

## Women at Warp Episode 254: Love in the Time of Streaming

[Women At Warp Theme]

**Jarrah:** Hi. And welcome to Women at Warp, a Star Trek Podcast. Join us on our 10-year mission to explore intersectional diversity infinite combinations. My name is Jarrah. And thanks for tuning in. With me today is Grace.

**Grace:** Hey, folks. How's it going? Greetings from Puppet Land.

**Jarrah:** And Diana.

**Diana:** Hi.

**Jarrah:** 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 a month. As you probably know by now, we are wrapping up our 10-year mission at the end of March. We have our last round of our patron merchandise coming out, and you still have time to sign up to get our last thing, which will be a commemorative mission patch for our 10-year mission. So, visit [patreon.com/womenatwarp](https://patreon.com/womenatwarp) to learn more about that.

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So, to mention joining us today is our special guest, Diana, who's been a previous guest on the podcast. Diana, can tell the audience a little bit about yourself.

**Diana:** Hi. Yeah, thank you so much for having me back. Last time, I was here was to discuss *Prodigy*, and all the Janeway and Chakotay feels that Jarrah had. I'm currently writing for Geek Girl Authority online doing recaps, reviews, some really cool column pieces called the Geek Girl Crush of the Week. So, I do recommend you guys check them out they're very cool.

I've had to move a little bit away from *Trek*, because *Geek Girl* has their *Trek* aficionado and she's amazing. But when I was over with TV fanatic, I was their only *Trek* person, so that was a lot. Loving it and so happy to be back here with Women at Warp.

**Jarrah:** Awesome. Well, and speaking of nerd girl crushes, we are going to talk about all the crushes today, specifically those in the streaming era. So, longtime listeners of the show will know that we had a series called *O Captain, My Captain* that was about the love interests of the captains. And so, we had one on Kirk, Picard, Janeway, Sisko and Archer.

**Grace:** If I can correct you really fast though, Jarrah, I believe it's pronounced, *O Captain, My Captain*. [Diana laughs]

**Jarrah:** It didn't really feel like it had the same ring to it to be like, "Oh, retired admiral and then still retired admiral, my retired admiral." And "Oh, Ensign and then lieutenant, [Diana

laughs] my Ensign and then lieutenant.” Basically, we've had to talk about what do we do in the streaming era, because we have a bunch of protagonists who have love interests.

Debatably-- well, not debatably, every one of them has fewer love interests and romantic storylines than in the pre-streaming era partly, because-- We can get into what we think is the reason for that, but just with less episodic storytelling, you carry through a relationship a little bit more. So, instead of just focusing on captains, we're going to look at the protagonists of all the streaming era series. And if we have our time, we can broaden it out a little bit and maybe look at, yeah, how do these relationships differ from the ones we saw with Kirk et [audience laughter], or do they? So, yeah, so let's get into it.

**Grace:** Let's go.

**Jarrah:** I felt like we should start with *Star Trek: Discovery*, that being the first one chronologically. And so, first, we have Michael Burnham and Ash Tyler.

**Diana:** Yeah. Yuck. Sorry, this was my least favorite of any relationship in *Trek*.

**Jarrah:** Interesting.

**Grace:** I liked what they were doing when the relationship was introduced and it was like, “Oh, no, they've both been through some shit and found each other. But everything about them as a couple was being so heavily projected, ‘No, this is a relationship based entirely in tragedy that is how it will end.’” So, there wasn't a lot of hope for it throughout the brief course that it had.

**Diana:** The exit was forecast.

**Grace:** Yeah, it wasn't exactly shocking.

**Diana:** It felt like a manufactured relationship, something to pull Burnham into her human side. It was all about cracking the Vulcan training and the context. Ash himself being manufactured, quite literally, was just that-- People had guessed his identity, so early on. I kept saying, “No, they wouldn't be so stupid.” Yeah, no, they were. [chuckles] I disliked everything about the relationship. And then, when she's like, “No, it's fine. He just killed Culber.” Like, “What?” [laughs] It's like, “How is this fine?” [laughs] It's like, none of this is fine.

**Jarrah:** Yeah, I'll say that. I like how you put it, Grace, where you were saying like there was this reason that you could buy. I think the part that I appreciated about it was like, I could see that, “Hey, these are two traumatized people who might help each other heal,” was how like-- in magic to make the sanest man go mad, it's shown as like, “Look, they can make each other better. While I think that's problematic dynamic, we can get to that when we talk about Mariner and Jennifer.”

[laughter]

**Grace:** Oh, don't worry. We're talking about relationships in *Star Trek*. We've got plenty of problematic shit to go over.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. But it's a trope that I understand on some level.

**Grace:** Well, also there's no joke that there- I'm trying to think of the best way to say it without just directly quoting the movie, *Speed*, that-- It's really easy to get into a relationship when you've both trauma bonded, but those relationships don't usually last long-term.

**Jarrah:** Mm-hmm. Especially not when they're dealing with the kind of stuff that Burnham and Tyler are dealing with.

**Grace:** No. Because both of them life stories have to be mega tragic.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. The part that really I didn't appreciate is, so after shit goes down and L'Rell helped basically kill the Voq inside him, so that he can continue to live. He's practicing his knots, because he's got a sailing background and he is super whiny to Burnham about being hesitant getting back together. Basically, just like, "Oh, you don't understand what I've been through." And it's like, "Dude, she's also been through a lot this entire time." Like, "Does not to minimize your thing."

**Grace:** Yeah, "No one's going to fully understand what you're going through, dude. But if anyone is going to come close to it, it's going to be her."

**Jarrah:** Also, maybe "If you hadn't killed the person who is later the therapist, you could have got some help for that."

**Grace:** That's shooting the DJ at the party, man.

**Jarrah:** Just like shooting the-- Oh, God. Yeah, I still have a hard time joking about the Culber stuff too, because that was just so devastating.

**Grace:** It sucked, and everyone was furious over it.

**Diana:** Yeah. I don't care that Tyler doesn't remember, or it was his sleeper programming or whatever. Yeah, no, I couldn't come back from that.

**Grace:** That was what a lot of people were saying after that happened. They're like, "No, how do you redeem the shit after that?"

**Diana:** Yeah. No, I was done.

**Grace:** They literally had to go to double back and like, "Oh, sorry. People were really mad that we killed off one of our gay characters that we were--" Putting front and center to be like, "We have gay characters now. People didn't like that. We had no idea."

**Diana:** Read the room. Read the room.

**Jarrah:** I agree with you too, Diana, that if there was a purpose here that was to get Michael to be more comfortable with feeling.

**Grace:** One of my questions is, would they have done it that way if Michael had been a male character? Would they have been like, "No, you need to make you more human by way of romantic relationship"?

**Jarrah:** Well, so, I think *Star Trek* has always played a little bit with that. We saw with *This Side of Paradise* and stuff with Spock that there was a lot of interest in pulling-- There's always been interest in pulling Vulcans out of their comfort zone.

**Grace:** We get the same thing with Data a couple times over as well. But I don't think it would have been-- It's not usually quite so tragic as it is for Michael, because everything has to be 500% more tragic for her.

**Jarrah:** Our Black Pain in *Star Trek* episode talks a bit about this as well as our Michael Burnham episode. But yeah, I'm trying to-- I like Shazad Latif. I think that he does a good job in the role. I don't know, I'm trying to think like, is there a way that this could have worked?

**Diana:** No. No.

[laughter]

**Grace:** Well, there you have it, folks.

**Jarrah:** Maybe if they were just friends the entire time, and then it was just about unpacking all of their separate stuff. But I don't know.

**Diana:** Yeah. No, the support, I am totally on board with. Like, supporting each other, supporting through the healing, stepping through the trauma circle, whatever you want to call, it was fine. But taking it to a romantic level where neither one of them was in any shape to be a romantic partner-

**Jarrah:** Yeah.

**Diana:** -where neither one of them-- both of them were making mistakes hand over fist.

**Grace:** And which was to be expected in the kind of situations they had both been going through, you're going to make mistakes.

**Diana:** It wasn't even a honey trap. I was so annoyed. [chuckles] It was just a trap. Yeah, I was like, "Go away." *Discovery* started with Burnham's error in judgment, right?

**Grace and Jarrah:** Mm-hmm.

**Diana:** That having those flaws was probably one of the things that people who weren't ready for this evolution of *Trek* were upset about. They wanted a captain, first off. They didn't want someone aiming to be a captain. They didn't want a mutineer. So, having, especially in the Ash Tyler arc, through his discovery, through his identity, through killing Culber, [chuckles] it was for her to see someone as flawed as she was. But I just feel it was so heavy handed. And then, also, the first half of *Discovery* Season 1 had that *Alice in Wonderland* theme. Do you remember?

**Jarrah and Grace:** Yeah.

**Diana:** Which they just completely dropped after the mid-season break. Suddenly, it didn't matter.

**Grace:** They ran out of ideas of what to do with it, I guess.

**Diana:** It takes energy to carry an analogy like that through.

**Grace:** I know you would think they would have continued it with the whole science magical mushrooms thing a little longer. But no.

**Diana:** Oh, my God. Yeah. Like, it was all laid out there. But once the showrunner switched over, the minute they walked away, the writers' room was like, "All right, and we're done with that." No one really was interested in that. It doesn't matter the audience was watching it and following it [laughs] for all this time.

**Grace:** Yeah. *Trek* viewers famously have a very short attention span and not much attention to detail, right?

**Diana:** Of course, not. Yeah, we don't look into it.

**Grace:** They don't pick knits.

**Diana:** Because Voq was the white rabbit, wasn't he? I should go back and do it again. I had it all written out at one point.

**Jarrah:** There was also just the whole three showrunners in Season 1 situation.

**Grace:** Because as we all know the best shows, only good things come from decision making by committee. Creatively speaking, only good things happen that way, certainly. [laughs]

**Jarrah:** Well, yeah, we were talking about making mistakes. So, how do we feel about Burnham and Voq by that metric? In my opinion, big improvement.

**Grace:** Yeah, definitely.

**Diana:** Oh, gosh. Yeah. Oh, a thousandfold, a thousandfold.

**Jarrah:** I feel like it's like one of those things about-- This feels like a meme, but the whole like dating someone with massive issues and then figuring your own shit out and who you want to be and then by having some more confidence in yourself and the direction you're going, you can be better in a relationship with someone who has their shit together a bit more.

**Diana:** Yeah. The fact that she finds him in the future where she's literally cut all her baggage away is just-- it's a nice metaphor where he is her future, he's Something that's moving forward, not dragging her down in the past.

**Grace:** Also, they had such great chemistry.

**Diana:** Oh, yeah. O Captain.

**Grace:** O Captain, My Captain. [Diana laughs] Yeah, she trades baggage guy who can't deal for cat dad guy in a way. The baggage is non-negotiable in *Star Trek*, but still.

**Diana:** But you go from the guy who doesn't know who he is to the guy who is empathetic to everybody.

**Grace:** Yeah.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. Upgrade.

**Diana:** Yeah, big time.

**Jarrah:** Yeah, totally. I would say that he's definitely one of the less toxically masculine male love interests we've seen in *Star Trek* to this point. Especially when you go back and you look at like the Janeway love interests and the episodes we've talked about with everyone that Dr. Crusher and Troi date. [Diana laughs] Yeah, I really like how he doesn't really feel pressure to be in Starfleet, but he's supporting while still being who he is.

**Grace:** I think one thing that runs through *Star Trek* is you really learn so much about it based on how the show and the characters treat the non-Star Trek people that they interact with, especially ones that they are interacting with on the regular. That reminds me a little bit of the Sisko and Kasidy Yates relationship in that, "Yup, he's Starfleet. Starfleet is the main thing in his life, but he's also got someone in his life who's got her own deal, and it doesn't revolve around Starfleet."

**Diana:** Or, him.

**Grace:** Oh, him. Yeah.

**Diana:** Yeah, loved it.

**Grace:** Loved it. Respect.

**Diana:** No. Booker was fantastic.

**Grace:** Yeah.

**Jarrah:** So, how do we feel about like-- So, he goes and he helps Tarka, because he wants to prevent other planets from getting destroyed, and maybe get revenge on what happened to his planet. And then, he's punished by having to do intergalactic community service for a while. So, cool that they've got some restorative justice going on in the Federation. And then, how they get back together after sort of that breach of trust.

**Diana:** So, post-burn, they're not going to let someone with his skills just rot away in a cell. So, they're going to put him to work. His flaws were that he didn't deal with his trauma. I think that could be the overriding theme of character development in *Discovery*, was if you don't deal with it, it's going to bite you, because you look at Stamets, you look at Culber. You've got multiple examples.

Yeah, for a guy who had a lot of qualities and again, could connect with plants and animals, [chuckles] he stopped connecting. He went inside, and he refused to deal with it and then that led him down the Tarka path.

**Jarrah:** Yeah, I think that's a great observation on that theme. There definitely is that going on. Culber tries to help him, but he's also struggling himself. Like, we've observed in *Star Trek*, the therapists are all either like medical doctors who are doing therapy on the side or they're bartenders with the exception of Ezri and Counselor Troi. I don't know, it seems like he's taken a weekend seminar on therapy and he's stepping into this role, because there's no one really else there to do it.

**Grace:** I'm sorry, that's just reminding me of kind of the shit they would pull on house all the time like, "Wait, you're an expert in hypnosis?" "Yeah, I took a weekend seminar." "Oh, just going to allow that now, I guess."

**Diana:** [laughs]

**Jarrah:** Yeah.

**Diana:** The bar is very low at times.

**Jarrah:** But I also like that they have a happy ending.

**Grace:** Yeah.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. I feel like that doesn't happen often enough in *Star Trek*.

**Diana:** I would like to see that story though, because I don't feel like where our timeline ended and then they did the jump to their future that I don't feel like they were at and we're going to get married point. It was like, "Let's go off and have more adventures point," which was awfully sexy

**Grace:** Especially because marriage doesn't have to be the ultimate end game in a relationship.

**Diana:** It doesn't. It doesn't. There's a point which I want to see the conversation where the two of them are like, "Yeah, let's settle down on Sanctuary 4. Let's have a kid," [chuckles] sort of thing. But I feel a little cheated honestly by that the tacked-on ending.

**Jarrah:** That's fair.

**Diana:** Have for a while. Because I feel like there was more story to tell at least, or I would have been happy with them just going off and having adventures together. I don't know if I needed to see them happily married. I'm happy we saw it.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. I'm assuming that that was just added after they canceled the show and that-

**Diana:** Yeah.

**Jarrah:** -maybe the rest of what we saw in the episode was the stuff that was planned to lead into another season.

**Diana:** Fair. Yeah, no, absolutely. I didn't actually even expect Season 5. There was an interview with Michelle Paradise. She was coy about the idea of a Season 5. The way they ended Season 4 would have been a fully satisfactory series ender. I would have been sad that it was over, but it was very elegantly done. When 5 came on, I'm like, "Okay, cool, let's go for this." And then, they're like, "Oh, boy. Now, we've been cancelling it." I was like, "What?" [laughs]

**Jarrah:** Yeah.

**Grace:** There's definitely an art to saying, "Okay, we wrapped it up the way we want. We have more time. What do we do with that?" It can be done well or it can be done really badly. I don't think this was one of the cases where it was done really badly. It had been wrapped up.

**Diana:** It had.

**Jarrah:** Yeah, it certainly was, "No, these are the voyages."

**Diana:** Yeah.

[laughter]

**Jarrah:** Yeah. There's been other shows or books and things where they do that at the end. Actually, I'll cite *The Hunger Games* and *Harry Potter* as examples, where there's this section at the end where it's like, "Oh," and then these people had this marriage and we named our children after the characters that died earlier. That is my pet peeve. I don't feel like it was quite that cheesy.

**Grace:** This is unnecessary. Yeah.

**Diana:** The other gripe I have with the end of Season 5 with the finale was what they did to Zora. I'm still not impressed I think my hashtag was justice for Zora for weeks after that. I was like, "What the hell?" Yeah.

**Jarrah:** Yeah.

**Diana:** Anyways.

**Jarrah:** Yeah.

**Diana:** [chuckles]

**Jarrah:** Yeah. But I like overall that-- There was this whole thing for Janeway partly, because they were in the Delta Quadrant, but partly also because it was the 1990s and she was a woman in leadership that she had to choose that she couldn't have a relationship and be taken seriously as a captain. After Burnham gets together with--

**Grace:** *The Voyager* writers really said, "What is this, Murphy Brown?"

**Jarrah:** Yeah. Well, Kate Mulgrew was really strong on that as well, just saying like, "If she dates anyone on this crew, they're going to feel like she's beholden to them." That was never a question. Well, there were a couple times where people said, "Burnham, can you be objective while you're in this relationship?" But no one was saying like, "You can't do your job, because you have a relationship." It was only when it came to the close to being a conflict of interest that people raised it. And then, she clearly still could do her job.

Also, ultimately, she got to keep both her families. She didn't have to say like, "This is important to me and that means I can't have this happiness in this other area of my life."

**Diana:** Beyond Booker and Tyler, like looking back at the five seasons of *Discovery*, Burnham and Saru's relationship is still the core of everything for me.

**Grace:** It really is. It's such a load bearing relationship in terms of the storytelling.

**Diana:** Yeah. No, it didn't need a romantic piece. It was that gradual growth to respect for Saru-

**Grace:** Yeah.

**Diana:** -because he distrusted her, his ganglia were all over the place with her.

[laughter]

**Diana:** Yeah, and then for her to support him through everything that he went through in his development. For me, the takeaway, as much as I love Book. Love, love, love Book. That relationship was always core for me. Maybe because it was there from the beginning. It was there before Tyler. It was there before Book.

**Jarrah:** Yeah.

**Diana:** That's just my thoughts on that.



**Jarrah:** Well, going back to the point about, at the end of that, you didn't necessarily expect them to be getting married or anything. Let's talk about Picard and Crusher in *Star Trek: Picard*. Debatable whether she's a love interest, but my take would be that while she isn't in the time of the show, it's obviously implied that they had a relationship, and we know they had a kid and now they're a weird family again. [Diana laughs] So, let's talk about Picard and Crusher, and Picard and Laris.

**Grace:** Are we allowed to talk about Picard and Crusher without Sue around?

**Jarrah:** She doesn't have to know.

[laughter]

**Jarrah:** We can talk about it as long as we say, "Sue, we acknowledge that Picard and Crusher is the one true pairing. And any comments do not change that."

[laughter]

**Diana:** There's a point at which two people have so much history they can't be a good couple.

**Grace:** It's true.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. Oh, that's so true.

**Grace:** That's just them in a nutshell at this point with Picard. Yeah.

**Diana:** And Jack Crusher. Yeah, and green candles and all their--

**Grace:** [laughs]

**Diana:** They were side by side for all of these really weird, intimate relationships. They can talk to each other about them over whatever-- It's hard to see them-- I think they probably gave it a go, right? I think they're like, "Well, we're good companions. We understand each other. We're genetically meetable."

**Grace:** Literally up in each other's brains at one point.

**Diana:** Yeah. [Jarrah chuckles] Yeah. I wouldn't say it's a one and true pairing, but again-- Yeah, I wouldn't ever expect Burnham and Saru, because they have too much history.

**Jarrah:** Mm-hmm.

**Diana:** Yeah. But Picard and Crusher, so they've carried lifetimes together. So, yeah.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. She has a very valid point that like, look at all of the people that just made clones of him and were constantly trying to kill him in creative ways that-- Yeah, if the people knew that Jack was his kid, that would have put the kid in danger. Not saying like I think that was the right decision to withhold it or whatever, but I totally understand it.

**Grace:** Every now and then, you see someone make a decision as a character and you're like, "Okay, that was your decision. Not the one I would have made, but okay."

**Jarrah:** I did like how to me it-- The way that things went with Crusher and Picard felt true to me, to Crusher's character through the *Next Generation*, where she's-- We've talked about

how she's basically Picard's conscience and she's the one that will say the tough truths a lot of the time, like, "Hey, that perfect mate is basically a sex slave, Jean-Luc," [chuckles] and stuff like that.

**Grace:** Let's address that. Yeah.

**Jarrah:** So, the fact that she's just determined and she's going to stick to what she believes in, and Picard is helpless and terrible with emotions. I'm like, "Yeah, this tracks."

**Grace:** He's terrible with emotions and he's terrible with children.

**Diana:** Oh, yeah.

**Grace:** Those are his Achilles heels is.

**Diana:** [laughs]

**Jarrah:** Mm-hmm.

**Diana:** I thought back to a scene where-- Shoot, it was a Season 7 of *Next Gen*. It was the one with the train and the weird metaphor for-- It was the Enterprise having a baby. It was *Emergence*, Season 7. At the very beginning of the episode, Picard-- At the very, very beginning, Picard and Data are doing Shakespeare on the holodeck, and a train rolls through and then he gets injured, he goes to see Crusher. Crusher is like, "Oh, I've always wanted to go on the Orient Express." She has that very romanticized look on her. And Picard's immediately, "I didn't know you like trains."

[laughter]

**Diana:** He was totally geek boy. And she's like, "That's what you took away." She's just got this look like that's like-- [crosstalk]

**Jarrah:** Oh, my god.

**Diana:** That's so Picard. It's just like, "Oh. Yeah, did you know?" [crosstalk] going on about train stats? And she's just like, "No, Jean-Luc, I did not know that."

**Jarrah:** Yeah. You get the feeling that he's reading Shakespeare, but he's thinking about the meter the entire time.

**Diana:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Jarrah:** Exceptionally well crafted. [Diana laughs] What we really can't tell Sue, is that I like Laris.

**Diana:** I did too.

**Jarrah:** I was annoyed. I enjoyed a lot of Season 3, and I enjoyed getting the gang back together. But it frustrated me incredibly that they had this entire Season 2 that basically was like, Picard needs to let go of his fear of love and fear of abandonment and open his heart. And also, they need to make this new Borg. And then, they threw both those things out. And Laris is just at the beginning-- There's still a couple, and then he's just gets this call and she's like, "Oh, I guess you're going off on your thing." It's pretty clear, I feel like that he's not going to come back to her.

**Grace:** Yeah.

**Diana:** I love Laris too. I actually love the actress so much.

**Jarrah:** Yeah.

**Diana:** Do you have any sense of ick over how they just got rid of Zhaban [chuckles] to clear the way for Picard and her? It was just like, "Oh, by the way, he died."

**Jarrah:** Yeah. Well, were they together? I actually missed that. I forget whether they-- I think they were together, but I'm not 100% sure.

**Diana:** Oh, he was her husband.

**Jarrah:** Okay. Yeah.

**Diana:** Yeah, they were married, and they'd escaped together, thanks to Picard.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. My guess is it wasn't the original plan, because I think the actress has talked about how basically she was a fan favorite from being the badass Romulan detective in Season 1. Like the detective spy, housekeeper. And so, I think they grew her into that character. But I really liked how she's even keeled, but she has self-respect. She's not going to take his shit. She's Like, "I've given you chances. If you can't get your head out of your ass, I'm leaving."

**Diana and Grace:** Mm-hmm.

**Diana:** Yeah. If you haven't seen *Into the Badlands*, she's just glorious. Orla Brady is glorious in her role in *Into the Badlands*.

**Grace:** Yeah.

**Jarrah:** Mm-hmm.

**Diana:** I really like the Picard and Laris, and it was such a shame to have that whole storyline thrown out.

**Jarrah:** There was this whole thing where Patrick Stewart really, really wanted the last scene of Picard to be that he's back on the vineyard and his wife is calling him for dinner and he's like, "Maybe you don't even need to see who it is. It could be Laris, it could be Crusher, it could be someone else."

**Diana:** That is so egocentric.

**Jarrah:** Yeah.

**Diana:** [laughs] That is so egocentric, because he is the name of the show. I get that. But yeah, no.

**Jarrah:** Yeah, Patrick Stewart in his memoir talks about how he really felt that was necessary, because he wanted Picard to be at peace. And for him as a person, he felt that he hadn't been at peace until he was with his current wife.

Yeah, that was also some of the parts of Picard I didn't really love were the parts that felt like it was so much just like an excavation of Patrick Stewart versus Picard. So, yeah, I don't

have anything wrong with him having a relationship with either of those people, but I didn't really need to then see them just be there as like, I don't know, his emotional support woman, I guess.

[laughter]

**Diana:** Accessories.

Grace: Oh, Lord.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. Especially not even seeing who it is shows that it doesn't matter. It just matters that life.

**Diana:** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. No, and those characters had been so fully fleshed out by the series that had such nuance. Crusher has decades, right?

**Jarrah:** Yeah.

**Diana:** Yeah. Crusher is badass in Season 3. I love all of what she grew into.

**Jarrah:** Mm-hmm.

**Diana:** Yeah, to have them to be the hangers on or just be highlights in his portrait was-- Yeah, I'm glad that they didn't go with that. I'm glad someone smartened him up.

**Jarrah:** Okay. Well, let's go to a more light hearted series [Diana laughs] and let's talk about Mariner and Jennifer in *Lower Decks*. And for anyone that doesn't know, we have a podcast connection to this, because-

[laughter]

**Jarrah:** -back when we reviewed Season 1 of *Lower Decks*--

**Grace:** Oh, way back when.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. Sue, I believe, described it as aggressively heterosexual.

**Grace:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Jarrah:** Mike McMahan later told us that was part of the reason that he worked to make Mariner explicitly pan or bi, and that was the intention, but it wasn't intended to be something that they would clearly show on screen. Yeah, so that happened. And then, Andi said, "Cool, well now she has to sit weird in chairs." And then, that was a line that got worked in. So, you're welcome.

[laughter]

**Jarrah:** Yeah, so we hear somewhat early in *Lower Decks* that Mariners dated bad boys, bad girls, bad gender, non-binary babes and ruthless alien masterminds and bad Bynars.

**Grace:** [laughs] I want to see what a bad Bynar looks like.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. [chuckles]

**Grace:** Show me the rebellious Bynar. I'm very curious. [Jarrah laughs]

**Diana:** I'm sure Mariner brought it out in them.

**Grace:** Right.

**Diana:** Yeah.

**Jarrah:** Also, do you have to date the pair a few days?

**Diana:** Yeah, you totally do.

**Grace:** Probably. Probably, yeah.

**Diana:** That only makes sense.

**Grace:** Cool.

**Diana:** Yeah. [Grace laughs]

**Jarrah:** We also got a couple references just before we get into Jennifer being her main relationship, but we got a reference to her dating an Anabai to make her mother angry. We see or hear referred to a date that she goes on with Lieutenant Steve Levy, but ended it because he believed in conspiracy theories like that Wolf 359 was an inside job. So, from there, we get Jennifer. And it's interesting.

**Grace:** I liked what they were trying to do with the character. I liked that we were able to see a character in a contemporary setting of being like, "Okay, sometimes you get into a relationship, sometimes it works great. And you know what? Sometimes it just is what it was. And even though it doesn't last, you can still end on good amicable terms," which I liked, especially considering the stereotype that all bi, pan people are incredibly dramatic and tempestuous. So, just the idea of, "Okay, yeah, we didn't work, but it was a good time. See you later."

**Jarrah:** Yeah, totally. I think that it ends well. And, I think, for sure talked about how it's a toxic relationship. This was before the most recent season where you get to see the more the resolution.

**Grace:** And how it would have stayed toxic if the two of them had stayed together, because Jennifer is willing to bend over backwards just to force Mariner to address shit in not the most healthy way.

**Jarrah:** Yeah, exactly. The episode where Mariner goes and meets all of Jennifer's friends that are all just the worst.

**Grace:** And Jennifer just unleashes Mariner on them.

**Jarrah:** Yeah.

**Grace:** For funsies.

**Jarrah:** It's fun, but it's also manipulative.

**Grace:** Super manipulative. Yeah.

**Jarrah:** It's like a weird test in a way that isn't really super fair to Mariner, but it's a funny episode. I enjoyed it. Yeah, I enjoy that she's got personality and that they have conflict and ultimately-- Yeah, it isn't working and they end it. That is also positive that it doesn't need to drag out and be like--

**Diana:** Or, be repaired. Or, be repaired or something, because they don't need fixing. They just don't need each other.

**Grace:** Which could have been a lot worse for our first ongoing woman-woman *Star Trek* relationship, you know?

**Jarrah:** Yeah. They didn't feel the need to murder someone, one of them. [Diana laughs]

**Grace:** Fair. Fair.

**Jarrah:** They didn't bury the gays, they didn't have it be like, I'm secretly a clone of the real Jennifer who is cloned by Romulan spies to infiltrate Starfleet or things like that. [Diana laughs] Just a normal thing that was normal that it ended.

**Grace:** We did never get an explanation though of why there is Andorian with the name Jennifer though.

**Jarrah:** That's true. But her last name is Andorian. Sh'reyan.

**Grace:** Okay. Yeah. Ooh, the House of Sh'reyan? Nice. [Diana laughs]

**Jarrah:** No, it's Sh'reyan. They spell it differently.

**Grace:** Oh. Maybe it's a regional thing.

[laughter]

**Diana:** Yeah. The two of them being able to go off and both stay Starfleet, both continue on career paths and both showing that they're completely competent Starfleet officers. They were a very well-balanced pair for that. They just weren't romantically healthy.

**Jarrah:** Yes.

**Diana:** Yeah. I have friends who have married people that they were brought together purely out of a shared dislike of stupid people.

**Jarrah:** Yeah.

**Diana:** That's a direct quote. Yeah, they've [unintelligible 00:40:13]. They found other things obviously.

**Grace:** I mean, you hope that wouldn't be the full basis for the entire relationship.

**Diana:** [chuckles] It's just the starting point though. But [chuckles] with Mariner and Jen, do you have a number on how many actual episodes where they were a couple?

**Jarrah:** Oh, this is a great question.

**Diana:** Three. Three.

**Jarrah:** Okay. So, first *First Contact* was their first one.

**Diana:** And then, Mariner was obviously thinking about her in minding the minds minds, because she showed up everywhere.

**Jarrah:** And then, there's all the things around the whole thing that splits them up when Starbase 80--

**Diana:** Oh, right. When they go to Starbase 80. Yeah. Yeah.

**Jarrah:** So, there's two episodes there, and then there's in the latest season when they discuss that their relationship's over.

**Diana:** So, once they broke up-- So, one, two, three. They've got three episodes. But you get a lot-- Your brain fills in the gaps on these two. You know that they spent a lot of time on the holodeck. [chuckles] Yeah. Whether or not they're working the same team or not, they're definitely, yeah, hanging out.

**Jarrah:** I think it fits well too with just like the arc that Mariner goes through where there's this whole thing about not wanting to grow up and take responsibility, because you're afraid of failure. Maybe that's also why you date someone that is maybe not really going to have a positive connection with you. It feels like an immature relationship.

**Grace:** Yeah.

**Diana:** Right place, right time.

**Grace:** We're allowed to have a few at least.

**Jarrah:** Well, that's a good segue to Dal and Gwyn in *Star Trek: Prodigy*.

**Grace:** Oh, man.

**Diana:** If there's ever a guy punching above his weight, seriously.

**Jarrah:** No kidding. [Diana laughs] So, despite being a kids show, Dal and Gwyn are both also similar to Burnham and Tyler on a way less extreme level.

**Diana:** Yes.

**Jarrah:** Yeah, they've got a lot of trauma and they know barely anyone else, especially in the first season. They only know their literal oppressors and their four friends. They're the ones that are physically the most similar to each other and compatible with their respective sexual orientations. [chuckles] They're also people that have-- They've tried to support each other.

Gwyn had a bit of needing to realize that her father was abusive essentially. She knew it a little bit, but realizing that not only was he abusing other people, but he didn't care about her really. And so, Dal helped her, like recognize that, but also was there for her when it happened and was-- But then, also a child.

**Grace:** Kid relationships, not always the most stable ones or long lasting.

**Jarrah:** Mm-hmm.

**Grace:** Relationships are like pancakes. There's a few cruddy ones when you start out at the very least, and you know what, that's part of the process. But someone who claims that the first one is the best one for all time, I question. But that might just be my personal cynicism.

**Jarrah:** For some people, sure. But for Dal and Gwyn, I feel like you need to play the field more when you have a field at your disposal.

**Grace:** Grow up a little bit, learn a little more about yourself and maybe see that an important long-term relationship is not always the one girl in your age group that you are immediately adjacent to, because God damn, that kept cropping up for me in high school.

**Jarrah:** Mm-hmm.

**Diana:** It bugs me a little that Dal spent time at Starfleet Academy, even though he wasn't like an official cadet without making more connections to people who are coming up. Part of it's the trauma bonding, I get that. But you never really see him with anyone else until the Prodigy group is brought back together again, right?

**Jarrah:** Mm-hmm. Yeah.

**Grace:** I want them to both have the lives, where they can go out, explore. I don't necessarily mean like romantically, but find the Kind of life and the kind of partner that works for them not just based on immediacy, you know?

**Diana:** Yeah. But also, Dal himself just didn't rock out there. She was talking to everybody, right?

**Grace:** Of course, she would.

**Diana:** Yeah. He was just cautious, and he was out of his depth to be fair with the Academy.

**Jarrah:** He was also consistently afraid of being-- He had imposter syndrome. He was afraid of being found out as a fraud even when he didn't have reason to be. That said, I think it's a pretty accurate depiction of a kid relationship in that I definitely knew people that were off again on again for several years and just-- When you're a kid, you can sometimes feel like, "If this thing goes away, this is the end. This is the only person that's ever-- [crosstalk].

**Grace:** This is it. This is [crosstalk] end all be all. Yeah.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. So, you don't have that perspective. So, I can appreciate it on that level, but I-

**Diana:** Yeah. Fair.

**Jarrah:** -I personally just wanted them to be friends. I feel like the show presented it like they were soul mates versus just that they're--

**Grace:** Never trust the idea that your first relationship ever is your soulmate. Therein lies madness, therein lies poor decision making.

**Diana:** No. That's your first pancake.

**Grace:** Well, I just get a bunch of hate mail now from people who are like, "I married my first girlfriend at age 12, and I don't appreciate your tone."

**Jarrah:** [laughs]



**Diana:** To be fair, Dal is the only Dal.

**Jarrah:** Yeah.

**Diana:** He is very isolated, and short of blue shirts that want to study him.

**Grace:** I like that we've got this running theme with talking about the relationships in the streaming years of, sometimes they don't work out and that's okay. And sometimes you have a relationship that ends badly and you move on just like--

**Diana:** And that's okay.

**Grace:** And that's okay.

**Diana:** Yeah.

**Grace:** I appreciate that that something that we probably weren't going to see as much on a serialized TV show in the 1990s or the 1980s. I'm glad that that's more of the cultural vibe, being able to talk about how some things don't last forever when you felt like they were. The fact that they don't last forever is not the end of everything. It's not the end of the world, if a relationship doesn't work out for you. It can feel like it, but you're also capable of moving on. It's a signifier of some, God willing, some long-term maturation in media.

**Diana:** I would say the streaming era also though does represent that domesticity in a relationship is also totally okay. So, you can have Culber and Stamets just mild bickering and then giving each other a kiss and going.

**Jarrah:** Brushing their teeth.

**Diana:** Brushing their teeth.

**Grace:** Part of the fun of having multiple shows going at once is we've got a bunch of different relationships being modeled here.

**Diana:** Yeah, for sure. Absolutely.

**Jarrah:** Well, and let's talk about Captain Pike, who's our last protagonist we have to get through. He has domesticity. He makes pancakes for Captain Batel.

**Diana:** Lets her sleep in.

**Grace:** So domestic.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. Well, let's start with Vina. While he was not the protagonist of *Discovery*, when we see Vina in *Discovery*. I did want to note that, because that's still something that they allude to in *Strange New Worlds*. They keep alluding to the incident from *The Menagerie*. But yeah, basically in *Discovery*, we learned that he's got this ongoing telepathic connection with Vina from *The Cage/The Menagerie*. Any thoughts on that?

**Diana:** When I was covering that one for TV fanatic, I was able to pull side by side. They recreate a *Menagerie* pose of Pike and Vina-- I'll text you to you, Jarrah. But it's a side by side and it's striking. It's striking. It was a tie to old *Trek*, it was a tie this connection. And in one shot, they were able to pull up a pedigree of *Trek* and bringing her the character in was key to establishing Pike as Pike.

**Jarrah:** Yeah.

**Diana:** Yeah. Their story's tragic too. Like, "Oh, my God, the tragedy involved in this."

**Jarrah:** Yeah. Although I feel like going into it, we don't know-- Or, going into it, we know now Pike has had tragedy before that. But in the beginning of the cave, you just know he's tired of being a captain, but he doesn't have the same kind of trauma that she's been through. But yeah, it's a tragic story when you look across their entire lives.

**Diana:** Yup. We know what's coming for Pike.

**Jarrah:** Yeah.

**Diana:** Yeah, that this is the beginning and the ending of his relationships. I thought it was quite an elegant addition to Pike's storyline and his introduction in *Discovery*.

**Jarrah:** I also really appreciated the nostalgia of the episode and bringing back the Talosian's and all of that. I think that what I didn't love was that-- Hopefully, everyone had seen *The Menagerie* or then went and watched it, but I feel like Vina came across to me as just not as interesting as she is in the original.

**Diana:** Oh, she was a tool. Not in a pejorative sense that she was. She was a puppet.

**Jarrah:** Yes. Yeah, she's a device.

**Diana:** Exactly. Thank you. That's the word. Yeah.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. Exactly. So, I agree. I think they used it effectively to establish Anson Mount as Pike, but I felt like it maybe did the character of Vina a bit of a disservice. But from there, we see him in the premiere of *Strange New Worlds* making some pancakes for Captain Batel, who is his girlfriend, maybe friend with benefits, maybe at this point.

**Grace:** Yeah.

**Jarrah:** And the benefits are pancakes.

**Grace:** Pancake, pal.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Diana:** If you want to go bad taste, you could say something about how she likes her Gorn eggs.

**Jarrah:** I don't know what's going [Diana laughs] to happen in Season 2, but I'm real worried about that. Yeah, so I quite like Captain Batel. Like, Burnham and Book like, she's got her own thing, he's got his own thing. They're together when they want to be together. They do care about each other legitimately. This is a thing where Pike needs to consider, what does he want here? Is this going anywhere? Does he want to move this forward? But they still have their own identities and their own interests, which is always something I appreciate.

**Diana:** She outranked him. Like, her security clearance was higher than his. My question's always been, I feel like it's a plot hole. She goes across the nebula to meet someone and she's like, "That's above his security clearance." And then, she comes back and arrests Number One. [chuckles] I've been like, "Who the heck did she meet over there?" [laughs]

**Jarrah:** *Ad Astra per Aspera*, we did a whole episode on-- It is, I think, such a good episode in many ways. But one of the pieces I like is basically she's the reluctant antagonist having to charge and try Number One. But you learn about her values and her conflicts. She's someone who believes in her job, and Starfleet duty and believes in Starfleet. And then, when she is getting a sense that like, this actually isn't fair and people are wanting to make an example of Una more than actually do justice in the case. And she loses. She loses a promotion. She wants to try to have the best outcome while also doing her job to the letter of the Starfleet code.

**Diana:** Yeah.

**Jarrah:** I think I would just maybe like to see-- Well, I'd like to see her not die in the beginning of Season 3.

[laughter]

**Grace:** Yeah, that'd be nice.

**Jarrah:** Because at the end of Season 2, she's infected with Gorn eggs and asks that she be killed if she can't be saved. And it's real gross. There's also this moment where it seems like maybe she's going to be fridged where--

**Grace:** I'd really rather they not.

**Jarrah:** Yeah, because Gorn destroy her ship. It's like in the context of Pike realizing that he cares a lot about her, and then her ship gets destroyed kind of thing. So, fingers crossed, they're not going that direction. I know that obviously they're not going to be together in the end of his story. I don't even necessarily need them to be together forever. I just would like her to continue existing and having her own things.

**Grace:** Ias It's such a low bar *Star Trek*, please.

**Diana:** Again, she's good Starfleet. There's no reason a relationship with Pike needs to deep six that. So, yeah. He doesn't need more tragedy in his life. [laughs]

**Grace:** He's got enough tragic backstory.

**Diana:** And for story, if that's a word. [laughs]

**Grace:** For story. Yeah, we've just got enough tragedy going here, which I wish someone would have said about Michael Burnham at some point like, "I think we've done enough here." [Diana laughs]

**Jarrah:** So, the only other relationship we get to see for Pike is, or sexual slash romantic relationship is Ellora, who's the Magellan that Pike met when he was a lieutenant, and they meet 10 years later and sleep together until he realizes her planet's real messed up.

**Grace:** Does she hate it when that happens?

**Jarrah:** Yeah.

**Diana:** She's unapologetic about the way things are. Yeah, she's--

**Grace:** Red flags.

**Diana:** Yeah. Objectively, she's beautiful. If he saved her life at one point, there's that again trauma bonding. That episode killed me. Yeah, it was so emotionally wrought. No one comes out of it, and it's left open ended. They're not Federation, you can't impose anything, you can't do anything, you can't even support the rebels. Yeah, it made my brain and my heart hurt at the same time.

**Jarrah:** Yeah, it's great-- The Ursula K. Le Guin inspired episode about the planet with the first servant. That's the child that has to suffer for the planet to thrive. And yeah. But yeah, to me, this encounter feels the most like original series relationship of the other ones. Maybe of any of the ones we've talked about in the streaming era. So, maybe that is a good transition to the last part of the discussion, which is basically what are some of themes we can see. We talked about that relationships can end without it being either a massive tragedy, or the person turns out to be evil or sometimes just--

**Grace:** Relationships can just end. That's part of life.

**Jarrah:** Any other broad differences or similarities between how protagonist relationships are portrayed versus broadcast era?

**Grace:** A lot less of the episodic, we need a new love interest every week kind of thing, which definitely appreciated as more often than not that setup meant new hot babe every [chuckles] week rather than getting to get to know a character and see them fully fleshed out.

**Jarrah:** Mm-hmm.

**Diana:** I would say power dynamics in streaming era are more varied. It's not always--

**Jarrah:** Yeah.

**Diana:** Yeah, it's not always macho dominant male character. I wouldn't say simpering, but the gentler, like the tough and the gentle. You got a lot of pairings that are very equal in status, or even reversed in the status that you've got actual conversations, that actual conversations that-- [chuckles]

**Jarrah:** Yes.

**Grace:** We get to see the relationship and not just the romance. Yeah.

**Diana:** And they're in a working relationship sometimes. So, seeing them working as a pair, like courier work, before romance even enters the equation. That's just nice. Or, the help mates versus romantic mates, like people who just are there to support them, comfort them, provide solace. There's so much more nuance. Oh, and swearing. We get more swearing.

**Jarrah:** Oh, yeah.

**Diana:** We get more swearing in the--

**Grace:** More swearing. More swearing.

**Diana:** More swearing in the streaming era.

**Jarrah:** They're not all straight.

**Diana:** Yes, absolutely.

**Grace:** Awesome. Love that.

**Jarrah:** Yup.

**Grace:** Behind that 110%.

**Jarrah:** One thing that is observed a lot in the pre-streaming era, is that Miles and Keiko are really the only married couple that's prominent that you get.

**Grace:** They have a low key hate each other.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. We don't have a ton of like marriage marriage with the exception of Culber and Stamets, and then I guess Burnham and Book. So, that still is a thing where-- Well, no. So, I think that to some extent it's become easier to work in, like we'll just say long-term committed partnerships. It doesn't matter, if you had a legal ceremony or whatever, because it doesn't have to be theme of every episode. It's not like, "Oh, now we're watching Culber and Stamets episode. And then we're not going to explore this again for the entire rest of the season." [Grace laughs]

**Diana:** We just wanted to remind you that there's a marriage here.

**Grace:** And done.

**Jarrah:** Well, and the other thing that I think we noticed, is that almost all of them have other stuff going on in their lives, which is very cool.

**Grace:** Which is great. It's so great to have a love interest be introduced, and their entire purpose beyond their role on the show is that they are a fully fleshed out. Again, fully fleshed out character who's got their own shit going on.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. They're not just there to suck Troi's life force, [Grace laughs] or Crusher's life force [chuckles] or what else do people do. They just show up for, I guess, manipulate Kirk--

**Grace:** Die. Die.

**Jarrah:** Die. It turn out to be a secret double agent, triple agent.

**Grace:** Etc., etc.

**Jarrah:** So, yeah, to me, it's nice. It feels like we were talking about immature relationships, and I feel like *Star Trek* has grown into a more mature relationship with its relationships.

**Grace:** It's true. It really has.

**Diana:** Yeah. The diversity and nuance layers like a parfait. There's just more to be seen here. They're meatier relationships. They're relationships that you think about after the show's over. There's pieces of them that you will sparkle where I'd be like, "Oh, that's a really good relation." Like, "That's a really nice piece of a relationship." Kirk never had a single one of those. I honestly don't think so.

**Grace:** Except with Spock.

**Diana:** Yes. Yes. Okay. Yeah. Yeah. Fair. Fair. Absolutely fair. Even Pike and Batel singing their duet in the musical episode was-- I'm not going to say that's a sparkly moment, but it's like there's a pairing. When they're together, it works. And then, sometimes like we've said, it doesn't. It stops working, or whatever brought them together isn't enough. It occurred to me also before Jett Reno. Did we have anyone who had lost their life partner?

**Grace:** Crusher.

**Jarrah:** Sisko.

**Diana:** Okay. Fair. Okay. Yeah. Jett's just a neat-- When she references her wife, it's with tenderness, but also with understanding and acceptance. So, I like seeing someone who could move on and didn't necessarily need a new relationship, but had enough in that one to live.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. It wasn't their whole story. It's not necessarily Sisko's whole story, but it's a really key theme of his first couple seasons, for sure. It's like, for Jake and Wesley, the loss of their parents really shapes who they are. And for Jett, it's a fact. There was love and pain there, but it's not the only thing.

**Diana:** All right. Well, this has been a really nice conversation, folks.

**Grace:** Yeah.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. Thanks so much for joining us. Is there any other final thoughts that either of you have before we wrap up?

**Grace:** [chuckles] Nope. No more thoughts.

**Diana:** Blank slate.

**Jarrah:** What *Star Trek* needs now. It's love, sweet love. But that's all about all the time we have today. Diana, where can people find you elsewhere on the internet?

**Diana:** I am @geekgirlauthority doing recaps and reviews. As I said, I do recommend people check out our Crush of the week. They are fascinating reads. I am still contributing to the *Televisen*. Oh, and I do have a couple of-- I guessed it on a couple of podcasts last year, one with *Trek Marry Kill*. And that was the one we discussed *Emergence* on. And I did *Deep Space Love*, and we discussed the relationship between Riker and Minuet. That was a fun one. That was super fun.

**Jarrah:** Grace, is there anything you would like to plug?

**Grace:** You can find me across the internet and laugh at my jokes or not. I'm not your dad under the name @bonecrusherjenk. I'm all over the place.

**Jarrah:** You can find me places @jarrahpenguin. That J-A-R-R-A-H Penguin. And I'm at *trekkiefeminist.com*. And to learn more about our show or to contact us, visit *womenatwarp.com*, email us at [crew@womenatwarp.com](mailto:crew@womenatwarp.com) or find us on Facebook or Instagram, @womenatwarp. Thanks so much for listening.

[Women at Warp theme]

**Jarrah:** Sorry, just one second. [chuckles] The cat is making crazy noise. One second. What are you doing?

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