

Women at Warp Episode 152: Comfort Trek

Grace: Hi and welcome to Women at Warp: a Roddenberry Star Trek podcast. Join us on our continuing mission to explore intersectional diversity in infinite combinations. My name is Grace, and thanks for tuning in. Small crew today, with us we've got the lovely Jarrah.

Jarrah: Hello.

Grace: Jarrah, it's just you and me today, which means that we are going to be acting as our audiences sommelier of comfort and calm.

Jarrah: Yes. Well, today's theme for the episode is comfort episodes. And the reason that no one else was able to join us today is that this episode hadn't been made yet. So people didn't know what Star Trek episodes to watch to feel better when the world was a dumpster fire. So yes, we're going to fill in and get you comforted.

Grace: Yeah. Light that way to Eden. Like, wrap your soul in fluffy blankets and give it a warm beverage via Star Trek. That's the plan for today.

Jarrah: Just crawl into a pile of Tribbles.

Grace: Yeah! And then they'll start purring and you'll feel warm and fuzzy and, you know, surrounded by living hair, but still warm and fuzzy!

Jarrah: Yes.

Grace: So before we get into our main topic, we have a little bit of housekeeping to do first. Our show is made possible by our patrons on Patreon. If you'd like to become a patron, you can do so for as little as a dollar a month? What? That's a crazy low price! And with that you get awesome rewards from thanks on social media to silly watchalong commentaries. We're actively working on some new, additional patron content. Visit www.patreon.com/womenatwarp. Also, if you don't want to throw money at us we understand. Times are tight. You can support us by leaving a rating or review on Apple podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts. Just go out there and say that you're listening. So we know you're out there and listening. We also now have merch. We have Tee Public store with new designs based on our banner art, plus logos, and some other non podcast specific Trek designs. I might have a few up there, so check it out. You can check it out at Teepublic.com/stores/womenatwarp.

Let's see. Is there anything else we need to touch on before we leap full force into comfort?

Jarrah: No, I feel like that is all people really need right now.

Grace: That is all the knowledge you need right now. Congratulations! You're caught up. You don't need to figure anything else out.

Jarrah: Yes. Isn't that comforting?

Grace: That's so comforting to know.

Jarrah: Amazing. We had a lot a lot a lot of listener feedback of what people's, you know, go-to Star Trek episode is for times that they are just finding the world a little too much. And so we're going to go through some of those, maybe throw in some of ours. Grace, do you have one that you go to Personally?

Grace: I do. And I will definitely be the first to say it's not exactly the most upbeat episode, but it's one that I definitely find comfort in. And that is Deep Space Nine "It's Only a Paper Moon." Which is the one where we see Nog having PTSD and seeking comfort hanging out in Vics. And I know that sounds like a very dark concept for a comfort episode, but for one thing, seeing someone actually go through- kind of to be put through the ringer and then go through the process of trying to heal from it. It feels really cathartic to watch, and it's got some just incredible acting in it. And I- I love a wacky aesthetic, so sixties Vegas works for me. But mostly it's just the fact that I have had times when I've been going through really rough times and just kind of sitting down and watching that episode, to put myself in a place outside of my own fear and anxiety, but to see someone else going through that and to see that someone else can come out the other side of that has been really comforting for me. And I actually got to talk to Aron about how much that episode meant to me. And he was an absolute sweetheart about it. So that's just going to be a very fond memory, always, for me.

Jarrah: That's lovely. And yeah, I totally get what you're saying about some episodes being kind of go-to- especially, you know, cause there are some times when you're like, "I just want to forget that things are terrible" some times where you're just like, "I just need a good cry."

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: And that's its own form of comfort. And I certainly feel like season three of Disco so far has been really cathartic. We'll see where it goes, but so far I'm just going like, "Oh my gosh, was this all just a metaphor for this year?" *Grace laughs* Yeah like growth, and hope, and trusting people-

Grace: and fluffy cats.

Jarrah: There's a lot of big themes in there. And these just kind of beautiful moments about persisting in kind of an unimaginable circumstance.

Grace: Yeah. There's a lot to take away from this whole season already. It's kind of blowing my mind.

Jarrah: Yes, for sure. And I mean, on the total other side of things I would consider pretty much all of Lower Decks, so far, a comfort episode or comfort- worthy. Like- it is obviously pretty hilarious. Like, if I had to pick one, I couldn't pick which would be the comforting episode. It would just be like, "let's just go rewatch Lower Decks."

Grace: It's definitely one of those shows where there's just enough of it and it's enough jokes per minute that you can just have it going on in the background and be like, "okay, I'm set for a couple of hours of something in the background that's brightly colored and making me laugh" which there's something to be said about.

Jarrah: Yeah, for sure.

Grace: Yeah. Plus, I've said it before and I'll say it again, Titmouse just does some beautiful animation sometimes.

Jarrah: Yeah. So nice. And they're union now, too! Woo!

Grace: Yeah, I know! How cool is that?

Jarrah: Its very cool.

Grace: So you get to watch Lower Decks and feel better about watching it knowing that they're one of the forces moving forward in unionizing the animation industry in Vancouver.

Jarrah: Yay!

Grace: Which is neat. Super neat.

Jarrah: I mean, maybe that's a good segue into one of our listeners suggestions-

Grace: Ooh, let's do it.

Jarrah: Which was Bar Association. So this was *Grace cheers* from SSRITrek on Twitter. And they say "Bar Association has become my go-to as things have gotten more, well, 2020. I'm really involved in my union at work and between Rom quoting Marx and O'Brien being willing to fist fight Worf for crossing a picket line, the episode both comforts and reinigorates me."

Grace: That is very well put. That is definitely one of those episodes where I know that I'm going to, at least, enjoy myself every time I watch it. Because it's going to leave me feeling fired up about, at the risk of sounding sanctimonious, that there are things worth fighting for.

And the rights of the people are one of them. And that just feels good to see that that persists into space. And that that is one of the ideas that can be spread around.

Jarrah: Yeah. It's a super cute episode, it's really funny, and it has a theme in there. But it's, you know, it's not getting like too too serious. Yes.

Grace: It's basically Newsies, but in space.

Jarrah: Yeah!

Grace: Which I want everyone to pause and take a minute to imagine. Especially the young Christian Bale part. *Jarrah laughs* Yeah. That would be great.

Jarrah: Yeah. That episode did need more tap dancing.

Grace: I mean, don't they all?

Jarrah: Tap dancing Ferengi waiters.

Grace: *whispering* Yes. I love it. Oh, my gosh.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Grace: Also, if you ever get the chance to- I know I bring up other stuff a lot, but the Newsie strike episode of Drunk History is just one of my must-watches of that entire series.

Jarrah: Yes! Ah, Drunk History segue. Just another comfort TV show. *laughs*

Grace: Yeah, pretty much. And also it's fun to see Jaylee Whole haley Joe- Jaylee Whole Osment, which is the bizarro version of Haley joel Osment, I assume. You know, doing stuff again and being active again, it's just like *excited noise* look at you!

Jarrah: It's Haley Joel Osment with a goatee.

Grace: *laughs* Yes. Jaylee Whole Osment

Jarrah: *laughs* Jaylee Whole would be a terrible name. *both laugh*

Grace: This is like the reverse universe version of him that didn't get his start as a child actor, but in fact got his start late in life as an adult film actor, and then *both laugh* slowly progressed into serious roles. *Jarrah laugh*

Oh, wow. Good stuff. But yeah, that really is such a fun episode to watch. And I love seeing how every year around labor day *laughs* people rediscover that episode.

Jarrah: Yeah. It is a fun one.

Grace: Yeah!

Jarrah: Did you want to pick another one from our list?

Grace: I would love to, cause this is actually one that I just rewatched this morning specifically to get pumped for this episode.

And that is- Kaia who writes for our blog, check it out, says "There are many, the one I rewatch the most is Carbon Creek. For me, the overall message is about compassion and looking past differences: the overall meaning of Trek. The people in the town welcome complete strangers and the Vulcan crew become part of the community.

So for those of you who don't remember that episode, that is the one for Enterprise where T'Pol is relating that Vulcans actually came to earth in the fifties to investigate the launching of Sputnik. And ended up crash landing on earth and ending up in a small mining town and have to kind of learn to live with it and become part of the community for the time being.

And it really is- I don't want to say "bottle episode." That's not the phrase I'm looking for, but it's a really good standalone episode, in that Kaia is correct, it really is a good sort of core sampling of the values of Star Trek. And also it's just a pretty good piece of sci-fi in terms of it being kind of "kitchen sink sci-fi" in terms of, day-to-day life is very strange and anytime you kind of stop and overanalyze it, you ask yourself "Wow, I wonder what an alien would think of the way we just kind of do this."

Jarrah: Yeah. And there's lots of like, fun references. Like, there's an I love Lucy Easter egg in there.

Grace: I love that part.

Jarrah: It's very cute. And like, she puts on the dress backwards. Like, they're funny- what do you call- like a fish out of water kind of comedy.

Grace: Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. And Jolene Blalock really sells the episode in terms of performance.

It's one of those things where where watching it I'm just like, "Man, I wish she got as much to do every other episode as she does here."

Jarrah: I also just like that, you know, she's telling this as a story to Trip and Archer, and is like totally smug about whether or not it happened. And they were like refusing to believe it. But it's a nice, you know, it's nice when she gets to kind of have the upper hand with them, which doesn't happen that often.

Grace: It doesn't happen enough, really.

Jarrah: If you want to listen to like a deep dive critical look at this episode, we compared it to the Voyager episode 11:59 in an episode of Women at Warp that we called "How I met your great great great-grandmother." *laughs* so, if you want to hear us go deep into that one. But it's a really sweet episode and, you know, the little nerdy boy who wants to go to college.

Grace: And they all are just like, "Oh, we are a species of nerdy boys. Let us help you."

Jarrah: Yeah. It's very sweet.

Grace: Definitely a feel good episode. Definitely one that you walk away from feeling satisfied.

All right, Jarrah, would you like to pick the next one?

Jarrah: Yes. Okay. I am going to go to one from Sarah. Sarah on Twitter says that she's picking a movie instead of an episode and it's First Contact.

Grace: Ooh!

Jarrah: "The moment they turn on the Borg battle over the audio, I start crying. Then when they choose to defy Starfleet orders to travel back to fight, I cry again. Then when Adam Scott says "It's the Enterprise!" *Grace cheers* I Absolutely lose my shit."

Grace: I don't use this word a lot, but that movie is freaking epic, in every sense. In, you get the full blockbuster movie experience, you get the full Trek fan experience, and you just get to feel everything!

Jarrah: Yeah. There's action. There's fan service.

Grace: There's Lily Sloan! What more could you ask for?

Jarrah: *laughs* Yeah. Drunk, Troi

Grace: Aside from more Lily Sloan, maybe.

Jarrah: Yeah. And probably more Dr. Crusher. Since Sue isn't here, we have to put in the Sue voice.

Grace: It's true. We have we have to do the stand-in Sue stanning.

Jarrah: *laughs* There's like, "I got to go take a leak." "I'm not detecting any leaks."

Grace: *laughs* You get super creepy Barclay. You get Borgs you get. You get *excited noise* you get magnetised boots! And space on the hull of the ship!

Jarrah: And you get like, the Vulcans land at the end and you know everything's going to be better.

Grace: It's true. You get such a, "Yes! It only gets better from here!" ending.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Grace: It feels so good. And also it's just a beautifully made movie. Do you have a favorite part of First Contact that just gets you up every time you see it?

Jarrah: I really like the theme song for First Contact. So like even just, you know, right when I hear the music I start being like, "Oh!" I really like the part where, you know, the "You broke your little ships" moment Where Picard has to realize that, like "This isn't the right decision and I've been pursuing this kind of like self interested obsession to the detriment of my crew." And it's a really powerful scene that is held up by two really great actors.

Grace: And on the other end of the spectrum, I just really love when they get to be dressed up in the Holodeck. *laughs* Also, the doctor from Voyager cameo cracks me up every time.

Jarrah: Yeah. *laughs* It's good.

Grace: It really is.

Jarrah: Also like, when they see the Phoenix for the first time and they're all like feeling the Phoenix. And Troi's like, "Do you need a moment?" Or something? Or "Do I need to leave you boys alone?"

Grace: I'm always going to think back to that scene in Lower Decks now, when they're doing just the big parody of all the Star Trek movies episode, and it's just the incredibly extended shot of the ship. And everyone's just bursting into tears and freaking out over it.

Jarrah: Yeah. I mean, As much as I think we all wish that Troi and Crusher had better material in the movies, I think that sassy Troi is one of the best Troi's. So I'm very into First Contact sassy Troi.

Grace: Yeah. Aw, good times. So for the next one, because it's another one that I know is one of my go-to feel good ones, I'm bringing it back to Deep Space Nine because I love Deep

Space Nine and I love a dress-up episode, which would be Bada Bing Bada Bang. Kate says "Bada Bing Bada Bang, of course! Gotta love heist antics, and incredible costumes, and a little bit of sociopolitical reflection, and heaps of found family love. Sisko sings "The Best is Yet to Come" and I cry every time." I love that one.

Jarrah: We definitely had a couple snarky Twitter comments about Bada Bing Bada Bang, *Grace laughs* but we had more people who said it was a comfort episode, and it was personally one of my earlier comfort episodes. Like when I lived on this tiny Island, we didn't have cable my sister would videotape DS Nine and Voyager and mail them to me. And I had that one on a videotape that I probably watched, like, more than anything else because I just thought it was so fun. Yeah.

Grace: Yeah. I really love the fact that- how intentional it is for this episode to be kind of before we get the big dramatic denouement of the show that wraps everything up and finishes everything out and will leave your heart broken in a few places, we get, this one episode that's just totally fun and totally off the wall in terms of plot. And I like that they took that, but they also didn't use that as a means to just kind of rest on their laurels and say, "it doesn't matter. This is, this is a comedy episode. This is a fun episode. We don't really have to put the whole-", there is effort put in. There's a lot of it and it's really appreciated. And again, coming back to Sisko making some commentary in there. I think that the scene where he's talking to the historical stuff on the Holodeck is very important.

Jarrah: Yeah, absolutely.

Grace: This is, this is a personal soap box, but I think we're kind of seeing- we've seen a few shows in recent years trying to do revisionist history. I'm thinking specifically of that Ryan Murphy Hollywood show where they're like, "okay, this is historical, but we revised it a little bit so that we can have people being openly gay and there's women visiting sex workers and stuff."

It's like, okay, I see why you want to put that in here. But are you being unfair to the people who struggled historically because of this? The people who were locked up because they were gay, the trouble that sex workers went through, just all this stuff. Are you doing that a disservice by just kind of leaping over that? And this is just such an excellent example and articulation of that.

Jarrah: Like, I don't know that the question is ever a hundred percent satisfactorily resolved, but I think it's important that they raised it, and it was really good for the time.

Grace: Even if it was just a little acknowledgement.

Jarrah: Yeah. Definitely. If you're cool, I will spin off that for a second and- cause it just occurs to me that there are, I would say, several holodeck episodes that qualify as comfort episodes. And the other DS Nine holodeck episode that I believe was brought up at one point in our listener comments was Take me out to the Holosuite.

Grace: Aww! Such a feel-good episode.

Jarrah: "Death to the opposition!"

Grace: "To manufactured victories!"

Jarrah: I love it so much. "You're out of there!"

Grace: *laughs*

There's so much of the episode that's just this crew, again with the found family thing, just kind of being there for each other. And being like, "okay, this is ridiculous, but this means a lot to you. So I'm all in" and that makes it so fun.

Jarrah: Yeah. And I mean, I think like a TNG example would be Fistful of Datas.

Grace: Oh my gosh. *laughs* Fistful of Datas is just so unabashedly silly, also.

Jarrah: There's a lot of really silly fun holodeck episodes throughout the series.

Grace: That's part of the appeal of the holodeck episode. The sort of "anything goes" aspect of it. Yeah.

Jarrah: Yes. "Let's get these people in some period costumes."

Grace: "Let's let these actors stretch their legs a little."

Jarrah: Yes. If there is a Satan's robot, *Grace laughs* all the better.

Grace: It does really make you wish that the cast of TOS got to do a few holodeck episodes, but I guess they've got a few episodes that kind of count, like Shore Leave.

Jarrah: Yeah. And I guess like they- almost kind of an equivalent would be the episodes where they're on the planets that have adopted the human cultures, like the gangster episode, A Piece of the Action.

I feel like if they had had the holodeck, then that could've just been a holodeck episode. It had the same kind of character that you would see in the later series.

Grace: Yeah. And on that note, we did have a few, one or two, TOS episodes recommended to us. One we've got on here is The Way to Eden. @LCtechHorace on Twitter said, "Space hippies! TOS, The Way to Eden. It's an episode that's so dated and campy, but with a real lesson, which was the core of STS original philosophy that shone through." And that absolutely is a spectacle episode, just in terms of the aliens of the week are so visually out there *Jarrah laughs* and- uh. Such a- uh, what am I trying to say? Such a reflection of sixties idea of visually out there. And I appreciate that a lot. And also you get to just see them having a jam session with Spock.

Jarrah: Oh man. There's, you know, I would say that The Way to Eden falls into maybe the category of like "bad yet entertaining." Like, I would, I would put Spock's Brain in there. But sometimes you just want to watch a really silly episode. I do think there is like, as our commenter pointed out, a real lesson in there, but it's not- maybe not like top of the TOS list.

But it's very funny. And you're right, the costumes are bonkers. This like, kind of Paisley mummus. And that's-

Grace: The giant wigs.

Jarrah: Oh my gosh!

Grace: Gotta love a spectacle.

Jarrah: They need to-this whole, like, "We need to make this a Star Trek more attractive to the young people. Millennials, am I right?"

Grace: "This is what the young people are into, right? *Jarrah laughs* They like big hair and body paint. That's what the young people are into. That sounds about, right."

Jarrah: Yeah. It's a fun one.

Grace: It really is. Do you have another one you want to pick?

Jarrah: Sure. I will go to the only Disco episode that was suggested

Grace: Yeah, Disco not usually much of a chill out show, is it?

Jarrah: No. So Lee suggests The War Without The War Within. I would suggest that maybe more of a cathartic comfort? But the comment from Lee is "I just really love Cornwell," which fair.

Yeah. So I think this is interesting because yeah, I mean, Disco is a show that, while I love, I haven't gone back and rewatched that much because I generally find it like, first of all, it's hard to find standalone episodes and I don't tend to find it very comforting. Although, like I said, this season I'm feeling like it's much more cathartic than previously. But one Disco episode that I would put on the list for like, a mostly standalone comfort episode is New Eden from season two.

I think that has, I mean, it's a more classic kind of Star Trek-like planet of the week episode, and they're fighting religious ignorance and there's funky stained glass windows, and a bunch of Canadian actors. *Grace laughs* And it's optimistic. And, you know, there's like the people from the backwards society that want to believe in science and to like- it has, you know, elements that we're familiar with from other Trek series as kind of like optimistic values pieces. So, I really enjoy the Way to Eden. Or- sorry, not The Way to Eden *Grace laughs* New Eden. We just talked about the Way to Eden. One has space hippies -

Grace: The Way to New Eden.

Jarrah: -and one is about a church planet that has stained glass of the red angel, that they don't know what it is yet.

Grace: There's definitely crossover potential there. And I feel like we need to put a pin on that and come back to it later.

Jarrah: Yeah. That was also like the first episode that gave like a little bit of teaser for how awesome Owosekun could be as a character, which we are still waiting for more, but-

Grace: Hint hint, we are waiting.

Jarrah: But yes, it's great.

Grace: Another one that's got- I appreciate just because it's a really low stakes episode, in that there isn't too much to actually get tense over, is Virtuoso from Voyager. And we've got a comment from Ann Marie saying "It's cute and funny with amazing music and the most beautiful moment at the end really captures the human condition and feels hopeful. I just love it." And if you don't remember, Virtuoso is the one when the Doctor on Voyager accidentally introduces music to an alien species and it blows their minds and they just think he's the coolest for this, because he can sing.

Jarrah: And then at the end they basically discover rock music and they're like, "we're done with you."

Grace: They get into prog rock, and then they're like, "It's all over old, man. Get outta here."

Jarrah: But it is really sweet.

Grace: It's such an- it's basically the story of the Nightengale and "We made a newer better version. Byeeee."

Jarrah: But like, the Doctor, you know, feels like he's finally being appreciated for something that kind of he had a say over because, you know, most of what he does on a daily basis is his original programming, is medicine. And he kind of loses sight of the way that he is valued for the way he's evolved and who he's become. And yeah, the Voyager crew aren't always that great at showing him. So, yeah. It's a really sweet episode.

Well, one detail that also just kind of cracks me up about it, is when he gets to the species and is like communicating with them about, you know, "This is music, this is this awesome thing that we have in our part of the galaxy." and one of the alien leaders he's talking to is played by Paul Williams, who's *laughs* a really famous songwriter and actor. He wrote all the music to the horror musical The Phantom of the Paradise. He was The Penguin in the Batman cartoon from the nineties. And he has written a ton of really famous songs. One of the best being The Rainbow Connection and also the theme song to The Love Boat.

Oh my gosh. I did not know that!

Grace: Yeah. So being like "what is this music?" But coming from this prolific song writer is pretty hilarious to me.

Jarrah: Can I throw in Another random silly Voyager episode, which is Live Fast and Prosper? The one with *Grace laughs* the con artists that are pretending to be like Janeway and Tuvok. And the guy who's pretending to be Tuvok, who's like the method actor. *both laugh*

Grace: The method actor! Yes!

Jarrah: Oh my gosh. It's so funny.

Grace: It makes me think of the Brooklyn Nine Nine episode when they're trying to make a video for the station, but they decide that the real people aren't jazzy enough. So they hire in actors and the guy's like, "I think that my Ray Holt is secretly a drug addict."

Jarrah: *laughs* Yes!

Grace: And he's super into it.

Jarrah: Aw! There's some great episodes of, well, Brooklyn Nine Nine, but also Voyager. And yeah, it's a lot of these ones that are kind of sillier feel like, they kind of come in later seasons, maybe that they weren't so worried about how characters were going to be taken, or just like the characters are more relaxed into themselves.

Grace: Maybe they weren't worried about having anything to prove. Who knows? Or maybe they were just like, "You know what? Let's do something fun for the cast this time around." Good times. That's going to be my catchphrase of this episode *in a weird voice* " Good times!" I slowly morph into good times Grace, who can only speak in catchphrases and talk about upbeat episodes.

Jarrah: Word.

Grace: That's what we're learning from this episode.

Jarrah: "Nine nine!"

Grace: My gosh. Did you see the trailer for the Quebecois version that's coming out?

Jarrah: No!

Grace: *laughs* That's a thing that's coming out. If you want to watch something and feel like you're looking at it through a fun house mirror.

Jarrah: I do, is it called Neuf Neuf?

Grace: *laughing* I dont know! I couldn't tell, it was in French. *both laugh* and that's your segue.

Jarrah: Segue for our Patreon. We do a thing called the Spore Jump, where we do episodes about non-Trek topics for our patrons at a certain level. So you folks just recorded one on horror stuff?

Grace: Yeah. Yeah, we did. It was one of those episodes that went off the rails really fast. Cause it's a topic that it's really easy for those of us who are horror fans to get talking about. And it's always fun to try and explain really weird, bizarre stuff to Sue because she is a- Oh, Sue. Very much that *as Sue* "what are you talking about?" *Jarrah laughs*

Jarrah: We haven't done one on Brooklyn Nine Nine, so I feel like that needs to be added to the list.

Grace: Something we could do. Definitely. But back to our comfort episodes.

Jarrah: Yes. Well, there's one more Voyager one. Oh, actually there's two Voyager ones on the list. So let's knock those off. So, I felt like it was necessary to include Sue, not our Sue, but another Sue *Grace laughs* who I'm sure is equally awesome, says "Year of Hell, because then I feel better that somebody has got it tougher than me." And you're not alone.

Grace: There's definitely something to be said about that.

Jarrah: I actually feel like we published an article on the blog about it. Uh, about like- yes! We did. And I will double check, but I believe it was by Kelly. And it was about basically drawing lessons from Year of Hell to navigate turbulent times.

Grace: And I definitely know that feeling of, you know, "I need to know that someone else is having a harder time than me just to put it in perspective," because I've definitely had frustrated days where the only way I could unwind was by like putting on reruns of I Shouldn't Be Alive *laughs* in the background or something. Cause I'm a monster.

Jarrah: Yeah. Year of Hell is definitely all about persistence and about, you know, needing to rely on your support network and that that's okay. And that you can survive without coffee.

Grace: At what cost though, really?

Jarrah: Yeah.

Grace: But there's a happy ending at the end and all that. So-

Jarrah: Yes. If you do want more on it the article is called "Surviving the Year of Hell: Insights From Star Trek Voyager", and it was written by Kelly Fitzpatrick on our blog back in June.

Grace: And the other episode we've got from Voyager on our recommended list is The Muse from Voyager.

Jarrah: I think it's just Muse. THE Muse is that DS9 one. *laughs*

Grace: How many muse based Star Trek episodes are there? Oh my God is that James L. Brooks movie secretly a Star Trek episode? Who knows. So @fruiter says "I love Muse from Voyager. B'Elanna saving herself, supporting the arts, and stopping a war." Which is the episode where B'Elanna crash lands on a planet and a theater writer finds her and starts making a series of plays based around B'Elanna and the adventures of Voyager, in very old timey Greek theater style.

Jarrah: Definitely.

Grace: And I'm going to admit I'm a little biased on this, because I studied Greek theater in college. So there's a lot of just little bits of that that cracked me up on a deep level. And also I got to love anything that's part of the gag of it is *pretentious voice* "For the theater. It's about the arts, and how the artistic temperament is so volatile."

Jarrah: Yeah. And this also led to just a lovely exchange on our Twitter about how awesome B'Elanna is, which I always appreciate.

Grace: She is. I love the B'Elanna.

Jarrah: I would say that B'Elanna tends to have more of the like cathartic comfort episodes, but this is like a good one to pull out that doesn't necessarily put you through the wringer.

Grace: Yeah. It's just B'Elanna stranded on a planet, and you know she's gonna make it out okay. Because otherwise this would be the weirdest way for them to kill her off.

Jarrah: *laughs* Yes.

Grace: And like, that's a comfort there. Just like, "No, there's no way they write off- they end this character this weird."

Jarrah: All right. Well, we have a TNG suggestion from Anika which is Rascals. *Grace cheers* Which, you know, is one of our faves on Women at Warp. And Anika says "Mainly for the Guinan and Ro subplot. The reminder to take time to play, to let go, jumping on the bed, the last coloring scene, and the whole episode is just silly and fun." And then Jenny adds "Rascals for sure. I need more tiny Picard temper tantrums." *as Picard* "I need to see my father now! Now! Now! Now!"

Grace: This is actually the episode I was watching when I was late to start recording, cause I wanted to get to that part before we had to start *both laugh* because, Oh my gosh, you just know that Riker was giving him a hard time for that for the rest of their entire friendship. Just like, "Hey, remember that time you got turned into a 12 year old and threw a complete total hissy fit? That was great."

Jarrah: I love it. "He's my number one dad." So how comforting was it Grace?

Grace: Incredibly. Also just sometimes, again, watching people who you love and care about and seeing them just kind of working through this weird out there, not necessarily horrifying situation and just being like, "you know what? Sometimes life throws you a curve ball and it's super weird." And sometimes you just got to say, "well, this is what I'm dealing with right now. Okay. What do I do?" And I appreciate that in this episode.

Jarrah: Yes.

Grace: Also the little children costumes. Oh my gosh!

Jarrah: Baby Guinan and baby Ro.

Grace: Wee little fancy lad Jean-Luc Picard.

Jarrah: Yes.

Grace: You could just see him, like in a little Lord Fauntleroy outfit, frolicking around the decks. Saying *in weird fancy lad voice* "Where are my berries and cream?" *Jarrah laughs* This rich fiction I'm evolving here for fancy lad Picard.

Jarrah: Yes. I feel like this needs a spinoff fanfiction series. *Grace laughs* Like it's an alternate universe. Like, what if he didn't get turned on back?

Grace: What if he just decided to live out all of his dreams that he didn't get to fulfill as a child? Like, Peter Sellers style. Just be like, "no, that's my life's work now. I'm going to go and I'm going to tell my brother he's a butt face, *Jarrah laughs* but now I'm doing it as a Starfleet captain!"

Jarrah: Yes.

Grace: Just retires, takes that sweet star fleet pension and gets up to, you know, all the stuff he never got to do as a kid, it's kind of like reverse Big.

Jarrah: That would be awesome. Or even just, you know, he has to keep leading the Enterprise, but he's just looks like he's 12.

Grace: That'd be pretty great. There's just the one ship in the fleet that's led by a 12 year old. And they still invite him to like banquets and huge historical agreements and stuff. And every now and then someone will lean in and just be like, "Is that a 12 year old? Is he someone's kid?" And like, "no, he, uh, he actually brokered this whole thing." "What?... can I a-" "no, don't ask. Don't- don't ask it's a whole thing. Don't get into it."

Jarrah: It did surprise me that we didn't get any Q episodes that I saw named. Actually, to be fair, I didn't note down everyone that just suggested episodes by title with no explanation. So it's possible people suggested some Q episodes and didn't explain why.

Grace: And just to note, that gets you more likely to have your comment read, if you elaborate, rather than just give us a title.

Jarrah: We appreciate all of them, but there were so many that we had to- I had to pull the people that also said why it was a comfort episode. Especially cause like this definitely didn't happen, but if someone had been like "Q2," I would have been like, "I don't believe you."

Grace: I would consider that one of my comfort episodes actually.

Jarrah: Why!?

Grace: Because, I will be completely honest. I have a special affection in my heart for characters who are just kind of smug little shit-lords. Cause they speak to me personally. *Jarrah laughs* And that is Q junior to a T.

Jarrah: Fair fair enough.

Grace: And also I appreciated the friendship between him and Icheb. And just how sometimes if you were the only two people in an age group, in a group of people, you got to kind of start a friendship based entirely around that.

Jarrah: I think mine's probably Deja Q, which is- Deja Q is the one where he turns into a human, right?

Grace: Yes. And requires 10 chocolate sundaes.

Jarrah: Yes. And Guinan stabs him with a fork.

Grace: That episode has got so many great one-liners in it also. Just, you got to love anytime you get a good John to Lance one liner. That's fuel for the soul. "How do I have to prove to you that I'm mortal?" "Die."

Jarrah: We also didn't get any Picard suggestions.

Grace: Yeah. For some reason, Picard, not exactly the most chill series. *laughs*

Jarrah: Yeah.

Grace: Shocking.

Jarrah: Even the one called Nepenthe. *Grace laughs* Although, as we were talking about with the, you know, cathartic episodes, and I certainly know that folks have written about why, like, an episode like Nepenthe meant something to them. Because of like grief they had been through, and similar to like some of their heavy episodes like The Visitor and stuff, that have helped people process grief in their own lives, but not necessarily like something you just want to pull out when, like you've had a really rough day.

Grace: Is it one that you watch when you've got your friends over and are having a slumber party just for funsies? Yeah. That's part of my grading criteria there.

Jarrah: Yes, for sure.

Grace: Just- just Star Trek in general is so much my comfort show. Having to just dial it down to specific episodes is such a challenge.

Jarrah: Well yeah. Definitely. One of my favorite comments that we got, just because of *laughs* like commentary with it, which I also felt like we had to include here for Sue's benefit, was from Rachel. "I reached new heights recently when after a rough week I watched Attached twice in one day."

Grace: Yes!

Jarrah: "Oh, and why? Because the way they," they being Picard and Crusher, this is the one where they are like psychically linked "the way they work together and support each other and their loving relationship is on max in that whole episode is so great. Even if the ending guts you every time."

Grace: Oh my goodness. Yes. I love how even people with pairings or shippers have a specific shipper appropriate comfort episodes.

Jarrah: Oh yes.

Grace: I love that. Also I got to say again, just the way that Crusher says croissants.

Jarrah: Yes. Ah, it's so beautiful! And like also, you know, Riker's just like hard-ass diplomacy. Yeah, I'm a big fan of that episode. And yeah, I will side with the shippers that the ending was not justified given what came later.

Grace: Well, we'll save that for our less comfort-based mindset.

Jarrah: Yeah. But certainly when I was a JC shipper, I had probably like three or four episodes that were like the comfort JC shipping episodes.

Grace: I love that you get to say that like, *world-weary tone* "Oh, back in my adventurous school days."

Jarrah: That was pretty much it. Yeah.

Grace: "Back when I was a gaddabout on AO3."

Jarrah: *laughs* It was- fanfiction.net was the big thing-

Grace: Yes! Oh, memories.

Jarrah: And even like pre fanfiction.net when we had like dial up internet and, you know, there would be these like 38 chapter barely explicit fanfics. *laughs*

Grace: That's- that's the measurement of just how primitive these years were.

Jarrah: There was barely any sex.

Grace: You couldn't even surf for a JC sexual act. It was the dark ages.

Jarrah: Maybe I just didn't know enough to know where to find those things. *Grace laughs* I'm sure they were out there, but yeah. Like weirdly Coda, which- it's an okay episode, but it's like Chakotay is like really upset that she's dead and I'm like, "this is very comforting."

Grace: Oh my gosh. If I can bring it back to TNG for a second, honestly any episode that has Lwaxana in it is going to comfort me because I am one of those weirdos who just likes to be aesthetically comforted by seeing sparkle, shiny, pretty things. Very oddly specific thing I know, but you know what? That's how my brain works. And also I like to imagine that someday I too, when I am old and whatever color wig I'm wearing that day, will be able to be flamboyant and outrageous. Which is like the more hip version of "when I'm old, I will wear purple." When I'm old, I'm going to be the weirdest most out there old lady you have ever met.

Jarrah: Yes. Lwaxana is all of our aging goals.

Grace: Yes, basically. Except maybe I don't want to have, you know, fall in love with David Ogden Stiers and then have him die. That would kind of bite, especially cause he died already. My God. *Jarrah makes a sad noise* Oh, I can take that back with a neat David Ogden Stiers bit story I've got. My family is from Eugene, Oregon, which apparently David Ogden Stiers lived there for a while and apparently he was a sick longboarder. So every now and then when my dad would go back to the hometown to visit the parents, you just be

driving along and "Oh, Hey, who's that old? There's an older guy on ska- that's- that's David Ogden Stiers from MASH! He is on a skateboard. He is grinding the hell out of it. Awesome!"

Jarrah: That's amazing.

Grace: That was just a thing you could see around Eugene, Oregon at one point. And I love knowing that. That brings me a comfort in me heart, that mental image there.

Jarrah: There was one more TNG suggestion from @logbookguy on Twitter, who says, "I love Pen Pals. The entire universe isn't ending. Some research is conducted. There's a nice non-end of the world ethical Prime Directive debate. A planet is calmly saved. Data makes a big fingered friend and there's a lovely holo-horse. Sheer bliss."

Grace: It's true. You really also got to love this episode for the fact that, not to genderize tropes too much or anything, but Picard is totally a horse girl!

Jarrah: Yeah.

Grace: He's totally that kid who's into horses. And you got to appreciate that he's just so unabashed about it. Like, "These are the best! I love horses! They're so cool Troi." She's like, "I'm so happy you're having a good time." Yeah. And it is a very sweet episode just in terms of- I feel like it says something about sci-fi fandom and just the love of sci-fi in general, that we all want to believe that somewhere out there in space, beyond what we know personally, there is a kindred spirit out there who is on our side. And I think that's just such a comforting thought. And I think it's something we all at heart want to believe.

Jarrah: This is also the reason why I love the episode Thine Own Self, which is the one where Data has amnesia. And the people on this primitive planet think that he's an Iceman. And there's like a little girl that befriends him and is like, convincing her teacher and her dad to listen to Data's science. And I think sometimes when we feel like we need to be comforted, we have similar feelings of vulnerability to when we're children.

Grace: Oh, absolutely.

Jarrah: You know? And this feeling that like, we just want to feel like we're safe. And so this being like, "Where's my Data? Where's my Data who will tell me I'm safe?" Or like when I was watching Discovery season three episode two. Um, hopefully this is not- I don't think this is too much of a spoiler to say this is a very nice moment where Saru boosts Tilly's esteem. *Grace squeals* and reassures her that like, she is a good representative of a Federation and that was like, "Where's my Saru? I need my Saru."

Grace: There's so many characters who you take comfort from to the degree that you want to comfort them and hug them and be like, "It's okay! Okay. I'm protecting you from this show."

Jarrah: Yeah. Just like, warms my heart cockles.

Grace: If I can briefly segue on Data, Blue Delliquanti did a really good article recently about sexualizing and robotic characters. And there's a point where they point out I'm so sorry- I'm

forgetting the actual cartoonist who said its name, but they were talking about being on a panel and talking about finding Data sexy and another person responded with. "No! I can't find Data sexy. He's my child!" *Jarrah laughs* and that will stick in my brain for so long. Too protective to sexualize.

Jarrah: Yeah. It's like, we all have interesting relationships with these characters. And that is just sometimes- like, sometimes you cast a character as a parental figure, or a child figure, or a romantic figure, or a sexy figure, friend or whatever. And yeah, it's like interesting. And then you hear someone like viewed it totally differently and both are valid.

Grace: And then there's characters like Janeway where different writers are trying to throw all of those at once at her. And it's like, she's spinning plates. Like *sings circus music* "I'm your mother figure. I'm sexual. I'm your child. *singing Bitch* I'm a bitch. I'm a lover. I'm a child. I'm a mother.-

Jarrah: " I'm a holographic Jane Eyre stand-in. I do not feel ashamed." *Grace laughs*

Grace: *still singing* Delete the wife!

Jarrah: *laughs* Gots to love us some Janeway.

Grace: Yeah. Let's just take them- because comfort characters are definitely a thing too. Just one that you personally dial into and just seeing whatever they're up to makes you feel like you're checking in on a friend sometimes.

Jarrah: Yeah. I mean, I think Tilly is one for me because of that like hopefulness and just kind of like wide-eyed optimism a bit. And, you know, just seems like a normal person dealing with, you know, anxiety or potentially neurodivergence. And she's like a very relatable character, but you know, really keeps on always being hopeful.

Grace: Surprisingly for me, Bashir is really one of those characters in terms of, I know I definitely rub a lot of people the wrong way on first impressions. And I always feel like I'm kind of the new kid in any situation who just showed up and is being misread incredibly. But- I don't know. Also just that character's growth is so comforting in terms of- oh, what am I trying to say? We are all attempting to grow. We are all attempting to *dramatic voice* manifest the person we want to be. Which is my super zen moment. Yeah.

Jarrah: Yeah. Well, we have one more TOS one. Did you want to read that one?

Grace: From Marina we've got Journey to Babel. "Journey to Babel hands down. It was a great episode that got me hooked on Star Trek. It has everything that is Star Trek elements, hope for a better future, *mysterious voice* a murder mystery, and most importantly, Leonard McCoy finally getting the last word. I have lost count of how many times I've seen it and it always manages to ground me, if not cheer me up." And that's definitely- that is excellent because again, Journey to Babel! You get aliens. You get them eating weird little fruit crystal bits. What more could you want?

Jarrah: I always kind of love when Star Trek characters parents show up and they're lovely and embarrass them.

Grace: I love that trope!

Jarrah: "He had- it was a Selat and it's like a Teddy bear."

Grace: and McCoy just going "A TEDDY BEAR?!?"

Jarrah: It's like, even though I wouldn't- I think the episode Family from TNG is obviously amazing. I wouldn't necessarily call it a comfort episode, but the Worf part with his parents is similarly adorable.

Grace: *As Worf* "Mom, you're embarrassing me." *Jarrah laughs* There's a rule of comedy that directly how serious the character takes themselves is proportionate to how funny it is to hear them say the words, "Mom, you're embarrassing me."

Jarrah: Yes. Also Kyle Riker. *Grace laughs* Never never forget. Hashtag never forget.

Grace: But Journey to Babel!

Jarrah: Yes. Journey to Babel has that, plus all those other things that Marina mentioned. And it's so good.

Grace: Also just eye candy episode, in terms of them trying to do a bunch of alien species in the sixties.

Jarrah: Yeah. The Tellerites and the Andorian.

Grace: Yeah. This is one of the first Andorian appearances, isn't it?

Jarrah: I believe so. And also Amanda's outfit.

Grace: Oh my gosh!

Jarrah: The cloak? So to die for.

Grace: It looks so comfortable, but so over the top. And I appreciate that because you can just really lounge around the house in that. You can be sitting in that, watching your stories and then say, "Oh, got to go to this banquet." and you're good to go. Just throw on some gloves, big hair.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Grace: Yeah. I want to live in that future.

Jarrah: Absolutely.

Grace: Let me see it. I don't think we have any listener examples anymore. So, do you have a comfort based topic or thought that you want to leave our listeners with?

Jarrah: Well, I also feel like I would be remiss if like neither of us mentioned The Animated Series at all.

Grace: Yes, that's true.

Jarrah: I don't know that I would say that, you know, every episode is equally comforting. As we did watch along recently and we were watching, was it the Ambergris Incident? *Grace laughs* Like "Um, this is very visually stunning, but a little boring."

Grace: But like "This is a cartoon. How has it so boring? Had they not discovered children's attention spans back then?"

Jarrah: *laughs* But there are many great examples of Animated Series episodes that are just joyful and hilarious. And generally I love it.

Grace: There's a lot to love. There's a lot to love in Star Trek in general. And I'm glad that it's a thing that we, you know, all as different fans of all stripes can look to it and be like, "yeah, this is a thing that brings me joy." Connect over that. And that's at its core why I love being a Trekkie, and being in the Star Trek fandom.

Jarrah: Yes. Yeah. I love that we had a lot of suggestions that were, I think, kind of like more or less universal. Like everyone would be like, "Yes, this is a comfort episode." But then a lot of people who had like a really personal reason for picking that thing.

Grace: Yeah. Everyone's got their own personal relationship to it and that's beautiful.

Jarrah: Yeah, exactly. And you know, if you want to write to us and tell us more about your comfort episodes or comfort characters, we'll give you the information at the end of the show. And we would love to hear more from you. And I hope that we have suggested some episodes that you might want to pull out to improve things in your life.

Grace: Hopefully, our yammering has been in some way a comfort to you.

Jarrah: We can only hope.

Grace: Yeah. We can. And you know what? Hope is important.

Jarrah: Hope.

Grace: Hope. *laughs* That's the note we're ending on. *Jarrah laughs* Hope. Hooooope. And any episode where there's puppies. Those are good too.

Jarrah: Oh yeah. Oh my gosh, we didn't even talk about Tribbles. But maybe we can all agree that they're comforting. Tribble episodes are comforting. I mean, maybe not The Trouble With Edward.

Grace: *laughs* Maybe not Short Treks. Yeah.

Jarrah: Definitely. Maybe not so comforting, but Trouble With Tribbles.

Grace: If it's over half an hour long and it has- no wait, there's the animated series. If it's over 20 minutes long and has Tribbles in it, you're going to have a good time!

Jarrah: Yeah! There, I'll single out that episode of the animated series as the specific example, I believe it was called More Tribbles, More Troubles.

Grace: They're pink, so it's cute. Even cuter.

Jarrah: Yeah. But maybe the comfort base ranking system would be a certain number of Tribbles.

Grace: Yes. That makes a lot of sense to me. And if it's like extra effective, they're purring.

Jarrah: Yes.

Grace: Awesome. That's our comfort-based Tribble system.

Jarrah: The Tribble Index.

Grace: It's like a Scoville unit, but for how much it makes you go "Aww!" So, that's about all the time we have for today. Where can people find you elsewhere on the internet Jarrah?

Jarrah: You can find me on Twitter @JARRAH-penguin. Or you can find me at Trekiefeminist.com.

Grace: And I'm Grace, and you can find me on Twitter @Bonecrusherjenk, B O N E C R U S H E R J E N K. And definitely not, you know, tired and overwhelmed and forgetting how to spell my own Twitter username.

Jarrah: It happens.

Grace: It does. Definitely. I constantly ask myself "my God, why didn't I just come up with something shorter?" It's too late to rebrand at this point. To learn more about our show or to contact us, visit women@warp.com or find us on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram @womenatwarp. You can also email us at crew@womenatwarp.com. And for more Roddenberry podcasts, visit podcasts.Roddenberry.com. Thank you so much for listening and take care of yourself. .