

Women at Warp Episode 82: Prepare for “Disaster”

[Women at Warp theme]

Grace: Hi. And welcome to Women at Warp: A Roddenberry *Star Trek* Podcast. Join us as our crew of four-women *Star Trek* fans boldly go on our biweekly mission to explore our favorite franchise.

My name is Grace. And thanks for tuning in. We're with us this week, we've got the whole crew. We've got Jarrah.

Jarrah: I am pushing.

Grace: We've got Andi.

Andi: Hey.

Grace: We've got Sue.

Sue: Hi, everybody.

Grace: All right. And before we get started, we're going to go into a little housekeeping. Our show is entirely supported by our patrons on Patreon. If you'd like to become patron, you can do so for as little as a dollar per month and get awesome rewards, from thanks on social media up to silly watch along commentaries. You can visit us at www.patreon.com/womenatwarp.

You can also support us by leaving a rating or a review on Apple Podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts. We can also be found on Google Play, Stitcher, now Spotify. You can also leave us a rating or a review on Facebook. And honestly, this is the simplest and easiest way to show support. It does so much for us just to be able to get feedback on a regular basis and to have that traffic coming through any one of those sites is amazing. You can also now find us on Instagram.

[cheers]

Andi: Yeah. I've never done Instagram, so I'm going to let you, guys, do the Instagram and I'll stick to Twitter.

Grace: I'm excited.

Andi: Twitter is my medium. I'll let Grace Insta.

Jarrah: Send us photos of your cats with *Star Trek* books and things, and we will post them for you.

Grace: Absolutely.

Andi: Yeah. I figure our brand on Insta is going to be Cats and *Star Trek* and Cats and *Star Trek*.

Jarrah: Mm-hmm.

Grace: And the occasional gray selfie.

[laughter]

Jarrah: Yes.

Andi: Let's be real. Ooh, and speaking of cats, red alert, right, Sue?

Sue: Red alert. We're having a giveaway. Thanks to our friends at Chronicle Books, we are giving away a copy of the newly released *Star Trek: The Next Generation Cats* by Jenny Parks. To enter for this giveaway, just send us an email to crew@womenatwarp.com with the subject line, *TNG Cats*, and tell us your favorite *Star Trek* pet, whether it's Janeway's Irish Setter, Mollie, Data's cat Spot or any of the other animal companions we see across the franchise.

Entries will remain open until Sunday, April 22nd at 11:59PM Eastern Time, and each response will be entered into a randomizer in order for us to choose a winner. For more information, there is a post on our blog. It is dated March 28th, so you might have to scroll back a bit to see that. And the title is just giveaway, *Star Trek: TNG Cats*.

Grace: So, we've got a few cons coming up around the corner. We've got someone at Awesome Con March 30th to April 1st.

Sue: Yes.

Grace: All right. And I believe you're on a panel there.

Sue: Yes. We'll be doing a *Discovery* panel on that Friday at 03:30 at Awesome Con. So, that is in the D.C. area. So, if you're there, come say hi. I'll be scheduling a meetup at some point. Details to come.

Andi: Awesome. [Sue laughs] We're going to do that joke every single time. Awesome Con [unintelligible 00:03:24].

Sue: Yeah. I'm excited for Awesome Con to be over.

[laughter]

Grace: Well, you know how I think it is, awesome. Is it awesome? It's awesome.

Andi: Awesome.

Grace: Awesome.

Jarrah: You know what else is awesome? Our book club. We have a new selection for book club. So, if you want to join us in reading the *Star Trek: Starfleet Academy* IDW comic book miniseries, that will be our next pick. It's available as a trade paperback. It's set in the JJ Verse storyline, and mixes that crew with a crew of original character Starfleet cadets with a real focus on diversity, both in terms of race, gender and awesome alien species led by a Vulcan woman. So, hop on over to Goodreads and search for the Women at Warp book club if you'd like to join the discussion.

Sue: I'm holding it up right now, as if you could see me.

Grace: Yay. [laughs] See it with your mind's eye.

Andi: Do some gesturing like you're on one of those shopping network channels, and make sure to show off your manicure.

Grace: Do some infomercial hands. People will get the vibe.

Andi: Aah.

Grace: Ooh. Aah.

Jarrah: Also, not to be confused with those young adult novels about *Starfleet Academy* that were made in the 1990s.

Sue: Those were awesome.

Jarrah: They were awesome. We might do one at one point. [laughs]

Grace: Those were a thing, yes. On a more serious note, getting to the topic of our episode, sometimes things happen that are completely out of our control, and sometimes things just go completely ass end up and it is just a total disaster.

Andi: So well done. So pro. Such a segue. [chuckles]

Grace: So, in case you haven't guessed, that means that our topic today is this *TNG* Season 5 Episode 5, *Disaster*.

Andi: *Disaster*.

Grace: Dun, dun, duh.

Andi: I have to say now that whenever I hear the word, disaster, I think of Aja's Princess Disastah from *Drag Race*. [Jarrah laughs] I wish she was in this episode. I'm not going to lie. I mean, it's a pretty good episode.

Sue: She wasn't even born yet.

Andi: [laughs] Probably not.

Jarrah: I would cast her as the person who eventually comes and drops a rope down into the turbolift and saves Picard and the kids.

[laughter]

Grace: I just always think of the way Beyoncé pronounces the word, disaster, in the telephone with Lady Gaga. Not so much disaster as disaster. [Andi laughs] I really appreciate that. It feels like more of an onomatopoeia that way. Anyhoozles, *TNG* Season 5, Episode 5, Episode *Disaster*. Teleplay by Ron Moore. Story by Ron Jarvis and Philip A. Scorza. Directed by Gabrielle Beaumont.

Jarrah: A woman director.

Grace: Oh. Oh, Lord, [Jarrah laughs] the clouds have parted.

[laughter]

Grace: Mercy.

Grace: [laughs]

Jarrah: I believe she is actually the second most prolific *Star Trek* woman director after Roxann Dawson.

Andi: Very cool.

Grace: Yeah.

Sue: That's still only a handful of episodes, right?

Jarrah: Yes. I can look up the exact number.

Grace: Let us just have this little victory here right now.

[sings]

Blowing up my phone. Won't make me leave no. Faster. Put my coat on Faster. Leave my dudes no faster. I should've left my phone at home Cause this is a disaster!

Jarrah: She directed seven episodes of *TNG*, one episode of *Deep Space Nine* and one episode of *Voyager*.

Grace: Good for her.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Andi: And good for us, the audience.

Sue: Yes.

Andi: I think this episode is really well directed, actually.

Grace: Yeah. Do you want to give us a rundown of what the plot of this episode is?

Andi: There's a disaster.

[laughter]

Grace: Oh.. Oh.

Sue: [laughs]

Grace: And I'm sure this disaster occurs when all of the crew is well prepared and totally braced for whatever could happen, right?

Andi: Absolutely not.

Grace: Oh. Disaster.

Andi: What happens is they run into a quantum filament, which is nothing like a cosmic string.

Sue: And also, not a thing.

Grace: Okay. We'll get to Sue Science Corner. Okay, Sue, we'll get there.

Sue: There's so much. [Andi laughs]

Grace: Entire room is Science Corner.

Andi: So, they run into the quantum filament and everybody pretends to shake. It's pretty great. And then, the crew is separated into several different areas. Picard's trapped in a turbolift with a bunch of kids. Oh, that's especially a disaster for Picard. And then, we've got Ro and O'Brien and Troi on the bridge, and they've got Geordi and Beverly in Turbo Bay?

Grace: But Worf is in a totally calm situation here, right? Right? Worf is fine?

Andi: Keiko has decided to turn Ten Forward into her birthing room, which I appreciate as a power move.

Grace: Welcome to my birth chamber.

Andi: Oh, yeah. I almost forgot that Data's head and Riker are problem solving in the Jeffrey suits.

Sue: Engineering.

Andi: No. Are they? Are they in the--

Jarrah: Well, they get to engineering at the end.

Andi: Okay.

Grace: I like how the question isn't there wasn't just Data's head.

Andi: Yeah, just Data's head. The rest of his body is pretty irrelevant. His head is the most important part.

Grace: Guys, it sounds like this episode could be a real disaster. [Andi chuckles] And the prom is tomorrow.

Andi: So, overall, this episode's good, I think.

Grace: Yeah, it's a really fun one. We've got a lot of little subplots going on, which makes it a really good ensemble episode. So, we get a little bit of time with each of the characters, and we get to really see them playing to their different strengths as characters and that really gives the actors a chance to do their thing.

Sue: We also get all of our characters out of their element, so they're not where they usually are. They're not in pairings that they usually would be in. So, they get to do something different. And for just about everybody gets to do something different than they normally would in any given episode.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Grace: Which alone makes for good storytelling.

Andi: Yeah, absolutely. And if you think about it, if you had put, say, Picard on the bridge and Troi in the elevator with children,-

Jarrah: Oh, man.

Andi: -both of those stories would be so much more boring.

Jarrah: Yup.

Andi: Because the point is, is that they're stretching a little bit and they're doing things that they're not maybe so comfortable with and rising to the extreme occasion, which is super cool.

Jarrah: You know what also could have been funny though? Geordi in the turbolift with kids and Picard directing Keiko's Birth. [Sue laughs]

Andi: That could have been great.

Grace: I feel like that would have been uncomfortable for everyone.

Andi: Or, if you wanted to go fan-fici with it, if you wanted to go PC shipper with it, you could have put Picard and Beverly in the turbo bay thing.

Sue: Cargo Bay.

Andi: Cargo Bay. Yeah.

Sue: I don't know what a turbo bay is.

Andi: I can't remember the term-- [crosstalk]

Grace: A turbo bay is like a bay, but more turbo.

Andi: It's an extra special cool bay, okay? Turbo. Anyways, see, you have your bay sometimes and then you have your turbo bay.

Jarrah: It's a bay that's crossed into another game, because its game wasn't popular anymore.

Andi: [laughs]

Grace: "Oh, shit, it's turbo time."

Andi: But yeah, they could have been in the cargo bay. Is that better, Sue?

Sue: Uh-huh.

Andi: And they could have made out and stuff. I would have been cool with that.

Sue: That's totally fine.

Grace: Or, they could have helped deliver a baby together.

Jarrah: Who would have known about the radiation, and the explosives and how space works.

Grace: And who would have talked to the kids about radishes.

Andi: I would have just cut out all that stuff and just had them make out the whole time.

Grace: You know what you're about, and I respect that.

Andi: Just saying.

Sue: So, should we start with Troi on the bridge?

Andi: Yeah, let's do it.

Sue: Okay. I understand that for exposition's sake, they had to have somebody asking questions. "What does that mean? What is that protocol?" But it just makes Troi dumb.

Grace: Yeah, she's on the bridge a lot of the time. These are all things that she would probably be familiar with or at least have a passing knowledge of.

Andi: See, I don't think it's unrealistic that she wouldn't have some of the deeper science knowledge, but I feel like she would know isolation protocol. I feel like she would know the emergency protocols.

Jarrah: I think that it didn't bother me, actually, this time as much as it used to. This part used to be my least favorite subplot for exactly that reason. But this time, I appreciated how it's brave to ask questions, and that she stuck to her guns and that in the end, she was right. But I do agree with you that there were a couple times that I think it crossed a line. I think, particularly, the way that O'Brien explains things, when she's like, "Oh, it's like a quantum string." Oh, it's nothing like a quantum string. He just sounds so disappointed that she didn't know that basic science thing.

Grace: O'Brien is just sad that not everyone is engineers.

Jarrah: Yeah. So, I thought that part did make her seem like she should have known something. But when it came to making the tough calls, I appreciated that she didn't just bluster and pretend she knew what she was doing when she didn't.

Grace: Yeah, that would have been an easy way to take it. I'm really glad they didn't, because that would have been so out of character for her for one thing.

Andi: I really appreciate her lack of ego.

Grace: Yeah.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Andi: She's not in it to look important. She is in it to get them through this. You can see at the very beginning, when she realizes she's in charge, she's a little intimidated because she's not as aware of some of these command decisions. She doesn't try and hide that. She's just like, "Okay, I would appreciate some advice." I dig that a lot, and I think that that's missing from a lot of leadership, this idea that you can't show weakness or you can't show that you don't know everything.

For me, it's a much better leadership quality to be able to admit and delegate when you are not as versed in this specific area, because I think the best leaders have a passing

knowledge of everything, but have people that are hired for specific things. So, you're going to go to O'Brien for specific engineering questions.

Grace: It really is a question of knowledge versus the wisdom to know when you don't know enough.

Andi: Yeah. And so, I personally like this section. I get what you're saying, Sue, and there are moments where gets a little bit cringy and they're leaning too hard into. She doesn't know what she's doing.

Sue: I think the most frustrating part of it is the isolation protocol.

Andi: Yeah.

Sue: Especially, because Ro shows up a recently arrived ensign and is just isolation protocol, whatever. They just go right into it, and she's just left in the dark.

Andi: Yeah, I think that's the most egregious moment.

Jarrah: So, that's why I thought it was interesting when I read this, "That you found Sue from Michael Piller in Captain's Logs, where he said he thought we made a mistake with Ensign Ro," and he says, "We gave her the role of the disbeliever who had nowhere to go but lose in the end, because she didn't believe Troi. I think, as I wrote in a memo, it would have been much better if she'd been around a year with some victories before we threw her into that situation to look rather foolish." Because I don't think she actually looked foolish. I think she looked overly pragmatic.

Grace: She looked like a jerk.

Jarrah: Yeah, a little bit. [chuckles]

Sue: Some of the other quotes that I found from him-- He says more clearly that his problem was that she apologized. [Jarrah laughs]

Grace: How dare she?

Sue: Not that she apologized, in general, but that she apologized so quickly. Like, "You were right, Counselor. I was definitely wrong." When Troi replies like, "You could have easily been right."

Jarrah: Yeah.

Sue: That's accurate. Ro could have easily been right. So, there's a middle ground there that I see what he's saying.

Andi: See, that's my favorite part of the whole thing, as it's not a weakness to be able to admit that when you were wrong. It annoys me that we have turned it into a weakness or it's perceived as a weakness. She wasn't making irrational decisions. She wasn't pushing for something completely irrational. Her plan was a good one. It just wasn't the right plan for this exact situation. And that's why I love that line back, like, "You could have easily been right."

She could have. It could have gone either way. So, I appreciated that as, two women, they disagreed on the best way forward, but in the end, they just wanted the best thing for the ship. Like, both of them just wanted the best thing for the ship. So, I find it inspiring.

Grace: That's the part that really elevates the episode. Let's be real.

Sue: I do appreciate that this episode is referenced, two seasons later in *Thine Own Self* when Troi decides to take the Bridge Officer's Test. I don't know why it took two seasons to get there.

Andi: Yeah, it is cool that she decides to go further with her education, I guess you could call it, or career, broaden her horizons. Can we move on to the elevator Picard kid thing, because that's my favorite part of this episode?

Jarrah: We're all going to die.

Grace: Future red shirt.

Andi: Let's just be real that the real MVP of this episode, is that little blonde kid who is obsessed with death.

[laughter]

Andi: That kid is awesome. I just love his unblinking stare, like, his dead eyes. I super dig it.

Grace: There is a one thing I am a total sucker for. It's dead eyed children.

Andi: [laughs] Me too. I love how creepy and weird he is. Oh, it's amazing.

Grace: Let's be real. I only like dead eyed children because I totally was one.

Andi: [laughs] Grace would have been in that elevator being like, "Well, I mean, death comes for everyone."

[laughter]

Grace: Time to make peace with our Gods.

Andi: [laughs]

Grace: Just lie down on the floor and start chanting whatever gives you comfort.

Andi: I just find it really amusing. He's what, like eight? I don't know, he's already accepted his own mortality to such a degree. [laughs] It's pretty amazing.

Grace: Some kids are there at an early age.

Andi: Apparently.

Jarrah: I definitely would have been the girl Marissa, who's too shy to talk to anyone, but I wish I was a kid that had been Radish Kid.

Grace: Radish Kid is the real MVP of this episode.

Sue: Radish Kid is the most kid like to me.

Grace: Yeah.

Sue: I put some radishes in some dirt and they came up all weird.

Grace: Yeah.

Andi: [laughs]

Sue: [crosstalk]

Grace: Good for you, Ensign Radish Kid.

[laughter]

Andi: I love how Picard's trying so hard to care.

Jarrah: Yeah.

[laughter]

Jarrah: Ooh.

Andi: He's like, "Ah. Yes, yes, radishes. Totally, very cool." I also really love it when they start crying. It's so one of those, don't be crying situations.

[laughter]

Andi: He's like, It okay. Stop feeling."

Jarrah: "Everything will be fine. Can you tell by how I'm yelling that."

Andi: He's like, "Stop crying." And they're like, "Aah." It is so amazing. [laughs] Patrick Stewart is just so good at this.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Grace: He does.

Jarrah: I feel like the early episodes where we first learn that Picard really doesn't like kids. He was so much stiffer than that by this point, we get a good balance of-- He's still awkward with kids, but he is human.

Grace: And making an active effort to not just be Captain Buzzkill, Captain Buzzkill in the Radish Squad.

Andi: I do appreciate that Marissa looks like the Pink Ranger.

Grace: Oh, I didn't even realize that. [laughs]

Andi: That girl was serving Pink Ranger realness. It was amazing, and I totally dug it.

Grace: All of these kids are just having a blast in their respective onesie get ups.

Andi: [laughs]

Jarrah: I also like that she got to be number one.

Andi: Yeah, it was super cool of him to put this young girl in charge, especially since she started out so unsure of herself. And by the end, she overruled Picard. It was amazing. She's like, "No, we're not going to do that."

Jarrah: Yeah.

Andi: "We discussed it, we came to an agreement and this is what we're going to do." It's wonderful. It's really cool.

Grace: Personally, I wouldn't have given the pips back. I would have just seen how long I could carry that position before Riker genuinely is like, "Okay, joke's over. I want my job back."

Sue: Well, that was super cute at the end, especially her little bashful grin in the very last scene.

Andi: I would not have minded seeing her back.

Grace: That was intentional. You know it. That was intentional, and she was making a power play there.

[laughter]

Grace: She got sent to the tiny brig for tiny mutineers.

Andi: This is the new Shelby.

[laughter]

Sue: Look, can somebody please explain to me why there are no treads on Picard's boots?

Andi: You won't notice the weirdest things, Sue.

Jarrah: [laughs]

Andi: I didn't even notice that Picard was wearing boots. What are you talking about?

Jarrah: Okay. We see women in *Trek* wear heels on away missions a lot. Picard's just on the ship with those boots, at least in this episode. So, as far as we know, he has other shoes for things where he would need treads.

Grace: It's so that members of Starfleet can walk single file to hide their numbers.

[laughter]

Andi: So, people can't track him across the ship.

Sue: It would be really difficult to climb that ladder with those really thin rungs when he's jumping between levels, because his ankle's broken with no treads on the shoes.

Andi: I love you so much.

Sue: [laughs]

Grace: Guys, did we just find the polar opposite of Saru's platforms?

[laughter]

Grace: What if they switched?

Andi: I would love to see Picard rock platform.

Grace: Although, we would probably love less Saru, trying to walk in treadless shoes would be pretty shitty, actually.

Jarrah: [laughs] Yeah. It would have been nice if the kids had been a tiny bit more diverse, like, aliens, race. I don't know, it was three cute little white kids, they're adorable. But you know, I don't know.

Sue: Did you ever find out what Marissa's science project was?

Jarrah: No, that's the other thing is, she's too shy to talk about it, so she never tells us.

Grace: She actually just wandered into the room when they were-- [crosstalk]

[laughter]

Grace: So, I'm going to propose another musical endeavor here, and that would be Captain Picard's Funtime Sing along album in the style of Marlo Thomas, where it's just him doing some old favorites for the kids for when you need a respectable and reasonable bedtime anthem.

Andi: Oh, my gosh, I would buy that. I would buy that and torture my cats with it.

Jarrah: [chuckles]

Grace: It's just him trying to play the penny whistle and singing a few Gilbert and Sullivan songs.

Jarrah: [laughs]

Sue: There was so much singing in this episode.

Andi: Well, that's a good segue to get to Beverly and Geordi in the cargo bay.

Grace: This is a cool subplot. I remember even the first time I saw this episode when I was still not very familiar with the characters, seeing them put their plan into action and be like, "Oh, that is badass."

Sue: I like Beverly and Geordi a lot together.

Grace: Yeah.

Sue: The subplot. But there's just a lot of bad science here.

Grace: It's fun if you don't understand how science works.

Andi: That's why I like it.

Sue: [laughs]

Jarrah: When I was rewatching it, I was thinking. I was like, "Wow, we need Sue Science Corner at multiple points in this episode, but this is really the part where we need Sue Science Corner." This is one of the scenes that, as a kid, this one was one of my favorite subplots, because it's the most action packed and the most danger seeming. But now, I'm like, "Hmm."

Andi: Okay. Before we get into Sue Science Corner, I have to sing your theme song. All right, you ready?

[sings]

Sue science Corner.

Grace: *Corner.*

Andi: *Corner.* Okay, now go.

Sue: So, it's not even when they open the blast doors or whatever. But from the very beginning, when Geordi approaches that panel and Crusher's like, "The wall's hot. Geordi should be able to see that the wall's hot."

Jarrah: Yes.

Grace: He wasn't paying attention. He can't look at everything at once. He's not made of eyes.

[laughter]

Grace: Look, man, people expect a lot out of Geordi eye wise for a blind guy.

Sue: Well, sure. But then, for my second issue, we can quote "Data" from the very first episode and say, "Correction, Sir. Blown out."

Andi: Oh, wow.

Sue: Yeah.

Andi: That's a deep cut.

Grace: Yeah.

Sue: [laughs] They definitely should not have held their breath, because their lungs would have exploded.

Andi: [laughs] Now, see, that to me seems like a bigger issue than the fact that Picard's shoes don't have treads.

[laughter]

Grace: It's funny what we all notice.

Sue: Then, also, they can vent the cargo bay from one control panel. But to reventilate it, that access panel is on another wall, that seems like a really important design issue.

Grace: No one said it was a well-designed cargo bay, just that it was a cargo bay.

Andi: See, all of this stuff is stuff that I never notice. So, I feel like Sue peels back the mystery, [Sue laughs] lays bare all of the flaws. So, I'm just going to pretend you didn't say anything, and think that all of this is plausible and they vented green stuff.

Grace: And guys, we got to see Geordi and Crusher do a friggin Ripley, and survive the air getting pulled out of the room and be badass about it.

Sue: Blown out.

Grace: Blown out.

[laughter]

Grace: But I guess science wise it's kind of a disaster. [crosstalk]

Sue: [laughs] That is accurate.

Andi: I will say too that although I very much enjoyed Geordi as Gilbert and Sullivan. I feel like it's not even the best Gilbert and Sullivan we see in *Star Trek*.

Jarrah: It's true. Who know.

Grace: How much does it say that we've got a sliding scale of references?

[laughter]

Andi: But the best Gilbert and Sullivan in science fiction, in general, is definitely in Mass Effect with Mordin when he sings Gilbert and Sullivan. So, anytime I see anybody else do it, I just think about how Mordin did it better.

Grace: Well, we've also just got to admit that that was the greatest moment in musical history. So, we can burn every theater down. Nothing is going top that.

Jarrah: Crusher has a limited pool to choose from. There are a lot of roles in H.M.S. Pinafore. There's a lot of leading male roles. You know that Picard's not going to do it yet, even though he's a big fan, but he's not going to take the time out to go to rehearsals. Barclay doesn't have his confidence together yet. O'Brien's having a baby. She's got to just flatter Geordi into this part.

Sue: Or, maybe don't do this show, girl. [chuckles] If you have to chase somebody down at work and pressure them into fake auditioning for you, maybe don't do that show.

Grace: I love how it's just a recurring thing that Beverly, in addition to being CMO, is also just the pushy community theater director of the ship.

Andi: [laughs]

Jarrah: What I'm really sad that we never saw was stage mom Bev.

[laughter]

Grace: Because you know she made Wesley learn to tap dance. You know it happened.

Jarrah: Yeah. Wesley's little vaudeville act and she's there as Mama Bev off by the side. I *had a dream, a wonderful dream, Wesley.*

Grace: Sparkle, Wesley, sparkle.

Andi: [laughs]

Sue: Oh, it's [crosstalk] moms.

Jarrah: Amazing.

Andi: I wish we had gotten to see Gates dance more.

Jarrah: That's true.

Grace: Well, if wishes were horses, we'd be watching *Deep Space Nine*.

[laughter]

Andi: But seriously, they should have just done a straight up musical episode. I would have so dug that. But *C'est la vie. C'est la vie.* I will say that I really love, and this is one of the plot lines that we really, really see this in is one thing I really love about this episode, is that everybody is doing God-tier problem solving, thinking out of the box, trying to find different ways to solve these really intense problems. I really enjoy watching Bev and Geordi play off each other, and learn from each other and find solutions together. They have a really cool chemistry.

Jarrah: Agreed.

Grace: I'm just imagining Wesley having to do the little Lamby dance from *Gravity Falls* now.

Andi: [laughs] Really, they should have just forgotten all of that sciencey stuff and just tap dance the whole time.

Grace: You can dance your cares away like a Fraggles.

Andi: [chuckles] Plus, I feel like a tap-dancing scene would not have gone amiss in the cargo bay there. [Grace laughs] I mean, more tap-dancing scenes, in general. I feel like I am pro. More tap dancing.

Sue: It's never a bad thing.

Jarrah: Maybe when they throw Data's body in the current, Data's body could have tap danced.

[laughter]

Andi: Speaking of weird problem solving, removing Data's head is up there.

Grace: Yeah. Let's get ahead on that.

Jarrah: Har-har-har. [chuckles]

Grace: You know what you brought me here for. Puns.

Andi: The highest level of punnery.

Grace: It's punishment, to be sure.

Andi: But we have to say that Data really goes very quickly to the beheading solution.

Grace: Has he been waiting for this? Is this something he's been wanting to try? Does he have a fetish? What's the deal, Data?

Andi: I super love that. Riker's like, "That's weird, bro." But he's laughing about it, [chuckles] because that's what I would be like.

Grace: He's having a moment of, "Dude, you're crazy as hell, and I like it."

Andi: "Really? Is that really a good idea? Oh, my. So, I don't understand this at all. I don't try to understand the science ever, but what? What's happening? I don't get it." They're crawling through vents or something, and then there's electricity and they want to throw Data through it.

Sue: For some reason, the computer will work better, if they hook Data up directly to it. The thing that's always annoyed me a little bit about this part of the story, is the very end when they open a bulkhead and Riker's like, "For some reason these screens are working." And Data just casually is like, "Oh, that power has been rerouted from the bridge." Like, don't you think that would have been important to know?

Andi: Yeah, I really just am focused on his headless body.

[chuckles]

Andi: That's very distracting. I'm not usually trying to understand the sciencey stuff anyway. I usually just accept it. But that time, I wasn't even listening to it. I was like, "What is happening?"

Jarrah: [chuckles]

Grace: I'm just disappointed that we didn't get Data's headless body getting up to reanimator shenanigans running around.

Andi: Oh, my Gosh, no.

Jarrah: [chuckles]

Grace: Not that kind of-- Not that part. Obviously, not that part.

Andi: How's that obvious? That's the most famous part.

Grace: There's also some slapstick with just a headless body running around.

Andi: Okay, fine. As long as that's that part, I'm fine with that and not the other part.

Grace: It is the non-rapey part.

[laughter]

Jarrah: Oh, Lord.

Grace: It is the non-knees clamped together while watching it in theater part.

Andi: [onomatopoeia] Poor, Sue. Do you know what we're talking about?

Grace: She's probably better off not knowing.

Andi: Yeah, if you don't know, we're not going to tell you.

Jarrah: I don't actually know either, but I'm entertained and disgusted at the same time.

Grace: Just look back on Jeffrey Combs' IMDb.

Andi: Don't do that. [Jarrah laughs]. You're better off not knowing.

Grace: Do it. It'll be fun.

Sue: Okay.

Grace: See what you find. It's nothing, but voice acting. [laughs]

Andi: Really?

Grace: Really.

Andi: Grace is evil.

Grace: You knew that when you married me.

Andi: I think this is the plotline that has the least, I don't know, good stuff in it.

Grace: Yeah.

Andi: Yeah, it's really just a sight gag about headless Data.

Jarrah: Yes.

Grace: What's even the point of headless Data, if Mark Twain isn't there?

Andi: Yeah, right? If there's no time travel, I'm bored. Well, not bored. It is still funny. But compared to say Picard and Radish Boy, Boy obsessed with death, it's definitely not the strongest part of all of these various plot lines.

Sue: So, Keiko and Worf.

Grace: Yes.

Andi: Oh, goodness.

Grace: Do you know what this situation sounds like? Do you know how it sounds like it's going to play out? Do you know?

Sue: Before we even get to the birth of Molly, I want to-- [crosstalk]

Grace: The Disaster.

Sue: -address something that happened-

Grace: It's the disaster.

Sue: -in the very beginning of the episode, where they're all just hanging out in Ten Forward and they're talking about the baby and the due date, and nobody reaches out and touches Keiko until she invites them to.

Jarrah: Yeah, I noticed that too.

Grace: Yay.

Sue: It tells Riker to feel. And then, when he's done, Data asks if he can. I was like, "Good job."

Jarrah: Agreed.

Grace: That is good example. Don't just go out and touch other people, A. B, don't just think you're entitled to touch a pregnant woman's body. She is having a baby. She is playing host to a foreign organism. You do not need to be a second foreign organism or third. I don't know how many babies you're having.

Andi: The other thing is that Riker apparently thinks that everybody should name their kid after him-

[laughter]

Andi: I mean, no. And also, your name is boring.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Grace: They're going to retaliate and name the baby Riker's Beard. Riker's Beard O'Brien.

Jarrah: I tried to convince my brother to name my first nephew Jean Luc, because he was looking for a J name, but he didn't go for it.

Grace: I've told you, guys, my *Voyager* child naming story, right?

Jarrah: Maybe.

Andi: I don't think so.

Grace: My cousin Alice went to high school with a kid, and they were all going around introducing themselves on the first day and he's like, "Hi, my name is Chuck. It's short for Chakotay." And someone said, "Oh, wow, is that a Native American name?" And his response was, "I guess".

[laughter]

Grace: He was named after the character on *Voyager*.

Sue: Oh.

Jarrah: Wow.

Andi: Wow.

Sue: I had a friend whose mom told her she could name her baby brother and she picked Spock. And they would not let her name her brother Spock.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Sue: So, his name is Kirk.

Grace: [laughs]

Andi: That is really a tragedy. That's a sad story.

Jarrah: I feel like that would be a fair middle name. And then, that way when the kid gets older, if he wants to change his name to Spock, it's easy.

[laughter]

Andi: Really long-term planning there, Jarrah. I like it.

[laughter]

Grace: I think it would depend on the last name, like if it's something that works, like Spot Crocker.

[laughter]

Andi: What kind of name is Spock Crocker? What is that? [laughs]

Grace: Good one. One that has rhythm to it as opposed to like Spock Andrews that doesn't have quite as much mustard to it. Spock Crocker.

Sue: She was also probably like five or six at the time.

Andi: So, really awesome kid, is what you're saying.

Sue: Yeah. Pretty much.

Andi: Wow.

Grace: I really hope there's someone out there named Kirk McCoy who gets asked every time, "So, middle name's Spock?"

[laughter]

Grace: "No, it's Derek."

[laughter]

Andi: I just think it's so funny that Riker doesn't even really know Keiko and O'Brien that much. He's like, "Well, you're obviously going to name your kid after me." He's mostly joking. I think-

Jarrah: Yeah.

Andi: -he may agree that. He's probably joking. But I still think it's funny. William.

Jarrah: And also, that they're very attached to let's name it after one of our dad's kind of thing. But in the end, it turns out that doesn't work. But what do we think about the whole birth situation itself? I think it's hilarious and I think it's one of Keiko's better episodes. But I was trying to look at it a little bit critically. I'm wondering what other folks think.

Sue: It's so fast.

Jarrah: It is so fast.

Grace: Yeah. I do appreciate that this is a situation where we really do see the guy involved who is the stand in for a medical figure is the unreasonable one placing unrealistic expectations on mother to be which is something we do see and don't really see. Talked enough about the fact that a lot of women's genuine concerns in childbirth and during the pregnancy process are really written off as the woman being hormonal or hysterical. And so, things go unaddressed and instead decisions are made by her medical professional when they should be made by her.

That's something we see a lot. I do appreciate that we really get to see-- You're very clearly being the unreasonable one here, opposed to Keiko being like, "No, I know what is happening more than you do here." That said, this episode, the whole situation really is played for yucks.

Andi: It is funny.

Jarrah: It is.

Grace: It is. It's very funny.

Jarrah: Like, "Congratulations, you are now fully dilated. You may now give birth."

Andi: Going back to that a little bit though, Grace, that is actually a really serious issue and contributes to a higher maternal mortality rate than we need to have.

Grace: Yeah. We do really have a culture of saying, "Just sit back and let the doctor do what the doctor thinks is right," when this is something where another person is very heavily involved in your body and you have a level of right and a level of say in what goes on there. Sometimes that is ignored by medical professionals.

Andi: The other thing is there's lots of studies that show that-- So, female pain in general and medical settings is often underestimated, which can be really a problem. But there's also a racial aspect in that. Black women's pain is especially underestimated to the point where Black women have a higher maternal mortality rate in America than white women do. And a lot of it has to do with the way they're treated by medical professionals.

Grace: Which is really, really horrible, considering that dates back as far to-- I can't remember his name, but he's considered the father of modern gynecology. He got most of his information from performing-- We'll call him, experiments on unwilling Black women, because he said they don't feel pain the same way regular women do, which is horrifying and monstrous.

Sue: J. Marion Sims is his name, and there's a statue of him in Central Park.

Grace: There's been some lovely graffiti on it.

Sue: And often protests around it. Yes.

Grace: Yeah. There is a lot to protest there. There is a lot to unpack there. I know I'm going off on a tangent here, but women not being allowed to be in charge of aspects of their own biology is pretty freaking scary.

Andi: Yeah, definitely. But in this case, I think it's pretty well done, this scene.

Grace: Yeah.

Andi: I mean, it's definitely not realistic. It's hilariously not realistic.

Grace: It's treated as intense, but not horrifyingly so.

Andi: Yeah, exactly. It's fun. Keiko and Worf are fun together. I think we can agree that a lot of the jokes really land well. Overall, it's a pretty good scene and it's a pretty good plotline, and I enjoy it immensely. I think it's nice to see the spotlight on Keiko, because we don't get that very often. I actually really like Keiko. So, it's cool for me.

Grace: I like Keiko when they know what to do with her.

Andi: Yeah.

Sue: I also think it's one of the first times I remember seeing an umbilical cord-

Jarrah: Yes.

Sue: -on TV.

Jarrah: Yup. It's great, because the minute the baby's out, she can reach over and be like, "Give me a drink."

[laughter]

Grace: "No, really. We just need to disinfect my liver."

Jarrah: [chuckles] Yeah. Not science, but anyway.

[laughter]

Grace: We're starting a new segment here called Jarrah's Lush Corner.

Andi: [chuckles] Jarrah's Boozy Corner.

[laughter]

Grace: Well, what subplots would we have liked to see going on in this disaster? Because I want to know where Guinan was during all of this.

Andi: Yeah, it's true. She's not in Ten Forward.

Jarrah: Guinan in her quarters with a super-hot ensign who's really worried and wants to get out, "We're all going to die." And he's like, "I have duties." And she's like, "Oh, yes, you do."

Andi: [laughs]

Grace: Your booty is my duty.

Andi: I don't know, they did a pretty good balance between fun and funny puns and then a little more tense. So, I think in that way, they really hit a lot of different problems. I don't know, I just really think this episode is a fun one and I enjoyed rewatching it.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Andi: What's not to like?

Grace: Yeah, it hits a lot of different notes, which is really good as far as an ensemble episode goes. We get to see a little bit of everyone again. I feel like post *TNG* this episode is now par for the course with *Star Trek*, that every now and then you absolutely have to have an ensemble episode where it's just everyone reacting to the same thing. I really appreciate that, because I think that makes for really good storytelling.

Andi: I also like episodes where the shenanigans are the A plot instead of a weird B plot that's thrown in.

Grace: Yes.

Andi: When it's done well, I think it's really fun.

Grace: Yeah.

Andi: Fun to watch, because a lot of weird crap would happen in space. It is fun to see how our crew response to that.

Grace: Let's just establish. Space is weird.

Andi: Space is weird.

Jarrah: What you're saying, is this has become part of the course, but it wasn't really until this point. At least Jerry Taylor felt that this was very much breaking formula, changing something and doing a different kind of story, not being what someone might say this wasn't *Star Trek*, maybe because it doesn't have really a message. But yeah, it was definitely fun and I don't think it broke out of the spirit.

Andi: I think it's more of a character study than anything. Maybe not a super deep dive, but what drives most of the enjoyment of this episode is the crew's personality.

Jarrah: Yes.

Sue: Mm-hmm.

Andi: So, I find that to be pretty fun.

Grace: Yeah.

Andi: I think that the closest we would get to an episode like this in *Discovery* is the mud episode. I would like to see that more for *Discovery*, because I feel like *Discovery* is kind of walking the line of being too art.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Andi: And not having these fun, not silly, but more lighthearted episodes. I would like to see them try that out a little bit more.

Sue: This isn't a morality play like a lot of other *Trek*, but I would say there is a message. I mean, every single one of our characters is out of their element, but they're working together and making do the best they can to solve their problems. That seems like a pretty good message to me.

Andi: And very Trekkie.

Sue: Yes.

Andi: In that everyone has their own way to cope with disaster.

[laughter]

Sue: But if it had been, I don't know, Riker and Data in the cargo bay and Beverly and Geordi in engineering, we would have had probably different solutions.

Andi: Yeah. Yeah, I like that. It's showing how everybody's different strengths come into play. Especially in that Ro-- Roi. Hey, Roi, I found their ship name in the Ro Troi scenes, they have such different skill sets, and such different problem-solving techniques and such different priorities. It's super interesting to see those conflict.

Sue: Actually, I want to jump back to that for half a second, because I think the other part of that that bothers me, is that the disdain that Ro seems to have for Troi when O'Brien points out that she's the highest-ranking officer.

Jarrah: Yeah. She's just like, "Counselor Troi."

Sue: So, before she even suggests anything, Ro has put herself in this opposing position.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Sue: And I think that's part of the frustration.

Grace: Yeah. We've already got Ro as this standoffish person as a character. It felt a little unnecessary to add that extra distinction.

Jarrah: Yeah. I thought it fit with her character although she would have given Troi at least the opportunity to say what she wanted to do and then maybe developed a disdain when it was clear Troi didn't know really these things. But the other thing that was a little weird was also-- well, maybe not weird at this time in the series, but it seemed like Ro knew more about engineering than O'Brien did.

Grace: Which is weird.

Jarrah: At this point, he really is still the Transporter Chief.

Grace: But he is in engineering.

Jarrah: Yeah. Well, he's done some engineering feats and Ro is a pilot, so I don't know.

Andi: I think they just set her up to be hyper competent, because they wanted to contrast her with Troi.

Grace: Yeah, she was here to be a foil.

Andi: Yeah. Which is interesting, because contrasting super hyper competent Ro and then unsure, maybe not as confident in her skills Troi but then Troi ends up making the right decision, I just think that's interesting. We should say too that this is a strong Bechdel pass here,-

Grace: Oh, definitely.

Andi: -which is nice. It's not the typical conflict that you would see between female characters in this time frame of TV.

Grace: I definitely appreciate that. Yeah.

Andi: It's about science and decision making and leadership. That's cool.

Sue: It does make me wonder about Troi's rank. Like, is that just the rank you get when you're the head counselor on a ship, you're automatically Lieutenant Commander?

Grace: There are a lot of questions about Troi's career that I have. I have an entire episode devoted to that. I'm sure.

Jarrah: It's possible that she was always assigned to counseling and just rose through the ranks based on her performance in her job, and OA missions, and diplomacy and things like that.

Sue: But there are those positions in the actual military as well. It's just like-- I don't know the phrase for it, but it's almost like an honorary rank.

Jarrah: Well, like O'Brien in *Deep Space Nine* when-- That's not quite the same, but they keep saying that he's like-- What do they call it? A non-comm-- or?

Sue: Yeah.

Jarrah: So, he's in charge of a department, but he doesn't have the same rank. That's why he's chief. But that's a little bit different than saying someone's Lieutenant Commander.

Grace: That aside, are we ready to get into our final thoughts on this episode?

Jarrah: Sure.

Sue: I'm disappointed that we didn't get to hear the laughing Vulcan and his dog.

Jarrah: Yes.

Grace: Yeah, there's was a lot of potential there. But again, I'm feeling like we can fill all that out with Uncle Picard Sings the *Fun Times*.

[laughter]

Sue: According to Ron Moore in this, an AOL chat in 1998.

Andi: So, is that pre-Reddit Ask me anything?

Sue: Yeah, for sure. [chuckles]

Andi: Okay.

Grace: PR. Proto Reddit.

Andi: So, what did he say in this?

Grace: The quote we have here, is that he was asked if it was a reference to Sybok and he explained I just liked the image the title of the song conjured up. But if the laughing Vulcan and his dog isn't sung to the tune of the *Yellow Rose of Texas*, what's even the point?

[laughter]

Jarrah: Well, Grace, you have to write that.

Grace: I have to write everything, don't I?

Andi: I'm trying to think of a good rating metric.

Grace: Yeah. I think I'm going to rate this definitely 7.5 weird radishes out of 10, in that it is genuinely an all-around fun episode, even if it does have a few problems.

Andi: Okay. I will give it 8 out of 10. Creepy kids, morbid thoughts.

Grace: [chuckles] That little kid is like the shining kid of the Enterprise.

Andi: Unblinking dead eye kids are just my crack. I love them. [Grace chuckles]

Sue: I will give this 4 out of 5 disembodied Data's.

[laughter]

Jarrah: I will give it 8 out of 10 things that almost explode, but don't.

[laughter]

Grace: All around some positive stuff.

Sue: Yeah.

Andi: Just one thing that we forgot. The woman who was in charge of the bridge.

Jarrah: Oh, yeah.

Andi: There was a woman in charge of the bridge before unfortunately the console destroyed her.

Jarrah: Yup.

Grace: Those consoles are freaking death trap.

Sue: Lieutenant Monroe, right?

Andi: Yeah. So, that was cool.

Grace: More like Lieutenant Monroe, "Damn, a console just exploded."

Andi: [laughs]

Grace: Yeah. Comedy.

Jarrah: Lieutenant Monroe, no, she better don't.

[laughter]

Grace: Monroe, what a disaster.

Andi: I wonder if there is a way for us to say disaster more in this episode.

Sue: Disaster.

Andi: [laughs]

Grace: Disaster. Disaster.

Andi: Overall, a good episode, I think.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Grace: So, in case another disaster does come around, where can people find all of us online? Andi, where can they find you?

Andi: Easiest place is on Twitter, *@firsttimetrek*, where I'm live tweeting through my first time through *Star Trek*. But I have to warn you, I'm terrible in a disaster, and we'd probably die.

[laughter]

Grace: And what about you, Sue?

Sue: You can find me on Twitter, *@spaltor*. That's S-P-A-L-T-O-R.

Grace: And what about you, Jarrah?

Jarrah: You can also find me on Twitter, *@J-A-R-R-A-H penguin*.

Grace: And you can find me on Twitter, *@bonecrusherjenk*. That's B-O-N-E-C-R-U-S-H-E-R-J-E-N-K. And also in the elevator shaft tending to my radishes.

[laughter]

Sue: So creepy.

Grace: I will stare though. Fair warning.

Sue: And if you'd like to reach out to us as a show, you can email *crew@womenatwarp.com*. Find us on Twitter, *@womenatwarp*. Find us on Instagram, *@womenatwarp*. Find us on

Facebook at Guess what? *facebook.com/womenatwarp*. You can also find other podcasts from the Roddenberry Podcast network *over@podcasts.rodnenberry.com*.

Grace: No, guys, I think I see something on the horizon. Oh, God, it's a disaster.

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