

## Women at Warp Episode 19: Star Trek Matriarchies

JARRAH:

Hi and welcome to Women At Warp. 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 our crew members Andi.

ANDI:

Hi everyone.

JARRAH:

And Grace.

GRACE:

Hey there.

JARRAH:

And before we get started I just want to do a quick plug for our Women At Warp Patreon, which you can find at [Patreon.com/womenatwarp](https://Patreon.com/womenatwarp). It's a way that you can support us with a small monthly donation and that helps do things like it helps us print promotional materials and things, and get out to conventions so we can keep spreading the word about women at warp and feminism and Star Trek, and good women stuff.

GRACE:

Help keep these Women At Warp.

JARRAH:

Exactly. So head on over to [PATREON.com/womenatwarp](https://PATREON.com/womenatwarp) and anyone who donates any amount gets access to exclusive cool bonus content like behind the scenes convention stuff, and fun Ferengi romance novel excerpts by Grace. So it is definitely worth it. Thanks so much to everyone who has supported us so far.

ANDI:

Grace, when are you going to do more Ferengi romance novel? Because I kind of need more of it. One chapter was not enough.

GRACE:

Ooh you guys want more?

ANDI:

Absolutely.

JARRAH:

What happens to Froome?

GRACE:

Well, maybe if I have a little more incentive in knowing that more people actually wanted to see it. So if you want to see more let me know.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Email us at [Crew@womenatwarp.com](mailto:Crew@womenatwarp.com) if you want more Ferengi romance novel content from Grace. So, today we are going to talk about the matriarchies. The women dominated societies in the Star Trek universe. So to get started, I thought I would just give a quick definition of matriarchy. So we're talking about here "A system of social organization in which descent and inheritance are traced through the female line and or government or rule by women." So in this case it's not enough to just be like the Borg and have a woman in charge, we're looking at societies where women hold systemic power. So some people aren't aware of this, but there are actual Matriarchies in the world today. The most famous one is the Mosuo, I hope I pronounced that right, who live near the border of Tibet in the Hunan and Sichuan provinces. They live with an extended family in large households. And at the head of each is a matriarch, lineage is traced through the female side of the family and property is passed down along the same matriline. Mosuo women typically handle business decisions and men handle politics. Children are raised in the mother's household and take her name. The Mosuo have what's called Walking Marriages. There is no institution of marriage, rather women choose their partners by literally walking to the man's home and the couples never live together. Since children always remain in the mother's care, sometimes the father plays little role in the upbringing. In some cases the father's identity is not even known. Instead the male's child rearing responsibilities remain in his own matrilineal household. So I just bring that up as an example to sort of compare to some of the societies that we're going to talk about in the episodes, because it- to also say that it's a little bit more complicated than some of the examples that we see on Star Trek that we're gonna talk about today.

GRACE:

Oh yeah. Yeah.

JARRAH:

\*laughs\* But if you're listening to this episode, odds are you live in a patriarchy. Modern sociologists who talk about patriarchy are usually talking about how men hold the power overall in society, political power, economic power, military power etc. We're not saying that *all men* are more powerful than *all women*, and it doesn't require men actively or consciously trying to oppress women. It's about systems. So you can have a woman head of government, for example Margaret Thatcher or the Borg Queen. \*laughs\*

GRACE:

Tomato *tomato*.

ANDI:

I love the comparison there. \*laughs\* Thatcher and the Borg Queen. Okay, yes.

JARRAH:

And still you can have that, and still live in a patriarchy, because the systems are overall working to women's disadvantage. Moreso in Britain under the Tories than the Borg under the Borg Queen. That was just to *everyone's* disadvantage. \*all laugh\*

GRACE:

Let's just say that right there. Yeah.

JARRAH:

\*laughs\* Yeah. So women are still earning less than men, serving in government less than men, geek merchandisers still think action figures are just for boys and boys won't play with a Black Widow action figure, etc. Men as a group are benefiting more than women as a group in a patriarchal system, which is reinforced by a culture that associates positive leadership traits with masculinity and negative traits with femininity and treats the deeds of men as of greater importance to society.

ANDI:

We see anytime there is a US election with a woman in it.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Then it's like people have a hard time even conceiving of a woman leader, because like we talked about this in our Janeway episode, you can't win. You're either too maternal or you're too cold. Whereas these seem types of traits in men are not treated as negative.

ANDI:

The one I remember most clearly is when we had both Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin running, and you could see both of them were affected by that in different ways. For Sarah Palin it was all about how she was feminine and sexy and not to be taken seriously, whereas Hillary Clinton was too masculine and not likable and all of that thing. And you know they could- neither of them could win.

GRACE:

Yeah, you can't win either way really.

JARRAH:

Anyway. \*laughs\* I'm sure we could talk all about the real life examples, but we're gonna get into the Star Trek examples. Just want to quickly say that gender is, of course, only one source of social disparity. Patriarchy is interconnected with classism, racism, homophobia, and other

types of oppression. And so that's what I mean about not *all* individual men have more power than all individual women. Your position is mediated by these other factors as well. OK, so when we talk about matriarchy in Star Trek there are only really a few examples-

GRACE:

Which is unfortunate. Yeah.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Well, and by and large they're really considered exceptional and they're almost always the focus of the episode. It's not like you just- they randomly encounter an alien and just happened to mention the women are in charge. There are a couple, which we'll talk about-

GRACE:

Infinite diversity in infinite combinations, not as infinite or diverse as you would imagine. Who knew?

JARRAH:

So one of our Facebook followers Elizabeth commented "Overall, I wish the franchise had more matriarchal societies that were just facets of the world setting. Being sources of interesting characters and plots instead of always being a one episode special issue to be dealt with. Plenty of Trek recurring races are egalitarian, and a lot of them are explicit or implicit patriarchys. So why not more explicit matriarchies?" So, I thought that was a really good point. Like, we certainly see the Klingons that in Deep Space 9 reinforce that the women can't head families, and while they are able to get *around* that it's seen to be very rare that the Klingon women head families. I mean, we almost never see women as heads of government. And that's not the only one of the Trek races.

ANDI:

I've always thought it was super weird actually that the Klingons wouldn't allow women to be on their high council but they also seem to value women warriors? And I just, I've never really understood it. It seems like to the Klingons it would be like whoever kicks the most ass would be able to do whatever they wanted. But they specifically have these rules in place to keep women out of power it seems-

GRACE:

That would make the most sense.

JARRAH:

Yeah, I mean the only rationale I can think of is the one that has most historically been used is like "Women can get pregnant and therefore they're unreliable." Like that's kind of the implication-

GRACE:

Damn you uterus! You're keeping us down. \*Jarrah laughs\* Damn you!

JARRAH:

Yeah it's pretty ridiculous but that's- but I don't know. That's the only justification I can see for the Klingons, which I don't think is actually fair.

GRACE:

They have the pill in the future. They've gotta. At this point it should be non-issue.

JARRAH:

So we're going to talk more about, though, the examples that we see in Star Trek.

GRACE:

\*bitterly\* Such as they are.

JARRAH:

Yeah. The first mention of a matriarchy in Star Trek, and this is a sort of I guess a cursory thing. We didn't we don't find out a whole lot. But it's in the episode of TOS Tomorrow is Yesterday, where the Enterprise goes to get their computer repaired-

ANDI:

Sexy computer! \*all laugh\*

GRACE:

Sexy computer, It's not just a Halloween costume. \*Andi laughs\*

JARRAH:

Yeah. So they send their ship to get repaired at the planet Signet 14 and the result is that the computer comes back and it flirts with all the guys. \*all laugh\*

ANDI:

As you would. As you would.

GRACE:

Apparently flirtatiousness is just one of those standard feminine traits.

JARRAH:

And Spock is really frustrated because he's just like "Females, so illogical."

ANDI:

\*laughs\* Poor Vulcan.

JARRAH:

But yeah, I don't know. I don't have a ton to take away from this, but I just thought it was interesting and it's funny thing to remember from TOS.

ANDI:

If I were a computer I would hit on Spock. \*Jarrah laughs\*

GRACE:

Honey, you would hit on Spock even if you weren't a computer.

JARRAH:

Yeah and like Buddy astronaut or pilot guy from the past is like "All right. Well, I don't want to come between you and your girlfriend" \*all laugh\* or something like that. But the first real matriarchy that we see on Star Trek is in the animated series episode The Lorelei Signal, which I know has been requested by a couple of our listeners. So I'm excited that we're gonna get a chance to talk about it. Andi, you just watched this fairly recently. Do you feel comfortable giving a quick synopsis?

ANDI:

All I really remember is Uhura kicking a lot of ass, and a lot of pretty siren-like women.

JARRAH:

That's pretty much the episode.

ANDI:

Yeah. I mean, the animated series is interesting because they're really short, so there's not actually a whole lot that goes on. Like, they get to the main plot of the episode very quickly and they finish it up very quickly. So basically they get drawn to this planet and it turns out there's lots of sexy ladies that the menfolk can't keep their head together. And Uhura is like "Screw this, I'm taking charge" And she takes command of the ship and puts together an all woman security team to basically, I don't know, did she take them out? I don't remember.

JARRAH:

She does! I have kind of mixed feelings about this episode. I have the like- the screenshot of Uhura assembling the all women team as my header on my mobile Trekkie Feminist Tumblr, because I absolutely- I just love how bad ass Uhura is. So basically they go to this planet where a bunch of ships have disappeared, and it turns out that- so basically all the men hear a distress call, but Uhura is going "I don't hear any distress call" and Kirk and Spock are like "There's totally a distress call. We're gonna beam down." and they beam down and they're confronted by this group of blonde sirens who look vaguely like She-ra Princess of Power, only less powerful. \*Andi laughs\*

GRACE:

She-Ra Princess of generic-ness.

JARRAH:

They've got like the blonde, and the robe kind of thing, and tiaras. And they give the men these head bands that suck their life forces. \*all laugh\* They literally- at one point Kirk says "They're literally sucking our life forces."

ANDI:

\*laughs\* I love this show.

GRACE:

Wooooow. \*all laugh\*

JARRAH:

Oh my God. And it also includes one of the best captain's log entries "Captain's log. The beauty of this place is unequalled. It's the answer to all of man's dreams. \*all laugh\* Exquisite in every way. We're here to investigate. To *investigate*. The women radiate light." \*all laugh\*

GRACE:

Oh wow. Imagine if they literally radiated light. That would be like a whole nother investigation right there. \*all laugh\* And actually probably more worthy of that captain's log.

JARRAH:

Yeah it's pretty great. And so the leader is *also* voiced by Majer Barrett. So she calls herself the Head Female. \*Andi laughs\*

GRACE:

Didn't we say that when I start referring to them as *females* they've already kind of lost a little level of credibility?

JARRAH:

Totally!

ANDI:

No no! Grace I'm going to make you a Tiara \*Grace laughs\* that says Head Female, and I'm sending it to you. And you have to wear it.

GRACE:

Can do. I'll take pictures, if you send it.

JARRAH:

And like, so Kirk and Spock and McCoy they run away, and they hide in a giant urn \*Andi laughs\* in the garden.

GRACE:

Well yeah. They couldn't find any skirts to hide behind.

JARRAH:

And so Uhura realizes that Scotty is also really affected by the ladies *radiant delight*.

ANDI:

To be fair though, Scotty is usually very affected by pretty ladies.

GRACE:

It's nothing out of the ordinary.

ANDI:

Like, every single time he does like this drooling vacant look that I always laugh at. Even when they're not magic ladies.

JARRAH:

Yes, that's true actually. I mean the TOS guys are in general, if you look at Mudd's Women they all just freeze. But Scotty probably most so. So yeah, Uhura takes command of the ship. It's awesome. She's basically like "I'm taking command. I take full responsibility, but Scotty is not capable of commanding right now." And she sends this all female team. They basically shoot all the- she orders on for the phasers on stun, and they shoot all the siren ladies. And then they figure out that they're hiding in this giant urn, which is now filling with rain and they're drowning, which is again \*Grace laughs\* not their most dignified moment. They're also really old now, from having their life sucked out.

GRACE:

You hear that folks? Women age men. That's what we do. That's our secret power. \*Andi laughs\*

JARRAH:

Yeah exactly. And so anyway, basically they win but the sirens explain that they moved to this planet, and the planet- something to do with the planet caused their men to age, but the women evolved a glandular secretion. \*all laugh\*

GRACE:

Ugh no.



ANDI:

We got to remind everyone that they do this and all that in twenty two minutes. \*laughs\*

JARRAH:

Yes exactly. It's awesome.

GRACE:

Welcome to Exposition, the animated series.

JARRAH:

My explanation is like half the length of this episode so- \*laughs\* the women evolved a glandular secretion that allowed them to manipulate and drain the energy from the men in order to save themselves. And then she goes "We do not age or die" and then like as if this is the worst part "We are unable even to bear children."

GRACE:

\*over the top tragic wailing\* Aaw no!

ANDI:

To be fair, bearing children is kind of how you know you progress as a society.

JARRAH:

Yeah. I'm not saying that like, they shouldn't be affected by that, but it's well- like they're- I feel like it's kind of implying they aren't *real women* because of that.

GRACE:

Bogus.

JARRAH:

But maybe I'm just reading too much into it.

ANDI:

Well I mean, if you take that part out of it like "we're gonna be young and gorgeous forever we don't need any men except for as a food source-"

GRACE:

Literal maneaters.

ANDI:

"Don't have to have kids." I mean for some people they'd be like "Sign me up!" you know? \*all laugh\* Not me mind you.

JARRAH:

If there were some cats maybe? \*laughs\*

GRACE:

Planet cat lady is sounding better every day now.

JARRAH:

Oh yes. Although maybe less, you know, I don't actually want to consume men but, you know. Well at least not literally. \*all laugh\*

GRACE:

Give her time.

ANDI:

Just metaphorically? \*all laugh\*

JARRAH:

So I love the Uhura kicking ass part of this episode. The other part like, it kind of counteracts it. I mean, it kind of sets this idea that like you can't trust women because they lure you in and eat you up and spit you out.

ANDI:

Well I mean, it's really clearly like siren succubus like all- I mean there's a lot of different kinds of archetypes here that are pretty-

GRACE:

It's definitely not a new concept.

ANDI:

You know, huge roles and lots of different kinds of victims. Yeah. No.

JARRAH:

But I like how Uhura is kind of the one to save the day. And the fact that there is this whole group of Enterprise women, shows that they're not necessarily saying "This is true of all women."

ANDI:

Yeah. And I mean the other problem I had is the sirens. I don't even know if they call them the sirens. I think that's just my name for them.

JARRAH:

Oh I don't even know if they have a name. I mean her name, the main woman- the *head female*

ANDI:

The head female, her name is Theela.

GRACE:

\*saying it as a tongue twister\* Head female Theela, head female Theela, head female fella. \*all laugh\*

ANDI:

It's a new tongue twister for everyone. Yeah. I mean, the one thing that I thought was right off the bat was like "OK, so they're all white and they're all blond. And they're all thin and they all look exactly the same and are like this idealized traditional-"

GRACE:

Well that's boring awful.

ANDI:

I don't know. I didn't like that much.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Well and they're also funny. They actually also have an actual siren song which is the way they call their computer, and it's hilarious. It's like \*does high pitched whale song noise\* I just could not watch it without hysterically laughing.

GRACE:

Is that a Macbook feature? Is that new? \*all laugh\*

ANDI:

They need that to add that to the new iPhone update.

JARRAH:

\*laughs\* Which part?

ANDI:

\*laughs\* The siren song.

GRACE:

There's gonna be like a diva Plava Laguna mode where you can only unlock it if you can hit a ridiculous \*Andi laughs\* amount of high notes.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Instead of the locate your iPhone app you just have to sing for it and then Siri will say "I'm here."

GRACE:

Or like Hocus Pocus, you have to summon your phone to you through song.

ANDI:

That's exactly what I was thinking! I was like \*singing\* Come little children.

GRACE:

Yes.

ANDI:

So thinking that. \*Singing\* Hush little iphone. I do want to say that I like this episode. Overall, I like it. I mean, it's got a handful of things where you go "Hmm" but I had fun watching it. It was funny, it was cute, Uhura's awesome.

GRACE:

It does have one of my favorite just one off Little Star Trek animated series moments, and that is when they're talking about how beautiful and wonderful the women are. And then we get to hear, I think it's McCoy, go \*aghast\* "But where were all the men!?" \*all laugh\* and he sounds so desperate when he says it. Like, \*McCoy voice\* "I'm drowning in estrogen! Dear God Jim!" \*Andi laughs\*

JARRAH:

And then Theela goes \*sultry voice\* "They're in another compound." And Kirk goes "That makes sense." \*all laugh\*

GRACE:

He's like "Yeah,OK." He's rolling with this.

JARRAH:

\*laughs\* Why does it make sense?

ANDI:

"Seems legit." At least through the head female.

JARRAH:

You know what another title for the head female is on another world? Mistress.

GRACE:

\*groaning\* Aw. Lord.

ANDI:

Oh yeah.

JARRAH:

And that is the episode we are going to talk about next. Which is Angel One.

GRACE:

A.k.a. Rikers hairy nipple adventure. \*all laugh\*

ANDI:

That remains the greatest screenshot I've ever posted on my Twitter ever.

JARRAH:

It's going to be in our show art. \*Andi laughs\* I mean it's gonna be him and Mistress Beata. But I was like "I can't not have Riker in that outfit on our show art."

ANDI:

It's like an ice dancer.

GRACE:

It's like a kind of weirdly fetishistic Brian Boitano.

ANDI:

\*laughs\* Yes! That's exactly it!

JARRAH:

OK, I have comparison shots of him and of him in that outfit and 1980's/90s figure skaters, which I will also share in our show.

GRACE:

Good Lord.

JARRAH:

Yes. So Angel One. I'm assuming probably most of our listeners are semi familiar with this, but does anyone-

ANDI:

It is kind of infamous isn't it?

JARRAH:

Anyone want to give it a quick recap of the episode which Gates McFadden has said was one of the most sexist episodes we ever had?

GRACE:

If I may, actually here. \*clears throat/unhinged yelling\* WOMEN CRAZY MATRIARCHY BAD.  
\*Jarrah laughs\*

ANDI:

There you go. Four words and Grace well summed it up.

JARRAH:

Yeah. And actually that was the second time, because Grace also said Rikers Hairy nipple Adventures, that was also another four word summary of this episode. \*Andi laughs\*

GRACE:

Brevity, what can I say?

JARRAH:

Well I mean, maybe I'll start with giving Picard's captain's log. Because the Captain's Logs in this would seem to be the most golden parts. \*Picard voice\* "Our away team has beamed down to an unusual \*Andi laughs\* matriarchal society, where all the females are aggressively-" Ok I sound like Sean Connery. \*all laugh\*

GRACE:

OK folks, we're just going to keep going with it-

ANDI:

\*laughs\* You sound like you've got marbles in your mouth or something.

GRACE:

Just start going to start going \*overly enunciated\* "the rain in Spain."

JARRAH:

\*trying again\* "Where the female is aggressively dominant as the male gender was on earth hundreds of years ago. Here the female is the hunter and soldier. Larger and *stronger* than the male." So that's Picard's summary.

ANDI:

I like Grace's better.

GRACE:

Thanks. You know, when we start up this episode and when we see the women who are in this matriarchy after this whole spiel of "the women are stronger, taller, more powerful, and soldiers" and what we actually see are just a ton of petite blonde J. Crew models? I kind of find it hard to believe honestly.

JARRAH:

Yeah. It's just that they make the men wear 1980s figure skater outfits, and the men that they show are like- tend to be semi diminutive.

GRACE:

And incredibly fey also.

JARRAH:

The main male character is the same actor who played Lal before Lal chose to be a woman in the episode The Offspring. So they cast kind of like androgynous looking men, as like symbolic of how the women were only keeping around the men they felt they could dominate, which is like insulting to those men. And like- and kind of demeaning to femininity, because it's saying that like for men to demonstrate more like stereotypical like feminine qualities or to be smaller or fey is-

GRACE:

And it really does add to the overall attitude that we see in this episode, of it's only very much stock powerful women in the straw man position to be, you know, to be sexy and titillating like \*sultry voice\* "We're powerful, let us show you" and it's really eye rolling.

JARRAH:

Totally. Yeah actually. So this is actually a great example of the trope of the "straw matriarchy" which TV Tropes defines as "This is how early philosophers portrayed Matriarchies, as a warning to allowing women in power. Women were shown to be fundamentally incapable of governing or utterly evil and castrating in their power wielding." In this case the Council of Mistresses basically exile-

GRACE:

How kinky does that sound?

JARRAH:

Yes, well- OK so question. Would you rather be named like Mistress Grace or Head Female?

GRACE:

\*pause\* Fair enough. But I think in a society where there isn't a male equivalent to Mistress, like Master or a gender neutral one, there's gotta be a better phrase than Mistress.

JARRAH:

Yeah for sure.

ANDI:

There are just some connotations to both Master and Mistress that are just not pleasant. \*Jarrah laughs\*

GRACE:

Yeah. Someone get these writers a thesaurus. \*Andi laughs\* Dear God.

JARRAH:

Apparently this was actually supposed to be an allegory not for sexism but for apartheid. But they use gender as-

GRACE:

Oh wow.

JARRAH:

-the. Yeah. Like you *definitely* don't get *that*.

GRACE:

Now I'm offended on multiple levels. \*all laugh\* Wow! I didn't think I could be any more offended by this episode, but now I am.

JARRAH:

Yeah. It doesn't get at that *at all*. And it doesn't show you really that sexism is wrong per se. It really does seem to more send this message that women are fundamentally \*laughs\* incapable of governing. Because even though they're in charge of this planet- so not only are they doing unjust things, like exiling space MacGyver for going against the natural order which presumably means being too manly, but basically they're overturned by Riker being sexy. \*all laugh\*

ANDI:

But to be fair, Riker's sexiness has been used to save the day on numerous occasions. \*Jarrah laughs\*

GRACE:

Can't we just weaponize Riker sexiness and get it over with it?

ANDI:

Bottle it, yep. I mean I'd be ok with him wearing that outfit all the time.

JARRAH:

One of our commenters, I think it was Elizabeth actually again, but she was also saying she thought it was ridiculous how Yar and Troi laugh at Rikers outfit and no one mentions how ridiculous it is that Troi's in the cleavage-y purple jumpsuit.

ANDI:

I was just thinking that!

GRACE:

Yeah, it's kind of the pot calling the kettle cleavage-y.



JARRAH:  
\*laughs\* Yes.

GRACE:  
Especially when we get to the point where they're like "You're going to dress like that? And just parade around them?" And it's like, how many times has a female done that and the entirety of the Star Trek franchise and no one's batted an eye? \*Jarrah laughs\* But now when it's a guy doing it we're making an issue out of it? It just-\*feral groan\*

ANDI:  
I will say though, that Jonathan Frakes wears it with like some super awesome confidence. Like the screenshots of him in it are he's like-

GRACE:  
It's true.

ANDI:  
What? Say it, say it, say it. "I love it so much."

GRACE:  
Dude's rocking it.

JARRAH:  
Yeah. I also like how the Mistresses conduct government in what appears to be a ceremonial yoga studio. \*Andi laughs\* Yeah they're all like sitting on the floor and everyone else is like kneeling on mats.

GRACE:  
Also they visually got this faux-Asian thing going on, with their kind of kimono-esque tops and kneeling on the floor. It's just kinda like "Wow, look at all these white people. Notice how these beautiful powerful women are aaaaall white."

JARRAH:  
Again! Actually, thinking about it. Oh, we're gonna get some later on. But yeah, mostly the ones that we're gonna talk about, mostly they are represented as white in Matriarchies.

ANDI:  
Sigh.

GRACE:  
Intersectionality doesn't exist in the future.

JARRAH:

So the goal of feminism is not matriarchy. So we're not being like "What we want is positive representations of women oppressing men." But if the goal is to highlight how inequality is unfair, you can't do that by like ending up questioning the leadership of *all women*.

GRACE:

Yeah. You've kind of shot yourself in the foot there.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Like you're just reinforcing sexism.

ANDI:

I just feel like there is a handful of people out there who can't kind of get their mind around actual equality. Like, to them it's just inverting the current power structure is the only thing that they can really wrap their minds around. I feel like there is an element of that.

GRACE:

Which would continue things as being unequal.

ANDI:

I mean, it seems like there are people who, whether consciously or subconsciously, feel like there *has* to be a loser. Do you know what I mean? And so when they're trying to portray-

GRACE:

Which isn't true equality there. If you're thinking that one of the more powerful groups has to stamp the other down for there to be any semblance of equality you don't understand equality.

ANDI:

And certainly the goal of feminism. I just- it's just super weird to me, like the idea that you can't even get your mind around the idea of everybody having equal choices and opportunities, because that's all it really is.

GRACE:

That is a hang up right there that acts as such a hurdle in any kind of feminist discussion, also. And this episode really exemplifies it.

ANDI:

Yeah. I mean, we've gotten to the point where things have been so slanted for so long that even just pushing it upwards towards equality *feels* like you're tilting it in the other direction.

JARRAH:

Yeah. But the next TNG example of a matriarchy we get is, I think, a lot more comparable to some of the real life Matriarchies on Earth today. And it's not actually even the main focus of the story. So in that way it's a bit different than the others. And that is the Mintakins in the episode Who watches the watchers. This is actually in my top ten feminist TNG episodes. I think it's a really underrated episode. It's basically the Federation- Federation Anthropologists have a holographic duck blind similar to the one we end up seeing in Star Trek Nemesis, or insurrection rather. And they are observing this society of proto Vulcan humanoids called the Mintakins. But there is an issue with the holographic projection that is providing cover for this anthropologist station. And two of the Mintakins end up seeing the federation scientists, as well as an example of the technology. And so Troi and Riker go undercover as Mintakins to try to find out how much they found out how, much damage has been done in terms of exposing this quote unquote primitive culture to advanced futuristic technology. And during their walk into the village Troi tells Riker that Mintakin women negotiate with each other for their men's services. And Riker goes "What kinds of services?" and Troi's like "All kinds." And then he's like "A very sensible people." because Riker totally rolls with the matriarchies.\*laughs\*

GRACE:

Apparently.

JARRAH:

And then they go into the village and it looks like more damage has been done than they thought. And Picard ends up having to come down and convince the leader who is a woman named Nuria that- she basically has to decide "How much do I tell her about who you really are?" Because they end up thinking that the Federation people are gods, and how do you prove that you aren't a god? Well you have to die. \*Andi laughs\* So there's that-

GRACE:

Which is inconvenient really.

JARRAH:

\*laughs\* Yeah. But even though there's this discussion about how the Mintakin women generally lead familial relations and have some semblance of control over quote unquote their men's services, we still see that men have voice and respect in the community. So there's a guy named Liko who sees the explosion, with I think his daughter, and he comes back and he tells everyone and everyone listens to him. There is another man later who is sort of considered the local expert on mythology and he's consulted as to whether or not he thinks these people are gods as are told in their legends. So Nuria, the woman who's in charge, is consulting with the men and there's not any discussion like in Angel One about, you know, actually maligning men. It's more that men have a separate role, and it may be like an unequal role as well, it may not be

fair but they still have like a respected place in society. So in that way it's more similar to what we see in actual earth matriarchal societies.

ANDI:

Really I'm happy with any episode that decides to have Ray Wise as a character. He's amazing and everything he's in and you always hire him. Note to all casting directors out there, if you have a chance to hire him, hire him.

JARRAH:

I mean, maybe consider if the role like could be a woman, \*Andi laughs\* particularly like a woman of color, other underrepresented groups. Consider other people. But if the role *must* be a white guy, Ray Wise.

GRACE:

Yeah yeah. Just think about it.

JARRAH:

But otherwise I agree. But yeah the leader Nuria is like a really wise and measured person. You can empathize with her. Yeah, I think that it's an example of, you know, showing that society as, like our commenter said, part of the world building instead of making it like the subject of this episode that ends up just reinforcing sexist stereotypes.

ANDI:

Also side note, Troi is a gorgeous Vulcan-y kind of woman. Like, she looks good as a Vulcan, she looks good as a Romulan. Riker....

GRACE:

Yeah.

ANDI:

Riker not so much. \*all make 'iffy' noises\* I think he looked better in his ice dancer costume.

JARRAH:

Yeah. I think it's a good Troi episode too, she gets to actually do some diplomatic stuff and be undercover. This is before Face Of The Enemy, so it's not quite as intense. But she shows that she's cool under pressure, and that she's familiar with this alien societies' culture, and ready to navigate.

ANDI:

I mean, if you think about it they could have put somebody else in that position, so I'm glad it was Troi and that we got to see her do something professionally and competently.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Well sadly, that is the last matriarchy that Riker gets to play a part in.

GRACE:

\*disappointed\* Aww.

ANDI:

And man, he does so well in Matriarchies.

GRACE:

He just loves him a matriarchy I guess. \*Andi laughs\*

JARRAH:

Yeah. So we're gonna move on to Deep Space Nines episode Sanctuary, which is- and yeah Andi, do you want to take a super quick synopsis of this? Because you just finished it.

ANDI:

Sure. So somebody comes out of the wormhole. Everyone's shocked, because everyone's shocked when somebody random comes out of a wormhole right? And-

JARRAH:

\*sarcastic\* It *never* happens.

ANDI:

Yeah I know. Never seen it before. They beam them onto the ship and the universal translator is trying to make it all make sense. And while they're doing that, they're like taking them all over the station and it becomes pretty clear very quickly that the woman is in charge and the rest of them are looking to her. And then eventually it comes to light that they are running from something called the Dominion, which sounds scary. Don't know anything about it yet, but it sounds scary. And they decide that they want to settle on Bajor as like their new home. And then the Bajorans are like "Hey now, woah. I mean you can't just pop out of the clouds and be like 'hey that planet seems cool, I want to live there.'" And so they kind of deny their request. But the main woman, what's her name? I don't remember- Haneke! Haneke and Kira kind of have an interesting relationship, in which Kira is trying to help them and, you know, they come to a kind of understanding, but Haneke is really disappointed when Bajor won't let them just-

GRACE:

Won't give them everything they're asking for.

ANDI:

Yeah. And I mean, I like this episode. It had a really interesting ethical dilemma, and I would actually say that this is one of the episodes where the matriarchy isn't the main thing of the episode.

GRACE:

Which is a good thing, but at the same time one of the few Matriarchies we do see and they're *jerks*. They show up, they take over the station, and then they're like "Hey we want your planet."

JARRAH:

I don't know. I thought that it was presented in a way where you could really feel for them, and the fact that Haneke gets the last word I think is really important. She I mean I- maybe it's partly that I'm doing it in the context of the fact that like the world is experiencing some pretty severe refugee issues right at the moment. And so I thought it was a really important political episode where you really could see both sides. I mean, it maybe seems unreasonable that they wanted to settle on Bajor because they believe that it was this planet told to them in prophecy, as opposed to this other perfectly good planet. But the idea of, you know, "We want to be part of your society. We admire you and we could help farm your planet. We could help feed your people." and then Bajor like also reasonably saying "We can't accept 3 million refugees just like that. What happens if you can't feed yourselves and we have to feed you?" So I thought it was a really powerful dilemma.

ANDI:

Yeah. I mean, I really really liked the whole concept because it is really timeless to be honest. And then for me I was like with Bajor all the way right up until that last moment where I was like "I'm sorry, but they just came out of like occupation for years, they're still trying to rebuild their society."

GRACE:

They kind of have their own thing to deal with right now.

ANDI:

Yeah. They don't have the resources to help you, and it's not like- it's not like they had nowhere else to go you know? So I was with them all up until that last moment. I think that was the point is Haneke has this really amazing last moment with Kira and she's like "You are suffering a famine and we are farmers. We might have been able to help each other but now we'll never know." And you can see in Kira's face that she's like "Well man, maybe I made a mistake" and that's what I went through as a viewer too. I was right there with her. I was like "Aw that's true."

GRACE:

\*doubtful\* An entire planet of farmers?

ANDI:

Yeah. I mean it's just it goes-

GRACE:

Sorry, that's just a head scratcher there. \*laughs\*

JARRAH:

Well, they're talking about like- I mean 3 billion people is a lot of people. But that wouldn't be the entire planet of Bajor. That would be like a city, or they're saying a peninsula. But I mean, I think that for the purposes of our episode you're right. Like, the refugee crisis is much more the focus of this episode. But the reason that Haneke makes friends with Kira is Kira is the only person she'll trust. At the beginning she is like, she won't talk to the man, and she doesn't want to let Bashir treat her because she doesn't believe he's really the doctor. And there's this- I actually think it's a really clever line where they're all in ops and Kira, Haneke, and Dax are on one side of the table and Odo, O'Brien, and Bashir on the other side of the table and Haneke says "Men are much too emotional to be leaders. They're always fighting amongst themselves, it's their favorite thing to do." \*laughs\*

ANDI:

Every single one of those dudes are like "Say *what?*" It was amazing.

JARRAH:

Yeah.\*all laugh\*

ANDI:

If I could take that screenshot, like frame it, and put it on my wall. O'Brien especially is just like "Whatchu say?" Yeah dudes,that's what that feels like!

JARRAH:

And Odo is like "Harumph!"

ANDI:

And then Dax has this just amazing-

GRACE:

Harumph is Odo's default state.

ANDI:

-smirk. It's so great. Where she's just like "Yep. That's what that feels like. Have fun with that."

GRACE:

Yeah. Welcome to the party guys.

JARRAH:

And it's clever because it's like, obviously we know that that's not fair. But we also know they're not seriously threatened by it. But it's clever because it totally flips that thing that women- we

were talking about like Women in Politics experience *today* where they're actually told they're too emotional to be leaders, only yeah it's like, you know "Why would you let her have the nuclear codes because what if it's her time of the month?!" \*Andi laughs\* and like it flips that and says men are too emotional because of this like aggression and competitiveness that's associated with masculinity. So I thought it was really a clever sort of flip, to say like if it's unfair to judge men because of these like social traits around masculinity and aggression then like surely it is unfair to judge women around these traits that you associate with femininity around being too emotional.

ANDI:

Yeah. I mean this is where allegory is helpful in the Star Trek universe. I mean I'm thinking of that episode of the original series. What is it? Let That Be Your Last Battlefield? Which isn't a super great episode, but for Season 3 you can watch it. So that's good. It's that one where they have the two guys that have the black and white faces and they're like locked into this desperate battle of racism and whatever. And the thing that I like about that episode is that they're like "Can't you see how inherently superior I am to this guy?" and the crew is looking at them like "okay..." Like he's like "His white half is on the *left* side" and they're like "Really? This is what you've driven your planet to like extinction for?" And it's so stupid. But then if you think about it our racism is just as stupid. It is *just* as stupid. So when you when you put it in these different ways it makes it clear how stupid these kinds of distinctions are. So like when you flip that whole "Oh women are too emotional" and you flip it to "Men are too emotional" and you see how it's just as stupid both ways. It is *just as* inaccurate. So that's something that Star Trek does well.

JARRAH:

Yes. She also calls her husband's *her males*. So that's another example of like using male or female as like a way to say like reduce someone to their biological or sexual functions instead of like their humanity. And she says "They're very useful." \*all laugh\* She has two and Kira is all like shocked that she has two husbands and- or they don't call them husbands she just calls them *her males* and says she's bonded to them. And she claims you know "We love our men" and you can tell that no one, not even the women and like Dax and Kira are buying that, because you don't love someone through inequality. Like, I'm not talking about having a relationship with two people, but about when she's talking about how like "Men are too emotional" and "They can't be leaders" and "We don't let them make decisions." That's not loving.

ANDI:

Yeah. I mean it's the kind of justifications that some of this like benevolent sexism "But we just want to protect them." "They're not capable." You know "We have to take care of them." And it's like \*uncomfortable noise\* if you're going to treat somebody like the adult person you need to allow them to take care of themselves as well. Anyway, I just I think it works really well. And whoever the actress who plays Haneke does a good job of making it seem like "Well *obviously*."

JARRAH:



Yeah. And I think like, because her character is a farmer she's not actually usually a leader of her people. So we can see *her* as a character and it helps understand how *anybody* can make these kinds of assumptions, and buy into this kind of system. It isn't just like *evil* people. So I think this episode kind of- I think it does the best of all of these episodes of using the depiction of a matriarchy to call out sexism in society today.

GRACE:

It definitely is one of the ones that's trying harder too.

JARRAH:

Yeah. I think it succeeds more than the other ones. I'm not saying it's perfect, but it doesn't demonize women. Haneke still forms a friendship with Kira and people still listen to her and we still listen to her, but we don't agree with or condone the way that she treats men. All right, well we are going to talk about two more episodes but they're from Voyager and Enterprise. So I don't know if Andi, you want to bow out for the rest of the episodes.

ANDI:

I mean I could just cover my ears and go "La la la la la la la." But probably that'd probably get boring after 20 to 30 minutes. *\*all laugh\**

GRACE:

You'd be "La la"-ing for a while.

ANDI:

I should leave you two to it.

JARRAH:

I should say when you get to these episodes though, I would recommend covering your ears and pretending it's not happening. *\*Andi laughs\**

GRACE:

Yeah, that's kind of the best way to do it.

JARRAH:

*\*laughs\** But thank you so much for joining us. Do you want to let people know where they can find you?

ANDI:

Sure. The easiest way is on Twitter. My twitter handle is [@firsttimetrek](https://twitter.com/firsttimetrek) and the last episode that I tweeted was Sanctuary. So yeah, you might even be able to see my tweets on this exact episode we just finished talking about. You can also check out my backlog of some of the TNG episodes on my Tumblr [Firsttimetrek.Tumblr.com](https://www.tumblr.com/firsttimetrek).

JARRAH:

Sweet. Well thanks so much Andi, and Grace and I shall continue with some really horrible episodes from Voyager and Enterprise.

GRACE:

Oh, terrible. Truly terrible.\*all laugh\*

ANDI:

Have fun. Have fun.

JARRAH:

All right Grace, it's just you and me. We are in hostile territory just-

GRACE:

We are in *very* hostile territory.

JARRAH:

Just like Voyager in the Delta Quadrant.

GRACE:

We are amongst the mansplainer writers.

JARRAH:

Oh gosh. Yeah, maybe. I mean actually the writer of this next episode is a woman, but it's written by Lisa Klink. But there's some discussion, from Garrett Wang and others, that it was touched by a lot of hands in the writers room and underwent a lot of changes to the point that the actual story, which was supposed to be about Harry Kim, the episode we're discussing by the way is Favorite Son. The episode was supposed to be like a growth story for Harry Kim and instead \*Grace makes skeptical noise\* turned into a story about how seductive women will suck your life forces and then kill you.

GRACE:

And how the Voyager crew is just *really eager* to get rid of Harry.

JARRAH:

\*laughs\* Yeah totally.

GRACE:

They're like "Well they say he could be an alien.Byyyye!"

JARRAH:

Yeah. Like basically he starts undergoing these changes, plus he's having weird dreams about his mother, and then these aliens contact him, and they're like \*mysterious voice\* "Harry you're one of us" and they're all sexy women.

GRACE:

And *they're* all "That makes sense."

JARRAH:

And then Voyager is just like "Oh cool. Bye." \*laughs\* Yes. So it's pretty awesome.

GRACE:

Again, this is another case where we get to see a culture that *we're told* is a matriarchy and that women are running everything. But what we see is just a bunch of women acting for the benefit of the few men who are around. Like saying \*mysterious voice\* "We just want to please you." "You can marry as many of us as you want." "We want you to be happy."

JARRAH:

Yeah. Like basically, this society-

GRACE:

Which is sketchy to begin with.

JARRAH:

Yeah. You know it's weird. This episode actually reminded me of like a season 1 TNG episode with Wesley- sorry as a story with Harry as Wesley Crusher.

GRACE:

Because it seems like the thing that would be stupid enough for Season 1 Wesley Crusher to get sucked into.

JARRAH:

Totally! He basically just was like "Yeah I want to stay on this planet where all of these hot women are caressing me and there's only one other guy and he's going to marry-

GRACE:

Who is clearly a douchebag.

JARRAH:

Yeah. And like the aliens are trying to like, give him and this other guy mood enhancing drugs.

GRACE:

It's like "Really? You're not- you're not running *right now*?"

JARRAH:

And Harry keeps having dreams about his mother. Like it's very like Neo-Freudian or pop-Freudian because he's also dreaming about Janeway, and then he's dreaming about these women, and he asks one of them to tuck him in. \*Grace makes uncomfortable noise\* And there's a part of-

GRACE:

Saying nothing about the fact that this is an entire species that only seems to wear bridesmaid dresses.

JARRAH:

\*laughs\* No kidding. They're awful. There is a part where-

GRACE:

But at least they aren't all white.

JARRAH:

That's true. That's true. There's one who isn't.

GRACE:

If *anything*, *that's* what they got.

JARRAH:

So like, this guy says he's getting married to these three women and they go to the ceremony, which is just weird. It wouldn't maybe even be creepy if there wasn't creepy music playing. Like all the women are in veils, and banging staffs, and it's just weird.

GRACE:

Also they tie him up and blindfold him?

JARRAH:

Oh right!

GRACE:

And say that it's a symbol of marriage. Marriage and bondage, same thing.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Harry's like, "Why are they tying him up?" And the woman is like "It's a symbol of binding them together"

GRACE:

“Really? Cuz it looks like *he's* just getting tied up and led away by them.”

JARRAH:

Well and she goes “Do you find it exciting?” And he goes “I never thought of it that way” which is \*Grace laughs\*the best Like most Wesley line ever.

GRACE:

Oooh woow.

JARRAH:

It was like \*naive voice\* “You mean sex? Woaah.” \*all laugh\* So director Marvin Rush called this, I think it's fairly accurate although I don't think it's a good thing, “A male fantasy with a dark twist.” He compared-

GRACE:

Well, you're definitely right on the male fantasy part.

JARRAH:

Yeah. And he compared it to the women- to the geisha girls of Japanese culture \*Grace makes unhappy noise\* which is a misunderstanding of geisha culture. But his quote is “The Western mind thinks of geisha as prostitutes. That's an element to being a geisha. But they are far more than that. A Geisha is a woman whose whole purpose is to entertain men in every possible way, intellectually, and with great beauty. It's the entire package. A Geisha is not a dummy. She's a bright woman. But her role is to be completely captivating to men. That was the goal for the characters in *Favorite Son*. To be so totally devoted to the male that whatever he wants he can have. These guest actors had to come in and play very non 90s women. I had to do a little convincing but we got there.”

GRACE:

Ugh. Lord. Also can I say one thing? There's a point where they're talking to Harry and they're like “Oh yeah, you must have some things that are different than your parents. I mean I bet you're probably really good at math or music.” and I just stopped for a minute and was like “Wait. You take the *one Asian* character on this show, and tell them they're probably good at math or music?”

JARRAH:

Yeah. It was a pretty obvious stereotype moment.

GRACE:

And then of course Harry follows up with “Yeah! I am special!” and it turns into this whole cluster\*\*ck of male entitlement. To “You know what? I *am* special. I *do* deserve multiple women!” and it's just like-

JARRAH:  
It's really weird.

GRACE:  
-oh my God.

JARRAH:  
And actually, I mean I love Garrett Wang and I don't know- I don't believe he would probably say this today, but in the Voyager magazine at the time he said he was dissatisfied because they had these matronly women with no sex appeal instead of babes dressed like I dream of Jeannie. Sooo-

GRACE:  
Wow.

JARRAH:  
-gross.

GRACE:  
*That's matronly?*

JARRAH:  
Yeah that was- first of all they are like 20. \*laughs\*

GRACE:  
Yeah. If you're over 19, you're officially a matron. Over 21 and you're a *crone*.

JARRAH:  
No kidding. So anyway, that was unfortunate. Like, I don't think that was the problem. But it clearly has mixed messages; it mostly seems to be again warning men about women who might be trying to manipulate them. At the end there is a very- it's like, as if we didn't get this was a super tired trope, that is literally like the same thing we saw in the Lorelai Signal and like fairly similar to Angel One, there is a part where Harry Kim then explains the story of the sirens to Paris and Neelix. And Paris is like "Yeah, no one could have resisted these ladies." \*laughs\* He's like "I was on the planet. I don't fault you. No one could have resisted them." and it's like "Except for *you* did."

GRACE:  
Yeah. The whole time, I was re-watching this episode I was with my roommate, and we were both just kind of watching and like "Imagine they got the *one asexual* member of Voyager on there. Or just really gay dude. And they're both just like 'Yeah. OK. Looks nice. I'm going now. There's nothing here for me. Sorry.'" Very hetero normative.

JARRAH:

Oh totally. And again, kind of insulting to men to say that like “No men could resist these beautiful women. They just can't keep their heads on straight when sexy women are around.” And- yeah I mean, it's almost the same thing as “They're much too emotional to be leaders.”

GRACE:

“They're too sex starved to, you know, make competent choices.”

JARRAH:

Like, we see that again and again. Like they're literally incapable of functioning when sexy women are around. \*laughs\*

GRACE:

Couldn't we just kill some of these toxic masculine tropes, just please? Just stop.

JARRAH:

Well, not before we discuss the Enterprise episode Bound

GRACE:

\*whines\* Nooo!

JARRAH:

In which men become even more literally useless in the presence of sexy women.

GRACE:

Also, can we talk about how in an episode where a big point of it is supposed to be *powerful women* and yet there's only like- one, we barely get to see any of the female crew members talk, like all.

JARRAH:

Do you want to remind the listeners what Bound- which episode Bound is?

GRACE:

Oh Bound. What a cornucopia of head slapping it is. \*Jarrah laughs\* In Bound they end up \*pause\* *somewhere*, where they meet up with some members of the Orion Syndicate, who hand over some beautiful Orion women. So they pretty much get these women handed over to Captain Archer, and they're like “Yeah, you can do what you want with all of them.” And they're like “Oh, well we are good people. So we will take them to freedom, and teach them, and let them be independent.” But of course the second they're on the ship they're just like \*girly voice\* “Ooh boys! Let us flirt with you endlessly! Let the euphemisms flow like a river from my over lip-glossed mouth!” \*Jarrah laughs\* And no one is suspicious of the fact that they are constantly

asking “So how does the engine work?” “Can you tell me where the things are?” “Where do you keep *\*intense voice\** the guns?” And of course *\*cheesy comedian voice\** *men* just can't be held accountable when women are beautiful. Am I right?! And so then people are just completely shocked when it turns out “no, these women are in control. They're running stuff for the Orion Syndicate and they're trying to take over the ship” and it's supposed to be really shocking when it happens and it's like *\*deadpan voice\** “No. Really?” It's groan. So groan.

JARRAH:

Oh gosh yes. That is an excellent description.

GRACE:

Also I just couldn't get over- *\*ugh\** the bad wigs don't match their eyebrows, *\*tortured voice\** and the makeup is uneven. It just makes me really angry when they don't even try with makeup on female characters. Green skin, does not a good character design make! *\*exasperated\** For God's sake! They could also probably find people who could have, you know, said their lines and not sounded like they were just reading a label on a pack of gum.

JARRAH:

*\*laughs\** Yes!

GRACE:

They had all of the convictions of someone who's trying to do a price check at the grocery store.

JARRAH:

That is true. But I don't think they were so much hired for a line reading ability. Which is not- I mean, maybe they're great in other- I mean certainly they were talented dancers.

GRACE:

They were, for what little dancing we got to see them do. Yeah.

JARRAH:

The actresses/dancers were not the biggest problem, *\*Grace laughs\** but yeah. So we start out with, like you said, Archer on the Orion ship where the commander basically is like “Here's some slave girls” and Archer is like “Yeah cool. We can't insult you by refusing slave women” and the guy is like “They can make you forget most of your troubles. Of course creatures such as these come with troubles of their own, but women are the same throughout the galaxy aren't they?” So yeah.

GRACE:

*\*joylessly\** Heh heh heh.

JARRAH:



And they're totally like "Yeah. yeah they are. Sexy women will always cause you problems. Women are either simple in looks and with no complications or they're sexy and bring a heap of trouble."

GRACE:

My favorite thing though is that when they bring them aboard the ship and they're like "Now we're not going to use these women as objects, we're just going totally eyeball them constantly.' And we get to see two of the characters having an intense discussion about how "The women. I just can't focus around them." and of course their conversation happens *in the gym*.

JARRAH:

Oh God.

GRACE:

Where it's just guys there. Apparently the gym is just there for dudes. No women use the gym. That is man time.

JARRAH:

Yeah. This episode is so hetero-normative, because what we learn is that the Orions are releasing pheromones that are making all of the men aggressive and distracted I guess. And that they are making all of the women listless as quote "A defense against competition." So like Hoshi-

GRACE:

Huh?

JARRAH:

- when they first start to figure this out Hoshi comes into sickbay with a headache. At this point the men are literally not-

GRACE:

Really? You're going with the "I have a headache" trope on this one?

JARRAH:

Oh, it's so insulting. So only the men are literally not doing their jobs. As you pointed out, this is a seriously big problem. Hoshi comes into sickbay with a headache, and she's complaining about the effect the women are having on the men. And Phlox basically accuses her of just being jealous and petty.

GRACE:

\*toneless\* How dare you want to do your job, and want people around you to do theirs. How dare you.

JARRAH:

And then it turns out she's right. \*laughs\* And T'Pol like- so I mean, we know- we can tell pretty quick that the women aren't actually slaves but no one else knows that. And T'Pol basically very weakly protests to Archer, like "Hey, Federation doesn't really condone slavery. Just like, dunno if you forgot or something. But like maybe don't sleep with these women, because they can't really consent." And Archers like "Oh yeah. OK maybe I'll go talk with them." So he goes to talk with the main woman, Navaar.

GRACE:

Who is actually a founding member of the Pussycat Dolls.

JARRAH:

Oh. Interesting, yeah. And he says you know basically, "I can't own you" and she's like \*sultry voice\* "But I still want to serve you or to please. I still wish to please you." And then he's like "All right. Let's make out." Like because, you know, like if she actually was a sex slave and you were just like "Yeah, you've been indoctrinated into this awful society. I can't take advantage of that." And she's like "Oh but you can" like that's not enough permission.

GRACE:

No. That's that's kind of rape culture-y isn't it?

JARRAH:

Yeah. And I mean, so you're right. I love the scene where Travis and Reid are lifting weights beyond the point of like *it will injure them* as a way to distract themselves because like they are being so dang manly.

GRACE:

We are just having so much testosterone flooding the screen just out of desperate fear that it may be even *slightly implied* that these guys aren't the straightest straights who ever did straight.

JARRAH:

And because no one masturbates in the twenty second century.

GRACE:

I am shocked they haven't figured that out. Honestly. That should be a prime directive right there. If you're going to be in space for that long you need a tension reliever.

JARRAH:

Like don't, you guys. Don't hurt yourself. There's something simple you can do to deal with this.

GRACE:

I know they don't have the holodeck yet, but this is years after they invented the Internet so *honestly*.

JARRAH:  
We do fine today.

GRACE:  
We do. I'm just saying \*all laugh\* was there like a dark age of sex and masturbation that we just missed out on? And if so, when do we get a series about that?

JARRAH:  
\*laughs\* Yeah, I guess it was during the Eugenics Wars. They also outlawed masturbation.

GRACE:  
God. It would have been a horror wouldn't it? \*dramatically\* My God.

JARRAH:  
So basically, they figure out the women are releasing these pheromones. So they lock them in the decon chamber and they're guarded by a man and-

GRACE:  
Of course.

JARRAH:  
There were so many points in this episode where I really wished that T'Pol would have pulled an Uhura and just been like "The men can't think straight. I'm taking control of the ship."

GRACE:  
They even did it on Stargate God's sake.

JARRAH:  
Yeah, but she just lets them. So like, Archer doesn't listen to her, he puts a man in charge of guarding the cell, so the Orion seduce their way out. And partly it's because T'Pol is like so distracted with wondering whether or not Trip still into her. So that was also just a frustrating side to this episode.

GRACE:  
\*cheesy comedian voice\* Again, women am I right?

JARRAH:  
Trip ends up saving the day, because Trip is unaffected by the women because he's bonded to T'Pol so he's already in like a heterosexual relationship. So therefore he can resist their wiles.

GRACE:

So in essence what we get from this episode is “Men, are women giving you trouble? You know what you need? Other men.” \*Jarrah laughs\* This is what I hear is also the moral of Fight Club.

JARRAH:

Yeah for sure.

GRACE:

“Men, you need men to keep you away from \*sinister voice\* women.”

JARRAH:

That is accurate. \*Grace laughs\* Yeah. This is an example of the “sexy matriarchy” trope, which is a fantasy where the women in power are attractive and often scantily clad with strong overtones of domination, lesbianism, or both. In this case just domination. I think.

GRACE:

Bringing me back to having the head woman called “Mistress.”

JARRAH:

Yeah, this is- the TV Tropes says “this can be just as offensive as a straw matriarchy. It’s a form of fetish fuel author appeal for certain male writers, and it almost always overlaps with the trope matriarchy in name only as women in an actual matriarchy would have no logical reason to cater to male desires.”

GRACE:

Yeah, pretty much.

JARRAH:

And our listener, and your friend and mine, Oren wrote in a comment saying “As far as attempting to subvert the helpless slave girl trope Firefly did it better. Largely because that show had well-developed women on the main cast, whereas Enterprise did not. Also if Orion society is really run by the women why are they bothering with the slave song and dance instead of just using their powers for political gain as almost every other species is run by straight men? I feel like no Trek episode has done a matriarchy well. In Angel One it was ‘Oh look women in charge. Isn’t that funny?’ In sanctuary it was a little better, but the Skreen seemed designed to be as annoying as possible.” So that kind of fits with our observations. But yeah, I mean we also had a listener request that we talk about the way that Bound fits into the way Orions are portrayed because it’s obviously very different than the way they were portrayed in TOS. But I think we’re gonna have to do that in a separate episode.

GRACE:

Oh yeah. There’s definitely some fodder there.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Yeah, for sure. But I think they were *trying to modernize* the story. This is an interesting point of tension in Enterprise, that they're set before the original series but catering to an audience in the early 2000s. So they're like "Oh this is good, because we're saying the women aren't actually slaves. They're in charge." Only they're in charge using their sexuality to manipulate men.

GRACE:

Yeah. That's noot really female empowerment.

JARRAH:

And the idea that like, first of all, everyone is obviously straight. And I feel like two things could have made this episode livable, one of them would have been T'Pol taking over the ship the other one-

GRACE:

Which would have been rad!

JARRAH:

Yeah. The other one would have even just been T'Pol and/or other people, like maybe Phlox or Trip who wasn't affected voicing stronger opinions about how wrong this was earlier on. Like, both how obviously they were being duped. And before that, how incredibly wrong it was to like assume that you could have any kind of consensual relationship with people who were sex slaves that soon. So. \*all groan\*

GRACE:

Well on that happy note, that's kind of all the matriarchy episodes we've got. This is what we have to work with people.

JARRAH:

Yeah. If only we were in charge. The Council of Ministers or Mistresses Grace and Jarrah, in charge of everything.

GRACE:

That would be scary. I love it. Make it so.

JARRAH:

Well it was great talking about matriarchies in Star Trek with you. Also, before we go I just wanted to remind you that you can hop over to Itunes, and if you'd like to leave us a review, we would love that. We always love to hear what you're thinking. Or you can send us listener mail at [crew@womenatwarp.com](mailto:crew@womenatwarp.com) or-

GRACE:

Show us some love, give us some feedback.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Or go find us on Twitter @womenatwarp, or on Facebook. Facebook.com/womenatwarp. And we are going to head out. Grace, where can people find you on the Internet?

GRACE:

You can find me on Twitter @BoneCrusherjenk or you can read my writing on the Mythcreants blog.

JARRAH:

Fabulous and I am Jarrah Hodge. And you find me at Trekkiefeminist.Tumblr.com or at twitter @JarrahPenguin. J A R R A H-Penguin. Have a great night. Live long and prosper.