with just perfect indignance though.

JARRAH:

Yeah, she totally does. I just wanted to raise it, because I thought that it was really unfortunate that like I said earlier, Star Trek has kind of an issue, a problem with body diversity. And we don't really get to see a lot of Starfleet people who fall outside of the norms of what's considered conventionally attractive. So this is like one of the very few times we get to see an actor with dwarfism on Star Trek and she's literally a circus freak. Like Verne Troyer who played Mini-me in Austin Powers has a quote where he says "We can do anything you can do. Don't look at us like we're circus people or these people that you make fun of. I hope we just show people that we're very independent and that we can do anything that normal people can do." So I just kind of wish- I feel like that is a missed opportunity. That you had this great actress, and you chose to cast her in the role of a circus freak instead of a Starfleet officer or someone that you could see as a person doing the things that everyone else can do.

GRACE:

Seriously, infinite combinations and infinite diversity. You couldn't have anyone shorter than five feet? Really? Seriously? All of them alien species? It's frustrating.

JARRAH:

Yeah. It's like you're Talosians or you're in the circus. But- or I guess there were some other small aliens. But at any rate it is very much about like "you're different from everyone else" which is I think unfortunate. But she does a really great job with this role so I don't want to, you know, make this seem like I didn't appreciate the actress at all.

GRACE:

She makes a very good, very creepy sidekick.

SUE:

At least they didn't really cast someone of standard height for that part. Right? *noises of agreement* Because I could see them doing that too.

JARRAH:

Yes. So just like I was saying that- so I think it's problematic partly because of the failure to represent people who look different than a standard norm, which is usually not actually representing the average of the population, it's representing an *ideal*. But also that with, you know, a few exceptions, which we will discuss in an episode on ability and ableism, there tends to be an erasure of physical disabilities and difference. Like, I would say obviously like Geordi is a huge exception to that. But it's considered something that is *remarkable*. And that's like, something that has to be a focus of that character. And that has pros and cons but, you know, when we get to Voyager there really aren't characters that are just kind of living with disabilities, and functioning, and being awesome Starfleet officers.

GRACE:

Yeah. Part of the whole “Having a standard crew that we don't get to really rotate out” means that it kind of limits the amount of characters that we get, which is sad. But part of the premise of the show. But they could have done something about that.

SUE:

Yeah. It's sort of like, the same issue that comes up when we have briefly touched on mental health in Star Trek. That the idea behind it was that by the time we got to the show there would be quote “cures.” Right? These things would be quote “fixed.” So it's difficult because it basically comes from an idealistic place. But it's still problematic. And like the only character I can think of that was ever in a wheelchair was Melora on Deep Space Nine. And really she's in that wheelchair because she was in a- she's from a low gravity planet.

JARRAH:

Yeah. And there has to be like this whole explanation. I mean the whole episode, and I value that episode, so I'm sure we'll talk about it more in detail later. I don't want to seem like I'm slamming that whole episode, but it's just to show that we rarely get characters where it isn't the focus of the story. Like Melora, the whole episode is about whether or not she should be cured. And there's the episode where Worf breaks his back and considers ritual suicide. And I think you're right, it does run into that thing of like “What will we have cured in the future?” But when you look at dwarfism it's kind of like- *laughs in frustration* where, you know, people are living full rich lives. So it's kind of insulting to be like “oh well people like you wouldn't exist in the future”. It kind of gets to like the Masterpiece Society. It kind of goes against the message of Star Trek, this idea that people who are different from this ideal are somehow- like need to be cured.

SUE:

Right. And that's something that's comes up a lot today when people talk about finding a quote “cure for autism.” A lot of people with autism will come out and say “I don't need a cure. I'm perfectly fine the way I am.” So to-

GRACE:

Different does not mean broken.

SUE:

-imply that somebody needs to be fixed when they're never broken. You know? It's not accurate.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Because who is defining what is normal? And it's the people who are *not* in those groups who are getting to define what is like the normal ideal way to live. So I think Star Trek at times does better addressing that but it's just a bit of a missed opportunity.

SUE:

And that went really far away from creepy clowns.

JARRAH:

It did.

GRACE:

Ableism is pretty scary.

JARRAH:

Yeah, totally. To get back to creepy clowns- so we sort of talked about this how Kim sort of becomes the damsel in distress, and the clown kind of runs him through all of his fears including one where he's literally sort of put in the position of watching this little girl being restrained as she's about to be operated on. So that is kind of interesting. And it's not presented in a way that's like emasculating in any way, it's just this is legitimately scary. And there is also like a fear of getting old, which is also problematic.

GRACE:

That's ageist there.

JARRAH:

Very very common in *laughs* Star Trek again. At least it's not like in the original series where Uhura sees herself getting old and ugly and just like *freaks out*. *laughs* But Kim sees himself getting old and fears sort of losing control of his faculties.

SUE:

And then immediately sees himself as a baby, because he fears being helpless.

JARRAH:

Yeah, he can't win. He can only ever be 30.*laughs*

GRACE:

Harry Kim can never win. That's kind of a theme of the show.

JARRAH:

That is true.

SUE:

I'm pretty sure he's perpetually like twenty two or something.

JARRAH:

Yeah. *laughs*

GRACE:

He's like Batman, he never really ages-

JARRAH:

Yeah, poor Garret.

GRACE:

-unless it's important to the story.*Jarrah laughs* And then it's a weird grim-dark future.

JARRAH:

Yeah definitely.

GRACE:

Dark Knight reference.

JARRAH:

laughs Very nice. But another similarity with this episode is Janeway saves the day. And in this episode she like *literally* owns fear! And it's amazing. I really- this is actually one of my favorite Janeway Captain moments. Because what happens is in order to- so first they send the Doctor into the holodeck to try to barter or negotiate with the clown-

SUE:

And the Doctors is pretty awesome.

GRACE:

Yeah, he is.

JARRAH:

Yeah definitely. But then the clown realizes that he's kind of trying to trick him and shut down the holodeck- or the sorry not the holodeck the mind link thing. But then in order to try to save Kim, Janeway says she'll go in instead. Even though the clown is able to basically kill people with fear, and he is *really* excited about that. Yeah. *laughs* He's like he's excited in like not just a way that's because she's the most powerful, but also like a sexual romantic way which is creepy. I think it is really tied up in the idea of of him wanting power, because he only exists by making other people afraid. But it is a little bit weird. And so when she gets there he says like "I'm not going to let you go. Not after all this. Don't we make a beautiful couple captain?" And it's pretty gross.

GRACE:

Maybe that's him playing on one of *her* fears? Which is pretty damn creepy so I would buy that.

JARRAH:

Yeah, I mean it does get to this idea that like women fear sexual violence. So in that sense it's kind of accurate because, you know, in our society that is one of the things that women are taught to fear, which controls a lot of our behavior and is not necessarily a good thing. But I think that makes sense. But you know, as a viewer it's like "Why are you doing this to the captain?" because that's gross-

GRACE:

Unnecessarily predatory behavior. You're an evil clown, you don't need to bring sex into this.

JARRAH:

Totally. But then it turns out it's not actually *her*. She is actually a hologram. *That* is so great. He starts dying because he's let all the other people go, and he can't exist without their fear to live on, and she gives this thing- the speech about "Starfleet Captains don't easily succumb to fear" and it's so great.

GRACE:

And then we get that great final exchange between them of him saying "I'm afraid" and her going "Good."

JARRAH:

Yeah.

GRACE:

And it's *gleeful voice* so spooky! I love it.

JARRAH:

Yeah totally. So even though, like he does creep on her, I could deal with it because I didn't feel like we ever got the sense that she was really vulnerable to it. Even though we don't know that she's tricking him right off the bat. She is clearly not actually going to spend the rest of her life with creepy.

GRACE:

With Creepy the Clown.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Yeah exactly. But this is also- I mean there's obviously a lot of horror tropes in this episode. The creepy clown being the most obvious one. But I felt this was also kind of a cool twist on the final girl trope. Which is, you know, like think about the end of *Scream*. It's basically-

GRACE:

Halloween, Friday the 13th. Yeah.

JARRAH:

Exactly. Like Jamie Lee Curtis. It's like, the clever girl usually- like the prettiest girl gets killed, the cleverest girl survives and kind of unmasks the villain or ends the villain somehow. And luckily they didn't do the first part of that trope but-

GRACE:

Are you saying that Harry isn't the prettiest girl?

JARRAH:

Well he doesn't die. *all laugh*

GRACE:

Fair enough.

SUE:

He almost dies.

JARRAH:

Like, that is actually an example of like tropes aren't always bad. They can be lazy, and there are some that are pretty hard to make positive, like the girl in the refrigerator. I think that's like-

GRACE:

Yeah, at this point we can really chalk a lot of it up to lazy writing.

JARRAH:

Yeah exactly. But the writer Dahlia Grossman writes at Bitch magazine "Many horror films have a sexually predatory killer at its center. It's empowering to watch a woman fight and conquer her attacker. The final girl shows us that fear is survivable and conquerable." So I mean, I guess another example of that would be like Jodie Foster in Silence of the Lambs. So that is kind of cool, that they embraced that part of the sort of horrors genre.

GRACE:

The idea that not only can you survive, but you can straight up *win*.

JARRAH:

Yeah. You're not just winning physically over an attacker, but you're also conquering your fear of the situations. When we talk about how like women are socialized to fear sexual violence, the idea that we can own that situation can be really empowering.

GRACE:

And especially in this case, because we've got Janeway literally conquering fear.

JARRAH:

I likes it! I'm down with this episode.

GRACE:

It is a fun one, definitely. It's very interesting to watch. It's very engaging, and again Michael McKean just steals the show.

JARRAH:

Oh, totally.

SUE:

Yeah. They did some really great casting on this. And he was mind blowing.

JARRAH:

Yeah and I mean, even Kes has some good little parts in this episode too. Just doing sort of medical stuff with these people that are in stasis.

SUE:

Right? Because it's early enough that the doctor doesn't have his mobile emitter yet.

JARRAH:

Yeah right. So generally everyone, I think, is used pretty well. I mean if Kim hadn't been kind of put in crappy situations for the rest of the series, this episode I think would be- you'd just be like "It's a pretty good Kim episode." Like we got to learn more about him, and I mean he wasn't *empowered*, but we learned more about his character and if he-

GRACE:

We got a lot of Harry in this. I guess you could say it was a Harry situation. *all laugh/groan*

SUE:

Yeah. Unfortunately, they just continued to play on him being the baby of the crew for the next six years.

GRACE:

Even when we have literal babies all on the ship.

SUE:

Will never get a promotion.

GRACE:

Poor Harry.

SUE:

The forever Ensign.

JARRAH:

Mock sadness Never gets his slave girls. *Sue laughs*

GRACE:

sarcastic Poor thing.

JARRAH:

laughs Anyway. So do we have any final thoughts on Voy-o-ween? Did we come up with any other creepy Halloween costume ideas? Any other star trek Halloween costume ideas?

GRACE:

Oh! Killer cheese! Neelix's killer cheese!

JARRAH:

gasps Yes! I should just dress up like a piece of cheese, and then people who don't know Star Trek will just think I'm being cheese for Halloween.

GRACE:

It's a cheesy costume, I'll grant you, but still..

JARRAH:

Well this episode will be coming out slightly before Halloween, and I probably still won't have a costume. So if any listeners have any ideas you can email them to crew@womenatwarp.com Or you can post them on our Facebook page, @womenatwarp, or tweet us @womenatwarp.

SUE:

How about a malfunctioning replicator? And you can just walk around and throw food at people?
Jarrah laughs

GRACE:

Oh! The impenetrable darkness of Janeway's coffee. *crew laughs*

JARRAH:

I could just be the void, and I could just dress all in black.

SUE:

Ooh, you could be Livingston *Jarrah laughs* Picards lionfish.

GRACE:

Or Barclay's cat.

JARRAH:

Yes. And I'm sure that, you know, in future years when we're doing another Halloween episode we will get to Cat's Paw. But we wanted to focus a bit on Voyager this year. So I hope you enjoyed. We had a really fun time talking about Voy-o-ween today. But this is just one of the many topics being discussed on the Trek.F.M. network recently. So here's a quick look at some of the other things you may have missed elsewhere on Trek.FM.

Trek.FM bumper

JARRAH:

We also wanted to let you know about the Trek.F.M. patreon. Trek.F.M. is a listener supported network. You can help us keep the Star Trek discussion coming by pledging a donation at Patreon.com/TrekFM. That's P A T R E O N.com/TrekFM. Every little bit helps keep Women At Warp and the other Trek.FM podcasts up and running. So once you've done the show again please consider hopping on over to Patreon.com/trekFM. So thanks so much for joining us today. Grace, where can people find you elsewhere on the Internet?

GRACE:

People can find me on Twitter [@BoneCrusherJenk](https://twitter.com/BoneCrusherJenk) and they can read my writing on the Mythcreants blog.

JARRAH:

And Sue what about you?

SUE:

You can follow me on Twitter [@spaltor](https://twitter.com/spaltor), S P A L T O R or find more podcasts and blog posts over at anomaly podcast.com.

JARRAH:

Brilliant. And I'm Jarrah, and you can find me at TrekKiefeminist.Tumblr.com. I am going to be posting a review of Bride of Chaotica hopefully in the next few days. And I'm also on Twitter [@JarrahPenguin](https://twitter.com/JarrahPenguin) which is J A R R A H Penguin. So thanks a lot for joining us. And we will talk to you soon. *spooky voice* Happy Voy-o-weeeeen! *Grace laughs*