

Women at Warp Transcript: Episode 197: Leave the Phaser, Take the Gagh (“Prodigal Daughter”)

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

Sue: Hi there.

Grace: And Jarrah.

Jarrah: You're not my real mom!

Grace: Who told you?

Jarrah: My real mom.

Grace: [gasp]

Sue: She wouldn't!

Grace: Now, before we get onto our very dramatic episode topic, we've got a little bit of housekeeping to touch on first.

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Sue: Yes, please.

Grace: We've got a TeePublic store, glad to say. We're adding new designs all the time on t-shirts, tote bags, notebooks, and more. You can find it at teepublic.com/stores/womenatwarp. We've got a great variety of products on there, and we're always finding new ones to promote through our shop. Let me see, we've got convention merch up on our site, we've got some beautiful

anniversary patches and pins that were designed to celebrate 50 years of Star Trek conventions.

Emerald City Comic-Con is coming up, my hometown con can't wait to see it and I can't wait to see you there. It'll be just a few weeks out when we air this episode and I cannot wait.

Jarrah: Exciting.

Grace: So this episode is a very special episode. The mother of all episodes, one might even say. It is a special patron thanks. It was suggested by our listener, Joseph. And he suggested the episode from DS9 season seven in which Ezri and O'Brien are on a different planet and Ezri's mom is a boss and her brothers are actually trash. It's heavily implied it's this way because there is no dad. So for those of you who don't remember, that episode is "Prodigal Daughter", which is the one where Ezri goes back home after, for the first time after being joined and gets into some Miss Marple mischief, one might say,

Jarrah: Mm-hmm indeed.

Grace: We've got a quote here about the background of the episode. Jarrah, do you wanna give us that?

Jarrah: Yeah. Sure. I'll tell you a little bit about the background. So basically they were looking to do an episode about Ezri's backstory, but big part of the problems with this episode is that they were rapidly running out of time to put the episode together. And Ron Moore actually said basically that the show was already in prep. So it was a case of first thought, best thought, just throw it down and move on because we've gotta get 10 pages out today. So boom. You just blaze through it.

Grace: I mean, it's better than writing by committee, right?

Jarrah: Yeah. Yeah, I guess. Man, is it? I mean, look at this episode. So...

Grace: Brutal.

Jarrah: Behr, Steven Behr was working on this story about Ezri's family and the Orion syndicate, and he wanted this to basically be like Deep Space Nine "Godfather" where Ezri would be like the character of Michael Corleone.

Grace: Okay. But if, but if Bashir is the love interest sort of at this point, does that mean he's gonna show up in Diane Keaton's like floofy orange dress to the wedding.

Sue: YES.

Jarrah: Oh this would've made this so much better.

Grace: There is gonna be just a single guy waiting outside her mom's office, practicing what he's gonna say to her, stuff like that.

Jarrah: Mm-hmm!

Grace: There's gonna be an inexplicably super Italian wedding band playing in New Sydney.

Jarrah: Yes.

Grace: I'm just saying if they were going in this direction, they should have leaned further into it.

Jarrah: I a hundred percent agree. Someone should have woken up with a targ in their bed. Vic Fontaine obviously, I guess, but...

Grace: There's a point where someone makes a really big deal about saying, "Leave the gun, take the gagh."

Jarrah: When as, so the idea is, you know, Ezri doesn't have any interest in the family business. And when Ezri returns home her mother would reveal that it was the Orion Syndicate who quote unquote arranged for Ezri to be given the Dax symbiont on the USS Destiny. But apparently it was dropped because it was a little too sleazy to suggest that Starfleet could be manipulated like that. I also don't know that *that's* true. Looking at the rest of Deep Space Nine.

Sue: Uh-huh.

Grace: Sleazy is as sleazy does really. There's variations.

Jarrah: Yeah so basically we came out with this episode that basically everyone kind of agrees is, is probably the worst episode of the season or, or among the worst episodes of the season.

Grace: Which isn't to say it's a bad episode, it's just not sort of up to snuff with some of the other stuff in the season.

Jarrah: Nicole DeBoer said Ira apologized to her after they filmed.

Grace: Okay, okay, I take that back then!

Sue: Wow. Good

Grace: Good lord. Nicky, what did you see?

Jarrah: There's there's maybe some redeeming features, but can we maybe start at the beginning with the, the scene about the gagh?

Sue: Can we start with the title though?

Grace: “Prodigal Daughter”? Yeah.

Sue: I mean, the, I guess that the caveat here is, you know, reminding people that I was raised by a Baptist minister. But like the, the parable of the prodigal son is that like the son who left went and like demanded his inheritance right away and spent it all and made a bunch of bad choices, but the father was so elated to see him come home, that he was like, it didn't matter what he had done because he came back to the family and it was an exciting thing and he threw a feast and like his brother got jealous. And like, none of that is in this, right?

Grace: No.

Sue: Ezri's family is terrible.

Jarrah: Mm-hmm.

Sue: And like, she is the one who made good choices by leaving. So like, I just don't understand the choice of this title, unless it was just about like, “Ezri's going home!”

Grace: I think that's the gist of it. That's probably what happened there, but I will say that accor--- if you asked Ezri's mom she made a bunch of bad choices, so...

Jarrah: And Ezri's mom probably feels like she bent over backwards, like pulling favors to get O'Brien.

Grace: Yeah. And there is some sibling inadequacy and jealousy going on there so, if you squint it works.

Sue: But it it's still about like the dad being so elated...

Grace: Yeah.

Sue: To have his son home that nothing else mattered.

Jarrah: Mm-hmm.

Sue: Right. And that that's not what's here at all. So like...

Grace: No.

Sue: I guess I'm just trying to read too much into this episode title? Surprise?

Jarrah: I think that the... accurate meaning of the phrase prodigal son or prodigal daughter has like been a little bit watered down over time and that like prodigal is kind of broadly used to just mean kind of like "long lost, returning home" and people forget about the whole spent inheritance thing?

Grace: Right? Yeah. It's become more of a term than an actual synecdoche for the Bible parable.

Jarrah: Or it's just like that the person that decided to name the Voyager episode "A Good Shepherd" because Janeway's basically Jesus.

All: [laughter]

Grace: Janew-esus.

Sue: I just, I, I think I sometimes go down these rabbit holes because we know like, TOS was, thought so hard about how it would name its episodes.

Jarrah: YES.

Sue: It's like, that doesn't seem to be happening here.

Grace: No, I mean, they tried, but not very hard.

Jarrah: I mean, I think DS9 did in general, 'cause you still got like some, a decent amount of Latin titles and stuff but...

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: But this, this one I think may be an exception.

Grace: But speaking of feasting, can we talk about that opening scene though, of Ezri finding out that a bunch of different types of gagh have been delivered to her because Jadzia ordered them for Martok's birthday?

Sue: I mean, this one's pretty funny.

Jarrah: It's cute.

Grace: And I love that the kind of, "Well, of course!" of there being so many different variations of gagh for like...

Sue: Yeah.

Grace: Different breeds of worms and different preparations and Ezri just not being able to stomach any of them.

Jarrah: I also like that she tells Odo to space it all and Odo's like "Environmental regulations say we can't." And I approve of the fact that there are environmental regulations.

Grace: Yeah, definitely keep our space clean.

Jarrah: I don't know that they had to clear those when like they put, you know, a minefield out in space.

Grace: Okay, okay, so, so, so what if they did jettison all this gagh into space and it just hits some ship's windshield?

Jarrah: Or like eventually it just gets drawn closer and closer to Bajor and then there's like a meteor shower of gagh.

Grace: It's raining worms!

Sue: But it's also food waste.

Grace: Yeah!

Sue: It's just...

Jarrah: You'd think you could just recycle it into the replicators.

Sue: Or donate it to the Klingon restaurant on the promenade.

Jarrah: That was the other... Yes.

Grace: They're starving but George would kill for this kind of gagh.

Jarrah: Could you leave it for Martok anonymously?

Grace: I feel like if you did that, he would assume it was poisoned.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Grace: Or a trap, like leaving a delicious roast turkey dinner for Daffy Duck.

Jarrah: Or you just leave it with a note that's like, "Dear Martok, here's a bunch of gagh. Love, Gowron."

Sue: "It's definitely not poisoned."

Grace: See, anytime something says "Definitely not poison" I'm immediately gonna have 500% more questions about whether it's poisoned or not.

Sue: Yeah, uh-huh!

Jarrah: Ezri also could have offered to give it to Worf or have Worf give it to Martok?

Sue: Mmm, that's true.

Grace: I mean, it'd be pretty funny if Worf was actually a wuss when it came to eating gagh, especially 'cause he's so like, "No, I'm the ultimate Klingon!" and they're like "Now eat your worms." And he's like "[upset stomach moan]".

Sue: The most Klingon Klingon.

Grace: “Oh, I'm on a I'm on a non-live diet. I can't do that.”

Sue: He's uh, Worf's on a cleanse?

Grace: Yes! He's on a targ blood cleanse.

Jarrah: Oh, my God.

Grace: Do you think there's a smoothie place on DS9 and if so, do they do like special green smoothies and stuff?

Sue: Oh God, I don't like it.

Grace: I love it.

Sue: I like it?

Grace: I love it. I love it. I wanna know everything about it.

Jarrah: Raw, fresh, pressed *or* flesh pressed.

Sue: Oh...

Jarrah: Targ juice.

Grace: Now we're getting into some Clive Barker nonsense. And I love it.

Jarrah: And then like Bashir is not okay and, you know, is it Kira that asks him if he's okay? Or Ezri asks him? And they're basically, he's just like, “I just really miss Miles.”

Grace: Yeah I mean, who wouldn't.

Sue: Poor guy.

Jarrah: Yes.

Grace: That the two, they're they're palsies, they're joined at the hip.

Jarrah: Yes. This is actually the moment where I was like, yeah, I can really see shipping them.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: Because he seems way too like, longing for Miles for just like having his friend out of town for a little bit.

Grace: He does that a bunch of times though. He has a lot of moments of, “Oh, this would be great, if Miles were here... He's just miles away...”

Jarrah: Aww. Would he walk 500 miles?

Grace: And he would walk 500 more.

Jarrah: Mm-hmm

Grace: Just to be that man who showed up at the middle of the night at chief O'Brien's door.

Sue: Oh my God.

Jarrah: Look, Sue, I don't know what you expected really.

Sue: Ao3 is calling .

Grace: So anywhoselbee, we do find out that the reason that O'Brien is away is because of a carryover from a previous episode, “Honor Among Thieves,” which is the one where Chief O'Brien goes undercover in the Orion Syndicate. Because for some reason, Starfleet has this guy with a full-time job doing undercover stuff? A bunch?

Jarrah: Yeah. Also “Honor Among Thieves” I feel like was kind of a forgettable episode, honestly? And

Grace: It was all right.

Jarrah: It was maybe fine, but also I always was weirdly annoyed by trying to be asked to believe that there would be a gangster named Bilby. Just, it's like the least intimidating last name.

Grace: He's, he sounds like he's a Hobbit gangster.

Jarrah: Exactly.

Grace: Startin' shit all over the Shire. [Irish accent] "We heard ya done crossed Master Bilby. That really upsets me apple cart!"

Sue: My gosh, maybe it's just 'cause we watched "Brigadoon" so recently.

Jarrah: Probably.

Grace: [Irish accent] "That's a nice cabbage patch you got there, it'd be a shame if someone's poet ran through it."

Jarrah: Okay. Also Bilby's widow's name is Morica, but whenever I was reading it on the subtitles I kept reading it like "Murrica".

Grace: [to the tune of "America, Fuck Yeah"] 'Murrica...

Sue: Fuck yeah!

Jarrah: Yes, exactly. Yeah so then Bashir has to go and admit to Sisko that O'Brien snuck away to do this thing and that Bashir covered for him and Sisko is unimpressed.

Grace: Sisko is unimpressed and also reasonably pissed off that they didn't tell him.

Sue: Yeah. I mean, *yes*.

Grace: Yeah. I think we even get a pretty good "What!" from Sisko.

Jarrah: I also feel like Sisko would've just let him go do it. Honestly? Like Sisko lets people go do random personal missions all the time.

Grace: Sisko is a very side quest friendly leader.

Jarrah: Yes.

Grace: Which honestly, one of the best things you can ask for.

Jarraah: Yep.

Grace: Yeah. I appreciate--- I do appreciate that they carried over a plot from a previous episode because I, I just always like it when they carry over threads from previous episodes. And considering the amount of times we have Chief O'Brien going off on life changing adventures that are just never mentioned again, I really appreciate that this at least got--- came up again.

Jarraah: Yeah, definitely.

Grace: Unlike his space dog who lives in the stations computer and who we never heard about again.

Jarraah: So sad.

Grace: I know! Why won't they let chief O'Brien have a space dog?

Jarraah: Yes, exactly. It's like how Elnor never got to pat spot the, the holographic cat.

Grace: Yeah.

Sue: I'm still mad.

Jarraah: Yeah.

Grace: We're gonna be mad about it for a while, probably.

Sue: But, so, so O'Brien has this mission where he's gonna find this guy's wife and it just so happens that she was, I guess, last seen the same place that Ezri's family lives.

Jarraah: That is convenient.

Grace: New Sydney! Which is great 'cause I, I really love the implication that there's a new every major city on earth.

Jarraah: Sure.

Grace: But you gotta imagine that it's like the really super touristy version of whatever the original city on Earth is. So it's like a whole planet devoted entirely to Australian stereotypes.

Jarrah: Yessss. They should have done that!

Sue: The planet is Sappora Seven, right? And the, the city is just New Sydney.

Grace: Oh.

Jarrah: Yeah, that wasn't clear in the episode though, to be fair.

Sue: Yes.

Jarrah: And I like the idea, even if it's just the city, like, the law enforcement should totally have had Australian accents?

Grace: [Australian accent] “Ya goin’ down undah!”

Jarrah: Yeah, they should have had like logos on their shoulders that had like...

Grace: Koalas.

Jarrah: Boomerangs, something like that.

Grace: A koala getting hit by a boomerang.

Jarrah: Instead of a painter, Norvo should have been an opera singer at the opera house or wanting to be an opera singer.

Grace: Because every building in the main like downtown area is made to look like the Sydney Opera House.

Sue: Look, we don't need Star Trek to have more cultural stereotypes.

Grace: No, but I live in the same state that has Leavenworth, which is a town based entirely around Oktoberfest stereotypes. So I can't help but, you know, wanna see more of that energy that's, you know, not being used to actively discriminate a marginalized group.

Jarrah: Yeah. Like I would like there to be some “Sub Rosa”-esque silliness in this episode

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: Because it doesn't have much else going for it.

Sue: All right. That's, I guess that's fair.

Grace: What it does have going for it is Ezri getting involved in kind of a murder mystery, which it, it's funny because we, we get one season of Ezri and she gets multiple murder mystery episodes. Which leads me to believe that she inherited both the memories of the Dax symbiont and Hercule Poirot.

Jarrah: Hmm.

Grace: Or possibly, possibly Jessica Fletcher considering she just keeps wandering into murders. And that's a very Jessica Fletcher trait.

Jarrah: Yeah. I mean, O'Brien kinds end up -- kind of ends up doing more to solve this mystery?

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: Although Ezri partly solves it through intuition,

Grace: Which is cool 'cause you know, she's got a psychiatric background and all that.

Jarrah: Mm-hmm.

Grace: So she gets to be the one to like suss it out emotionally at the end, which is pretty, which is a cool moment for her, I gotta say.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Grace: It doesn't have her mom sitting in a big chair stroking a cat though which, I felt like we were so close to getting that and didn't. And I, I feel like we've all got a lot to say about Ezri's mom.

Jarraah: Okay. So first of all, before Ezri comes, she messages her mom to say, “Hey, can you help find O'Brien?” And her mom basically says, “I'm not gonna help unless Sisko will let you have leave right away to come visit.” Because it's been three years, I think she says?

Sue: Yeah.

Jarraah: And not cool, Ezri's mom. I mean...

Grace: Yeah.

Jarraah: That is a long time, I get it. But you know...

Grace: Now, didn't they say that uh, she'd seen her like right after she was joined and it was really awkward and weird.

Sue: Oh, right.

Grace: But hasn't come home in three years.

Jarraah: Yeah.

Sue: She hasn't been to the house, yeah.

Jarraah: Mm-hmm. Right. But like also she is in Starfleet in the middle of a war.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarraah: And the galaxy is a big place.

Grace: And she's an adult with her own life and commitments.

Jarraah: Yeah. I mean, I, I totally get, you know, wanting to say, like, “I miss you a lot and I would like to see you more, like when do you think you can come home?” But just like the approach of being like, “I'm not gonna help even though your friend might be in danger, unless you go tell your boss that your mom needs you to come home right now.”

Grace: “I demand you drop everything for me in this situation.” Yeah. I'd have been there. [?]

Jarrah: That said, as mentioned, Sisko did just let O'Brien go to what he thought was just to go visit his dad. So clearly being on DS9 during the war wasn't like, that pressing a reason not to go visit your family.

Grace: Well maybe, maybe O'Brien claimed it was a family emergency or something.

Jarrah: Mm-hmm.

Grace: Which would explain why Sisko was like extra mad, like "You told me he had rickets!"

Jarrah: Mm-hmm.

Grace: "And you had to rush to his side!" But let's talk about Dax going home, home and meeting up with this kind of a mess emotionally family.

Jarrah: Sounds good.

Grace: In their cool, cool house.

Jarrah: That is a redress of Vic's Lounge.

Grace: I know, but wouldn't you love to live in Vic's Lounge.

Jarrah: Yeah and also, I mean, I couldn't tell at all.

Sue: No.

Jarrah: From the, the living room that it's a redress of Vic's Lounge. There's a giant fire pit in the middle of it and it's all white.

Grace: They did a good job, yeah. I mean, it's cool. Also the, the family house itself was designed by matte artist Syd Dutton, and the house was based on the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, particularly Falling Water in Pennsylvania, which is a beautiful place; if you haven't seen it you should google it 'cause a) very important architect, b) really neat looking place.

Sue: Hmm.

Jarrah: Yeah. Star Trek, especially DS9, has a thing for Frank Lloyd Wright because the house where the albino lives in “Blood Oath”...

Grace: Yeah, that was another Frank Lloyd Wright, wasn't it?

Jarrah: Mm-hmm.

Grace: I think Frank Lloyd Wright was also having a big moment in the nineties, so...

Sue: Oh, for sure.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Grace: Everyone was just going ham on Frank Lloyd Wright. They were like, “Mmm! We need us some more conceptualist architects in our lives.”

Jarrah: Yeah. “Show us more cement. Less windows.”

Grace: Yeah! All about that.

Jarrah: I mean, there's lot, lots of windows, but...

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: But like current Star Trek houses that they seem to highlight are like, *all* windows, like the houses we see where like Sarek and Amanda live.

Grace: Well, let's be real without windows you can't greenscreen a cool background going on behind your characters.

Jarrah: Word.

Grace: You could have a room or you could have a room overlooking some really cool shit during your episode.

Jarrah: Yes.

Grace: Given the choice, what would you go with?

Jarrah: Hmm...

Sue: I'm just not sure how much glass I'd want letting light into my house on Vulcan, the desert planet.

Grace: They probably have like super tempered glass or something.

Jarrah: Yeah. It's probably super high tech.

Grace: If they have clear aluminum they've gotta have like really good, like UV-resistant glass.

Jarrah: Mm-hmm. Yeah. Or it's like, you know, also solar powering the house at the same time.

Grace: Oh, that would be neat. Man, we gotta get on top of that.

Jarrah: I'm sure they could do that in the future.

Sue: Yeah.

Grace: We gotta get on top of that now.

Sue: So Ezri's mom.

Grace: [to the tune of "Stacy's Mom"] Ezri's mom has got going on.

Sue: No, she does not.

Grace: Yes, she does!

Jarrah: I mean, depends what "it" is. If "it" is maternal guilt, yes.

Grace: Then absolutely. And also being, you know, primetime soap actress Leigh Taylor-Young, then absolutely. And I, I warned Jarrah I was gonna bring this up. I spent a good part of the episode going like, "Okay, where do I know her from? Where do I go know her from?" And I looked it up and she was in a Michael Crichton totally bonkers-ass movie called "Looker" that is so unbelievably audaciously weird I kind of love it. And so that's just gonna be the thing I forever associate with it. The movie where super models get plastic surgery to be even more perfect and then are getting murdered for it!

Jarrah: Oh is she a model who gets murdered?

Grace: Yes.

Jarrah: Okay.

Grace: And for those of you who don't remember Michael Crichton author of "Jurassic Park" and famous user in court during plagiarism claims of saying, "Try and stop me!"

Jarrah: *Okay!*

Grace: Yeah. That's his whole deal, or was. He's dead now, but yeah, basically his whole thing was, "Oh, I'm too powerful of a sci-fi writer for you to go up against me, even if I did steal your book!"

Sue: Great.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Grace: Right?

Jarrah: That's, that is audacious.

Grace: Which feels very Orion Syndicate. So. fitting, bringing it back to the, to the episode at hand, instead of my weird segue.

Sue: Okay, so, Ezri's mom.

Grace: Ezri's mom! Ezr's mom sucks!

Sue: Yeah. She's terrible to all her children.

Grace: But in a way that you definitely like, as an audience member buy in terms of some people just have moms who have very little empathy for their kids.

Sue: Right.

Grace: And expect their kids to do whatever *they* want.

Sue: And aside from the Ferengi really she's like one of the most capitalist characters I can think of in Star Trek.

Grace: Calling it. Now we should do another episode, "Top 10 Capitalists in all Star Trek!"

Jarrah: Yeah. I mean, she's definitely one of the most capitalist non-Ferengi.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: And, but her family is in competition with the Ferengi.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: For mining pergium, which is the thing they're mining in "Devil in the Dark."

Grace: Yeah, but why don't they have a bunch of little spaghetti critters crawling around leaving eggs?

Jarrah: I don't know. Hopefully it's not because they killed them all.

Grace: Aww I hope not.

Jarrah: 'Cause they were just *too* capitalist and they're not in the Federation.

Grace: Oh gosh.

Sue: Yeah they're, they're, they're cooking the books. They're paying off Orion Syndicate people.

Grace: They're a sketchy bunch. And it's really, the most surprising thing is that Ezri didn't know about this before coming and is only just figuring it out.

Sue: Well, it seems like it's recent.

Jarrah: Mm-hmm.

Grace: If, so her family got really good at being criminals really fast. There's usually a learning curve there isn't there? It

Jarrah: It seems like they're bad at it, like, which is...

Sue: Yeah, I think that too.

Grace: Okay. Fair.

Jarrah: Okay so, let's talk about the brothers briefly. And you need to hear the actor bio for the actor who played Janel Tigan, who's basically like, she has two brothers that are essentially like the masculine one that is fault -- like, doing what his mom wants and taking care of the business.

Grace: The butch mama's boy, right?

Jarrah: Mm-hmm. And then the less butch artist who doesn't really have a head for, or desire to do the things that his mom wants to do in relation to the business.

Grace: It is very much the stereotypical tortured alcoholic artist character.

Jarrah: Yes. So Mikael Salazar who played Janel Tigan, who's the butcher bro.

Grace: Mm-hmm. Not a butcher, just more butch.

Jarrah: Yes. This is just part of his bio. "In 1993, Salazar joined Jillian Hessel's workout studio in West Hollywood as a manager, and also learned and experienced the world of the Pilates apparatus."

Grace: Oh my god.

Jarrah: "He started to do maintenance work for the equipment and built his own business within Southern California. This was also the time he was nicknamed 'The Pilates Guy' and started his business he is still working on." Which tracks.

Grace: Good for Pilates Guy!

Sue: Where is this bio from?

Jarrah: Uh Memory Alpha. I mean, it says like his two acting roles and then it says that.

Grace: Well good for him, he uh started acting and then got flexible.

Jarraah: It is entirely possible he updated that bio on Memory Alpha or someone he knows.

Grace: Yeah. Whereas our other guy who played the other brother was on the “Lethal Weapon” series playing a -- guess what his character's name was? You're gonna love it.

Jarraah: Lee?

Grace: His, his character's name was Brooks Avery.

Jarraah: Oh my gosh.

Grace: Right.

Jarraah: Okay, that *is* delightful. He has a lot more acting credits.

Grace: The, the “Lethal Weapon” TV series was fun.

Jarraah: I never watched it.

Grace: It was fun. I got uh, I got it recommended to me by an older woman at work saying, “There's just some real dishy guys on there.” And it was like, well, I gotta watch now.

Jarraah: He, he has had uh recurring roles in some more recent series, including “Madam Secretary” and “Mad Men”.

Sue: So we have these two brothers.

Jarraah: Yep.

Grace: Two brothers!

Sue: And then Ezri, right, who was like, by what we hear in this episode wanted to get out of there as quickly as possible.

Grace: Can you blame her?

Sue: And it's, it's really interesting 'cause everything that we've heard about like Trill culture to this point has been that like it's, it's almost everyone's desire to become joined and it's such a, a high status thing and it's, it's so desirable.

Grace: Yeah. That like culturally it's the best possible thing.

Sue: Right. And it, her, her mother seems to hate it.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarraah: Yeah.

Sue: Right. She seems offended that, that their family name Tigan was replaced with the symbiont name Dax. She like, sort of rolls her eyes whenever Ezri talks about the difficulty she's had, like figuring herself out. She's not accepting of like, "I have these additional memories now." And I, I mean, it's, it's an interesting twist on what we have been told of Trill culture to this point, but it is also, you know, I am saying this as a cis person, but it reflects a lot of what I know I have heard and read from trans people

Grace: Yeah.

Jarraah: Mm-hmm.

Sue: Who are trying to explain things to their families who just either don't get it or refuse to try to get it.

Grace: We, we even get a line from Ezri saying "I'm still figuring out my pronouns."

Sue: Mm-hmm.

Grace: So, so yeah, that was definitely something I was picking up on there too.

Jarraah: And Janel also seems to really resent her. He's kind of a dick when she first comes and I think he seems like he's basically taking his mom's side on things and that there's a lot of resentment to her for like leaving and not taking on part of the family business. Although it seems like...

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: They were maybe okay with her being in Starfleet.

Grace: Mm-hmm.

Jarrah: But like, this is a bridge too far.

Grace: Yeah. “How dare are you not only have your own life, but have the memories of eight other lives that have in no way been influenced by your mother.”

Jarrah: Mm-hmm! Yeah. And there's a super interesting point later which, we can get more into the mother dynamics, but the point where she's trying to tell her mom how she needs to behave towards Norvo, the artistic brother, and her mom is just like, “What do you know about this?” And Esri's like, “Actually I have eight memories of -- eight lifetimes of memories of this stuff.” And her mom, I think understandably, is pissed a little bit by that. like, this idea that you in a moment kind of were able to accumulate all of this experience that now you think entitles you to like lecture me on motherhood? I can definitely see like both sides on, in just like that tiny, tiny moment.

Grace: Let's be honest, who hasn't had an older person or parental unit become frustrated at you needing to say, “Yeah, I'm actually, I actually know more about this thing than you do. Please respect that.”

Jarrah: Mm-hmm.

Grace: Or that might just be me. Who can say, who can say?

Sue: I, I don't think that's just you, mmm-mm.

Jarrah: I feel like generally trying to tell your parents how to parent differently is never gonna work well, even if you're right.

Grace: No, no. Yeah. That is true.

Jarrah: One thing I thought was was interesting is, I was reading this book like a year and a half ago that was called “Hidden Valley Road”.

Grace: Mm-hmm.

Jarrah: And it was about a family that had a really strong genetic predisposition to schizophrenia, which they didn't know about. But they like, their family became one of the first families to be really like studied because they had, I think it was something like 10 or 12 children and like six or seven of them ended up being diagnosed with schizophrenia.

Grace: Oh wow.

Jarrah: But the two youngest daughters who did not end up having schizophrenia, one of them, the youngest one kind of had to stay and the older one kind of was able to get out and like was...

Grace: Oooof.

Jarrah: Essentially kind of got herself kind of half-adopted by like a family friend. She got herself into like a private school and, and the, the dynamic between these two girls was really interesting.

Grace: That had to have been really rough.

Jarrah: Yeah and they talk about it in the book as adults about, you know, having to... One of, you know, the one who stayed had a lot of resentment and she felt like she was left to like pick up the pieces...

Grace: Yeah,

Jarrah: Of all the stuff that was happening in the family and to like develop compassion for her, her siblings that had caused, you know, not through any fault of their own, but had, had, you know, caused a lot of chaos in the family. And ending up needing to like, be able to forgive her sister for not doing the same thing, because they were both, you know, kids and both traumatized, and one of them needed to have this different approach. And yeah, so something that I think about is, 'cause I think this happens in a lot of families and other types of scenarios in lesser, like less dramatic ways, but that some people are gonna stay and try and stick it out and some people are gonna leave and ultimately no one is necessarily right or wrong in those situations?

Grace: Mm-hmm.

Jarrah: As long as you're kind of clear-eyed about the reality. And I think that's what we're missing in this family is her brothers don't really see that they do have options and that they're, they're making a choice to stay.

Grace: Well, let's be real, the oldest brother probably feels like she left him to carry the bag in that situation.

Sue: Mm-hmm.

Jarrah: Yeah, totally.

Grace: And she left him to be the one to make up for her not being there. And also he has to keep an eye out on their younger, flaky, artistic brother. I love how much of a stereotype of the temperamental artist this character is. And I, I absolutely adore that there's him being like, "Here's my painting. It's derivative. I hate it. Mother hung it up and..." Just using the most kind of stereotypical over-the-top way to describe the painting and then him getting mad and painting a little stick figure on it.

Sue: It's a stick figure!

Grace: I love that so much. I'm kind of trying to get myself into doing a painting series of prop paintings from TV shows and now I really wanna do that one also.

Jarrah: Oh, that would be super fun.

Grace: Yeah. It's been fun so far.

Jarrah: He's like upset 'cause he didn't get into the best art academy and his sister Ezri is, you know, trying to reassure him like, "I still believe in you."

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: But it also just kind of makes him feel bad about himself because she's kind of a bit insinuating that he, he's given up.

Sue: Yeah, that pep talk was not good.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Sue: Like "You had so much potential when you were a kid, what happened?" Like that is...

Jarrah: Mm-hmm.

Sue: Never the appropriate way to approach that conversation.

Jarrah: Especially when you're the one that bailed.

Sue: Mm-hmm.

Grace: Well, hey, now, now Ezri has Ezri and then like eight other people in her memory being like, "Man, what happened to you?"

Jarrah: Mm-hmm.

Grace: So she's got a ratio of judgemental to sibling that she's gotta work with there.

Jarrah: Yeah. But, yeah, I mean, it's also partly just limited by the, you know, realities of episodic television that you can't have someone go through -- go to like five therapy sessions before they have a breakthrough.

Sue: Right.

Grace: Unless that therapy is a big part of the show itself.

Jarrah: Yeah, exactly. You need to just have her say exactly what's on her mind instead of going a long road to coaxing it out. You know, coaxing him to realize he has more options.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: But like, yeah, the mom is super, super hard on all of them. She puts a lot of pressure on, for example, Norvo for not having the books done correctly even though he clearly has no inclination or aptitude for it.

Grace: Yeah, he just kind of got roped into the family business.

Jarrah: Yeah. And same with Janel. She's like criticizing him for the issues even though he's trying really hard to solve them with the equipment and stuff. But it turns out they're being sabotaged by the Orion Syndicate.

Grace: And then when Ezri like first shows up, she's like, "Ezri! Oh, I hate your hair." And she's like...

Jarraah: Mm-hmm.

Grace: You can see she's trying to do that in that “Oh...”

Jarraah: Yeah.

Grace: “I'm lovingly chiding you” way, but you totally see in the, “No, you're just being really bitchy” way.

Jarraah: Mm-hmm.

Sue: And wait, can we, before we, we do more plot stuff...

Jarraah: Yep.

Sue: Can we talk about how the insinuation is this is all because they don't have a father?

Grace: I didn't see that. I didn't really see that, but yeah, let's talk about that.

Jarraah: Do we know what happened with Ezri's dad?

Sue: We have Google.

Grace: If they said in the episode, I don't remember it.

Jarraah: I, I mean, it's not mentioned in the episode. My thought is that it is not the, the most obvious implication that it's because they don't have a dad, but I think it's a very common trope we see with single mothers.

Grace: Mm-hmm.

Jarraah: That, you know, that maybe there's an implication that if there had been a dad, then someone would've been keeping her in check.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarraah: In terms of how she was parenting the kids.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarraah: And because she was left to her own devices, she was able to, you know, kind of the equivalent of “Mama Rose” of mining on them.

Grace: Now I'm just imagining an Ethel Merman “Godfather” in space.

Jarraah: Yep.

Grace: [Ethel Merman voice, to the tune of “Some People”] “Some people can take ‘em to the mattresses!”

Sue: According to Memory Alpha, it is mentioned somewhere in the episode that their father and mother separated.

Grace: Ah, that extra adds to that whole thing then doesn't it.

Sue: And in cut scenes, Ezri mentions that her father stays away to avoid her mother, but was planning to return for the trial.

Grace: Oh.

Jarraah: Oh, okay. Because in the actual episode at the end she says, “I'm gonna stay through the trial and then I'm gonna come back to Deep Space Nine.” And that's what we see at the end of the episode. But you know, there's also a trope, and we haven't got there in the plot, but there is also a trope, obviously, of mother blame...

Grace: Yeah.

Jarraah: When someone commits murder.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarraah: I just spoiled the ending.

Grace: Oh no, someone committed a murder?!

Jarraah: Mm-hmm yeah, so they find out Morica Bilby -- oh, wait, O'Brien, sorry, we didn't explain that.

Grace: Mmm-mm.

Jarraah: Ezri's mom's law enforcement friends found O'Brien...

Grace: Mm-hmm.

Jarraah: And were like basically super unimpressed with him and were just like, "Get him off this planet." And then he helps them in the mine and identifies that things are being sabotaged by the Orion Syndicate and says, basically, "This seems like they're trying to pressure your family by causing things to go wrong and only they can fix them."

Grace: Mm-hmm.

Jarraah: And so him and Ezri start investigating the books and the HR records and stuff and figure out that Morica Bilby worked for the family!

Grace: [gasp] My god! What are the odds?!

Sue: And there's this weird scene with Ezri and Miles.

Jarraah: Mm-hmm.

Sue: Where he, he confronts her and says, "Did you really come here to, to rescue me? Or did you come here to stop me?"

Jarraah: Yeah.

Grace: Yeah. Like he thinks she's in on it for a minute there.

Sue: Right. Which like, I don't see anywhere. Like that seems very odd.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarraah: Yeah, it did seem odd but then again he has only known her for like six episodes.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarraah: And also he's potentially jealous that his BFF is, has a crush on her?

Grace: Miles has got some stuff he's working through right now.

Jarrah: But then also Ezri just goes “No!” and O’Brien’s like, “Yeah. Okay. That was, that was maybe a bit much.”

Grace: Yeah. I believe you. But yes, we have, we have O'Brien and then we have the whole setting up to be like, “No, it's probably the super, super loyal brother who's the one who did the murderering,” and he's like, “No, I didn't!” And that's when we get to see Ezri go, “No, it was you! Sensitive artist, brother!” and that's kind of her, her big moment of the episode is when she just kind of realizes, “Oh, it was you that did it.”

Sue: You did it to make the accounting easier.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: Basically, ah!

Grace: I mean, who hasn't wanted to kill someone rather than have to do math?

Jarrah: So the mom, before this happens, like back at when Ezri's doing the pep talk, after that Norvo gets super drunk and then Ezri's mom accuses her of like causing that problem. And Ezri is validly like, “That's ridiculous. He's an adult.” And that's when she...

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: Is kind of questioning her mom's parental choices.

Grace: Mm-hmm.

Jarrah: And then when O'Brien and Ezri find this information about how Morica Bilby worked for them and how they were increasing her salary, and this seems like Syndicate stuff.

Grace: Mm-hmm, sketchy, sketchy.

Jarrah: The mom just straight out accuses Janel. It's like, “This was you.” So yeah, she's basically accusing her own kid.

Sue: Right, ‘cause she turned over like the day-to-day operations to him.

Grace: Yeah. Her kid who's been like bending over backwards to try and make everything work.

Sue: Right. So what is she doing day-to-day? That's a question I have as well.

Grace: Aside from firing people, what does she do?

Sue: Right.

Jarraah: Like she shows up in the mine at one point and like makes some comments, but yeah that's a good question. Because Janel, you know, pushes back like, "You put all of this on us and you didn't seem to care as long as things were working, right? And then stuff was going badly and you just wanted us to fix it so that's why we got, got in bed with the Orion Syndicate."

Sue: Right and this is, I think also we can expand this to like, people who just give jobs to their children instead of the most qualified applicants, maybe?

Grace: Nepotism! It's not usually a great vis--- business plan.

Sue: I really enjoy the Reddit channels like Malicious Compliance, which often have people dealing with like bosses or, or people at work who are, you know, somebody's cousin or somebody's nephew!

Jarraah: Hmm.

Sue: And it's just, it's lovely.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarraah: And so Norvo just gets this weird look and that's when Ezri does say, "You're actually the killer." And he doesn't -- and so Norvo basically says that he did it because he realized if she was gone all their problems would go away, which I feel like shows a lot of naïveté about the mob.

Grace: "Only one person is in our way for everything. I can commit one murder and then never again!"

Sue: That was great, Jarraah.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: I mean, also I actually have to go back briefly 'cause I failed to mention my favorite minor character in this episode. Yeah, so the minor character's name is Thadial Bokar and he shows up in the mine...

Grace: Great name.

Jarrah: To be the most conspicuous bad guy ever.

Grace: Yes!

Sue: He does not have a mustache. Or a monocle!

Grace: He does have shoulder pads for days.

Jarrah: If he had a mustache, he would be twirling it And so my favorite line, so he basically shows up -- Janel and, and O'Brien are working on this drill and then he shows up and he has this great line "Thadial Bokar, I'm a commodities broker attempting to establish business ties with the illustrious Tigan family." And it's just like, if he read the one line of his character description in the script.

Grace: That's like his "front of the Agatha Christie book" character description.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Sue: It's his LinkedIn profile.

Grace: Old man who was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Jarrah: Yeah. I just was like, oh man, they could not do anything subtly in this episode because they didn't have time, obviously. But this guy I think was also unnecessary. Like O'Brien was kind of figuring out what was going on.

Grace: It feels like they had a plan for this character and then forgot to use him for anything.

Jarrah: Mm-hmm.

Grace: It's kind of like a Madlibs episode isn't it, with ideas that were interesting but just kind of pasted together.

Jarrah: Right.

Grace: Also, can we talk about one more thing, that between the two brothers, the one that's, you know, the anguished artist character with mommy issues is the one who kills someone in the end.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Grace: Norman Bates-y kinda.

Jarrah: Exactly, yeah, that's exactly what I was gonna say. It's like, it's got the mother blame and the idea that the man who is more effeminate or creative or artistic is...

Grace: Is the more volatile one. Yeah.

Jarrah: Yeah. Yeah. And I think...

Sue: Hmm.

Jarrah: I mean, I wanna think that maybe, you know, the line about how “This would solve all our problems...” It isn't that he's actually naive but that they're leaning towards he's pathological? That he's like got some type of, of mental illness or something?

Grace: Hmm.

Jarrah: But they don't totally go there, but...

Grace: Yeah, art school's *full* of pathological people.

Jarrah: It would be in line with the trope, for sure.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: And then, like, I think we have to talk about the scene where Ezri's mom says to her, like, “This wasn't my fault. Was it?”

Sue: [groan] I mean...

Jarrah: And then there's just silence.

Grace: “Make it better, child!”

Sue: “Absolve me of this terrible thing. My children did.”

Grace: “Child, parent me!”

Jarrah: I mean I, obviously it's a shitty thing for the mom to do, but also it's a shitty thing for the writers to do, to like jam her into that trope to be like, “And it was all the mother's fault.”

Grace: All of this could have been solved with more attentive parenting!

Jarrah: Like previously Ezri had been arguing that Norvo is an adult.

Grace: Yeah!

Jarrah: And not a child who needs special treatment, but now he's *not* an adult capable of making his own decisions whether or not to kill someone.

Grace: Yeah. There's just a lot of different directions that this episode isn't sure what, which it's going in.

Sue: [sarcastic] Because of all of the pressure from his mother. If she just let him leave and be his own person, he wouldn't have murdered anybody.

Grace: Or if only his father had been there to make her toe the line.

Sue: Oh, ooh.

Grace: Yep, yep.

Jarrah: I feel like it might have worked better if Norvo had made the decision and killed Morica Bilby while Ezri and O'Brien were on the planet. So like maybe Morica Bilby was missing, but not dead?

Sue: Mm-hmm.

Jarrah: And then Norvo kills her while they're there...

Grace: Mm-hmm.

Jarrah: Then there would've been a situation where Norvo had had the opportunity from Ezri to leave but he still chose to do this thing? Versus what

we have now where like, essentially all of the actions already happened before the episode even started.

Grace: Yeah, come to think of it they do just kind of show up after everything that's interesting has already happened.

Jarrah: And then they have to uncover it and it's really easy because these are not, not hardened criminals.

Grace: And yet they're working with the Orion Syndicate for some reason.

Jarrah: Yeah. Well?

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: They're kind of being shaken down by the Orion Syndicate and they're playing out of their league.

Grace: Oh no yeah, that's the, that's the crux of this episode: a lot of people playing out of their league.

Jarrah: I mean it really does make you excuse Ezri for not wanting to go home and visit her mom. Her mom is legit the worst.

Grace: Yeah. You absolutely understand it.

Jarrah: And bad moms, bad dads, bad parents of all kinds do exist in real life so maybe you can find some relatability there that's helpful?

Grace: Mm-hmm.

Jarrah: In addition to some of the, the trans parallels that are potentially helpful to identify with maybe there's a also, "I don't really like to go visit my mom that much? Because she's manipulative?" that could be useful, but.

Grace: Mm-hmm.

Jarrah: It also is just a crappy trope when you don't have like a lot of other examples of different types of moms in Star Trek.

Grace: Which is funny because I feel like Star Trek as a whole put so much emphasis on like these grand, complex father-son relationships, but a lot less on mother-daughter. Just, just by scale I think we see a lot more father-son than mother-daughter.

Sue: The only other one that comes immediately to mind is the Trois.

Grace: Yeah. Which is very much a “*Mo-ther?!?*”

Jarrah: And then, T’Pol and her mom.

Sue: Hmm.

Jarrah: Which is not dissimilar to the Ezri relationship except for her mom's not actively evil, but her mom does, you know, not understand her and is trying to fit her into a box.

Sue: And well, they're all kind of controlling and manipulative and overbearing.

Jarrah: Mm-hmm.

Grace: And we've got B’Elanna's mom who's just, cartoonishly Klingon.

Sue: Uh-huh.

Grace: So she's, she's, she's kind of an over-the-top monster mom.

Jarrah: Yeah, there's been um definitely some academic writing on moms and motherhood in Star Trek and analysis of how some of the attitudes are kind of problematic-to-conservative about the whole thing?

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: The other -- I was reading a paper the other day and the other example I was talking about was about Samantha Wildman, who just like has a baby and then leaves it with Neelix the whole time?

Grace: Yeah.

Sue: Well, I mean, Crusher literally leaves her son on the ship.

Jarrah: Yup.

Grace: Yeah.

Sue: And goes elsewhere, like...

Jarrah: Yeah. And, and like all the focus is on the father figures in his life.

Grace: Yeah.

Sue: Yes.

Grace: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. When he is got an awesome mom.

Sue: It's all about the, the male mentor or the father figure or the father-son relationship. And we don't -- the, the relationship between women on Star Trek, at least at this point has not been given even the same sort of respect.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: Mm-hmm.

Sue: And I think that that started, has changed since then.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Sue: And like specifically, I think they tried to do that in the very beginning of Discovery with Burnham and Georgiou.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: Mm-hmm.

Grace: Definitely.

Jarrah: And I think in Voyager as well with Janeway as a mentor and with Seven mentoring Naomi,

Sue: Mm-hmm, yes.

Jarrah: But there were still, it was coinciding with these kind of challenging mother tropes as well.

Grace: Before we wrap up, do we have any final thoughts on this episode that we wanna share? Other than Ezri's mom just kind of sucks.

Sue: I mean, this can be, this can be a hard one to watch if you have some family stuff in your own life.

Grace: Yeah.

Sue: I, I just kept getting mad!

Jarrah: Mm-hmm.

Sue: Ooh.

Grace: I would give it two and a half out of five self vandalized paintings.

Jarrah: I will give it one and a half out of five derivative sculptures.

Sue: If the unit is bad does the higher the rating mean that it's worse?

Grace: Don't read into it too much.

Sue: I'm, I'm going low. One outta five awkward family meals.

Grace: Alright. That about wraps things up for us today here on Women at Warp. Sue, where can people find more from you online?

Sue: You can find me on Twitter at "Spaltor". That's "S P A L T O R". And next month, Labor Day weekend, you can find me in Atlanta, Georgia, at Dragon Con.

Grace: Ooh, drinking the sweet tea down in Georgia! With the dragons, at their con!

Sue: Drinking the apple pie down in Georgia.

Grace: Ooh. What about you? Jarrah, where can people find more from you?

Jarrah: You can find me on Twitter at “J A R R A H penguin”. And you can also find me at trekkiefeminist.com, where I have been posting a bunch of new stats on the gender breakdown of behind the scenes positions in Star Trek.

Grace: And I'm Grace and you can find more from me on Twitter at “BonecrusherJenk”. And just elsewhere in all of the forms of Women at Warp, I have my sticky fingers.

Jarrah: For more from our show, you can follow us at womenatwarp.com or on social media at “WomenAtWarp”. And you can reach out to us on social media at Women at Warp.

Grace: If you wish to email us, you can reach us at crew@womenatwork.com.

Sue: Thanks so much for listening.

Grace: [singing] That was me doing “Godfather” music.