

## Women at Warp Episode 258: Series Finale Smackdown

[Women at Warp theme]

**Sue:** Hi. And welcome to Women at Warp: A *Star Trek* podcast. Join us on our 10-year mission to explore intersectional diversity in infinite combinations. My name is Sue, and thanks for tuning in. Jarrah and Andi are here today.

**Andi:** Woo-hoo.

**Jarrah:** Yes.

**Sue:** And so is Claire.

**Claire:** Yay.

**Andi:** Yay.

**Sue:** So, today, we are going to use a very unscientific method to not at all definitively prove *Star Trek's* best series finale. But first, we have our housekeeping to do. For nearly all of our 10-year run, our show has been made possible by our patrons. So, we want to say thank you to those of you who have joined us over on Patreon. Our Patreon will be active through the end of the year. So, if you would like to help us, support us with close down costs or transcription backlogs, you can still head over there and do that. That would be lovely.

As a reminder, everyone at our Warp 5 tier or higher for any month through the end of the year will receive our mission patch. So, that reward will still be going through the end of the year. And you can find out more at [patreon.com/womenatwarp](https://patreon.com/womenatwarp).

If you are looking for some podcast merch, the TeePublic store will also be up to the end of the year. We have our mission patch design is available on TeePublic, as well as long as some other great things. You can find out more about that at [teepublic.com/stores/womenatwarp](https://teepublic.com/stores/womenatwarp).

Claire has been here a few times before. But in case someone is picking up our podcast for the first time, why don't you introduce yourself.

**Andi:** On the penultimate episode. [Sue laughs]

**Jarrah:** Yes. Hey, you never know.

**Claire:** Yeah. I've been on I think three episodes. And oddly enough, two of them were about one of the series finales that we are going to be talking about today.

**Andi:** That's exactly why we invited you here. [Sue laughs] It was a thematic choice that we made consciously.

**Claire:** The only person in the world who wants to talk about *Turnabout Intruder* is me.

**Andi:** You, and me and Jarrah, because we had a rocking good time on that one.

**Claire:** [laughs] Yes. I've been on the show a few times. My name is Claire and I like *Star Trek*.

**Jarrah:** Great.

**Andi:** It sounds like you're at a support group.

[laughter]

My name's Claire, and I like *Star Trek*.

**Sue:** All right. So, I guess let's get into it. So, what we're going to do today. We're going to take all of *Star Trek*'s series finales, all 10 of them, and put them into a single elimination bracket competition and have them face off against each other to determine what the four of us think is the best series finale.

**Andi:** Oh, no. It's very serious, Sue. This will go down in *Star Trek* history as the definitive ranking of *Star Trek* finales. So, everybody should write us extremely angry emails. Whenever we get something wrong or say something you don't like, definitely send us emails and we'll read them very carefully.

**Claire:** Please, everyone, go develop a gambling habit with FanDuel's. This is on there.

**Jarrah:** Oh, man.

[laughter]

**Jarrah:** What are you going to do if you don't like what we say today? We cancel our show?

[laughter]

**Sue:** Indeed. Silly, fun, Unscientific. I don't know. Send the email if you want. I'm tired.

[laughter]

**Sue:** Oh. So, what I did, I looked up a 10-team elimination bracket. It's a little bit weird, because there's not a multiple of four. [laughs] So, there are some weird preliminaries going on. But then, I asked friend of the show and *Star Trek* author, Keith DeCandido, to give me his ranking of the series finales, so that it would be his bias seating the bracket [Andi laughs] and not mine. So, thanks, Keith.

**Andi:** You got to email Keith first.

[laughter]

**Sue:** That's right. It's all his fault that certain episodes are facing off against each other.

**Jarrah:** Interesting.

**Sue:** Yeah, his rankings, not my rankings. I guess we'll also post the starting bracket in the show notes, in case. I don't know, you want to do this on your own or follow along or whatever, it'll be there. [Jarrah laughs]

**Andi:** Do what you want. We're not your boss.

**Jarrah:** We're very feisty today-

[laughter]

**Jarrah:** -but not at you as much as it might sound like that. We're all prepared to go to bat for some gray finales, and against some very not good finales.

[laughter]

**Sue:** All right. So, are you ready for our first matchup?

**Andi:** Hell yeah. Bring it.

**Jarrah:** We're so ready.

**Sue:** All right. We've got the 7 Seed, The Counter-Clock Incident from *TAS* versus the 10 Seed *Enterprise*. These are the voyages.

**Andi:** I know which one wins.

[laughter]

**Jarrah:** This is very easy.

**Claire:** It is bizarre to be voting for an episode I haven't even seen.

[laughter]

**Andi:** I'm telling you, Claire, you're a good example of even if you don't know, you know-

**Claire:** Yeah.

**Andi:** -that *The Animated Series* wins this one hand down. But here's the thing is, even though it definitely wins because the *Enterprise* finale sucks so hard, but it's also a good episode, and I like it. It definitely wins. Everyone knows I love *The Animated Series*. I really enjoyed it. Someone reached out to me at Blue Sky was like, "I just want to thank you for always sticking up for *The Animated Series*." And I was like, "I love *The Animated Series*. It rules."

This is a good episode and a good finale, and it's got good themes about growing older and letting go of things and moving on to the next thing. So, it's a perfect cap for a show. So, I genuinely think *The Animated Series* rules.

**Claire:** I haven't even seen it, but I know that there are going to be really beautiful background and animation backgrounds. I'm serious. *The Animated Series* had some really gorgeous art. Haven't watched the show, but I've seen enough of it to be in awe of some of the background art that they were able to put together, *These Are the Voyages* though. Wouldn't even be a good episode if it wasn't a finale? It's insulting as a finale and it's not a very good episode in general.

**Sue:** So, our January patron watch along was *These Are the Voyages*. Neither Andi nor Jarrah had seen it at that point. It was quite the experience for me as certain things were revealed. [chuckles]

**Andi:** I just kept getting madder. The thing is, is this is literally the only episode of *Enterprise* I have watched. Even I was like, "These characters deserved better." [Sue laughs] I don't know them, and I have no emotional connection to them and I still feel like they deserved better. The whole time I was sitting there and I was like, "The fans of the show were

apparently really mad about this and they are right to be mad.” They basically hijacked their show for some really awkwardly placed *TNG* fan service.

**Claire:** It's literally at a cut an off screen deleted scene from an episode of *Next Generation* that isn't even a particularly amazing episode of *Next Generation*.

**Sue:** No, it's a not memorable episode of *The Next Generation*, in my opinion, of course.

**Claire:** Yeah, it's fine. There's nothing wrong with it, but it's not an episode where you're like, “You know what I want? An hour more of that.”

**Jarrah:** Yeah. And the whole connection to *The Pegasus* is really weird after a show that tried to define itself by not referencing other *Star Trek*. I mean, that was the original intent. Of course, they did reference other *Star Trek* in some ways delightfully. But it's so weird to then throw back to a *TNG* episode that then you have to explain to the audience, because also people might not be able to just recall it.

**Claire:** It's not something that's been discussed organically on *Enterprise* before, because there's 150 years or 200 years between those two series. So, it's not like, “Oh, yeah, that thing Archer was talking about three episodes ago.” It's bizarre. The dough that T'Pol is kneading, I feel like that pizza dough or pasta dough or whatever dough it is, is going to create the toughest pasta or bread or whatever. They just knead it for what seems like hours.

**Sue:** Hollywood would not approve.

**Claire:** No, it's very distract. Once I started noticing it, I was just like, “Oh, my God, I think you're done. You don't have to keep kneading that.”

**Andi:** That's actually probably my least favorite scene, because it's the forced intimacy is so creepy and weird.

**Claire:** Yeah. T'Pol of all characters to try and do that with.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. Yeah, Riker is supposed to be making a command decision, but he's going very basically traumatizing hologram. [laughs]

**Claire:** Yeah. And it's like, he's got to make this command decision, so he's going to go fart around. He's farting around on the holodeck for [laughs] an afternoon instead of fucking up and making this decision.

**Jarrah:** Well, and he keeps getting bored and fast forwarding.

[laughter]

**Jarrah:** It's like, yeah, us too, Riker.

**Sue:** I don't like this scene or these characters. What's next?

[laughter]

**Claire:** Yeah. You're not giving me the advice I want to hear. Bring in Malcolm or whatever.

**Sue:** No, not Malcolm.

**Andi:** Again, I do not have a particular emotional connection to these characters. But if I did, the two that I do have more of a sense of is Trip and T'Pol. Trip going out like that was upsetting. The way the characters don't even really seem to care that much is even more upsetting where it's like, they cut to T'Pol being sad and they give her a scene to be sad and Archer a scene to be sad. But then they literally go and like--

Hoshi and Mayweather and Malcolm are all, I don't know what they were as some sort of ceremony or whatever, a speech. They don't seem to give a shit at all. Like, an entire member of their crew died and they don't-- Tasha Yar at least got that horrible Windows 95 background, like hologram funeral thing. And that funeral sucked and it still was better than this.

**Claire:** Well, and Trip is one of the three main characters of the show too. He's one of the members of the Triad. So, he's not just a bridge crew guy. He's one of the main bridge crew guys.

**Jarrah:** Even the end of Season 1 of *Discovery* when Stamets has Culber's medal at the ceremony, at least he's there and people remember. But I also feel like the fact that we don't see the actual founding of The Federation, they just cut forward and then say, "Hey, so that happened." We'll talk about *Endgame*, which also has issues. But it would be like if *Voyager* didn't go home at the end and they just cut to like, "Oh--" They showed Janeway back on her farm and they're like, "Oh, yeah, so we did eventually get home."  
[laughter]

**Claire:** It's very like Trip died on the way to his home planet.

[laughter]

**Claire:** Or, the Federation was founded on the way to the home planet or whatever.

**Andi:** It's so true. If I was that bad after a single episode of *Enterprise*, I just can't imagine, like, if you were actually invested in this show, how mad I would have been.

**Claire:** I watched this in my dorm room in college, and I remember being really upset and trying to explain to my roommate who didn't know anything about *Star Trek*, but very patiently let me. I was like, "I got to watch this show. Once a week, you got to let me just watch this show. [laughs] I'm sorry, I have to watch *Enterprise*." I owe it to Gene Roddenberry.

[laughter]

**Claire:** She was like, "Okay, whatever. I'm going to go in the other room and do my homework." But yeah. I was like, "Megan, you don't understand how bad this was."

[laughter]

**Claire:** She was like, "You're right, I don't."

[laughter]

**Andi:** Yeah. It's a rough one. It's a rough one. But you know what's not a rough one? *The Counter-Clock Incident*.

**Jarrah:** It's really good. I very much agree with you. I think it's up there may be in-- I would say probably top two, my maybe second favorite episode of *TAS*, or widely regarded as one of the best episodes of *TAS*, along with *Yesteryear*.

**Andi:** I definitely would put it up there with *Yesteryear*, because a lot of the other *TAS* episodes that I really, really love. I love them because they're campy and they're fun. But this one actually has a good message and really interesting shenanigans.

**Sue:** So, it sounds like we have unanimous agreement here that *The Counter-Clock Incident* takes the win.

**Claire:** Yes.

**Andi:** Yes.

**Sue:** All right. All right, ready for the next one?

**Andi:** Yeah. Hit us.

**Sue:** This is eight versus nine, *Voyagers Endgame* versus *Turnabout Intruder*.

**Jarrah:** Oh, this is hard, actually.

[laughter]

**Jarrah:** No, it's not that hard. I was expecting to be able to rule out both of these in the first round.

**Sue:** That's why you seed your bracket.

**Jarrah:** Yes.

**Andi:** So, *Turnabout Intruder* probably loses this. I will love to hear from you all. But I will say that thanks to Claire, I rewatched *Turnabout Intruder*, and we did a whole episode on *Turnabout Intruder* and I highly recommend you go listen to that, because that was one of my favorite episodes I think we ever did. There is actually a lot of really interesting stuff about *Turnabout Intruder*. I have a fondness for it now, but it's not good.

**Claire:** No. And it's not a finale. It's not a series finale at all.

**Andi:** Yeah. It's a random episode that aired last.

**Claire:** And as much as I think there's tons of really interesting stuff in that episode, the last line of dialogue stinks and it is a terrible legacy to end the original series on.

**Andi:** Right.

**Claire:** And all of *Star Trek* up until the 1970s when buzz was happening again and things got restarted, what a stinker of a legacy.

[laughter]

**Claire:** So, I cannot vote for *Turnabout Intruder*, no matter how much I may think it is unintentionally an interesting episode.

**Andi:** Yeah, got to agree there. As much as I enjoy Captain Kirk, Space Queen, and truly do love some of the relationship dynamics that play out here, like, Kirk and Spock and McCoy are Kirk, Spock and McCoying like some of the best trio dynamics.

**Sue:** And there are some great screenshots.

**Andi:** Definitely. I genuinely love Shatner's performance. I genuinely think it's good. It's campy in some ways, but it also is emotional and I enjoy it.

**Sue:** I want to hear Jarrah talk about *Endgame*. [Andi laughs]

**Jarrah:** Okay. Because I didn't watch *Enterprise* live, I didn't have the rage upon watching the finale, but I would say probably a less extreme version of that for *Endgame*, because I don't think *Endgame's* as bad as *These Are the Voyages* or as much of a just slap in the face to *Voyager*. But it has a few things that really bug me.

The first one is just the idea that basically Janeway risks a future where everything's pretty good except for a couple of her friends have tragic things happen to them to try to reset things, so that all of her friends are happy. Who knows? That could have caused a lot of suffering to other people. But it also just it doesn't feel *Star Treky*. It feels too vixy, I guess.

[laughter]

**Andi:** Doesn't feel like the lady who Stone Cold was like, "Nope."

**Claire:** You're creepy. We want the other two back. [chuckles]

**Jarrah:** Yup. She's that committed to her friends that she wants her friends the way she wants them. And without that, she is fully willing to commit questionable ethical choices.

**Sue:** Well, I guess that's character consistency from Season 2 to Season 7. [laughs]

**Jarrah:** Yeah. But in between, I don't think it is. I think that, I don't know, it just leaves a bad taste in my mouth. I also just don't find the episode itself that well done. We've talked before about how I think in general the Borg in *Voyager* got less scary, but they were still the big bad. And so, "Oh, let's bring back the Borg again."

I also really dislike, even though this happened before the finale, the whole compulsory heterosexuality with Seven and Chakotay and then that being the reason that he was never happy again or whatever, because Seven died and it was like, "Oh, come off it." So, yeah, that's where I'm at.

**Claire:** I think the dynamic between Janeway and the Borg Queen is really hampered in this episode by them bringing back Alice Krige instead of Susanna Thompson. I totally get why they would want to have Alice Krige there, first contact and she's the big movie star and all that stuff. But Susanna Thompson is Janeway's queen. That's the actor and the performance that Janeway has had all this screen time with. It just feels like you're supposed to ignore all that and just mentally swap out Alice Krige for Susanna Thompson. And it also is like, I always thought it was cool how there can be multiple queens and that they exist outside of, what is that, human flesh is so limiting or whatever those quotes are.

Just being one person is one individual-- They have a mini hive of queens or something. I don't know the details on that, but to me, it just seems like they ignored that by bringing back this other lady that we've seen before. I don't know, I really wish that they had kept Susanna

Thompson. I think it wouldn't have fixed any of the plotting issues at all, but I think it would have made those showdowns more satisfying as a viewer.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. It's got some fundamental flaws, but it is a finale. They get home twice, technically.

[laughter]

**Jarrah:** So, I think just for the basis of it felt like an ending that there were some questionable choices and missed opportunities, but it was a finale. And that said, I still would probably just rather watch *Turnabout Intruder* for entertainment.

**Claire:** Yeah, I can see that.

**Jarrah:** But I'm not necessarily voting for it for a better finale.

**Andi:** I am going to vote for *Voyager*, just because I really feel like Claire's point about the *Legacy* as a finale for *TOS* is just, like, I can't get over that. That being the last episode is upsetting.

**Claire:** Yeah. It's not written as a finale in any capacity. It's just the last episode that aired.

**Jarrah:** Yeah, I agree. I think it's not even just an issue of hindsight with *Turnabout Intruder*. I think you would have known at the time it was not the best ending.

**Claire:** Like, even if you have a problem with it, you'd still be like, "That's it?" [laughs]

**Sue:** Okay. Next round. We have our number four seed, *Deep Space Nine's What You Leave Behind* versus our number five seed, *Prodigy's, Ouroboros*.

**Jarrah:** This is actually really hard, I think.

**Sue:** I really, really, really, really love *Ouroboros*, but I also realize that it was made for me in multiple ways [laughs] in that that the second half of the second season is very much, if not based on draws inspiration from the *Star Trek* lit-verse. And the Crusher comes back-

[laughter]

**Sue:** -check and check, they got me.

**Andi:** Yeah.

**Claire:** Hey, fan service, if it is executed correctly, is some of the most satisfying stuff you can get.

**Jarrah:** I will say that, yeah, I love both of these. I have a diary entry from high school about how much I cried watching what you leave behind.

**Claire:** Oh.

**Jarrah:** And so, it's hard for me to separate it from the nostalgia. If I try to take a bit of a step back, there's also some pieces I don't love about Ezri and Bashir and things like that. I don't know if I would knock the finale for that. I love that just iconic last scene of Kira and Jake looking at the wormhole.



But you still have all of the stuff with like the horrible CGI Pah-wraith cave fight and then the whole thing where Sisko basically like “I get that.” It's great that Avery Brooks talked them out of killing him off, but he still is stepping away from being a husband and father, which he wasn't happy about, and negotiated this compromise where he says, “Maybe I'll be back tomorrow, but I have to go live with the prophets now.”

**Sue:** But also, that the episode opens with him promising Cassidy that he's not going to leave, and then he leaves.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. So, for that reason, I'm inclined to knock it down a little bit, even though it got me good when I first watched it. [Sue laughs] Yeah, *Ouroboros* is great. I think the tying it into the Picard timeline, because it also ties into *Children of Mars* and stuff was validating the show as canon in a cool way. Also, yeah, tons of references. The Crusher stuff was great, and Gwyn's journey to be a different leader for her people and all of that, I thought it was really good. So, I just talked myself into voting for *Ouroboros*.

**Andi:** I think that both *Prodigy* and *Lower Decks* have been the most successful in bringing in the other series, and referencing *Star Trek* itself and referencing the canon, because as you could see in the *Enterprise* finale, that can go very poorly. I feel both *Prodigy* and *Lower Decks* have a good track record of striking the right tone with their cameos and their call ins from other series, where they don't let it overpower it but it just adds a nice continuity of this is a shared universe.

**Claire:** But it doesn't make the universe feel small. They do find that, because sometimes Season 3, I think of *Discovery*, the one with where Spock and Pike and everybody start showing up. To me, the universe starts to feel really small. [chuckles] But you're right that *Lower Decks*, their cameos feel like it expands the canvas instead of shrinking it.

**Sue:** I think both of the shows benefit from where they are in the timeline. Because you've just had three series that take place in approximately the same timeframe, and both of those shows take place basically right after that. So, you have three series to draw from and not just one or not just the closest one.

**Claire:** I think it was Jarrah, you were talking about how it doesn't work quite as well for you, I guess, now that Sisko leaves. And I totally agree. I feel like that about Odo.

**Jarrah:** Oh, yeah.

**Claire:** Yeah. This is not specifically this episode or *DS9*. This is a general trophy thing that I just wish we didn't see as much. But I think it would be nice for the outsider who learns that he's not really an outsider after all, for him to get to stick around and stay with his found family that he's become a member of. It's very frequent that they either sacrifice themselves or, “Thanks for everything. Bye. I have to go back to my home planet,” or whatever. I don't know. I think it would be cool if they could stick around. [chuckles]

**Sue:** Not only does he have to go back, he has to go back to heal them.

**Claire:** Yeah. He's going back to these people that-- I know it erases to me, it erases a lot of the character development, because of course, originally, this was his single most important goal in life, was to find his people. And then, he found them and realized, this is so corny to say this, but his people were the people that were around him all along. [chuckles] His people were on the station with him. He still ends up going to this great length where he doesn't know anybody. He's a stranger. He doesn't know their cult.

**Andi:** To me, it's trying to call back to the end of *Mirror, Mirror*, where the idea is maybe Spock is going to start to influence the Terran Empire, because it's not just that he's trying to heal them from the plague, but he's like, "I need to make them not fascist."

**Claire:** Which is admirable.

**Andi:** Yeah. But also, I agree with you that the idea that he is just gone now. Yeah.

**Claire:** Yeah. And that he can't live a life, he has to go do a job, is he has to go do this job to smack his people around and prevent them from being fascists, which is, again, a good thing to do. But I don't know, like, can't he just chill out a little bit, hang out, live a life that's not working?

**Andi:** Yeah.

**Sue:** All right.

**Andi:** We'll just say that this is only round two or round three, and the best is yet to come.

[laughter]

**Sue:** Well, *Prodigy* advances. I guess it is technically our first upset since it was the number five seed. So, that's fun. But it's time to move on to round four, two streaming era shows up against each other. We've got the number three, Discovery's, *Life Itself* versus number six, *Picard*, *The Last Generation*.

**Jarrah:** This is a hard one.

**Claire:** Yeah.

**Andi:** Yeah.

**Claire:** Kind of how I feel. [laughs]

**Jarrah:** For me, it's hard because I have issues with both.

**Claire:** Yeah, same.

**Jarrah:** I think that probably a lot of people might just be like, "Oh, well, it's *Picard*, because it's the conclusion to the *TNG* reunion." But so much that I did not like about that storyline, and then the end all Jack 'Nepo Baby' and Q showing up and everything and I'm just like, "Oh. No."

**Andi:** It's actually the fact that it's the end of the *TNG* storyline that makes me question if it was actually good or if it was just that I was enjoying watching it at the time, because I felt like I was 10 years old again.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. Captain Seven is a significant pro.

**Claire:** I went to one of theatrical showings for it in D.C. So, I got to watch this episode on the big screen, and it was gorgeous. All the *Enterprise* D shots on the big screen in a packed theater with a bunch of other Trekkies, top experience. So, I'm biased in the sense that the act of watching that episode was much more fun for me than the *Discovery* finale. But I don't think that really means it was better. I think I just enjoyed watching it more in the moment.

**Sue:** That's the difficulty I have in trying to really analyze *Picard* Season 3, because I recognize that it was almost purely fan service. But again, I was the fan being serviced.

[laughter]

**Sue:** But I can recognize that. [laughs]

**Andi:** Yeah, I feel like fan service gets a bad rap. But in some ways, it's really just going with the parts of your show that people love reinforcing pieces of the show and the characters and etc., that your audience loves. I don't think that's necessarily a bad thing.

I do think sometimes it can mean that you try and reread things that should be left alone. And if you don't execute it, then people get more angry than they would if you were doing something new. An example for me is the I hate *Into Darkness* so much for a variety of reasons. I think it's just terrible. But the thing that made me so mad was the end when they tried to recreate *Wrath of Khan*, but flip it. That made me mad.

I feel that was an instance of them trying to do fan service to an iconic moment. And to me, they didn't execute it correctly, so it just felt cheap. So, it's really about execution. But I don't have a problem with fan service on its own, you know?

**Claire:** I don't have a problem with it either, but I think *Picard* Season 3 leaned on it in a way that felt a little bit mean spirited once you took yourself away from the joy of like-- In the moment of watching the episode for the first time, you're like, "Hell yeah, it's this. Hell yeah, it's that." But then, you step back and especially given the lukewarm reception that *Picard* Seasons 1 and 2 got, and I think rightfully so. The *Picard* Season 3 fan service just felt like I don't know, there was something weirdly antagonistic about it or aggressive about it that was just like-- [crosstalk]

**Andi:** "Are you happy now? Are you happy now?" [chuckles]

**Claire:** Yeah. And also just like, "You guys wasted two seasons doing shit and we're going to go in and give people what they want." And it's like, "Hey, yes. *Picard* Seasons 1 or 2 are uneven," but they were trying something. Maybe they didn't succeed all the time, but it's cool that they tried something and *Picard* Season 3 was just like, "Step aside. We're setting up our playmates action figures and we're going to reenact our favorite things about *Star Trek The Next Generation*. Don't you love that?"

**Sue:** Okay, but I'm going to buy those action figures.

**Claire:** Oh, yeah. For sure. [Sue laughs] Oh, yeah, totally. No, no, no. I totally get it. And it's like, "Yeah, can I play too?" Like, "Yes."

**Sue:** Well, it also did come down to-- I don't remember if it was actually in the finale or in one of the lead ups, but the theme really became young vs old.

**Claire:** Yes. It got really awkward. Young vs old in a way that was like young people were being brainwashed by social media essentially. I don't know if they meant for it to be like that, but it became a very weird woke versus old, listen to your boomer elders or whatever. Again, I don't know if they meant that, but it was a little awkward. Also, the reveal of why he is the way he is, is essentially like-- So, Picard has Borg--

**Sue:** Oh, yeah. How the Irumodic Syndrome is actually a Borg modification and not his Irumodic Syndrome.

**Claire:** And it's also like, if Borgness is hereditary, then-- Once you start thinking about it, it gets real awkward real fast.

**Jarrah:** Well, plus the whole thing about the collective use this to take over everyone under a certain age in the fleet. So, they basically just cleansed all the seniors. [chuckles] I don't know, it's dark. But question I have about *Discovery* finale, because this was one where they had to significantly reshoot it to make it the finale. Does it feel like a finale, or does it feel like the season ender that they tacked stuff onto?

**Claire:** I think if they didn't do that epilogue, it would have actually been a really nice series finale. They literally walk into the sunset and say, "Hey, what's next? It feels very hopeful and optimistic."

**Sue:** I feel like *Discovery* ended every season as if it were a series finale.

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

**Sue:** For me, that ending does feel tacked on. However, it gives us a happy ending for Michael Burnham for book. We see them far into the future, and she's an admiral and they have a kid.

**Jarrah:** Not a happy ending for Zora.

**Claire:** No. And also, I felt like that scene, the way they shot that on the bridge of *Discovery* where Admiral Burnham is taking Zora, taking *Discovery* out to just hang out in space for a while when she has that flashback to the goodbye scenes. Something about the way it was, I don't know if it was the way it was shot or just written or edited or whatever, I was like, "Is Burnham also being put out to pasture?" It almost felt like she was having some like, does she have dementia? Yeah, it didn't feel like a flashback in a normal sense. I don't know, it just felt she was also ending in a way.

I'm not saying I think she was going to die, but I don't know, the tone didn't hit for me. It felt odd. I would have really liked it if they had just not included the epilogue, and just left it with her and her book walking away from Saru's wedding, I would have been like, "All right, I like it. Good ending."

**Jarrah:** We'll say that. I appreciate that I would say by contrast to *Picard* Season 3, *Discovery* tried a lot of things. We've talked a lot about-- They didn't all necessarily land, but I do think that it ended in the same vision vein that it had been going for better or for worse. I also think that the various kinds of references to Daniels and things like that were fun.

**Sue:** So, one of the issues I had with *Discovery* throughout its run, is that the problem every season was universe level. The stakes were always so, so high. So, when you get to a series finale, like, how are you going top yourself?

**Claire:** Well, you meet God. I mean, [Sue laughs] you meet God. Like, you hang out with God and say, "No, thanks." [laughs]

**Sue:** *Next Gen*, I think an episode or two before all good things was emergence. It's the holodeck episode where the *Enterprise* creates life. Not that's a light topic, but they certainly treated it that way [laughs] and just-- *Disco* was so heavy each time. That's why I say that each season finale felt like a series finale. But I did like that this last season was inspired by *The Next Gen* episode, by the chase, and they were on this mission. I liked that they were putting the scavenger hunt pieces together.

**Jarrah:** I also liked that the progenitor was a person of color, because that was something that had been pointed out in, past theory that when *Star Trek* does these advanced races or ancestral races like the whatever Chakotay's God people were in that horrible episode that they turn out to be white. But yeah, so, *Star Trek* has keep showing and Q, we've talked about why are there not black Q? And so, that was nice.

**Claire:** Yeah. Yeah, that's a really good point. This is a hard one, because I came into this thinking, I was going to choose *Picard* just for the fact that the experience of watching it was more fun.

**Andi:** I think that's a valid reason.

**Claire:** I do too. But I also feel like all the criticisms that we just discussed about it are also very valid.

**Jarrah:** I think I'm going to end up picking *Picard*, because it's more fun and also because I am resting assured that it's not winning this whole series [Sue laughs] of brackets.

**Claire:** Good point.

**Sue:** I'm starting to, I don't know, pick things apart a little bit where I'm thinking, is it the best or the better episode in a vacuum, or is it the better episode for the show it was a finale for? Like, is it a good representation of the rest of the series?

**Claire:** Because *Discovery*, I think, wins on being a-- [crosstalk]

**Sue:** Absolutely.

**Claire:** Yeah.

**Jarrah:** I don't think, honestly, I would want to watch either one in a vacuum.

[laughter]

**Jarrah:** Not because I think they're terrible episodes, but they don't stand well out of context.

**Sue:** Correct. Because they're both written as serialized stories.

**Jarrah:** So, I guess, it is a valid point to say, "How does this end the rest of the series if they're not presenting it as a standalone episode?"

**Claire:** *Discovery* ends its series the best, but you could also say the *Last Generation* ends fans anticipation for *Star Trek: Picard* as a concept.

**Sue:** I think that ended way before then. [laughs]

**Claire:** Well, no, but when it was announced there was going to be *Star Trek: Picard*, I think everybody was like, "Hell, yeah. More *TNG*." That's not what it was for the first two seasons. And that finally became that in Season 3. The *Last Generation* is the most *TNG* Season 8 of all the episodes in that season, because you get the *Enterprise D* back, and the whole crew is together and they have one last adventure.

**Sue:** And the shot of the poker game.

**Claire:** Yeah. There's some good stuff. I'm going to go with *Picard*.

**Jarrah:** Yeah.

**Claire:** Yeah.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. It's not a mark of anything, except for it was more fun.

**Claire:** Mm-hmm. Yeah.

**Sue:** Ooh. I see. I feel like I was leaning *Discovery*, because I'm trying to counteract my own. [laughs]

**Andi:** Girl, remember what we said at the top. This is for fun.

**Sue:** it is. All right.

**Andi:** Ellie's going to come out of the woods and track you down. [chuckles]

**Sue:** I don't know. People get mad about wild things. So, *Picard*. We're going *Picard*?

**Jarrah:** Yeah. We all acknowledge that it's a really tough one to make a choice, but we have to make a choice or this episode will be three hours long.

[laughter]

**Jarrah:** Yeah.

**Sue:** All right, that's another upset then. All right, so we have gotten to round five. Our number two seed, *Lower Decks*, *The New Next Generation* versus *TAS*, *The Counter-Clock Incident*.

**Andi:** Oh, no.

[laughter]

**Andi:** I am sad by this.

**Sue:** Animation versus animation.

**Andi:** Oh, this one is going to hurt for me. Okay. So, as I said before, I really do think *The Counter-Clock Incident* is a really, really good episode, and I love it. It would win against a lot of these other episodes, I feel like. But the *Lower Decks* series finale, I think, is wonderful.

We've been talking about so many different ways to do the criteria of evaluating it. This I feel hits all of the right criteria where it's like, "Is it a good example of the rest of the show?" Yes. "Does it end on a hopeful note for the future?" Yes. "Does it feel like *Star Trek* ethos?" Yes. You know what I mean?

It gives you a satisfying ending while still reminding us that these characters are going to continue to move on with their lives and grow in the way that we know they can. It's also just a really fun and funny episode. Oh, gosh, my heart.

**Claire:** I don't know if this was intentional when they were writing it, but it explicitly does not do the *These are the Voyages* in the sense that *Lower Decks* was a show that had a lot of cameos and they didn't really do that in this. This episode is really about the Cerritos and the

core five characters. They didn't do cameos for this one. They did them a couple episodes prior. They did a lot of great stuff in the last season. But this episode is about its characters, not other characters that you like that you've seen before.

**Sue:** That's a really good point.

**Andi:** Yeah. I think that just goes to show and reinforces what I said before, which is that I feel like *Lower Decks* and *Prodigy* are the best at balancing when you should and should not be pulling those things out. Also, I just have to say that I really, really love the ending with Ransom's catchphrase.

[laughter]

**Jarrah:** So, I haven't seen the *Lower Decks* finale, but having seen *The Counter-Clock Incident*, I feel like from what you're saying, a key area of advantage for *Lower Decks* is, again, that it was an intentional finale that focused on wrapping up the characters stories in a satisfying way. *The Counter-Clock* episode is a great episode of *The Animated Series*. It's not really a finale.

**Andi:** Yeah, it does help that coincidentally the themes of moving on, and always moving to new things and not letting yourself get stuck in a certain place, because you can't let go of the past basically are all incredibly thematic for a series finale. It's just were they doing that on purpose? Mm. Yeah, got to engage the core.

**Sue:** So, I have nothing to add. *Lower Decks*?

**Andi:** But I'm sad to see *TAS* fall here. But they put up a fight. I will just say again, if you haven't seen *The Animated Series*, consider it. It is a good time.

**Sue:** All right. *Lower Decks* advances and we are in round six. Are you ready? It is our number one seed. *TNG's All Good Things* versus *Endgame*.

**Claire:** *All Good Things*.

**Andi:** *All Good Things*.

**Jarrah:** *All Good Things*. [laughs]

**Sue:** Do we need to discuss it. [laughs]

**Andi:** I don't feel like we do. [laughs]

**Jarrah:** Perfunctorily, it's perfect.

**Claire:** Yeah.

[laughter]

**Jarrah:** There's an old Data in a room full of cats, there's Captain Beverly Picard. The only thing that's not great, in my opinion, is that Troi and Riker are still boning, and the whole Troi died and Riker having a chip on his shoulder. But it's not the biggest focus of the thing, so I can live with it.

**Claire:** Data has a million cats written on her notes.

[laughter]

**Claire:** It's not just, in my opinion, the best *Star Trek* series finale. It's one of the best series finales that I've ever seen.

**Andi:** Of all time. Yes.

**Jarrah:** Period. Yes.

**Andi:** For sure. When I think of the best series finales of all time, I think of this episode, I think of the end of *The Last Airbender* and I think of *The Good Place*.

**Claire:** And also, the last episode of *Supernatural*, obviously.

**Andi:** Oh, my God, Claire, don't do that to me. [Claire laughs] You know what? That's bait. I'm not doing that.

[laughter]

**Claire:** Look, you got old people and all good things. You get old sin.

**Andi:** No, no.

[laughter]

**Sue:** Jarrah brought up her journal entry for *DS9*. I do not have a journal entry, but I will tell you, I cried myself to sleep [Claire laughs] the day that this aired. It aired in the afternoon, because it was a special event. So, I cried for like eight hours.

[laughter]

**Claire:** I don't know if I still have it, but for a long time, my mom kept it. I had to do some assignment. I was in fourth grade, I think, when this aired, and it was important things that happened in the world in the year 1996 or whatever it was. [Sue laughs] That was 1994. And *Star Trek: TNG* ending was like one of the things that I included as being one of the most important things that happened in the world that year.

**Jarrah:** Yeah, correct. [Sue laughs]

**Claire:** You were not wrong.

**Sue:** All right. So, *TNG* moves on and we are down to the final four.

**Andi:** Woo-hoo.

**Sue:** So, round seven, *TNG* again versus *Prodigy*.

**Jarrah:** Well, it's still *TNG*.

**Andi:** It is still *TNG*. Yeah.

**Jarrah:** Yeah, it's hard to beat it. It's the heavy hitter.

**Sue:** These are probably my two favorites personally. Yeah, it's *TNG*. All right. [laughs]



**Andi:** I mean, mm.

**Sue:** See, this is where it gets easy and starts going fast, right?

**Andi:** Yeah, I guess so. To be fair, when I sat down and looked at Sue's outline that she diligently put together, I was like, "Oh, this is so cool, Sue. *TNG* is going to win.

[laughter]

**Andi:** But I do enjoy the exercise. So, let's continue to do it.

[laughter]

**Sue:** Well, all right. Round eight. *Lower Decks* versus *Picard*.

**Jarrah:** *Lower Decks*.

**Claire:** Yeah.

**Jarrah:** Yeah.

**Claire:** Yeah.

**Jarrah:** I haven't even seen it, but just based on everything you said and my opinions on *Picard*, I'm going to agree.

[laughter]

**Jarrah:** And my opinions on *Lower Decks* as a series and my faith that therefore the finale will be awesome.

**Sue:** All right.

**Andi:** It's tremendous. It's a really good-- Because we've talked about this so much. Is it a good episode for the show, and is it a good series finale? It's both.

**Claire:** It is both. Well, I don't think it has any of that wishy washy. Did I enjoy watching it because it was exciting at the time, or did I enjoy it because it was legitimately good television?

**Andi:** It was both is good.

**Claire:** Well, yeah, but *Lower Decks* is legitimately good television.

**Andi:** It wasn't razzle dazzling you.

**Claire:** Yes.

**Andi:** Yeah.

**Sue:** So, all of the previous rounds were essentially pointless, because we've wound up with the number one seed versus the number two seed.

[laughter]

**Sue:** *TNG* versus *Lower Decks*.

**Andi:** It's still *TNG*.

[laughter]

**Claire:** It is. You know what? I think the crew of the *Cerritos* would even agree.

**Sue:** Yes.

**Claire:** They would be like-- [crosstalk]

**Sue:** 100%. [Claire laughs]

**Andi:** Yes. Honestly, the only people that would do a better job than we did doing this bracket would be Mariner and Boimler. Just like the way Boimler would be like, he would have pages of notes, pages of notes to go through every single detail of every single finale to really scour it, because Mariner and Boimler love *Star Trek* as much as we do.

**Sue:** He would be the maddest one about *These Are the Voyages*.

**Andi:** Yes.

**Sue:** The maddest one.

**Andi:** He probably would.

[laughter]

**Andi:** He'd be like, "T'Pol deserve better." And you know what? I'm so glad the last scene we got of T'pol is not from *These Are the Voyages*. It is from *Lower Decks* and it ruled, and that is the reason why I am connected to T'pol is that episode alone was good enough that I was like, "This lady rules and I am into her."

**Sue:** Oh, Andi likes the Vulcan lady.

**Andi:** I know. It's such a shock.

[laughter]

**Andi:** Shock.

**Sue:** No. But I think for both of these, the reason that they're both so good, is that they're acknowledging what has come before for all of their characters, and their growth and their relationships with one another. It's celebrating that. And then, they both show us that those crews are continuing on together.

**Andi:** Yes. They're not undoing the progress those characters have made for story reasons to just fit it into the finale for whatever reason. Those lessons were learned. I think part of the reason that this is so hard and endings are so hard is because people don't like them. They always want the story to go on forever, even though that's a bad idea. Like, there has to be closure, there has to be a culmination, there has to be a final moment. I feel like if you go into it accepting that and loving it and knowing that that can be a good thing, you get something like these two episodes. And if you go into it and are just like, "Okay, we're done now," you get *These Are the Voyages*.

[laughter]

**Claire:** Yeah. You need production staff and writers that not only know these characters really well, but respect them. Like you were saying, you don't want to undo character development just because it makes for exciting drama in the last episode or whatever. To respect where they've come from and where they've been, I don't know, I'm rambling.

**Jarrah:** Word. [Sue laughs]

**Andi:** So, it really comes down to, for me, the two moments that just make me think like, yeah, these people are going to keep going and they're going to keep thriving is the poker game and the end where they're and on to new adventures engage the core. Like, that's why I love engage the core so much, because it's not just funny. It's not just a really well written joke. It's also hopeful and it's such an interesting play on what we see at the end of the undiscovered country where it's like, and now off we go again into the stars but also making fun of it in such a loving way. It's so *Lower Decks*. It is the encapsulation of everything that is good about *Lower Decks* to me.

And then, the poker game is just like, the character dynamics and the hopefulness and the fact that they didn't-- It's like you said, Sue, with the *Discovery* and the fact that they were always at universe level, sometimes you need to be at character level. Character level is the most important thing for the ending. I don't give a shit about the plot. I care about the people. And that's what this *TNG* finale does for me. It remembers that the number one most important thing is the people and their relationships together. They highlight that and that's why it works so well.

**Claire:** One thing that's so impressive to me about *All Good Things* is you watch it, and especially the Q stuff and you're like, "Holy shit." Did they know when they wrote *Encounter at Farpoint* seven years earlier? Did somebody jot down and here's what'll happen in the finale? I know they didn't. I know totally different people wrote both of those episodes.

The payoff that you get in *All Good Things* is so satisfying and profound thematically. It's incredible to hit that target from seven years out. And *Encounter at Farpoint* is an episode that I will defend to the death, even though a lot of it is really goofy. The Q stuff is so good. The reason it's so good is because *All Good Things works*.

Independently *Encounter at Farpoint* would not be-- I probably wouldn't defend it to the death. But with *All Good Things* tacked on seven years later, like, "Oh, my God, how they did it." Like, "They pulled it off."

**Sue:** But again, it's not just the big stuff, because it's not just the Q stuff. The first poker game we see from this crew, I think, is in Season 2. That's a device that they use throughout the rest of the series, and that's where they end the show. I literally have a print of Jenny R. Johnson's painting of the poker game from above hanging on my wall, and I see it every day. [laughs] So, obviously, *All Good Things* was going to win. [laughs]

**Claire:** Well, and this also ties back to *Star Trek: Picard* Season 3 finale. They do the poker game again, and it's great. Again, I-- [crosstalk]

**Sue:** And that's where they should have ended it.

**Claire:** Well, yeah, for sure. I totally agree. But again, it wasn't an original idea. It's good because you're like, "Hey, it's the poker game again." Not because, "Wow, they're finally

playing poker." It doesn't feel profound the way it does in *TNG*, because *TNG*, it's like, "Oh, my God, they're playing poker together." Picard, it's like-- [crosstalk].

**Sue:** But Picard joins for the first time, and he's like, "I don't have to be separate from my crew anymore."

**Claire:** I should have done this. I should have done this years ago. Like, "Ooh." But in Picard, it's very "Say the line, Bart." Like, "Oh, they're doing poker." As opposed to like, "Wow, they're playing poker."

**Andi:** Yeah, So, I've said this before and I will say it again. All art is manufactured to elicit an emotional response. But the successful art, you don't notice. And in this, you can see the strings.

**Claire:** Yeah. In *All Good Things*, it's telling you, there is a message in it. *Picard* Season 3, that finale doesn't really have a message to it. It just has cool stuff you enjoyed the first time--

**Jarrah:** Meme one.

**Claire:** Yeah. And it's like, stuff looks cool.

**Andi:** Well, we all knew where we were going to end.

**Jarrah:** It's a good thing this is the episode we picked for our watchalong in a couple weeks as well, because we did *These Are the Voyages* for our watchalong two months ago, and we are doing *All Good Things* by means of reparation.

[laughter]

**Sue:** I'm going to cry, because I always cry.

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

**Sue:** All right. Well, do we have any additional thoughts we want to throw out on any of these finales or finales in general?

**Andi:** It's hard, and sometimes you don't stick the landing and that's okay.

**Sue:** Yeah.

**Claire:** Yeah.

**Andi:** Endings are hard.

**Sue:** Yes.

**Andi:** But when you pull it off, man, do you pull it off.

[laughter]

**Sue:** All right. Then, we are going to wrap up for today. I hope it was a fun time. We certainly had a fun time. Claire, is there anything you want to promote or point people towards?

**Claire:** I do not have a podcast. I just show up on my friend's podcast occasionally, her blog or anything.

**Sue:** I'm about to be in the same boat.

[laughter]

**Claire:** Freedom. [laughs]

**Sue:** All right. To learn more about our show or to contact us, visit [womenatwarp.com](http://womenatwarp.com), email us at [crew@womanatwarp.com](mailto:crew@womanatwarp.com) or find us on Facebook or Instagram, [@womenatwarp](https://www.instagram.com/womenatwarp). Thanks so much for listening.

**Andi:** Bye.

[Woman at Warp theme]

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