Women at Warp Episode 232: Star Trek Adventures: What's to Come

[Women at Warp theme]

Aliza: Hi, and welcome to Women at Warp: A *Star Trek* Podcast. Join us on our continuing mission to explore intersectional diversity in infinite combinations. My name is Aliza Pearl, and thanks for tuning in. With me today are Samantha.

Samantha: Hello.

Aliza: Hello. And April.

April: Hi, everyone.

Aliza: And my cohost, Jarrah.

Jarrah: Hello.

Aliza: Now, before we dive in and find out who and what our incredible guests are doing, we have a little bit of housekeeping. So, our show is made possible by our patrons on Patreon. If you'd like to become a patron, you can do so for as little as $1 per month and get awesome rewards from thanks on social media from us to silly watchalong commentaries with us. So, visit *www.patreon.com/womenatwarp* for more info. If you're looking for podcast merch, check out our TeePublic Store. There are so many designs with new ones being added all the time and on so much more than just t-shirts. Find it *@teepublic.com/stores/womenatwarp*. So, let's get into it. I would love to introduce our fabulous guests from Modiphius, Samantha Webb. Hi, Samantha.

Samantha: Hello. How you doing?

Aliza: Good, how are you?

Samantha: I'm good, thank you.

Aliza: Awesome. And April Hill.

April: Hey, I'm so happy to be here and finally get to sit down and talk with y'all.

Aliza: We're so glad to have you here to talk about *Star Trek Adventures*. But before that, we want to know a little bit about you two. So, Samantha, can you tell us a little bit about yourself and your personal history with *Star Trek*?

Samantha: Yeah, of course. So, I began watching *Star Trek* with my dad nestled next to him in his armchair. We used to watch *The Next Generation* together when it was syndicated on the BBC. So, you would never quite get the same series of episodes in the same order necessarily. But that didn't stop our enjoyment of it, definitely. We managed to work our way through *Deep Space Nine* as well, *Voyager,* and then we finally got to watch *Enterprise* as it was being broadcast together, which I know it gets a little bit flak, but I think is a really good show, actually, and a really exciting time in the *Star Trek* timeline.

Aliza: Fantastic. Yeah.

Samantha: And then I got my job at Modiphius in 2016, and one of the first things I managed to do was to assist with the publication of *Star Trek Adventures*, which was really,

really exciting. I went very quickly from being like a publishing assistant to project managing that game. And we released the core rulebook at Gen Con that following year, basically. So, I've been involved in *Star Trek Adventures* development since then. In the beginning, I was more involved. So, I was actually deciding which books we were going to publish, what they were going to be about, deciding on the contents and the chapter breakdown and stuff like that, and feeding back on adventure writing as well. Even art directing occasionally, although I'm a terrible art director, do not get into art direct anything ever again.

[laughter]

But now Jim Johnson project manages the line as well as being the line editor. So, I work with Jim to decide the game's products and its overall direction as a brand manager on it.

Aliza: Fantastic. Awesome. And April, can you tell us about yourself, your history with *Star Trek*, and what you do at Modiphius?

April: Sure. So, I am the community manager here at Modiphius, so I run our Discord and our socials and all the fun stuff like that, and I have loved *Star Trek*. It's so funny hearing Samantha's story because mine is very similar. I grew up watching *The Next Generation* and then later on, of course, getting into *Deep Space Nine*. But then it's been so amazing these past few years with all the new content they've been putting out. I love *Prodigy* and *Lower Decks* and *Strange New Worlds*, and I'm about to get into *Discovery*. Despite what a lot of people say, I really still want to watch it because I think everything I've seen about it looks really cool, but I haven't got to jump into it just yet like I want to.

But, yeah, so it's just been so amazing getting to see this resurgence and watch all the movies and then, of course, like, all the new games and stuff that we have for it so.

Aliza: Fantastic. I'm really excited to have you two on to-- yeah, just to talk about all things Modiphius is doing, but it's also really great to hear about your own personal connection to *Star Trek* because so many of the *Star Trek* games and *Star Trek* other things that are being made and licensed to be made for *Star Trek* are by fans. So, I love hearing about that creation process through the lens of both you all as professionals and also as fans. So, to dive in to *Star Trek Adventures: What's to Come*. Here's a little just recap or get you all up to speed listeners, if you're not aware, but of Modiphius, the publishing company, we recently got news that Modiphius will be releasing a Second Edition ruleset for its very popular *Star Trek Adventures* tabletop role playing game.

And since Jarrah and I are avid *Star Trek Adventures* players and GM's, we are thrilled to have Samantha and April here to ask them all about what's to come with Second Edition STA. So, what will change, what won't change in the rule set, and how *Star Trek Adventures* helps TTRPG players and *Star Trek* fans create immersive and exciting *Star Trek* stories at their tables. So, first question from me, why a Second Edition?

So, as you said, Samantha, First Edition came out around 2017, but now, it's been several years. So, can you talk us through some of the major reasons for an overhaul of the First Edition of this game?

Samantha: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, so, yeah, if you're doing the math *Star Trek Adventures* is already seven years old, and we actually started developing it back in 2016. So, it's grown and it's developed with each new expansion, each new supplement that we've published. And we've learned a lot about the 2d20 system as well, which is like the proprietary rules system it uses that we developed as Modiphius. And so, as we've developed other games using the 2d20 system, we've learned a lot about it. So, when we've been developing *Achtung! Cthulhu* or *The Fallout Tabletop Roleplaying Game*, or *Dreams*

and Machines, which is setting our new IP with a role-playing game attached to it. We've discovered a lot about what really works well and what's streamlined about it and stuff like that.

And fans have also shone a light on parts of the *Star Trek Adventures* rules that they either love or hate. And that's also informed the game slowly over time too. So, a Second Edition makes good on all of that by incorporating everything we've learned about the game, everything we've learned about the system to improve the game for both existing and new fans that could come in with the Second Edition.

Aliza: Cool. And how has the response been from the community about a Second Edition? April

April: It's been very well received. Everyone is really excited, especially since we teased what the cover art is going to look like with our announcement, which let people know that "Hey, guess what? *Strange New Worlds.*" Yeah, that's a thing. So, I think the response has been really well received by everyone, and everyone's really excited to jump in and see what the changes are and get playing.

Jarrah: Yeah. I can say my group of players here in Ottawa is very excited. I'm hopeful because right now I have way too many people who want to learn how to play and play *Star Trek Adventures,* and I am only one human, so I'm hopeful that it will be like a good natural point to also start training up some new GM's here so we can have some more groups going locally.

Samantha: Yeah, absolutely. And that's always been something that we've been quite conscious of as well, is exactly a thing of people being like, "I don't have a GM," or "I don't feel like I could be a GM yet," but that's where a lot of product development has been in terms of the starter sets that we've produced for quite a few things. I think I'm right in saying that the *Star Trek Adventures* First Edition starter set was actually the first starter set Modiphius ever did. And it started to set a trend with our products. And I remember at the time feeling like that's the game had finally arrived then because the only people putting out, like starter sets were like literally *Dungeons & Dragons,* I think. I don't even think that *Pathfinder* had quite done one yet, maybe or maybe they were just releasing one.

So, I thought the fact that we'd done one, it really felt like the game was like grown up now, even if it just been released. And it wasn't just that you had to just buy that book or that you had to spend a week reading the rules as a GM, getting to understand them so that you can teach them to other people. A lot of the starter sets that we've put together have been very focused on trying to onboard both GM's and players. But we want to get over that hurdle of someone having to learn the game first in order to teach other people.

Aliza: Yeah.

Samantha: I'd say that close to 100% maybe, of people who first start tabletop, they don't just pick out a book off the shelf and start reading and trying to learn it. They learn it from other people. So, we've really tried to make that onboarding process really easy. So, for *Dreams and Machines*, for example, the starter set there, literally, you can play it without any prep whatsoever, straight out of the box, you lift up the lid and GM's and players can learn the system as they go. So, those lessons that we've learned with other products, those things are what we're hoping to incorporate into *Star Trek Adventures*, the Second Edition. And we've already announced a starter set for Second Edition as well. It's going to come out after the Core Rulebook. So, Jarrah, you're not alone. Definitely.

[laughter]

Jarrah: Awesome. Yeah, I mean, I certainly found the first starter set very helpful. I'd never GM'd before and I had played one game that Aliza ran, which got me super excited, and I played some *D&D,* so I was basically starting from scratch, and it made it definitely a realistic thing to take on and to bring other players on to learning the mechanics, but also the way that the stories work and the worldview and how I think it does a really good job mimicking what all the things we love about *Star Trek.*

Samantha: Yeah.

April: Yeah.

Samantha: Yeah, for sure.

Aliza: That's the thing I love about *Star Trek* Adventures too, Jarrah, is that you just like the diversity in terms of genres and formats that *Star Trek* can be in, you can do that in *Star Trek Adventures* and, like, the Streampunks, we've been having a lot of fun with being, like, "We're going to do a Mars base and everyone's engineers or designers and making starships," and like what's the most blue-collar version of this show. We just have so many ideas of where we can place our *Star Trek Adventure* stories, because *Star Trek* is such a huge universe, and notoriously fans are very creative, and we create our own stories and thoughts and ideas about *Star Trek.* So, it's just such a rich world to play a game in.

So, yeah, *Star Trek Adventures* is just perfectly balanced to help you do that, and, yeah, really enjoy that.

Samantha: I always love hearing that feedback because it's nice, and I feel really proud of the fact that the fans who have come to the game do keep telling us that this really feels like *Star Trek.* And I remember that when we were developing adventures for it, so, missions that you could go on, we were producing the first *Mission Compendiums* that I had a copy of or managed to find a copy of Gene Roddenberry writer's guidance for the *Next Generation* and really took some of those points to heart about how if you can just basically replace the circumstances of the plot with dragons and castles and princesses, then it's not a *Star Trek* story.

[laughter]

Samantha: Right. And that's how we were. We're up against science fiction license or IP that is up against a market of predominantly fantasy games and a lot of demand for fantasy games. And so, you really need to differentiate yourself editorially from those games. So, I think it's funny because I've been preparing a writing workshop this week for internal use, and I've been coming across the same points and the same very strong opinions I have about adventure writing for RPG's based on my editorial experience whilst I was curating those missions for the first *Mission Compendium,* because it's got to be a *Star Trek* story and you can't just travel from one end of the quadrant to the other in like a day or whatever.

It has to have all of these things to really make it feel like a good *Star Trek* story. And I'm really proud of what we managed to put together because I think all of them really do feel like that. There are no missions where you just feel like, "Oh, this just feels like a carbon copy of a fantasy adventure I played for *D&D* or something." They're all very specific and they all really touch on those themes and the vision for *Star Trek* as well.

Aliza: Yeah. it's really interesting. And someone who's played lots of different TTRPGs to see how. Yeah, I think you all have used your 2d20 system really effectively to like capture those core tenets of *Star Trek* stories and *Star Trek* characters and things like that. But I also

wanted to say, wouldn't it be fun to see like, that *Lower Decks* fantasy planet [laughs] like a mashup of that in *Star Trek Adventures* or like *D&D,* maybe when you go to that planet, you start playing *D&D* and then you come back.

April: Oh, I've done that.

Aliza: Oh, my God. Really?

April: Well, not in *Star Trek Adventures*, but in *Fallout*. In our Fallout Roleplaying Game, my players characters played *D&D*.

[laughter]

Aliza: I am a fan of the game within a game and I've done that as well. Yes.

April: Well, in *Lower Decks* they also have the Klingon RPG- [crosswalk]

Aliza: Yes, yes, that's very-

April: So, you can make that part of your campaign.

Aliza: Oh, my God, please. Samantha and April, can we please get that? [laughs]

April: That would be so funny.

Samantha: We'll try. We'll try.

April: Well, they have like Dragons ante and they've got like little games that you can play in *D&D*. There should be like little games that you can play in *Star Trek*. Like in *Star Trek Adventures.*

Aliza: Yes.

Samantha: Well, I always get my players to-- when they're creating a character, I get them to freely pick a focus, but it has to be a hobby. So, I play 3D chess or I play-- what's the racquetball like? [crosstalk]

Jarrah: Oh, Velocity.

Samantha: Velocity, yeah. So, a player in my streamed game that we've just wrapped on literally had Velocity as like one of their focuses and then like, came into effect at some point because they were shooting something or someone. [laughs] I was just like, "That's perfect. That's absolutely perfect."

Jarrah: Oh, maybe Velocity is the one where you're shooting the phasers at the flying discs.

Samantha: That's it. Yeah.

Jarrah: Yeah. Sorry. I think it's just racquetball. Is racquetball.

Samantha: Oh, fair enough.

Jarrah: Just future racquetball with awesome unitards.

Samantha: Yeah. Just on the holodeck.

Jarrah: Yes.

Samantha: Yeah.

Aliza: Well, yeah, I wanted to also ask because in the past seven years, *Star Trek Adventures*, you all have come out with so many amazing supplements and other core books. And so, I know when a Second Edition of things come out, there's going to be some, obviously some compatibility and then also some things that go out the window. So, do you have a sense of like, how much of the preexisting material you all have come out with for 1E? How much of that still works for 2E? And also, do you have any tips for 1E players to switch over to 2E with all the supplements we already have?

Samantha: Yeah, for sure. I mean, we made a choice really early on to make Second Edition compatible with First Edition, and the team's done a really great job of making that work. A lot of the supplementary material for First Edition, though, is kind of like it's law based. A lot of its background information or its adventures or missions that you can go on and that can all just be used in Second Edition games anyway. So, by all means, if you're looking at a supplement or if you're looking at an expansion for First Edition, don't be dissuaded from grabbing it if you wanted to buy it because it won't be made redundant. We sometimes say like, within the office internally, "No one's coming around and burning your books." Like, you're still going to be able to play First Edition, have First Edition material if you want to, as well. But we're hoping that Second Edition really gives you a better, more developed, more streamlined experience of the game.

It's not a massive divergence from it, and so stuff should be wholly compatible, but the Second Edition is really going to open up the possibility for players to step outside of the Starfleet-focused gameplay and tell stories of the different well-known species from the *Star Trek Universe*. So, the First Edition was very focused on Starfleet, but this is going to allow you to play more of the Klingon games you want, the Romulan games you want, and the other polities that we see in the franchise could even be like a civilian crew. And you could do a bit of a *Picard* thing where you're going off on your own devices a little bit. With the addition of *Strange New Worlds*, the license as well., the new edition is obviously going to feature more art that's themed around this. And I really adore it as a series. It's been really popular, so I'm really excited about that.

In terms of supporting the ability to play from different parts of the *Star Trek Universe*, there's going to be a whole selection of fully playable non-Federation species in the Core Rulebook. There was in the First Edition Core Rulebook, but I think it wasn't made as obvious and it wasn't as developed as having a whole page dedicated to playing a Cardassian or playing a Ferengi. But if you were looking closely enough in the *Allies and Adversaries* chapter, then you could play those, there were stats for them and stuff, but this is really doubling down on you being able to play in whichever corner of the galaxy that you want to.

We are going to be talking more about the changes in detail in the build up to the launch, so I'm not going to reveal too much yet. And you'll get a chance to preview that before we release the Core Rulebook at this year's Gen Con. So, it's going to be a quick start to come out and you guys are going to be able to see it before we actually launch the book. But if you want to know more details, you will need to sign up to our socials and our newsletters because that's where we'll put the news out first.

Aliza: All right, awesome. Are there any things that you as fans-- so for instance, I love that the approach for this new edition core book, it's *Strange New Worlds* is the theme and the time era that, that the core book is written in, and obviously it can be used for other time periods. But I love that even in the way you've just described, what this Second Edition book

contains is in the spirit of *Strange New Worlds*, like discovering new *Strange New Worlds* and going off into different parts of the *Star Trek Universe* and meeting new characters and new planets and getting to play some other things outside of just Starfleet.

So, are there any other ways that you as fans, and it could be you too, personally or if you know, like other folks on staff and creators that you use in your own *Star Trek* fandom that inspires what you make for Modiphius. Does that question make any sense? [laughs]

Samantha: Kind of.

[laughter]

April: So, what's been really awesome is when the line first started, it was limited to what we could put in books and what we could write about. And it's been really cool with all of these new shows coming out and everybody, like, there being this resurgence and everybody getting new fans coming to the fandom and stuff like that, it's been really cool being able to be like, "Oh, guess what, you know what? Everybody's really loving *Lower Decks*, but we haven't been able to write about it. Guess what? We get to write about that now." So, getting the opportunity, and I know all the writers and all the people on these projects, they are fans. They are hardcore fans of what they write about and these games and the shows and everything. So, it's been really cool to be able to see their creative juices flowing as we pick up some of the newer material and we're able to make stuff for that. So that's been really amazing to be able to do.

Aliza: Yeah. So, it seems like it's just a very organic-- I mean, besides, when you say you're limited, I know that also has to do with licensing, maybe especially licensing, right?

Samantha: Yes.

Aliza: So, yeah, other than that, it flows from what you all, as fans are. Yeah, like are interested in and also what you have available to you.

April: Yeah, it's always fun to read comments. They're like, "When are you going to make stuff for this? When are you going to make stuff for that?" And it's like, "Well, when we're able to, we would love to." [laughs]

Aliza: Yeah, well, I'm honestly-- I feel like you all have had this really amazing expansion because it wasn't that long ago where-- yeah, you all didn't have *Discovery* and *The Federation Klingon War* and there was even, like, you all came out with like, *Voyager* stuff within the past few years, I feel like you all have had this robust slate of catching up to all the new and uncovered shows that-- yeah, like, new *Star Trek* shows, but also going back to *Voyager* and releasing some character sheets from that and Mission Compendiums that take place in that era.

April: Yeah. Even the-- what was the one that we came out with on First Contact Day.

Aliza: Ooh.

Samantha: Yeah, the animated show.

April: The animated. There was the animated little series.

Aliza Yeah. Oh, that's awesome.

Jarrah: Have you ever had like a time that you can remember where someone in your social channels was like, "Hey, what about this idea?" And you folks were like, "I legitimately never thought of it, but that is a great idea." Does that happen?

April: Yes.

Samantha: I mean, just every day in the Discord, I guess.

April: [laughs] Yeah.

Samantha: Our fans are probably, I'll admit it now, more knowledgeable than we are if you take them as a whole. And so, they'll ask you about a really obscure point of the canon and you're like, "My God, how did we--?" obviously we can't write a whole supplement about one place, one planet or one species or anything like that. So, it starts to get a little narrow. But yeah, I'm always surprised at what people suggest or what they kind of like grok onto because you're just like, "Wow, I would never have thought of that." [laughs] But you spoke about licensing earlier, actually, and I'm thinking that fans of tabletop RPG's might not know.

So, the licenses that Paramount have for *Star Trek* are specific to the different movies in the series. So, for example, if you get a license for the *Next Generation*, that's the only series that you can represent in your products. But so, with our license, and especially the one that we've just secured, we have everything *Star Trek*. So that is the *Legacy* series, that's new shows, that's movies, new and old even the Abramsverse now. We didn't have that before with our previous agreement. So, I'm so looking forward to covering lore that we didn't manage to actually touch in the First Edition. Fans have been asking us for a Romulan material for so long, and I think that the *Picard* series touched on that in a really interesting way that we could definitely dig into more.

I'd also be really interested in delving into and exploring what happened with the Federation around the Android crisis around Mars, in *Picard*. it's those larger events that I find have that playable space to inhabit and explore as a playing group or as a game. If you're an extra on the bridge that only takes a seat because you're a seat filler for a main character, it's quite restrictive. You're not going to be able to do very much. And if you're sticking to canon as a GM or as a group, there's nothing you can do to influence the events of the *Enterprise* or whichever enterprise it is or *Voyager* or something. But an event like that in the setting where it's like this larger thing happened, the baron creating artificial life forms. Like, there's room to play in there and there's room to explore its themes as well. So that's more where I'm really interested in playing.

And so, I think that our fans often, they identify those things, but sometimes, like I say, the suggestions can be really specific because there's just so much *Star Trek* lore out there that I'm just like, that's brilliant. But there is no way that we can cover that and sell it effectively and make any money off of that, I'm afraid.

[chuckles]

Jarrah: Well, and, you know, canon sometimes has inconsistencies within itself. So, sometimes you just as a GM have to make a call on, like, this is how it applies in my game or not.

Samantha: Yep, absolutely.

April: You just say timey-wimey things. Just timey-wimey things happened. It's fine.

Jarrah: I'm always like, "In our *Star Trek Universe*." [laughs]

April: Yeah, exactly. Yes.

Samantha: Yeah. That's how I approach it too whilst running it, is that I've always noticed, particularly with the writing and how the shows are actually made. Obviously, there are going to be fans out there who are tracking all of the different adaptations and technology that they use. And if you actually keep a tally of that, there is some really crazy stuff that you could just do every day. The writing and the way that the show does that it doesn't-- it cares about it from a plot perspective like nowhere else. So, it matters that they can adapt to try in order to do something to solve a problem in that moment, but they'll never touch on it ever again. So, that's how I tend to run my *Star Trek* is like what you do and how your creative problem-solving works matters right now, but the fact that you just changed a fundamental law of physics right now doesn't matter in the next episode, it just doesn't matter. It's fine.

Aliza: That is such a good point about how technology is written into the show for usefulness in that moment. I never thought of it from that lens, but that's so true. And it's useful, yeah, as a GM to just be able to do that.

Jarrah: Yeah. I also remember when I was first starting to play-- I forget if this is actually written down or if it was another player who was explaining this to me about how, the way that *Star Trek Adventures* is structured like an episode, and you don't see all the times people eat a meal or go to the bathroom on the *Enterprise*. So, watching the detailed scientific exploration of how they solve a thing would not be very exciting TV for everyone. So, figuring out a way that you're being attentive to the skills that go into and the thinking that goes into solving the problems, but not just turning the entire thing into very technical exploration of something that might only involve one of your players that understands it, is, I think, one of the interesting challenges. But once you wrap your head around, think of it like if this was a *Star Trek* episode, it becomes, very natural to people.

Samantha: For sure. Yeah. And I think you have to make peace that it's creative, it's not inherently scientific. It's like creative problem solving. But that's the best play space to be in when you are role playing. And I think it's what magic takes its place for in fantasy. Magic is that thing that just excuses all reason and lets you do the cool, creative thing. Whereas with *Star Trek*, its basis is in science. But if you tried to adhere to that perfectly, I think you're right. I think you'd have maybe some very boring moments, but also some very frustrating moments because you'd be like, "Oh, well, then I can't do that, just can't."

Aliza: There's, I think, in the spirit of technobabble, anything is possible in *Star Trek*. Yeah, just like create around it and create towards it, especially and I think one of the joys I have as a GM is having players come up with super creative technobabble reasons that something does or doesn't work. So, yeah, it's just part of the creativity there.

Jarrah: And there is a table to roll it if you need it. [laughs]

April: It's funny. Oh, I was just thinking Neil Tyson had done an interview sometime this past week, I think, and he was talking about how the thumpers in *Dune*, he's like that, "Actually--" and then how the worms move across the sand in *Dune,* he's like, "Well, actually." [laughs] So, I think there's still stuff in *Star Trek* that it's like there's going to be somebody out there that goes, "Well, actually, in physics--" even though I know *Star Trek* is one of the-- out of every fandom, I think, and setting out there, it tries to be the most scientifically, this could be correct out of all of them that there are, but that just made me think of that. He's like, "Well, actually." So, there's always going to be somebody out there that says, "No."

Samantha: If that's your playstyle too, fine. If you want to delve into some of the science of it and really analyze what could be possible and why that's physically possible and all that kind

of stuff, great. But my playstyle is very cinematic, creative problem solving and stuff like that. I wanted to give a very quick shout out to my player that was in my streamed game, Anita, who can just come up with technobabble just all day, every day, and I'm just like, "How do you do that?"

Aliza: That is a talent, for sure. Are there any other pockets? I know we've already discussed some, but are there any other things that any of us personally bring into our games or would want to see in *Star Trek Adventures*? Like any pockets of your fandom? Things that you like about *Star Trek* or you're like, "There was this one episode where this happened, so I brought it into my game." [laughs]

Samantha: Also, when I ran the Shackleton Expanse on Stream on the Modiphius channel, I can never run anything just straight out off the book. Like, I can't ever run a campaign just straight out of the book. I always have to mess around with it or personalize it. So, instead of doing a, "You're the senior officers on a ship and you're going out into the Expanse and you're exploring the Expanse and this," that and the other, I did a station game, so I took the essence of *Deep Space Nine* and put it into the Shackleton Expanse because you've got this keep on the borderlands, that is Narendra Station, which is the little hub that everyone meets at before they go and is like the gateway into the Expanse.

So, I really put that at the center of the game. And so, one of the players was just perfectly positioned as the operations officer for the station, bit of a Miles O'Brien, but she was also part Klingon, part human and so she was at the crux of that federation, Klingon politics, because it's a jointly operated station that we wrote into the campaign. So, that was really fun to explore with her. Yeah, I tend to put my own little spin on things rather than just play them straight out of the book.

Aliza: I was just going to say, I'm about to start in a private game that I run. We're starting the Shackles and Expanse campaign. So, I'm really excited to dive into that.

Jarrah: We also just started it with our group and making some adjustments just because we ended up having different people available for different sessions. And so, to ensure the people that need to be there at certain points of the story are there. But, yeah, so far so good. And you're talking about the Romulan stuff now. I'm fantasizing about a Romulan basically just political intrigue campaign around those events, around their sun going supernova.

April: That's awesome.

Jarrah: That would be cool. I'm not 100% sure if I could get critical mass to play a long campaign about that but maybe a one shot.

April: Mm-mm. [laughs]

Samantha: I love a political game. I ran a *Game of Thrones* campaign streamed again for years, and much like the novels, it started off, and I was like, "We're going to do maybe three short seasons of this, and then I'm going to wrap up the story and that's going to be it." And it turned into basically three books worth of material. [laughs] But that was so fun. And I love playing antagonists or villains that can just twist an argument and the players might hold something to be absolutely true, and I'll just be like, "Okay, well, I'll be contrary about it, this perspective or maybe this argument. What do you think about that?" And they're like, "Oh, no, I have to think now."

Aliza: Yeah. That's the thing too about *Star Trek* and *Star Trek Adventures,* social combat is very fun because it exists in the series and movies where you're going up against a villain

who's just trying to outwit you and out argue you and I love that the rule set is easy to adapt into a social combat.

April: I feel like with 2E, it's going to be even easier to do that. I feel like the changes that have been made, that it's going to favor that even more.

Aliza: Very cool. I was going to say my pockets of weird things that I've wormholed into my games are Liberated Borg, an Ex-Borg. Yeah, we got to see more of that perspective in *Picard* Season 3. Well, I haven't actively been running it, but off and on, I have this Liberated Borg two shot or four shot where people play a party of Ex-Borg that have been dumped on like Backwoods Planet and have to-- It's very social combat heavy. It's not easy, I'm going to say. I think it's for people who want to explore heavy social issues in a game. So, it's not for the faint of heart. It's not just a fun, whimsy game, although that exists in it because it's fun *Star Trek*. It's been fun to dive into that.

And then we did *Clear Skies: Perseverance,* which is like Utopia Planitia on Mars, the shipyards, and I got to bring in a lot of actual Mars science and think about what would a surface facility that's dedicated to ship design and creation look like? And we got to build that. So, I love just taking an idea from *Star Trek*, diving into it and fleshing it out with our own ideas and actual science and actual society and history. It's my favorite thing about *Star Trek Adventures.*

Samantha: Yeah, for sure. I'd love to do some more Borg stuff.

Aliza: Yeah, yeah.

Samantha: I've actually never touched it when I've been running or playing *Star Trek Adventures*. And there's just, it's a classic villain, that's just relentless and you can't really do much about. Yeah, I'd love to do a few sessions on it or a more in-depth thing on the Borg.

April: I wish I could have gotten my hands on that Borg Cube that we had.

Aliza: Oh, yeah.

April: The Borg Cube box set. That thing was so beautiful.

Samantha: You heard it here first, that's my retirement. I have the first Borg Cube. I have one of 1701.

[gasps]

Samantha: And it's sat in this cardboard box in its shrink wrap. I have not opened it. That's my retirement fund basically. La

Aliza: [laughs] Amazing.

Jarrah: I wanted to just open up for a bit of a broader conversation on how *Star Trek Adventures* is considering the broader conversations and debates that we're seeing in the world of TTRPGs around inclusion and equity. And *Star Trek*'s always been ahead of its time when it comes to diversity and inclusion, and it gives us a window into a fictional world where equity was taken seriously, and we're supposed to be like humans past some of that stuff, at least in some of the series. And so, I was wondering, in terms of things like, for example, facilitating an inclusive gaming experience for diverse players. From your perspective, how have you taken that lens into *Star Trek Adventures?*

Samantha: *Star Trek* inherently has a vision of infinite diversity and infinite combinations. And so, the game, I think, has always celebrated the differences that the characters have and what makes them unique. So, for example, if it comes to the topic of races or character traits, personality traits and stuff like that, we do have species in the game, but it's very much meant to be more of a scientific distinction and it focuses more on fundamental physical traits and it can discuss cultural ones, but you don't have to abide by them.

One of my favorite things about it, the life path character creation system, allows you to choose or to randomly determine the influential events of your background, from where you were raised to how you were raised, what happened to you, whether you rebelled against that, whether you accepted that. And the game specifically asks you open ended questions about all that kind of stuff. So, you're always in the driving seat when it comes to the decisions about your character.

April: And I feel like we've done a really good job of putting safety tools and safety tool questions in our books so that people can also-- when they are creating these characters and when they are playing these games, that it's a safe space and everyone feels good about it.

Samantha: Yeah. I think as well that like traditional tabletop RPG publishing, which is my own categorization, but it's like I categorize Modiphius to be part of as opposed to like indie TTRPGs. I think they took a bit longer to include safety and consent as an important topic in their rules material. I was certainly using community tools before we'd published anything specifically in a Modiphius rulebook. And in the players and game master guides for the First Edition, we included guidance on that. And I think the community's gotten better at large about making sure that we're playing in good faith and that we're welcoming and inviting to fellow players and we're playing in a safe environment as well. But I'll absolutely admit that the very beginning *Star Trek Adventures* didn't show that maybe too well.

But as I said about the development of First Edition then into Second Edition, we've learned a lot about that over the course of its life, and so we've included more of that as the First Edition has gone on, and then into the Second Edition as well. And so, when we've been working on, when we've been structuring how the Second Edition book, core rule book and books are going to be, that part of that about consent and inclusion has been at the forefront of our discussions. And initially we were adamant about representing diverse characters artistically, but I think it's only through the evolution of the game line that we've seen a more diverse team and a more accommodating approach to consent and issues around that in gaming.

Aliza: I think I remember seeing some of that in the player's guide. Is that right?

Samantha: Yeah, I think so. I haven't got it to hand right this second, but yeah, it's in the Player's guide and the GM's guide has guidance on session zeros, like how to pause the game or show that you're not in a good space, or to flag up things beforehand about safe topics and stuff like that. I personally came to that more through the streaming community, actually, where we were doing more lines and veils type stuff, and I'm really pleased that it's actually found its way into published games more and more, as opposed to just being a crutch that the community is providing these games. The games actually providing the tools themselves just means that it's better and safer and easier for people to play.

Aliza: Yeah, absolutely. I'm also personally really glad it's finding its way into the published games as well, because there's some really great indie creators who have created tools that have become widely used. And, yeah, they're all adaptable to each ruleset, but it's just great to see publishers put that more at the forefront and make that more part of the rules of the

game are safety and making sure everyone's having a good time and feeling good and taking care of each other.

Jarrah: Mm-hm. Yeah. And there's some things that are uniquely sci-fi elements that might come up in a campaign, like telepathic control. I mean, I guess you have telepaths in fantasy, too, but in fantasy, I feel like that conversation comes up more in the context of love potions and how, you know, don't subject a player to this without talking to the player first to see whether they're okay with that happening to their character and make it participative and not, basically doing something that could be triggering or just a very not fun experience for the other person.

Samantha: Yeah. And the perspective that naysayers or people who are concerned about those tools really need to understand is that if you're just watching one of your characters on a *Star Trek* TV show have their mind taken over or their bodies swapped or something like one of those typical science fiction tropes, and therefore, Miles O'Brien getting a clone and thinking he's going out of his mind and then discovering that he's the clone or something, stuff like that. It's really entertaining when you don't have to enact it or describe it, particularly for a character that you have created. And so, you really have to be affirmatively up for that kind of thing. It's more like studying it a little bit and thinking about it. It's kind of like a-- oh, no, what's the-- It's not pathos, what's the word when you're empathizing with, like a TV show or a play catharsism.

It's like when I've been looking into it or studying it, playing through these things, it's like a firsthand catharsism which I think can be a bit more of a tender experience than, say, watching it happen or watching it on a TV show or something like that. Even video games, it's like you have a separation there. You have a controller. It's very clear there is an avatar and all that kind stuff. But when yourself have like your character's having to do these things, you are having to describe these things or you are having these things thrust upon you, I think it's a very different experience that we haven't maybe fully psychologically understood as a community. But I'm glad that those tools are there to make sure that people who are cool with that kind of thing, that it allows for it but then people who definitely do not want that kind of thing, don't have to then go through those things.

It's interesting that you mentioned your mind being taken over or your body being taken over by, say, a psychic influence or an alien influence, because that's actually one of the small but it's a plot point for, say, the Shackleton Expanse campaign. And with those tools, with those kind of lines and veils that we went through before we started streaming one of them that was on, there was basically someone saying, "I do not want that theme to be something that happens to our characters. And so, I just left it off the table.

We saw it happen with NPCs just for a plot drop or for some interest and some more intrigue and clues into the Tilaka saga. But I never, and I knew I would never psychically take over a character or anything like that because, A, it was anonymous thing in the lines and veils thing, which I think is quite important, too. And so, it was just- it would not appear in the campaign. And that's fine.

Jarrah: Yeah, that's super interesting. And the other thing I wanted touch on was discussions about basically connecting personality traits to what used to be called in *D&D* races or species, in alien species, in *Star Trek Adventure* and gender. And I know in the case of *Star Trek*, for example, there are these pervasive traits or stereotypes. Some are biologically founded for some species, like you might be a cold-blooded species or a green blooded species, and then there's others that we see exceptions to all Ferengi are greedy. We see that that's not the case. So, how does *Star Trek Adventures* approach those types of discussions?

Samantha: Yeah. I mean, like I said, we do have species in the game, but it focuses more on those physical traits that are related to just how we would be as humans as a species, we discuss cultural or-- there's nothing that I don't think is like, no personality traits are discussed but cultural maybe traditions or culture is described from an outside perspective, but you don't have to abide by those, when you're creating your character, it's an open-ended thing. You can decide to rebel against those things. You can decide to accept those kinds of things. They can just inform your character, essentially. So, we're more focused on, it's like the fact that, Vulcans are just, are stronger than humans, so when they're grappling, they might have a slightly easier time of it than the human does or something like that. But because the game asks you these open-ended questions about your species or your upbringing or your character and their life events, it always means that you have the final decision in how to actually approach that. And I love that play space because I love seeing exceptions to the rule.

And I also love seeing things where it's like, "Oh, this happened," or "this character is different than I expected." And rather than going, that shouldn't be the case. I always love picking apart, like, why? Okay, so why aren't they what I expect? Or why does that go against what I thought was true or what I believed? Because that's the more interesting thing to me than just going with, "Oh, but they just wouldn't do that. That's just not how that species is." I'd be like, "But there are always exceptions."

April: It's kind of like with Tendi with *Lower Decks*. She is absolutely not what you would think is the typical for her. So, I think that's really cool because it's your character, make them how you want. This might be what that species is known for, and that might be their history. But what's your history? What's your character about?

Jarrah: I mean, semi related. I really appreciated in the Klingon book that there was a lot of really interesting background on Klingon society, which was just helpful for players who want to play, even Klingons and Starfleet to know, like, this is the background of your society if you were raised on the Homeworld. But also, the way that it described roles for women, I thought was really neat because it didn't pretend that *Star Trek* never said women can't do these things, but it did open up possibilities for while women maybe couldn't hold this position between these years, in practice they held, they did all these other powerful things. And also, apparently Klingons very open to queerness. So, I was very down with that. So, you heard it here first, folks. You can play a queer Klingon or really any other species, I assume, in *Star Trek Adventures*.

Samantha: Yeah, we absolutely take that infinite diversity in infinite combinations to heart when it comes to the game as well as the IP.

Aliza: This is making me think of too how as a fandom, I'm speaking very generally, but I'm sure not everyone has had this journey that I have. But I feel like when I was a kid watching TNG, I was like, "Wow, this is how Klingons are because of everything Worf did." And I fell into that trap. Even as a Black Latin woman, I fell into that trap. But what's nice too about like, the fandom and games like *Star Trek Adventures* is it helps us see characters like Worf in a more mature light and a more grown up, more expansive light. So, for me, it was like, Worf is representative of all Klingons. And then watching back as an adult in this world with what we know, I'm like, "No, no, no wait. Worf was just like super super--" You know, we've talked about this on the podcast. Worf was like super into Klingon culture because he was taken away from it. He was raised away from it. So, he's trying to restore it for himself. And he went way hard into that more than even like Klingons who were raised in the culture. And that's him.

I love that seeing that as an adult and having that view and I love that *Star Trek Adventures* has that built in that. Yeah, you could create a Worf and then have as a GM, if your character

is playing a Worf like character, you can create a whole storyline that puts them in a situation where they have to confront that for themselves or when they become more and more Klingon because they're doubling down on what they didn't get to experience as a kid versus when they're around other Klingons and how that shows up. So, yeah. Jarrah, was there anything else you wanted to ask in that vein about the inclusivity and safety tools?

Jarrah: That pretty much covers it for me, but I'm open to if our guests have anything to add on that front or else maybe we can go into shout outs and final thoughts.

April: I would say that just like what we were saying, that's obviously something that we are going to-- I mean, because First Edition came out almost a decade ago, that's another reason why it was time for a Second Edition. And we're doing that with the safety tools and adding stuff like that and language that an inclusivity language and stuff like that. We are doing that with not just *Star Trek Adventures 2E* but all of our games. We're trying to be the lead by example, I guess, and not try to be the back of the pack where it's like, "Now we have to do it." No, we're making these changes and doing these things because we genuinely want to, and that's what our community wants. Like, we want to do it and that's what our community wants. So, yeah.

Jarrah. Totally. And for any of our listeners who aren't familiar with some of the safety tools we've been referencing, we'll post some links in the website for this episode in case you're playing this or any other system and you want to look up more about, "Hey, what does lines and veils mean? Or what other types of principles should I be approaching with my TTRPG group?"

Aliza: Yeah. And as we're wrapping up, I also wanted to give a shout out to all the many *Star Trek Adventures* content creators out there. So, Modiphius, not only does Modiphius have actual plays that they run on their socials, YouTube and Twitch, there's many, many awesome creators out there. So, if you have never played TTRPGs or *Star Trek Adventures*, you can just watch them first and get an idea of how some folks are playing these games. And so, Samantha and April, I know on the Modiphius website there's a whole page where you can click through your different games and see like a list of all the different content creators. Is there an easy way for folks to find that? Or can they just go to your website and find it?

April: So, one thing we do have is we have our YouTube channel. We have our normal YouTube channel, and we have our new Modiphius live YouTube channel, which is the home to all of our Modiphius run actual plays that are run through our channel. So, you can go to Modiphius Live and you can see, like, Samantha's campaign that she just ran for Shackleton Expanse, it's there. And we do have plans to do some more *Star Trek* streams coming up soon, but you can also go to our website, and there is a tab, if you look under community streams, there's a tab for that. So, you can see past community streams that are not just from us, that are from other communities that are playing *Star Trek Adventures*.

And you can also check out our Discord because we have a going live community streams channel where people post their streams all the time. We have our *Star Trek Adventures,* specific channels where you can look for games. Like maybe if you're a player and you're like, "Hey, I want to get into this, but I can't find a group." So, you can post that there. And there are GM's that are like, "Hey, I want to run this. You want to join me?" So, there's a looking for games channel. There's a spoilers channel for talking about the shows, the many shows and movies and just the general chat and announcements channels. So, plenty of places to go when you're looking for questions about rules, questions about trying to find games and stuff like that.

Aliza: Fantastic. Well, that's about all the time we have for today. Samantha, where can people find you on the internet, if you'd like to be found on the internet?

Samantha: [laughs] Yes, you can find me around the internet *@rpgwebby*. And you can also find some of the other stuff that I make outside of Modiphius at Black Cats Gaming. So, if you hit us on the socials *@followblackcats* or if you go to *blackcatsgaming.com*, you'll be able to find out more about that kind of thing.

Aliza: Very cool. April, where can we find you if you'd like to be found?

April: Sure. Yeah. Me personally, you can find me on all the socials @AprilNicoleHill. And of course, if you were looking for Modiphius stuff, it's Modiphius basically everywhere. We're on TikTok threads, Bluesky, Twitter or X, Facebook, Instagram, Discord. Modiphius is everywhere, and I try to be everywhere as well. [laughs]

Aliza: [laughs] I love that. Jarrah, where can we find you?

Jarrah: You can find me *@trekkiefeminist.com.*

Aliza: Lovely. And I'm Aliza Pearl. You can find me *@alizapearl* on pretty much all the socials. I'm on TikTok @realalizapearl. We'll see if TikTok continues to exist after this week. [laughs]

To learn more about our show or to contact us, visit *womenatwarp.com*, email us at *crew@womenatwarp.com,* or you can find us on socials pretty much everywhere, particularly Instagram *@womenatwarp.* Thanks so much for listening and I hope you all have wonderful *Star Trek Adventures*.

[Women at Warp theme]