

Women at Warp Episode 153: Memorable Meals in Star Trek

Andi: 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 Andi, and thanks for tuning in. With me today, I have Grace

Grace: *goofy fancy voice* Mmmmgood morrow good listeners.

Andi: And also Sarah.

Sarah: I have nothing to follow that. *all laugh*

Grace: Sorry!

Andi: I mean, really who would? Before we get into our main topic, We do have a little bit of housekeeping to do. 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 per month and get awesome rewards from thanks on social media, up to silly watch-along commentaries.

So, if you're interested in that, feel free to visit us at www.patreon.com/womenatwarp. You can also support us by leaving a rating or review on Apple podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts. And just as a heads up, we do have a Tee public store now with new designs based on our banner art. And we also have logos and some other non podcast specific Trek designs.

So feel free to check that out. That's at Teepublic.com/stores/womenatwarp. Cool. Okay. So today our main topic is memorable meals in Star Trek. And basically I thought of this when I thought about how sad I was that we weren't going to get a good Thanksgiving this year. Because you know, of the plague and stuff.

Grace: Because the world is happening, and it's not happening the way any of us want it to right now.

Andi: Exactly. And I was starting to think about all of the really hilarious and awkward and weird meals, communal eating scenes, we have in Star Trek. And I thought it would be kind of fun to- kind of discuss them and what they mean to us. And it'll be just in time for Thanksgiving.

Grace: And let's be real. For a lot of us thanksgiving is the primary awkward meal of the year for us.

Andi: *laughs* Especially during an election year.

Grace: Oh, totally! It always takes me back to the SNL thing when they just announced that Trump and Clinton were running against each other and they're like, the only nice thing any families have to talk about at Thanksgiving right now is the new Adele video.

Andi: Yes. I remember that sketch very well.

Grace: So, for good and for bad family relations, we here at Women at Warp are here to give you a meal experience socially *all laugh* by proxy and by Star Trek, which really is the better way to do it. Don't you think?

Andi: Well, and there's just so much to say, I feel like, about food. Because I think people take it for granted. It's something you have to eat every day. But it can vary so much based on personal habits and culture, and like the amount of social interactions that are like tied up in having meals with each other is just a really interesting and dense topic I feel.

Grace: It's a fascinating topic to do a deep dive on. Definitely.

Sarah: You know, what I'm really interested in- and this just occurred to me. Was that I'm in awe of a lot of the dinner setups they have on Star Trek. But then if you think about it, they didn't have to do any cooking. *Grace laughs* They don't have to do any dishes afterwards. So of course, they're going to just make their table look amazing. You know, they have the time.

Grace: "This is going to be a 15 course meal because we don't have to clean a damn dish afterwards." *all laugh*

Andi: It's kind of interesting too, how many varied kinds of meals there are, and how many of them are represented in Star Trek. Because the very first one that I even thought of when I thought of this concept to begin with is the Star Trek: Undiscovered Country diplomatic dinner mess.

Grace: Oh, it is the granddaddy of awkward dinners in Star Trek. It truly is.

Andi: I feel like it's a gold standard *all laugh* against which all other awkward meals in Trek must aspire to. But the thing that I love so much about it is it's really well-written, like dialogue wise and character wise, but it's also- it's like the entire movie distilled into one scene.

Like the themes of the movie, all in one place.

Grace: It's pretty much the- if you want the gist of the whole movie, you can just watch that essential scene and get the vibe of it pretty well.

Andi: Yeah. So I'm going to assume there aren't very many people who don't remember Undiscovered Country. But the scene we're talking about is- basically the Klingons come to dinner on the Enterprise and they have a really awkward diplomatic dinner in which they're trying to kind of like, feel each other out, and kind of prepare for a possible truce between them. But there's lots of distrust.

Grace: And just, neither side is having it.

Andi: Yeah. Cultural misunderstandings. It's pretty great.

Sarah: I don't know. You really feel for Gorkon and Spock because they're there for diplomacy and it seems like Kirk and Chang are just there to flex.

Grace: Yeah, basically.

Andi: A hundred percent.

Grace: Like, you can really tell which people are there because they're invested and they're really trying to make this work, versus the ones that are just there and really don't want to be.

Sarah: I mean, claiming Shakespeare for another species is a pretty bold move.

Andi: Yes, it is. Very bold.

Grace: I'm trying to remember who it is who walks onto the launch pad with a giant freaking tooth.

Andi: Oh! It's Gorkon.

Grace: That is such a flex right there. *all laugh* Just like, "Hey, here's my giant animal tooth." *all laugh* "What? This old thing?"

Andi: *laughs* yeah. I mean, everyone has one, right? And just carries it around as a prop.

Grace: "This is just my walking stick. You wouldn't deprive an old amount of this, would you?"

Andi: Yeah, pretty much. And one of the comments we got on Twitter, I thought was interesting, from Amy who said "Nick Meyer made the food blue because he thinks there's not enough blue food in real life. And he's right." I think she's right. I mean, one of the things that I like about the blue food is it looks kind of off. It makes that awkward tension make sense almost, because everything is just a little bit off. And it's just visually interesting. But apparently the blue food was so gross, cause they had to like dye it with so much crap, that the actors actually were bribed to eat it. And they were offered \$20 per bite.

Grace: I'd do it. *all laugh*

Andi: Apparently Shatner did the best. And then puked. *mix of laughter and grossed-out noises*

Grace: Which I'm sure was all manner of majestic colors.

Andi: Apparently, it's like squid dyed blue? Which, Hmm. Okay. Yum.

Grace: Okay. So this is a thing that I find really interesting about how alien food is portrayed in this movie and how we see it get portrayed over and over again, actually, in Star Trek. And with the blue food thing. That actually speaks to a specific sort of proven scientific phenomena where the human brain, like way back in our primordial lizard brain, will a lot of the times see blue food and like blue plates. We don't usually see naturally blue food. So it triggers the, "This is bad. This food has gone bad. It is rotten" instinct in us. So that's probably one of the reasons we don't see a lot of artificially blue food. It's also the reason why a lot of like diet cultures and a lot of fad diets and stuff recommend eating your food on

blue plates, because it'll encourage you to eat smaller amounts, in theory, because it triggers that part of your brain that thinks something is off about this.

Andi: That's funny.

Grace: I always thought so.

Andi: Well, one thing that I think is kind of the underpinning of the whole tension there is just straight up microaggressions *laughs uncomfortably* and racism.

Grace: How many microaggressions does it take for it to just be an aggression- aggression?

Andi: *laughs* I really like it though. I like the conversation that Azetbur especially is like- checks Chekov.

Grace: Yeah. It's great.

Andi: And is like, "Oh yeah. Inalienable human rights. Do you even hear yourself, bro?"

Grace: "Watch yourself."

Andi: I love that.

Grace: "Watch yourself you little Russian."

Andi: *laughs* But I think that plus the scorn that the Enterprise crew has for like, different table manners. And then also kind of the- the othering of the Klingons mixed with the Klingons using human culture to seem sophisticated. I find it really interesting. Some interesting dynamics there.

Grace: Yeah. There's a question of whether they're using like Shakespeare culture to seem sophisticated, or if it's something that genuinely the Klingons have like latched onto. And are like, "Oh yeah, we're all about this stuff." And it's really sweet that Uhura tries to be like, "So you guys like *uncomfortably* Shakespeare?" And it doesn't work out.

Andi: *laughs* Yeah. Overall, this is probably my favorite scene in this movie.

Grace: It's great. It's truly amazingly well done.

Andi: It's also very short considering how much, kind of, thematic elements are added to it. But the cherry on it, that absolutely makes me love this scene, is the very end where Spock is like, "You guys suck." *all laugh*

Grace: "You guys all screwed this up so bad."

Sarah: I like that- they don't spoonfeed it to you, but really- and I forgot her name. Kim Cattrall's character.

Grace: Yeah,

Andi: Valeris.

Sarah: Valeris, She'd set up the whole thing. She's the one who said "let's break open the Romulan ale." She made sure that dinner was a failure.

Andi: Well, and then there's the scene right after the Klingons beam aboard. And the two crewmen are like, being super racist. And she kind of like comes and she gives him the eyebrow and she's like, "Don't you have work to do?" And you can read that scene the way I did the first time, which was like, "Stop this shenanigans. They're not befitting Starfleet." And then when you look at it, after knowing where she's coming from, and you're like, "Oh, she's telling them that go forth and assassinate." Just like, it's brilliant because there's two ways to read that scene and like, it's perfect because if you're watching it for the first time, it reads one way. And if you're watching it for the second time, it reads a totally different way.

Grace: You got to love that. When there's layers upon layers.

Sarah: Yeah. It's such a good murder mystery.

Grace: *sighs* Love it so much.

Andi: The whole idea of food as a cultural exchange, kind of flows right into another episode I want to talk about, which is A Matter Of Honor, which is the Klingon exchange students *all laugh* episode where Riker goes and serves on a Klingon ship.

Grace: And I appreciate that his pre, you know, serving on a Klingon ship thing is like, "No, I'm all in. I'm going to try all the Klingon food. And I'm going to- I'm going to do it!" Yeah. And I appreciate that in the sense that, you know, Riker would be a really fun dude to go like, try out a new kind of cuisine with and be like, "mm Oh, let's try a little bit of everything!"

Andi: I really appreciate that. The scene in 10 forward he has with Pulaski and- Picard I think?

Grace: And they're both just such fogies about the whole thing.

Andi: But I just really appreciate how he's like, trying everything. Because as someone who loves to travel, that's what you got to do. Like, I would show up to restaurants in places and just point to shit and be like, "Bring me that!" Like, well, why not? I will try anything once. And sometimes it's uh, really gross. And sometimes it's delicious.

Grace: Yeah. Sometimes it's awesome.

Andi: Yeah. But that openness to a new culture is, I think, really cool. And kind of like the whole point of this episode.

Grace: Yeah.

Sarah: That's always Riker, right? He's always just open to new cultures and not judgy.

Andi: And new experiences. He's excited to explore.

Grace: Excited to try a little bit of everything on this table.

Andi: Yeah. We had a comment from Jennifer on Facebook who basically was like, she picked this episode, and was like "Riker interning on the Klingon ship, Papius claw, heart of Targ, and Gagh. Owning that food."

Grace: Yeah! He's going for it. He is all in.

Andi: Yeah. Apparently they made that food out of like turnips and pumpkin pies dyed red. Like they were doing lots of interesting stuff. The gagh was brown noodles, which looks right.

Grace: Yeah. I recognize the Papius claw as chicken feet. And it also in our notes, according to prop master Alan Sims, most of the things Sims bought were from an Asian market, which makes me wonder- that scene must read really differently if you grew up eating chicken feet and other things that are recognizable there. Like, "Oh, this is- really? This is alien to you guys? *Andi laughs* Okay. Weirdos."

Andi: But I think that brings up an interesting point, Grace, in that this kind of disdain for other cultures foods is super common and is steeped in a lot of racism.

Grace: Oh, totally! Totally.

Andi: I feel like every couple months somebody gets dragged on Twitter for doing a quote tweet of "what food don't you like" and it's just like "All that icky Asian food." And it's like, "okay?" Or Indian food, you know? Like, there's just this gross kind of disdain.

Grace: It's just so weird how disdain for a cultures food can be such an extensive shorthand for disdain of that culture. Especially when we're talking about the sense in which food is representative of that culture. Not just in the sense of "that food comes from that culture", obviously, but in sort of the idea of like sharing a table and sharing a meal, being an active participation of the culture and an attempt to share something with others in the fact that it's kind of like taking this "Here is our food. It is this gift to you. Please appreciate- see what we have to offer." And then taking that and being a bitch about it. It's *groans* such a pain and I'm just, I'm sorry, there's a, there's a Reddit post going around right now of a guy asking if he's the asshole for accusing his wife of child abuse for making the food spicy. And then the further it gets into it, he's like, "Well, she's a surgeon and works full time, but I insist she does all the cooking. But she's Asian, so she always makes everything really spicy. So I always insist that she makes it less spicy for me, and she didn't have time to make three meals and so I got really mad at her because onions are just TOO powerful." It's like, what the hell?

Sarah: So it's a "throw away the whole man" post?

Grace: Basically. Yeah.

Andi: Well, I think part of the reason why that whole disdain thing gets really icky is because food is so personal. It's- and it's not just culturally personal. It's like what your parents made you when you were sick, or like associations with a really good meal that you had with a friend or, you know, it just- it gets tied up very sense memory-like with a lot of really personal things. And also it's one of the ways that people show love. And also, Grace, you were talking

about like this whole cultural exchange idea that we were talking about as like someone welcoming you to their culture by saying "I made this."

Grace: Yeah.

Andi: And it makes me think of like, when I was traveling, especially in college when I was like living in the Middle East, one of the things that would happen is- literally I'd be like at the store and this little old lady would come up to me and be like, "You're coming home with me now for dinner." *all laugh* And I'm like, "Oh, okay. Yeah, I guess this is a thing that is happening now." And then they would bring me home with them and just make me food. And it's so loving. It's such a loving gesture.

Grace: I'm Jewish so the idea of "I am feeding you, and this is my catalyst for showing you how I care and showing you everything that me and my family have to offer you just to the best of our ability" is very deeply ingrained in my culture. So that- that's always something I think about. And it's funny how that ties into religious cultures in general. I think there's a book called like, "Women Food and God" all about the different variations of that across the Abrahamic faiths. But yeah, it's a big thing. Food is a very intimate thing across cultures.

Andi: Well, and I think where I grew up was like- is very much a middle class white, not quite suburban, but almost suburban kind of culture. And for us food is not that. It is very much cheap, fast, and like-

Grace: Full of mayonnaise? *all laugh* Sorry, that was my guess!

Andi: You're not wrong. But also mayonnaise is good sometimes. If you put Sriracha in it, you can call it aoli and pretend it's not mayonnaise.

Grace: Japanese like, Kewpie mayonnaise. I love that stuff. *Andi laughs* Also. Belgian mayonnaise. It's wild. Everyone should try it at least once.

Sarah: I was going to say, in Japan we use mayonnaise as salad dressing.

Grace: Yeah.

Andi: There you go. See, it's not just white people in the Midwest Grace, okay? *all laugh* It's an international thing.

Grace: Mea Culpa. Mea Culpa. *Andi laughs* There is a wider culture of mayonnaise that I, misrepresented there.

Andi: But I do really think that there is often like a disconnect between, I mean, this fast and not communal.

Grace: Yeah.

Andi: Like when I was growing up we had communal meals, but they were special occasions. Me and my mom didn't eat dinner together. She was working. I ate alone. And so this idea of like sitting around a table with everybody and like sharing food was very foreign to me. Badum-psh!

Grace: Very alien you might say?

Andi: Aalien. So then when I went overseas, it was like, it blew my mind. It made me think of food in a whole new way, which was really cool.

Grace: I just- I don't understand people who don't like food. And I've actually had this be like, a deal breaker in relationships before when someone realized I love food, I love talking about food, and I love eating, and I love trying other people's stuff. And them being like, "Oh, food just doesn't really matter to me." It's like, "What?"

Andi: Yeah, I can't speak for everyone, but I know that I had a really complicated relationship to food because of being fat. So like I had extreme shame about food for a long time and it took years to unpack all of that and like, find a new love of food and find a new personal relationship with food that involved me eating healthy food and not just avoiding eating whenever I could.

Grace: Yeah. And there is a whole wide range of different types of relationships you can with food, and I should respect that. But at the same time-

Andi: It's important to you.

Grace: People who are just like "It is nutrient paste. Just give me whatever. I will eat every meal with processed Chicky Fingies and call it good." That doesn't- that doesn't sit with me. Especially because, and this is- this is a sad me fact, but one of the things I've missed the most about socially distancing and being in quarantine is not being able to cook or prepare food for friends as my way of saying "I love you! Look at this thing I made."

Andi: I make people pie as a shorthand for "You are one of my favorite people" all the time.

Grace: Pie is so good.

Andi: Yeah.

Sarah: I don't cook, but I make cheese plates.

Grace: That's something too!

Andi: I love cheese.

Sarah: *laughs* Well, we're going to have to have a cheese plate party.

Grace: Yay!

Andi: That sounds awesome. Charcuterie.

Sarah: Okay. We got way off of Star Trek though.

Grace: *laughs* This was a matter of honor talking about A Matter of Honor. *Sarah laughs*

Andi: In general I think what's great about this episode, getting back to A Matter of Honor, is that the episode itself is about othering. Like, it makes me think of how lonely it must be for

Worf generally on the Enterprise. And how nice it must be to have someone else understand what that feels like. Cause I really love- there's a scene where when Riker comes back, him and Worf have a nice little scene where there's just a little like acknowledgement of how hard it is to be a non-human on the Enterprise. And we get some of that with the B plot as well with, I think his name is Mendon, also doing this exchange program and how it makes everything more difficult. It makes all your personal relationships more difficult.

Grace: Wow. And it's amazing how food can be representative of that.

Andi: Yeah. Maurice Hurley, when he was talking about this episode, he said that he "wanted to explore what it must be like to be the only black face in the room of 40 white people. And that's what Worf in a sense is doing. He's the only Klingon, on a basically humans ship. So we said, let's spin it. Let's put somebody on an all Klingon vessel and see how that works. What is it like to be a fish out of water?" So, I think they nailed that completely.

Grace: I would definitely say so.

Andi: This was one of the more popular responses on our socials.

Grace: I'm glad. I'm glad that it was one that was based around being, you know at least one person, being positive and excited about trying new things.

Andi: Also, apparently this is the episode where Klingon blood wine makes its first appearance.

Grace: Ooooooh!

Andi: That's what Memory Alpha says, and all I can say is Memory Alpha probably knows better than me. *Grace laughs* Well, moving on from like cultural exchange on to straight up aggression. My next favorite one is TNG Face of the Enemy. *Grace makes excited noise* When we get this amazing showdown between Troi and Toreth, which if people do not remember Face of the Enemy, you should definitely rewatch it because it's amazing. That's the one where Troi wakes up on a Romulan ship and has Romulan makeup on and oops, she's a spy now. And nobody's told her. And yet she rises to the occasion beautifully. And we have this wonderful, very antagonistic scene that I like to think of as like a duel between Troi as a Tal Shi'ar operative and Toreth who's the commander of the Romulan ship.

Grace: It's, bar none, one of the best Troi episodes. And we definitely get to see in this episode, and in this scene specifically, we get to see the side of Troi that we don't usually get to see of her. Usually being the sensitive and empathetic person. And being like "No, I will dish it out as good as it is thrown at me." And it's so powerful. And I like how that's kind of reflected in the way she's just served up this Romulan food and she just kind of digs in like, "Nope, this is what I'm doing."

Andi: Well, and Toreth uses the food as a test of her, and she messes it up and still passes. Which I think is amazing. So, Toreth basically is like "Here, try the whatever Romulan dish" and Troi picks up totally the wrong thing. And she was like, "Well, you could have at least

tried it." And she was like, it smelled bad. I have never seen such terrible Romulan dish who can remember what it's called." *Sarah laughs*

Grace: *As Troi* "I've had better on a prison vessel."

Andi: Yes! It's exactly what she says. So this idea of all of the things that they're saying has multiple meanings. I mean, Toreth is starting out and you think that she's like just telling some throwaway story about a mission of hers. And then at the end she's like, "And the intelligence officer in charge of that mission was executed" and that she looks straight at Troi and "It's like, Hmm. I wonder why I brought that up right this moment."

Grace: I love that in a story about Troi being forced into a different face, literally, so much of the plot is based around being two-faced.

Andi: Yeah! It's pretty great.

Grace: I appreciate that a lot.

Andi: The whole thing is about like the cracks in Romulan society, that the distrust between the Tal Shi'ar and the military. And how have like the civilian leadership and then the military, and them, the spies, and like how much they don't work well together and how that causes them problems all the time.

Grace: Well, I will say that one of the things that I did while researching this episode is I looked into *overly fancy voice* rules of etiquette and manuals of politeness, *normal voice* just because I wanted to see how kind of, some of these situations stacked up in that degree. And big ups to Teresa McElroy of Schmanners, who I was able to get the recommendation for Florence Hartley's *overly fancy voice* "The Lady's Book of Ettiquette and Manual Politeness: *Andi laughs* A Complete Handbook for the Use of the Lady in Polite Society" *normal voice* it was an extended title, but I found some A-plus quotes in there just about how being politeness is about being straightforward, putting your best foot forward. And I like that so many of these scenes are based in the opposite of that. And that's part of what makes them awkward, is that a lot of the ones that are uncomfortable for everyone is because they've either got an ulterior motive beyond wanting to, you know, be nice and having a good time. And that's what gives everyone a really crappy time. Well, let's start- out of the book is *fancy voice* "In preparing a bookof ettiquette for ladies, I would lay down as the first rule do unto others as you would have others do unto you."

Andi: So, if we were talking about Toreth, it'd be like "Stab people in the front instead of the back."

Grace: Exactly. Yeah. *Andi laughs* And there's just so many great, bizarre little one-liners in this book that I found, and I really want to actually keep reading it just for that. But there's so many little examples of like "rudeness will repel where courtesy will attract friends" in terms of be genuine, don't try to butter people up, don't try and talk down to them. Try to be genuine and straightforward, and you will have actual meaningful conversation.

Andi: Or you could do this meal in which everybody's an inch from going for their weapons,

Grace: *laughs* Exactly. "Politeness forbids any display of resentment, the polished surface throws back the arrow." *Andi laughs*

Sarah: Also, I think Romulans are just allergic to straight forward. *Grace laughs*

Andi: Yeah. I think that they would actually find it- if Romulans were writing this etiquette book, they would be like, "Never be straight forward, that insults your enemies intelligence."

Grace: Romulan Emily Post would be wild *all laugh* and I want to see it.

Andi: But I can just picture they're like, "Here are a bunch of icebreakers that will expose your enemies weakness." *all laugh* And- you know what I mean?

Grace: "50 Conversation starters that will force your opponents masks to drop and then leave them a crushed shell of their former self." *Andi laughs*

Sarah: "How to poison your neighbors entree without being noticed." *all laugh*

Andi: I would read that. I would read that a hundred percent. And you know, they designed the chairs and the table settings and stuff from scratch, and they had no idea like what Romulan food or table settings would look like. And it looks pretty cool. Yeah.

Grace: I would have expected the chairs to be wider for their giant padded shoulders.

Andi: *laughs* It has to match the silhouette.

Grace: Yeah!

Sarah: By the way, like when I was shopping for furniture for my new place early this year, I found a whole website of chairs used in Star Trek.

Grace: No way!

Sarah: Mostly high-end designer chairs, like thousands of dollars.

Grace: I believe it.

Sarah: Like that kind of thing.

Grace: That's really cool though.

Andi: After I read that about the chairs, I took a look at them when I re-watched this scene and they're pretty cool. They're very intricate. Which I guess makes sense for Romulans, but a part of me feels like Romulans would be like, "It's a chair should be just like straight angles."

Grace: It should be. I kind of like the idea of them being super into mid-century modern aesthetics or that sort of Swedish minimalism thing.

Andi: Yeah.

Grace: Icelandic primitivist style! That's what I was thinking of. *Andi laughs* Cause I also threw in a Good Place reference there.

Andi: Oh, that's funny. Other fun facts about this episode is that they were going to have it be Crusher.

Grace: Yeah.

Andi: Which would have been interesting. I feel like Beverly could have done this duel. I feel like she could have. But they eventually decided Troi made more sense because of her empathic abilities, which I mean, I can't argue with. And honestly, Troi does not get enough cool episodes, but neither does Beverly. So I could have seen that being pretty cool.

Grace: But it's so cool that we get to have like these big dramatic scenes going on between two women characters. Which we, it feels like, so rarely actually get in Star Trek. Even when we're talking about these amazing women characters we get, we don't get a lot of women going full out against each other it feels like. In terms of just dramatic dialogue like this.

Andi: Yeah. And they wrote Toreth as a male character and then cast a woman.

Grace: See you guys! Gender blind casting can work if you actually commit to it!

Andi: Yeah, pretty much. Everything that they're talking about is very pointed and none of it is softened, which I think is interesting.

Grace: Really love it.

Andi: But I will say that this whole like, duel kind of meal is something that happens in Star Trek a lot. Somebody brought up on our Facebook Space Seed as another one of these kind of like duel meals, where Kahn and Kirk are kind of like feeling each other out and trying to learn about each other.

Grace: I love that. That always makes me think of how every- I don't know why we get them in just about every old Bond movie, but we always get like a dramatic dinner thing at the enemy lair. And it's like, why are you bothering to make this guy dinner? Why? Why? *Andi laughs* Why- why is this part- why is pageantry such a big part of this? Pageantry and vaguely explaining your plans? That doesn't seem like a good idea at all.

Sarah: But if you don't get any pageantry, what's the point of being a villain?

Grace: True.

Andi: Yeah. That's true. And Khan was very extra.

Grace: That's also true.

Andi: This worked for him nicely. I mean, you could also look at the- one of Jarrah's favorite scenes, which is the Alfarian hair pasta *Grace laughs* food fight between Neelix and Paris.

Grace: Yeah. *cheesy comedian voice* Now that was an awkward conversation over food.

Andi: *laughs* I just liked that they're one of the few ones that were like, "You know what? Enough with the duel of words, let's duel with pasta."

Grace: *laughs* It's a pasta based argument. Let this be our last pasta-based battlefield.

Andi: They're just like, "Let's throw down with a big handful of pasta right in your face." and I dig that. I feel like that that should happen more often, really.

Grace: I mean, I guess with a replicator, you'd feel a lot less guilty about food fights.

Andi: There are a lot of scenes with like food fight-like qualities. There's that Discovery scene- I think it's in one of the Short Treks. That Tilly Short Trek, where the replicator just loses his mind and just is like tossing sundaes at her face. *Grace laughs* And it's pretty great. I enjoy good food fight. Gotta say.

Grace: Messes are funny.

Andi: You know what else I enjoy? Garashir dates.

Grace: Yep. Yep. *laughs*

Andi: So we talked about diplomatic dinners.

Grace: This is a different kind of diplomacy.

Andi: Yeah! This is a romantic feeling out of somebodies romantic attentions. They have a lot of dates y'all. *Sarah laughs* Like a lot.

Sarah: So Grace and I did a Star Trek panel at Wizard World last year. And afterwards we were so tired, went back to my house, and we're just like, "Okay, let's watch a bunch of Bashir episodes." *Grace laughs* And so we start with the episode where Garak meets Bashir. And I just remember being like, "Oh my God, was this always so gay?"

Grace: Yep!

Andi: Uh, yeah, it was. It was very gay. And that episode is called Past Prologue and it's their first date. And their first date comes in the third episode of the first season. So like, they laid that groundwork early.

Grace: I love the progression in their relationship that we get throughout these though, in terms of how the show goes forward. We see such- what am I trying to say here? Both representation of how comfortable Bashir is becoming like with his situation on Deep Space Nine and with this whole intriguing world of Garak that he's sort of getting pulled into and how in control he's getting with that. And also just how personally engaged with the whole thing Garak is getting over time. Rather than just, "This is an interesting novelty." To "Oh, these are people I know and work with, and this is someone whose company I value."

Andi: And that first one is kind of funny, because they play it very interesting. *Grace laughs* And it's kind of out-of- it's not the same as the rest of them. So you've got Bashir acting very wide-eyed and naive, *Grace laughs* and then you've got Garak almost being a bit

predatory? And Andrew Robinson has since said in the documentary that he was like, "I want to be really clear. He wanted to have sex with him." *all laugh* And I was like-

Grace: We noticed.

Andi: Definitely got that bro. Like, that was very clear.

Grace: T'were'nt subtle.

Andi: T'were'nt subtle at all. But I mean, some people didn't get it. So obviously, I mean, your mileage may vary on this one. But for me, I was like "Gay!" But it's different, because as we go on they become much more equal in the power dynamics. You get less wide-eyed Bashir and like, Garak gets less condescending, I think. But one of my favorite kind of like little bits after this first Past Prologue date, is Bashir goes straight to ops to O'Brien *Grace laughs* and starts gushing about how the spy wanted to have lunch with him.

Grace: "DUDE you're not going to believe this! We're not even friends yet, and I have to tell you."

Andi: I know! It's amazing. That's the THIRD EPISODE. And like, at the time they did not really have that whole Bashir O'Brien bromance thing going on. And he just goes straight to him and he's like, "Guess what!" And O'Brien's like, "I don't care. *Grace laughs* At all." So really just an excellent outing all around, I would say for these folks.

Grace: An outing in multiple senses.

Andi: Their first date was awkward.

Grace: Every first date is awkward to a degree.

Andi: True. And then over the course of their many many dates, I noticed that season three has a habit of doing cold opens with a Garak and Bashir date, which I can't be mad at. I'm happy with that.

Grace: What's to be mad about?

Andi: And they spend a lot of time talking about literature. Mostly.

Grace: It's kind of their cultural exchange thing too, isn't it? They're talking about Cardassian literature versus human literature. So while the food isn't such a primary aspect of it, it is about sort of the cultural exchange and the putting forth of what your culture has to offer.

Andi: Yeah. I feel like we underestimate how much having food makes things less fraught, because there's something else- there's a reason why like dinner and coffee and drinks are the most common first date sorts of things. Cuz like, there's something else there. There's a reason that you're there.

Grace: There's a task at hand.

Andi: Exactly. And so it makes it less- it gives it less pressure as a social interaction. So you can sit and have tea with a friend, and then discuss Cardassian novels. And offend your Cardassian boyfriend by telling him that the novels that he's recommending are too repetitive.

Grace: "Your culture is kind of a downer, man." *Andi laughs*

Sarah: It gives a structure to your meeting. So you're drinking your tea. And when you're done, if you're still enjoying the conversation, you get another tea. If not, you're like, "Oh, I'm done time to go."

Andi: Yes. That's very true. That's a really good point. There's even one of their dates, Bashir is rushing and Garak's like, "Well, I guess we're not getting dessert." *Grace laughs* He's all like salty about it. But I just really love that they built this relationship out with these little, especially lunch, dates. And in the meantime they have all of these thematically relevant conversations. Like in Probable Cause is the one where Garak's shop gets exploded-y?

Grace: Exploded-ity?

Andi: Yeah, exploded-ity. And they're talking about Julius Caesar and how he doesn't see his betrayal coming. And Garak's like, "What a moron! How did he not see the, you know, Bad vibes coming his way?" And then he goes downstairs and gets blown up in his own shop.

Grace: *laughs* "Oh my hubris!"

Andi: But I mean, Garak- they do have a really interesting conversation too, in that specific Caesar conversation, in which Bashir is rushing to get to the infirmary. And Garak's like, "Humans are always rushing when they're eating." And he starts making all these very large cultural leaps of like, "what does this mean?" And it's kind of funny to me. And Bashir is eating what looks like scrambled eggs, *Grace laughs* which will also make me laugh. I do love them. I do love their dates too.

Grace: What's not to love?

Andi: True. True. Are there other dates that we can think of?

Grace: I'm sure there are if we put the work into it. But as far as awkward dinner things, I think we're more invested in bad things happening *laughs* in these social settings.

Andi: I will say that the Garashir dates went much better than when Chapel tried to bring plomeek soup to Spock. And he threw it. *laughs*

Grace: Sometimes you put your heart out there, you try and reach out to someone by making them food, and they yeet it right in your face.

Andi: *laughs* Ah, poor Chapel.

Grace: Poor Chapel. *all laugh*

Andi: And so Discovery is not without its fair share of awkward scenes -

Grace: Oh HELL no!

Andi: If we're talking about memorable meals, it's hard to top Forget Me Not. Which just aired, and spoilers for anybody who has not seen the scene. But, yeah. So saru is like, "I got this crew, their morale is low. I know what'll work. I'll give them a pizza party."

Grace: *laughs* "Okay kids, we lost the game this week, but you know what? We're still having the pizza party. You know why? Cause you're all winners to me!"

Andi: I cannot tell you how many insanely awkward like, work buffet. What's that- potluck.
Grace laughs Work potlucks where I'm just like, "Uh, I'll bring chips."

Grace: It feels like such a perfect extension of the idea that Star Trek is, to a certain degree, a workplace drama. And that the uncomfortable forced social gatherings are part of that.

Andi: A hundred percent.

Grace: I also loved that before this episode aired, there was a screen cap of Georgiou going around. People being like, "Oh, Georgiou is giving me big, your gay aunts showing up at Thanksgiving dinner to just watch the drama play out vibes."

Andi: She is goals in this scene. She's just like not bothered. The whole- like, she is completely indifferent to the awkwardness.

Grace: "I came here to watch people get attacked and I am having such a great time." *Andi laughs*

Sarah: To me she read as like your goth teenage cousin who's just determined not to cooperate with this happy family dinner.

Andi: Yes! That's what I was like. I was always in the corner reading a book and being like, "Oh, nobody understands me."

Grace: "these people don't get me, mom!"

Sarah: And then she steals the wine at the end.

Andi: When she walked out *Sarah laughs* with the whole fucking- the whole caraffe of booze and was just like, "Bye!" I was like, "Girl."

Grace: "I got what I came for."

Andi: The juxtaposition of Saru trying to give like this inspiring speech-

Grace: Aw bless him.

Andi: and everybody like- the team boosting. And then Georgiou was just like, "Hmmm."

Sarah: And he made this beautiful table, and he made food for all the different people in different species. And just everything fell apart.

Grace: There's such a degree to which Saru is the mom friend. And I love it. *Sarah laughs*

Andi: I truly, and I mean this so sincerely, I truly appreciate his leadership style when it comes to mental health.

Grace: Yeah.

Andi: Cause he is the only one- I remember when Tilly was like, she had the ghost girl. Like the mushroom ghost girl or whatever THAT was. *Grace laughs* And she wouldn't tell anyone. And afterwards Saru is like, "You have to take care of yourself before you can take care of others." And it's like, thank you! Somebody get a decent counselor on this ship? Because Saru can not be doing all of your counseling. But he's trying so hard.

Grace: He's a good egg.

Andi: He is. Such a good boy. But I mean, one thing that I appreciate about this scene is how when there is hurt underneath? It comes out. And it's really hard to avoid that. So you have this whole Detmer versus Stamets kind of showdown where it's like, this stuff has been festering and they're not going to let it fester anymore. They're going to, you know. If there had been Alfarian hair pasta-

Grace: *laughs* It would have been thrown. Yeah.

Sarah: I appreciate though that certain people left, but they cooled down and they came back. They address some of their issues.

Andi: We got a comment from Jay who's like, "That definitely topped the most awkward and tense dinner I can recall in all of Star Trek. That blood haiku, goddamn." Which I mean, what can you say? But yeah, that's accurate. Goddamn.

Grace: The only way they could really top this is if they did another episode that was an uncomfortable dinner event, but did it in real time. And that's just the whole episode.

Sarah: A Short Trek?

Grace: Yes. And the audience is forced to sit through it.

Andi: That's pretty funny.

Grace: I would find that amazing.

Andi: Speaking of Discovery and Georgiou, I have to say that one of the most disturbing things that's ever been on Star Trek is Georgiou choosing her Kelpian *Grace makes uncomfortable noise* to eat in the mirror universe.

Sarah: Yeah.

Andi: I don't know if I'll ever get over that.

Grace: And then her offering Michael the ganglia and it's only then that Michael realizes what that was all about. And she's like, "Oh God!" *makes retching sound*

Andi: Yeah, Lydia on Facebook said, "Can't really say it's a favorite moment, *laughs* but it certainly sticks out as a disturbingly memorable meal." Well said, Lydia.

Grace: It's an effective moment.

Sarah: I love when they're in the Orion Outpost on Kronos and Michael tells Tilly she's eating space whale.

Grace: "Ugh gormagander!" her "I'm eating a critter!" face.

Andi: Yeah, pretty much. Oh goodness! There's so many to choose from. So you asked me to remind everyone that we can't talk about them all. So please don't send us emails about how we forgot your favorite one.

Grace: Because we've got 50 years of TV that we're working through in an hour here.

Andi: Yeah. So I'll remind you, but I know it won't do anything. So just- yeah. I mean, roast us for all the ones that we forgot, and didn't do. But are there any that people want to discuss that, like really stood out as cool memorable meals?

Sarah: My favorite is from Deep Space Nine "In the cards." Cause that's like my go-to comfort episode. And at the beginning they have to establish that everybody is depressed. So they have a dinner in Sisko's quarters where the war isn't going well, everyone's depressed. They're practically crying into their cups. But the whole scene Worf is often the corner pretending to look at a mask on the wall so he doesn't have to participate in the conversation. *all laugh*

Grace: I didn't even notice that!

Sarah: And at the very end, Sisko's like, "Okay Worf, you can go now it's over." *Grace laughs*

Andi: Replace mask with pet of some kind, and that's me at every party. *Sarah laughs*
"Where's the dog? I want to go talk to the dog, ignore everybody else."

Grace: And that scene is so effective too, because we've seen previous scenes about what it's like having a food-based get together at Sisko's. And it's usually- in the past has been really fun and genial and everyone just chilling out. Now it's super tense and uncomfortable.

Andi: Yeah.

Sarah: I do like how dinners at Sisko's are usually him cooking. And that In the future, when you have replicators, someone cooking is a big deal.

Grace: Yeah! I love that. I love that we get to see that in the TNG episode Time Squared, when Riker invites everyone over for omelets and is serving everyone up. And then it turns out they're weird alien eggs. And everyone's like, "Oh no." All except for Worf was like, "This is great!"

Sarah: "Can I have yours?"

Andi: Yeah. Carrie from Facebook said basically Riker making eggs in Time Squared and nobody liking them except for Worf, that's her favorite.

Grace: And when I was rewatching that bit, it did bring up an interesting question though. Because I was watching it with my roommate Dakota and he noticed that Data gets served up eggs. And he was like, "So does Data eat?" And I'm like, "I don't think he really eats" he's like, "Does he just have like a garbage disposal in there?" like he puts food in his mouth and then you hear *makes garbage disposal noise/Andi laughs* Or does he have to go off and use the little Android's room?

Andi: That's funny. I have to say that one of my favorites is also TNG. It's Sins of the Father and it's when Kern gets that really awkward buffet. And he's like, "I shall try some of your replicated burned meat." *all laugh*

Grace: very much goth kid at the family gathering energy there also.

Andi: Star Trek's pretty good at awkward buffets, cause there's also a really good one in TOS in Journey to Babel, which is also where we finally get the Andorians and the Tellerites for the first time. I really love that episode and that buffet.

Grace: And the little colorful food cubes!

Sarah: That do not look like something you want to ingest, but they're pretty. *Andi laughs*

Grace: They're so pretty! And therefore I would ingest them.

Andi: Yeah. And I mean, that was another one where it's like family. Cause get Sarek and Amanda showing up and Spock being like, "Oh, and yeah I have a family. Bye." *all laugh*

Grace: "Spock out of here."

Sarah: Oh, you know what I forgot was Voyage Home. The dinner in the Italian restaurant.

Grace: Oh yeah!

Andi: That's a good one!

Grace: They had a pretty nice time there, didn't they?

Sarah: It was very congenial, but also like, you know, "I'm from the future." a little bit awkward.

Andi: Yeah, you're right Sarah. That is such a good one. That's a much better first date than Garashir got. *Sarah laughs*

Grace: Definitely. What always comes to mind for me is in the DS9 episode Cardassians, when the O'Briens are having dinner and serving it up for the kid Rugal who is genetically Cardassian but grew up on Bajor. And Keiko, bless her heart, is like "I thought I'd make some food from your home planet!" And nobody likes it. *Andi makes sad trombone noises* And it's just kind of like a, "but this isn't my culture though." and O'Brien's like, "This is

disgusting." And Rugal's like, "This is disgusting." And they both get to have that moment of "No, thank you." And it kind of reminded me of, you always hear about that experience of someone's well-meaning but ultimately dippy parents being like, "I thought I'd try and serve up some of your culture's food!" Which I have had happen before and have had go not well. But it does remind me about how sometimes bad food can be such a wonderful bonding experience. I have a great aunt who liked to share the story of when she married her husband, who was Jewish, she was meeting his family for the first time, over a big dinner. There was gefilte fish and she's like, "Oh gosh, I'm a nice Midwestern girl. How do I eat this?" and like the first genuine conversation she ever got to have with her future mother-in-law was her leaning over going, "*throat-clearing noise* Cough, put the napkin to your mouth, and then put it in your lap. *all laugh* That's how you pretend. You get it off your plate without eating it."

Andi: That's funny. Yeah.

Sarah: My Great Aunt used to make jello molds with weird stuff in them, like celery. But you know what? As a family, we still laugh about them to this day. So.

Andi: I mean, there are foods that are actually bad. And I know are bad, but I still love just because of nostalgia purposes. And then there's food that's bad that I am like, "How did I ever eat that?" But like, okay. For example, Thanksgiving. Let's bring it right back around. *Grace laughs* The circle of life. That green bean casserole that everyone makes in the Midwest. I don't know if you make it outside the Midwest-

Grace: Oh yeah!

Sarah: I'm making it!

Andi: With mushroom soup?

Sarah: Yeah, yeah.

Grace: Yeah. Same here.

Andi: It's terrible.

Grace: Like, it's so bad for you, but it's part of the experience.

Andi: It's so mushy and like almost tasteless, but like I love it. And one of my cousins is actually like a really really good cook. Like he went to a couple of years of culinary school and everything, and he was like, "Okay, I'll make it." And he made it like a good version and it was like steamed green beans and like, he made the mushroom soup himself and everything. And it was like, nobody ate it. *all laugh* It's like, "It's not what we want. We want the mushy crap!"

Grace: We want the mushy crap that tastes so good when you can't sleep and get up at three am.

Andi: You put it and mix it with mashed potatoes?

Grace: Yeah. The closest I have to a secret with that one is use fresh green beans, steam them separately, and then put them in. So there'll be just a little crunchy and less mushy in your casserole.

Andi: Yeah. But see, that's not what I want. *Grace laughs* I want the green beans that you get from a can that just dumps out like *makes splorching noise*.

Grace: Mmmm. Goey.

Sarah: I thought it was frozen.

Andi: *laughs* That's funny. I feel like this is similar to people's attachment to the cranberry sauce that's from a can that has the ridges.

Grace: Yeah. Some people just have to have it still can shaped, and some people have to make it from scratch. But I love how everyone has got their own thing. That's like the, "I know it's gross, but this is our thing."

Andi: Yeah. I have a couple of those things where it's like, it doesn't matter that it's gross. I still love it.

Grace: Yeah. Our family does clam dip. Which sounds horrifying, I know. But is a sacred tradition in my mother's family.

Sarah: So my family is doing zoom Thanksgiving. So we'll see how awkward that is.

Grace: Same here.

Sarah: Like, with the extended family.

Grace: Oh my gosh.

Andi: But I don't know how zoom Thanksgiving is going to work. That's going to be tough, I think. I know that things are going to be tough this year for people. So just know that at least it can't be as bad as some of these terrible meals *laughs* that we have discussed from Star Trek.

Grace: At least you are not watching William Shatner get paid \$20 a bite to eat blue gelatinous something.

Andi: Squid.

Grace: Squid is delicious. I will say that.

Andi: Probably not raw with blue food coloring.

Grace: No, that sounds painful.

Andi: *laughs* So if you're looking for something to be thankful for, you can be thankful for the fact that you don't need to eat the blue food from Undiscovered Country. All right. Cool. Is there any other meals that anybody wants to bring up before we wrap up?

Grace: I do. I've got one more. And that is the first dinner scene we get in Enterprise between Trip T'Pol and Archer in Broken Bow. Because it's just- I was talking earlier with the quote "Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you" and they are so clearly just kind of being crappy towards T'Pol. Like "Oh, we know you're a vegetarian, but we're going to eat these big honkin steaks and joke about cannibalism while we're eating them while you're very clearly uncomfortable with it." Such a Dick move.

Andi: We did also get a comment from Fred on Twitter about Enterprise that said "Just watched Extinction from Enterprise season three. *Grace laughs* Archer Hoshi and Reed get turned into apes and eat bugs out of a gourd. Had me howling with laughter, though I don't think that's what the writers were going for."

Grace: Oh, hell no. But it's pretty freaking funny to watch Scott Bakula on all fours trying to break into a gourd.

Andi: *laughs* I look forward to it.

Grace: You can quote me on that one.

Andi: Awesome. Any other final thoughts?

Sarah: I'm really hungry now.

Grace: *laughs* Me too.

Andi: Me too. All right. Well, that was really fun. Thanks for joining me to talk about awkward meals in Star Trek y'all.

Grace: There's nothing more fun than discussing other people's awkward situations. *Andi laughs* It's true, right?

Sarah: Don't you feel a little bit better about your last dinner party?

Andi: Yes!

Grace: I do! I do.

Andi: Well, great. So Grace, where can people find you elsewhere on the internet?

Grace: You can find me on twitter @bonecrusherjenk. That is B O N E C R U S H E R J E N K. That's on Twitter. And you can also find me crying over store bought pumpkin pies.

Andi: And Sarah, where can people find you?

Sarah: I'm on Twitter @sarahmiyoko, S A R A H M, as in Mary, I Y O K O. And you can find my fanzine Star Trek quarterly on Facebook, and I'm also doing a weekly Discovery podcast on the YouTube channel For dying of exposure.

Andi: Very nice. And I'm Andi, you can find me on Twitter @firsttimetrek. 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.rodtenberry.com. Thanks so much for listening.

Grace: We're thankful for you listening!