

[Women at Warp theme]

Kennedy: 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 Kennedy and thanks for tuning in. With me today are Aliza.

Aliza: Hola cómo están?

Kennedy: amor bien, gracias. And the one and only Derek Attico.

Derek: Hey. Thanks for having me, ladies.

Kennedy: Thank you so much for sticking with us.

[laughter]

Derek: Always, always.

Kennedy: Open and willing and available to try again. Folks, you have no idea the type of temporal shenanigans that we caught into trying to report this episode.

Aliza: Hmm-mm. Chroniton particles just kept bombarding our recording.

Kennedy: And no matter how many times we reversed the polarity, it just was a no-go. So, we figured try again with a clean slate and we are so glad that Derek is here to join us. Thank you so much.

Derek: My pleasure. Thank you for having me.

Kennedy: Of course. Before we get into our main topic though, I do 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 are you looking for other podcast merch? Well, look no further and check out our TeePublic Store. There are so many designs, with new ones being added all the time, and on so much more than just t-shirts. Find it at teepublic.com/stores/womenatwarp so that you can have swag too.

Aliza: Swagalicious.

Kennedy: It's delicious, it's nutritious, and also fashionable.

Aliza: It's swagalicious.

[laughter]

Derek: Women at Warp swag. You can't beat that.

Kennedy: Truly. It is some fashionable stuff there. So, this week's suggestion comes from one of our favorite listeners, Etawi. Thank you so much for sending this episode in. We will be reviewing *In The Pale Moon Light*, and we have asked the illustrious Derek Attico to join us because he just wrote a book. He wrote the book-

Aliza: Pew-pew-pew.

Kennedy: -on Captain Benjamin Sisko. The Sisko book, if you will. And we'll be getting into that in just a little bit. But I just wanted to jump right in and talk about one of the most

infamous, famous, I don't know, depending how you look at it, episodes from *Deep Space Nine*, *In The Pale Moon Light*.

Derek: It's THE episode, right?

Aliza: Top tier episode.

Kennedy: Yeah. Because we've seen so much from Sisko and the crew of *Deep Space Nine* and their surrounding beings, individuals that are influenced by all of the decisions that Sisko and subsequently *Deep Space Nine* makes, and the Federation itself. So, we have this squeaky-clean imagery of Sisko before this episode where he can do no wrong. He's human, and he has flaws, but he is otherwise morally good and true. And then, *In The Pale Moon Light* happens and you're like "Whoa, your man's been at war too long, because what's happening?"

[laughter]

Derek: Yeah, that's a season 6 episode. And so, it took six seasons to get there, but, man when it gets there, it just hits hard, right?

Kennedy: Yeah. Foot on the gas the entire time.

Derek: Hmm-mm.

Aliza: Yeah.

Kennedy: He wrestles with the finer points of morality throughout the entire episode because the crew is feeling the loss at that point of the Dominion War. Like you said, Derek, it's six seasons. It's six years-

Derek: Right.

Kennedy: -of the tomfoolery.

Aliza: Yeah.

Kennedy: And along, he's commiserating with his senior officers. He speculates about convincing the Romulans to join the war and how much that could shift the tides of things, which everybody was like, "What? The Romulans?" The Klingons were like, "Whoa, excuse me. [laughs] You don't want to do that. They're a lot-

Derek: [laughs]

Kennedy: -I promise you. And it's not going to work the way you want it to work."

Aliza: Hmm-mm.

Kennedy: So, because so many people were dubious about this, Sisko had to recruit Garak to a system. And who better, who better than the espionage king, than Garak?

Aliza: Yes.

Derek: The tailor. The simple, simple tailor.

Kennedy: Sure, sure, sure. When I say espionage king, I mean, man, is he sleuthy with those stitches.

[laughter]

That was a stretch. Anyway, [crosstalk]

Aliza: That was a stretch kind of like fabric you mean?

Kennedy: Ooh, I see what you did there.

[laughter]

Excellent. So, he recruits Garak to assist him. And then Garak digs in his crates and finds Grathon Tolar to forge the data. So, now we're talking about forgery. We're talking about lying. We're talking about just general ne'er-do-well looking at this. And this is such a stark thing coming from Sisko, honestly. Because like I said before, he's the beacon of light and truth, and here he is dealing in back alley turbolifts with questionable Cardassians.

Derek: Have you guys ever gone-- You said back alley, have you ever guys ever gone down like a street looking for an address like at night, and it's like the further down the street you go, it gets darker and darker. That's what the episode felt like to me because the further he went, he just kept getting in deeper and deeper and deeper and it was like he couldn't get out because everything, first the Federation is like getting their butts kicked. So then, he has to get in. Then, he gets in with Garak, and then Grathon Tolar. Everything, every step he makes, he just has to keep going, and it's like he's getting in deeper, and it's like the way out is becoming more and more distant.

It's like Dante and Dante's Inferno. When Dante first goes into the inferno, he says in the first two, three lines of Dante's Inferno that he lost his way, and that's why he had to go through hell was because he lost his way, he couldn't find his way back to the real world. And I think that's what Sisko's journey is. It's like he couldn't go back to the real world, so he went through, and he went through with Garak, which was like, "Ahh, I don't know if you want to do that, dude."

Kennedy: Or is that the precise person that you want to do that with?

Derek: Right, right [laughs]

Aliza: Well, yeah, and that's the thing. Sisko can go through every proper channel and has for other things, for everything else. But this is something that requires a different set of skills that Garak has, which also means, yeah, once that trigger is pulled-- Like you said, Derek, it's like down the rabbit hole. This is a different type of world, this is a different side of wartime strategy that Sisko is actually not the top dog in and he has to kind of follow Garak's lead. And yeah, I love that analogy of getting deeper and deeper down on this dark alley that he doesn't really know the way of.

Kennedy: Yeah. And down this dark alley is someone hawking bio-mimetic gel.

[laughter]

Aliza: Great.

Kennedy: "Hey, yo, here, I got the Bio-mimetic gel."

[laughter] [crosstalk]

Derek: I got that gel. Right, right, oh, man. And you could just tell, and Mr. Avery Brooks plays it so well, because just the discussion of the bio-mimetic gel and that whole discussion with Bashir, it just rests uneasy, but he's like, what's he going to do? What's he going to know? He has to go that route. And Bashir is like, "What are you doing? Bio-mimetic gel?" This is something that's pretty much outlawed in the Federation. He's like, "Look, doctor, just give me the gel."

Kennedy: "This is going to have to go on record, and I'm going to sign-- [crosstalk]

Derek: On record.

[laughter]

Kennedy: "I do ask for this because I don't want you to have this. But since you outrank me and you could probably beat me, Imma handing it to you."

Derek: Probably. You are right.

Kennedy: "[unintelligible 00:08:10]. I don't want to be doing this."

Derek: We haven't even gotten to Quark yet.

Aliza: Oh, yeah.

Derek: Right.

Kennedy: Oh, geez.

Derek: And then, when he gets to Quark and he's like, you know, with Grathon Tolar and Quark, I mean it is almost like you see that Sisko feels dirty now.

Kennedy: Hmm-mm.

Aliza: Yeah, yeah.

Derek: He has to deal with Quark. And Quark is like loving it. Quark is taking a bath in bribery. And he's like "Oh, yeah, I'll make this go away for you, no problem. You just have to bribe me. That's all it is, that's all it's going to take." And he's like, "Oh, man, I got to deal with this guy." And you just see layers of Sisko being chipped away, his morality, his principle is little by little being chipped away and he's like "Ahh."

Aliza: And it shows how far he's willing to go. He's like, "Oh, crap, another challenge, another twist in this story of life."

Kennedy: In this yarn [laughs]

Aliza: Yeah, there you go. Sure.

[laughter]

And he still says yes and keeps going down this path.

Derek: It's like Sisko said. He had to keep his eye on the ball, right?

Aliza: Yeah, yeah.

Derek: And sometimes you keep your eye on the ball, you lose sight of everything that's happening around you. You lose perspective. Because you got your eyes so focused one thing, you lose sight of where you are and everything that's happening around you, and so he's like, "Oh, man, what are you doing," so yeah.

Kennedy: Which is unnerving as an audience member. Because as we've said, we are so accustomed to seeing Sisko being resolute in his decisions, even when it comes to things that he wasn't 100% sure about, he at least remained unwavering in his own resolve. So, for that to stop-- not only is the Federation getting their tuchuses kicked by the Dominion, but now I got to ask Garak to help me, and now the board that Garak helped me with is starting stuff at Quark's and I got a-- This is-- I'm losing my way. Bashir no longer respects me, that's something--

Derek: Right, right.

Kennedy: We were always so accustomed to seeing him in control and at the very least, like I said, resolving his own decisions that now it's like, well, man, not only have we never seen something like this in *Star Trek* before, at least not to this extent, but we've certainly never seen something like this from Sisko, so it's hecking unnerving.

Aliza: Yeah.

Derek: Hmm-mm. Absolutely. And it's all framed in the narrative where it's delivered almost like it's a stage play where it's just Avery Brooks as Benjamin Sisko on speaking pretty much to the audience, narratively speaking to the camera, imparting everything that has already happened. So, you're getting his point of view, and it's unnerving. Because when it opens, he doesn't even remember what day it is. He's like, "What day is it? How many days have passed since this all happened?" And you're like, "What? How does the Starfleet captain, this pinnacle of principle, how does he not know what day it is? What's going on?" It's so good, it's so good.

Aliza: And then, we have the belle of the ball, Vreenak.

Kennedy: What a kind way to describe him.

[laughter]

Aliza: The girl who everyone's attention goes to when she walks into the room, Vreenak.

Derek: That's dope.

Aliza: [laughs] I love in our notes it says antagonistic jerk face.

Kennedy: Because he is.

Aliza: It's true. Yeah.

Kennedy: Like, you don't have to be like that.

Derek: He is, he is. Yeah.

Kennedy: Like, don't be ignorant your whole life.

Aliza: [laughs] Right.

Aliza: Vreenak is the one who spots the fake rod and almost he basically threatens to bring this whole plan to its knees and also get everyone involved in a lot of trouble, including of course, Sisko. Which leads to the biggest, most finite thing that happens, which is that Vreenak goes boom and Vreenak is assassinated through Garak means to make sure this whole thing doesn't turn to goo. And that is probably for Sisko one of the most morally, not even gray at this point, morally murky things that Sisko has to deal with. He didn't give the order for this, but he knows that this all was a part of this same plot that he has been a part of and he kind of helped kick off and brought Garak in with Garak's methods, knowing what Garak is capable of, and this was the result.

Kennedy: Garak's like, "You know who I am. That's why you came to me. Don't be mad when I am doing it."

Derek: [laughs] Right.

Aliza: You know his methods. And this is how far he will take it to make sure the mission succeeds. And it does because the Romulans officially declare war on the Dominion.

Derek: Well, Garak cleaned house. He got rid of Tolar. He got rid of Vreenak. He convinced-- Basically, once Sisko brought Garak into it, Garak hatched the plan. He really did everything behind Sisko's back, really.

Aliza: Yeah. And Sisko was kind of just like cleaning up the messes that Garak made or that other people made in the wake of Garak's decisions.

Derek: Yes. That's so well put.

Kennedy: Garak had a book of scenarios on how to bring the Romulans into a conflict.

Aliza: He was ready.

Kennedy: He was just waiting for this moment.

Aliza: Yeah. He's like, "Oh, I've been waiting for you to ask me."

Kennedy: Kind of like how in *Steven Universe*--

[laughter]

-when Ruby and Sapphire got married, Steven brought out a whole book because he was ready with pictures and contingency plans and napkins-

Derek: Everything.

Aliza: [laughs]

Kennedy: -And floral arrangements. Garak was like, "You want me to do what? I thought you never would--"

Aliza: Say less, say less, king.

Kennedy: Say less.

[laughs]

Derek: Right? I thought you'd never ask. I've been waiting for this moment.

Kennedy: Oh, man. I'm almost emotional thinking about how--

Derek: Right.

Kennedy: To do some stuff that only I could do, but you know what? I don't care what nobody else says about you, Benjamin, I like you.

Derek: Right?

Kennedy: I do.

Derek: For real. For real. And he ran with it. He ran with that. And when Sisko hits him, he's upset because Sisko realizes he was manipulated. But Garak is like, "What are you so mad at me for? You brought me into this. And I got it done."

Aliza: Yeah.

Derek: I got it done. And look, "Okay, yes, I manipulated you. Yes, I killed these guys. Yes, I killed all these people. But the Romulus will come into the war, and we probably just saved the entire Alpha Quadrant. So, you know what? I would just rather you probably have said thank--" I mean, he didn't say that, but he was intimating, "You just should have really said thank you to me," and then Sisko hits him again.

[laughter]

Kennedy: That's because Sisko doesn't have fists. He has the galactic starblazers one and two. Because we forget that those same fists put an omnipotent, omnipresent being in his place for fooling around on--

Derek: That's right, that's right.

Kennedy: So, those wasn't a regular human punch. No, that was the--

Derek: That's right.

Aliza: The prophets endowed him with those punches.

Derek: That's right. I don't even think he even hits Garak. I think he backslaps him, right? I think he backslaps him.

Kennedy: Oh, no.

Derek: I don't even think he all out just slugs him. I think he backslaps him because it's like Garak, it's not like Q. It's like his light work.

Kennedy: That's right. Q got the two piece of the biscuit.

[laughter] [crosstalk]

Garak just got the biscuit.

Derek: Right.

Aliza: I just want to acknowledge how fabulous it is that we have a Starfleet captain that pimp-slaps people.

Derek: Yes.

Kennedy: It was.

Derek: And takes it to them. Takes it to them. Yes. Let's get some snaps for that.

Kennedy: It was because Garak was really like, "Hold on, first of all, humans aren't supposed to be this daggone strong. This must be that wormhole alien DNA-"

[laughter]

-I am leaking. Do you see this? I am bleeding. That's crazy. I am a simple tailor who may or may not know some shady people. You out here hitting people? Don't ask me for help again. Don't ask me for help again."

Derek: Yeah, it's good.

Kennedy: It's so good. And of course, to make this all just a cinematic narrative perfection basket with a bow on top, we see the ending scene where Sisko ultimately decides to delete the log, which I think is the heaviest decision in an episode of heavy decisions.

As you said, Derek, he just keeps getting-- His hands keep getting dirtier and dirtier and dirtier and instead of-- this is how he washes his hands by flushing it.

Aliza: Yeah. He had to get it out of him, kind of like journaling kind of helps you get through stuff when you [crosstalk] about it.

Derek: Right, exactly. Right, right.

Aliza: But then, the mission wouldn't be complete if he had left this record detailing how everything went down. [laughs]

Kennedy: No, because he didn't want to go to jail.

Aliza: [crosstalk] evidence. Exactly.

Kennedy: He knew that he was going to go to jail for THE rest of his life as opposed to anyone else who might or may not have done something similar to Kirk. [coughs] Excuse me.

Derek: And there's a moment when he pours himself a drink and he salutes. "This is a win for the good guys, and I should be happy, we should all be happy." And you think he's going to take a sip of the drink. And I realized that thematically, if he sips the drink, if he takes a sip of the drink, that's almost like saying that he's okay with what he did. And even though he's saying he's okay with what he did, he never takes that drink because he's not okay with what he did, because he can't stomach what he did, because even though he saved the Alpha Quadrant, it's still eating him up. So, he never takes that drink, and he puts the drink down, and he says he can live with it, but he never takes that drink. That drink remains on that table, never actually taken as a signal and significance of how he's really feeling opposed to

what he is saying to us. At least that's how I interpret it. I don't know how you guys felt about it.

Aliza: Yeah, I can see that.

Kennedy: I mean, I think that's true. I think he put the glass down on camera to show that he wasn't okay with it, but we don't know if he took a swig.

[laughter]

You know what I mean? He might have sat, looked at it like, "Shii--"

Derek: You know what? Never mind.

Kennedy: You know what? Like, "I said what I said. I did what I did. Nobody needs to know about it."

Derek: [laughs]

Kennedy: "And this is how I'll get to sleep at night."

Derek: [laughs] Right.

Kennedy: No, but you're right. He couldn't take that sip of congratulations on camera like that, on screen like that because, as you said, it would be acknowledging and applauding what had been done.

Derek: Right, right.

Kennedy: I think, like you do, Derek, that he's not going to take that sip. But part of me knows that as soon as that thing was turned off--

Aliza: Well, he wouldn't want to waste it.

Kennedy: No because that's wasteful. We can't do that [crosstalk] resources.

Derek: [laughs] Right, right, right.

Kennedy: This is Dilithium power we out here wasting, what'd I look like?

Derek: Of course. [laughs]

Kennedy: Unless that wasn't. I mean the moonshine that Grandpa Sisko holds on to, might have shipped him a liter or two. You think the Siskos have a family moonshine?

Derek: I have no comment on that [laughs].

Kennedy: Yeah. I mean this is maybe is a perfect segue because Derek as the writer of the autobiography of Benjamin Sisko, do they have a family moonshine.

Derek: [laughs]

Kennedy: Just to know of Sisko family recipe for corn liquor. That's all I'm asking.

Derek: For corn liquor. Well, that's why I said no comment. [crosstalk] it would be me, but I have no comment on mic. Like Sisko, you never know what happen off mic.

[crosstalk] [laughter]

Kennedy: So, that's a yes. That means they've got moonshine and tub run.

Derek: Oh, well, but they are from New Orleans. It's New Orleans, I mean, you know.

Kennedy: Yeah.

Derek: And Joseph is all about not having technology or anything like that.

Aliza: Right.

Kennedy: Hmm-mm.

Aliza: Derek, I am halfway through this beautiful book that you have written, and I am enamored with the home life you've created for the Siskos. It's so rich. And I don't want to spoil things, but the transporter story.

Derek: [Laughs] you like that?

Aliza: So wonderful. I love it so much. It just tells me so much about Ben and his parents and how he grew up and then also his entry into the world and figuring out, "I'm in the 24th century. Oh, wow, okay. What does that mean?" It's beautiful, beautiful story.

Derek: Right, right. Yeah. Without giving a lot away, I just-- I looked to Joseph Sisko when I was creating the character-- or writing the book, I looked to Joseph Sisko and thought a lot about what New Orleans would be like in the 24th century. And of course, the writers of *Deep Space Nine* created beautiful characters in Joseph Sisko and Jake and Benjamin Sisko. But I tried to deepen Joseph's story and a lot of the reasoning for why he is the way he is and his belief and what he does. And in deepening that character, it led me to come to understand what I wanted to say about earth in the 24th century, about New Orleans in the 24th century, about people of color and specifically black people, us African Americans in the 24th century, and our history and our culture. It led me to a lot of things, a lot of really good and positive things that I think are really rich in the book. New Orleans almost becomes a character in the book itself.

Aliza: Oh, yeah. New Orleans and in this, like you said, this time period, I think you did a really fantastic job of both of those things, like creating New Orleans as its own character. And then also, this year, this century, what is New Orleans like? What's the day-to-day life? It's so clear to me. It really comes alive for me in my mind as I'm reading it.

Derek: Thank you, thank you. Yeah. And having it stand apart, because, I mean, we're so used to seeing *Star Trek* from the point of view of starships and clean and replicators and all this. I thought a lot about Louisiana and New Orleans and a town and a state that's pretty much service industry and has its beginnings in-- Honestly, I'm a person of-- try to be at least of authenticity. And as a writer, I try to write that authenticity into my writing. So, Louisiana comes from-- A lot of its history comes from slavery and from food, and out of that came a lot of culture for everyone, not just people of color, but for everyone. And so, I was thinking, what would Louisiana and New Orleans do with that culture in the 24th century. Would they forsake it for starships and replicators, or would they want to hold on to that? Would they want to hold on to jazz? Would they want to hold on to those things? And so, I think I addressed that a lot in the autobiography.

Aliza: Yeah. And since the three of us are all writers, I want to get really geeky about the process for a second.

Derek: Sure.

Aliza: I'm wondering, how did you-- You're taking a fictional character who exists in this very rich world, but we are missing a lot of history from him. So, that's what this book is. You're just filling out a lot of history and backstory and lore. So, you have these specific moments that we have heard, little inklings of the restaurant. We know the Sisko family restaurant exists. We know it's in New Orleans. We know certain little pieces of the Sisko background. But what was your process in going to fill in all these holes and gaps with this history, this lore?

Derek: Well, that's a great question, Aliza. Thank you for asking that question. That's a really great question. Some of it, to be honest, I'm also a fan of *Star Trek*. So, I know that every time I watch *Deep Space Nine* and every time went to New Orleans and we would see the Sisko's marquee in the restaurant, we would just see that marquee for like 2 seconds, and we see like a horse and buggy go by and like that's it. And I'm like, "Well, I want to know more." And I figured, well, if I wanted to know more, then I was pretty positive there were a lot of people that wanted to know more.

And so, I started thinking, well, what's on both sides of that marquee? Is that the only place on that block? Is there something else in the block? And so, then I started looking, and I did a lot of research. I found the original blueprints to the actual set. I did a lot of research beforehand. And it's not a giveaway, but in the book, there's not just a restaurant, but there's a Sisko hotel that I included. It's not on the show at all, but I included it for reasons that are clear in the book. And so, I just started to include things that I felt were organic and started to make sense. And everything has to come from an organic place. It has to make sense. Not just because I want to do it, but when a reader is reading it, it has to have a certain kind of logic and make sense to it. And if I feel it has that, then I'll include it, like a bookstore or this or that.

And I did a lot of research on New Orleans. I read a book on the history of New Orleans because I've never been. And I'm a big fan of jazz, but like I said I've never been to New Orleans, I watched some documentaries. I watched all of the *Treme* from HBO, which is a phenomenal show, and really helped me to get in that mindset and understand what I wanted to understand about New Orleans and the people and the culture like right now so I can move that forward. Because it's important to understand-- If you want to understand the 24th century, you have to know what it is like now and what happened in between. So, I tried to explain a lot of that. Hope that answers your question.

Aliza: Oh, yeah, that's awesome. And kind of a similar question, but more specifically about Ben Sisko's childhood. We don't have anything in *Star Trek* about his childhood besides what you've mentioned, the restaurant and his dad. And there's just these very specific moments, things that happen to him as he retells them. How did you decide, "This thing happened to Ben Sisko when he was a kid, and that's how he became the adult"? Did you like-- Obviously, it's like reverse engineering his adult personality, or maybe it's not that, what was--

Derek: Yeah, you're on fire. Yeah, you're right. See, the challenge with Ben Sisko is unlike any other captain or most characters in *Star Trek*. Most captains in *Star Trek* have something-- to be quite honest, something wrong with them, from Kirk to Burnham to Pike. They have something missing in their life. And that's easier because when there's something missing, you can fill it.

Aliza: Right.

Derek: When there's a hole, you can fill that hole.

Aliza: Hmm-mm.

Derek: But when you have a complete human being that's balanced, it's like, well, he's already balanced, then how do I-- I have to show the etymology and the origins of all of that. I have to show how he became this balanced, strong individual. How do I do that? And I think as writers, we're used to writing trauma, and we're used to writing people that are broken, not people that are complete. And Benjamin Sisko was a complete person.

When we meet him, he's suffering from the trauma of his wife's death in the initial episode. But after that, he's a good human being. He treats his people well. He's a man of character and strength. He has all those things lined up. He's a good family man. He's a father. He's good with women. He doesn't have any issues.

So, I started thinking a lot about that, and I was like, well, some aspects of that just come from my own life. I was raised by two very strong women, and I think some of it comes from the way I just look at people. But then, I started thinking that between the ages of 5 and 10, this is just science tells us that who we are is pretty much formed. And knowing that, I knew that I wanted to have things that happened to him happen to him during those ages, and that the people around him would form a lot of his character from those ages on.

And so, then I was like, "Well, who would be around him in those ages?" And I knew that my grandparents were instrumental in forming who I was, and so I gave him grandparents. And I think that was a little risky, but I think it was needed. And so, once that happened, that was great, because then that didn't only inform Ben, but then it started to also become a story about Ben's father, Joseph, and so it became a family story.

And then, I found myself spending a lot of time not just with Ben, but with the entire family and showing you how this person became a well-rounded human being in the 24th century. So, when he gets to *Deep Space Nine*, the reason he can tackle all these things is because of the life and history and family that he's had as his foundation.

Aliza: I've never thought about it in that sense but yeah, you're right. Like, all of the captains have some major loss or some-- Actually, last year when *Picard* season-- Well, actually, what season was it? Season 2, I think, we saw some major loss in his family and with his parents. And like Burnham, we know her parents, the tragedy-- well, tragedy that befell them and then her mom comes-- sorry, spoilers, whatever. But yeah like-- But with Sisko, he has-- I love that you built this very solid, well-rounded home life and family life, and it's so loving and secure, and it makes sense. It makes sense for him. It's like, yeah, he was a good kid. He grew up with such a great support system, and in this beautiful nest of a home.

Derek: Yeah, I mean, he did bad stuff, as we see. Even when he did bad stuff, his father explains to him the lessons of life. It's like, "You're doing things that are just wrong, man, and here's why they're wrong." And even when he does bad things in the book, you see where those things are coming from, from the lessons, from the messages that he's taking the wrong way. And he's taking things the wrong way and to see how a person-- Because I think that's human beings, people take things the wrong way, and the decisions you make in life can lead you down the wrong roads.

So, I think that's what I'm trying to show is that Ben starts going down a wrong road because he's interpreting something that's wrong and where that leads him, and then his father

explains to him, "This is what that's about. That's what that message was really about, not the way you interpreted it as a kid. This is what it's about." And then, he's like "Oh." And you know what I'm talking about I think, right?

Aliza: Yep, I do, I do.

Derek: And so that was very important to get that right. And then, there are a few other moments where his father tries to explain, but then Joseph has his own thing. And it's not like everyone is perfect in the Sisko family, because Joseph has his own trauma that's actually African American trauma, and he has that. But it takes Ben to help Joseph with his trauma. So, there are a lot of things in this family that is going on, and the father helps the son, the son helps the father, the family helps each other. And I think that's what is supposed to happen and what does happen in many families. Although you don't always see that in media, that's what's happening all the time.

Aliza: Right. Yeah.

Kennedy: I have a question. What was it like switching gears? First of all, what was it like writing for *Star Trek Adventures*? Secondly, what was it like switching gears, writing for *Star Trek Adventures* to the autobiography of Benjamin Sisko?

Derek: Oh, wow. That's a great question, Kennedy.

[crosstalk]

[laughter]

Well, I started as a kid. My first long form writing was role-playing games. I would write campaigns for my friends. So that was like my actual first-- I was like maybe 12, 13. So, it was like coming full circle, writing *Star Trek Adventures*. And that was a lot of fun, writing *Star Trek Adventures* and creating species for the game and stuff like that. And I even put some of that in in the book, but it's a whole different way of thinking.

Writing for a role-playing game is like writing an open-ended story, because when you're writing a short story or a novel, you're writing something that is ultimately close ended. You may be writing what the characters are thinking and all that stuff, but it's close ended. It has a beginning, middle and end.

When you're writing a role-playing story, you're creating guardrails for players because you don't know what they're going to do. So, you're giving them like a huge overview. You may have like dialogue and all this stuff, but you're giving them enough so that hopefully they'll enjoy it and then take the ball and run with it. So, it has to be very, in part, open ended. So, it's a very different way to think, but it's a lot of fun.

And I hadn't written anything in *Star Trek Adventures* for a while when I hit the autobiography, but I may be going back to that soon, we'll see. Yeah, but it's just different ways of thinking. It's like all of it is just different ways of thinking where it's short story, role-playing game, screenwriting, long format, it's just different ways. You have to switch over your brain. I don't know how to describe it, but you just have to switch your brain when you're thinking about that.

Aliza: Mm. Very cool. I have a question, but I have a feeling you probably can't answer it.

Derek: Okay.

Aliza: So, the autobiography of Kathryn Janeway is narrated by Kate Mulgrew.

Derek: [laughs]

Aliza: You see where I'm going with this. Is it at all possible that we could get an Avery Brooks narrated autobiography of Benjamin Sisko someday?

Derek: Oh, Aliza, that's a great question.

[laughter]

I'm sorry. No, it's not. It is a great question. It's like the only question that people really ask me. They don't care about me.

Aliza: [laughs]

Derek: Let's just be honest. They're happy with the book's written, but they want to know if Mr. Avery Brooks is doing it, and I don't know. The answer is I don't know. I don't know if he would. I just don't know. I just don't know. I thought a lot about that when writing it. I don't know. To be honest, I think we'd have a better chance of maybe Cirroc Lofton doing it, which would be great as well.

Aliza: Yeah, yeah, that would be amazing.

Derek: Yeah, that would be fantastic. So, yeah, I can just cross our fingers and hope. And I think if Mr. Brooks did do it, it would just be like-- it would fly off the shelves.

Aliza: Yeah. [laughs]

Derek: Right. I mean-- Because, I'll be honest, I wrote it, and if he did it, I would just go to sleep to it every night, right?

Aliza: I know.

[laughter]

Derek: I would just put it on every night before going you know. I mean really, really who wouldn't? I mean, the man is incredible. I have no shame saying that. The man is incredible. His voice is phenomenal.

Aliza: It's beautiful, Yeah, yeah.

Derek: Yeah.

Kennedy: Well, I will cross my fingers, then. Thank you. Thank you for that. That is not us saying, "Hey, bombard the Brooks estate" requests.

Aliza: [laughs]

Derek: No. Right.

Kennedy: This book. If you don't want to do it, let the man be in peace. It's his decision, we have to respect that.

Derek: That's true. We have to respect it.

Aliza: I can only hope someone has at least asked him and not assumed he wouldn't do it. You know what I'm saying?

Kennedy: Yeah.

Derek: Right. That's a great point.

Aliza: I just hope they have at least asked him.

Derek: Right. But, Eliza, I've been asked at least 30 times.

Aliza: I'm sure you have. I'm not surprised to hear that.

Derek: Yeah, at least 30 times. Yeah, it's nuts. And he really should do it hopefully, if he feels like he-- But I also said to someone in another interview, they said, "Well, do you think he'll come back to *Deep Space Nine* or why doesn't he--?" And I'm like, "Look, I don't read my own stuff after I do it." And I understand that. Sometimes, you want distance from something. So, on the other hand, to play devil's advocate, he might want distance. So, who knows? Who knows? Because other actors want to reprise characters, he may not want to.

Aliza: Yeah.

Kennedy: I mean, like I said, we can all hope and dream, but at the end of the day, I feel that he's made it pretty clear about how much he's left of himself in *Trek* and how much he's unwilling to leave at this point.

Aliza: Yeah.

Derek: Absolutely, Kennedy.

Kennedy: I don't want him to feel pressured to do anything that he doesn't want to do.

Aliza: Hmm-mm.

Kennedy: So, if it's going to take convincing to get him to narrate, then no, let the man rest.

Aliza: Yeah.

Kennedy: But if he's like, "What, this is a thing? Hell, yeah, I'll narrate it," then yes, take my money.

[laughter]

Derek: Right, right, exactly, exactly, I agree, I agree. Absolutely, absolutely I agree.

Kennedy: That's so awesome. So, the autobiography of *Benjamin Sisko, the Life of Starfleet's Legendary Captain and Emissary*, is available. Go buy it. Everywhere that you can buy a book, go buy books, buy two.

Derek: Yes, please. [laughs]

Kennedy: Save one and give the other to the trekker in your life. And I promise you, they'll love you. If they didn't already love you, that will definitely, definitely do it.

Derek: Absolutely.

Kennedy: Yes. All right. I think that's about all the time we have today. Aliza, where can folks find you on the Internet?

Aliza: You can find me *@alizapearl* on Instagram and X/Twitter. Also, on Hive and Blue Sky. And TikTok, *Therealalizapearl*.

Kennedy: And, Derek, where can folks find you on the Internet?

Derek: You can find me still on the site formerly known as Twitter. And you can find me on Facebook and Instagram, all of those under my handle, *@DAttico*, or my website, *derekattico.com*.

Kennedy: That's awesome. And you can get in touch with me at *kennedy@womenatwarp.com* because I'm no longer public on the Internet. Sorry, guys.

To learn more about our show or to contact us, visit *womenatwarp.com*. Email us at *crew@womenatwarp.com* or find us on Facebook or Instagram *@womenatwarp*.

Thank you, Derek, for joining us. And thanks, folks, for listening.

Derek: Ladies, thank you so much for having me.

Aliza: Thank you for being here.

[Women At Wrap theme]

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