

Women at Warp Episode 237: P'Jem-a Party (“The Andorian Incident”)

[Women at Warp theme]

Jarrah: 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 Jarrah. And thanks for tuning in. With me today is Aliza.

Aliza: Hello.

Jarrah: And Jamie.

Jamie: Hi.

Jarrah: And before we get into our main topic, which is the classic, groundbreaking *Enterprise* episode, *The Andorian Incident*, we have a little bit of housekeeping to do.

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Okay, so we have a very special guest, Jamie, on for this episode. So, before we get into *The Andorian incident*, Jamie, can you tell us a bit about yourself and your history with *Star Trek*?

Jamie: Yeah. Thank you so much for having me on, first of all. I actually have come to *Star Trek* quite late. Until a couple years ago, I'd only seen maybe a handful of episodes, but very early pandemic, I decided to watch *Next Generation* with my spouse.

So, when we got near the end of that series, asked around to all my Trekkie friends like, “Tell me what should I watch next? Tell me about all the other *Star Trek* shows.” And got lots of good reviews about *DS9*, heard some mixed things about *Voyager*, heard some good stuff about newer series. But across the board, the one thing everybody said was, “Do not watch *Enterprise*, [Aliza laughs] whatever you do.” [Jarrah laughs] But because I am me, I was like, “Please tell me more about that one. Would like to know more about *Enterprise*.”

Jarrah: Mm-hmm.

Jamie: So, over the past couple of years, I have friends who will just randomly tell me facts about *Star Trek: Enterprise*. Everything that they have told me is more absurd than the last. [Jarrah chuckles] So, earlier this year, I finally-- By the way, I did decide to watch *DS9*. So, at this point, I'm actually still watching it. I'm almost done with it. So, I've seen *DS9*. I've seen *Strange New Worlds*, *Lower Decks*.

There's so much of *Star Trek* that I still have not seen. But earlier this year, I finally was like, “I need to watch *Enterprise*.” I've had a fascination with it for so long. So, I needed to watch it but I knew I needed people to talk to about it, so I convinced some friends to watch it with me and do a podcast.

Jarrah: Nice. [laughs]

Jamie: It was the only way I could get anyone else to watch the show, really. So, I have a podcast called *Enterprisesplaining*. None of us have seen *Enterprise* before, so we're all watching it for the first time. But actually, each week only one of us watches the episode, and then we describe what happens on it to the other two. So, it's a little weird. It's a recap podcast, but not really-- It's fun. I've been having fun so far. But honestly, at this point, I've only seen the first 11 episodes of *Star Trek: Enterprise*. So, I'm definitely not an expert in this show yet.

Jarrah: All good. We appreciate the enthusiasm. I identify with the eagerness to be like, "Hmm, a lot of people don't like that. I need to understand this better." [Jamie laughs] We do know that there are some folks out there that passionately love *Enterprise*. I think this episode is one that fans widely consider one of the best ones, but it's definitely one that sets the tone for the show. It's Season 1, Episode 7, *The Andorian Incident*. Aliza, do you feel like you could give a quick plot summary for folks that don't remember this episode, or who haven't watched *Enterprise*?

Aliza: Okay. So, this episode starts with the *Enterprise* bridge crew-- Well, basically, Trip and Captain Archer conferring and talking about exploration, as this show loved to do, talking about the great wilds that they are exploring as the first humans out there. They mentioned that there's a planet nearby that they are interested in. It's called P'Jem. They confer with our lovely T'Pol, Vulcan science officer, who confirms, "Yes, P'Jem is actually controlled by Vulcan powers. We probably can't go there, because it's a very sacred retreat space for Vulcans who are pursuing the Kolinahr, the very sacred ritual of purging of all emotions." And of course, Trip and Archer are like, "We have to go there, because we have to."

Jarrah: Exploration.

Aliza: But they're very culturally curious. I will give them that credit.

Jarrah: Exploration doesn't mean respecting people's boundaries.

[laughter]

Aliza: Yeah. Uh-huh. Uh-huh. If you can't tell by how I'm giving this recap, I have feelings, strong feelings, about Trip and Archer, just in general. So, basically, Archer badgers T'Pol into looking into how they can visit formally and she's like, "Fine, I'll go call them."

Fast forward a little bit. It turns out they're arriving at P'Jem, and literally, T'Pol is like, "Oh, by the way, I couldn't hail them because they don't use technology. They're that into Kolinahr and being in a retreat." And so, then, Trip and Archer are like, "Oh, wait, hold up." So, T'Pol's like, "Hey, it's fine as long as you follow protocol and respect them." We see how this is going to go. T'Pol rings the doorbell of the monastery. It's a monastery, by the way, if I didn't say that. And no one answers.

Captain Archer notices that there are some marks on the door, like someone had been banging on the door and scratching. I forgot an essential piece. The cold open of this episode is a bunch of Andorians busting through the door of this monastery. So, now, we see, "Oh, crap. This is what the cold open was. This is the door they busted through."

So, Archer mentions the marks on the door. Yeah, mentions something about them. And T'Pol's like, "It's a 3,000-year-old temple. You can't expect everything to look new." But clearly, the marks on the door are fresh. I was like, "Come on, T'Pol." But anyway, no one

opens the door when she rings the big doorbell. And so, Archer pushes the door open. There's one Vulcan monk standing in the antechamber.

T'Pol goes over to greet him and to ask permission for them to look around and visit. He says, "Oh, you just caught us with everyone's about to do Kolinahr. This is a bad time. We can't let you in." So, T'Pol goes and tells Trip and Archer, "That's what he said." They're like, "Oh, but can we get the little sticker [chuckles] for visitors?" There's some type of trinket-- I don't know what is it, like a little statue that-- [chuckles]

Jamie: It's a rock of some sort.

Aliza: A little rock, but some type of memento that they came and visited in person. So, she says, "Hey, can you get my human friends that since they came all this way?" The guy's like, "Hold, please." The Vulcan monk walks away to the back to go grab the stickers. I'm going to call them stickers.

And so, when he's gone, T'Pol starts looking around, and she's like, "Hold up. There's a weird vibe here." And so, Archer is like, "T'Pol, what's wrong? Is something wrong?" And she's like, "Well, that statue is cocked weird. That's not normal. It's tipped over. No one has fixed it." Also, this monk is agitated. And of course, Trip and Archer are like, "Agitated? He seems fine to me."

Then the monk comes back in, and tries to give them the little sticker rock thing. Archer and Trip and to T'Pol too, she's in on this, they start to run this three-man [chuckles] checking out the place thing on him and just start talking to him a lot and saying, "Oh, well, I've always wanted to visit a place like this," blah, blah, blah. They're just searching the area.

Trip and Archer spot that there's an Andorian hiding behind some type of fake, not fake wall, but screen. They plot to knock over the screen together, revealing the Andorian. And then three more Andorians pop up, hold them all at gunpoint and now the gig is up. This is a hostage situation.

And so, now, the rest of the episode is jumping between the folks on the *Enterprise* who are figuring out, "Oh, we haven't heard back from our away team. Something's wrong." They find another vessel in orbit, figure out that it's Andorians. So, they start to piece things together on their own.

Back on the planet, Captain Archer gets beat up a lot by these Andorians who are looking for a sensor array, a very high tech, very powerful, long range sensor array that they believe the Vulcans are using to spy on Andorians. Now, we're starting to reveal and learn that Vulcans and Andorians, first of all, they come from the same part of the Alpha Quadrant. They also have been long, time-- They've had a tenuous relationship. You could even say they've been rivals.

And so, the Andorians being the more passionate of the two and Vulcans being more reserved, they have this hot and cold type of thing going on in their rivalry. But that's what the Andorians are convinced of. They now believe that these humans-- Well, they don't call them humans. [laughs]

Jamie: Pink skins.

Aliza: They call them pink skins. This is also the first time these Andorians are hearing of earth even. So, first contact, "Wait. Hold up. Wow. Just breeze past that." Yeah, so, the Andorians are now convinced that these earth beings, these pink skins, are also in on the spying that's happening in this monastery.

So, of course, we spend a lot of time with Archer being beat up, the Andorians trying to get this information out of the monks. And also, now the pink skins also, there's some very weird creepy vibes with poor T'Pol who is getting sexually harassed by a very creepy Andorian. Well, Trip really goes into this secret passage that the Vulcan monks reveal, and they're like, "Oh, we have a radio that we've never used, but it's been down there for a long time."

Trip fixes it, so that they can radio up to the Enterprise and say, "Hey, don't come down here, because the Andorians have threatened to kill a bunch of people if anyone tries to rescue us." But somehow, there still becomes a plan of them beaming down to a specific place underneath, which is near their very ancient, very sacred reliquary, where they keep little sacred items and things. This is down below in the catacombs below this monastery that they're being held in.

And so, Malcolm, I think just Malcolm correcting me if I'm wrong, maybe some other security folks, beamed down into the reliquary area. Sorry, I know I'm compressing a lot of stuff because I'm realizing I'm taking a long time [chuckles] with this.

Jarrah: All good. It's delightful, all of it.

Aliza: [laughs] And my commentary too. [laughs]

Jarrah: Yeah.

Jamie: A lot happens in this episode.

Aliza: Yeah. [laughs] So, Malcolm does beam down into the reliquary area. Trip noticed some weird lights coming from there as well. So, that's a little hint that there's something else to explore down there. The monks, when they find out that Archer, and Trip and T'Pol have allowed for their team to beam down near there, they get very tense and they're like, "Hold up, wait a minute. We actually want to be really passive in this." They don't say that, but that's what they're doing. They are like, "Listen, the Andorians come once a month or once a year. They sniff around, they get mad at us and then they leave because they realize we're not hiding anything. This is just another time. But you showed up, so it's worse. So, let's just let them leave."

Trip and Archer being their little rah, rah boys, they're like, "Well, maybe you've got to show a little violence sometimes." [onomatopoeia] So, that conflict is happening as well. The head Vulcan monk gets very agitated when he hears that someone has beamed down into the catacombs. He gets visibly worried. For a Vulcan, this is major.

And so, his little second-hand Vulcan monk guy is like, "I'm going to go down there with them because I want to protect what's ours." And we're like, "Ooh, what are you protecting the little reliquaries, like little statues? Okay. Cool." So, they all go down. The second-hand, second right hand man spoken guy goes down with them. They go down to the reliquary. He tries to stop them from entering the sacred site, but of course, they don't listen to him. They enter it.

In what's about to become a firefight, because the Andorians have now sensed the energy signal of someone beaming down, the Andorians enter the reliquary. It's about to be a firefight. Archer pulls back this tapestry, revealing a big, round steel door, which doesn't look like it fits in ancient reliquary. So, he presses a button, the door opens, reveals this massive underground, cavernous, technologically advanced, fully suited up sensor suite. Everyone is just mouth agape, "Holy crap." And it's Vulcans. There's Vulcans in there tending to the tools and running scans and things like that.

Jarrah: Sketchy war Vulcans.

Aliza: It's super sketchy. T'Pol is even like, "Bro, what? Vulcan bros are you kidding me?" T'Pol's visibly shook by this. It becomes clear to the Andorian, I think, that they didn't know this was there either. And so, he's also like, "Oh, my God. What the fuck?" Right hand man Vulcan tries to stop them, T'Pol punches him. I believe it's T'Pol who punches him.

Jarrah: Archer.

Aliza: Oh, Archer punches him and knocks him out. T'Pol takes a bunch of scans and picture video evidence of this. Picture evidence, probably. Archer hands it over to Shran, our lovely Andorian leader, and he says, "Hey, here. The Vulcans broke your treaty by having this here. So, you deserve to know. Your people deserve to know." Shran is like, "Thanks, bro. That's cool of you. I appreciate that." We could see a nice new relationship forming between the human and the Andorian. And then that's it. Is there anything that happens at the end of the episode that I'm forgetting?

Jarrah: No. They're basically just like, "So, Vulcans were shady all along."

Aliza: Right. Yeah, that's it. That's pretty much the episode then. *THE* end.

Jarrah: Yay. I mean, yay for your performance. Not yay, it's the end of the episode.

[laughter]

Jarrah: I will say this was the first *Enterprise* episode directed by Roxann Dawson. Fun fact. Just in the summary, there's a lot of themes and questions that have come to mind. But I would be curious to start off with hearing from you, Jamie, about whether or what your first impression was of Shran, since this is someone who, hopefully not too big of a spoiler, will become a more major character.

Jamie: So, I actually didn't know that. This is the first time I am learning that he has a name.

Jarrah: Oh, no. Sorry.

Jamie: It's totally fine. I'm actually so excited to hear that, because I really liked him. Come on, Jeffrey Combs is great.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Jamie: Just the scenery chewing that he does in this episode every time he's on screen,-

Jarrah and Aliza: Mm-hmm.

Jamie: -he just seems to really relish in playing these bad guy characters, although I guess I don't know how he's going to be moving forward.

Jarrah: Yeah, they're all somewhat different, like, clearly this is not Brunt or Weyoun. But yeah. Aliza, do you have Shran feelings?

Aliza: I do. I'm a big fan. Just as Jamie said big fan of Jamie Combs and big fan of Shran.

Jarrah: Jeffrey Combs.

Aliza: Oh, sorry. [laughs] Name boggle. Jeffrey Combs. So, yeah, the first thing I noticed when I rewatched this episode was when the Andorians come in that cold open, he busts through the door and then he pops a hip and takes this stance. And I'm like, "Okay. So sassy, so strong." I remembered why he's such a great character actor in *Star Trek*, because of that type of just tight, like, quick moment, first time you see the character. And also, he does this thing where he takes his glove off and just throws it. [Jarrah laughs] Like, "We live here now." Like, "This is our modest--" I was like, "Dang, that is so badass." Yeah, he's brilliant. He's really brilliant.

Jarrah: Mm-hmm. Yeah, Weyoun always fawning, right? He has presence in his energy, but he's not challenging everyone else for space in terms of the character, while Brunt is pretty confident. He's like--

Jamie: He's more-slimy, I feel.

Jarrah: Yeah, exactly. I was like, "What was the word I was looking for?" Yeah. Also, this is a bit of a redesign of the Andorians by Michael Westmore, although the Andorians haven't really been around in *Star Trek* for a while, since-- I believe TAS, there were Andorians and TOS, obviously, as major characters. So, I don't know if we have any opinions on the redesign. I like that their antenna sometimes move.

Jamie: I love that they move independently.

Jarrah: Yeah.

[laughter]

Aliza: Yeah. Nice detailed work there.

Jarrah: It makes me think of owls and stuff. I know owls. It's not different parts moving independently, but just the way that they can swivel their head around. Some owls have their ears on different, like, one ear on each side of their head, but one is higher and one is lower, so that they can swivel their head around and get more of a range of sound. That's what it made me think of.

Jamie: Wow. I didn't know that about owls, about their ears.

Aliza: That's cool.

Jarrah: Yeah. I'm going to mess this up, but I think it's particularly great grey owls that can do that. Write in and politely correct me if I'm wrong, owl listeners. [Aliza laughs] Sure, you're out there. You're supposed to say who.

Aliza: [laughs]

Jarrah: But also, when you were talking about that, I feel like we should talk about the really key takeaway from this episode for the majority of watchers. I think what was the intended takeaway was, this isn't your grandma's Enterprise, and this isn't your grandma's Vulcans.

Aliza: Mm.

Jarrah: Certainly, even from before this, we've seen a bit of a reestablishing of the Vulcans as an ideal. So, what was your thoughts on whether on how this worked in this episode? Some people really are like, "This is awesome. It's not realistic that an entire species of

people would be basically devoted to logic and not doing any shenanigans.” And some people think, it's basically heresy.

Jamie: So, I have not seen a lot of original series, which I think is where most of the Vulcan stuff comes in. So, I have very little context for Vulcans, actually. But what I do know of them, they seem maybe uptight, but generally benevolent. So, I do think it's fun to see a darker side to them.

Aliza: Yeah, I don't feel like it's heresy. I think it's just, yeah, adding another layer of dimensionality to Vulcans. What I do find not great about this episode, and maybe we'll dive into this more later, is how it sets up this way of thinking, or it lays out this very Western way of thinking that like, “We can barge in--” If we suspect something, even if this is a wholly sacred place to you, we can do XYZ because we suspect XYZ and we will be proven right. That's what bothers me about this episode. The fact that they are proven right, sort of, I think it sets up a dangerous precedence for viewers even to think, “Oh, well, then it's okay to barge into somewhere that you should be respectful of, because there's probably some shenanigans happening.”

There are different ways that, both the Andorians and the humans in this situation could have gone about this to find the truth. And also, I think there's also a lot of grey areas where it's like, “Well, the monks clearly knew--” It seems very intentional and very clear to me that the monks knew that that door was there. But here's the thing. I believe that they are monks. I don't think they're spies. It's possible that some Vulcans were like, “Hey, we're going to do some spy shit. Don't say anything.” They were just like, “Oh, that sucks. Don't do that.” They didn't have a choice in the matter.

So, I still don't feel like this, the end reveal throws this shade and this definition of being sketchy over the monks or Vulcans in general. I think it's like these particular Vulcans in this time and place we're doing this. But more importantly, it doesn't give the Andorians or the humans the right to barge in the way they did.

Jamie: The humans in this episode don't even seem that suspicious. They actually seem to just take at face value that the Vulcans are telling the truth. And so, they are still extremely rude the whole time, destroying sacred relics left and right and not caring about it at all. They could have just beamed out of there at any point.

Aliza: Yeah. Exactly.

Jamie: They don't necessarily even need to be there, but they seem to just feel that they know better, and therefore, everybody should listen to them. And then they're proven right at the end, sadly.

Jarrah: This is actually one of my recurring *Enterprise* complaints, is one of the things I really love about *Enterprise*, is that it is trying to build those complexities into-- I would say it's both in the proto-federation powers that be, as well as these other previously, maybe a little bit more monolithic alien species societies. But what it has a really hard time with doing is being self-reflexive on the main, particularly white male heroes.

Even when Archer ends up not being right, at the end of the day, it's still usually to T'Pol who is pointing out the very reasonable point. Archer gets annoyed that she or whoever else has brought up this point. Sometimes that person is mocked for being too Vulcan or whatever. And then at the end, Archer's wrong, and he still doesn't apologize.

Jamie: We see that pattern in just the one scene when they first enter the atrium. When T'Pol's like, “Guys, I think something went wrong here. Something feels off.” Immediately,

Trip and Archer are making fun of her. I think Trip says, "Oh, something tipped over. Do we need to call Starfleet?" But then they know she's right, because they immediately also start looking around to see if there's something up. They believe her, and yet they make fun of her for it anyway.

Aliza: Yeah. Honestly, so much of my experience of watching *Enterprise* has been recognizing what T'Pol goes through as the only Vulcan woman on that crew. The gaslighting, the mockery--

Jarrah: The microaggressions, macro aggressions.

Aliza: The microaggressions, macro aggressions. Yeah, all of it is so familiar as a woman of color. I think this was not intentional, [laughs] unfortunately. Jarrah, I totally, I'm 100% on the same page with you, this is where *Enterprise* really-- I think it's still worth watching, Jamie. I commend you, because I did the same thing when people were like, "Don't bother watching *Enterprise*." "I watched it, damn it." Like, "I'm going to watch all of *Star Trek*." I'm glad I did. There is a lot of *Enterprise* that I do enjoy.

But the whole show has this, like, I want to say taint kind of just always being from the perspective of the white male, hetero cis-guy hero who is like John Wayne out in the West. It's very gross. I dislike that about *Enterprise*. This episode has it all over it.

Jarrah: Yeah, I was going to say, the quote that I'm seeing here is when T'Pol is briefing him and Archer on the rules on visiting the monastery, Archer goes and I thought Starfleet training was tough.

Jamie: [laughs] The rules are, like, be quiet.

Aliza: [laughs]

Jarrah: Yeah.

Jamie: Don't talk to someone who's meditating.

Aliza: Yeah. They're the easiest rules. [laughs]

Jarrah: It reminds me of a teenage boy who's rolling their eyes at their teacher. It conveys this both this diminishment of her that I think is gendered and racialized. But also, it's just freaking immature. [chuckles]

Aliza: Yeah. I wonder if it's the writers were told to put more jokes in or something. I don't know. It's like, why is this here? Why are they so snide all the time with her? So annoying.

Jarrah: Yeah. All right, well, I feel like that's a good segue into-- One of the things that we always talk about on the show is even when there's some things that are a little problematic, there's also opportunities opened up that you can use that for a point for a discussion. I know that we started talking about the idea of tourism, cultural sensitivity, the fact that they just show up and have very little respect for what's going on. But I was wondering if, Jamie, you wanted to speak more about that theme.

Jamie: Yeah. Look, again, I've only seen maybe almost half of the first season of the show. But *Starfleet* chose this crew to be the representatives of humans, going out into the universe and meeting [chuckles] alien species. These are the people they chose. They chose Archer and Trip to lead this extremely important mission. This was the episode where

I was watching this and I was like, "Was there a mistake somewhere around here? [Jarrah laughs] Did Archer get this job through nepotism?" Because it just feels like they--

Jarrah: He did. He surely did.

Jamie: Yeah, I know. I don't understand why these two were chosen. They seem to not have any respect at all for any other culture other than their own. It's all a big joke to them. It's surprising that the show is about the founding of the Federation, because if I were an alien and I met Archer and Trip, I don't know if I would want to ever ally with humans.

Aliza: Well said [chuckles].

Jarrah: Well, and it's also interesting to me, obviously, the production for this happened before 9/11. But the episode aired about three weeks after the start of the war in Afghanistan. So, obviously, as we're alluding to, there's some parallels to how-- Particularly the US, but if you want to go back and listen to our *Anglo-American Empire* episode or Our *Colonialism and Imperialism* episode, or our Native American perspectives of a Maquis, Western powers approach other cultures. It's notable that once we started getting into that stuff, *Enterprise* did not become more sensitive to these issues. In fact, they're just like, "Let's just lean into this approach."

Jamie: Oh, no.

Jarrah: With some exceptions.

Aliza: And then they were like-- Sorry. Okay, you know what? I was about to say a spoiler for later in the series, so I will, yeah, not say that.

Jamie: I recognize that I'm a guest on this podcast, so if you guys want to spoil things, that's okay.

Jarrah: You can just cover your ears and go, "La, la, la," a bit.

[laughter]

Aliza: I will be vague about it. But not only did they not get more sensitive, they also decided to put a thing, a big disaster thing, that happens into it and then deal with it their own way. So, yeah, instead of sensitivity, they were like, "Let's just pull from the headlines of what's happening and put it in this show and make a space version of that."

So, yeah, this show it's such a mixed bag for me, and I can't unsee the glaringness of the white male cis hetero being the center of all action, and all discovery, and ingenuity and stuff to T'Pol and also, all the other characters of color are second shift on this show. Even the *Bridge Crew*. Sorry, that's very downer. [laughs]

Jarrah: No. Sorry, Jamie, was it you who wrote the point about pink skins? Because I am honestly like, how has this-

Aliza: Yeah.

Jarrah: -ever occurred to me? So, I'm going to get you to mention that.

Jaime: Yeah. So, I recognize that in this episode, there's only two humans that the Andorians meet, and that's Trip and Archer, and they are both white people. But first of all, which is already a problem, because the chain of the command on this *Enterprise* is all of

the white people and then the two people of color at the bottom. So, maybe if they'd cast a little bit differently, there wouldn't be only white people in this episode going down to the planet.

But I really just think these writers were sitting around, they were trying to come up with a slur for humans. They came up with a slur that only applies to white people. It's not even clear to me that the writers realized that.

Jarrah: I didn't realize it literally until you pointed this out. So, I'm very appreciative. I was like, "Holy shit. Yes." I get, yeah, like you said, the in-universe thing makes sense for this episode, but then they use that for minor spoiler alert, the rest of the series. I don't recall a moment where Shran, who does meet other people of color, is like, "Oh, wait, you're not all pink."

Aliza: Yup.

Jamie: Yeah. It really seems like these writers were trying to come up with something and were literally looking in a mirror at themselves being like, "Okay, I'm human. What is it about humans that we could use?" and just forgot that there were people whose skin maybe would not be described as pink.

Jarrah: Yup. If you read the *The Fifty-Year Mission* and stuff where you will read Rick Berman and stuff talking about the process of casting the show, there's parts there that basically mention about like, "Oh, I was so relieved to get to cast this character because I didn't have to worry about it being in all diverse and stuff. It's so hard to find people that are talented, and also meet these characteristics." Notably, he says that it's hard to find women who are beautiful but also good actresses.

Jamie: I actually do have that book. I haven't read very much of it because of spoilers. But I did read the part about casting to T'Pol. It was shocking.

Aliza: Jeez.

Jarrah: Mm-hmm. Yeah. And in the *Voyager* part, he talks about like, "How it was great to get to Paris?" because you could just basically cast a white guy and you didn't have to worry about checking all the boxes.

Aliza: Who said this?

Jarrah: Rick Berman.

Aliza: Cool. Cool, cool, cool.

Jarrah: Yeah. So, definitely seek out all of the memes about Rick Berman. I recommend them. [chuckles]

Jamie: So, he said that when Jolene Blalock first came in for her audition, he didn't want to cast her, because he didn't think she was pretty enough because she wasn't wearing makeup.

Jarrah: Yup.

Jamie: They made her come back with makeup, and the second time they were like, "Oh, now that she's wearing makeup, I guess we can cast her in this part." She is actually beautiful.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Aliza: My God. Wow.

Jarrah: Hey. Okay. Well, I do want to talk more about T'Pol as a character in this episode, but I also didn't want to miss your point that you made, Jaime, about the lack of respect in general for the sacred site and the artifacts, which was something that obviously was coming up as we went through the rest of *Enterprise* dealing with then the war in Iraq, as well as I'm sure, in Afghanistan. And so, to see this put against that historical timeframe and then even just now these issues continue to see that connection between just like, "Yeah, let's totally just have a fight and destroy a whole bunch of these statues and not even consider the loss of that is not cool."

Jamie: Yeah. At no point in this episode do they ever-- When they're trying to figure out like, what should we do, how should we deal with the Andorians, they never ask the monks for their opinion ever. The monks will just overhear things and then speak up and be like, "Hey, maybe don't destroy all of our artifacts." They treat it like, "Well, they're just holding us back from saving the day."

Jarrah: We've talked a bit about this in talking about religion in *Star Trek* and how some of the older *Star Trek* particularly is very quick to write off just all religion as superstition, and therefore, it's basically justified to come in and disrupt those ways of thinking, because we're enlightening you with our knowledge that you deserve to have. I feel like this isn't really going there, but it has that underpinning of like, "We definitely don't care about what we think is of as your superstition." But then they're also not trying to provide them any knowledge.

Jamie: I think it might does go there. When I think T'Pol's telling him that they really want to try to avoid violence, and Archer says, "You people think you're so damn enlightened. The you people just really got me."

Jarrah: Yeah. I know some people will be like, "Oh, well, what's wrong with enlightening people out of superstition?" As we've talked about before, it's akin to saying, "You people won't exist in the future," for people that do have faith in something. And as long as you're not using that to oppress other people, that should be valid.

Jamie: They chose to go visit this monastery. There was no reason why they had to go there at all.

Jarrah: Yeah. They didn't know the Andorians were there. Yeah, I will say that P'Jem always makes me just think of pajamas for some reason. So, now I'm just imagining the whole thing in pajamas. Well, I'm going to awkwardly segue that into discussing just the treatment of T'Pol in this episode in general, because one of the things that I remember when I first watched this made me so angry, is the scene where she's cold and Archer has to share a blanket with her.

Aliza: [laughs]

Jarrah: I was already annoyed that she was in a catsuit for no reason, and then it's like, "Oh, you mean to tell me the catsuit wasn't logical?"

Yeah, we've also talked about on the show like, catsuits can be okay if you can somewhat justify it. A character or an actor could feel empowered wearing a catsuit. But in this case, I think we are all pretty clear that the reason she was wearing a catsuit was Rick Berman.

Aliza: [laughs] Right.

Jarrah: And that it is irritating to me when she's constantly being cut down, that she also is then a bit of a damsel in distress at points in this episode.

Aliza: Yeah. The first thing I thought when he offered her the blanket was, "Wait, she's Vulcan. She's is more equipped for temperature extremes in either direction, really, even though Vulcan is more hot." But Vulcans can withstand more physical things than humans can. Vulcans are more hardy. So, that's the first thing I noticed. I was like, "Okay, I guess it's nice of him." But she is Vulcan. She actually should be fine up to a certain point. But then it's established that she is cold and I'm like-

Jarrah: "Oh, no."

Aliza: -"Oh, that's weird." I don't know, I feel like T'Pol was such a great asset as a character, and they just constantly undercut and undermine her strength. Even her vulnerability is undercut. God, there are episodes that, Jamie, when you get to them, maybe we should talk about them because like, girl, yeah. There are some episodes where T'Pol is vulnerable, and we get to explore more of how she handles really gnarly stuff in her life.

They don't even give her the space to have agency in that. This is an another very tiny moment with the blanket that I was like, "Oh, yeah, that's right. It's to T'Pol. So, of course she is cold and does need the blanket after all, because Archer said it. So, Archer is right."

Jarrah: For more on that, listeners, we have an episode on *Carbon Creek* compared to 11:59, which I think is more like, we generally like *Carbon Creek*. But also, we have one called two about T'Pol which is about Fusion and Stigma and gets more into what Aliza was just talking about.

Jamie: Yeah. The thing about the blanket scene is they could have had that whole scene without the blanket. It would have worked perfectly. It would have been a lot less weird too, because she looked so uncomfortable. She's sharing a blanket with her boss, essentially. This is a work situation.

Aliza: [laughs] Yeah.

Jamie: The way she was up on her, she looked, I have never seen her this tense.

Jarrah: Because I was just thinking about it and I was like, "Yeah, it would be gross if Seska was behaving this way towards Kira." It would be gross if almost any other captain, first officer was doing this. The only thing I think makes the somewhat romantic tension between Jamie and Chakotay, in my opinion, less cringey. Although what's more cringey in the portrayal of indigenous characters is that like, he is clearly the one who is setting the tone there, and she's like, "I don't know how to deal with this appropriately." But yeah, I think if Janeway was behaving that way towards Chakotay, viewers would have had a real problem, and I would be right.

Jamie: I'm trying to imagine Sesko and Kira being in this situation. I just can't imagine how that would have even gone. [chuckles].

Jarrah: Just mirror Kira. But I also just really, really hate the creeping onto T'Pol from that Andorian. So, there's that really, really gross line. I'll enjoy having you... as a prisoner.

Jamie: Gross. Yeah.

Jarrah: I believe that he also talks about her like, "Oh, I've heard of your people's exotic sexual practices and stuff." So, it's just really objectifying, exoticizing her, making her powerless but in a way that's particularly sexualized.

Aliza: Yeah. Multiple times throughout this episode.

Jarrah: Yeah. She does get to punch the Vulcan in the face, as you mentioned, Aliza. I was wrong that was her, and not Archer. This happens also repeatedly to T'Pol. So, I'll mention in acquisition, this is another thing that happens, and it's like every time they're taken hostage or they're in some situation where there's an alien present, it's like they have to comment about like, if there's a man, he has to comment about how I'd like to bone her.

Jamie: Really making me glad I've decided to watch this show. [Aliza laughs] Thank you, Jarrah.

Jarrah: But I also don't think it's unique to originates with *Enterprise*. So, I'll give it some credit that I think it's carrying on a series of tropes that goes back to the beginning of *Star Trek*. We talked about on the show how there's often an inclination to sexualize women characters in, for example, *Next Generation*, as well as to feel like you have to remind the audience that they're hot. Like, in *Code of Honor*, when Lutan and [unintelligible 00:42:02] are talking about how like, "Oh, Yar is really sexy." And they're like, "Yeah, she is really attractive, right?" And then there's Troi being victimized multiple times, and people ogling Troi all the time. In the original series, multiple women get creeped on by multiple other men. So, it certainly isn't *Enterprise* invented this. They just didn't move forward from it.

Aliza: They based the whole core of the show on this very toxic masculinity.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Aliza: Yeah. I think they settled in on it. They got comfortable with it. [laughs]

Jarrah: Yeah. And to me, because it's 2001, it should have been moving forward. But I think, again, if you read the information about where people were coming from creating the show, it was like, "Okay, well, so we have to create a new show. How do we make it different from *Voyager* and *Deep Space Nine*? Well, let's make it more like the Wild West again. But we'll go--"

There was some legitimate sense that by the time *Voyager* was wrapping up. Like, we've created all these technologies that solve all the problems. It makes it hard to come up with good stories, when it's like, "Okay, well, you could just snoop that planet, or you could just transport all the people off or you could just do this."

So, let's limit their technology and let's explore these conflicts that they would have had in founding the Federation. But yeah, it's just not really done with sensitivity, by and large.

Jamie: I have to say though, the creepy Andorian does offer to kill Archer for her.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Jamie: And honestly, I'm not mad at that.

[laughter]

Aliza: Yeah, but was he just trying to offer that [chuckles] skin good with her? I get it. This is very good point. [chuckles]

Jarrah: At least he asked. He sought her consent one thing.

Aliza: [laughs] Right.

Jarrah: Archer also questions her loyalty at one point, because she doesn't know the Vulcans are hosting this thing, and she's defending them. As mentioned, a lot of that is just like, maybe don't be super disrespectful to their protocol. But yeah, there's a point where he's basically like, "Whose side are you on?"

Jamie: There were six episodes before this one, and I can tell you that every single one of them, she had proved her loyalty over and over and over again. In fact, I feel like they'd already had this conversation previously. Almost every episode leading up to this was about her and why is she there. It just seems like they make her prove her loyalty over and over and over and over again, and it's never actually enough.

Aliza: Sounds sad and familiar.

Jarrah: All right. Well, I'm just wondering if anyone has any final thoughts before we wrap up.

Aliza: Final thought is shoutout to Jeffrey Combs and Jolene Blalock, because they're awesome. I love them. I don't mind the other actors. I don't like their characters though. [laughs] That's it. Just shoutout to the actors in this episode, and this whole show.

Jarrah: Mm-hmm. Jamie?

Jamie: I learned today that this episode is very highly regarded, and it definitely doesn't make me feel that great about continuing with this series. But really [Aliza laughs] watching this episode made me very angry. But it was still a fun somehow. This show definitely has a way of doing things where even when it's infuriating, I'm still usually having a pretty good time. This episode is a pretty good time, even if I'm angry about it and need to talk about it for hours with others afterwards.

Jarrah: Yeah. I'll also say I appreciate Shran. I appreciate, in general, having the Andorians back and getting more information about them. I also appreciated some of the design in this episode was neat with the monastery, and the artifacts and things like that. Maybe not exceptionally creative, but I enjoyed it.

Yeah. I think generally it's very watchable episode. I think the reason why it's highly regarded is because it really lays a foundation for a lot of where *Enterprise* is going to go. Because I think a lot of people had the reaction like, "Whoa, they just blew *Star Trek* wide open." Because you had this situation where the Vulcans were not behaving. When I say the Vulcans, I mean the Vulcan government military apparatus, I guess, was not behaving ethically. That is not really something we had seen, even though we had seen individual shitty Vulcans before.

So, yeah. I'll give props again to *Enterprise* for trying to add those layers of complexity to what you thought you knew about *Star Trek*, even if I didn't always love how it was executed. Okay. So, what we'll do before we wrap up is we will go around and we'll rate the episode. Aliza, do you have a rating?

Aliza: Yes. I will give this episode, two out of five sacred Vulcan relics.

Jarrah: Mm. Nice. Jamie?

Jamie: On the scale of *Enterprise* episodes that I have seen, which is 11, I would give this a one in that I actually think it might be the best of the 11 episodes that I have seen.

Jarrah: Yeah. [laughs]

Jamie: One being, I guess, yes, first.

Jarrah: Nice. I was thinking that too. I'm like, "Am I rating it based on *Enterprise* or based on just the entire universe?" I'm rating this based on-- I also agree in Season 1, *Enterprise*, it's pretty strong. Like other *Star Trek's Enterprise* gets better in later seasons. But I'm going to say I'll give this five and a half out of 10 stinky human blankets.

Aliza: [laughs]

Jaime: Those blankets really did look like they had been in the monastery for thousands of years.

Jarrah: [laughs] I guess it's technically a stinky Vulcan blanket, but it was Archer that was stinky. So, yeah, it was then became a stinky human blanket. At any rate, that is about all the time we have for today. Aliza, where can people find you on the internet?

Aliza: You can find me [@AlizaPearl](#) on Twitter/X. And on Instagram, same handle. [@therealalizapearl](#) on TikTok, though I don't post that much. Yeah, I'll be at D&D in a Castle and Gen Con, if you are gamers and you're planning to go to either of those events this summer.

Jarrah: Awesome. And Jamie, would you like to plug where people can find you and or your podcast online?

Jamie: Yeah. So, you can find me [@uajaime](#) on Bluesky. I have left Twitter. My podcast is *Enterprisesplaining*. By the time this comes out, we will probably actually have an episode up about *The Andorian Incident*. So, if you want to hear even more about this episode of *Enterprise*, I think that that episode is going to be called Unnecessary Torture.

Jarrah: Yes. We did not even mention that. But yeah, that happens in this episode also. And then also, it's like, "Oh, but the Andorians were justified in all of this because they ended up having a correct assumption." So, it was a lot of ends justify the means going on. Anyway, very much appreciate you mentioning that.

I'm Jarrah. And you can find me at [trekkiefeminist.com](#). And I'm also not on the bad website anymore, but you can find me on Instagram, [@jarrahpenguin](#). To learn more about our show or to contact us, visit [womenatwarp.com](#). Email us at crew@womenatwarp.com or find us on Facebook or Instagram, [@womenatwarp](#). Thanks so much for listening.

[Women at Warp theme]

Aliza: Sorry, [chuckles] I don't know if we need to bleep that.

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