

Women at Warp Episode 191: Picard Season 2 Review

introduction music plays

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

Aliza: Hello!

Sarah: Jarrah...

Jarrah: Hi!

Sarah: And special guest Godiva Lee!

Godiva Lee: Hello!

Sarah: So, before we get into our main topic, we have a little bit of housekeeping to do first. Our show is made possible by our patrons on Patreon. If you'd like to become a patron, you can do so for as little as a dollar per month and get awesome rewards from thanks on social media, up to watch longs with the crew. Visit <https://www.patreon.com/womenatwarp> for more info. Looking for podcast merch, check out our TeePublic store. There's so many designs with new ones being added all the time, and on so much more than just t-shirts. Find it at <https://www.teepublic.com/stores/womenatwarp> So, Godiva why don't you tell our listeners a little bit about yourself and your history with Star Trek?

Godiva: Oh, absolutely. I've been a fan of Star Trek for a very long time, but I'm sure that's the case for everybody here. I also am an audio engineer over at the local radio station. KBOO.fm in Portland. I am also an events coordinator for Star Trek bar Trek, PDX, which is just a fan run bar Treking gang, going around talking about Star Trek and drinking beers together. And that's me. That's my jam.

Sarah: Awesome! So, let's get down to season two. Does anyone wanna give a brief recap of the major events of season one?

Jarrah: Sure. So, um, in season one, Picard starts out, he's basically retired from StarFleet and, he is kind of jaded about the whole thing because of bad experiences with the Romulan refugee crisis and the way that StarFleet handled it, and because they've banned synthetic life, because there was an attack on Mars by synthetic life forms. And wow, it's actually really hard to briefly recap season one, cuz it's so dense, but let's uh, basically just say that Picard pulls together a ragtag crew of non StarFleet folks, some ex-StarFleet folks and they eventually save the galaxy, and make it cool to be synthetic.

Aliza: As Picard becomes himself.

Jarrah: Oh right. Yes. That also happened. A lot happened.

Godiva: A lot happens. That was a good recap.

Sarah: Thank you. That was a great recap for like me not giving you any heads up that was going to be asked.

Aliza: Yeah. I'm impressed.

Jarrah: Also Riker made pizza.

Aliza: Mm-hmm bunny corn pizza.

Godiva: Mm-hmm.

Sarah: It was pretty awesome. I wonder what bunny corn tastes like. So, onto season two, which first I just wanna express my appreciation that they did the one with the whales, the next generation, and they just really leaned into it.

Aliza: Yeah. Yep. I love all the little nods to it. Very nice. Very nice.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Sarah: But a big issue that a lot of people had with this season that we have with Star Trek over and over and over again is it's depiction of mental health treatment.

Jarrah: Are we just gonna get into, we're just gonna go, right. Let's tackle this one to start and then we can go to the more fun stuff.

Sarah: Let's just jump right into it.

Aliza: Yeah, go for it.

Godiva: Well, I was not too comfortable. with its depiction of manic... What was the mother supposed to have wrong with her manic depression or...

Jarrah: I assume it was bipolar. Bipolar.

Godiva: Oh, boy, that just felt like depressive or mental instability, torture porn. I don't know if I can say that on here, but...

Jarrah: Mm-hmm

Aliza: no, I agree. I think it was also romanticized in a weird way.

Godiva: Yeah.

Aliza: It was like, oh my beautiful mother who was just crazy. Oh, I'm so traumatized. Like it just felt... I think because it was so beautifully shot weirdly, it actually had an inverse effect of making it seem like this weird wistful, yummy memories of my mom losing her mind, you know?

Jarrah: Yeah. It was weird in multiple ways. I think that, and there's kind of two discussions that are had about these episodes towards the end of the season. One is on content warnings, which maybe we can come back to, but just on the representation, in addition to it being like really oversimplifying mental health challenges, I mean, it also really just told this woman's story from the perspective of child Picard. And while I think it's valid to tell stories, you know, from the perspective of someone who's experienced a parent with a mental health issue, when like Star Trek until Discovery didn't really have a good history of dealing with mental health issues, it's challenging when you're basically like reinforcing these stereotypes about people with bipolar and like really she has no subjectivity or agency. And in what Star Trek universe are we allowing spouses to lock their mentally ill wives in bedrooms, as treatment in the 23rd, 24th century. Like this is not the yellow wallpaper, it's not Jane Eyre.

So, that really rubbed me the wrong way, that like, you know, I feel like you could say a hundred percent, this was abusive of the father, but the show never says it. Like, it maybe kind of implies it by the way that his mother gets dragged away at the beginning. But, in the end when like Laris, or sorry, Tallinn is like

helping Picard process this and like saying it wasn't your fault. No one ever says also your dad never should have locked your mom in a room, that wasn't cool.

Aliza: I totally agree.

Jarrah: The other thing that really bothers me about it is basically it's presented as like Q forced Picard to confront this trauma as a gift to him, to, you know, move on with his life and be able to accept love. And while in Picard's case, this may be like a valid story, it also really reinforces this problematic idea of like attachment theory, that if you don't choose to have long term, usually straight monogamous relationships that it's like, because something is deeply wrong with you and you must be suffering from childhood trauma. And this is like a real thing, that a lot of people put themselves through like thousands of dollars of therapy, trying to figure out what's wrong with them when like, actually some people just don't wanna be in relationships or don't experience sexual or romantic attraction. So this bothers me also for that reason.

Aliza: Yeah. I think what bothered me about that side of things is that I was never sold on Laris and Picard having romantic possibilities or energy or anything. Like the very first episode, them sitting on the patio, drinking wine and chit chatting was very sweet and nice, it felt very comfortable and friendly, but then immediately it turns to romantic on her part. And I was very confused by that because I think maybe if they wanted to sell us on that, like maybe they've come close to maybe kissing or dating or something in the past, and then it finally comes to a head where she's like fed up with waiting. Maybe, I would've bought it more, but it just felt kind of outta nowhere.

And it made me think to your point, Jarrah, about not everyone wants relationships, but also honestly, there's also just the, the angle of maybe he's just not into her in that way.

Jarrah: Word!

Aliza: Why? I don't understand why it was like... It was presented as like, there's something wrong with you, cuz you're not interested in this woman who's right here in your face. Like it was just weird to me that that was proposed as like a big issue for him to deal with.

Sarah: I feel like it would've made a lot more sense if Beverly had come back.

Jarrah: Mm-hmm

Sarah: And she had played the part of the love interest.

Aliza: Oh yes.

Sarah: But then it would've made it super weird, if traveler Wesley sent someone who looks like his mom to beat Picard's ancestor's supervisor.

Aliza: Wait, I have a question about that. Cause I'm, still confused about why Tallinn and Laris look the same. Was there any real connection between them besides them being Romulan?

Sarah: Not that they explained, but I think maybe I don't know, in my head cannon, maybe Wesley did that on purpose. Like sending someone who looked like Laris to help Picard. I don't know if that makes any sense, but I mean, actually I think for the writing's sake it was so they could like fridge Laris, but also not fridge Laris

Jarrah: Mm-hmm. I mean, I love Orla Brady, and I'm glad that she was in another season basically, because apparently fans reacted really positively to her in the first season, but yeah, agreed, it was weird.

Aliza: Yes. She's awesome. I love watching her perform. I wonder if they could have just the way that everyone had their like, you know, not mirror universe, but like alternate universe version that they were playing. Why couldn't they have just made that watcher Laris then, or not watcher, supervisor, whatever they called... Traveler. Why couldn't they make that like alternate Laris instead of just making, instead of making her a totally different character, that was confusing to me. I never really understood why they did that.

Sarah: I feel like there's a, a deleted scene or something. Like we're just missing some important information. Well, let's talk about Wesley, showing up because that was a happy moment.

Jarrah: Yes.

Aliza: Delightful.

Godiva: I, uh, specifically remember going to the Star Trek convention in Chicago that happened recently and I went to the panel for Wil Wheaton. And somebody had asked him a question about, uh, where do you think Wesley would be right now in, you know, a regular timeline. And, it's funny, looking back on what he had said now that we all know, that Wil kind of returns as

Wesley, but he, it, he was definitely eluding in his panel about, well, in my opinion, it should be Canon that Wesley is a traveler.

Sarah: And I'm just so impressed. He like kept this a secret.

Jarrah: I know.

Aliza: Ooh, that must have been hard.

Jarrah: It's so nice because you know, he's talked about how it felt to like, you know, have his scene cut out of the, was it Nemesis or one of the movies? I know a lot of fans were like, why is he not on the list for season three? So it's like really delightful to see that he is respected and appreciated by the official powers that be.

Godiva: So I have a question about that scene. Do you think he was inviting Kore to be a traveler or a supervisor?

Aliza: I thought supervisor.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Godiva: Okay. Yeah, that does make a lot more sense.

Jarrah: I also like that they were like, oh, they're these, you're the same thing. Travelers are part of the supervisors, cuz it just conveniently explains why there's like all of these groups that are kind of similar in the Star Trek universe.

Godiva: And I do like how he says, you know, we're nothing like the Q and sets up the Travelers to be like their own organization. That's totally separate and totally different. They don't just like run around screwing with people's lives. They actually try to help people.

Jarrah: And they aren't just about like helping people evolve to a higher plane of existence, the like actual material help.

Sarah: it's kinda nice. Can they come visit us now?

Jarrah: Yes please!

Godiva: It makes me daydream about Quantum Leap being an alternate universe of Star Trek with the Watchers.

Jarrah: yes.

Aliza: I love that.

Sarah: So, another mental health issue, they kind of explore this season is grief. And I know Godiva you had thoughts about Raffi and how she deals with Elnor's death.

Godiva: Yeah, I kind of got, I got defensive for her character at times. One of my favorite Star Trek Trek Trek characters is Kira from Deep Space 9, being somebody who has recovered from PTSD. It was very refreshing in Deep Space 9 to have Kira and her outbursts treated so fairly. And so with such understanding, it really made me happy about her character. And when comparing that to Raffi, it makes me a little frustrated because the characters in Picard, in my opinion, don't treat her with enough fairness and understanding as I think that she deserves. I also think it's very weird that when Elnor died, nobody else batted an eye. And when she was upset, they all got angry at her, like she was this loud emotional train wreck. And it's like, does nobody else care? And why are you mad at her for being sad? And they just made her look like a, a bully. When she was obviously grieving and they just treated her like that, the entire run of this season, too, even when they weren't talking about Elnor they just made her look like some irrational, loud, wild card that... There was that scene, they were trying to get up to the giant tower. And the entire time Raffi was like, let me at it, I know what to do. And there's Seven of Nine who was like, no, no, don't get crazy. I know you're like that don't get wild. And it just really bothers me that they've done a good job in the past, at least Deep Space 9 did in my opinion of trauma and stress reactions. And I don't think they did any justice to that, but it, like y'all said, it looks like they needed to reevaluate their views on mental health. So...

Aliza: Yeah, I'm seeing a pattern here with this season where like Raffi and, uh, Seven's relationship happened between seasons, and we only saw them like right when they got together, and then when they had just broken up at the beginning of this season, or not just broken up, but they had been broken up. And so we're... and just like with what I was saying before about Laris and Picard, maybe yeah, since her husband died, maybe during that time that we didn't see, they were getting close, they were like having cute little moments of cooking dinner together in the kitchen. Like I needed to see that, to understand how we got to the beginning of season two, with those, with their relationship. I

think in a similar way with Raffi, all of the, these endowments, they were trying to give her character of like what you're saying, like the irrationality and like being a little hotheaded and, uh, yeah, like dealing with grief in a normal, healthy way. All those endowments they were giving her felt kind of like, where's this coming from? Like why all of a sudden is like, no, oh, this is how Raffi is! She's all like hot under the collar. It feels like the stuff that they assume happened between seasons, we needed to see more of that to buy these endowments, they're now giving the characters between like personality traits and relationships.

Godiva: There were times to me where it seemed like the characters were living plot devices instead of fleshed out characters. And I know that probably sounds kind of rude, but in my head, that's what it felt like to me sometimes when they just assumed that we would understand where the characters were coming from.

Jarrah: I still felt that the Seven/Raffi kind of storyline through the season was way more enjoyable to watch than the sad Picard storyline, at least like, you know, it had humor. There's the part where they, you know, help bail Rios of ICE and like have driving mishaps. And I mean, we can go back to that if we wanted also talk about content warnings again and how maybe Star Trek should have them, but I was way more interested in them chasing the Borg Queen and like having fights and also squabbling with each other than I was about Picard's, you know, past. And honestly, I feel like this was a thought I had in season one where the way that Picard, you know, he puts together this ragtag crew of folks that aren't his usual crew from StarFleet from the next gen, partly because he's like, I couldn't put them in danger, which is kind of cold and awful to be like, but I can put all these people in danger. And this was a repeat this season, and I felt like the way that he really detached from what happened to Elnor was like, kind of cold.

Aliza: Mm. Yeah. Well, about the, not wanting to put them in danger, it felt more like I've already asked them to, to put themselves in danger for me. So many times I can't ask, I can't ask them again. It felt like that that's what I got from that in season one more like, I've run out of asking them for favors. I'm gonna leave them alone. but I also do see your viewpoint. Totally. I can see that as well.

Sarah: I mean, to be fair, they are all senior citizens now, so they deserve a break.

Aliza: Yeah, they need to just have their bunny corn pizza and chill, you know.,

Sarah: You know, another couple that kind of broke up off screen was, um, Rios and Jurati.

Jarrah: Oh yeah. Oh, I was so glad they didn't get back together.

Aliza: Yeah, well that's the thing, like, did we, that, yeah, you're totally right. Like they Def, okay. We know they hooked up last season, but then, it was like, oh, that's done. So was it, was it just that one time? And then they were like, we should try this. I was confused about that, to be honest

Godiva: It seemed like they were almost romantic friends.

Aliza: Ah, friends with benefits, like that kind of thing?

Godiva: Yeah. Friends with benefits possibly.

Sarah: I don't know, there was awkwardness when he called her and she picked up drunk.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Aliza: And she was very sassy to him when she came onto his bridge.

Godiva: Wasn't she still a little drunk though? Or did she take some sort of sober shot?

Aliza: No, she was, she was still drunk. Yeah. I just rewatched that, but you know, I will say though, I, even though I feel like I'm ragging on this season a lot. I actually really enjoyed this season a lot. And for me the first, like five to six episodes hit really well. I thought the storyline was really driving and interesting. Oh my God, I was so glad to see Q back. I thought he, I thought he was in top form. I think he, he fricking nailed it. Just like he was. So John de Lancie was incredible. I thought Whoopie was awesome. I thought Brent Spiner was dope. Like, I was very, very happy with the first like six episodes of this season. And then I do think the last, like two to three episodes were a little rougher for me.

Jarrah: Yeah, I'd agree. I think going back to the beginning and some of the stuff that I really liked, so you mentioned Q, so like silver fox Q was also perfection.

Aliza: Oh, My God.

Jarrah: And also another thing that really struck me in the first episode was just the amazing costumes. The costumes have been so good this season. I mean, they were good last season, but there wasn't as much chance to kind of show off the style because it was like a lot of sweaters and like Picard suits. But like Seven's president outfit and everything is just, was so good. So big fan of the costumes.

Aliza: Yes, absolutely. And the production design, like when they go to the alternate universe. Oh, I saw some really great tweets that summed up my feelings about this because I was like, God, like, I know they're like fascist and evil, but damn the design looks so, so in this world, Like, I wanna wear what they're wearing! I wanna dress like these, like future fascists

Jarrah: And they also updated the theme song and I really liked it.

Aliza: So dope. Really great attention to detail there.

Sarah: Yeah. Props to Jeff Russo for like bringing in old themes through the whole season. Like he knows how to like, just grab your heart. Like when they go on the, the Stargazer bridge and they play like the old TNG theme it's oh,

Godiva: They're really good at sometimes, and I'm not saying this in a bad way, it's like the writers know exactly when to feed the fish at the pond and they know that tossing out these small references is gonna get all the Star Trek fans to just like jump to the surface and grab at 'em like, oh yeah. That's why. That's what makes me think of, and I'm good, I'm ready for it. Give me some of them snacks, man.

Aliza: I think that's a great metaphor!

Jarrah: Let me be your goldfish.

Sarah: So, I, I actually wanna give props to Brent Spiner, who I think is really underrated. Cuz like last season he played this character, we absolutely loved and we're just weeping when he died and then this season he comes back and plays someone we absolutely hate. Like there's no redemption for Soong whatsoever.

Aliza: Ugh. I did, uh, exactly what you were talking about, Godiva, I was a goldfish with the project con folder. I was like, oh my God,

Jarrah: I didn't understand why Soong needed to be there though. Like honestly the like plot-wise except for, to give Isa Briones a role in the season. Like I don't know why it couldn't have been anyone else who like, donated money and, or got access somehow to the astronauts to try to poison Renee. The like, attack on Les Sirena, well, I mean, that was really like a Borg thing, but it was kind of both the like went after Picard's mansion. Like all of these things struck me as like, it wasn't that important that it was actually Soong.

Sarah: That's a good point.

Aliza: Yeah. So I think the first time he appeared this season, I went and onto the internet and looked up the history of Soong on like, uh, memory alpha and stuff. And the only thing I would say to argue in defense of the choice to bring him in is that I'd think it is a nice way to seed some future stories for, for, you know, season three, and also it is a pretty cool cannon, uh, move to, bring him into this past. Also, it seemed like people felt like they didn't honor what DS9 had laid down for this era in human history.

Jarrah: Oh yeah.

Aliza: In earth history...

Jarrah: The Bell Riots.

Aliza: Yeah. But I actually disagree with that because I think everything we saw happening in 2024, especially all the ICE stuff and what Guinan was seeing and feeling all of that stuff felt like pressure cooker stuff that would lead to the Bell Riots that would lead to everything else that was gonna, that we know in Star Trek, it's going to happen in earth history. So, I actually think the Soong also is a cool way to, to seed the idea of we are, this is the point, this is the turning point where humanity is like really dystopian and really like things are in balance. We're in pressure cooker. We're about to have another world war and there's billionaires who want to genetically do weird things to people. So that's yeah, that would be my defense of that choice.

Godiva: If there was a novel at all, following this season for Star Trek that I would wanna read, it would absolutely be a Picard Deep Space Nine crossover with Rios interacting with the Bell Riots.

general agreement from all

Godiva: I would buy that in a second.

Aliza: I, can we talk about Rios for a second?

Jarrah: Yeah.

Aliza: I, my heart, when he and Teresa actually like finally got together, like that cute little moment on the, on the ship when they realized they loved each other, I was so for it. And I agree with the choice to stay in the past. I love that, but I am also kind of mourning having Cristobal Rios in space and in the future and being a dope, awesome, wildly entertaining captain. Yeah. So I, I feel mixed feelings about his choice to stay in the past.

Sarah: But, it's okay cuz we still have like 16 Rios holograms.

Jarrah: That's true.

Aliza: I know, I guess

Godiva: Isn't he signed up to show up in season three?

Sarah: I don't know.

Jarrah: I think we heard that for sure that Allison Pill is not, but we haven't heard about him.

Aliza: Okay.

Sarah: Allison Pill is not? How does that even?

Jarrah: Um, so she was doing an interview where someone asked her about season three and she answered, she said, "but I'm not really involved in season three. So I don't know."

Sarah: Oh, that's so weird.

Jarrah: So I guess it's not a Borg story. I mean, maybe she'll be in like one episode if they're like these guardians at the gates.

Aliza: Yeah, and the offer at the end seemed like she, yeah, like there would be this bigger threat that the Borg would help to mitigate. So that's interesting.

Godiva: Also did Jurati just spend 400 years, you know, doing genocidal Borg atrocities while we waited for this episode?

Jarrah: Yeah, like someone was asking, does that mean like, you know, then basically who did Voyager fight or did that not happen? Like my understanding is that there would basically be kind of like two threads of Borg as a result of this, but I don't know, time travel, man.

Aliza: I think this means that going forward Picard, the show is it's own timeline. That's kind of how I'm seeing it because Jurati Borg. Yeah. No, I don't think this ret-con's anything, I think it's just, this is a fresh new timeline. They changed the past, you can't change the past to be exactly what it was before to become this exact same future. You just create a better future. So that's, I don't know, that's my theory.

Jarrah: But does that mean in like our prime universe where like Janeway fought the other Borg queen and Picard fought the other Borg queen that like, everyone got like, you know, in this horrible dystopian future?

Aliza: Well, no, because that was the thing that they changed. Right? And that was, so who was, was it Q who changed that? Q went back to 2024, changed this thing and was like, ha ha, now you have to fix it. Was that what happened?

Jarrah: It kind of seemed like it.

Aliza: Yeah. So I think that's why we don't have in the prime timeline, the creepy like Star Fleet. We wanna kill everybody future.

Sarah: No Borg Slayer.

Aliza: Borg Slayer future. Yeah. I think that was because it was a Q...

Jarrah: A QX phenomenon

Aliza: Shenanigan. Yeah.

Sarah: Yeah, that whole thing, and the whole Guinan timeline thing, like I can't wrap my head around it.

Jarrah: I do wanna talk more about Agnes and the Borg queen though. And I'm curious what people thought about the whole, like. let's make a better collective and stuff.

Sarah: I was really creeped out for most of the season when the Borg queen was very clearly grooming her.

Jarrah: Oh yeah. Annie Wersching was super amazing and creepy.

Sarah: I've only ever seen her play like a creepy serial killer, so this fits.

Godiva: Yeah, I was a little bit, it kind of reminded me of Deanna a bit because isn't Agnes supposed to be like this very, very brilliant scientist, and her mind is one of her key features, but in season one and two, her mind is absolutely taken over and taken advantage of kind of how Deanna Troi's empathy was taken advantage of anytime it was brought up. So, I don't know. I, I don't know how I felt about that. I wish that she would be coming back for season three because I was getting excited watching the last episode thinking, well, she's kind of got a handle on this, joining with the Borg queen, maybe now we'll get to see her, use her intelligence to do something amazing. And now she's not coming back for season three and it's like, did we just watch her basically get groomed by the Borg queen and then dropped or ?

Aliza: Well, I don't, I think she, so it sounds like she said she's not very involved in season three, right?

Jarrah: I think that was roughly what she said.

Aliza: Yeah, I don't think it says she's not appearing, but, but no, your point still stands. She might just kind of have a little bit of appearance here and there.

Godiva: Maybe she'll get another musical number?

Aliza: That was awesome. I liked that.

Jarrah: I had mixed feelings about it. I agree. Like I had the same thought that I feel like, oh, this was a repeat of her season one storyline where she's like, basically co-opted by the evil force. And I didn't really like the like, because you're always gonna be lonely and no one's ever gonna understand you thing, I mean, maybe that's, you know, a grooming lie, but then it doesn't really justify her choice very well. Because like she does have this chosen family. And so that was a little bit irritating, although I loved like the red dress and boots situation.

And I also thought the like build a better collective thing, felt like really fast reversal of the Borg Queen's values, but I kind of appreciate it on one level because it kind of reminds me of, so like in feminist theory, there's this thing called cyborg, the theory that some of you might be familiar with, and it basically talks about like the liberating potential of the cyborg for women. And in some of like some criticism of Star Trek is that the Borg kind of presents a vision of the cyborg as like necessarily destructive and autonomous, whereas like the idea of collectivity and serving like a common good and, you know, not necessarily striving for individuality could actually be like a more egalitarian feminist thing. This is extremely oversimplifying this, but I did kind of appreciate this idea that like, yeah, collectives don't all have to look like the same thing. Maybe we could build a better one that has nice values.

Aliza: Build Back Borg.

Sarah: It's interesting because in season one, they establish that individual Borg are not monsters, they're victims. And so she, they kind of come back and with the way for them to not be victims, but to take back their power by choosing to be a Borg, which makes me wonder about like Seven and other ex-Bs like, are there other ex-Bs left or did they all die in season one?

Jarrah: I think that they didn't all die, but a lot of them died.

Sarah: And you kind of have to wonder, I know, I would love to see the scene where they find out, oh, now people can choose to be Borg and not have their, you know, consent violated the way mine was.

Jarrah: Yeah. Like I would be deeply suspicious and the, the thing is also like, you know, the way that they cure Seven by like giving her back her implants, I understand the importance that played in Seven's story, but it like the way that scene happened, Raffi was like, if you don't let me treat her, she'll bleed out. And then they're just like, oh, we'll just save her. And so like, they didn't seek her consent to like save her through re-borg-ification. They're just like, this is a good thing to do, and you should be grateful.

Aliza: On a just purely visual note. I think it also was a little strange / funny to just put back the same implants.

Jarrah: Yes.

Aliza: Like why?

Godiva: I'm wondering if it, it was them just making an excuse to give her back her famous facial augmentations when I would absolutely still enjoy Seven without them.

Aliza: Yeah! Like, I mean, her, her wound was in her abdomen. So why, why the eye thing?

Sarah: Well, we should talk about Seven without her augmentations because she liked it.

Jarrah: I enjoyed it. I, I thought I liked her, you know, wrestling with like, what does this mean about me?

Sarah: Well, and how she was treated by other people too. I know someone who had weight loss surgery, and they told me, "until I lost the weight. I didn't know that people smiled at you on the street."

Jarrah: Oh man. That's sad.

Sarah: They just got treated so differently, once they were a different size. It was lot of the same thing for Seven. That's like the first thing I thought of when, when she was like enjoying that party and talking to strangers

Jarrah: Yeah. I mean, and she says basically that she was discriminated against because she was ex-B because she wasn't allowed to be a captain. Which was surprising to me. And I dunno how I feel about that, but I'm glad that it kind of seemed to indicate that they were gonna stand by her and help to push against that after.

Aliza: It makes sense, when you think about the world that we saw in season one, the Borg being like one of the biggest threats to the, this is not making any excuse for Star Fleet, but I can understand why in their, you know, very progressive, uh, system, they still would have an issue with a, uh, ex-Borg being a captain. It sucks, but also, yeah, I mean, Picard is an ex-Borg, too, so.

Jarrah: Yeah. And in the universe of Picard, I mean, you're right. That they show the Federation is not above discrimination.

Aliza: Right? Yeah. I thought it was very cool to see her get to play in that way. And I do mean Jeri Ryan get to play in that way, like seeing what it's like for Seven to experience, not having her Borg implants and you know what, even though I kind of jokingly criticized, like why is it an eye piece again? I'm glad

it's back. like, uh, it's iconic. It's dope. Um, she's dope. And, but I am also really glad that the things that happened to her, she was able to kind of like deal with and talk through and kind of make peace with, with them. Yeah. In my TTRPG world with Star Trek stories, I have a special game that I run that's just a party of ex Borg. So the players create characters that are all ex Borg. You get to choose what your implants are, your backstory, everything. And I just like run you through an adventure of basically like experiencing the world as an ex Borg and restarting your life. And it's kind of parallels reconstruction era in the US when African Americans were recently freed from enslavement and had to restart their lives. So I'm like super, super down for ex Borg stories. I want more of them. I hope we do get more of them, I guess it would be well, yeah, we only have one more season of Picard, but hey, give, give, uh, give Seven her own show. It'll be the ex-B show.

Godiva: There are honestly so many side stories that I would love to hear. Like I would love. A backstory of Seven's experience with this colony of ex Borg that apparently she was defending on the outskirts of Romulon space or something.

Aliza: Oh, I was thinking of the, the Rangers too. Like we we've gotten to see flashes of, of that, you know, her being a Ranger and out doing the space, faring, uh, Robin, not Robin Hood, whatever, you know, helping people thing that, so that I will watch a spinoff of that, too

Godiva: Or, Jurati's story. After she becomes the Borg queen, I guess. That would be great.

Aliza: Yes, absolutely.

Jarrah: Yeah. Like the, the intervening period

Sarah: I'm really just surprised that Elnor ended up in Star Fleet and not the Fenris Rangers. Like, I just think that would've been more fitting.

Jarrah: Yeah. I mean, it seemed like what I got, they were implying is that like Raffi was a mentor to him and that she got back in Star Fleet.

Aliza: Oh yeah. And he followed her, or he like, yeah, he went to Star Fleet to kind of please her.

Jarrah: Yeah, I will actually, I, I had a bit of an issue with the scene where they have the hologram Elnor. I mean, it was very funny, the emergency combat

hologram. That was great, but like that, the hologram was like, I know his last thoughts before he died, and he was thinking that he was grateful to you for, you know, leading him in this direction and like, and he loved you. And like, I get that it was a necessary moment of closure for Raffi's character, but like, I don't understand how a hologram reads your thoughts as you're dying.

Aliza: Okay. My brain justified this. I agree. It was weird. But my brain was like, okay, so maybe the computer needed... Nope. Nope. I can't, I don't even know. I can't even justify it. I don't know. I was gonna say maybe the computer had bios scans of everyone and it, it shows him, but no, that's so...

Jarrah: Our bios scans are like, so advanced that like from your brain scan, the computer can tell what you're thinking.

Aliza: Yeah.

Sarah: No, it's it's um, Our Man Bashier when something goes horribly wrong and they have to put everyone's like pattern consciousness into the holosuite. I'm sure it's something related to that.

Jarrah: I mean, if they had said they did that, I would totally buy it.

Aliza: That actually, oh my goodness, actually that does make sense. Like at, during his dying moment, the computer was like, well, let me save his like brain waves, cuz maybe if he gets a new body, we can put him back in.

Jarrah: Actually that would've made a ton of sense! Again, it's just like there was a missing scene.

Aliza: Yeah, I think they probably didn't even think it through that much. They were like, it would just be a nice moment to have hologram Elnor.

Jarrah: Well, and they also probably didn't wanna like give the idea that like the plan was to go back and put him in a synth body because then Raffi wouldn't have had the grief arc.

Aliza: Yeah. Yeah, that's true.

Sarah: They just need to hire us to come in and like nit pick their scripts.

Jarrah: I mean, overall I felt like the season was a lot more cohesive than season one, even though those like latter episodes before the finale to me were a bit challenging. But overall I think like they stuck the landing pretty well and things came together.

Godiva: I, uh, for season one of Picard the entire time I was like almost every single character's character growth is somebody dying in their life, but at least Raffi and Elnor don't have to worry about that. The season two rolled around, and I was like, oh, nevermind. It's cool.

Sarah: Yeah, I mean, mortality is a big thing that Picard has been exploring with Data in season one and Q and season two. So I don't know who's gonna get killed in season three. I have a guess. But, how do you think they're handling mortality?

Godiva: Well, they're definitely trying to talk about it. They bring it up a lot.

Sarah: I mean, they gave, they gave both Data and Q very dignified deaths.

Jarrah: I mean the Q, you know, basically having to straight up, say to Picard that he cares about him was like a really beautiful moment and the hug I was here for it . Yeah. I don't know. I feel like in Star Trek, well, at least in Picard, like, there are these big deaths that like have a lot of lead up and a lot of like big thoughts associated with them. And then there's like these senseless deaths, like Elnor's and then like, oh, oh, we have to reverse that.

Sarah: Sorry. I was just thinking back to, and I just forgot his first name, but, uh, Riker and Troi's son. That was another.

Jarrah: Oh yeah. Thad. Oh yeah.

Sarah: Important death.

Jarrah: Yeah, I mean, and that one was to serve a message and I feel like actually, you could argue Elnor was fridged for Raffi in this case. Um, if you can fridge a character to motivate a woman, it was sort of like used in that way for a story. But, and I think the other thing that people rightfully pointed out is, I mean, it basically sidelined a major person of color character for the whole season. And then you have like Raffi and Rios who are kind of like the hot messes of the group. And like there, isn't kind of the same criticism of Picard who is actually, you know, probably the most preoccupied by his feelings, but he's like also a white guy with a manor.

Aliza: Wait, what's the criticism of?

Jarrah: Oh, just so I saw some, um, critique that the season wasn't particularly great to the racialized characters by Elnor, both being kind of sidelined and then Raffi and Rios being the ones that like are more criticized for their emotions or emotionality in this, um, season. And I was just arguing if, so it's a double standard because Picard is very driven by his trauma the entire season. And no one, I mean, there's some like, what are you doing, Picard moments, but no one is like Picard, get yourself together.

Aliza: Yeah. That's, that's an interesting take. I do think Picard, what's funny is, and kind of sad is that when Picard is being the Admiral and level headed and moving things forward, no one cares what he's going through. And then, um, when he is dealing with stuff or when people want an emotional response from him, that's when he becomes a problem. Like, again, going back to the Laris thing, it's like, girl, if he's not into you, I'm sorry, you do need to move on. Like, but don't make him feel like he's damaged for not having those feelings for you, not wanting to take the relationship further. And, and so, and then similarly, like when, when he gets knocked out and he's struggling with the trauma and stuff, I, I don't know. I don't think I fully agree with the second part of that take, whereas where that, like Picard's emotionality, wasn't an issue. I think it was made an issue and I think his, he wasn't allowed to be as vulnerable, as he could have been in this. I mean, and that's more, that's not even like a writing note. It's more so just like having a strong character like that, what is, how vulnerable can you really, really make Captain Picard of the Enterprise? You know what I mean? Like we've already seen him as the Borg, which I think to this date is probably the most vulnerable we have ever seen Jean-Luc Picard and in, in the aftermath of him being a Borg as well was like really the most vulnerable we've seen that character. So I don't know. Yeah. But I, yeah, I appreciate that take, but I think I see it a little differently.

Jarrah: I think that's fair. And I think that actually raises an interesting point that I was like, oh yeah, he went through like a major amount of guilt as a result of Wolf 359. So it was kind of interesting that like, but he had this other guilt, so he asked and I mean, In some ways that's accurate. Like, you know, people often don't have just like the one defining thing that, you know, um, is the thing that drives all their behavior. They often have more than one thing, but it did feel like a bit of a revisiting of like, you try to save the galaxy because you feel guilty that you are a Borg and it's like, you try to save everyone because you feel guilty that you couldn't save your mom.

Aliza: yeah. Yeah. I think one of the little, I hate to reduce it to a trick, I don't think it's like, I don't mean to be dismissive about that, but I do think one of the go-tos they have for this show is that it's like calling out people for their like pathologizing, how people deal with the hard things in their lives. And you, you, you, uh, Godiva, you already kind of said this too. Like the grief, how everyone is dealing with losses in their lives and things like that. And maybe it's literally, it seems like it's maybe an underpinning of this whole show, the whole series. Like how people move through trauma and grief and loss.

Godiva: Like it's not only talking about living and looking at death, but also it's talking about living past trauma that could be holding you down.

Sarah: Another, um, topic, the show explores is fear of failure and it kind of explores it this season on two levels. You have Renee who we haven't talked about at all, who fears personal failure. And then you have Guinan who fears, you know, planet wide failure. Like she loves earth that she doesn't think we're gonna make it.

Jarrah: Yeah. Relatable.

Aliza: Yeah. Very relatable. I was really, I thought they did a really great job with those, that Guinan moment when she is on the streets of 2024 LA in that pressure cooker situation, dystopian situation. And just, you can see that heartbreak of where the, where the, not just the country, but where the, the species is going, where they're heading. I really related to that. And I think just, yeah, I was, I was also really glad to see Guinan, I don't know who was in the writer's room and who wrote that, but it felt like this was the first time we're seeing a Guinan who has writers, who get that experience. And cuz like as much as I adore Guinan before Picard the, you know, all the, all the things we've seen from Guinan before Picard version of her. I do think there are a lot of missed opportunities. Like what would it have been like to be, to be a popular culturally influential black woman in 1860s west like old west United States?

Like, yeah. Like, I, I love the fantasy of it, of that Guinan. I freaking love those two episodes, but there was just, it was just missing the fact that, hey, it would've been very unusual for her to have that position in society and a nod to it and an acknowledgement of her from her of that fact. Would've been awesome. And we finally are seeing a Guinan who acknowledges her race. Like, yes, she's an El-Aurian, but she's also a black woman. So that was awesome to me.

Jarrah: I loved the summoning a Q moment.

Aliza: Yeah, that was cool. I love all the Guinan lore that El-Aurian lore that we got from, from this season.

Godiva: Mm-hmm now I'm a little confused about the timeline of when Guinan actually met Picard, because as I understood it, if Q had messed with time and made Picard, like the Borg Slayer and everything, I understand that he would have probably never hired Guinan to be his bartender on the ship. So, he would've never have gone in time, Mark Twain that whole episode. I get that. But how did Guinan know before time was messed up, that that's how they would meet once he got back to the proper timeline. It's just, if anybody has an idea, any ideas about the continuity of that.

Aliza: Oh, well, I mean, the way they usually paper over that is that Guinan as an El-Aurian has that like time sense. So, she can, she can sense shifts in the timelines. She can even sense different timelines sometimes. Like with Yesterday's Enterprise, she's the one who's like, oh, something's not right. Something's changed. We're we're not on the same timeline

Godiva: With Tasha.

Aliza: Yeah. She she's the one who knows that before anyone else figures it out. So I think that is just like an easy little way that they can just be like, that's why. Because she's El-Aurian and she has like, timey wimey sense.

Godiva: But what about back with Mark Twain times? Like, why didn't she remember that? It's ah, I should probably just drop it.

Aliza: So that, yeah, I don't know what happened with that.

Godiva: In one, uh, Next Generation episode, she also referenced, uh, having crushes on bald men because of one that she had met when she was younger.

Aliza: Yes.

Godiva: Right before that other episode came out where Picard went back in time.

Aliza: Yes, exactly.

Godiva: But I love Guinan's character so much in my head. I'm just dropping it.

Aliza: I'm sure. I'm sure. It'll all make sense one day

Godiva: Yeah.

Sarah: I was just really hoping she was gonna stab Q with a fork again, but, no such luck.

Jarrah: Or, for the first time, I guess.

Sarah: Yeah.

Godiva: It's like how they say hi to each other.

Aliza: I still think my Guinan fanfic still makes sense based on all the new Guinan and Q stuff we got. My story still makes sense!

Sarah: Where can people find your story?

Aliza: Oh we wrote a script. We wrote a series that was like, Guinan's backstory, but it hasn't, it's never been produced or anything. So, you can't really find it anywhere unless you don't hack my system or anything please, but maybe one day it'll, it'll have a life of some kind.

Sarah: Before we move on to what we wanna see in season three. Is there anything else in season two you wanna talk about or even just moments that made you squee?

Godiva: When did they just let Soong get away with murder and sabotaging a space mission? Because I understand he is a very rich white guy, so...

Jarrah: Yeah, they did.

Godiva: Okay, they just did.

Jarrah: He's like I gave you enough money can't I go kill someone?

Godiva: And they were like, yes, sir. Yes, you can.

Jarrah: Yeah, like, Honestly, no.

Aliza: I did not love him. Like, I, I don't even wanna use the word Gaslight, cuz I think that's getting overused now and misused, but that, yeah, that the moment where he's like, oh how about, could you say that I'm gonna leave you behind here? Like come on. This lady works in a high security, high pressure cooker area. I, I think she would've been smart enough to be like, no, actually you, you can't go back there. I'm sorry. Like I didn't like that moment.

Godiva: Yeah. My customer service brain started working as soon as that scene started and I was like, okay, wait a minute.

Aliza: Mm-hmm yeah, you find ways to yeah. That's a good point with customer service. Yeah. No you're you don't get tricked by customers. You just find ways to like, let them think they're getting their way, but still putting the guardrails up. So I, I was like, why did the, why did this woman just let him run over her? Like that that's weird. That was weird to me.

Jarrah: I appreciated. Seven and Raffi finally getting to kiss.

Godiva: Yes. I tried not to spike the mic, but I'm very happy that, uh, we had our first gay kiss in Star Trek Trek in Deep Space 9, but it was a sad lesbian kiss. This is a happy one. I'm so happy that we finally get happy moment of two women kissing. I really like that they are allowing, uh, Seven to get some sort of, uh, queer identity as well. Because as soon as Voyager had that line between Seven and the doctor where the doctor was telling her, you are a woman and she comes back with, is that an observation or a diagnosis? It always just stuck in my brain, like this is a queer character. So it was just a happy moment for me.

Sarah: I was very happy that Wesley's return was to give Kore the first choice she's ever been given in her whole life.

Godiva: Oh, I didn't think of it like that.

Aliza: Yeah.

Jarrah: I also like that she did some revenge hacking.

Aliza: Yeah, that was great. That was very satisfying. Her deleting everything.

Godiva: With that actress', various characters that she's played throughout the series. She also really gets the short end of the stick in a lot of episodes and doesn't get to choose a lot. So that is sweet. I didn't think of it like that.

Sarah: You know, I was wondering if Brent Spiner had the record for playing like the most related characters in Star Trek, but Briones might get that award.

So for season three, we know that like the entire Next Gen cast almost is coming back. What do you want to see happen?

Godiva: More, just what is it called when it's not a one long story, but like short episodes?

Jarrah: Episodic?

Godiva: Episodic. I would like more episodic episodes, but I hear that Brave New Worlds is kind of sticking to that theme, so, maybe some more nostalgia treats?

Jarrah: Yeah. Strange New Worlds is definitely pitching that that's their angle. I don't expect that's what we're gonna see in season three of Picard given the first two seasons. But yeah, like I, I have the same feeling. Like I find it really hard to, re-watch an episode you have to like, re-watch the whole season, which I mean, I guess is not that much a hardship for a Star Trek fan, but, and like there's so dense the episodes, so like multiple watching actually does improve them. I have a thought that is not about content. Although I feel like if someone doesn't say like, they need to see Picard end up with Dr. Crusher then like, Sue's gonna be very annoyed, so I'll say that. But I think that, or, you know, at least that like the, the character of Beverly Crusher needs to be respected and not just like, you know, buttoning Picard's collar and talking with Troi about how firm their boobs are at this age.

So that's, that's what I wanna see. Not related to content. I do wanna see Picard if they're going to introduce topics like we saw this season to look at and all Star Trek to look at content warnings. This was something a lot of people raised that like should have been on the episode where Yvette dies as well as some people said that it should have been on the episodes with ICE, given the potential to be retraumatizing to people who have experienced policing of their communities and threat of deportation.

And. I think like one of their arguments you see against that is like, well, but you don't wanna spoil it for everyone else. And if you put a thing on at the beginning of the episode, then you know, what's gonna happen, but I really don't see why they couldn't take an approach like a lot of podcasts do and just put it in the show notes on the streaming services, so you could have, you know, a thing at the beginning says like this episode contains mature themes for more details,

read the episode description. And then for people who know that they have the potential to be, you know, upset or triggered by certain topics could go into the episode description and look, but it wouldn't necessarily spoil other people. But I think that there are like some topics that are widely recognized to be really challenging and, um, upsetting to many, many people and having a, a way to warn people as well as referral to appropriate resources at the end of the episode, whether that's like suicide crisis lines or sexual assault, resources is also really important and something that Star Trek hasn't really done.

Aliza: Yeah. I think I totally agree with you. I, do think it's BS to say that it's a spoiler. I think that's just BS. I think it's just people trying to find a justification. And defend the show for not doing it, but it's not a spoiler content warnings are not spoilers. I'm sorry. That's just that argument just needs to be shut down.

Sarah: I mean, look, I hate spoilers more than anybody on this planet. I have blocked so many people on social media for posting spoilers.

Aliza: It's not the same thing. It's just...

Sarah: there should have been a suicide content warning. There absolutely should have been. And even if it spoils something for me, I can live with that.

Aliza: But it doesn't because it's not telling you who or what is doing the, you know what I mean? Like it's just not, it's not a spoiler. It's a content warning.

Jarrah: I think in this case you could guess, like, I, I saw the spoiler on Twitter and it didn't say who committed suicide. I guessed pretty easily that it was going to be Yvette given the storyline, but I, in this case, I was really, really grateful for the opportunity to be able to like watch it when I was in the head space to cope with it emotionally.

Aliza: That's a content warning. exactly. And also just to, just to, again, shut down the it's a spoiler because I still don't, I disagree with it still just to shut that down. If it was about not wanting to spoil the episode, they would've put the crisis hotline at the end. They didn't do that either. So, no, it's not about it being a spoiler. They just didn't do it because they don't realize that they should have done it. So I just don't, I don't know. I'm tired of hearing excuses for things like this. Like people need to get with the times, and that includes the people who create Star Trek, Trek. like get with the times, put content warnings. It's important, that's it.

Jarrah: Think a little bit more about your audience when you write these stories and not just being responsible to the characters, but also the people that are consuming their stories.

Sarah: Yeah, I mean, even if it is a straight up spoiler, me not getting spoiled is not as important as someone else not having a traumatic experience watching Star Trek.

Sarah: Other thoughts on season three? I mean, it's the final season, so we're, we know they're gonna wrap up Picard stories somehow.

Aliza: Yeah, I mean, earlier we were talking about how season one, we see Data die. Season two, we see Q die. Do we think Picard's gonna die in season three at the end?

general agreement

Aliza: I think so too.

Jarrah: I'm stocking up on Kleenex.

Aliza: I know, right? I'm like, okay, I'm prepared. I'm gonna be prepared. It's fine. I think it would be, yeah. I'm interested to see how they get there. If that is what happens.

Godiva: I'm just excited to see the relationship, obviously between Seven and Raffi, but also characters being a little bit more gentle to Raffi. That would make me really happy. And just seeing how she grows.

Aliza: That poor woman has, she has had, she's gone through so. Personal trauma and you're right, like they, they were not great with her. They did not handle with care with her this season.

Sarah: They never talked about her relationship with her family that she was trying to recover.

Aliza: Mm-hmm also her addiction didn't really come up at all, which maybe that's a fine, you know, she's recovered addict, recovering addict. So maybe that's okay. But yeah, just things to notice. So for me, season three, because I, I still have a I'm against the Laris / Picard relationship. I, I don't see it. They didn't sell me on it. So I want them to acknowledge that she's just rebounding

from her husband. And this is not gonna be a real relationship. I hate to say that, but I'm not, I'm not down for, I don't ship them at all.

Godiva: That's what I had said when I was watching the first or second episode of Picard was like, didn't her husband just die? Yeah. Like how long has it been?

Aliza: It's unclear how long he, he passed away. I don't did he pass?

Jarrah: I mean, it was long enough for Elnore to get through Starfleet academy.

Aliza: Yeah. Okay. That's true. But, but like for us?

Sarah: I think they said like a year and half.

Jarrah: Okay

Aliza: Fine. Fine. But for us, I literally within like, maybe it wasn't 10 minutes, but within that first scene of them, it's just jumping to the romance. It was too fast for me. I'm sorry. I, I need...

Godiva: It gave me whiplash.

Aliza: It gave me whiplash too. Thank you.

Sarah: Well, I just wanna see a finale scene, like not the very last scene, but some point in the finale. A big bridge scene with the whole old crew back together.

Aliza: I'm sorry, I'm gonna jump back to the Laris thing cuz I just wanna clarify. I don't think it's too soon after her husband's death. That's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about with their relationship. It just jumped to romance before I could see any connection or spark between them.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Sarah: I didn't see any chemistry between them. I think they're two very good actors doing their best, but there wasn't a natural chemistry.

Aliza: I think their chemistry is just like, like compatriots, you know like friends. Partners in crime, like confidants, all of that. Yes. Confidants. Yes. Close friends even. But yeah, the romantic chemistry was not there for me, but I

also will stand by, Jarrah, your proxy comment up to Beverly Crusher. Yes. Yes. Bring her back. Let them get together season three. That would be lovely after his rebounding with Laris.

Sarah: So, on that note, I think that's all the time we have for today. Godiva where can people find you on the internet?

Godiva: the internet? Yes. Uh, they can find me at kboo.fm/profiles/godivalee. Or you can find us on Facebook, my, uh, Star Trek bar Trek group in Portland, Oregon. Uh, just give a little Facebook search for Star Trek bar Trek, PDX, and we'll pop right up.

Sarah: Awesome. And Jarrah, where can people find you?

Jarrah: You can find me on Twitter or Instagram @jarrahpenguin, or I'm also at <https://trekkiefeminist.com/>

Sarah: And Aliza where can people find you?

Aliza: You can find me @alizapearl on Twitter and Instagram. Um, I also have a website, I never plug that, it's just <https://www.alizapearl.com/> You can like see my headshots or something.

Sarah: and I'm Sarah, you can find me on Instagram @sarahmgulde And you can find my fanzine Star Trek quarterly at startrekquarterly.wordpress.com or on Facebook to learn more about our show or to contact us, visit womenatwarp.com, Email us at crew@womenatwarp.com or find us on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram @womenatwarp. Thanks so much for listening.

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