

Episode 241: Prodigy Season 2

[Women at Warp theme]

Jarrah: 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 Jarrah and thanks for tuning in. With me today is Sue.

Sue: Hello.

Jarrah: And our special guest, Diana.

Diana: Hi.

Jarrah: And before we get into our main topic, which is *Prodigy* Season 2, 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 a month, and get awesome rewards like thanks on social media, to silly watchalong commentaries, and episodes about non-Star Trek topics, visit patreon.com/womenatwarp.

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Sue: I added a new design earlier this week.

Jarrah: Ooh, tell us about it, Sue.

Sue: It is an Uhura shirt that says "Sorry, Neither."

Jarrah: Excellent. Excellent.

Sue: I really love it. [laughs]

Jarrah: That was amazing [Sue laughs] Find our store at teepublic.com/stores/womenatwarp. All right, Diana has been writing for our blog and did our review of *Star Trek: Prodigy* Season 2. But for listeners, tell us a little bit about yourself and your history with *Star Trek*.

Diana: Oh, thank you. So, I was a big *Star Trek Next Gen* generational person. I grew up watching the show, loved the characters, wrote poetry about various episodes. So--

Sue: Amazing.

Diana: Yeah, it was something else. And since *Discovery* relaunched the franchise, I was reviewing for tvfanatic.com and I did episodic reviews for everything that came out. There was no one else that was interested in picking it up with that site. And so, at one point, I think I did 48 weeks straight with doubled-up weeks--

Jarrah: Oh, wow.

Diana: Yeah, it was really intense and I loved it. Like, I was breathing *Star Trek*. I woke up thinking about it and there were just some great ideas there. And then, I love that I've been able to review some of the comic series with Women at Warp. I really appreciate that opportunity.

And yeah, it's a formative touchstone of my development as a person. And I feel like culturally you connect with a lot of people through Trek themes and characters. You are always surprised, I think, by who has connected with Trek on levels, whether it's something they watched with a parent or something they discovered when they were in university and something that opens their mind to an idea. It's powerful.

Jarrah: Absolutely. And in terms of that being formative in who you are as a person, we are going touch on some things today that awoke feelings in me I hadn't had since I was 13. And I thought we're long dead. [laughs] So, I very hear that.

All right. Okay, so *Prodigy* Season 2, some context before we get started. The whole way that this season happened, which is to say that Paramount canceled the show and it seemed like it was going to-- I mean, they did cancel the show after the season was created, but in order to claim their tax breaks, they couldn't actually release it. So, we weren't sure we were going to even get it. Then, we did get it, just all at once, on Netflix. But presumably, this is the end of *Prodigy*.

Diana: Although there is a campaign.

Sue: There's always a campaign. It's what we do best. [laughs]

Diana: Yes. Yes, it is. There's a campaign. And. Yeah. It was interesting too, because the first season of *Prodigy* took so long to unfold due to there were unplanned hiatuses, and then there was a midseason break between the first 10 and the second 10 episodes, and then to have season 2 just drop, they had designed the season to have that midseason break again. You could see it when you get to the end of episode 10 and not to have the time to digest and to process was a lot.

[laughter]

Jarrah: Yeah. Very much agree. I mean, trying to get caught up on it in a week was delightful, but it was also a lot. And there was so much going on again. I did the episodic recaps last season, and this time we didn't even bother because it-- when things are released all at once, people are looking for that information right away. And just the amount of time it was going to take to do all of those was daunting. So, yeah. But I remember at the end of season 1 thinking, "Okay, so they've set us up for season 2, where they have to find Chakotay." And I was very not excited about this.

[laughter]

Friends, I was wrong. [laughs] You heard it here first. So, let's get into-- We'll talk about the two-part premiere *Into The Breach*. Sue, do you want to just briefly read us into, where are we when the season starts and some of what happens in the premiere.

Sue: Yeah. The kids are, I guess, Starfleet hopefuls. They're hoping, I think, still, to get into the Academy because they keep calling them Starfleet Academy hopefuls.

Jarrah: Yeah. They're like in academy prep school.

Sue: Yeah. And they're called back to Voyager to help find Chakotay. And the Nova Squadron is also on the ship and looking down at them and they're seen as these misfits. Yeah. [laughs] That might be too simple.

Diana: It was the academy Breakfast Club.

Jarrah: Yes, very much.

Diana: Yeah. And the fact that they had all separated out into their various divisions and then-- So, it was a reunion. That time had elapsed. A bunch of them, like Rok was fully bought into all the Academy Kool-Aid. She's fully into it. And then, Dal is doing his Ferris Bueller thing and just bunking off.

Sue: And on Nova Squadron, there is a Vulcan named Maj'el and I would die for her.

Jarrah: Yes.

Diana: Yeah, yeah, yeah. She did the voice of Gorn too, who grunts.

Jarrah: Oh, okay.

Diana: Yeah. So, the actress, and I'm blanking on the actress right now, but she voiced both Maj'el, who gets lots of lines and lots of screen time, and her Nova Squadron completed Gorn [laughs].

Sue: Like Valerian?

Jarrah: Yes.

Diana: Yes.

Jarrah: Yes.

Diana: Awesome.

Sue: I heard the name and I bolted upright, and it was the first of many Easter eggs throughout this season.

Diana: Oh, so many.

Jarrah: So many.

Sue: The whole season is a love letter to *Star Trek*.

Jarrah: There's also a lot of homages to other properties in a way that I thought was really delightful and did add even more watchability for adults that might think, "Oh, this is just a kids show." In addition to the fact that this is legitimately an amazing story, amazing animation, great characters. You have all of these *Star Trek* Easter eggs and shoutouts. You also have all of these homages to other things. There's the Dal talking about tiny-wimey stuff.

Diana: Mm-hmm.

Sue: Yes, yes. [laughs]

Jarrah: In the episode where they're in the Ziggurat, the music echoed the *Raiders of the Lost Ark* theme. There's definitely *Star Wars* connections. To me, the final two-parter felt very *Star Wars*-y when they're on Solum and there's the lightning storm and they're in a battle with the two-bladed heirloom and stuff.

Sue: Yeah, totally.

Jarrah: But in a way that still is unmistakably *Star Trek*.

Diana: There was comparisons of Season 1 of *Prodigy* with *Clone Wars*. Yeah. So, a lot of the younger, other series that-- So, there were those comparisons, especially because the *Prodigy* crew is made up of alien species. For a lot of people, it felt like there was, "Oh, you're just taking a page out of *Star Wars* animation." And so, yeah, but the adventures and the battles have been epically *Star Trek*.

Sue: Mm-hmm.

Diana: Yeah. There was also-- I don't know if it was only me, but it felt like when the Doctor was taking everyone through *Voyager* and dropping them off in their various divisions and it was *Wizard of Oz* where, "Yeah, look what I've got in my bag for you" and giving Rok Cetaceans Ops, yeah, it was just amazing. And then, of course, when you get to Dal being Dorothy, it's like, "Do you have anything in the bag for me?"

Sue: Huh-huh, huh-huh.

Diana: And he gets books. Lots and lots of books. [laughs]

Jarrah: Yeah. The Doctor is just delightful in this and it worked really perfectly in my view, the whole he's so eager to try to train and mentor people. In some ways, he's playing actually a Neelix character there. If were on *Voyager* in *Voyager* time, that would have been Neelix's role, but I'm fine with it not being Neelix.

Diana: But also, everything is fodder for his next [unintelligible 00:10:12]. [laughs]

Jarrah: Yes, that's very funny.

Diana: How many times did he trot out the bones line though?

Sue: Yeah, but he did that in *Voyager* all the time too.

Jarrah: Fair.

Diana: "I'm a doctor, not an assembly line." [Sue laughs] Yeah.

Jarrah: Butler was the first one, "I'm a doctor" when he gets the bags thrown at him. He's like, "No."

[laughter]

Jarrah: So, for the first couple of episodes, the big thing that's happening is-- Well, there's two things. So, Gwyn is going off to Solum to try to get first contact right, and she immediately finds that her younger dad is actually a super nice guy. And the other thing that's happening is Dal & Co are feeling like something's happening on the ship and they're not privy to it. And so, they go investigating, they find this cloaked ship, they accidentally steal the ship. Not really accidentally--

[laughter]

And then, they mess up time. And that is the premise for the entire season.

Diana: I might have missed it, but who left the disruptor or the weapon?

Jarrah: It was Dal.

Diana: It was Dal. Okay.

Jarrah: I think. Yeah.

Diana: Yeah. Because that's what messed up time, because everything, I think if it wasn't for that one thing had what was unfolding as they knew it, if they were an active part of their own history.

Jarrah: Mm-hmm. And there's the whole recurring theme of Temporal Mechanics 101, which is very cute.

Diana: Yes. Ah, so cool.

Sue: [unintelligible [00:11:50] Dr. Erin shoutout.

Diana: Yes. Dr. Erin is awesome.

Jarrah: Yeah, I mean, I don't know about you, I had a polite argument with my boyfriend about whose fault was all of this. [laughs] And I was like, oh, Dal. I feel like he's regressed from season one at the beginning of the season. But then, on the other hand, he's also just a kid, and reverting to some of your previous habits and not knowing how to study is probably not actually surprising. But I was like-- Because he blabbed about the secret that then he had to go steal the ship to cover up the secret from Nova Squadron, all of this is his fault. And Zac was like, "No, it's all Wesley Crusher's fault."

[laughter]

Oh, no. Or it's all Janeway's fault. We have to cut Dal some slack, of course, but also things went really, really badly.

Diana: Yes. And if you're going back to the beginning of the premiere, Dal is in a completely different situation. Again, he really has no idea what to do in formal education, as you pointed out. So, he's doing what he can to just stay engaged, because he knows that this is the path for him if he ever wants to be a hero again. The way that I thought Rok had such a great line, "Because we were heroes, because we can be it again. We just have to do it the right way." And Dal is just like, "No, just go fast." And everything about Dal is go fast to the point that it becomes a feature, not a glitch. The changes in the other characters, Jankom trying to be more polite and groomed. [laughs]

Jarrah: I love this.

Diana: And Rok taking on that responsibility of being the straight shooter, where before the impression you get is, she's young, and she'll go along with what the big kids are telling her to do. But now, what the big kids are telling her to do is endangering the future that she's dreamed for herself. So, she steps up and she's the mature voice in the group. It's like, "No, we're not going in the Jefferies tube. No, you're sneaking around again." [laughs] She's Hologram Janeway. She's mothering them.

Jarrah: Yeah, that makes sense to me. I felt like she-- and then, I felt like she switched out of that too quickly.

Diana: Yeah, yeah she fell back into her old role.

Jarrah: And I understand her fear is also-- Like you said, she's fully lawful good in this situation.

Diana: Yes.

Jarrah: And she wants to follow the rules. She's afraid of what she could lose if they don't follow the rules. And then, the switch flips, and then the rest of the time, she's not at all concerned about that. But I do still think she had an interesting journey over the course of the season just becoming more comfortable with herself and realizing that it's okay to make mistakes was a theme of the season, not just for her, but for Gwyn, for Dal, for everyone.

Sue: But Rok also becomes a lot more confident in herself. And it really struck me in the one scene where I forget exactly now who was asking her, but they say, "Well, how much of this subject did you learn?" And she's like, "A lot of it. I'm good. I got this." [laughs]. Season one Rok would never.

Diana: I think it was the Klingon scientist.

Sue: Yes, yes.

Diana: Yeah, which resulted in the Bribble, but--

Jarrah: oh, so good.

Diana: Oh, I love that. And I love the fact that she now has adopted her own mistake, an "unexpected outcome" embraced it. Really.

Sue: Unexpected variable.

Diana: Yeah. Thank you. Yes, that was the phrase. And the Bribble ends up saving them. So, what the heck, it all worked out. I like the Bribble. I want a Bribble. [Sue laughs]

Jarrah: Well, speaking of the character journeys, let's talk about Murf briefly.

[laughter]

Sue: Yes.

Jarrah: Because we have this Murf centric episode in *Observer's Paradox*, which has the delightful homage to *Star Trek IV* and that they've named the humpback whale Gillian.

Diana: Yes.

Sue: I can't handle it.

[laughter]

Sue: So good.

Jarrah: And I really enjoyed the episode, but I was like, "How is Murf actually studying if no one can understand what Murf says and no one seems to think this is an issue except for when they need this one specific message and they figure out a way to translate, but then they don't figure out a way to make that work the rest of the time." And I'm fully fine to

suspend my disbelief and just be like, whatever, it's fun. But because I also have to overthink things. I was like, "Wouldn't that suck for Murf?"

Diana: Yeah.

Jarrah: What if he has amazing things to say?

Diana: He probably does. [laughs] But he is security track. So, from what I could tell, the training was all scenarios of, how do you dismantle this opponent? [laughs] Yeah. And just the look on his face when, again, the Doctor plays wizard and drops him off, in this scenario, all he does is grab all the weapons and purrs. His vocalization at that point is like, "Oh, this is my happy place." [laughs] But yeah, that communication gap, that window where he just sits and makes sounds of ascent or descent.

Sue: I always thought that Rok could understand him a little bit and that it was like a Wookiee situation.

Jarrah: Yeah. Yes, yes, exactly. R2 or a Wookiee. Yeah.

Diana: Well, and then it turns out that Wesley is just fully communicative with them. So, yeah. It's like, thanks, Wes, all right.

Jarrah: Well, and then we have Gwyn, who is a fascinating example this season, I think, going from-- maybe I wouldn't say she's overconfident, but at Starfleet, I think, was overconfident, being like, "Yes, let us send this one person back to our planet. Nothing will go wrong." And then, being in time flux the whole season to being essentially the savior of her people at the end.

Diana: Queen of Solum. I think she works really well. If you look at her in Asencia, in, juxtaposed, their mission is both of them set out to change the future. And one coming from a place of, "I can make the world better. I can take all the bad things that happened to me and that which I was complicit with when I was working with my father, and I can create a future where we thrive," versus Asencia's, which is, "I will remake this world in my own image. And I am unhinged and rabid." [laughs] And so, you have these two characters with a similar motivation taking vastly different paths. Yeah, it is fear versus love, really.

Jarrah: I like that. I also still think she's too good for Dal and I don't understand. [laughs] I'm fine for them to be best friends and Captain-First Officer. Yeah, also, to be fair, they've been around a limited number of other people their own age, so yeah.

Diana: That's true. [laughs]

Jarrah: Hormones for some people will make you form weird attachments, so.

Diana: With Dal, peaking at his future and seeing that final moment, and then when it comes, that acceptance again, very much like Rok and the Bribble, and all the other characters who've come to accept things, that is the ultimate enclosure for his arc. Because he's no longer the go-fast guy. He is go fast but let's think about this too. And that recognition, you go back to season 1, and everyone's like, "What do you do?" He's like, "Well, I'm the captain." [laughs] It's just-- And even then, Gwyn was way more competent as a captain. And it can't be something someone tells him. He had to come to that realization on his own and accept it.

Jarrah: Yeah. And she also had to make mistakes this season, and although she clearly accepts them much more easily, but still feels a lot of regret over some of them in the

moment particularly. But let's jump to Zero, and *Is There in Beauty No Truth?* Because I feel like there's so much to unpack there. Any initial reactions to, "Hey, Zero gets a body."

Sue: [laughs] This is the one part of the season that I hated. I'm not sure I can totally articulate why. I think I just loved the concept of the containment suit. It was already pretty humanoid with arms and legs, but the idea that every alien creature is somehow striving to be or wants to be humanoid in particular is bothersome to me because Zero never really expressed that. They expressed that they essentially wanted sensory input, which we got back to with the new containment suit.

Jarrah: They wanted no susception.

Sue: Yeah. But they also all looked the same, and not just in the fact that they were literally almost looked copied and pasted, but in that they were all very tall and very thin, which was also [laughs] a little bit bothersome.

Jarrah: Interesting, yeah.

Diana: I think I noted that it felt like one of those-- It's an ethical quandary, and that is looking closely at identity and community, where if Zero had had a chance to stay with their community of Medusans, and we saw that in season 1 when they just zipped around and experienced the world in Medusan way, a noncorporeal way. But now that they're immersed in the academy with corporeal beings, the fact that—the scene in the premiere sticks with me, where they're watching the two cadets hold hands and reading their minds at the same time, which felt a little intrusive, honestly. But [laughs] yeah, so their sense of identity is being shaped by the community that they are now part of, which is a very gray zone.

If they wanted to go out and seek Medusan communities again, I think that they would be allowed to, but I don't think they want to. I think they want to be part of, but they also want to be able to share the experience that their corporeal counterparts and corporeal colleagues are experiencing at the same time. So, yeah.

And I also love the new containment suit. I love the sensory input, and I love that little connection with Maj'el. Yeah. Although Maj'el also, I don't know, I projected some chemistry with Gwyn as well.

Jarrah: Oh, yes. Yeah.

Diana: But Zero being-- Yeah, it's part of fitting in. It's one of those big question episodes and then the idea of surviving that fearful run, the planetary tradition of, "Oh, if they catch you, they'll kill you." So, this makes you feel more alive. [laughs] And I thought of *Discovery's* last season in *Whistlespeak* with basically competing to be a sacrifice. And then *Strange New Worlds' Lift Us Where Suffering Cannot Reach* which also has this idea of sacrifice, which in a more kid friendly level, you do this because it makes you feel alive. And the whole point of being here is to feel alive and with that sensory, that fear, that adrenaline.

Yeah. I also appreciate after, as they took their body off the planet and into adventure, the experience of pain, [laughs] and it's like, "Ow, that doesn't go away." [laughs] So, yeah, and a bit like Q becoming human and trying to figure out what the sensory meant when they have a lifetime of not having that input.

Jarrah: Yeah, there's so many really deep concepts in this episode in nonetheless, a kid friendly way that I was impressed by that. But I also hear you say and I had the same thought about just like, "Oh, does everyone have to want to be more human? Humanoid-y?" The things that made me feel better about it in this episode, in this season, for one thing, I

appreciated that all the bodies were still androgynous and so you weren't getting now suddenly Zero has a gender. So, I appreciated that. And at the end, the way that Zero recognizes that they can be what they want while still looking like they look, to me, that helped. It wasn't, we're going to design you a new human body, or human-like body.

But yeah, and, I mean, I also was thinking about this and going like, "Okay, but can't we have an episode or a character where it's a human that their whole life has been striving to be more Medusan. Like, I just really want to be a ball of light."

[laughter]

Sue: I did really at the end, with the new containment suit, when they say, "I can look like me and feel like me."

Jarrah: Yes, exactly.

Sue: *Prodigy* says trans rights, right?

[laughter]

Jarrah: Yes.

Sue: So good.

Jarrah: On some level, I appreciate that part of the reason they keep going back to this well is because it's used as a way for us as human viewers to explore what humanity means that said-- The in-universe explanation for that, isn't that satisfying? So, yeah, I don't know. But I also really liked the whole thing where it was like the reason Zero decided to stay wasn't that they twisted their arm. It was the friends just wanted to make sure they were making an informed choice. So, I liked that.

Diana: The other individuals on that planet, there were checks and balances. There was one who said, "You didn't tell them everything," and they're like, "They'll find out on their own. They need to experience it first," which was both arguments I kind of get, warning someone before they have the experience. But yeah, going back to the fact the bodies, the noncorporeal beings made for themselves, were uniform in a way and of a look, I feel like there could be a deus ex machina explanation that maybe their technology only creates that body yet. [laughs] They haven't come up with variants yet that—

I don't know. It feels like they came to the planet, they created this technology. They just haven't branched out from that. The fact that Zero had a containment suit before they came and had therefore again formed an identity around that look that it feeds to the final episode where, as Sue said, they talk about, "I can look like myself and feel like myself." And for me, it also gelled with there's a little bit of a dovetail with the synth storyline from *Picard* and—Yeah, and Data's quest--

Jarrah: Golem.

Diana: Yeah, yeah, exactly the golem. Yeah. And Picard's golem, not mine. [laughs] So, yeah, yeah. They pull so many threads together in *Prodigy*.

Jarrah: A cosmic tapestry, if you will.

Diana: Very much so.

Sue: The Picard tie-ins especially were everywhere.

Diana: And the timeline, just fitting things in. It was an ambitious, ambitious reach to make it fit in and somehow introduce the Mars shipyards into the *Prodigy* story. I was just like, "How?" Because the children of Mars short track was focused on the children's reaction, and so to bring those together, because I wouldn't recommend children of Mars to children to watch. [laughs] Whereas with *Prodigy*, it's like, "Oh, my gosh, what happened?" And then to have that explanation given to them and for adult viewers to know where that leads, it was a finesse, just to show it off, honestly, storyboard wise. They were like, "We can make this work." [laughs]

Jarrah: Mm-hmm.

Diana: Can we talk about the Loom?

Jarrah: Yes, yes. No. That's exactly where I was going. I was going to say, "Let's get to *The Devourer of All Things*, which would have been the midseason finale. Go for it, Diana, take away on The Loom.

Diana: Oh. Because I note that Sue says this ties into the continuing novels, but I haven't read those novels. So, the Loom were completely new to me, and I love it. The idea of them, the idea that they can erase you from all history, it's cold and it's grand and it's horrifying. [laughs] And that they are attracted also to the disruptions in the timeline to two dimensions that are starting to fall apart, and they come and feed on it, everything about it is so foreign and so frightening.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Diana: Yeah, it's cold, base-of-your-spine kind of tingle to have that idea, it was really well done. Despite the fact they moved a little bit like Toothless from *How to Train Your Dragon*. [Jarrah laughs] That was the only thing that threw me off a little bit at the beginning. But as you realize, they're way scarier.

Jarrah: They reminded me of axolotls that were trying to decide if they were going to be goth or Lisa Frank, but that doesn't sound like a scary comparison. I did find them scary. Also, their faces, I don't know if either of you watched *Doom Patrol*, but they reminded me of the butts in *Doom Patrol*.

Diana: Yes, yes, yes. The teeth were very butt like--

Jarrah: Yeah.

Diana: Yeah, yeah, yeah, they were. Although the butts eventually become show tunes.

Jarrah: Yes. I love it.

Diana: Yeah. [laughs] No, the devourer of all things. And then of course, Wesley, that was a total WTF moment for me.

Jarrah: Yeah. I did not predict that. We were all trying to predict who is this voice that was coming? And I was like, "It's Dal. It's Chakotay." I don't know if you had other predictions, but I did not predict Wesley Crusher.

Diana: I had a time-traveling Gwyn in my mind or someone from the Vau N'Akat. Yeah, I did not predict Crusher. [laughs] And yeah, and he's basically a Time Lord now. We saw him

briefly in *Picard* when he recruits [unintelligible [00:33:39]. Thank you. Yeah, but very briefly. And then to have him have multiple scenes and the way he's holding the threads, the different dimensions in his head, and he's the only traveler left in our dimension because everyone's given up. And I was like, "You are the Doctor, or you are a Time Lord [laughs] who's on our side," so that when Asencia has him to jump forward again in the season, I predicted that it was part of his plan. My husband's comment was, "Yeah, you can be as unhinged and crazy as you want, but that doesn't bag you a Time Lord." [laughs] He walked into that, and so that I felt like that should have been obvious that he was pulling all these threads together, because no one really gets a jump on him that way. And again, that's giving up a pawn to save the queen.

Jarrah: So, Sue, I do want to hear about the *Prime* novel tie-in, because I am not--

Diana: Yes, please do.

Jarrah: --familiar with how this ties in. But before that, I will just say we also got tank top, phaser rifle Janeway. And I was so happy.

[laughter]

Sue: Okay, so here's the thing. I don't know how many people read these novels. I read these novels from the time I was, I don't know, 10 years old. [laughs] So, spoilers for the next little bit if you plan to read these. So, after *Nemesis*, when we thought weren't really getting more *Star Trek*, The *TNG*, *Voyager*, *DS9*, *Titan* novels all came together, and they were called *TNG* relaunch for a while. They were called some other things, but eventually, most of us refer to them as the shared continuity timeline. And it went on for 20 years. And when they brought *Picard* back and they brought these characters back, it was completely divergent from where the novels had gone. So, the decision was made that they had to end this thread of the novels. They did this with what *Prodigy* calls the Loom.

And the characters in these stories realize that they're in one of the offshoot timelines with the help of Wesley Crusher, and they have to fight these creatures. They call them something different. They're described to look a little bit differently. They fight these creatures and collapse their own timeline to preserve the prime timeline. And there are descriptions about, you fall into their wake and you age so rapidly because they're consuming time and they're eating timelines. It's not a coincidence. And it was when I realized what was happening-- I assume because Dayton Ward is one of the advisors for the franchise that he was in on this. I have not asked him. But when it all clicked in this episode, I texted our mutual friend and fellow podcaster, Thad. "Hey, Thad." [laughs] And I was like, "Holy shit, is this what's happening right now?" [laughs]

Because I know he also reads these books and blew my mind. I was so excited, and in a weird way, this is going to make me sound strange, but I really mourned the end of that novel series because [chuckles] I had invested so much time in it. And I came to love those versions of the characters. And seeing the events that end it from the *Prime* timeline's perspective almost lends legitimacy back to some of those novels.

Jarrah: That's so cool.

Sue: And it made me feel warm and fuzzy and I loved it. And I can't believe they did it, really. I'm still in shock and awe that it happened. [laughs]

Jarrah: There was I feel like so many things in this season that felt like it was directly responding to things we had said and I'm assuming other people felt that we wished had happened in other things. Like, Wesley going to see Dr. Crusher, actually.

Diana: Oh, my gosh.

Jarrah: And meeting Jack. Yeah.

Sue: Oh, my God.

Diana: Oh, my God. Yeah. Yeah. It was so beautifully completionist. It filled in those corners that people have been questioning. It's like, "Well, what about this, then?" Or but it's like, "I have someone for you to meet." I'm like, "Aargh".

Jarrah: Yeah, exactly. Okay. Well, we're starting to get into the big feels for me with the *Last Flight of the Protostar*, which would have been the premiere to the second part of the season where we find out that Chakotay's been stranded for 10 years on this planet and his EXO has died trying to figure out a way that they can get more fuel to go back without destroying the Federation with the weapon on the Protostar and the crew all show up and-- Is it Rok? Oh, wait, no. Who is it who says that basically, he's an old, broken man. One of the crew members says that. I think it might be Dal or Rok.

Diana: I feel like it was Dal. Doesn't seem like --

Jarrah: Yeah, yeah.

Diana: Someone's going to fact check-- [crosstalk]

Sue: It's part of a comment that all Starfleet captains are old broken men.

[laughter]

Jarrah: Yes.

Diana: Very funny.

Jarrah: So true. Yes. Or old, broken women, but yes. [laughs] I was tearing up in this episode, this two-parter, when just the montage of the way Chakotay has been spending the last 10 years and whittling the little chess pieces and then when they find his EXO holding the solution to the problem but dead, it was like, "Yeah, it was just really powerful." And to me, this season of this show has basically completely redeemed Chakotay as a character in my books because I was an OGJC shipper.

But as I got more critical thinking about indigenous representation and also just Chakotay and Voyager was pretty boring [laughs] and a lot of his character was just constituted with this sort of faux pan-native representation based on the pretendian that they hired to consult. So, yeah, I was like, "I could deal with never seeing this character again." But on the other hand, the fact that is indigenous representation is still actually really important, and they brought Chakotay back in a way where it's like he's changed and he still has spirituality, but like the hokey, fake spirituality that was in *Voyager* is not so much there. And it's more about who he is as a first officer and this mentor father figure to Dal and a broken man who's been marooned on a planet for ten years and all that stuff.

Sue: What is it with streaming era *Star Trek* giving classic characters more character development in one season than in seven of their original shows?

Diana: Excellent question.

[laughter]

Sue: It happened a lot.

Jarrah: We also get Hologram Janeway back in this episode in a way that's very sweet. And she doesn't remember the kids, but they remember her, and she immediately takes them under her wing, and that is delightful.

Diana: Her scenes with the Doctor where she expresses the fact that she's read everything he's read.

[laughter]

Sue: Yes.

Diana: It cracked me up so much.

Jarrah: So, to go slightly less child friendly for a second, do we think Chakotay and Hologram Janeway boned?

[laughter]

You don't actually need to answer that. It's kind of a rhetorical question, but I was joking for sure they did when I first watched *Last Flight of the Protostar*, and then at the end, when she's really sad about how she's going to be-- like, all of her memories will be erased. I'm like, "Oh, they so boned."

[laughter]

Diana: Ten years, ten years, yeah. Again, there's very little distraction on a planet besides--

Sue: Oh, my God.

Diana: --chess pieces. Yeah.

[laughter]

Jarrah: I mean, I will do my normal caveats that it is totally okay for characters to not be in romantic or sexual relationships with each other just because they're close and a man and a woman, but because of my originally shipping them, which was very much based on how incredibly supportive Chakotay was of Janeway, which was very much my thing, and then getting to see them be there for each other in this show was really powerful for me. It was not even necessarily about the sex, but I was just like, "Oh, they love each other."

Sue: I have no idea what that's like, Jarrah.

Jarrah: I thought you would relate, Sue. [Sue laughs] So, I was like, I thought that little tween teen shipper was dead, but no, she's still alive [laughs] And [Sue laughs] I mean, I'll say that the Hageman's talked about how, again, they talked to Kate Mulgrew and decided to not make it more explicit or that they had any relationship in terms of the Vice Admiral Janeway and Chakotay, because she felt that it would cheapen their relationship and that it's even more important to be a Captain-First Officer relationship. And I disagree, but I guess I can live with it.

[laughter]

Diana: The scenes at the end though, when they're together, the level of affection between those characters. So, hypothetically, if Chakotay and Hologram Janeway had relations, is there a power differential when one can program the other one? So, and then, so that leads to Geordi and Dr.--

Jarrah: Brahms.

Diana: Thank you. [laughs] So, yeah, again, the real people, that affection was clearly there at the end, beyond first officer and captain. Whether they were drawn that way-- But the voice acting was incredible, and I mentioned that in my review, was that they were able to evoke so much nuance in what they were expressing. Yeah, they might have set out not to set that up, but it was there.

Jarrah: Yeah. There was enough food for me in there. And it partly shows up in *Cracked Mirror*. This is a good segue to our fun Mirror Universe episode.

Sue: Oh, my gosh.

Jarrah: When you have, at the very end, they're reunited and her voice breaks. But before that fun Mirror Universe stuff, what did you think of this?

Diana: Someone alert Captain Tuvix.

Jarrah: [laughs] That was great. I also loved the just drawing goatees on yourself.

[laughter]

Sue: Yes. So good.

Diana: Evil whales for the win. [laughs]

Jarrah: Yeah. And I mean, the evil Janeway in the Mirror Universe is the one that was in the one-shot Mirror Universe comic. So, that was kind of fun.

Diana: She was really sexy.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Diana: Yeah. Like, "Wow."

[laughter]

Jarrah: Yeah. I enjoyed that. I thought that was one of the episodes that did feel rushed to me to try to convey that much in 20 minutes, but I'm glad that they still had these slightly sillier adventures in the midst of the other stuff.

Diana: When you have 20 episodes, you do get those side trips. It's a nice break. And yet, I think everything from all the side trips, whether it was *The Fast and The Curious* or things they learned, were brought together again. Hageman and the writers were just so good at pulling things together and everything just making sense, the puzzle pieces fall into place so beautifully and yet not predictably. It works really well. I also have to shout out for the cameo of the [unintelligible [00:47:14] on one of the decks as they were flying through the dimension when the doors open. Yeah. It was just like, "Oh, yes." [laughs]

Jarrah: Yeah. We also saw Bynars and I'm sure if I rewatched it all, just catching the thought that was put into every single background character.

Diana: Totally.

Jarrah: Not to mention the planet design and everything, this show has just been stunning from start to finish. All right, well, we have a few more episodes and then into the finale of *Ouroboros* part 1 and 2. And without getting into too much, the premise, they lay down for season 3, because I think we should conclude on that. What were your thoughts on the wrap up to the season?

Diana: It was done on an epic scale. To have villains like Asencia on one side and the Loom on the other, it was very much an overwhelming odds situation, especially as they realize the stakes and the idea that, "Oh, we're going to save the universe one more time," [laughs] and then having Wesley and pre-diviner Diviner, what Gwyn's father--?

Sue: Ilthuran?

Diana: Yes. Yes. Was Ilthuran or Lorian?

Jarrah: Ilthuran or-- it's something like that.

Diana: Yes. Yeah. [laughs] But having him lead the rebellion against future Asencia and having present day Asencia--

Jarrah: That was cool.

Diana: --it was so brilliant. It was really brilliant. Just to have the dynamics within the Vau N'Akat shifting, like, everything was reactive to what Asencia was bringing into the mix.

Jarrah: Yeah. And the Doctor going undercover as Janeway thing was very fun.

Diana: Yes.

Sue: That was hilarious.

Diana: Freeing the Loom. Yeah, freeing the captive Loom, part of me thought that might lead to a Bribble-like situation where the freed Loom convinced the other Loom to go away. [laughs] Didn't happen, but still the idea was there. The show makes you think. The show makes you predict. It's so engaging.

Jarrah: It was that really nice moment where Ilthuran or whatever his name was, and everyone is lending their psychic power to Gwyn. And that was really powerful.

Diana: I feel like it was. It was very *Buffy*, wasn't it? It was like the sense of everyone banding together and. Yeah, I vote my tags. Yeah.

Jarrah: The other cartoon thing it made me think of was the Care Bears. [laughs]

Sue: Yes.

Diana: It was It totally was.

Jarrah: Yeah. And, yeah. I mean, I think through the season, we also got so many of those returning great characters and voice actors from the first season. Obviously, Jameela Jamil

as Asencia, Daveed Diggs as Tysess. Definitely others. Before we get into the premise for season 3, are there just thoughts or highlights that either of you want to mention for the season?

Sue: I honestly just kept finding myself amazed that this is a kids show.

Diana: I feel so bad for those people who write it off as a kids show. I'm tired of fighting it. If they don't want to watch animation, that's fine. But they are missing out on such good storytelling, amazing character development and just this-- It pushes the Trek universe forward and they're choosing to miss out because they've written it off.

Jarrah: I had several points during the season where I was like, "This show is a contender for my favorite series of *Star Trek*." It's maybe not my top, but probably in my top three. It's just so solid and imaginative and thoughtful. And I know that a lot of that is because it builds on the things that came before, but it does it in this really unique, funny, moving way.

Diana: I would agree that as packaged seasons, it is stronger than probably any series.

Jarrah: Well, and for sure, if you look at just the first two seasons of any series. [laughs]

Diana: Yes, exactly. If you were to compare those side by side but it does linear storytelling and yet its episodes standalone too. And you don't have that in the live action. Yeah, you just can't. And the writing is so cohesive through both seasons where even the side trips, they are not throwaway episodes. So, you can't miss them. You can't skip that episode. The little fun fact of Daveed Diggs, *Ouroboros* was also an episode of *Snowpiercer* that he stars on. So, yeah, it was just funny that I saw the title come up and I was like, "Yeah, okay."

[laughter]

Jarrah: I thought it also connected back nicely to *Loki* season 2 because the whole cosmic tapestry thing, the way that it was illustrated was very similar to the way they show the Loom of time in *Loki* season 2, which also has episode's characters called Ouroboros.

Diana: [laughs] Yes.

Jarrah: So, apparently that's the theme.

Diana: The writer's room is very cognizant of the context in which they write. So, there's all these in jokes. There's the Doctor commenting on the dysfunction of the Cerritos.

Jarrah: Yeah, yeah, right.

Diana: There's so much. Even for the Vau N'Akat to determine they would only listen to the victor, the winner of the battle, it felt like a throwback to some of what we saw in societies that classes like original series and *Next Generation* encountered. Does that make sense? It was this idea of like, the winner is right, literally right. The might is right. And then for the way that Asencia won, being kind of is a win with an asterisk at best. Yeah, it really fueled my thought process around how subtle they can be with what is right and what is wrong.

Jarrah: Mm-hmm. I do just briefly want to go back to the point that you made about Maj'el and Gwyn, and I think that even if you don't read chemistry into it, I did really like they had a couple of great friendship moments. There's notably the part where they're both sitting on the hull of the ship and Maj'el is talking about, again, it's okay to make mistakes. And, man, Maj'el is very empathetic for a young Vulcan [Sue laughs] and just lovely.

All right, so let's wrap up by talking about the premise for season 3, which, I mean, we can assume that this was the intention of the end of the finale where you have the attack of the synths on Mars and Janeway gets called back from her field in Indiana where she is plowing and not being plowed.

Sue: Oh, my God.

[laughter]

Sue: Jarrah.

Jarrah: Sorry.

[laughter]

And she decides that she needs to take a stand against all of Starfleet just being mobilized for military purposes, and she's going to basically get the Protostar prototype 2 or whatever and make just an exploration ship so that Starfleet is still doing some exploration at this time and brings all the kids with her.

Diana: It's about as close to Janeway stealing a ship as they can possibly get. And our thought process watching it was an interview with Picard. "Did you hear what Admiral Janeway did?"

Sue: Right.

[laughter]

Diana: "I'm being what?"

Sue: I didn't super understand the new class of Protostar was deemed--

Jarrah: Was only good for exploration.

Sue: Yeah. It was impractical for anything but exploration. What?

Jarrah: I don't know.

Sue: Would that have also been the Voyager? [laughs]

Jarrah: Yeah.

Sue: And when Chakotay comes back to get her, he says, "Starfleet needs you." And then she ends up taking the kids on another joyride. [laughs]

Jarrah: Yeah, I know. [laughs] Yeah.

Sue: I'll get behind it for story, but it doesn't make a lot of sense. [laughs]

Jarrah: I know. I did find a few weird things in this. I also found myself wondering in the scene where she's standing up and lecturing Jellico and everyone else on how Starfleet's mission is exploration, dude, you missed the Dominion War, right?

Diana: Well, she did.

Jarrah: Yeah. So, it makes me think, if I was the folks in that room, I would be like, “Wow, nice that you have the luxury of your principles. You didn't have to live through the Dominion war.” And while, I mean, obviously, I agree with her *Star Trek* values wise, but I also could put myself in the shoes of folks that were thinking more practically about the defense of the Federation. But yeah, it was just a bit weird, that was like, “Starfleet needs you so badly you have to come out of retirement.” And then, she's able to still convince Starfleet to just let her take a ship off and not help with defense.

Sue: They can't spare a single ship for Romulan refugees, but for these kids, no problem.

Jarrah: Yeah, and I mean, they don't mention-- They mentioned the Romulan refugee crisis, three times in the season of *Prodigy*, but they're not going to use the Protostar to transport refugees?

Sue: It's not exploration, Jarrah.

Jarrah: Oh, well.

[laughter]

Jarrah: But yeah, I mean, I guess if it's just the setup for Janeway and Hologram Janeway and the crew goes on a training mission, as long as they give us more good story, I would have been here for it. Who knows? Who knows? Maybe the campaign will succeed.

Sue: They also go from Academy hopefuls to full-fledged kid--

Jarrah: Oh, yeah to ensigns, yeah.

Diana: Pips, pips. Yeah, they got pips.

Jarrah: Also unclear why they need pips for that.

Sue: That's another thing they learned from Wesley.

Jarrah: Yeah, [laughs] they were like, “Well—” Yeah, I mean, to be fair, they're at least at acting ensign stage by that point in terms of just competence and experience.

Diana: And the co-captaining captain chairs. So, you've got a bridge crew of ensigns, an admiral on board, and Gwyn is captain?

Jarrah: Yep.

Diana: Yeah. So, is Janeway giving the orders though? She's training them?

Jarrah: Yeah, because it said, like, under her command.

Diana: Yeah, but admirals, captain command fleets. Is this a fleet of one? [laughs]

Jarrah: I guess, if it's the only ship doing exploration and she doesn't want to command a fleet of other military ships.

Diana: To be fair, she's the only one that told them this was a sanctioned exploratory training mission.

Sue: She's just making it up.

Diana: She stole the ship. She just stole the ship. Yeah, there's a lot of holes when you consider the level of paranoia Starfleet goes through, as we saw in *Picard* season 1, or regarding synths and regarding anything to do with unsanctioned missions, they would require a lot of plot armor to make this fly. [laughs] I'm just going to go with, Janeway stole the ship.

Jarrah: Yeah, well, and also, Janeway didn't go on interplanetary television and trash the Federation.

Diana: True.

Jarrah: Although Picard was right about that. So, take for that what you will.

Diana: Fair. Fair. I'd like to see the vid-com between Janeway and Picard as she takes off. [laughs] "You chose to-- You stand up your way. I'll stand up mine."

Jarrah: Yeah. I also just wondered if that premise was a little too inside baseball for kids who didn't come from being avid Star Trek fans. But maybe, again, it just ultimately doesn't matter. At any rate, I did like the after Chakotay and Dal have that rocky start to their relationship, and Chakotay's is kind of a dick to him, but he was not in the best mental space, and then becomes sort of a mentor. And then, Dal realizes like, "Hey, being a first officer is good too." It's important.

Diana: That is growing beyond, that is very much in--

Sue: His original programming?

Diana: Yeah. And as first officer, he can still go fast.

Jarrah: Okay, well, any final thoughts?

Diana: Give us season 3.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Diana: They've done more than prove themselves at being able to show us good Trek, good adventure, and connect us with the characters. By any measure, they are deserving of a season 3.

Jarrah: Yes. All right, well, that's about all the time we have for today, unless we steal a time ship. [laughs] Sue, where can people find you on the internet?

Sue: Just right here on the podcast.

Jarrah: Excellent. And, Diana?

Diana: I'm freelancing it out there in reviewer world. So, I write for Geek Girl Authority as well as the *Televixen* on occasion, as well as when I'm invited to *Women at Warp*, which has been an absolute delight. Thank you so much, Jarrah, for bringing me in.

Jarrah: Awesome. And I'm Jarrah, and you can find me at trekkiefeminist.com and [@jarrahpenguin](https://www.instagram.com/jarrahpenguin) on Instagram. 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](https://www.instagram.com/womenatwarp). Thanks so much for listening.

[Women at Warp theme]

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