

Women at Warp Episode 142: Well, Here We Yar

JARRAH:

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's Jarrah and thanks for tuning in. Today with us we have a few awesome familiar faces to our show, or voices I guess because we are a podcast, so I'll let them introduce themselves starting with your Jamala

JAMALA:

Heeeey! I'm Jamala Henderson, I use pronouns they/them and I've been a Star Trek fan since I can remember but I'm in my upper 40s so of course *laughs* yeah, It's been a long time.

JARRAH:

And Sarah?

SARAH:

Hi, my name is Sarah Gulde. I'm from Portland Oregon. I am the editor in chief of Star Trek Quarterly, an online fanzine you can find on Facebook and I'm really excited to be here!

JARRAH:

Awesome. And we will share the links to Star Trek Quarterly as well as any other cool projects that you folks want to promote in our show notes and social. And Aliza!

ALIZA:

Hi! I am Aliza Pearl. I am an actor, writer, trekkie, improviser and my upcoming project is a Klingon tabletop rpg playing the Star Trek Adventure system. Our campaign is called Blood of the Void and we are gonna be streaming on queue times so that's Twitch.TV/queuetimes. You can find us @bloodvoidRPG on Instagram and Twitter.

JARRAH:

Awesome did you have to learn to speak any Klingon for this?

ALIZA:

I didn't have to, but I *am* learning and it is very fun.

JARRAH:

Has anyone tried the Duolingo klingon app?

ALIZA:

Yeah. I started with that, and I needed grammar. I needed to learn the grammar first. So now I'm- I have Duolingo on hold and I'm doing like a Klingon language course first, and then I'll go back to Duolingo once I know some Klingon.

JARRAH:

Amazing. Well, before we get into our main topic we have a little bit of housekeeping to do first. Our show is made possible by our patrons on Patreon. If you're able to support our show you can hop over to [Patreon.com/womenatwarp](https://www.patreon.com/womenatwarp). That's P A T R E O N.com/womenatwarp and for as little as a dollar a month you get access to cool bonus content like watchalong tracks, and you get to hang out and watch stuff with us, thanks on social media, and you're also helping us keep going paying our expenses and helping us get out to report at conventions and things like that. But also right now we are taking part in Trekkies Together, which is a coalition of Star Trek Websites, podcasts, platforms, fans who are encouraging listeners, supporters, readers to take action and make donations if they can in support of organizations that support Black Lives Matter and basically a more just and equal society like Star Trek shows us. So if you're able to support an organization, Women At Warp we donate it individually to the East Of The River mutual aid fund. We encourage you to do that if you're able, and also to just reflect on how you can be advancing these issues in your own world and life. And we have a great article on our blog which is an open letter to White Trekkies from a fan of color that has a lot of great suggestions for ways that you can act and reflect going forward. And so I'd encourage you to hop over to [WomenAtWarp.com](https://www.WomenAtWarp.com) to check that out. So today we are going to talk about Tasha Yar and I wanted to start off with turning to her description in the TNG writers guide a.k.a. the TNG Bible and it's it's a long description so I just kind of pulled out some highlighted passages that I thought we could maybe touch on. So I don't know, Aliza would you want to read the first one or two there?

ALIZA:

Sure. "Despite the fact that she is only 28 years old, Tasha has been selected by Captain Picard as the starship's Security Chief, one of the few of the crew who performs the same function both aboard ship and off."

JARRAH:

All right. So I feel like we've got pretty standard opening and the one thing I will say about it, which *shouldn't* be that exciting but it is when you read the other character descriptions in the TNG Bible, is that it doesn't immediately talk about her being sexy. *all laugh* Like "She has a cool job."

ALIZA:

That's improvement, I guess. Okay. *laughs* "Tasha comes from an unfortunate Earth colony where a combination of harsh environmental changes and fanatical leaders had made existence there a hellish nightmare." Turkana 4, yeah. pretty scary dystopian place she grew up on. Funny enough I've been reading Parable of the Sower and it's kind of Turkana 4-esque. Like yeah the future dystopian L.A. in that story by Octavia Butler is very *pause* there's a lot of rape and a lot of scary stuff. *Dismemberment* *ugh* and oh there's a lot of stuff in there.

JAMALA:

shudders

JARRAH:

Interesting. Yeah. That totally is accurate. Also a great book that everyone should read.

ALIZA:

Yes. Tasha, "She also comes close to worshiping the Starfleet officers who embody this quality of devotion to duty and quiet decency."

JARRAH:

Yeah. So how do we feel about that? I thought it was interesting.

SARAH:

It's not something I picked up on in the show.

JAMALA:

Yeah me neither.

ALIZA:

Yeah. That's what stands out to me. Yeah.

SARAH:

Which I'm kind of glad because it's a little bit cringe-y. *noises of agreement*

JARRAH:

Well it's interesting because I feel like, you know, just thinking about it like The Parable of the Sower. It's kind of like her instinct is to try to escape and then like police what was wrong? Which is a bit interesting. And she doesn't seem- I mean, I guess we don't really learn like what was the federation's accountability to Turkana 4.

ALIZA:

That's a great point. Yeah.

JAMALA:

Yeah yeah. What happened there?

JARRAH:

Yeah. I mean I can see how you could arrive at that, you know, seeing what other humans have and just wanting to fully buy in and be a part of that. But it's hard to imagine not being like sort of disillusioned that while your people were suffering other humans were doing totally fine.

ALIZA:

Right. And then also there's this guilt of you- I feel like usually there's this guilt of having left and I wonder. Yeah, I never saw that really on screen and I wonder if that was considered in her character. I guess we'll see here, *laughs* if they had that layer to her. There's like the survivor's guilt usually if someone is going to leave a place like that. And also she had her sister who was still there. So that's pretty major.

SARAH:

And I could see coming from a horrible place like that and then turn your life into creating stability.

JAMALA:

Mm hmm. That makes a lot of sense.

JARRAH:

I think we do- There are some comments and other memos and stuff that I recall seeing about Tasha really really looking up to Captain Picard and it mentions this a bit in her character description that she really sees him as a mentor. But it talks about in her description to the extent that she's basically thinking of the rest of the crew and these senior officers as *Saints*? Which is really interesting. You can kind of see it in the way that she acts, the way that Denise Crosby acts. Her relationship with these characters in the first season and she's very very earnest.

JAMALA:

Mm hmm. Yes I was noticing that too as well actually. You know, it's interesting coming back and re-watching this show being a lot older as opposed to when I was younger and watching it. As far as I was concerned everybody on that crew was you know quote unquote adult to me, you know, even in my early to mid 20s I'm like "Oh of course all these folks are older." But she in particular, looking at her now it's like I can see that earnestness. I can see that sort of honesty and wanting to like portray whoever she is. But what I found interesting was, and I think we're gonna talk about this in a little bit, but her- when they talk about- OK so there's a specific episode and it's called Symbiosis. And she's having this like short very short conversation with Wesley about how people fall into drug addiction. And I've got to say whoever wrote that little passage, you know her, I don't want to call it soliloquy, but you know her- what she talks about it's *coming*. The voice that I hear in the actual words that she's saying, it sounds like somebody who's been through addiction in that way. And it makes me wonder was that supposed to be part of her character's past? Or did she merely *see it* enough around her that she learned from all of that. And then got up and made sure that wasn't her future. Like she really escaped having a future in that in that sense. But she definitely understood what was happening with, you know, drug addiction and where it leads people to.

ALIZA:

For sure.

JARRAH:

Yeah definitely. Jamala, did you want to read the next *crew giggles* cringe-y quote?

JAMALA:

I would say this is more than cringe-y. So, "Tasha's (unspecified) Ukrainian descent gives her an unusual quality of conditioned-body beauty that would have flabbergasted males of a few centuries earlier. *blech's* With fire in her eyes and a muscularly well-developed and *very female* body, she is capable of pinning most crewmen to the mat -- or being just an exciting sensual and intellectual challenge to males who enjoy (win or lose) full equality between the genders. *crew snickers* Neither Number One nor Captain Picard is blind to these qualities in Tasha, but she finds it difficult to treat these "saints" as mere mortals." So there's our quotation of saints again and it sounds to me like what they had in mind was to have her sort of really hold all of the officers, her commanding officers above her, in very very high regard. You know?

JARRAH:

What I like about that quote is the part that is like "to males who enjoy full equality between the genders" like it's a pastime?

SARAH:

Right.

JARRAH:

It's just like the fun-

ALIZA:

It's a diversion for you know, *crew laughs* men who enjoy equality for others. *distressed* *Riiiiick*.

JARRAH:

I mean that does seem to accurately describe Riker *crew laughs* .

JAMALA:

That first sentence though is really what got to me. You know "unspecified Ukrainian *descent* gives her an unusual quality of *conditioned body beauty* that would have flabbergasted males of a few centuries earlier" like, that her type of physique didn't exist *all laugh* before? Or what? I mean I don't understand .

ALIZA:

laughing Yeah, what *does* that mean?!

SARAH:

Is that just a really creepy way to say she's athletic? *sounds of laughter and agreement*

ALIZA:

I think they did *the most* with this sentence. *all laugh*

JARRAH:

Yeah I mean, that is how I read it. I read it like “Yeah she's *strong*.” She's Lara Croft before Lara Croft. *Jamala laughs* The like, the trope the fighting f-toy. I mean I guess like the best spin I could put on that would be it's noting that she's *unconventionally* attractive? But it does kind of explain why they felt the need to repeatedly in many of the episodes have characters say that she is attractive.

JARRAH:

Huh that's interesting.

JAMALA:

I did notice in one conversation, there was just this offhand conversation between her and Worf.

SARAH:

excited I was going to bring up the same scene. I think I know exactly what you're talking about.

JAMALA:

Yeah. You know that scene that I'm talking about, where she's discussing you know different crew members. You know, she's in a competition and of course she's, you know she's the security chief. So she's top of her game with all types of skills, but she starts discussing different qualities about the competitors that she's gonna be up against and she and Worf are just talking and Worf is just like “Ah, you're going to win. You're going to take that guy.” And then at some point you know he's like *Worf voice* Well you are favored in the ship's pool.” *laughs*

SARAH:

I mean it's kind of cute. He's like “I bet on you” and she's like “Oh you bet on me?” And then she just smiles at him until he gets really uncomfortable. *laughs*

JAMALA:

She just smiles until he walks off! *all laugh*

ALIZA:

It's so cute! I love it.

JAMALA:

It is cute. It was really cute. I enjoyed that. But you know unfortunately, of course that is her last episode. But it was a nice moment that showed that *laughs* the one person who most likely is probably the most physically conditioned on the Enterprise, Worf- I don't know I could see him taking out quite a few folks but there may be species on the Enterprise that I'm not familiar with

that could have knocked Worf on his ass. But he very much, you know, recognizes her strength and respects it and that was a nice thing to see in that conversation between the two of them.

JARRAH:

Yeah definitely. Well, let's go through some of these memorable moments. Although actually, I do want to quickly point out before we get to that, the Bible does also point out that her basically substitute childhood best friend is Wesley Crusher *all laugh* because she was deprived of her own childhood. And it says quote "She treats this boy like the most wonderful person imaginable. *all burst out laughing* Wes is the childhood friend that Tasha never had." Which is sad but kind of adorable. *all continue laughing*

JAMALA:

Maybe offscreen, I don't know. I don't remember- well that particular conversation actually that I'm talking about you can see that kind of rapport between her and Wesley. But it's more like, you know, an older crew member doting on a younger person who doesn't understand the ways of the universe.

JARRAH:

Yeah it's not like Seven and Naomi Wildman.

JAMALA:

laughs Exactly!

JARRAH:

That said, I could have seen that dynamic happening had Tasha continued.

JAMALA:

Well *that* plus now I'm gonna go back and see if I can actually see that dynamic. Because it sounds to me like they have a lot of set up interactions between specific crew members that they would have liked to explore in ways like that. But I honestly I just *pause* I don't remember too many. Well I don't know. I actually didn't get a chance to look at the Naked Now again. So y'all will have to remind me about what happened there. Course we all know that's one of the craziest Star Trek episodes ever! *laughs* You know, where we find out about a fully functional Data but- which I'm sure is a whole nother conversation within itself.

JARRAH:

Well we'll *definitely* have to get to that. And it's the second episode that she really features in. But let's start with Encounter At Farpoint and our first impressions of Tasha. Which mostly I remember her like trying to pull a phaser on Q and then getting frozen for objecting to the court.

ALIZA:

Yeah. I don't remember- I didn't re-watch this very recently, so I don't remember much more of Yar specifically in this episode, to be honest. Does she do much more than that?

JARRAH:

I don't think so. But, I think like us in terms of establishing a first impression I would say that it establishes strength, vigilance, but she's also very emotional. Like, by when she is objecting in the court to, you know, kind of Q treating this sort of dystopian future kangaroo court as a joke and how it reminds her of her planet and the messed up things that happen there.

ALIZA:

So we see she takes a strong stand early on. She's passionate and she speaks up. Nice.

JARRAH:

Also I may be wrong about what episode it actually happens in, but it's like pretty early on that we get the mention of rape gangs on her planets.

ALIZA:

Yeah I think I think she does mention it maybe in the drug soliloquy *laughs* as Jamala called it. I think I remember her mentioning it there. *Jamala laughs*

JARRAH:

And she hallucinates running from the rape gangs in Where No One Has Gone Before and I think that's really like the only kind of memorable moment she has in that episode. It's *pause* I don't know, I would say like it almost kind of works better today than it did at the time because at the time sexual assault was not talked about really on TV and the way that it was put in there I think was almost just kind of salacious and not like really nuanced "Look at how, you know, this is part of society that is in a state of dysfunction." But, it's complicated but I think that it kind of just *pauses* it's like she's basically a survivor of trauma. But you never really get that more than just the mention of it.

ALIZA:

That's a great point.

JAMALA:

Well this is true. You know a lot of the sort of context around specific characters come in dialogue, when we found out about their backgrounds except for, you know, sometimes later on we actually explored different aspects of their background i.e. Tasha's sister who comes back later. Yeah. That- I don't know. I just remember there being a lot of emphasis on the fact that they had a woman as a security chief who was in charge of this. And I think that where *laughs* I think that where this comes out the most is in the episode that I have read dubbed "The Worst Wakandans." *all laugh* It's one of the very first, you know, Star Trek episodes and she's prominent in it. You know it's- what is the actual name of that episode?

JARRAH:
it's Code Of Honor.

JAMALA:
Thank you. Now you know what I like to call it. It was- oh God it was so hard to re-watch this episode but it was very- it was actually very interesting. And one of the- I don't know if I want to say it's the worst depiction of a culture involving black folks ever that I've seen, but I think it's probably one of Star Trek's worst.

SARAH:
For what it's worth, the cast agrees with you. They talk about how awful it is.

JAMALA:
Oh really? Oh really? I'd love to read that! Oh wow I'd love to read that, because I was looking- It was funny to me as I was watching that episode and thinking a lot of this is a way to kind of pull out what we see of Tasha Yar, as her function of security chief on this particular ship, but at the same time everything about the- and there the name of their actual culture is Laigon?

JARRAH:
Ligonians.

JAMALA:
Ligonians. And the like Ligonians from I guess Ligon 2, and it involves a vaccine interestingly enough which is the same thing that happens on Symbiosis. But there are so many things in this episode that are just so hard to like watch. You know you've got first of all the costumes with all of the African-American cast. They reminded me of *laughs* I guess what I would see like Aladdin riding around in. In like in a Disney movie or something with the turbans and the you know the very kind of spicy costumes that they had on. The women's costumes were pretty cool. But a lot of how they depicted this particular quote unquote culture were very interesting. Didn't really much agree with it until the end of course. But I still see problems with the way that they have that setup. *laughs*

ALIZA:
Well I mean, the biggest thing is that like tying back into what we read from the show bible how you know "how to write Tasha Yar" and talking about her like, how did they weirdly state her ethnicity?

JAMALA:
Ukrainian descent. *laughs*

ALIZA:
Yeah but like, what was it? Unspecified!

JAMALA:
Unspecified Ukrainian.

ALIZA:
Whatever *that* means. *all laugh* And then just her “*Very* female body and muscular well-developed” So like first of all super objectifying her right? And then this episode also objectifies her literally making her an object to be captured and a trophy of heroism for this leader on this planet.

JAMALA:
Absolutely.

ALIZA:
Then you layer on the already very complex and tricky and not always great relationship between just like generally you know black men and how they are viewed as if they are dating white women and white women who date black men, and just like *all that stickiness* you know, just drop that in there too like *laughs*.

JAMALA:
Exactly. And the anger-

ALIZA:
It's just chock- Oh yes! Oh my God! You're right! The anger of, what is it the first wife?

JAMALA:
Yes Yareena. Her name was Yareena. She was the first one and the owner of all the lands. You know, there was some scheming going on from the very beginning. And of course people on the Enterprise figured it *out* based on, you know, the rules of the culture? But I don't know. It's like *laughs* shady shady shady shit happening from the very beginning.

ALIZA:
You know what's funny too is like, this episode *so easily* with just some core tweaks could have been cool. It could have been good, because the only like shred of goodness I can see in this episode is seeing black characters not have to be the hero, not have to be perfect in an untouchable, and wise, and magical. Like it actually is refreshing to get to see black characters that are not sanitized. You know what I mean? Although they *are* in a different way in this episode.

JAMALA:
There definitely- it's definitely refreshing, but at the same time I feel like they're still held to specific, you know, cultural construct from that time period that *we* would have considered to be not OK. Right? It was like you're holding up this completely created black society up against you know these, I'm sorry to say, white standards of what would be considered to be civilized right?

CREW::

Right.

JAMALA:

Because the very last sentence in that particular episode is, you know “You may have more technology but we still know how to be civilized.” Or something to that degree. And I was like. “Whaa?” *laughs* “Who wrote this?” *all laugh* Who wrote this?!?

JARRAH:

They’re like literally withholding a vaccine from like dying kids or something. So they’re very much portrayed as like these evil exoticized baddies.

ALIZA:

Yeah.

JAMALA:

Then again much later in that same episode- in that other episode Symbiosis. Right? But you had two *white* cultures sparring over it with equal powers, just one was overtaking the other. It’s kind of funny when you start doing you know analysis of these episodes *together* because you start to see a lot of themes and it makes you wonder “Gee, where are you getting these from?”

SARAH:

I think the scene that bothers me the most in Code Of Honor is when Deanna and Tasha are talking and Tasha like talks about the leader and she basically says “I don’t like him but I’m attracted to him.”

JAMALA:

muttering I hate that scene.

JARRAH:

Its so gross!

SARAH:

It’s so gross.

JARRAH:

And Deanna’s basically like “Oh admit it you totally want to bone him. *all laugh* I’m a great counselor.”

JAMALA:

And she didn’t *laughs* she didn’t do it *that way*, but she literally tricked *Sarah laughs* literally tricked Tasha into saying- well just into being free with her feelings you know? But I was like “Damn Deanna. That was cold.” *all laugh*

JARRAH:

Yeah and for no reason. And like, it's not like it's helpful to her to do it.

JAMALA:

Well you know, bringing out the underlying feelings and emotions of what are actually causing your actions, I could see that would be the reason why Deanna would do something like that, if only to help Yar sort of consciously understand what she was getting on about. But at the same time yeah, that was kind of cold.*laughs*

JARRAH:

This is also the episode where like four people say she's very attractive or like a very striking woman or like I think Picard says that at one point like "I acknowledge she's very attractive" or something. And it's like, "We have eyes thanks."

ALIZA:

And there's a quote on the Memory Alpha which is the leader Lutan introducing his wife to Picard. So it goes "This is my first, Yareena" and Picard goes "Lutan is a fortunate man." So there's a lot of just commenting on women's attractiveness in this episode.

JAMALA:

Yeah. Yeah.

JARRAH:

I do like Yareena's ruched pink shiny catsuit. *all laugh* That's the only highlight of this episode to me. *all laugh*

JAMALA:

OK, I will say that there is one particular moment that I actually enjoyed about this episode. So if we're talking about the scene in Code Of Honor where Yareena and Tasha are having basically, well I guess Tasha's basically using her whatever Starfleet training to kind of negotiate with this you know with Yareena about not fighting for this. Not taking you know this brutal action of a fight to the death. Well *laughs* by the end of that conversation Yars like "Well you know, look the way we do things" and she's- Yareena is not having it. And the last thing she says is "You are on *our world!*" *all laugh* I just love that because it says a lot about cultures dealing with other cultures and you know the actions that you should or should not take. Of course there's a lot of discussion about the Prime Directive in that particular episode and how to go about doing that. But of course all of the actions taken by the Ligonians are, you know, viewed through the eyes of Starfleet officers and they deem most of the cultural shenanigans as being very beneath them, and it comes through very clearly in that episode as far as I'm concerned. But that one moment depicted what I thought to be a very interesting, I don't know, power dynamic between

these two women specifically, you know, a black woman and a white woman from two different societies. I found that really fascinating.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Like the Prime Directive it prevents you interfering but apparently doesn't prevent you from being hella judge-y.

JAMALA:

Right.

ALIZA:

Right. My goodness, yeah.

JARRAH:

But it's worth noting that the director of this episode was fired for being racist to the cast *multiple 'ooooh's* mid-episode. So may also not have helped the final product in terms of it being portrayed with an additionally racist lens.

JAMALA:

Yeah. It hurts to watch, it really does. Yeah. You know despite some of the tiny highlights that we have given. But you know not my favorite hence my title "The Worst Wakandans."

ALIZA:

laughs The worst Wakandans! I love it.

JARRAH:

Does anyone have any other thoughts about Symbiosis, since those two are kind of similar.

ALIZA:

Just that, yeah- you know, like you said when you compare these episodes to each other in hindsight it's funny how much like the racial and social dynamics of the times, or at least what we were talking about publicly back then, jumps out in these episodes. So you know the one, Symbiosis, is about basically one culture- one planet's culture making another planet's culture dependent on them through the use of narcotics and it started as a vaccine but then they cured the plague that the vaccine was made for- or not a vaccine a treatment or a cure for it. But then it was a narcotic so they got them hooked and they just kept making it stronger and stronger. So these people became dependent on it. And obviously that echoes a lot of real world stuff especially in the 90s with all the like anti-drug campaigns. You know "say no to drugs" "keep kids off drugs." "This is your brain on drugs" all that stuff we were like saturated with in the 90s. So you see that and it's so interesting how like the whiteness of the aliens kind of is used to remove any of the overt racial and social commentary.

JAMALA:

Yeah that's very true. You know something else came up in my mind while you were talking about that as well which was I see parallels to today's kind of opioid epidemic? You know with the rich folks, you know, there was a man and a woman and they were really like uppity and full of themselves and I just, you know, they'd be like Big Pharma. *laughs* You know with everybody else being like "I need that opioid to be able to live!" and then you have people you know totally getting hooked on this thing and they feel like they can't live without it only because they don't know that they can't. And in the meantime it's ruined their society and done a lot of interesting things. So that's one thing I see about that particular episode but in terms of judginess there's definitely, you know, a 9 or 10 factor of judginess from the Enterprise crew being that once again the prime directive comes into play, you know, with just how much they can help or not help. And what's funny is that, *laughs* I mean they wanted to help in the beginning and so they gave- they were going to give the society that was lacking the medicine, apparently, new coils for their ships to be able to get more shipments but *laughs* after they realized what's going on they're like "Nah, we're not going to give you these coils" you know? Because they were gonna be- the other side decided to give that lithium shipment for free to the culture that was suffering when they know that the only way that they can keep this other culture on their leash. So that was really interesting to me.

ALIZA:

Yeah, that's one of those episodes where like I watch it and towards the end I wonder like "What's Picard going to do? Like how do you get out of this predicament?" And so him pulling that move of denying them the coils at the end you're actually like "Oh yeah. OK OK Picard, I see you. I see you." because he's basically just trying to like, in his own you know adhering to the Prime Directive way, he's trying to cut the chain of dependence. And the only way he can do that is by not helping this chain to continue. So by not giving them the coils they no longer have the freighters to pick up them medicine and if you don't have the freighters to pick up the medicine then they had to get that- so it was actually- yeah I thought that was a pretty boss move for Picard ultimately.

JAMALA:

There are quite a few boss moves like that, and you know the writing around that gets better as we go on because you know we're really we're dancing around in season one here *laughs* and there are so many episodes that are just like "I'm going to forget about that one." *all laugh* "Gonna just toss that one away. Let me just fast forward to season three here."

JARRAH:

Yeah. One of those moments that I wanted to mention was when Tasha gets put in the penalty box in Hide And Q, and I remember really really not liking- Hide and Q was one of those episodes I had on VHS tape when I was a kid and so I watched it a lot because I had access to it. But I remember really not liking that, because I like Tasha kind of is like getting teary about how unfair it is and Picard is kind of comforting her and in retrospect like I think that was maybe a bit of internalized sexism on my part. And it's probably not necessarily *that* bad, but I think it actually really does speak to how they were describing her and the character by a bible as she's

someone who really really wants to impress Picard. And she also really really wants to believe in fairness and wants to be able to protect everyone. And so she's like feeling like she's really failed in that moment. That's pretty much the only Tasha moment in that episode. Like many of these episodes which is partly why she left, but we'll get to that in due course. *Jamala laughs* But we should talk about the Naked Now.

JAMALA:

I'm going to let somebody else start that one off. *Aliza laughs*

ALIZA:

I did watch this yesterday first of all. Second episode coming out the gate with the crazy, with the wildness of direct reference to tTOS, which is actually kind of fun. You know I appreciate that. Might as well just get it out of the way early into the show. But yes, the Naked Now. So the whole crew gets basically infected with something that makes them have no inhibitions as if they're intoxicated. And so there's a lot of sexy times, there's a lot of making out in the corridors-

JAMALA:

A lot of giggling. *laughs*

ALIZA:

Lot of giggling. Lot of- Tasha in particular breaks into *laughs* just so hilarious. She breaks into Deanna Troi's quarters and pulls out all of her like flowy, flowery, you know, clothing and is like "Deanna I want to change my look and be more *feminine*." So I guess that's what her inhibition is, is that if she's too feminine she will not be taken seriously, or she won't be considered strong or whatever it is. And that's just really telling you know that that's the first thing that she does when her inhibitions are down.

JAMALA:

That's really interesting. And my thought that came up as you were talking about that, was you know that could have been something that was acculturated within her coming from a planet that was you know full of quote unquote rape gangs. You know, in order to avoid that the last thing she'd want to do is to look like a meal to those roving bands of horny dudes. I don't know. So. *laughs*

JARRAH:

Wow, I feel like you have just uncovered so many more levels to this episode that I never appreciated before. *Jamala laughs*

ALIZA:

Totally yeah! I think you're right on point with that Jamala.

JAMALA:

Yeah. I mean it's something that could have come from just, you know, I'm looking at this picture of her holding that poor cat *all laugh* you know with with men and holding flashlights behind her and she's obviously, this is you know obviously her flashback to when she was on Turkana 4 and like she's obviously very scared and she's trying to hide from these rape gangs and I can't imagine what kind of ways that she had, sort of I guess, put on as a coat in order to protect herself from that kind of violence and that kind of you know unstructured obviously unlawful society.

JARRAH:

Yeah. No I mean, and yeah we all know that that is things that are behavior that real people do to try to avoid sexual harassment and assault and that is super interesting you know because I always thought that it was kind of more like trying to make her safe for an audience like "Oh don't worry. She secretly wants to be feminine." But I think like those two things can exist simultaneously. That's a super interesting way to look at it.

JAMALA:

It's just something that made me think about who she would be as somebody with that kind of traumatic past trying to cover up that traumatic past in a way that could never hurt her again, and putting on that Starfleet uniform could be part of that.

SARAH:

It's a shame they were writing characters on such a superficial level in the first season, because then you get later on and you see like Picard processing his trauma from being Locutus on the Vineyard and you realize "Oh they they actually figured out how to do this later on." What could we have had of Tasha if they had been doing this right out of the gate like some of the newer shows are doing?

JAMALA:

Yeah yeah it would've been a whole different level of storytelling. But my view of how I see season 1 at this point is kind of like *laughs* you know a 60s hangover. And then like trying to understand what Star Trek could be in this moment at the moment that they were making it in the you know the late 80s early 90s.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Well, and so then she sleeps with Data. *all laugh*

SARAH:

That was an awesome Segue.

ALIZA:

We bury the lead on this whole episode.

JARRAH:

laughs I didn't know how to introduce that. So then that happened.

JAMALA:
Goodness.

JARRAH:
Which, tricky consent issues here. Because she's ostensibly drunk with disease, like polywater drunk, and she's just like "Data I want to bone you" and I mean it's supposed to be like "it's removing inhibitions" and "it's what you really want" but like it's also like into alcohol and it's not necessarily making good decisions.

ALIZA:
We also have the direct comparison to make with Geordi, because Geordi *sees* that she is not herself and he's like "Nope! Not gonna go there"

JARRAH:
And Riker also kind of refuses to let Troi go there for the same reason. So there's like multiple other people who are like "No I can't when you're like this." Obviously I don't think that there- I think that they just think, I don't know how they thought. Did they think it was sexy? Did they think it was funny? Did they think it was both? Why was it not an issue when it was Data?

ALIZA:
Mm hmm. I think there's maybe some safety, or at least perceived safety, because he's an android and they're like "Oh he's like" I don't want to say childlike because then this whole conversation becomes *much* creepier. *all laugh*

JARRAH:
"Innocent?"

ALIZA:
Innocent, yeah. He has an innocence to him that makes it like "OK yes the human dudes would you know these are standup dudes and they know better than to make that choice." But he has this innocence to him as someone who's learning about humanity and learning to be around humans and he's like "You know I haven't gotten to try out this function of mine." So we're not OK.

JARRAH:
I do feel like I do have to shout out a part of another podcast on this episode that made me like laugh so hard that snot was running down my face, which is the podcast Treks in the City, which if you haven't listened it's very funny. And when they did the Naked Now they had Paul F. Tompkins on, and he talks about how Data says like "I am programmed in multiple techniques"

Jamala laughs and they point out how Data is usually very specific about numbers. *laughs* He doesn't ever say *how many*. And they are like "Like two?" *all laugh* And then there's an extensive discussion about what they might be. So I would say go take a listen to that episode.

JAMALA:

Actually I will go listen to that. That's really funny! *laughs*

JARRAH:

I mean I do kind of like the scene at the end where she's like "We're never talking about this again" although again like, if you're if you're taking it from the perspective that this was iffy on the consent front then like it's not really about funny but obviously it was not intended to be iffy. So. It's got some issues.

JAMALA:

I also feel like maybe she felt more, I don't know, comfortable with Data because she knew she could trust him? I mean I think that was part of it, but yeah with the tricky consent issues it just the whole thing just gets weird.

SARAH:

It's definitely like a 1987 level of comprehension of consent.

JAMALA:

laughs Because yeah, overall my *impression* was that this was supposed to be funny. You know what I'm sayin? Like "Oh this is what we think is cute giggle giggle."

JARRAH:

Right. And that dress that she evidently stole from Troi. *laughs* Like, we never see Troi wear that but holy crap that dress.

ALIZA:

Yeah. It's like, there's a lot of under boob right? It's like yeah middle and under boob just hanging out.

JARRAH:

It's all torso. It's like right from your sternum to your like pubic bone. *all laugh*

JAMALA:

Yeah. You know I don't have any issues with like you know costumes. I only have issues with actions and because it seems to me that it wasn't very much- it wasn't clear, you know, like I think what Sarah said rings true with me. It was definitely in 1987 you know sort of confused way of looking at consent issues.

SARAH:

I'm definitely flashing back to the end of Sixteen Candles right now.

JAMALA:

Oh dear.

ALIZA:

Wait, what was that?

JAMALA:

That was a *horrible*- you're talking about the car thing?

SARAH:

Yeah. The really popular girl who wakes up with the nerdy guy and is basically like "Oh you date raped me. OK."

ALIZA:

gasps What?! Oh my.

JAMALA:

And *that* was supposed to be funny.

SARAH:

That was OK.

JAMALA:

That's- That's definitely not OK. *laughs* Wow.

ALIZA:

Holy crap. I forgot *all* that.

JARRAH:

I mean they certainly I think they tried to make it more palatable.

SARAH:

They tried to make it romantic. *laughs*

ALIZA:

GROSS.

JAMALA:

Ew.

SARAH:

Thank you 80s for like, you know, all that stuff we have to unlearn now.

JAMALA:

"You must unlearn what you have learned." Oh sorry. Wrong franchise. *all laugh*

JARRAH:

All right. Well let's look at the death of Tasha Yar. *laughs* The *first* death of Tasha Yar. So sad.

JAMALA:

Just watched it like 5 minutes ago. Well not five minutes ago, but just before we started talking. It happened quick. I couldn't believe it. I feel like some, you know, it must have it must have been very quick that she decided she wasn't coming back. But then the decision to kill her the way that they did, didn't give her much of a goodbye obviously which I guess at the time belies how they treated her as a character as a part of that ensemble. But it really didn't feel like a death that would befit a member of, you know, a regular member of the crew who is- the bridge crew I guess is how I should say it. Had she been on the show longer, and of course she does come back in Season 3, but had she been on the show longer she might have maybe they would have handled that differently. But I honestly did not like the way that she went out at all. Even though they explained it away, they explain it away by saying "Well she died doing what she loved you know in the line of duty et cetera et cetera." It just felt really random.

ALIZA:

Yeah for sure there's like the long- not long. But like her memorial service that they have for at the end of the episode.

JARRAH:

Oh gosh, that's just her talking about herself? She has to actually- no she doesn't even talk about herself, she talks about other people. It's like a reverse of a funeral where other people talk about the person that died. It's the person that's dead talking about other people that are still alive.

SARAH:

I think part of what made it so abrupt is that she didn't even get any character development in her final episode. They let Deanna have all these very emotional scenes but nothing for Tasha. And she's just kind of gone.

JAMALA:

Yeah very very true.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Well, Denise Crosby has definitely talked a lot about why she left and said that it was amicable with Gene Roddenberry. That she basically said "Hey, I'm not getting enough to do here" and Gene Roddenberry apparently said "You know this is supposed to be like the original series where there's three main characters here. So it's Data, Riker, and Picard and that's just

how it's going to be and I can't actually promise you more but if you want out you can have out." And at that point it seemed like that was a good decision and they- and then I remember definitely reading that the decision to kill her off kind of abruptly was an attempt to show that quote "space is a dangerous place" like this could happen to anyone at any time and you could find yourself on bed in sickbay with a purple splotch on your face just stone dead.

SARAH:

Isn't that what red shirts are for? *all laugh* I also-I've seen Marina Sirtis talk about how they were gonna fire *her* because three women in an ensemble cast is way too many. And then because Denise wanted to leave that saved her job.

ALIZA:

Oh wow! I didn't know that.

JARRAH:

Yeah. She talked about it at Vegas a few years ago, and she also talked about it on a Mission Log I believe and said that they they had decided that the ensemble was too big. And even though, you know as much as I'm glad they didn't get rid of Worf given where Worf went, I think if you look at season one they like duplication between Worf and Yar didn't really make a lot of sense. But they were like "No there's too many women." So- and Marina wasn't seen to have like the same backing in the fanbase and Majel was apparently like giving her advice to try to go out and go to conventions and make sure that she built enough of a loyal following so she wouldn't get fired. And she said that if Denise hadn't left then she 100 percent would be gone.

JAMALA:

Yeah. I find that really interesting. And the fact that they thought three women in that ensemble was too much. Yeah I find that a little bit reprehensible.

JARRAH:

Well and the first convention that I met you at Jamala, was with Denise Crosby and she's super lovely and you actually sort of like exceed her panel. And I remember her talking about how she thought that Tasha really should have had a chance to take the Borg Queen. *everyone 'ooh's*

JAMALA:

Awesome. You know, that was probably one of the best memories of my life. They asked me to be a moderator for her at GeekGirlCon. And I believe that was 2014? What I remember, she was amazing, she was funny, she was gracious, she was so nice to me, and she was incredibly funny. Do you remember the story that she told Jarrah, about Jonathan Frakes, a pink bathrobe, and an earthquake on a paramount set? Do you remember that? I don't remember the details, but she went out with that story *Sarah laughs* and it was the funniest thing ever and everyone was laughing at the very end and that's how she ended the session. It was totally awesome!

JARRAH:

Well I *do* remember her talking about Yesterday's Enterprise, which we should definitely touch on before we end today, and she talked about how she wanted to come back pretty much right away at least for some guest appearances and Yesterday's Enterprise was sort of designed in some ways to give her this more meaningful death than Skin Of Evil. And what I remember her talking about after that, and we can talk a bit more about Yesterday's Enterprise, but she said that when she pitched coming back as Selah, well she pitched like coming back as Tasha's daughter and Berman apparently was like "Well how could that have possibly happened?" And. And she was like "Well there was Castillo right there." *Sarah laughs* And he's like "Yeah but it doesn't make any sense. Like when would you have had time to do that?" and she's like "Well I don't know how long it takes you..." *all laugh* And I think that you know we talked about Selah fair amount on the show before, but I think it would have been more- we would have liked it probably more all around if it had not been like the child of rape by a Romulan. And then Tasha getting murdered, cause just kind of like- it's so awful after you know she had this story of being a survivor of trauma and making something of herself dying tragically young coming back sacrificing herself for meaning and then having *another* meaningless death. So we'll just, you know, it would have been so much cooler if it was like her kid with Castillo.

ALL:

Yeah.

JAMALA:

I agree with that. And I also agree that, you know, because when Selah did show up it was just so- it was kind of meaningless in a way because nobody understood how she could look like Tasha Yar *laughs* you know, because what happened happened in a different time- you know a timeline I guess to the point that you know Picard didn't get what was going on. Guinan had a sense of what was going on, but it just it had no meaning except for us as an audience to be like "Eeeey" you know? But I remember the episode where Picard sees her and, you know, he's freaked out but he's like, you know, he has another conversation with Guinan and kind of like "Something wrong happened. And I think that the fact that she showed up here on Romulus is your fault." *all laugh* It's like "No Guinan" he is just like "Well, but I don't understand how this happened so let's just you know focus on the situation at hand or whatever" and it just it kind of amounted to not a bunch. But I guess it was fun for the audience, is how I see it.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Any other thoughts on Yesterday's Enterprise or Selah stuff?

SARAH:

Well on Enterprise- or Yesterday's Enterprise. First of all I need one of those belts from that episode because those are amazing. *all laugh* Second, there is a line that Tasha has when she's talking to Castillo and she wants to move to the Enterprise C and he's like "No" and she's like "Show me someone on the ship who could do this job better than me." And I just love a woman getting to say that, because we never get to say that.

JARRAH:

Yeah, it even makes me think of like an original series where Uhuras like wiring some things and she's really doubting herself and Spock has to come over and be like "Trust me you're good at this." They really was the Next Generation where women can say "Yes I am good at this."

JAMALA:

Well I'll just say that, you know, Yesterday's Enterprise is one of my top favorite episodes. So it's definitely up in my top five but it's not the first. But yeah it's an amazing episode. I still love it.

JARRAH:

Yeah I love it too. It's got so much great stuff and it's I would say the best Tasha episode by far.

JAMALA:

Word. Agreed.

JARRAH:

So the last Tasha appearance we get is in All Good Things, in the finale. And I do really love that moment where Picard sees her and is kind of moved by it, and it's a very touching moment. And I like that her character was kind of given that attention in the finale. But yeah, and we also see her sister Shara in Legacy. But that's really the life and times of Tasha Yar in official canon Star Trek content. Does anyone have any final thoughts? Maybe you do on a round robin some final thoughts on Tasha or any of the episodes we've discussed?

SARAH:

I've got two, first of all the way they treat Tasha in All Good Things was great. I wish Jadzia Dax had gotten that treatment in the final episode of Deep Space Nine. And also this is a total tangent, but there was a panel last weekend and it was Denise Crosby and Jonathan Frakes and John DeLancie and they were talking about how they had auditioned for the show and Denise was like "I actually was auditioning for Troi until they found Marina Sirtis." And so that set my brain off on this whole tangent of Tasha Yar in Deanna Troi situation. So Tasha having to deal with Lwuxana Troi as a mother. I just don't see her going off and eating chocolate sundaes, I see her breaking stuff every time Lwuxana comes to visit. *all laugh*

JARRAH:

Yeah. They actually auditioned for each other's parts and the part of Yar before it was given to Denise Crosby was originally called Lieutenant Masha Hernandez.

JAMALA:

Yeah.

ALIZA:

Oh really?

JARRAH:

Yeah yeah. But they were gonna cast Marina in that role.

JAMALA:

Yeah. The original- I have the wiki up in front of me right here. It says originally Marina Sirtis auditioned for this role while Denise Crosby read for Deanna Troi. Roddenberry decided that each would be better as the other's character and Mashas description was altered to reflect Crosby's blonde look.

SARAH:

Oh yeah! Because Tasha Yar was modeled after Vasquez from Aliens

JAMALA:

"Unspecified Ukrainian." *all laugh*

JARRAH:

I think it just means she's really white. *all laugh*

JAMALA:

Whatever that means, I don't know.

JARRAH:

Any final thoughts from you, Aliza?

ALIZA:

Just that it's very fun to think about Tasha Yar and talk about Tasha Yar and appreciate her, because Denise Crosby and the character both have this very special place in in the franchise where you know they had a short run but then they came back a few times and just kind of like solidified who they were in the franchise. Which I, yeah I appreciate that as the character doing that and also as Denise Crosby just sticking around and being like "Yeah you know I left, but I'm still here." Like I don't know, I personally just on a professional level admire that because there are so many professional relationships that can end and not be, you know, not end on a great note. And then you never work with that person again. But I don't know, I think it's kind of cool that she was able to come back and still continue that relationship and then contribute that character and other characters to the franchise. So big ups big ups for Tasha Yar. I Stan.

JARRAH:

And Jamala?

JAMALA:

Yeah, I enjoy talking about Tasha Yar. I really enjoyed being able to moderate that panel years ago. And you know just looking at her now has given me a really fun look at who that particular character- what kind of impact that character had because she was there for *part of one* season, and most of one season, and then came back for guest appearances. But she lived on in the memories of many many Star Trek fans. And you know I think that having a woman security officer at the very beginning of that show was a bold move in that particular era, the era of my youth. I also just don't- I want to give a shout out to her as an actor who was really interested in what was going on with fans because we all remember, you know, she had produced a couple of documentaries about Star Trek fans called Trekkies and then there was this follow up. And I remember really enjoying those, because she was so curious as to why so many people were so into Star Trek, and not just liked Star Trek but were obsessed with Star Trek, you know, kind of like we are. *all laugh* And I always found that really fun. And I guess I appreciate this opportunity to talk about, you know, what that character's legacy is and how we can still enjoy that whole universe today. So yeah. This was fun. And thanks for allowing me to be a part of this conversation.

JARRAH:

Well thanks so much for joining us. We'll close out here. So Jamala, where can people find you elsewhere on the Internet?

JAMALA:

You can find me on the Twitters @Jamnhen. J A M N H E N.

JARRAH:

Aliza?

ALIZA:

You can find me on Instagram and Twitter @AlizaPearl A L I Z A pearl, and on Twitch, twitch.TV/apizaliza A P I Z A L I Z A.

JARRAH:

and Sarah?

SARAH:

Best way to find me will be through Star Trek Quarterly. You can just search for that on Facebook.

JARRAH:

And I'm Jarrah, you can find me @Jarrahpenguin on Twitter. That's J A R R A H-penguin. And to learn more about our show or to contact us visit Womenatwarp.com or find us on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram @womenatwarp. You can also email us at crew@womenatwarp.com. And for more from the Roddenberry podcast network visit podcasts.Roddenberry.com.