

Women at Warp Episode 174: Kink in the Star Trek Universe

[Women at Warp theme]

Andi: Hi, and welcome to Women at Warp, a Roddenberry *Star Trek* podcast. Join us on our continuing mission to explore intersectional diversity and infinite combinations. My name is Andy, and thanks for tuning in. With me today are Kennedy.

Kennedy: Hello.

Andi: And Grace.

Grace: Hey, everybody.

Andi: Woo. Before we can get into our main topic, we do have a little bit of housekeeping to do.

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Our TeePublic store has new designs, and Grace just went buck wild on some new ones too. So, we are [Grace laughs] always updating that. So, definitely check it out. Logos, non-podcast specific *Trek* designs, and then also our banner art. So, if you wanted to check that out, that's teepublic.com/stores/womenatwarp.

Now, the next convention that the Women at Warp crew will be attending will be New York City Comic Con which will be October 7th through 10th, and Roddenberry Podcast will be hosting a panel with Women at Warp and Priority One on Saturday afternoon. So, be sure to keep an eye on our Facebook and Twitter for more details.

All right, so, our main topic today is Kink in the *Star Trek* universe.

[laughter]

Andi: Yeah. We are going to be approaching this as academically as possible.

Grace: As academically as we are capable of approaching it.

Andi: That's probably a better way to put it.

Grace: Yeah. There's going to probably be a lot of giggling. [Andy laughs] So, we will do as best we can. But you know, there's some caveats there.

Andi: Yeah. And overall, due to the topic, please make sure the young ears are not listening, because this episode will be not safe for work.

Grace: If they heard that intro and are asking what a kink is, just say it was a band in the 1960s.

Kennedy: Nice. [chuckles]

Andi: There you go.

Kennedy: Yeah.

Andi: So, this one was a patron request from Lara who sent us-- Her first spontaneous idea is Kink in *Star Trek*. But I can't recall any mention of sex outside the vanilla spectrum. And all I can say to that, Lara, is challenge accepted.

Grace: Yeah. Andy jumped on, this was like, "No, we are going to do a whole episode out of this." [Andy laughs]

Andi: So, just to get started and ease into this topic, let's just talk a little bit about what we mean when we say kink or BDSM. So, BDSM is a term to describe bondage and discipline, domination and submission, and sadism and masochism.

Kennedy: Sadism is getting pleasure from giving pain, whereas masochism is getting pleasure from receiving pain.

Andi: Absolutely. That's what BDSM stands for. Kink is defined generally. There are lots of different definitions for kink, as sexual activity that falls outside of sex that society traditionally considers "acceptable."

I want to make a caveat there, because even though I literally just use sexual activity in the definition, I do want to make it clear that not all BDSM/kink is inherently sexual. You can absolutely engage in kink without sex. So, a lot of people get that messed up, because I think that it's most commonly understood to be sexual, which is understandable. Yeah, something that I just wanted to throw out there, because we are going to be talking about some Kink in *Star Trek* that is not sexual.

Grace: It's a thing.

Andi: It's a thing.

Grace: For those of you who didn't know. [Grace laughs]

Andi: And overall, BDSM kink has become more popular in mainstream media in the last, I want to say, what would we say, 5 to 10 years?

Grace: When did *Fifty Shades of Grey* come out?

Kennedy: Well, there's been elements of kink in other forms of popular media for a while there.

Grace: Oh absolutely.

Kennedy: You can think of imagery like Pinhead from *Hellraiser*.

Grace: Yeah.

Kennedy: You can think of, really, leather kinks from any of *The Matrix* movies.

Grace: Oh absolutely.

Kennedy: But particularly, I want to point out the scene in the third film that was straight up like a fetish club, and everybody-- "There was latex everywhere."

[laughter]

Kennedy: “Latex everywhere for everyone. Everyone was dipped in latex.” So, again, not all of that was overtly sexual. But there is something to leather, or vinyl, or latex, or rivets, or any of that that leans towards the kinky sides of things, even though it doesn't necessarily always have to involve intercourse.

Andi: Yeah.

Grace: Sometimes it's just a style thing, as the 1990s proved to us overall.

Kennedy: Right.

Grace: [laughs]

Andi: I also think that beyond *Fifty Shades of Grey*, which we should just say right now, please don't model any BDSM exploration you do on *Fifty Shades of Grey*, because it's horrible.

Grace: It has been widely looked down upon and disavowed by many BDSM higher organizations and groups due to the fact that it is not safe, sane, or consensual at times.

Andi: Yes. And honestly, that flows into the next thing that I wanted to bring up, was the idea of safe, sane, and consensual. Because BDSM and kink can be very intense, the community that engages in this, they really stress communication and consent.

Kennedy: Enthusiastic consent.

Grace: Yes.

Andi: Enthusiastic consent. Exactly. *Fifty Shades* has this. They just ignore it. There are literally contracts that you will have people sit down and literally write out all of the things that are acceptable and all the things that are not acceptable and sign contracts with each other.

Kennedy: It's super intense. When you're engaging-- I mean, I would suppose, when one was engaging--

Grace: If one would theoretically be into such a thing. [Kennedy laughs]

Kennedy: I mean, one could say [Andy laughs] that the act of engaging in kink play, anything that isn't vanilla, anything that requires one or both parties to surrender control of their body, control of their mental-- Anytime there's a relinquish of control or you're expected to behave in a way that isn't acceptable, let's say “by society,” it's always best to have those conversations. It's always best to really take a moment and figure out what it is that you, as a person, as an individual, need from this individual that you're about to engage with.

Really, when you think about it, a lot of “kinky relationships,” a lot of BDSM arrangements, tend to be super healthy, because everyone's needs are addressed. And if they're not met, there's moments to have those needs met in some way, shape, or form. So, people, if they tend to see folks who are obviously in a kinky relationship out in public and they seem very, very tight, it's because they trust each other more often than not, because they've had those difficult discussions. If they engage in play, then something happens that they're not cool with. It's discussed immediately as opposed to swept to the wayside, and stifled and allowed resentment to build for something that can be discussed openly. So, it's important to note that I believe anyway that the kinky relationships are more healthy than the status quo has led us to believe.

Grace: However, there are exceptions in every group.

Kennedy: Well, yeah. Sure, there's always a jerk face.

Grace: You get those in literally every group of people in all of human history, though.

Kennedy: Right.

Andi: And that's one reason why it's important to be careful, because predators can exist in any space, and you're giving up a lot of your trust and you're putting your safety in someone else's hands sometimes. So, just be careful. Just be careful.

Unfortunately, when I was going through, thinking about what we are going to be talking today, I would say that the vast majority of even kinky subtext in *Star Trek* is pretty toxic.

Grace: Yes, it is.

Andi: And not healthy

Grace: Because it is still seen as bad people stuff.

Kennedy: Because you can always tell the people who have never properly engaged in kinky behavior or the lifestyle, I guess it's best to say-

Grace: Yeah.

Kennedy: You can always tell when those folks are writing things about the lifestyle, right?

Grace: Yes.

Kennedy: You can tell how much research has not been done, you can tell how many people have not been consulted, you can tell how much personal experience has not happened. And unfortunately, a lot of cases in *Trek*, when it comes to kinky lifestyle behavior is-- For anyone in the community, it's clearly like, "Oh, some vanilla dude wrote this. Got it, got it, [Andy laughs] got it, got it, got it."

Grace: Yeah. It always makes me think of every crime show you will ever watch you will have that one ripped from the headline sex clubs episode. That's always like, "Oh my God, this is someone's uncle wrote it after hearing a story passed through five different people about what this situation is like."

Kennedy: Yup.

Andi: Yeah. Well, I think the very first topic we have to tackle, it plays into this really strongly because the Mirror Universe.

Grace: Yeah.

Andi: I feel very strongly that the Mirror Universe adopted a kinky subtext as an aesthetic.

Grace: Oh absolutely.

Andi: When you're doing that, when you're just like, "Let's make it sexy but a little bit violent." You're missing a lot of the nuance there. It ties right into my other rant about the Mirror Universe, which you all have heard before and you will hear again, which is, they do

the same thing with pan and bisexuality where it's like, "Ooh, all the Mirror Universe people are pan and bi, because it's sexy and just a little bit taboo."

Grace: "This is an inherently naughty thing. Good people don't do this. High-risk lifestyle."

Andi: Exactly. And it gives the impression that it's only acceptable when the people who are doing it are "evil."

Grace: Or, that there is an inherent level of sleaziness to it.

Andi: Yeah, and I have serious problems with this. Unfortunately, this is something that has been carried through to *Discovery* and is even, I would say, more prominent in *Discovery* than it even was beforehand.

Grace: Well, it feels like with *Discovery*, they're like, "Ooh, we don't have to beat around the bush with this. Let's just straight up be like, 'Yeah, everyone's kinky. PG-13 TV.'"

Kennedy: So, as someone who has spent a great deal of time in the Mirror Universe, -

[laughter]

Kennedy: -I will offer the counter argument that, mainly for the folks who say we agree with each other too much, here's a disagreement.

[laughter]

Kennedy: The Terrans are the antithesis of humanity, right, whereas all of the "society things" that makes us who we are in this universe are completely polarized when it comes to Terrans. So, if our society is supposed to be "decent," "wholesome," "proper," when it comes to expressing yourself sexually, then the Terrans are going to be the exact opposite of that.

Obviously, they're terrible, they're fascists, they're racist, they're violent, they're deceitful people. All things that we have decided as a society are not cool. Well, we once upon a time decided that stuff wasn't cool and yet some people are like that.

Grace: Some people believe *Star Trek* has just recently gotten political.

Kennedy: Yeah. Right. So, we openly have decided that deplorable behavior like that is unacceptable, and that any type of sexual expression because of Puritan things or whatever else is frowned upon-- At least open, flagrant, unapologetic sexual expression is frowned upon in most societies in our universe which stands to reason in the Prime *Trek* universe.

But when it comes to the Terrans, this is a society who doesn't give a shit about treating each other like people. They're not going to give a shit about what is considered "proper" when it comes to sexual expression. So, I always read the Terrans propensity for violence as something separate than their sexual proclivities. The thing that makes them problematic with exploring-- Because what is kinky? Kink is, when you think about it and boil it down, it's all relative. What's kinky to me isn't kinky to you. What's kinky to you, isn't kinky to you.

So, there's going to be some nuances there. But as far as the Terrans are concerned, the problematic element of them is not the fact that they are completely uninhibited sexually. The problem with that is that they're terrible human beings and that you don't know that the person that they're engaging with sexually will survive the encounter. So, I feel like that is the overhead danger when it comes to sexual displays in Terran cultures.

Not so much that they're doing kinky stuff, because that's the fun part, as far as I'm concerned. [Grace laughs] The terrifying part is whether or not this person that they're engaging in these scenes with will leave them in safety, will leave them in one piece, will leave them with all of their needs being met. It's not so much that they're doing the thing, it's the fact that they're violating the core principles of what we've had to agree upon as a society makes that acceptable.

Grace: Right. But then, it's contrasted with-- We have very few examples of, say, a canon kinky character in our main universe. So, it becomes all a negative exposure to this. I'd say that this has gotten better. Before *Lower Decks*, we didn't have a canon on screen bisexual character, except for Mirror Universe characters. You could make an argument, and people have, and certainly Terry Farrell has that Dax is canon pansexual. I think that's fair. I also would say that she's one of our very few examples of a kinky character that is portrayed positively.

Kennedy: Yeah, I would agree to that.

Grace: Yeah, absolutely.

Kennedy: She was all about that bat'leth. She was like, "Let's go."

Grace: She was all like, "Let's wrestle in these mud caves."

Andi: So, it's not that there are no examples, but it's that contrasted.

Grace: Yeah.

Kennedy: That's true. It is difficult, because there's not enough balance to illustrate that the act isn't inherently evil. It's the people participating in the act. I can agree to that.

Grace: I already can hear somebody taking this entire episode out of context and being like, "They won't rest until we see someone get whipped. Explode into Love Seeds on *Star Trek*."

Andi: That's exactly what I'm saying.

Kennedy: Explode into Love Seeds, by the way, is my Duran Duran cover band.

Andi: [chuckles] Nice. This idea really comes clear to me when it comes to Georgiou.

Grace: Yeah.

Andi: Because we see her be, both bi or pan and kinky on screen, but only the Mirror version. Now, to be fair, we haven't seen enough of Prime Georgiou to really know. Maybe she still is queer and kinky. We don't know. But the only time we see it is when we see Mirror Georgiou. There's a whole exchange with Culber and Stamets, where it's like, "No, we're gay." But their Mirror Universe counterparts were apparently not homosexual. They were bi and pansexual. So, that, to me, is just weird.

So, that's what I mean is like, it's interesting to me that they did the exact same thing with Culver and Stamets that they did with any other "straight character," say, Kira. We never see Kira being an on-screen romance with a woman. But when we go to the Mirror Universe, she exhibits sexual attraction for women. And then, they do the same thing with-- Apparently that is also true for our gay characters, that to me is like, "Okay, that's really weird. [chuckles] I don't know how to unpack that."

Grace: I'm not sure how to unpack what this makes the writers seem to think of bi and pan people.

Kennedy: That's ultimately what it boils down to, right?

Grace: Yeah.

Kennedy: When the people in charge of creating the content have no idea about what it is they're trying to write and they just guess, like, this is what happens. This is why you need to make sure that all of the intersections are involved when it comes to creative making processes.

The issue is not that these characters are kinky in the Mirror Universe, because one could make the argument for societal norms. The problem is that, as you say, Andy, it's not reflected on both sides. But I also know that people in the 1960s weren't sitting there and really going into the psychological appeals when it comes to kink. So, I don't really expect them to get it right.

But as far as the *Discovery* part that you mentioned, yeah, there should have been, I don't know, some type of notion, some type of hint that these folks enjoyed the same things just for completely different reasons.

Andi: Well, going back to, you mentioned the 1960s, this is a part of the Mirror Universe from the very beginning. The scene that really sticks out to me when it comes to the kinky undertone is Uhura and Sulu on the bridge with the knife.

Grace: Yeah. Her turning it into a game and turning it into a let's play, kind of thing.

Andi: Yeah. And to me, that is very clear kink subtext.

Grace: Yes, absolutely. [chuckles]

Andi: It's baked right into, as I said, the aesthetic.

Grace: Which was around in the 1960s, obviously, even if it wasn't always getting addressed on TV. The Comstock Act was working overtime in the 1960s, I'm sure. [Andy chuckles]

Andi: So, I feel like it's baked into the aesthetic of the Mirror Universe, which is why we see it again and again when we go back in *DS9*. We've gotten Intendant Kira lounging, public sex happening, all sorts of kinky undertones there. So, to me, it makes sense as to why it keeps coming back. I just wish that once we had come back to it, with a more contemporary sensibility, we could have--

Kennedy: Grown up a little?

Andi: Yeah. Fixed some of these issues and been a little bit more nuanced on how we handled them. As much as I enjoyed seeing Burnham put Lorca on his knees while they were both wearing leather.

Grace: [laughs]

Kennedy: Yeah, that was--

[laughter]

Grace: Should we just take a minute to all share a pervy cackle?

[laughter]

Kennedy: When Prime Burnham crossed over and had Voq, just chilling in her bed and she was in lace,-

[laughter]

Kennedy: -and I was just like, "Let's go about this." Well, "You mean I get an actual cabana person? Okay. Yeah, I'll take those bars. Thank you."

[laughter]

Andi: I also think the Mirror Universe is a good example of just general sadism.

Grace: Yeah.

Andi: They enjoy inflicting pain.

Kennedy: Yeah.

Grace: They've got an agonizer booth. They use it. [Andy laughs]

Andi: Yeah. I would say that's a good example of just a general sadism. Not necessarily sexual. They just like hurting people.

Grace: Yeah. I think that the Mirror Universe in the 1960s was a lot more convinced about the sexual power of a goatee than it actually had. [Andy laughs]

Kennedy: Yeah. It was a lot more convinced about the exposure of a midriff as well.

Grace: That being inherently sexual.

Kennedy: But I also love how it was a power play. It's one of those things where it might have been perceived as degrading towards women. But when in reality, we all know how straight men get around exposed flesh.

Grace: It's true. [laughs]

Kennedy: So, maybe it's a bit of a power play, like, "Here, look at this. Hey, hey, you like this? Jab. Cat, cat, cat." You know what I mean? [Grace laughs] Like, "I'm the captain. Look at me. I'm the captain now."

Grace: Oh my God. [laughs]

Kennedy: Which has been, as we've seen in *In a Mirror Darkly* when the Enterprise crew goes back and Hoshi Sato figures out how to take the crew. I just wanted to point that out as well. They do some cool themes about taking elements of sexuality that have been perceived to be degrading, and then making them empowering.

Andi: And it does make sense to me that if you've created a world where everything is violent, I feel like your sex would also be more violent. That makes sense to me. Like, I get that.

Grace: The really kinky [audio cut] is in the Mirror Universe are the ones that aren't into the weird stuff. They're the ones you got to watch out for.

Andi: Oh. See, and this leads us right into the next culture I want to talk about, [Grace laughs] which is Klingon culture. We definitely get the implications that Klingon sex is inherently kinky. If that's true, maybe to them, vanilla sex is really the kink.

Grace: That is the shameful underground stuff. [Andy laughs] They have a group that meets up in the back of the adult bookstore every Thursday.

Kennedy: Gosh, I didn't even-- It never even occurred to me to think of a Klingon perceiving vanilla sex as kinky.

Andi: Okay. Just imagine this, Kennedy. Imagine that. You're getting close to your Klingon lover, and you're just like-- [Grace chuckles]

Kennedy: I'm picturing Voq here. Okay, go ahead. [Andy laughs] I like this. I like this.

Andi: "Hey, let's get crazy tonight. Let's do missionary."

[laughter]

Kennedy: [gasps] First of all, missionary is an extremely underrated position-- [crosstalk]

[laughter]

Grace: Your Klingon warrior just leans in, breathes into your ear, "Let's cuddle." [Andy laughs]

Kennedy: "You don't understand. [Grace laughs] I might need a minute."

[laughter]

Kennedy: It's to this logic, right? We're following this logic. The Worf's brief little relationship with Troi must have been kinky as hell to him-

Grace: Exactly, right?

Kennedy: [crosstalk] how tender he had to be.

Andi: [chuckles] I was actually thinking about Troi when it came to this, because-- [Grace laughs] I really was, because I was thinking about-- So, we talked earlier about how kink doesn't necessarily need to be sexual. One of the first things that I thought about when I thought about wanting to talk about this topic is Worf and his Rite of Ascension, which is a ritualized pain scene essentially. It is not sexual.

But something that struck me right before the Rite of Ascension, Troi is bringing him there. She walks right up to the door and he's like, "You're not coming in?" She just gives him this look and is like, "No." And I was thinking, "What would it be like for Troi as an empath to be around a pain ritual like that, and would it harm her?"

Kennedy: Mirror, Mirror. Troi would be into it, probably.

Grace: Yeah.

Andi: Yes, that's true.

Grace: This would be an example for the experience to be safe, sane, and consensual for her and Worf to have a chat beforehand about it.

Kennedy: I'm sure they had to.

Grace: Yeah.

Kennedy: All of that must be incredibly profane for Worf.

Grace: And also, there's a point where he was talking about how Klingons are too strong and powerful for human women. So, they definitely would have had to negotiate some stuff ahead of time.

Kennedy: Yeah. I think about the amount of restraint that Worf exhibits on a regular basis. Don't get me started, because that stems into other things. [Grace chuckles] That's a whole other episode [Andy chuckles] about the domestication of Worf and Klingons, in general. [Grace chuckles] We'll get into that in a minute. Don't get me started.

Grace: You said domestication, and I imagined him wearing an apron and holding a tray of cookies or something. And I thought, maybe that's Troi's kink. [chuckles]

Andi: [laughs]

Kennedy: Right.

Grace: [laughs]

Andi: One of the things that came out of that-- It was like, Riker went to the Klingon ship on-- [chuckles]

Kennedy: Oh, the commander change-- [crosstalk]

Andy and Grace: Yeah.

Andi: He was hanging out with all the Klingons, and the Klingon women are like, "Hey, that's a tall glass of water."

Kennedy: No. The Klingons are like, "Wow, he's ugly as hell. I want to hit that." That's what that was.

Grace: They're all just leaning into each other and going like, "Is it just me, or is that sexy ugly?"

Andi: [laughs]

Kennedy: They're like, "Look at his smooth ass face, yo. That shit is weird. I want to put my cooch on it."

[laughter]

Grace: "Look at that entirely smooth forehead. I want to lick it."

Kennedy: Right. They're like, "This dude is our size, but he's a human, which means he's frail and probably prone to breaking things. [Grace chuckles] I wonder what his pain threshold is. Let's see." [Grace laughs] The best part about Riker, is that he was with the shits. He was like, "Let's go. My quarters are down on deck. See, let's talk about it."

Grace: We have a recurring thing throughout *Star Trek* also of characters hooking up with Klingon women and having it be implied to be super kinky and stuff. Like, we have Quark and I want to say Grilka ending up in the medbay, giving each other knowing looks. We've got Neelix in, what's her face, taken over to Voq's quarters. It keeps happening.

Andi: Yeah. [chuckles] We had a listener comment that was Neelix and Ch'Rega is a super positive take on kink, unless you are Tuvok.

Grace: They did not clear that usage of Tuvok's quarters with him, which wasn't cool.

Kennedy: That's a great point, though, that Neelix and-- Oh, geez, what was her name?

Andi: Ch'Rega.

Kennedy: -Ch'Rega are a perfect example of enthusiastic informed consent.

Grace: Yeah. She tries to hit on Harry earlier, and Harry's like, "Nope, not my thing."

Kennedy: Neelix, however, was like, "Ooh, girl."

Grace: Neelix is like, "I'll try anything once."

Kennedy: Neelix was like, "Girl, where is your quarters at? You ain't sleeping alone? Well, we could go somewhere. We could go somewhere." Neelix was about it.

Grace: We also got a comment from [@GristleMcNerd](#) asking, "Please discuss in excruciating detail that time Neelix got it on with a Klingon."

Andi: [laughs] This came up when I was complaining to Jim, who is the one that made that comment, that I was complaining that there is very few positive portrayals of kink. And this was his example is like, "They enjoyed themselves. They had fun."

Grace: They had a great time, then they went their separate ways.

Kennedy: Neelix was a little salty about that, though.

Grace: Ah, yeah.

Kennedy: He was ready to risk it all, wasn't he? He was ready to risk it all and throw himself back into the Delta Quadrant before he was like, "You know what? You know what? Let me cool out. I got this Federation Quarters here. There's carpets on everything. Let me chill. Let me--" [chuckles].

Grace: Once you go honorable, there's no coming back.

Kennedy: I will say overall, though, that Klingon's perception of sex, it fuels my argument that kink is relative.

Andi: Yeah.

Kennedy: What's kinky to one person is not kinky to somebody else.

Grace: Because the Klingons are just all about power dynamic, and honor, and the big drama, and gravitas of everything. So, the kink just is a side effect of that.

Kennedy: Right. Really, their sex is just rough.

Grace: Yeah.

Kennedy: So, if you're into rough sex, that doesn't necessarily mean that it's still kinky. You know what I mean? I think that leather daddies in the gay community are sexy as hell, like, "Oh my God. Oh my God, it's my thing. Big, burly, hairy dudes with leather and tight things and collars and harnesses, yes, give me one. Please. I'll take that one or that one, whichever is more available." But somebody who lives that lifestyle regularly could look at one of those dudes and just be like, "Oh yeah, that's Pat. [Andy laughs] Oh yeah, that's Pat. Yeah, he makes a mean chocolate chip cookie."

Grace: "That's Jimmy. We're on a kickball team together."

Kennedy: Exactly. "We're in a softball league. We were in a beer league. We play softball together. He's my center fielder."

Grace: "I regularly beat him at shuffleboard."

Kennedy: Not to say that Pat code switches between different parts of his expression of his sexuality or anything. But someone could know this dude from this context, and not see the leather and the harness and the hat and the boots, and just see an individual. So, it really is relative. All of the stuff that the Klingons do sexually is vanilla to them, and it's just more extreme for those of us who don't have duplicate organs and to engage in all the time.

Grace: I feel like we got to bring up the whole Kink at Pride discourse really quick, because that's the thing that keeps coming up in LGBTQ spaces, this idea of-- Well, we can't openly display this kind of stuff, because think of the children, and this is how people negatively stereotype our communities as just being super sexual and all that.

But at the same time, that was the building block of a lot of the LGBTQ community as we know it. There are a lot of people for whom that's just part of their life, that's part of their lifestyle, and they want to celebrate and represent that. And then, there are people saying, "No, no, this is whitewashing the whole thing and making it kid friendly and stuff." And people go, "Well, there are kids and families at Pride and stuff, so it's an evolution." It's a whole thing. I feel like we can tie that into the *Star Trek* discussion, because there's kinky *Star Trek* people out there.

Kennedy: Oh yeah. [chuckles]

Grace: There's that quote about Margaret Cho quote about, "What is it with Trekkies and leather and the Renaissance Fair? It all ties together." And, yes, there is definite overlap, and we are definitely going to get no Kink at Prided over this episode, I feel like [laughs] it's an ongoing debate.

Andi: Bringing it back to Klingons, we haven't discussed probably the most famous of relationships that explores this, which is apparently Jadzia and Worf, and their honeymoon.

Grace: Good for them, right?

Andi: Yeah. It goes right back into like, where are the positive portrayals? Apparently, Jadzia and Worf are a positive portrayal, although breaking bones might not be something I'd recommend for folks.

Kennedy: No. Not unless you have a doctor handy who can wave a light over it. This is not the time to be breaking things and clogging up hospitals.

Grace: Hell no. Hell no. When I think about Worf and Jadzia, I always think of specifically Worf, for all his Klingon posturing, is a super hung-up dude who is acting very tough, but is very insecure. And Jadzia has seen and tried everything, which probably makes for quite an interesting couple dynamic for them. But that makes you go, "Oh, good for them. She's tried everything. He's probably a little bit like-- [gibberish] and then they get to figure it out together.

Kennedy: Yeah. You got to remember that Worf is somebody whose culture was taught to him-

Grace: Exactly.

Kennedy: -much later.

Grace: Yeah.

Kennedy: So, anyone who had a bit of their heritage not introduced to them until much later point in their life is going to feel like they have to make up for lost time. It's like, discovering that you're a Trekkie in your 40s, you want to buy all the things, Worf wanted all the mek'leths.

[laughter]

Kennedy: He wanted all the mek'leths, he needed to listen to all the opera, just to fill the void of not having that cultural connection.

Grace: And then, with Dax, he gets to have this whole sexual renaissance.

Kennedy: Right. He still probably had to hold back a bit, because Trill aren't necessarily sturdy, or at least not sturdier than humans. And because she's carrying a symbiont, he has to be especially careful with her.

Grace: Do you think that that means she's got to wear a softball vest or something to protect the symbiont?

Kennedy: I think he just has to be careful, which is the kink for him. [Grace chuckles] Whereas with her, the kink is dealing with somebody who could, at any point in time, extremely cause physical damage.

Andi: Overpower you.

Kennedy: Yeah.

Grace: So, for her, it's hardcore. For him, it's cuddle core.

Andi: [laughs]

Kennedy: Right. So, I could just imagine in the throes of things, when her brain decided, "Yeah, break his rib," she knew what that could have pulled out of him. She knew that that could have pushed him past the point of control, which could have been dangerous, which was probably the kink for her and probably alluring to him. But Worf was still on the heels of that.

You would have thought that once he got what he wanted sexually, the things that he wasn't getting in other relationships, that he would loosen up a little bit. And if anything, he tightened up even more. So, this is why, this is why, this is why I talk about Klingons like this, because this Worf is just want to stick my teeth into the hole. He'd probably be into that. [chuckles]

Grace: And let's also just be real. Sex is a physical activity. Accidents happen.

Kennedy: It's true.

Grace: Yeah.

Andi: At least they had advanced medicine.

Grace: Yes.

Kennedy: Right. You can't do that kind of stuff, unless you got a doc to wave a light over it. Otherwise--

Grace: Oh, Bashir just has so much dirt on those two, I'm sure.

Andi: [chuckles]

Kennedy: And to your point, Andy, earlier about how kink wasn't normalized in the prime universe, Bashir knows. Julian knows what Klingon sex is like. He knows what Klingon sex is like with other species. So, the fact that he was like, "I don't want to know," is like, "Bro, first of all, you're a doctor. Get over yourself." One. Two. "Okay, so, Jadzia found a boo. Get over yourself." Three. "What is wrong with you?"

Grace: Don't hang your hang ups on us. Don't kink shame them. But we could also say he was drawing a healthy like, "I'm a coworker of yours. I do not want to know about your sex life boundary."

Kennedy: But had he been sex positive, he might not have pried for details. But he could have been like, "Jadzia, this clean break on this ninth rib is [muah] chef's kiss." [Grace laughs] You know what I mean? There could have been ways to encourage that.

Grace: He would high fives her on the way out or something.

Kennedy: Yeah. It gives them all baseball slaps on the butt as they leave, like, "Good hustle, guys."

[laughter]

Grace: Oh my gosh.

Andi: That's funny.

Grace: I just really appreciate knowing that there are Klingon romance novels.

Kennedy: Mm-hmm. Oh, they're super romantic. Listen to the wedding ceremony, the vows, and how Kahless and Lukara ripped out their beating hearts, because it was too strong for the masses that tried to subdue them, like, "What? What?"

Grace: You know, how the human romance novel community is already super intense. Can you imagine the Klingon romance novel community?

Kennedy: Just old Klingon dowager aunties gossiping over blood tea [chuckles] about the latest novel.

Grace: Oh, I love it. I want to see that book club so bad. [Kennedy laughs]

Andi: I have a soft spot in my heart for Klingons and their approach to sex, because I honestly feel like it's among the healthiest that we see in universe.

Grace: They're pretty straightforward about it. Yeah.

Kennedy: Yeah. I would say so. Because it's informed, enthusiastic consent.

Grace: Yes.

Andi: Yes. So, moving on to another topic that is not informed [chuckles] enthusiastic consent.

Grace: And is honestly just kind of, "Ah, when you see it."

Andi: I had not thought of this, and I was talking to a friend about this topic. All he didn't say a single word. He just sent me the GIF of the Borg Queen blowing on Data's skin and him going, "Hoo." And I was like, "Oh my goodness, I did not think about that." But that whole scene is, in both sense of the words, [chuckles] is super ass super kinky context.

Grace: Yeah. If we are going to talk about Pinhead as an S&M icon, then you got to bring up the Borg Queen also as this lady in her weird cyberpunk catsuit thing.

Kennedy: We got to say first and foremost that the Borg's whole jam is non-consent, right?

Grace: Yeah.

Andi: Yes.

Kennedy: Nothing about any of interactions with them is ever cool, because they don't care whether or not a person is enthusiastically or informed-- They don't give out pamphlets, "Hey, this is what happens when you join the Borg. Are you still interested?" So, any type of interaction they're going to have with anybody is going to be problematic.

Grace: Yeah.

Kennedy: But when she straps Data down and forcibly removes his dermal layer to surgically implant another, there's already red flags. Already. Even if you want to look at the isolated incident and not look at what the Borg has done across the galaxy. This isolated incident, did you just nail my man down and forcibly put some skin on him? What, what? That's--

Grace: Yeah, the whole thing's pretty messed up.

Kennedy: No, it's so wrong on so many levels.

Andi: Yeah. It's very clear it's bondage. He is being tied down. Sue said something interesting when she was looking through our comments that we got from social media. She was bringing up that everyone was pointing out rough sex and violent. But what she does when she blows on him is something that I would call sensation play.

Kennedy: Oh yeah.

Grace: Yeah.

Andi: So, think ice, think heat. It doesn't have to be violent.

Kennedy: Feathers, ticklers.

Andi: Feathers. Yes. It's all about feeling. I took this as a sign to rewatch *First Contact*, because [chuckles] why not?

Kennedy: Right. Right.

Andi: Because when in the very beginning of when they go back in time, they see the ship, and Picard's touching it and Data is like, "Mm, does touching it like do--" He didn't understand the sensation of touch.

Kennedy: Right.

Andi: So, bringing it back to-- She's showing him the power of touch.

Grace: Yeah. We even get Troi coming in and saying, "Do you need a minute alone with it?"

Andi: Yeah. Not just the power of touch, but the power of sensation. I found that really striking. Now, if it had been consensual, I'd be all about it, but it wasn't.

Kennedy: Yeah.

Grace: Yeah.

Kennedy: Yeah, agreed. Next.

[laughter]

Grace: That's that. I'm sure there are people who are super into that.

Kennedy: Right. I will say the kinkiest thing about the Borg Queen and dealing with-- When we take into consideration everything about consent and power play, and all the nuances in between, I would argue that the kinkiest scene involving the Borg Queen was when in *Endgame*, when Janeway [chuckles] screws her. Not physically, but plays with her perception of power. She plays with the notions of-- It wasn't consensual at all. You know what I mean?

Grace: Yeah.

Kennedy: She gave the power play element that can exist in the kink lifestyle, for sure, was at play whenever Janeway had to deal with the Borg Queen. Because it was very much

dealing with somebody who's accustomed to being in control all the time. Gradually explaining to this individual and providing examples to this individual that, "You are not in control of this situation. And at the very least, you are not in control of me." So, seeing that kind of-- I don't know if there's a term for it, and if there is, please let us know. But seeing two doms go at it in that way, two dominant people go at it that way, and then [Grace chuckles] [laughs] Janeway, "Come on, now. I'm trying to be academic. I'm trying to hold on to my pips." [Grace laughs]

To see two doms go at it in that way and dance around the elephant in the room, that is, who is in control of the situation. And then, seeing Janeway almost, almost top from the bottom until she pulls the rug out, if I remember anything, I think is the most appealing part of that whole exchange, you know seeing somebody who's accustomed to be in control of all things at all times suddenly realize that they're not in control and being a little outraged by it at first.

But I'll say that the Borg Queen was into it. She appreciated the fact that another challenge had presented itself, because I'm sure it must be boring as the drone, as the queen rather. Everybody's doing exactly what you tell them to do. So, finally finding somebody that is a general and genuine challenge to your power structure must have been appealing to her. She might have been pissy about it, but she liked it. [Grace laughs] You liked it, you liked it, you liked it.

Andi: All right. Well, turning into a much less sexy dude,

[laughter]

Andi: -I do want to talk about Mudd. One of the reasons why I want to talk about him is the *Discovery* version of Mudd literally brings actual bondage equipment onto the show.

Grace: Yeah.

Andi: I have to say that watching *Discovery* and being like, "Well, that's a spreader bar just is a really jarring experience." [laughs] I find that really interesting.

Grace: I feel like, as far as characters too bring it in, I was like, "Okay, yeah, that tracks."

Andi: It does. Because when I started thinking about Mudd, and I was thinking about him from the very beginning, he's always had an element of grossness.

Grace: You into this?

Andi: Yeah. But the way he loves androids, to me, feels kind of fetishy. He likes to make really beautiful androids who then worship him. He made a version of his wife to punish her. That, to me, is really, wildly extra role playing.

Grace: Yeah.

Andi: [chuckles] I'm just thinking about his whole vibe in those scenes. It made sense to me that they made it more explicit in *Discovery* that this dude is a kinky guy and not in a good way, in a predatory way.

The thing that was most interesting to me is in the *Short Trek* about Mudd, [Grace chuckles] we find out that not only did he make androids of hot ladies in the past, he made clones of himself [Grace chuckles] and then forced them to serve himself.

Kennedy: Narcissist. [coughs]

Grace: Also, that he has a giant bounty hunter lady Son'a, which [Andy laughs] more power to you.

Andi: Who doesn't have a giant bounty hunter lady Son'a?

Grace: Fair.

Andi: [chuckles] But just everything about him is about performance,-

Grace: Yeah.

Andi: -but also power.

Grace: Yeah, I feel like with Mudd also, these things are presented as sleazy, because he's a sleazy dude.

Andi: Mm-hmm. Yeah, none of it is as healthy, safe, sane, consensual.

Grace: Yeah.

Andi: It's all very toxic and predatory. That leads into the next thing I have, which is, I would like to discuss the idea of *The Perfect Mate* as a toxic trope of a submissive woman. So, if people don't remember the episode *The Perfect Mate*, *Perfect Mate* is when Famke Janssen shows up on *TNG*, and she is apparently of a race that imprints on someone.

Grace: Whatever someone else is into, she is suddenly into.

Andi: Yeah. She's supposed to be a gift to someone, and instead she imprints on Picard.

Kennedy: Because someone accidentally opened her box?

Grace: Yeah.

Kennedy: Let's talk about that. Let's talk about human trafficking. [Grace chuckles]

Andi: Yeah. So, the reason I wanted to bring up this is because I really feel like this is heavily leaning into every man's fantasy is a woman that is submissive, and will do whatever you want, and mold herself to be perfect for you, but gross.

Grace: This does feel like a scenario where she doesn't really get a choice in the matter.

Kennedy: True. But I feel like the biggest choice at the end of the day, once she had her sentence, was her not wanting to meet with the dude she was supposed to meet with. She had imprinted on Picard, and I think wasn't anticipating on genuinely liking the person that she had imprinted on.

So, the fact that she started to like Picard is the real tragedy there. Not so much that she was inclined to imprint on people. It was the fact that the person that she imprinted on she genuinely liked and wasn't supposed to be for him. That's the part that's-- Ooh.

Andi: I think the thing that I don't like about this-- I mean, there are many.

Grace: There's a lot to dislike. Yeah.

Andi: We have talked about this episode before. I am sure we will someday do a whole episode review on it, because there's a lot to unpack here. But specifically, when we're talking about kink, the thing I don't like about this, is it takes something that should be really personal and beautiful, which is submitting to someone, and twists it in a really icky, toxic way to me. Because submission does not mean weakness, and it doesn't mean that you disappear as a person. So, the way that they even framed this as kind of, this trope of a submissive woman bothers me.

Kennedy: Yeah. Because submission is a choice. The common misconception, is that when there is a dynamic of submission dominance, that it's the dominant that's in control, it's the exact opposite, in fact. It's the submissive that's in control, because they're giving you the permission to do all of these things. Without that permission, then it turns into assault.

So, in all of those dynamics, it's always, always, always going to be the power, rather is always, always, always going to lie in the person who's playing the submissive role and not the other way around. I feel like that wasn't quite explained in that regard. I feel like if they had thrown that element in there, like, "Yeah, I might be the one bending to his will, but only because I choose to and because I enjoy it as opposed to it's because something I have to do."

Andi: Yeah. The other thing that is an issue, besides all of the other issues, is she was raised to this. So, she was essentially groomed into this role. And so, there's no true-- Even if she could consent, like how? How? Because she's been trained to do this from a young age.

Grace: Mm. Just layers upon layers of uncomfortable there.

Andi: Yeah. I feel like there could be a very interesting story there. They had great chemistry. Some of those dynamics between Picard and her were very intriguing, mostly because the acting was so good. But overall, it's a flawed frame, so you can't really save it. It just makes me sad.

Grace: Yeah.

Andi: It makes me sad. I definitely wanted to bring that one up.

Kennedy: But shoutout to Picard.

Grace: Yeah.

Kennedy: Since we're talking about informed and enthusiastic consent, shoutout to Jean-Luc, for not being like, "Well, we make it do what it do." He just got to have to be mad about it. [unintelligible 00:52:09] loves the things that I love. "Listen, you're going to have to take a pip or something, I don't care. Because have you seen Famke Janssen?" He completely held onto his pips. He respected the boundaries that were placed upon him.

I think deserves a lot of credit in that case in particular. Because we know Picard is the lonely old man. We know he's lonely. So, for him to have found somebody that even though it wasn't supposed to be meant for him ended up being a better match than anyone anticipated. And him to voluntarily let her go, so to speak, is something that we-- I just got to get Picard his flowers on that.

Grace: Good for him.

Andi: [chuckles] I think the real, I guess, moral center of that episode is actually Crusher. Yeah, this is definitely an episode that we are going to talk about more. I'm sure we will someday do an episode review on it. So, we don't really have time to unpack it all. But I did want to at least get a chance to discuss that trope of submission, and why it is incorrect.

Grace: Yeah.

Kennedy: Mm-hmm.

Andi: So, there's something I want to talk about, because I wasn't sure whether to include it or not, because this is not really kink. But there are a lot of just general torture scenes in *Trek*, again, are not kink, because kink is not necessarily torture. But they have subtext. So, there's bondage, there's whipping.

Grace: There's subtext, and then there's the fact that while watching it, you're like, "Yeah, this probably awakened something in someone."

Andi: [laughs] Well, and the first thing I thought of when I thought of this general, "It's not really kinky, but it's kinky," was Kirk and Spock.

Grace: Oh, yeah. You know someone discovered they were into watching dudes get whipped from that, just because of the fact it might have been the first time they'd ever seen that on TV, 1960s and all.

Andi: Well, really, having two dudes shirtless. They did this hilarious thing where-- So, they have whip marks on them and it's clearly just lipstick.

Grace: Yeah, it's just drawn on. [chuckles]

Andi: [laughs] This is high camp to me. And then, Spock's is green.

Grace: Yeah.

Andi: [chuckles] But they're shirtless, they're sweaty, they're covered in whip marks, they're staring intently at each other, and I'm just like, "Okay, I see why people ship them." [chuckles]

Grace: Yeah.

Andi: I don't really think that they fit into just general BDSM. But some of the ways that they were staged and shot just evokes a kinky undertone, if that's fair.

Kennedy: It's Gene's vision.

Grace: Yeah, Gene's vision. [Andy laughs] Where are we to question it?

Andi: I love the idea of Gene's vision being green lipstick on Leonard Nimoy. [laughs]

Kennedy: [chuckles] Continuity.

Grace: Yeah.

Andi: Truly, every time I watch that episode, I laugh so hard at all the lipstick. It's so good. I love it so much.

Grace: It's pretty dang ridiculous.

Andi: 10 out of 10. No notes. No notes. Do not change a thing. Cool. Well, there are a handful of small miscellaneous things on our list here.

Kennedy: I would say I'm going to be brief about it, the whole Ferengi thing. Ferengis, in general, when it comes to women not being dressed, to the whips, to Oo-mox, and just how creepy they are, in general. Ferengis, what the heck? Ferengis are the parallel to people who perceive kink completely incorrectly.

Grace: [laughs] Oh my God. I love that.

Kennedy: They are. Because all of that stuff could be spun in a way that wasn't degrading, right?

Grace: Yeah.

Kennedy: They could have done this any number of ways. So, I feel like that's an interesting thing to get into. The other one I thought was really cool that we have mentioned here is the Orions. We're seeing a little bit of that on *Lower Decks*.

Grace: Yeah.

Kennedy: We've always been told that Orions were super, super biologically horny people, or at least infectiously horny people.

Grace: Yeah.

Kennedy: Then you meet somebody like Tendi, who is an intellectual, who's enthusiastically academic. Try and shy away from the more exploitive stereotypes that has been associated with Orions for so long. One of the things I like about *Lower Decks* exploring that is it gives the classic *Trek* platform to discuss racism, and prejudices, and discrimination without being overt about it.

For those of you who aren't caught up yet to *Lower Decks*, spoiler alert. Here's a couple seconds to pause and note the timestamps that you can come back to it. But that whole scene where they were on Orion and Mariner had to go in greenface, essentially, and talking about, "This feels bad. Just don't take any photos of me." That's a real thing.

I think the Orion discussion is a great opportunity to use it as a reflection of what we're doing wrong, what we're doing incorrectly, whether it's extorting people or being manipulative when it comes to a person's sexuality. Orions are a prime example of that.

Tendi is the one who's trying to rewrite the narrative, which is, we see it. But it wasn't until she punched her cousin in the stomach and said, "You'll do what I tell you to do." I was like, yes, "Dom Tendi, let's go. Let's go." [Grace laughs] "I never knew I needed a thing until I saw the thing." I was like, "Okay, I can watch Tendi turn a giant beefcake dude out." Like, "Whatever you say, Mistress of the Winter Constellations." Like, "What? What did she do? What did she do to earn such a title?" Like, "Was that something given to her? Did she earn it herself?"

Grace: We have so many questions. So many questions.

Kennedy: So many questions. So many questions.

Andi: Well, that's all about all the time we have today. Kennedy, where can people find you on the internet?

Kennedy: People can find me on Instagram and Twitter, *@thatmikeychick*. It's T-H-A-T-M-I-K-E-Y-C-H-I-C-K. Don't act up in my comments, because I will drag you publicly before blocking you.

Andi: And that's a promise.

Grace: That's not just a promise, that's a guarantee.

Kennedy: [laughs]

Andi: And Grace, where can people find you?

Grace: You can find me on Twitter, *@bonecrusherjank*, and also on perusing some stranger websites to see what the market looks like for those Klingon romance novels.

Andi: [laughs] And I'm Andy. You can find me on Twitter, *@firsttimetrek*. To learn more about our show or to contact us, visit *womenatwarp.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 *podcast.rodnenberry.com*. Thanks so much for listening.

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