

## Women at Warp Episode 224 Transcript - Lower Decks Season 4

[Women at Warp theme playing]

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

**Jarrah:** Moopsy, Moopsy.

**Andi:** And Sue.

**Sue:** Hello.

**Andi:** Hello. 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 \$1 per month and get awesome rewards, from thanks on social media up to silly watchalong commentaries. Visit [www.patreon.com/womenatwarp](http://www.patreon.com/womenatwarp).

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Cool. So, today's main topic of always a fun time to talk about *Lower Decks*. And today we're going to be talking about *Lower Decks*, Season 4.

**Jarrah:** *Lower Decks*.

**Sue:** *Lower Decks*.

**Jarrah:** *Lower Decks*.

[laughter]

**Andi:** I mean, chanting is kind of our thing at this point, right?

**Sue and Jarrah:** Yeah.

**Andi:** So, I figured we could just keep it simple and go through the episodes. So, there's 10 episodes for Season 4, and we had some great episodes and a lot of moments where I laughed a lot. So, those are all good things. We started the season with Twovix.

**Jarrah:** So basically, Voyager has been turned into a museum. They have to get back from the location that they're in to Earth, where it's going to be basically put on the ground at Starfleet Academy and then put in orbit for permanent exhibit. And so, they're moving some items back to the Cerritos for some reason. I don't really get that. And they are also just kind of checking her out to escort Voyager back. And things go really wrong.

So first of all, we have Billups and T'An'a get merged in the transporter ala Twovix. And then, out of fear that Freeman is going to do what Janeway did, they kidnap the other senior staff and force them to merge, including Freeman and Dr. Migleemo, and perhaps the most delightful, Steve Stevens and Matt the Whale.

[laughter]

**Andi:** Not their best work.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. Meanwhile, Boimler is having a bit of an existential crisis on Voyager when he kind of accidentally whiffs a couple of things. A Tak Tak Macrovirus gets loose. And while it's not deadly to people anymore because of vaccines, it starts basically going people to the wall.

**Andi:** [laughs]

**Jarrah:** And then the holodeck characters like Doctor Chaotica and what's his face, Irish guy and the evil clown from the *Fear* episode, they get loose and try to take over the ship. The Macroviruses become borgified and try to take the ship back to Borg space. And Boimler has to accept that he is deserving of a promotion, and he can be competent to save the day.

**Sue:** Don't forget that the robot salamander display also gets Borgified.

[chuckles]

**Andi:** So, a lot going on in this episode, as per usual, *Lower Decks'* pace is always quite impressive.

**Sue:** So, Andi.

**Andi:** Yeah.

**Sue:** As someone who has not seen all of Voyager yet.

**Andi:** Okay. I will say the lovely *Star Trek* fans who have my whole heart obviously have long spoiled the answer [crosstalk] [chuckles]. I have never seen *Twovix*, but I know basically what happens and kind of the moral dilemma around it, basically, is this a new lifeform, and did Janeway murder it? So, I definitely understood this episode, but I probably would not have if it hadn't been thoroughly spoiled for me over the years, while everybody argues about Janeway's decision and the ethics of it.

**Sue:** But not even that main storyline, but all of the other Voyager references.

**Jarrah:** Like Michael Sullivan saying, "I miss my wife."

**Sue:** Yeah.

[chuckles]

**Andi:** “Delete the wife,” also thoroughly spoiled. Okay, so if there is a meme around whatever has happened in *Voyager*, I have probably seen that meme. Have I seen the episode? No. Do I know what that was referencing? Yes.

**Jarrah:** Nice. Yeah, that's good to know, because that was one thing I was like, “Oh, it's a bit of an odd start to the season because it's so geared at people that love *Voyager*.” And even the DS9 start of the last season, I think, was maybe a little more accessible. But yeah, if you're kind of in the *Star Trek* universe online and looking at memes, you probably got the references.

**Andi:** Well, and not only that, one thing that Mike McMahan has made clear is he tries to make it so if you get the reference, it adds something, but if you don't get the reference, it's okay. I'm sure there are references I missed. I'm absolutely positive of that but I didn't get confused. It's still *Star Treky*. You know what I mean? It's still a shenanigans episode.

**Sue:** And you never got the feeling of, “Oh, this episode is definitely not for me because I didn't know any of this”? Okay.

**Andi:** No, uh-huh. And I think I'm only in Season Three of *Voyager*, so there's probably a lot I missed.

**Sue:** Oh, my gosh.

**Andi:** For me, for stuff like that, part of it is just my personality. If I don't get it, my brain just keeps it moving, but it just doesn't bother me. I'm sure there are things I've missed in all of *Lower Decks* references I've missed. I probably missed references in the DS9 episodes, but it's still enjoyable. It's still bright and funny, and I love the characters. So, anything happening to the characters is going to be fun for me, even if I don't know what it's referencing.

**Jarrah:** I think another thing that surprised me when I was rewatching it was there were so many jokes that kind of flew under the radar that I definitely didn't remember by the end of the season, but rewatching it, I was like, “That was great writing.” There's a moment where basically they're asking Boimler, like, “What's wrong? Why are you feeling off or behaving off today?” And he's like, “Uh, you know, Chakotay served on this ship.”

[laughter]

**Jarrah:** Which I assume is shady.

[laughter]

**Jarrah:** And then there's the point where one of the macroviruses has merged with Harry Kim's clarinet. There's a point where Tendi is saying to T'Lyn, “Don't you want to see Twovix quarters?” And she's like, “Perhaps, were they a steer?”

[laughter]

**Andi:** So, I think that's a comment, really, on how fast paced the show is. And I think that adds to the rewatchability. So, I don't mind it, but I think they don't really give you much time to breathe or let things like that settle, which I think is more of an issue in the first season when you're not used to the pace than it is in the fourth season where you're like, "Yeah, we're running. We're always running." They're always going top speed. They're always got their really fast patter where the dialogue is fast and multilayered and just by the time you've heard it's onto the next. And I think that for me is great, but I think it might actually go to like-- there are some people who really don't like *Lower Decks* and I have to think that this kind of pace situation is one of the reasons.

**Jarrah:** Yeah, I've heard from some people that it's like, "I don't hate it. It's just I can't follow it." And that's super, super valid. I love this show. I appreciate kind of that I know it's going to be fast and therefore I'm probably going to have to watch each episode a couple of times which, because they're short, is not that hard. But yeah, it just is not necessarily everyone's style.

**Andi:** Yeah. For me, it just means that when I rewatch it, I will pick up things that I didn't catch the first time. And that's cool with me. And I feel like *Lower Decks* is probably the most rewatchable of all of *Star Trek* to me. Not just because it's short and easy, as you referenced, Jarrah, but just because it's lighter. It doesn't take a ton of brain power. It's like popcorn. Delicious popcorn. It's substance.

[chuckles]

**Jarrah:** Exactly. Yeah.

**Andi:** Is there anything else we wanted to say about *Twovix* before we moved on?

**Jarrah:** No. I feel like let's go into the next one. And I feel like you kind of had a good segue because there are some deeper themes in this season. Although I wouldn't say any episode gets to the point of *The Visitor* or something where it's like a very heavy, beautiful, sad episode. But there are some deeper themes which, I think, work really well. And I was really pleased to see in the second episode, *I Have No Bones, Yet I Must Flee*, the start of a bigger character arc for Mariner. They've all just got promoted except Rutherford in the last episode. And Mariner is convinced, and this is part of her arc the whole season, that she's going to get demoted because it's happened so many times before. And so, she's basically self-sabotaging so that she can just get it over with and get back to being *Lower Decks*. So, that is a really interesting arc. This is also the Moopsy episode.

**Andi:** Moopsy.

**Sue:** Moopsy.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. And then Rutherford trying to get promoted, and then it turned out all he needed to do was ask for what he deserved.

**Sue:** You know that line just said so starkly. [laughs] Ooh. I mean, damn. Didn't have to shout.

**Andi:** Well, I think the major theme of this season is basically growth. What happens when you have to move away from what you've become comfortable with and how do you react to that. For Mariner, her reaction is, "Obviously, this is going to go wrong, so I'm going to make it go wrong first, so it's within my control." So, really her biggest fear, I think, is losing control. And when she doesn't have really big responsibilities and she can kind of just do what she wants, and she's so competent that she's way above a regular ensign, that she's just super comfortable, and being pushed out of that comfort zone causes her to self-sabotage. I will say I do agree that the arc fits nicely in this season. I will say that it feels a little bit repetitive at this point.

**Jarrah:** Yes.

**Andi:** I feel like Mariner has learned this lesson a couple times, and I think this season does it more thoroughly than other seasons does, and I feel like maybe we've finally gotten her there. And maybe it does make sense realistically growth wise, you usually do two steps forward, one step back.

**Sue:** Finally, not in this episode yet, but by the end of the season, she has dug into the reasons a lot more.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. I don't know what is next for Mariner's character development, but I didn't find it annoying. I felt it was realistic to have someone fall into old patterns, especially when you haven't really addressed the underlying issues. But yeah, I mean, it definitely also felt like there were kind of several episodes where she relearned the same lesson to an extent. But then, it makes sense that you have to have it reinforced over a period of time. And then later on, she gets to really grapple with her past and how that was leading to it.

**Andi:** Well, and the other thing is just part of it is probably just a structure thing. I think it's something that *Lower Decks* has had to address a lot more as the show has grown, because the premise of the show is these are low-level ensigns. And then, they grow throughout the seasons, which is good. But then, it doesn't make sense for them to be low-level ensigns, so they have to grow up. But the structure of the show is still supposed to be structured around that. So, I think that some of it must be probably structural TV making growing pains, which is fine. It's just a different format, and it's also comedy. So, a lot of that is like the sitcom thing where at the end of the episode, everything has to go back to the status quo. So, I think part of that is just growing pains around moving into a different aspect of these characters' growth.

I will say too that this episode is one of the areas where I feel like Rutherford does tend to get left behind. And so, the fact that they made it literal was kind of interesting. I remember when they did the promotion scene, and I was like, "What the heck? Why would Rutherford not get promoted? He's very clearly worthy of that." And obviously, they were making the point that he is worthy of it. He just has to indicate interest, pretty much. But I do feel like it's indicative of a bigger issue that they are running into with Rutherford where I don't feel like he gets the same

development and character arcs as the other characters do. And he used to share that with Tendi, but I think they've done a better job of bringing Tendi along than they have with Rutherford.

**Sue:** They also indicate that Rutherford had been offered a promotion multiple times and declined it because he didn't want to leave his friends, which is another thing when it comes to maturing and changing and leaving your comfort zone.

**Andi:** Yeah, I think it goes back to that theme where they want to stay together. I mean, we will get to caves eventually, but I think that's like when you do grow like that, sometimes you can grow apart. And that is scary too because that's leaving your support system behind. So, I get that.

And then, Moopsy. I do love that one of the most consistent and hilarious bits of this show to me is having something terrifying look adorable. They've done that several times, and it always makes me laugh. Right back to, I think, one of the most iconic first season things is that golden retriever dog that turns into like a horrifying nightmare.

**Jarrah:** Eldritch horror, yeah.

**Andi:** Yes. Still one of the funniest things I've ever seen on this show. I laughed so hard. I will always laugh at this. It just is funny. It's just a classic comedy bit. Continue, I'm fine with it.

**Jarrah:** Well, Boimler story continues *In The Cradle of Vexilon*, where he extremely, relatably, leads an away mission that is dangerous for his team, and decides that he needs to do all the tasks himself so that they don't get hurt because he can't necessarily trust that they're going to do it right. It's great. I love the stuff with him and T'Lyn in this episode that she's saying, basically, "You deserve to be promoted. You're competent. But also, look at your team. They might be also worthy of your trust, the way that Ransom trusted you." And this is also the one where Freeman's trying to fix the ancient computer, and it's just amusing.

**Andi:** Yeah. So, we haven't really talked about T'Lyn yet. I am so happy that they brought her on.

**Sue:** Oh, my gosh.

**Andi:** Yes. To me, she is such an excellent foil for everyone else because everyone else is so broad and big--

**Jarrah:** And bubbly.

**Andi:** Yeah. And then, her deadpanness just adds an extra-- I especially love her and Mariner and the foils for each other there. It's really effective to me. And I think that she is just-- I love Vulcans. I love Vulcans so much. And she, to me, is just they really nailed the quintessential things I love about Vulcans, like the logic with the heart underneath and the way that you have these folks that seem so emotionless,

but they're always subtly conveying mass amounts of sass. It's tremendous. Always love it.

And Boimler, yeah, this definitely is Boimler's arc, is like learning how to be the leader throughout the season. And this is definitely something that a lot of new leaders fall into in that they don't know how to delegate. You have to trust your team. And also, your team can't grow without responsibilities. They have to have the space to make mistakes and learn from them. So, there's no real way to get better at your job or a skill of any kind, really, without fucking up and then learning from that mistake. So, when the stakes are really high, like they are in this episode, I totally get where Boimler is coming from. One, he doesn't want to be responsible for someone on his team being harmed in any way. But two, he doesn't really trust them to do it as well as he can. And so, it's hard for him to let go again of that control. I enjoy Boimler's arc through this season.

And also, I just want to say that another thing I noticed about Boimler this season is just he has really grown into himself. He's gotten so competent. He has managed to balance that nerdy, people-pleasing, suck-up side of his personality, and it's really let him blossom.

**Jarrah:** All right, shall we move on to the episode where they all go to Orion for Tendi's sister's wedding?

**Andi:** Yes. So, *Something Borrowed, Something Green*. I said a little bit earlier that I feel like Tendi used to be in this category of not having as much development, not having as much of a character arc. And they've really in this season and last season, kind of dug into her a lot more. And there's a lot of interesting stuff there and a lot of interesting stuff in her background. So, Tendi's whole arc is about coming to terms with this part of herself, the Orion part of herself, and also coming to terms with her family and where she came from. And all of that, I think, is really rich emotionally.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. And I mean, there certainly isn't a clean ending. Yeah, a lot of it, I would say, is about her grappling with the pressure from her family to fulfill her hereditary role and to serve her family and play the key role there, but at the same time realizing that's not the path she wants.

**Sue:** It's interesting to me that the pressure seems to come more from the sibling who has to, in some ways, I guess, pick up the slack, step into that role, not the parents. But I really love T'Lyn in this episode who is both curious and supportive, and interestingly, taking notes on all of Orion culture based on Tendi's reaction to it, which is not how that works, [chuckles] but the very end where Tendi just sort of expresses like, "I'm not super comfortable with this," and T'Lyn's like, "Yeah, no problem. If you don't consent to this being submitted, it's not being submitted. Don't worry about it." Love T'Lyn.

**Andi:** I wish she was my friend. I wish she was my best friend.

**Jarrah:** Totally. We do have to talk about the pheromones thing in this episode. They're trying to reconcile the canon from *Enterprise* that Orion women all exude pheromones that they use to control men. And we saw earlier in *Lower Decks*, Tendi

being like, that's not all Orion women. And then in this one, we see she's like, "Well, I said it wasn't all of them, but some of them definitely do." We see that basically like a woman who is running an exotic dance parlor/brothel, perhaps. Although it's sort of implied that the men who work there-- it's kind of hard to say, but there's implied that there's some agency in deciding to work there. But then, you have to wonder, can't they actually make the decision to leave if they're being controlled by the pheromones? So, I had mixed feelings about it.

**Sue:** The dialogue about it is talking about it like recreational drugs. So yeah, that was unclear of how much control it really is. But I also thought it was really interesting that the woman running that place said Tendi didn't have the pheromones. So, I just found it really interesting because just the choice of words between "she didn't use them" and "she doesn't have them," and got me in my brain going down this path of like, I know a lot of people interpret Tendi as ace, and is this part of that? But then, that's saying it's a biological reason that you wouldn't feel this sexual attraction which is kind of a misconception about the asexual community. And it got my brain turning in circles and I just found it an interesting aspect to add to that character.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. And a lot of people also interpret Tendi as trans. So, that could make more sense potentially in that context. But yeah, I don't know how this episode overall kind of affects the way people relate to the character. But I think it had a lot of interesting background. Also, just we'll note the B plot, which is about Boimler and Rutherford becoming roommates and learning to work out their differences via Mark Twain.

**Andi:** Yes. Which comes back. Why does that work?

[laughter]

**Andi:** I think they really just wanted to let the boys do Mark Twain accents. I mean, who can argue with that? That's a good time.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. And Tendi has that line where she's like, "Oh, well, you just talked things out frankly about your emotions," or something like that. And they're like, "Mm. No."

[chuckles]

**Andi:** No. It's the Mark Twain accent. It's like the Mark Twain accents allow them to not realize that's what they're doing. [chuckles]

**Jarrah:** Yeah.

**Andi:** I just think that's cute because of Mark Twain's history in the *Star Trek* canon. And just overall, it's just one of those silly things that I don't feel like most people would come up with. So, I enjoy it. The randomness is what's funny about that to me.

**Jarrah:** Oh, I also have to mention the moment in that episode where Dr. Migleemo has to fight the beefy Orion guy and does the puffs up to trigger his allergies.



**Andi:** Oh, no, isn't that the *Old Friends, New Planets*? Because they have to convince D'Erika to--

**Jarrah:** Oh, okay, yeah, maybe I'm mixing up those two episodes. Yeah, that makes way more sense. Anyway, um, spoilers.

[laughter]

**Andi:** Yeah, spoilers. No, but I do think that was really cute and funny. It is a good example of Tendi being really clever and it not working out too because she was like, "I've got a plan," and then it doesn't work at all.

**Sue:** But can we also just bring up the little discussion with Mariner where Tendi's like, "I'm really embarrassed about my friends seeing the real me," meaning where she came from. And Mariner's response is like, "The real you is the person you are every day, not who you used to be." It was so quick, but that's just such a really powerful and supportive sentiment.

**Andi:** Yeah, their friendship is really great through all four of them. And I know in the first season, one of the criticisms was that Boimler and Mariner were always together, and Rutherford and Tendi were always together. So, it's been fun to see them pair them up in new combinations. And now that T'Lyn is like an extra fab, four gal, like, the combinations of adding T'Lyn into the mix have been really fun too.

Well, next up is *Empathological Fallacies*, which is where we get some of the most stacked guest actor casting around for our Betazoid delegation. We have Wendie Malick, Rachel Dratch and Janelle James playing Betazoids. For folks that don't recognize the names, Janelle James plays Principal Ava Coleman on *Abbott Elementary*, which she is very good on. I highly recommend. And Rachel Dratch used to be on *SNL*. And Wendie Malick, I feel like Wendie Malick is probably not really that remembered for what I remember her for, which is *Just Shoot Me*.

**Jarrah:** Yes. *Just Shoot Me*. [laughs]

**Andi:** Yes. She's so good in that show. That show, I feel like just disappeared from the consciousness of America, but it actually has a lot of really great comic performances in that show. So, I personally recognized her voice right away. It's very distinctive. It's all like throaty and cool. They play this Betazoid delegation that are actually spies, [chuckles] which I love. I love the idea of these hyperfemme party gals actually being really dangerous and like tricky, I always enjoy that.

But it turns out, so things start going really wild. Everyone's losing control of their emotions, and everyone's like, "Well, obviously it's these telepathic Betazoids." But no, it's our telepathic Vulcan, T'Lyn. So, the T'Lyn's arc we haven't talked about T'Lyn's arc, but T'Lyn's arc is very much accepting that she's in the right place and that even though it was honestly, it was probably kind of traumatic for her to be rejected so thoroughly from her Vulcan ship, especially since she was rejected for saving them all, which is really frustrating. Honestly shows poor leadership, in my opinion. I don't think Spock would have sent her away, I'll say that, or even Tuvok.

But basically, she feels rejected from Vulcan Society because she has shown creativity, really. She's still logical, and she still has control of her emotions for the most part. But the other Vulcans have reacted to her as if she's a wild and crazy gal, and kind of pushed her out of where she was comfortable onto Cerritos.

And I think her whole arc throughout the show is basically coming to terms with that rejection and learning to trust that her new crew is not going to reject her in the same way, and letting go of wanting to go back to that ship. So, this episode is all about her coming to terms with that and repressing her emotions around that means it gets projected outwards to everyone else. And we get another classic Cerritos-going-wild scenes where everybody just starts losing control of their emotions. And honestly, I'm always okay with it.

**Sue:** I think it's more than just rejection. We see it at one point in this episode where she says, "I'm not Vulcan enough." And it's not just the rejection, they send her away, and she's trying so hard to get back. And seeing I guess really how well she's been fitting in where she is makes her feel less than based on what she knows about other Vulcans. So, she's comparing herself. She's saying, "Why am I not like them? Why am I not like the people I'm supposed to be like?" And that brings self-doubt, but like Bendii Syndrome? Vulcan is a motherfucker.

**Andi:** Yes.

**Sue:** [laughs] Which is my favorite phrase, possibly, from this whole season.

[chuckles]

**Andi:** Well, and Mariner also shows herself to be given other moment of just an incredibly supportive friend in this one, where she basically is just like, "You're fine where you are, and you're fine as you are."

**Sue:** Mariner's a great friend.

**Andi:** Yeah. She's kind of stealth great friend.

**Sue:** Yeah.

**Andi:** If you told her she was a great friend, she'd be like, "Nah, I'm terrible. I do all these wild things."

**Sue:** Like, on the surface level, she's a chaos monster. But in reality, she's a really supportive friend.

**Andi:** I really love the description of Mariner as a chaos monster. I love that. That's tremendous. I mean, let's not pretend she's not. She is. She just is not *only* a chaos monster. Overall, I always find it interesting and funny that we talked about the Orions. *Lower Decks* has a habit of deepening canon around all sorts of different things that other Trek just kind of flies by, which is why it's complex popcorn. Because I think the number one thing that *Lower Decks* does that I have always

really appreciated it for, is because it's written by such intense fans, they take all of these dropped plot things, and things that we kind of just don't discuss or deepen in the other canon. And it's like, "What if we picked that plot thread back up?" "Yeah, as we're moving into *Parth Ferengi's Heart Place*, what's Rom up to? What's Lita up to? Let's find out." That kind of willingness to not only poke fun at the existing canon, but expand it is really cool.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. I have to shout out the episode reference to *Garth Merengi's Dark Place* for *Parth Ferengi's Heart Place*. And it was great having Max Grodenchik, Chase Masterson back to revoice their characters.

**Sue:** Oh, my gosh. It's so good.

**Jarrah:** I don't know how I feel though about what they introduce in this episode. One of the things, and we talked about this way back on the podcast, when he talked about the Ferengi feminist revolution, about how at the end of *Deep Space Nine*, when Rom becomes the Grand Nagus, it sounds like he's basically making Ferenginar socialist. And we definitely find out here that is not the case. They have introduced some labor rights, and I think they allude to women's rights a little bit. But it's very much just like this is actually more effective for deferred capitalism, which makes more logical sense. I think a lot of people have observed how would an entire planet, society that's so devoted to profit change that quickly? But I also was kind of like, "But socialism?"

**Andi:** [laughs] That's funny. I have to say, my favorite joke in this episode is *Pog & Dar: Cop Landlords*.

**Sue:** Oh, my God. Cop Landlord is so-- [crosstalk]

**Andi:** [laughs] When I tell you that, is just iconic in every way, based as hell-- Of course, entertainment for a hypercapitalist society would be not just cops, not just landlords, but cop landlords is like the pinnacle of everything to be looked up to. It's just tremendous. It's the best thing. I would love to know what goes on in Mike McMahan's head when he comes up with *Pog & Dar: Cop Landlords*. I tell you I had to pause it and just die laughing, it was so good. And I just love that precious Boimler who, growing up in the post scarcity communist utopia that *Star Trek* is supposedly, just being completely unprepared. His brain is so unprepared to handle commercials [laughs] and trash TV.

**Jarrah:** The Slug-o-Cola commercial when the ears grow.

**Andi:** [laughs]

**Jarrah:** And his reaction is, "They just lie to you?"

**Andi:** Poor Boimler had never experienced an Olive Garden commercial before. So, he's immediately gets sucked into-- he never even leaves the hotel room. He just watches trash TV, and I found it very cute. And that is what would happen to you. If you have no defense against this, obviously, you would be tricked. I think you'd be vulnerable to the trickery.

**Jarrah:** I feel like we have to talk about the Tendi-Rutherford stuff in this episode, where they've been tasked to go undercover as a recently married couple or engaged couple. And then, they have to eat sexy chocolate figurines of themselves and all this kind of stuff, so the Ferengi don't find out that they're know lying for the discount. And it's kind of implied that for sure Rutherford is somewhat attracted to Tendi. I feel like it's sort of implied both ways, but it's--

**Andi:** Ambiguous?

**Jarrah:** Yeah, it's ambiguous. And I don't love it, but I guess, yeah, I don't hate it.

**Sue:** I don't love it either.

**Andi:** Maybe that's why they keep making it ambiguous, so they can just ignore it if they decide they don't want to go that direction. But I did find it funny that they basically just took a fanfic trope, fake dating, and they were like, "What if we put Rutherford and Tendi into fake dating trope?" And of course, having it be in the middle of Ferenginar makes it very funny. But I don't know that I need romance here. I'm not completely against it. I do know that it would probably impact some folks' headcanons about Tendi. I do think that they are great together, but I have always felt like they were more platonic. But I guess I could go either way. I feel like if it's executed well, maybe. If they do decide to go this way, it's definitely been a very slow burn.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. And I mean, maybe this is a good segue into, I think, maybe also part of my resistance to it. It's definitely partly about the fan headcanon around Tendi, but I think it's also part of there continues to just not be a lot of overt queerness in this show. So, in this season, we do have the awesome mention of Mariner in this episode about how she sits weird.

**Andi:** She does sit weird in chairs. I wonder where they got the idea for that.

[chuckles]

**Andi:** No. And I do want to talk about the I-sit-weird-in-chairs because first of all, when I was sitting at home watching this and I was just enjoying *Pog & Dar: Cop Landlords*. And then, in the middle of this, in the middle of one of Mariner's speeches, she says, "I sit weird in chairs." And I fully spit out my tea and was like, "Holy shit."

**Jarrah:** [laughs]

**Andi:** Because I think we talked about this in our Bi/Pan episode maybe, where Mike McMahan and I had a conversation at Mission Chicago about Mariner's queerness and about her bi or pansexuality, and how I just jokingly told him that if he wanted to make it super clear that she was bi/pan, he should lean into the meme, which is that bi and pan people famously do not sit right in chairs. And I think that even kind of expanded to all queer people don't sit right in chairs. But either way, it's kind of like an in-joke within the queer community. And he was fascinated by this, and he

basically told me, "Good note." And then, he put this line in it and it was such to me like a lovely shoutout to that conversation that we had. But at the same time, it was subtle enough that if you didn't know what they were talking about, you didn't have to know what they were talking about.

I saw someone who had no idea about this conversation post a screenshot of that and just say, "Yeah, she's one of us." And that to me was just lovely. Just like little ways to lean into that aspect of her. And Mike McMahan did say in a further interview that was a specific shoutout to that conversation we had. And I of course tweeted about it and was like, "Holy shit." And he was like, "I wanted to see if you noticed." And I was like, "I definitely noticed. You don't have to worry about that." And he just said that animation takes a long time, referencing that conversation was a long time ago, but he did want to put that in there. So, shoutout back to Mike McMahan for that. I enjoyed it.

I do think that you're right, Jarrah, that overall, there wasn't a whole lot of queerness this season specifically. And interestingly, in that interview where he confirms that Mariner sits weird in chairs canonically because of that conversation that we had that he wants to revisit Jennifer. And the reason he wants to revisit Jennifer is basically a lot of people felt like that relationship just kind of dissipated and didn't get a really good ending. And I always thought that that part of the interview was almost more interesting to me than the shoutout to the bi/pan sitting, simply because I thought it was interesting that he completely agreed with me about Jennifer.

I have always thought that that was a toxic relationship, and that Jennifer and Mariner were actually not good together. But I also found that interesting and cool and realistic. Like, not every relationship is going to be the stuff of fairy tales. You're going to have toxic exes. And I thought that was interesting that he also didn't think that they brought out the best in each other. But he did confirm that he plans on bringing Jennifer back and exploring the Jennifer-Mariner relationship. So, I think we look forward to that.

**Jarrah:** Yeah, I mean my sense is, I thought about it more and it doesn't also have to be Mariner who's always the only visibly queer character if you do bring in more visible queerness. And the other thing is being bi or pan means you are attracted to a range of genders, so it doesn't always have to be that Mariner is with another woman. But yeah, there are other opportunities. There's the thing we've talked about before about the headcanon around Billups being ace. There's a whole range of senior staff that aren't, Shaxs and T'Ana. And to be fair we don't see a lot of straight sexuality overtly but there is like an undercurrent of T'Ana's relationship with Shaxs. There's this tension sort of between Tendi and Rutherford.

**Sue:** But what I've noticed is that even if it's not overt, there is an assumption of straightness.

**Andi:** Yes.

**Sue:** And what I mean by that is-- or the instance that immediately comes to mind is in the Betazoid episode where one of them hits on Freeman, and Freeman just says,

“Oh, I'm married,” and immediately the Betazoid replies like, “Oh, where is he?” And immediately uses male pronouns.

**Jarrah:** And even back in the *Twovix* episode, I didn't mention that when the Billups-T'Ana, which I think they just call them to T'Abillups.

**Andi:** [laughs]

**Sue:** T'Aillups.

**Jarrah:** T'Aillups. They just start referring to that character as he even though there's, like, no discussion about the fact that it's a hybrid character of two characters that normally identify as different genders.

**Andi:** It would make more sense for them to be a they.

**Sue:** On this discussion of queerness, it also doesn't mean that if you're an ace person that you're never in a relationship. The Tendi-Rutherford stuff does not break that headcanon for me whatsoever. In fact, I find part of it kind of relatable where Tendi's just playing along and then in her mind innocently mentions walking around topless and then realizes that is a sexual thing for someone and that's when it gets weird. I can relate to that situation. [laughs]

**Andi:** Yeah, I mean, there's no saying that she's aromantic as well. So, she could have romantic attraction to Rutherford and not sexual attraction.

**Sue:** But I could get on board with the two of them in a relationship and still have that headcanon. But I would love, love if there were a conversation of like, “Look, I didn't think this was going to be a thing for me, and I normally don't feel this way, but I feel this way for you. So, let's give it a try. And I just need you to be patient with me.” Make it explicit. [laughs] I don't know. Am I making any sense?

**Andi:** Yes, you are. And I think that there's just an opportunity here to just add-- As we said, it's super fast paced. So, there's a million ways to just drop in a different pronoun here or there to have something in the background.

**Jarrah:** Someone's parents be a same-sex couple.

**Andi:** Yeah, exactly. There are opportunities that are fairly subtle. And I know in that conversation that we did have with Mike McMahan at Mission Chicago, one thing he said to us was basically that he had held off on making Mariner explicit because he was a little bit nervous about doing it wrong. And it's possible that he still has that hesitation, like maybe not even consciously, but I think he has done a great job with Mariner overall, and he should have more confidence in himself. So, queer it up.

**Sue:** But also, get more queer people in the room.

**Andi:** Yeah, that too. Like, if you're worried about your biases, bring someone in who has more direct experience and doesn't have those biases, who can tell you to make Mariners sit weird in chairs without me doing it.

**Sue:** Or like, “We’re available for sensitivity reads.”

**Andi:** Yeah.

**Sue:** [laughs]

**Jarrah:** Well, the other thing is that if you only ever have one queer character, there’s more potential to get it “wrong” because then it is the representation of bi/pan people. So then, having them in a toxic relationship is a problem because you could see it as applying to bi relationships or pan or same-sex relationships. And that is partly the impact of having too few queer characters.

**Andi:** Yeah, I remember I was on a panel years ago on Dragon Con, and this was back when the Marvel Universe was very young, and I had a whole conversation with a room full of people about how the problem with Black Widow was that she was the only female character. She was like the only major female character in the whole franchise. And therefore, people would get pissed off at her representation in a myriad of ways. And the reason being, she can’t be the be-all and end-all of women in the MCU. And once they started adding more women in the MCU, she less had to be like the avatar for all womanhood. So, there’s that. Yes, agreed.

**Jarrah:** I will note one cool moment that we had this season in the last episode that I forgot to mention is we have a crew member who wears a hijab now. So, that’s pretty dope. I mean, I feel like more than background would be nice, but I know that a lot of people were happy to see that, and then some people were dicks about it. And I don’t care about those people at all. They suck.

**Andi:** Yeah, agreed.

**Sue:** You mentioned your favorite joke from the Ferengi episode. My favorite joke from the Ferengi episode was not even directly a joke, but it’s that they made Rom obsessed with baseball.

**Jarrah:** Oh, yes.

**Andi:** [laughs]

**Sue:** But Max Grodénchik was a pro baseball player, and knowing that-- I knew that from *Take Me Out to the Holo-suite* and doing some stuff on that. But in that episode of DS9, they made him switch sides, they made him I think lefty instead of righty so that Rom would be terrible at baseball. And it’s just sticking on that, I just loved so, so much. I loved that they were playing the Federation. I loved that Lita was like this shrewd businesswoman, and I loved that the outcome of that treaty negotiation situation-- not treaty, but Federation joining whatever kind of paperwork it was, was basically the same as a *Strange New Worlds* episode. They were testing the Federation to see if they’d respect the culture, and then once they got the right answer, they were like, “Okay, cool, bring us the standard contract. Let’s go.”

**Andi:** Yeah. Next up is *A Few Badgeys More*, which the number one thing I think is funny about it is having an Avengers team up of villains. [chuckles] I do think that it's kind of interesting that they basically took all of their three nonorganic life form villains that they had and just like, "What would happen if all three of them tormented our crew for an episode?" And I enjoyed it for the most part. I was surprised Peanut Hamper actually reformed herself. She couldn't reform herself for that super hot bird guy. I don't understand why gardening reformed her, but--

**Sue:** [laughs]

**Jarrah:** Well, she also had therapy. I love that Starfleet is providing sort of a restorative justice model for Evil AIs. It was great. And the whole Badgey, Goodgey, Logicgey thing, and Rutherford helping Badgey process his feelings of rejection by his father.

**Andi:** Yeah, it's basically like all he really needed was a hug and to be treated with respect. I do want to give a shoutout to Jack McBrayer who plays Badgey because the number of tone changes he had to do and different versions of Badgey but all still sounding like Badgey. I've always thought his performance as Badgey has been like a highlight just because he's so funny, where the way he says such over-the-top drama, extra things, like, "You will burn in the heart of the fire," or whatever that one was with such a haha kind of tone to it has always been really funny to me. But I think he really outdid himself in this one.

Yeah. And then, our next episode is *Caves*, which I think we referenced a little bit. Basically, this is kind of like almost a clip show type episode, but with stuff we haven't seen before. There's like all these missions in the past in *Caves* where the various Lower Deckers talk through other missions that they've been on without the core group and relationships they've formed without the core group. And it turns out that they're all a little bit afraid of admitting that they are growing as people and possibly growing apart in some ways. And so, they both try and hide that and then also fight over it. I will say I love having the Vendorians. It's such a huge part of this episode. I love the Vendorians in general.

**Sue:** Anytime they bring in TAS, I love it.

**Andi:** Yes. Referencing TAS is so important to me because, one, TAS rocks. And I've always been sad that it gets so underserved by the fan community. But secondly, *Lower Decks* is like Grandpa. They need to reference it. It's their first animated *Star Trek* show. It's important. So, bring more Vendorians always. And then, it just was funny the way that they're always testing us. And I did enjoy that the conspiracy theory guy was right. That's always funny. And then just in general, the Lower Deckers kind of reaffirming their friendship was very sweet and cute. But I think that for both *A Few Badgeys More* and *Caves*, they were kind of just basic shenanigans episodes. They were very enjoyable. I enjoyed them, but there's not a whole lot to say. They were fun and funny.

Whereas the inner fight, I think, is kind of the culmination in some ways of the Mariner arc and where we really finally get to dig into where the self-destructive behavior came from. And I enjoyed that it references Sito, which has always been



such a cool character. The episode of which inspired this entire dang show. It's like TAS, like of course they have to reference Sito Jaxa. Of course, they do. So, I really enjoyed Mariner finally being chased by glass rain into caves and being forced to finally confront her feelings and why she is so self-destructive.

**Jarrah:** Yeah, it felt kind of like almost a two-part finale to me.

**Andi:** Yes.

**Jarrah:** I will say-- and partly also because of the connection between Sito and Locarno and the whole season has been building up to who is until now we think they're destroying these ships, but it turns out they're stealing the ships and then putting the crew or the commanders on this planet. So, because of the connection between Sito and Locarno, it provides some groundwork for Mariner to have a relationship previously with Locarno. I don't know that it fully gelled. Maybe it's just like they didn't start introducing that background early enough in the season. But I did really enjoy the inner fight about Mariner's particular feelings and why she basically felt inadequate next to Sito and guilty. And it does set it up for the finale.

**Andi:** Yeah. I will say that I kind of agree with you. I think the arc makes sense. I think the arc was well executed. I don't know that-- I do think it kind of seems weird that if Sito had to had such an impact on Mariner, why have we never heard of her before and why have we never heard about this relationship before? And I will say that the Sito-Mariner stuff made more sense to me than the Locarno-Mariner stuff. That just didn't feel like a strong connection.

**Jarrah:** Agree.

**Andi:** But I do think it's funny that in the next episode, which is our finale, *Old Friends, New Planets*, Mariner does make on a side of like, "I barely knew you. Why do you feel like you know me?"

**Sue:** I didn't have a problem with that. I saw that they were presenting as Mariner being close to Sito, and Sito having to know Locarno because of the flight team. So, they were in each other's periphery, but they weren't like Mariner and Locarno. They weren't close by any means.

**Andi:** Maybe it's less that I didn't buy Mariner and Locarno's relationship and more that I'm not sure I buy Locarno turned into this.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Sue:** Maybe. I don't think it's at all weird that-- I mean, we've had Mariner talk about an "old friend" lots of times, but just not say the name. And when you have a friend who dies tragically, it's not like you're going to bring it up to everyone you meet and say, "Oh, by the way, here's my trauma." Whenever a criticism is like, "Well, why haven't we heard about this relationship before?", do you tell your coworkers everything about you?

**Andi:** No, but I might tell really strong friends about this. I wouldn't call Boimler and Mariner coworkers. And it's not even really a criticism. It's just interesting that we haven't heard about-- and it might have landed better if we had heard more about this earlier, but I still think it works. And also, I will say that it was delightful to get the cameos.

**Sue:** That blew my mind.

**Andi:** Yeah, that was great. Here's the thing, from the very beginning, as soon as *Lower Decks* premiered, in this case, I mean the episode, everybody wanted Sito to come back. And so, this, I don't think, closes the door on her being alive definitively, but it kind of assumes that she is not alive. But I know that when that episode happened, people were hoping that maybe she survived and would love to see her back, but we never considered really-- well, at least I didn't, a prequel version of her coming back before. And so, this was a cool way to kind of nod to that and bring a really beloved character back. I thought that was cool.

**Jarrah:** Yeah, I think I enjoyed it. It was just something to me felt like it could have been better, more deeply explored, if there was more time.

**Andi:** Yeah, agreed. And I do think that Nick Locarno, in the short time that we had him, did have the seeds there for a personality like this. So, it's not a complete stretch to me. It's just I don't feel like we knew him well enough to really see how this could happen. And again, I think it's just a thing like Jarrah said, maybe if we had more time with this, it would have landed better for me. I don't think it lands poorly. I feel like it could have been done better, but probably we just didn't have the time for it, and that's fine.

I do think it's a cool callback and I do think that as a season finale, it works well. And I really love Mariner in this episode. It's just so freaking badass, she's amazing. Like, that moment where she was like, "This guy sucks." [laughs] And then, just kicks him and takes the Genesis Device and just takes off, I was with Freeman, she was just like, "Attagirl." Yes. That is who Mariner is at the heart. I think she calls out the BS, and she is very decisive, and she is very competent.

**Jarrah:** And this is the one where they have to make the deal with D'Erika to get their ship. And now at the end, the cliffhanger is Tendi has to go back to Orion.

**Andi:** Yeah. Which is a bummer, but I think will be interesting. And my guess is we'll get her back quickly if we get a Season 5.

**Jarrah:** Yeah, I did find it was a little odd, because at the conclusion of *Something Borrowed, Something Green*, her and D'Erika, I feel like they're in a good place where D'Erika respects that this wasn't the path for her. But I still agree it'll be interesting to see where it goes.

**Andi:** Yeah, we'll get to learn more about Orion culture, because I'm pretty sure *Lower Decks* has given us more about Orion culture than any show ever. So, loving that.

**Jarrah:** I have to do a new edition of our Orion Women episode we did back in our very first year.

**Andi:** Definitely. Definitely.

**Sue:** There are a couple more parts of the end of the season I just want to note, because this also fills in a little bit more timeline for Mariner. Because if she's in the Academy with Locarno and Sito and Wesley, as we have suspected for a while, she is a lot older than the rest of her team. And still, we're back at ensign. We're staying at ensign, which is part of, I think, that growth struggle for her and that self-sabotage. But there's also the conversation with Locarno where he's talking about the bad stuff that Starfleet does, and she acknowledges that, but that they're trying. And I got the impression that part of that resistance to get more leadership was the feeling more, I don't know, responsible for some of those bad things.

**Andi:** I definitely think she has a fear of responsibility in general, but I think that makes sense. She doesn't want to make those calls.

**Sue:** Right. If you know that there are some problems in your organization and you continue to rank up, as it were, and those problems don't get better-

**Andi:** You're in complicit.

**Sue:** Yeah, you're complicit.

**Andi:** I agree with that. I do want to say too, I thought this throughout the season, the animation was tremendous in this season. I mean specifically the sci-fi stuff like the battles and the planets and all of those sorts of things, they were gorgeous. The colors were so bright and sharp, and I just wanted to make sure that I made a note of that because I thought the art this season was really, really good.

**Sue:** There was a shot of Voyager in space in the first episode-

**Jarrah:** So nice.

**Sue:** -that my brain thought it was a model for half a second.

**Andi:** Really, really impressive. And also, I do have to say I very much enjoyed Boimler and Rutherford going, "He looks the same. I don't see it." [crosstalk] [chuckles] And always great to have Robert Duncan McNeill back. He's one of my favorite actors in the *Star Trek* universe. So happy to see him. Was there any other final thoughts that we had about the season that we wanted to make sure we said before we left?

**Sue:** "Teach me to tap dance, Beverly Crusher."

**Andi:** Oh, no.

**Jarrah:** Oh, my gosh. Yes.

**Andi:** I love how he was like, “Argh,” of all the people on that list, he really wanted to see Bev, and relatable. I do really hope that we someday see Gates in *Lower Decks*, and that feels so. Maybe next season, we can have Bev teach Boimler how to tap dance.

**Sue:** He probably didn't know it, but that was Mike McMahan's shoutout to me.

[laughter]

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

**Jarrah:** You can find me over on Instagram [@jarrahpenguin](#) and at [trekkiefeminist.com](#).

**Andi:** Cool. And, Sue, where can people find you?

**Sue:** Right now, you can pretty much just find me at [womenatwarp.com](#) or occasionally on Instagram with an account about my cats, which is [@noodlebeanpotato](#).

**Andi:** Very nice. And I'm Andi, you can still find me [@FirstTimeTrek](#) on pretty much every platform. And to learn more about our show or to contact us, visit [womenatwarp.com](#), email us at [crew@womenatwarp.com](mailto:crew@womenatwarp.com), or find us on Facebook or Instagram [@womenatwarp](#). Thanks so much for listening.

[Women at Warp theme playing]

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