

## Women at Warp Episode 245: Favorites of the Holodeck

[Women at Warp theme]

**Andi:** Hello. 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 Kennedy.

**Kennedy:** Boop-boop, what's good, y'all?

**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 a dollar per month and get awesome rewards, from thanks on social media up to silly watch-along commentaries. Visit [www.patreon.com/womenatwarp](http://www.patreon.com/womenatwarp).

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Okay, welcome. Today is a happy day. We're going to be talking about holodeck episodes, which was the winner of one of our Patreon polls. And we're going to keep it pretty simple. Each of us has picked three of our favorite holodeck episodes, and we're just going to go through them and say why we liked them, why they're our favorite, why they added something to the holodeck lore.

So, let's start out with Sue. Sue, what is your first episode that you want to talk about?

**Sue:** I'm going to the first holodeck episode, *The Big Goodbye*. Pew, pew, pew.

**Andi:** Oh, yeah. No, no. I have to ask you a question first. Sue, before we get into it, how many slides on your PowerPoint for Picard and Crusher is devoted to *The Big Goodbye*? Like, ballpark?

**Sue:** Oh, probably like three.

**Andi:** Only three? Wow. Okay.

**Sue:** I mean, well, how long is my fictional PowerPoint--?

**Andi:** I mean, you tell me. It's your fictional PowerPoint. [Sue laughs]

**Kennedy:** I was going to say just three. Come on, Sue, you're underselling yourself.

[laughter]

**Sue:** I mean, Andi called this episode shipper fuel, but there are others. And this is just the beginning. Don't worry. [laughs] But holodeck wise, yes, we are introduced to the concept of the holodeck in *Encounter at Farpoint*. But this is our holodeck malfunction time. [laughs] The safeties are off and they can't get out. The 24th century crew is experiencing firearms for the first time, projectile firearms. And Picard dresses up like a detective. It's just so great. And they get to be out of character, and they get to be silly. And it came at the perfect time in

the first season where they really needed something good and light because that first season of *TNG* is rough at times.

**Andi:** Yeah, you're not wrong. They really set the tone. Right off the bat, this idea that, "Hey, we can just put our characters in these random genre situations and let them dress up and get camp." We're going to be talking about lots more episodes that are like that. It really does set the bar high for what holodeck episodes could be.

**Sue:** I mean, it's the beginning of the tropes. The broken holodeck is a *Star Trek* trope, and it all starts right here.

**Andi:** Yeah. And how many times have we seen the holodeck controls malfunction in a way that the stakes are suddenly so high? This is classic shit. And it's the first time. It's pretty impressive.

**Kennedy:** And also, just an opportunity for Gates McFadden to just devour every second of screen time that she has. I mean-- [crosstalk]

**Sue:** As usual.

**Kennedy:** I mean, if screen time was a delicious cake, she would leave no crumbs, just nom, nom, nom, nom, nom.

[laughter]

**Sue:** When she swallows the gum though.

**Kennedy:** Just everything, everything.

**Andi:** It's so good.

**Kennedy:** Every single solitary second the camera's on her, it is every film noir person's dream because here are all of these cinematographic-- That's a word now.

[laughter]

Effects happening in color. And not with a thumb-full of Vaseline smeared across the lens in order to get the effect. That's just how she looks just fabulous. The costume department went off on this. Finally, we can do something aside from these pajamas. You could tell the cast was moving a lot more freely in that because they weren't stuck in those very restrictive uniforms, just c'est magnifique. What a way to start.

**Andi:** I also think it's a cool character episode because Picard has been set up so far as a real fuddy-duddy. And so, it's cool to be like, "Yeah, but also, he's a big nerd, and he likes these silly, pulpy novels that are not anything like the high literature and the Shakespeare that we know he loves." But there's this extra aspect to his personality, this is new to us. And it really deepens his character and shows that he is not this stuck-up dude, that he has other layers to him, and he can be silly sometimes. Plus, their chemistry is insane. Like, what the hell? Which is why it's so prominent in Sue's PowerPoint.

[laughter]

**Kennedy:** I also like, oh, my gosh, the name of the episode is escaping me. But the callback episode where Guinan joins him as his cousin, Gloria.

**Sue:** Mm-hmm.

**Kennedy:** Just, ah. Oh, you want to talk about another one that's leaving no crumbs behind? Like, so good.

**Andi:** I think. I mean, there's something about the holodeck episodes where you can really tell the actors have so much fun with them. I mean, this is everything these theater kids want. They get to dress up in dumb costumes and get campy. Like, why wouldn't they love this? And it's a way for them to step out of the box of the regular format that *Star Trek* has.

**Sue:** Yeah, they no longer have to just go to the gangster planet. They can start the gangster holodeck program.

**Andi:** Yeah.

**Kennedy:** Mm-hmm.

**Sue:** But it allows them-- We think of *Star Trek* as a science fiction show, but it's like a science fiction show that's wrapped around any other kind of show, a horror or a western or a procedural drama or whatever, because it has these mechanisms within its storytelling that are just built in.

**Andi:** I have to say that I am unimpressed with the safety features on the holodeck, and I think that we definitely talk about some of the lack of OSHA-like standards.

[laughter]

**Kennedy:** Hey, listen, listen, listen, listen. Okay. [Andi laughs] I talked to the Engineering Corps on that mission of when they were in Drydock and when they were building and installing the holodeck. It was their first time [Andi laughs] installing field emitters of that size, of that scale, and it's a luxury ship. They had a million other things to get to. Sick bay was up their ass.

[laughter]

I just want to be mindful of the fact that these people are people as well, and people are prone to make mistakes. Thank you.

**Andi:** Yes, but then the mistake is repeated, Kennedy. So then, where is OSHA?

**Kennedy:** I don't have explanations for any of those. I was just defending that first crew.

**Andi:** [laughs] Only this invention. Only the first people who installed it, got it.

**Kennedy:** Yes. The very first folks. They had no point of reference.

**Sue:** Why is the crew even allowed to turn off the safeties? [Andi laughs] That's what I don't understand.

[laughter]

**Kennedy:** Valid question.

**Sue:** Seems like a bad idea.

**Andi:** They just want to feel alive. They don't spend enough time in life-or-death situations. They want to get shot.

**Sue:** That's a *Voyager* episode, Andi. We'll get to that.

**Andi:** My apologies. We'll get to it. [Sue laughs] Cool. Kennedy, what is your first pick for the holodeck episode you want to talk about first?

**Kennedy:** Ting, ting, ting, tiding, ting ting- [sings] *Take me out to the holosuite. Take me--* I'm on my baseball game right now. Sorry. Not sorry for any of you who aren't the Phillies. [Andi laughs] Only the true, true, true beast of the NL East. That's us. So, I've been heavy on the baseball tip lately and couldn't help but think of take me out of the holosuite, like, Holy smokes what a slice of Americana brought to the outskirts of Bajor space. Basically, we get this amazing glimpse into the fact that Benjamin Sisko is low-key petty spaghetti [Andi laughs] and just a great opportunity to delve into all of these characters in a really tumultuous point in Starfleet and Federation history and just see how well they incorporate new folks like Ezri. Getting ahead of myself though.

Basically, Captain Solok of the all-Klingon vessel, the starship T'Kumbra, challenges Sisko, comes to *Deep Space Nine* and challenges him to a game of baseball. He said, "Get your crew together. Meet me on the diamond." And Sisko was like, "Sure, I ain't scared of you. What? Just cause you're bigger than me and stronger than me and smarter than me and faster than me, you think I'm scared? Think I'm supposed to be scared? This is my game. You're not going to come into my house and demand that we play my game and then have an attitude when I say yes. Okay? Yes. I'll see you in a week. Shit."

[laughter]

Rally the troops and explain to them why this game was so important, but didn't get to the meat of it all. The meat of it all is that back in the academy days, Solok and Sisko was beefing. It was probably in the same homeroom because the S's, you know what I'm saying? And Solok was the epicenter of all the worst qualities of a Vulcan in that he was a supreme A grade hater. Just hater, just hater [Andi laughs] from Jump Street. And thought it was appropriate to pick on young Benjamin because why not? He's a human. Look, he's going to get pissed off. They tried to tussle. Solok nearly ripped his arm out of socket, and he's been salty ever since. He confides this in Kasidy Yates. She gets the crew together like, "Ayo. It's not just because they went to school together and don't like each other. This is the kind of jerk face--" I just had to censor myself.

[laughter]

"This is the jerk face that Solok is. We need to go practice. I'll see y'all in 15 minutes on the holosuite." And they get their asses handed to them in baseball over the course of this episode.

And the glory of it all is that they enjoyed the process, they enjoyed the journey, they enjoyed banding together. And even though they lost, they had a great time. And that makes no logical sense, which, of course, infuriated Solok. So, he left, salty as hell, saltier than Sisko was when he got there. But it was just a tremendous episode. And so funny to hear other people's interpretation of baseball. [laughs] Explaining the rules, as a fan, you forget how complicated baseball is as a game with all the statistics and the players and the rules. It can be a lot if you don't watch it every day like I do. [Andi laughs] So, I mean, I don't have season seats like Sue does. I'm not that intense with it. You have season seats, right?

**Sue:** Not anymore, but I used to.

**Kennedy:** Okay, see, so I'm not misremembering that, [Sue laughs] but it can be a lot if you have no familiarity with sport in general, let alone something as specific as baseball. So, it was a great opportunity to see Benjamin and Jake have their relationship as well. Always good to see them.

But another unique element that I love about this episode that doesn't get talked about a lot, so I'm glad to be the one to bring it up, is the way that Benjamin Sisko leaves his pips off the field and starts speaking a little bit of AAVE. AAVE is an acronym for African American Vernacular English. It is the pidgin-ed form, I guess, if you want to think of it that way, it's a culmination of certain cultural experience with the English language in this particular country. And some people perceive it to be unprofessional, uncouth, uneducated. Millions of people have proven that is truly not the case.

And it is extremely refreshing to see, not only in *Star Trek*, that it was spoken, even if very slightly, he utilized it to an extent in the future in space to a son. But also, that this happened in real life during the 90s, where that was being contested as more and more media focusing on black stories starring black people became a lot more prevalent. So, it's a nice, not only throwback to an era when baseball was the biggest thing in America, but also threw back to a time where socially, in real life, there was a change occurring in real time about how people perceived the way others communicate.

**Andi:** One thing I want to add, I think all that's really interesting, Kennedy. One thing I want to add is, what is it with Vulcans having the worst bullies?

**Kennedy:** Just why? You have so much brain you can put into so many things. You want to waste time being a hater? Are you for real?

**Andi:** It's world class topline bullying. We've never seen anyone bully. We've seen these childhood Vulcan bullies and then apparently also in the academy. But for what reason though?

**Sue:** Their whole identity is built on Vulcans being superior to humans. And then when they're not, they act like petulant children.

**Andi:** But that's such an emotional response, Sue. And I've been told [Sue laughs] that the Vulcans, they don't deal with these petty emotions. [Sue laughs] So, that does not track at all. So, I think you're mistaken. [Sue laughs]

**Kennedy:** Let's be real about the space elf family. Because by family, I mean the Vulcans, the Romulans, and the Remans because everybody forgets about them. I don't care who they are, they all have a mean streak capacity, all of them. Whether they're extremely "emotionally enlightened" or not. That seems to be the thread when it comes to Vulcans. But the fact that you're going to sit there and sign up for human-esque Starfleet and then choose to pick on somebody and then you go sit there and claim to be smart and then not realize the cultural ramifications of you picking on a black kid in school. And you going to challenge me to baseball? The first real, I would say, civil rights movement in America. You going to challenge me to baseball game? You then came all this way. You came to my house, you challenged me to my sport, and you going to smile in my face? You smiling, Solak, you piece of shit. You're not smiling but--

[laughter]

**Andi:** Amazing.

**Kennedy:** So, I just loved, loved, loved, including the standing ovation for Rom.

**Sue:** Can we talk about Max Grodénchik?

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**Sue:** And how he was a semi pro baseball player and they made him bat with his opposite hand because he was Rom?

**Kennedy:** I didn't know that. That is so cool.

**Sue:** Even with all the prosthetics on, he was still too good. [laughs] And they had to figure out a way to make him worse the baseball.

**Kennedy:** Oh, my God. If I ever get the chance to meet him, I cannot wait to share that with him. If he ever listens to this, holy smokes, look out at your signing table, because the crazy baseball lady's coming. That is so cool. Wow.

[laughter]

Take me out to the holosuite. And then also, but they're right. Oh, if I have to be critical about it, before I forget, now that I'm looking at my notes here, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the casual racism towards Vulcans when Nog had to tag one of them out and he literally went through the whole dugout. They don't all look the same, bro. That's racist. That's literally, literally racist. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Imma need a half a pip. Thank you. Come on and cough it up.

**Andi:** It was a popular response in our comments. Cheyenne said that she loved how silly and ridiculous it was that Sisko forces all of his employees to participate in an ancient and outdated earth sport that no one knows how to play, all to get back at the petty and superior Vulcan who beat him at the academy. The level of sass and emotion from a supposedly emotionless Vulcan is priceless. Also, the look on his face when they all start celebrating even though they lost was chef's kiss. You could just see his brain exploding from the illogic of it all.

**Kennedy:** Just ooh. Ooh. You lucky I'm at work too. Bad enough you going to show up at my crib. You going to show up at my job? [laughs] To hell with you, Solok. To hell with you.

**Andi:** Well, he got what he deserved.

**Kennedy:** Yup.

**Andi:** Well, I picked a couple of episodes. I'm going to start with *Hollow Pursuits*. When I was trying to think through the episodes, I wanted to talk about some of them-- I think *Hollow Pursuits* is a good episode. But it also has some interesting problems. [Sue laughs] Yeah, but they're problems in an interesting way. So, I want to talk about them. *Hollow Pursuits* is the one where Barclay is getting bullied, let's be, real on the Enterprise and is so stressed about it and so anxious about it that he basically escapes to the holodeck to act out these power fantasies in the holodeck using the likenesses of his coworkers, essentially.

And I actually think this episode is really, really interesting on multiple, multiple levels. One of them is that I feel like this is actually a fairly progressive episode for the time that really doesn't hold up all that well in some ways, because in the moment that they made this episode, actually acknowledging mental illness and neurodivergence, actually they approach it in a way where you're on Barclay's side against the crew, which is super interesting to me.

**Kennedy:** [imitates a haughty tone] *Star Trek* is so woke. When did that happen? My *Star Trek* didn't need therapy.

**Andi:** [laughs] But the reason it doesn't quite hold up is because when you're looking at it in 2024, you're like, "Really?" [laughs] The whole time, it's so over the top how mean they are to him, especially at the beginning of the episode and the way they're completely stymied on how to handle a fairly straightforward and basic anxiety disorder is hilarious. So, it's such an interesting time capsule into how much our thoughts around accommodations has changed over the years. And so, for that reason alone, I find it to be a fascinating and very rewatchable episode.

**Kennedy:** You know what? That makes me want to give it a second chance because I usually cringe a lot during that episode because, they really didn't have to be that awful to him.

**Andi:** I know. I remember the very first time, when I first time tracked it, when Captain Picard calls him broccoli, I fully laughed because I was like, "His face is incredible." Picard's face is just pure horror. He can't believe he's done this. It is funny. I noticed that when I was rewatching it yesterday, I literally paused right beforehand because I was cringing. It was like secondhand embarrassment. I knew it was coming and I was horrified by it. And I was just like, it's so awful for both of them, but it was just hard to watch.

And Geordi, I feel like Geordi is actually verging on out of character here at the beginning of the episode. He's so mean to him. And I'm like, "This is not our patient Geordi who deals with Data all the time with such care and empathy. This is a different dude that I don't understand." And then about halfway through, he starts to shift back into our Geordi. And he is very understanding with Barclay and he is very open to hearing his point of view. I just feel like maybe they took it to 11 at the beginning when they maybe didn't need to do that.

**Kennedy:** Season 3, episode 21. Okay, so I was curious as to, at what point in the arc that they were so comfortable speaking to him like this. But it's like, yeah, this is before they've been humbled by the Borg. [Andi laughs] They were cruising on the intergalactic luxury space yacht and felt really good about themselves and their position in Starfleet and figured, "Hey, I feel I'm in a good place. If opportunity presents itself where I can punch down a little bit to make that feel extra good--" So, if we're going to talk about how the fact that Vulcans can be grade A haters. Let's talk about the fact that a human being will try to find a way to be a shithhead because they didn't need to treat him like this for all of the reasons that you mentioned.

**Andi:** Yeah, but it's also interesting to me because his actions are really uncomfortable as well. I really feel like a solid half of this episode is just examples of really poor leadership on multiple levels. But at the same time, the way he reacts to it is really lacking in boundaries. And then, there's also an element of there is no privacy on this ship whatsoever. It's horrible.

**Kennedy:** Viruses don't spread as fast on ships as his business did.

**Andi:** Yeah. For real. So, Geordi gets called out by Picard for just not doing his job as a leader to accommodate him and bring him into the team and all of these things. And so, he's going to try now. So, he's trying to be better. Well, first of all, he's like, "Where is Barclay?" And the computer immediately tells him. We've talked about this a little bit before, but it is a little bit iffy that literally they can track everybody and there's no privacy. At any time, someone can go, "Where is this person?" And they will tell you.

So, he goes and he tracks him down. He goes into his private holodeck program where there's no security. And then, we get to see Barclay seeing his boss see his fantasies, ooh. When I was watching him, this is like the equivalent of my boss seeing my AO3 history. And I would walk into the lake and never return.

[laughter]

The fact that Barclay actually responds like a normal human being and sits down with him and has a conversation with him instead of immediately flinging himself into space is actually impressive to me.

**Kennedy:** Which is why his anxious ass is in Starfleet, because anybody else would have been like, "Nope, the airlock it is."

**Andi:** Yeah. [laughs] For real. Like, "I'll take the cold void of space over this." [laughs] And this is where Geordi really was very understanding. He was like, "Look, what you do in your own time is your own business," which, wow.

**Kennedy:** Is it?

**Andi:** Yeah, it's not, clearly, but he's trying. But at the same time, he walked in on a power fantasy in which he is treated poorly. He's dressed up in stupid clothes and he's just there for Barclay to beat up, essentially. And that is worrisome. I would be worried if I were him. But he takes it really well, and he's like, "Look, I think you need to see the counselor." Again, this is where the progressiveness at the time comes in. But then immediately, Barclay goes to the counselor, and Troi, I love you. Troi, I love you. But we don't get to see her counsel very often, and then her counseling in this is horrible. [laughs] I'm like, "Girl, what are you doing?"

It feels like she should be able to sense that he's insanely attracted to her. So, maybe this is not the way. And also, where is the secondary counselor? So, you should not be attracted to your therapist. If you are, switch therapists immediately. Please, please, please. This is my advice to anyone out there in therapy who's like, "Wow, my therapist is hot." Okay, they may be a great therapist. They are not for you. And it's just wild to me that immediately after this disaster therapy session, Troi goes to Geordi and says, "Hey, I just had a meeting with this guy. And it was weird. And he's weird." [laughs] They have a conversation about his therapy session on the bridge in front of everyone.

**Kennedy:** Yikes.

**Andi:** It is wild.

**Sue:** No HIPAA laws in Starfleet.

**Andi:** [laughs] I know. I know. And, wow.

**Kennedy:** Yikes.

**Andi:** Yes, some wild choices were made. But on the plus side, the episode really is very kind to Barclay. It really does say some nice things about ways to empathize with people that are struggling and build your team. And in the end of the day, he saves them all with 30 seconds to spare. So, yay for him. And also, I want to just say that this is a practical use of the holodeck that I would love to see more of, is holodeck as therapy. Like, you could use it in so many different kinds of therapeutic ways. And I wish we saw a more structured version of that rather than his just kind of unregulated, weird fantasies.



**Kennedy:** And also, not for nothing. If you notice a team member, and from Picard's perspective, several team members are mishandling a team member, then maybe it's time for the mishandled team member who is creating elaborate holodeck algorithms to project his workplace as a-- maybe he needs some shore leave. Maybe he needs to cash in some of that PTO, because if your fantasy is about how to deal with work, then you need a break. Just go sit on a beach, go touch some real sand, not some photonic sand somewhere. Go ahead and reconnect with nature, and then we can address everything else. But he should not still have been expected to report to a shift after that. Like, that's absurd to me.

**Andi:** We also never see Picard apologize. They pretty much are just like, "That was fuckin' awkward," and then that's it.

**Kennedy:** Ugh.

**Sue:** Do we see Picard apologize for anything ever? No.

**Andi:** No. Fair, fair. [Sue laughs] But overall, I think this is a really good holodeck episode. Does it make me want to tear my hair out? In many ways, yes, but it's really well crafted in a lot of ways. It's actually something that I was really impressed with is how seamlessly they put the A plot and the B plot together here. They're interwoven beautifully. And it's just a very rewatchable episode that I very much enjoy. So, that is why I chose *Hollow Pursuits* as my first episode.

**Kennedy:** Excellent choice.

**Andi:** Thank you. Thank you so much. I love to be validated for my choices, Kennedy, I appreciated that.

[laughter]

All righty, Sue, what do you got for us?

**Sue:** I feel like I'm taking us on a left turn or something, but I'm going to *It's Only a Paper Moon*. This is the Nog episode where he sequesters himself in the holodeck again, because he has these emotional traumas that he is trying to avoid, really, and then uses it-- not uses it, but like Vic Fontaine, sentient hologram becomes a better counselor than Troi was in *Hollow Pursuits*.

[laughter]

Gets him back out into the real world. And so, so much character development for a secondary character in the last season of this show. And it's just so excellent. And Aaron did an incredible job in this episode.

**Kennedy:** And so did James Darren, may he rest in peace.

**Andi:** Is this a good example of the uses the holodeck could have in actual real hard work of therapy?

**Sue:** I'm going to say yes.

**Kennedy:** Yeah, I would say yes and no, because of the slight enabling that occurred.

**Sue:** Yeah. It starts out as a method to avoid the problems, but he works through it while he's in there.

**Andi:** Yeah. See, the whole avoidance of problems, this is another thing that-- So, a lot of the *Star Trek* inventions. I would 100% walk over broken glass for. The replicator, hell yes. Sign me up. The transporter, yes with the caveat that it is absolutely terrifying. But the idea that I could just be like, boop, in another country is-- who I would love to avoid the airport. Let's say that.

But the one that really, I know I would be insane for is the holodeck. And the reason is basically, this is why I play videogames. It's like I don't want to have thoughts. [laughs] I want to avoid my thoughts. I should play videogames for hours at a time. And to me, I feel like they do talk about-- I mean, in *Hollow Pursuits*, even they talk about holo-addiction. I feel like it would be a real problem. And it could get really dark because how easy would it be to just run away?

**Sue:** Well, and that is what this episode deals with, really. Nog is essentially living in the holosuite at a certain point and when he starts to improve, I guess, or maybe turn a corner is when his friends and family finally intervene and he starts getting external support.

**Kennedy:** Yeah. So, what I said earlier about when all of that had been discovered about Barclay and he needed then a break if he's fantasizing about work stuff, this would have been Nog's break had it been pitched that way. If he had been prescribed X amount of time on a holosuite to feel your feelings and unpack your shit, and then we're going to check in at X amount of time or periodically or whatever is best, then it would have been a healthy way to do it. But because he was just left to his own devices, I feel—

And Vic Fontaine's not a therapist. It's not part of his program to know how to counsel somebody when they've experienced what Nog has experienced. So, there was a bit of enabling going on there because his core program is he's a show singer. His job is to have people have fun, whether he's sentient or not. So, he's not going to immediately be like, "Hey, this is great, but we're going to unpack this in a little bit to make sure you stay healthy." He was just kind of letting it happen. It's just a lot. That's a good one. I don't think you took us left at all, Sue. I think this is the other side of that holodeck is therapy coin.

**Sue:** Hm.

**Andi:** I really think that I would struggle to leave the holodeck.

**Kennedy:** Yeah. I think we all would presently, because of everything that's happening. But I would hope that by the time the 23rd, 24th, 32nd century happens, a lot of the external factors that are contributing to elements of anxiety and depression and all that stuff no longer exist. So, therapy, I would hope, at any rate, would evolve to accommodate whatever our problems, our mental issues look like in the future. Because how many of us are not really truly depressed, we're just broke? You know what I mean? Restricted because of our jobs or families or whatever? These are things that if our society was structured differently. Not capitalist. Sorry. Tickle my throat there. I imagine that a lot of our present-day issues would not apply. So, maybe we would hide in a holodeck all day, to your point, Andi, to avoid things. But if things aren't-- [crosstalk]

**Andi:** Horrible?

**Kennedy:** Yeah, it's all a matter of perspective. Like, us living in the Bell Riots times is probably unbearable to somebody who was born 200, 300, 400, 900 years into the future. Like, "Oh, my God, you people were still using fossil fuels?" You know what I mean? So, by that regard, our perception of what their problems are is kind of like, "Okay, you could push a button and get literally whatever you want. You need to relax." So, I don't know. I don't feel

like we would hide in the holodeck as much as we would now. Like, if we had a holodeck right now, right now? Sure.

**Sue:** Well, it's interesting you mentioned the outside world being a factor, because in the time of *Hollow Pursuits*, everything is great in the universe. Nobody's at war. Yay Federation, happy, smiley, peacetime. And everybody is super concerned about why Barclay is hiding away. But for Nog in *Paper Moon*, we're in the middle of the Dominion War. And people are a lot more empathetic, and they get it, and it's a lot harder.

**Andi:** I will say that this goes to how these episodes get dated though, because why would they not be prepared to handle the PTSD of someone who was traumatized like this? Why would they not have systems in place to assist him before he starts running to the holodeck as a way to self-medicate, essentially? And so, I think it goes to, this was art that was made in a particular time. And if we start trying to be like, "But that doesn't actually make sense," it wouldn't work that way. It starts to break down a little bit. So sometimes, we just have to pull it back and be like, "Yeah, but this is the 90s. And they did a good job at the time that they did, trying to predict what the future would be like."

**Kennedy:** Yeah, you could only see with the glasses that you have.

**Andi:** Yeah, exactly. So, I don't want people to think that I'm like, "Wow, they did a bad job." It's more like if we were making this exact episode now, I don't feel like it would ring as true because we've progressed in those 30 years.

Okay, well, if you want me to take you on a really left turn, my next one is *Our Man Bashir*. So, it's still *DS9*. But literally the only note I have for this, I had paragraphs of notes for *Hollow Pursuits*. My literal only note for *Our Man Bashir* is one word, and that word is gay.

[laughter]

And that's it. Moving on. Yeah, we spent all this time unpacking these other episodes. *Our Man Bashir* is just gay, and that's it and let's go home now. *Our Man Bashir* is such a good episode, and it's a really fun episode. I would say 90% of it is just pure fun, which you need in *Star Trek*. Nobody wants to watch all dark *Star Trek* all the time. Every once in a while, you want gay dudes being super funny and campy in a James Bond parody. Obviously, that is just as much *Star Trek* as anything else we've talked about today. But truly the number one thing is my jaw dropped because it's been a while since I've seen this episode, and I forgot how gay it was. And the cold open where Garak is basically like, "Honey, you haven't been around."

[laughter]

**Kennedy:** What are you doing?

**Andi:** You've been in your stupid program and you won't talk about it. And you're just hiding out in here and you won't come to our gay brunches and where have you been? And you're kissing this girl. I'm going to show up just as you're kissing this girl and be jealous about it and then just throw a fit because, well, you've been distant. [laughs] Why aren't you hanging out with me?

**Kennedy:** Are you playing dress-up in here?

**Andi:** Yeah, 100%.

**Kennedy:** You're playing dress-up without me?

**Andi:** I truly am so impressed with Andrew Robinson's ability to emote pure gayness through all those prosthetics. I bow down to him. He is a superior being. Thank you, sir, for all that you have done.

**Kennedy:** And also, can we talk about the tailor of Garak's tux?

**Andi:** Yes. So, I heard that they had problems trying to put together that tux because of the neck prosthetics. So, the fact that they still managed to make him look cool as hell and that tux is really a credit to the costuming department.

**Sue:** It's quite an interesting neckline, for sure.

[laughter]

**Andi:** I also like to say that on a scale of 1 to 10 of the gayest elements of this episode, the turtleneck ensemble that he [laughs] does is just so distinguished elder gay. I just truly loved it so much, 10 out of 10. The costuming in general in this episode was really good.

**Kennedy:** So good.

**Andi:** They really, really captured that bond-like, dated, try to be sophisticated and sexy, aesthetic really well. Very impressive. Also, I'm pretty sure that they should have given an Emmy to Avery Brooks for this episode. And I actually think it is an affront that they did not.

**Kennedy:** I mean, you already know why they didn't.

**Andi:** [laughs] There's this noise he makes when he's "Oh. Yes." [laughs] The fact that you knew exactly what I meant- [laughs]

**Kennedy:** Just the fact that he was never a Bond villain, I feel like, is almost a crime against humanity.

**Andi:** So, apparently, MGM, I think, who owned James Bond sent a very firm cease and desist to Paramount for this, when they really should have sent a request for Avery Brooks to be the next Bond villain. [laughs]

**Kennedy:** And also, how can they? Nobody was mentioned. There was no-- Ugh.

**Andi:** Yeah.

**Sue:** It's a genre.

**Andi:** It's a genre. [Sue laughs] Don't be iconic if you don't want to be pastiched. Like, "What are you doing?" I know that visitor had the most fun practicing her terrible Russian accent. Tremendous. No notes.

**Kennedy:** Yeah. Just so good. And, of course, any opportunity to see Siddig El Fadil in a tux is just, you know.

**Andi:** He really could be Bond. He was so good in this, and he's so handsome. And I think the other thing that I will point out before we move on from whatever this is. My favorite thing is that the most hardcore flirting they do is when Bashir shoots him. [laughs]

**Sue:** I mean, that's very on brand.

**Andi:** It's just these people are so funny because how did he fall more in love when he got shot? [laughs] He was just like, "Oh, you *are* the man for me."

[laughter]

The toxicity is so realistic and honestly sexy, and I ship it so hard. If you had told me that my number one ship for the entirety of this *Star Trek* series would be twitchy, awkward bisexual meets lizard gay-

[laughter]

-I would have told you, you were crazy, but yet my PowerPoint slide for this shit [Kennedy laughs] has at least 10 slides of this episode-- [crosstalk]

**Kennedy:** That makes sense.

**Andi:** [laughs] Awesome. Sue, what's your last episode?

**Sue:** This was really hard. I love the holodeck. I love it because it's so ridiculous most of the time, and then sometimes really heartfelt and poignant. And it was really difficult for me to pick a third episode.

**Andi:** You can do it.

**Sue:** Like, I even love *Emergence*. That's how much I love the holodeck. I mean, for a single line, I have to pick *Fair Haven*. Delete the wife. Is there anything better than delete the wife? I don't even ship her with really, anybody. I don't ship *Voyager* whatsoever. But delete the wife is so good. [laughs]

**Kennedy:** We were talking about utilizing the holodeck's therapy. These people are on the other side of the galaxy in a raggedy ass quadrant. Like, let them go to fake Ireland. Let them go.

[laughter]

Let them go to fake Ireland. Let them go to Fireland. [Andi laughs] Okay.

**Sue:** I don't want to.

**Kennedy:** If it takes for them to not murder each other in their sleep on during a shift change, then so be it. Like, no one's getting hurt. Neelix isn't cooking anything weird. If you want to leave it on, leave the program on. Leave it on. Leave it on. Is it draining anything?

**Sue:** Use up all the resources.

**Kennedy:** Will it take anything from my coffee? Then leave it on. [Sue laughs] Let the crew have it.

**Andi:** I think the reason "delete the wife" has become so beloved is just because it's very much like, "This is my fantasy. I get to have it any way I want it, and I don't want this bitch here. So, delete her." That is empowering. [laughs] It's like "Goodbye."

**Kennedy:** People who have an issue with the line have never played *The Sims*.

**Andi:** Yes, exactly. [Sue laughs] This is the equivalent of putting your useless husband in the pool and taking the ladder out like, "He's done now."

**Kennedy:** Now you have a function on *The Sims* where you can manage families from—manage households rather from the options menu, and you can edit households as well, so you don't even have to go through the process of murdering them. You can just delete them. Why would I feel bad about deleting this bit of data that I've interacted with for X amount of time? [Andi laughs]

**Sue:** You don't even have to go [laughs] through the process of murdering them. You can just delete them.

[laughter]

**Kennedy:** That's all it is.

**Andi:** But it speaks to the holodeck as the ultimate power fantasy. You have complete control of every aspect of the environment. And that is super seductive. And this to me is, it's fanfic, essentially.

**Sue:** It is, yeah.

**Andi:** It's like I have this story that I connect to for whatever reason, I'm going to fully do a full insert character of myself, plop it in the story, and then I'm going to delete all the elements that don't fit the fantasy. I love it. It's perfect.

**Kennedy:** This is my recreation time. Why would I choose to incorporate something that does not bring me joy?

**Andi:** Yes, 100%.

**Kennedy:** Do you put salt on your ice cream? Delete the wife. [Sue laughs]

**Andi:** So, Sarah from Facebook agreed. She said, "Computer, delete the wife. The episode on *Voyager* that they start going to that Irish town, love Janeway, getting a love interest, and discussions about dating holograms and ethics." So, yeah, let's talk about that a little bit though. The ethics, I guess. I don't see anything ethically wrong with doing a hologram dating deal. There's lots of examples of this in *Star Trek*, and I don't have an issue with it. You remember that super-hot jazz gal that Riker put together? Minuet?

**Sue:** Minuet. Yep.

**Andi:** Yeah. I'm going back to fanfic terms. If it's an original character, I don't think there is any ethics there. You made that person up. You can do whatever you want. That's the same to me as having a fantasy in your head that just is projected outward.

**Sue:** Okay. Let's use Riker. If Riker created Minuet and he is going on dates with her and doing other stuff on the holodeck, and then comes out of the holodeck and is like, "I can't have this meeting tonight to go over crew evaluations because I have a date with my girlfriend, Minuet," [Andi laughs] that's a little weird though.

**Kennedy:** That's just poor time management skills.

[laughter]

Not the same.

**Andi:** I agree, Sue, but that's a personal, mental health type thing. It's not ethically dubious towards other people, I guess, is what I'm getting at. Yes, I think that there's absolutely an unhealthy way to do that that's unhealthy to yourself, but it's not crossing boundaries with other people, I guess, is what I'm saying.

**Sue:** Yeah. Okay. All right.

**Kennedy:** Yeah. If he were to reassign somebody to a shift somewhere because they had holodeck time during the slot that he had scheduled this date, that would be unethical.

**Andi:** Yeah, it's impacting someone else.

**Sue:** All right. All right. I can get on board.

**Andi:** And we didn't talk about this with *Hollow Pursuits* as much because, Lord knows we went in a lot of directions on *Hollow Pursuits*. But this is an issue with *Hollow Pursuits* as well, is the ethics of not creating an original character, this is RPF. This is real people fiction. And I find real people fiction very creepy. It's especially I feel ethically dubious if you are putting real people into either sexual or violent situations with you, which is something that Barclay does in that episode. That's when I think it starts to get a lot more ethically dubious, especially if you're downloading their likeness, but also their personality and their memories and their thoughts and creating them on the holodeck? Woo. That's getting dark very fast. Yeah.

**Kennedy:** And also, like, that's not even something they can restrict from the holodeck having access to, because what if they're running a test simulation on, I don't know, one piece of equipment or another, and they need this particular individual's likeness because it impacts the process in some way? I don't know.

**Sue:** You mean Leah Brahms?

**Kennedy:** No, I don't mean like that.

[laughter]

Specifically, I don't mean like that. I mean, if a crew of engineers is trying to calibrate the, I don't know, gravity wells for a shuttle containing X amount of people and a piece of equipment, let's say they need the specifics of which people it is to calibrate different weights because different species have different bone densities and shit like that. Just because, I don't know, this Bolion is a small person doesn't mean that they weigh less, necessarily. You see what I'm saying? So, these type of specific matter in a situation where details are super crucial. So, you really do have to rely on the honor system, I feel like, so that you really have to. "Ooh, that's a tricky place to be in."

**Andi:** Yeah, it is.

**Kennedy:** Maybe we can specify the parameters of the program such that personal likenesses of crew members or Starfleet personnel cannot be used in a personal log setting, only in an official training simulation setting.

**Andi:** Yeah. I will just say that going back to our whole really fun discussion we had about *Star Trek* HR, I feel like HR would have a binder that was the size of *Crime and Punishment* for the holodeck—

**Kennedy:** For sure.

**Andi:** And you would have to be very careful. And that's actually why I find the holodeck on *Deep Space Nine* so funny because on one hand you have the *TNG* version of the holodeck, which is very PG. Even when Barclay is right in that line, he really just is like-- It's pretty tame, it's pretty PG. And then, you've got Quark who's like, "Get the squeegee. Holodeck 3 needs to get cleaned out." He 100% knows and understands what people are renting those holodecks for. And I just find the *DS9* version so much more realistic.

**Kennedy:** Yeah. The *DS9* version is what people who play *The Sims* do when they download mods and allow them to build strip clubs and shit like that. [laughs]

**Andi:** Yeah. And I just find it very amusing the different vibes there. [laughs] Of course, how weird do you want to get? I got lots of programs, [laughs].

**Kennedy:** But it's going to cost ya.

**Andi:** But it's going to cost platinum. Cool. Kennedy, do you want to go through your combined episodes?

**Kennedy:** Yeah, sure. I would like to round things off with one that always manages to make me uncomfortable in a multitude of complex ways. And I think it's fascinating that it evokes this type of reaction from me. I'm sure that others have strong emotions surrounding this character and his circumstance as well. I'm going to bring up the arc of *Elementary, Dear Data* and *Ship in a Bottle* vis-à-vis one Professor Moriarty. What a poop stain.

[laughter]

What a little butt cheek. I mean, but was he really-- I mean, Data and Geordi created this super complex and elaborate holosuite program around one of the greatest brains in human fiction, Sherlock Holmes. And his villain, Moriarty, who was also a bad boy and gave the program permission to be smarter than Data. It's never a good idea.

**Sue:** Okay, but can we talk about that? They have this whole conversation about, "Well, we told the computer to create a villain that could beat Data. Therefore, it created this sentient hologram," and they never unpack that. [laughs] Nobody ever expresses concern that the ship's computer can do that.

[laughter]

**Kennedy:** And also, the fact that, like, "Yo, you are the lead engineer. You didn't stop to think that maybe a program smarter than you're smarter than everybody else, friend, was a bad idea." You didn't think that you were just happy to be in your tweed?

**Andi:** Honestly, they're lucky that they created Moriarty and not *Terminator 2*.

**Kennedy:** Like, come on.

**Andi:** [laughs] Honestly, they got off light in many ways.

**Kennedy:** Just unreal. But there are some very interesting moments where, I hate to say it, that Moriarty makes some pretty strong arguments for the validity of his existence. And I don't know, it just makes me feel weird about it. I have an ick about people being really quick to award artificial intelligence rights and privileges when so many sentient real-life human



peoples don't. And I'm slowly getting better with this because it's work of fiction, honestly, let's be real. But the fact that it did invoke such things from me, made me want to unpack it. And yeah, Moriarty has a right to exist if the two of them willed him into existence.

But now, do we have to have holodeck AI synth life law systems? Do we need representatives? Do we need judicial systems? How do we incorporate beings that we have created into our society, even though we have created them, to exist outside the parameters of what we perceive society to be? How do you justify the existence of something in a situation that it was never intended for them to exist in? So, just really profound thoughts around this was supposed to be a day off, these two nerds cosplaying as their favorite thing, and it could have just been that, just this really moment in time where you could be like, "Oh, wow. I didn't think about it this way."

But no, here's a whole other episode called *Ship in a Bottle*. Moriarty's like, "Nah, son. I need to get up out of here. This is unacceptable to me. I need to breathe real air." And they're like, "But you don't have lungs, dog. How you going to breathe," If you don't have lungs? You don't understand. It's not that we want to keep you here. It's the fact that you can't exist anywhere else. And he was like, "Nah, nah, nah. To hell with all that. Look. Haha. Here I am, existing outside of the holodeck. Now, deal with it. I need my money, I need my boo thang, and I need a ship to get up out of here. What's it going to be? Do you want to breathe today? Do you want me to eat all these people into space? No? Then, run them pockets. I need all the things I need." See, this is why we can't have nice things. This is why.

**Sue:** I need you to do recaps for literally every episode of **Star Trek**.

[laughter]

**Andi:** Also, I love that-- Honestly, let's be real. Two nerds doing cosplay is probably how artificial intelligence is created. [laughs]

**Kennedy:** You know what I mean? Like, because these two nerds wanted an opportunity--they wanted to LARP. They wanted to LARP. They were larping.

**Sue:** Yeah.

**Kennedy:** Data and Geordi were larping, and in doing so, created one of the most dangerous lifeforms that this crew that has encountered the Borg, that has encountered the Sona, that has encountered the Remans, that has encountered Q, that has encountered all of these things, this little raggedy holodeck program really just gave you and your whole ship an entire problem. After that, I would feel like, "All right, Data, Geordi, no more holodeck privileges. You two are done. You two are done. I don't know if you need extra shore leave time, if you need to decompress, that's cool. I'm willing to work that into the schedule. But don't you step foot on this holodeck again without it being official business. And even if it is official business, I'm going to need you to sign three forms in triplicate and have them notarized by Starfleet Command before you start. You understand me?" This is why I'm not in Starfleet HR.

[laughter]

**Andi:** Yeah. I mean, if I was in Starfleet HR, there would be a lot less episodes of [laughs] *Star Trek*. So many episodes would stop before they began. It would be very, very boring, which is why that's for real life and not for fiction. [Sue laughs] But yeah, I mean, I think that this pair of episodes really gets at some of the cool ideas that throughout *Star Trek* grew into stuff like the Doctor on *Voyager*, this idea that-- or even Vic Fontaine on *DS9*, where it's like, what does it mean to be sentient? What does it mean to be a living being? Does it include a

physical being? And also, they created this technology that some people use to bang and some people use to do therapy, but also apparently can create life. And they don't really unpack that very much. They leave that to us podcasters, apparently.

**Sue:** And that's only the first time that the holodeck on the Enterprise creates life.

**Andi:** Yes. So, a lot going on there. We did do an episode, by the way, about the ethics of the holodeck, which I definitely recommend. Aliza is at her most funny in that episode. So, I highly recommend y'all listen to that. I'm going to finish up this conversation with my third episode, which is *I, Excretus* from *Lower Decks*, which is another example of, I feel like the practical applications of holodeck technology, like, the idea of doing drills in the holodeck makes total sense to me. Like, training drills in the holodeck makes total sense.

**Kennedy:** That's what it's for. That's what it's for.

**Andi:** That's why they have them on the ship. It's not actually so you can you put Troi in the most gorgeous outfits. By the way, Barclay has really good fashion sense. I don't know [laughs] how he came up with some of Troi's best looks. Anyways, the training drills aspect of this episode, it really makes sense to me from just a total practical perspective. But thenm I also just truly love it because it's everything that I love about *Lower Decks*' self-referential humor where it just like, "Hey, remember that episode? We're basically going to replay that episode with the lower decks characters and apparently they know these episodes as well as we do because it's like *Star Trek* history." I love that. I love that it will never get old to me. It's a huge reason why I love *Lower Decks*. And I just really enjoyed watching Mariner fail so hard. And I know that it's like because they were rigged, but Mariner immediately losing to the horse in the Wild West fantasy is so funny.

[laughter]

I also think this might be my favorite Boimler episode because he reacts to these training drills exactly how I would react to these training drills, which is how I react to video games where I'm like, "Well, I got to reload a prior load. I said one thing slightly not good and got negative two points from this character. So, I got to reload everything and start again." I'm halfway through my *Civilization* playthrough, and I'm like, "Mm, I didn't get that wonder. I got to start all the way over."

**Sue:** [laughs] No.

**Andi:** "This is not good enough." And so, I really feel that. And then I just also feel like this was a top-notch parody of Borg.

**Kennedy:** For sure. I was going to say to your point, Andi, like, as someone who has severe disdain for Boimler, this was an excellent Boimler episode because of just opening the toy chest that is the Borg trope at this point, and just running through all of it. When he pulled out the babies, I was done.

[laughter]

I was done. I was done. I was like, "Turn this shit off. I'm done."

**Andi:** He was like, "I played chess against the Borg queen [unintelligible [01:00:47]. It's just so good. It's like, this training simulation can fit so many Borg cliches in. Just really good. And then also the fact that they learned a lesson that basically the whole point of lower decks, like the lower decks ethos of the conflict between the lower deckers and the bridge crew and then them all coming to some sort of understanding of each other that will

immediately be forgotten next episode is just really delightful to me. Also, this episode has the fine distinction of the screenshot of Boimler showing [unintelligible 01:01:27] on Twitter everywhere as the pinnacle of the degradation of *Star Trek* will never will not be funny to me. The way all the *Star Trek* bros did YouTube videos [laughs] that were like 20 minutes long about how this screenshot of *Star Trek*, completely devoid of context, is proof that nothing good is happening on lower decks. I found that all very delightful.

**Sue:** Okay. But then when they removed the whole planning at the end of the season and the image of the Cerritos with that black bar on it started circulating, that was phenomenal.

[laughter]

**Andi:** Man, I love that we finished out some really, honestly went into a lot of depth and then ended with Boimler showing [unintelligible 01:02:17].

[laughter]

**Sue:** Sounds like us.

**Andi:** It does sound like us. That is our brand, I think. Cool. Well, we obviously did not get to all the holodeck episodes. Honestly, the comments we got on our social media about the favorite holodeck episodes are some of my favorites that we've ever gotten, and I'm sure there are more. So, folks, please tell us your favorite holodeck episode and why you loved it. This is but a small sampling of what *Star Trek* has to offer in the infinite possibilities of the holodeck. But I really enjoyed this conversation with you all. Thanks for having it with me.

**Kennedy:** Yeah, this is a whole lot of fun. Like you said, a fun Saturday afternoon.

**Andi:** Yes.

**Sue:** Very good activity.

**Andi:** On the show, we talk about so many things, and sometimes they verge from really hard topics. And I was looking forward to this one because I was like, even though some of the holodeck episodes tackled real things and can get deep and dark, overall, these episodes tend to be lighthearted and really fun, and I just really like talking about them. So, thanks for joining us. And yeah, Sue, where can people find you on the internet to talk to you about your PowerPoint, about Bev and Picard?

**Sue:** [laughs] Just right here on the podcast

**Andi:** Yeah. That's [sue@womenatwarp.com](mailto:sue@womenatwarp.com).

**Sue:** Oh, my God.

**Andi:** Email her slides for her PowerPoint. And, Kennedy, where can people talk to you more about baseball?

**Kennedy:** [laughs] Can actually find me on TikTok [@everydayphilliesbay](https://www.tiktok.com/@everydayphilliesbay) [laughs] if you want to talk baseball. [laughs] But if you want talk to me about *Trek*, you can email me at [kennedy@womenatwarp.com](mailto:kennedy@womenatwarp.com).

**Andi:** And I'm Andi. I am pretty much everywhere [@firsttimetrek](https://www.tiktok.com/@firsttimetrek). Thanks so much for listening. Have a wonderful afternoon.

**Kennedy:** Bye.

**Andi:** Bye.

**Sue:** I'm going to have to make that PowerPoint now.

[Women at Warp theme]

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