

Women at Warp Episode 30: Book Club: Mosaic by Jeri Taylor

Jarrah: Hi and welcome to Women at Warp. Join us as our crew of four-women Star Trek fans boldly go on our bi-weekly mission to explore our favorite franchise. My name's Jarrah. Thanks for tuning in today. Today with us we have host Sue.

Sue: Hi everybody.

Jarrah: We also have a special guest, Anika Dane, who I first learned about through Grace, who discovered her amazing Tumblr pixiedane.tumblr.com and it is hilarious and all the things and especially about *Voyager* and Janeway-related items. So, we thought she would be perfect to join us today on the show. Anika, can you maybe tell us a little bit more about like how you first became a Star Trek?

Anika: I had been *Star Trek* fan as long as I remember. I was that little girl who when *Next Generation* was announced, I was against it [chuckles] because I loved the original series so much even though I was like nine. I convinced people to go to Star Trek conventions with me. I added quotes from the *Next Generation* into my English literature papers. I was a super *Star Trek* fan. And anything that's like fan related that exists, like fan bids or fan fiction or fan mixes, all that stuff I just have been doing for, I'm 40 years old, so for 35 years. [laughs]

Jarrah: Awesome. So today, we have a book club episode. For those of you who maybe are new listeners, we have a book club that is on Goodreads, the Women at Warp book club. And every once in a while, we take a look at a *Star Trek* novel or an author or series and talk about themes and representations of women and just generally how we feel about the book. Over the past few months, we've been reading the book, *Mosaic*, by Jeri Taylor which was published in 1996 and it's basically backstory on Captain Janeway.

Sue: So, Jeri Taylor was the cocreator and executive producer of *Star Trek: Voyager* and I guess took it upon herself to give us the closest thing we have had or potentially maybe even will have to like a biography of Captain Janeway. And the book was published first in '96 and of course *Voyager* premiered in January of '95. And the book is set at least the "current day" chapters of the book are set around season 2 of *Voyager*."

Jarrah: Yeah, so I found a quote from Jeri Taylor in *Starlog* in 1995 where she says, "I identify with Janeway. I am a woman of authority, unique in the Star Trek annals. There has never been a woman who has had the title of executive producer besides myself. I have a staff that I work with and take responsibility for the successful running of a TV series is, at least in part, up to me. There are many pressures and a lot of stress, so I bring my personality to bear on this job. Naturally, it is those sensibilities that I tap into when I write Janeway."

And then in 1996, she talked about the unique pressure in writing Janeway as the first female captain, and she said that, "We acknowledge we are walking a very dangerous tightrope with a female captain. She is judged by different standards. If she shows any weakness, if she shows too much emotion in a situation of stress, it damages her in the eyes of the audience. So, we have to be careful that in professional situations, in leadership situations, on the bridge. At all times, she is completely in control. But to do only that with her would be to do a great disservice to the character and the actress who is capable of a broad range of things."

So, that's just some of where the author was coming from when she wrote this book. And now, I think we should move into a little bit of a synopsis. Anika, tell us about the A-- I would call it like the A plot, which is the part about Captain Janeway.

Anika: All right, it takes Janeway from age four to just before she took command, her second command, which was right before *Voyager*. So, it's her growing up story, or what is it's called? Her coming-of-age story, but then it also goes into her relationships with the men in her life as well as her family, especially her father, who she then loses. She loses her father and her fiancé and goes into a deep depression, which is my favorite chapter. [laughs] And then, eventually comes out of it and decides to become a captain, which is one of the things that her father did right before he died was tell her that he thought that was a great idea, that she should go into command. So, it was fulfilling that wish as well as her own desires.

Jarrah: And, Sue, do you want to fill us in on the ship plot?

Sue: Sure. On *Voyager*, there is sort of a standoff, I guess, with a smallish sect of the Kazon, and they're near a nebula and there is an away team down on this planet that's being led by Tuvok, and they are trapped on the surface and the Kazon have also beamed down, I think, and they're trying to get away and get back to the ship. So, Janeway is drawing on these pivotal moments from her past. That's how those chapters get fit in to the current-day story to make the decision she needs to make to get her crew out of this situation.

Jarrah: Yeah, we're probably going to focus more on the Janeway part, but we will touch a bit on the crew part. We had a few comments on our Goodreads book club. So, before we get into discussing some of the themes, I just wanted to throw out one from fellow Trek.fm host, Brandon-Shea Mutala, who hosts the show, *Melodic Treks*, on the network. He said, "This is the third time I've read this book. The first was back in 1996 when it came out. My mom bought it for me and actually read it in one sitting. I love all *Star Trek*, and it was great to get some past on this great Captain. Now, I think it is a weaker book in the franchise, but the new *Voyager* novels are just so darn good. A lot of people, myself included, feel this book is canon. It was written by the creator of the show and many of the things in Janeway's youth that happened in this book were discussed on screen. I think her tragic loss helps to explain her strong desire to help people and how resilient her character is. She goes through a lot of stuff. She has depression issues in this book, and she does in the series too. Remember when locked herself in her quarters in the episode, *Night?* As a young man, I never had a problem with a female role model captain like her. Thanks for doing the show and letting me dust off my copy of *Mosaic*."

So, like I said, we're going to talk about mostly the Janeway plot, but I just need to get off my chest the B plot or about the rest of the crew. I first read this book actually when it first came out as well, and it was one of my favorite books and I must have read it a dozen times. But I didn't really notice at the time that some of the crew descriptions just felt to me unnecessary, given that the people reading the book are probably also watching the show. So, there's stuff like it describes Tom Paris as sandy haired and Chakotay as darkly handsome.

Sue: It's weird. It's very weird. It's like-- [crosstalk]

Anika: It raised like the-- I feel like these were part of the casting blurbs, [Sue laughs] "We're looking for someone who's darkly handsome."

Sue: Well, see, if it was published a year in, then she probably started to write it before the show happened and now. So, okay, Jeri Taylor is a TV producer. She's not necessarily an author.

Jarrah: Well, she's a screenwriter, but not necessarily a novelist.

Sue: Right, but you don't have this descriptive nondialogue writing necessarily in screenwriting, or if it's there, we don't see it. So, it honestly can at times feel a little clunky when she's doing the descriptive scenes or describing characters, especially characters that we already know. But the voice of all of those characters and the way they all speak is spot on.

Jarrah: That's very true. And like I said, I actually really did appreciate that. There is two teams down on the planet, and one of them is Tuvok, Kes and Kim. And Kes and Kim go off on their own. And those are two characters that in the whole course of *Voyager* are very underused, and I think some would say underdeveloped. And so, it was cool to get a lot of time with those characters in a way that Jeri Taylor wanted to depict them. And I think she did a particularly good job with Kes being wiser than her age and very sensitive to what's going on around her. And then, there's another story that's a little bit more comic, about Neelix leading a bunch of people through a forest full of snakes.

I mean, I think it was supposed to be tense, but it was also funny. Anyway, it was interesting, and I think you're really right about the voices. Actually, I haven't read, Jeri Taylor also did the novelization of the episode, *Unification*, and I would be really interested to read that to see if it was an issue like you were saying, that the series wasn't far enough in for the characters to be developed enough, or if it was just an issue of her style of writing?

Anika: Yeah, there was a note, maybe it was on Goodreads I'm not sure, how at the end, all of a sudden, Janeway remembers what happened the day that her father died. And they were like that seems random that this particular emergency would all of a sudden bring that out. That might be true, but I forgive it because it's a literary thing that people do. I mean, I've taken a writing class, and one of the things that they suggest is that you write it out of order and that you have a flashback at an opportune moment, and then you're supposed to edit that out and make it flow. But I think that she did that and then decided that was the climax and that was important and so she kept it in that way. She also wrote that there's a passages. Is that what it's called?

Jarrah: Pathways.

Anika: Pathways. Pathways to which is the rest of the cruise backstory.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Anika: I have passages of this book that I have practically memorized, and I bring up and talk about with people having nothing to do with *Star Trek*. It's like, "Look at this beautiful prose and this is what I get out of it and I use it as my own to inspire me." And so, I don't want to say that it's poorly written. There are parts of it that I skip over or skim. But there are other parts of it that I just read once in a while to myself to feel good about the world.

Jarrah: Oh, absolutely. I wouldn't say poorly written. I felt like the scenes with the crew were clunky is what I would say. But she has strengths in the voice and the dialogue, and her backstory for Janeway has a lot of really amazing moments that we're going to talk about and relationships. I would say her weakness is trying to draw scenes in terms of describing how people looked or how the setting looked. I think that's probably not necessarily the strength of this book.

Sue: I think you nailed it. I think the best description for that is it's a little clunky at times, but I think the story is great and I think the dialogue is great. And I also think that of the three of us on the show, I'm the only one who did not read this growing up as a kid. I picked this up. It's something that I saw over and over again, was recommended to me over and over again. But this is the first time I've read it. And I am pretty sure that if I had read this '96, '97, I would

be way more attached to it and way more probably defensive of it than I feel right now. I think I'm looking at it with a little bit more of a critical eye. Reading it for the first time in my 30s, I think that makes a lot of sense.

Jarrah: So, let's take a look at some of the key relationships that are explored in this book. And maybe let me start with you, Anika. Is there a particular relationship that really intrigued you between Janeway and one of the other characters in her past?

Anika: My favorite is Admiral Paris. I really love Tom Paris and his relationship with his father and how it relates to Janeway and his relationship with Janeway and how it relates to his father. And so having this, it was the missing piece. And so, now I have a little circle of all of them. They're all related. And I went with that. I mean, I have so many different headcanons about it because I just found it so powerful. I really like that Paris sort of becomes a surrogate father to her because she's--

A lot of the book, she's really trying to get her father's attention. He is away because he's a big part of the Cardassian War, and so he was just never home, and he missed a lot of the important moments of her life. And that really affects her because she really looked up to her father and she wanted to make him proud. And I feel like part of that need, she was able to meet when she met up with Admiral Paris, and he becomes her faculty advisor and really her mentor for the beginning part of her career. And then, she's able to do that for his son when the show happens. And so, it made that relationship more poignant to me, and it adds so many layers to all three of those characters.

Jarrah: Yeah, I agree. I really enjoyed that because we get to see how it immediately flowed into the stuff that we saw in the series. Sue, do you have any thoughts on that relationship, or do you want to pick one of your own two we should discuss?

Sue: I have thoughts. I really like that relationship as well, but I actually didn't think of her relationship with Tom. It made me feel like that was a very relatable relationship, especially when you're going through school. Because there's almost always this one teacher or professor that seems to be this really rough person to get along to or get along with, and you don't really know how to relate to them, but just through hard work and persistence, you develop a rapport with that person, and somebody you thought would be really difficult to work with becomes a mentor in some ways. And I've gone through that throughout my education, and that's what I saw reflected in that relationship.

Jarrah: It relates to her relationship with Tom because so much of her early relationship with Admiral Paris is comparing how proud he is of Tom with how proud she thinks her father is not of her. And so, there's this whole dynamic where, to some degree, she would be carrying that when she ended up meeting Tom, even though her father obviously reassures her later that he's very proud of her. But it also helps to elucidate Admiral Paris and Tom's relationship with each other, because you really only hear it from Tom's side at the beginning in *Voyager*, and you really get to more see how devastating it must have been for his father. It helps you see the bigger picture of that story. So, I thought that was cool.

All right, Sue, do you want to pick a Janeway relationship to explore?

Sue: Oh, man. I think we need to talk about Cheb.

Jarrah: Oh, no. Cheb. [Sue laughs] Anika, what did you say your note was on Cheb?

Anika: My one note on Cheb is Cheb the worst.

Jarrah: He's so the worst.

Anika: Although I will also say he has a ridiculous name. His full name is Ted Packer.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Anika: What even is that?

Jarrah: I believe he was the CNN anchor of the future.

Sue: [laughs] That's not Perd Hapley.

Jarrah: [laughs] So, Sue, what was your impression of Janeway's relationship with Cheb, who I guess, is her first boyfriend that we see?

Sue: Yeah. Cheb is the worst.

[laughter]

Anika: I mean, my note on Cheb is the gaslighting. I remember when I was reading those scenes in the water caves of Mars, which, first of all is amazing. I want to go to the water caves of Mars. I was getting angry to the point that I had to close the book and just take a minute because of the way that he was speaking to her.

Jarrah: This is actually because of that, it's one of my favorite parts of the book as an adult. I definitely did not appreciate this in 1996. For those of you who aren't familiar, gaslighting is a term that was coined in the 1938 play, *Gaslight*, and there were film adaptations as well, where basically a husband uses manipulation in an attempt to drive his wife crazy. And it now is used to refer to a form of emotional and psychological abuse that happens in relationships when a partner- and it doesn't always have to be consciously but basically convinces the other partner that they're the one that there's something wrong with, even though the abusive partner is actually the one with the problem. So, they use strategies of psychological manipulation and intimidation that basically is a way of controlling and confusing someone else.

And often, this happens to women and is tied in with these expectations that women are socialized with to try to please men in particular and just generally to be the ones who are smoothing over conflict instead of causing conflict.

Sue: It's a really scary thing because it's essentially changing someone's perceptions of reality.

Jarrah: Yeah, absolutely. Basically, it's disorienting and causes the person who it's targeted at to question their own perception of things and including the point of their own sanity. So, do you want to talk a little bit more about the scenes in the water caves?

Anika: Cheb doesn't get into Starfleet Academy, and he basically blames Kathryn for that because there's a haunted house [laughs] and they go into it and it turns out that there's a woman living there and there's a fire. And so, she stays behind to make sure the woman is okay. And because of that, Cheb has to admit that he broke into a computer and had this whole beam-out that was unauthorized. And he thinks that's why he didn't get his Starfleet Academy. I think he didn't get into Starfleet Academy because he's a terrible person.

Jarrah: Yes.

Anika: They're in these water caves of Mars and she's excited because she finds a fossil and she really wants to go science, science, science because she's Janeway and that's what she does. And he wants her to basically spend the time apologizing to him and making him feel better about his life.

Jarrah: And making him oatmeal.

Anika: Yes, and making him oatmeal. And she-- [crosstalk]

Sue: It's the 24th century sandwich.

Anika: She finally says, "Look, you're the one who screwed up, not me, and I'm not responsible for your life." And she says, "I've been trying to help you this whole time." And he tells her, "If that was your idea of helping, that scares me. I think you are the one that needs help, Kathryn." And that was where I wrote, "Cheb is the worst."

Jarrah: Yeah. He goes on and he's saying that, "You've just been making me feel awful and criticizing everything I've done," and we know that's not the case. And she has a thought about how he has this way of twisting things around back on you. And that's basically exactly what gaslighting is. The reason it's one of my favorite parts is because Janeway is like, "Nope, nope, nope, nope. I am going to go check out these awesome puzzles. You can stay here and be a jerk face." Yeah, I actually really appreciate that though because it is an actual thing that happens in very bad, very bad, dysfunctional relationships. And it's cool to see Janeway face and overcome, refuse to become ensnared in that. So, that was cool.

Sue: Well, and even just recognize it right from the start.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Sue: Because that can be hard to do.

Jarrah: Yes, absolutely. I mean she still is a little bit torn, especially because he was like the super popular guy at her school. And she has all these thoughts about-- she thinks about all the other girls that he could have dated and like, "Why is he at all interested in me?" And again, those are feelings that I'm sure a lot of women in particular have faced of insecurity in high school. And she does have a hard time emotionally, but ultimately, she's clear headed enough to see like, "No, I am not the problem in this." All right, another young man whom she goes water caving, diving with.

[laughter]

Sue: What is this book?

[laughter]

Jarrah: Really, I mean, so she goes to these water caves on Mars like three times.

Anika: Three times.

Jarrah: Yeah, in this book. But I feel like Jeri Taylor does actually a very good job describing the physical space. I could clearly picture what this environment was like. And it's clearly an emblem of her daring and desire for exploration. And so, one time, before she goes diving with Cheb, she tries to go with some friends while they're on a trip to Mars, but the friends took a note. And so, then Vulky Hobbes Johnson shows up. Any first impressions of Hobbes Johnson?

Sue: Well, it is made very clear to us that he is not attractive.

Jarrah: No.

Sue: Over, over and over again, which is kind of hilarious.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Anika: He's awkward and has no friends.

[laughter]

Jarrah: Yeah. Doesn't it also say his like face is spotty or something?

Anika: Yes spotty. His hair is always a mess, goes in multiple directions. [laughs]

Jarrah: And he's clearly crushing on Kathy for a long time.

[laughter]

He goes to this farm school thing that her parents send her to, even though she wants to go to the science school. And instead, she has to learn farmy type things like old tennis.

[laughter] This is actually-- [crosstalk]

Anika: Her parents are traditionalists.

Jarrah: Yes. I mean it's cool to talk about families that were traditionalists because we see that with Picard's brother, and we know there are families like this on earth. But it was interesting that they were like, "You have to learn tennis." And she's like, "No one plays anymore tennis anywhere." But everyone fences in the 21st century. [laughter] So, somewhere in between now and the 21st century there's going to be a massive sports revolution.

Sue: Fencing and Parrises squares only.

Jarrah: Yes.

Anika: And tennis.

Sue: No tennis. Nobody plays tennis.

Jarrah: And velocity, which--[crosstalk]

Anika: And also, tennis saves Justin's life.

[laughter]

Jarrah: That is actually true. We will skip Hobbes now because Hobbes shows up later. So, anything else on young Hobbes and we can talk about Justin for a bit.

Anika: I do like in the water cave chapter with Hobbes that at the end, her father catches them and Hobbes tries to say, "Oh, it was my idea," and she can't lie to her father, so she can't let that stand and he keeps trying, even afterwards. And she hated him for that. And I

was like, "I love the idea that he's trying to be this nice guy." And she's like, "I hate nice guys. They're just--"

[laughter]

Jarrah: Hobbes is interested in her. Nothing really happens there. She goes out with Cheb for a while. Then the next love interest. Oh, the next significant love interest is Justin. So, what were your thoughts on Justin? Let's go with Annika.

Anika: It's weird. The whole Justin thing is weird because there are these beats, especially in the family dinner part where it's strange that her sister thinks it's weird that she's with someone who doesn't love dogs. And since dogs is a really important theme in this book. [laughs] Also, one of the things that people know about Kathryn Janeway is that she loves dogs. She loves dogs, she loves coffee. Those are recurring things. And I think that it's interesting to me that Phoebe goes out of her way to point out and she says, "How can you have fallen in love with someone who doesn't love dogs?" And so, it made me feel like maybe he's not really this great relationship for her. And it's just all of this trauma that happens around him.

They first get together after she's kidnapped by the Cardassians, and that's traumatic. And then, he dies right after they get engaged. And also, she thinks that she went wrong with Cheb. And so, she never wants to have that relationship again, which is why she doesn't go for the other one that we'll talk about in a minute. And then, she has the same thoughts about Justin, "Oh, he's dangerous, and I don't want to." Part of it is that she's afraid of a relationship. But another part of it is that he's this dangerous type of person, and he's nothing like Cheb. Justin is not the worst, but it is weird that the text points out that he might not be her soulmate.

Jarrah: Interesting.

Anika: I don't know how I feel about Justin because I just have all these weird feelings.

[laughter]

Sue: The text makes it or seems to want to make it clear that it is a weird relationship, but never fully identifies why. It's very strange.

Jarrah: So, well, the first thing that I actually noticed on this read through was his physical description. He's someone who has black hair and, I believe, blue eyes. And it struck me that this was very similar. Cheb also was described as having similar looks. And it struck me that it was similar to how we see Janeway's ideal man in *Fair Haven*. But in Kate Mulgrew's memoir, she talks a lot about how she would fall for these Irish guys with black hair and blue eyes. So, I was wondering if it was like something that carried through between Jeri Taylor and Kate Mulgrew and Captain Janeway as just being attracted to that type of look. So, I don't know. Just a thought.

But I thought it was weird because we don't really see what she gets out of the relationship. So, he saves her, she saves him. There's a lot of trauma, but I never really quite understood why he was so awesome or lovable. He seemed to be someone who was damaged, but it wasn't apparent that she wanted to fix him. So, I just wasn't really clear.

Anika: And we also skip from, "We decided to have a relationship," to, "Hey, we're engaged."

Jarrah: Yeah.

Anika: There's no build up. There's nothing there. And I don't know how much time has gone by. It's just that we don't get that part of the relationship.

Jarrah: Yeah, and initially they meet and she's trying to prove herself to him. He doesn't really want to let her have a fair share of this teamwork they're supposed to be doing on this mission with Admiral Paris. And so, she's fighting with him. And I don't know, I felt like maybe we were just supposed to assume that opposites attract or something like that, but maybe not. I don't know. I agree with you, it's a little weird.

Anika: And there's also this thing about where Admiral Paris, there's some line where she thought maybe he was trying to sell her on Justin. And so, it's like Admiral Paris is playing matchmaker with his favorite students. There's just a lot of weird stuff going on between Kathryn and Justin and their relationship. And I don't know how we're supposed to take it. I have no idea what was intended with all of that.

Jarrah: Okay. But I mean, obviously the incident-- Well, we haven't really talked about her father, but her coping with the loss, I feel like that part, it's very believable and easy to understand how she's feeling, even though I didn't maybe have a hundred percent buy-in to how much she loved Justin.

Anika: Well, she also loses her father.

Jarrah: Yeah, absolutely.

Anika: And she was there.

Jarrah: Yes. So, should we talk about her father?

Sue: Absolutely. I mean, this is the relationship, as Anika mentioned, where she is trying to basically get the attention/approval of her father from the time she's very young. And they're super, super close when she's little. And we have all of these kind of cute scenes in his office or teaching her things. And then, we see her reaction when her sister's going to be born. And then, the Cardassian War happened. So, her father is away more. And she's just seeking this approval. And he's described as this man who is not super outwardly affectionate, who doesn't necessarily say, "I'm proud of you," all of the time. So, that's something that she is really after, especially when she's young, teenager in the academy following in his footsteps basically, and looking for even just a pat on the head.

Jarrah: There's even one scene where I believe that it's after she has the fight with her sister, Phoebe, over the dog situation where she's in her dad's office and her dad basically makes this comment like, "Justin better be a tough guy to deal with you." And she's really hurt that, is this what her father really thinks of her? That her potential mate would have to be really tough because she was so difficult, and she starts crying. And honestly, in that scene, I was a little disappointed that her father asks her, "What's wrong?" And then she ends up being like, "I just want you to be proud of me." [laughs] And that was super sexist, dad. Just saying.

Anika: I don't think we can expect even Janeway to be able to say, "Hey, dad, you're sexist." Especially when she finally got his attention since she was four.

Sue: That is not a conversation that would typically go well. [laughs]

Anika: And it breaks my heart. Since she was four. At five years old, she decided that she had to be in control of her emotions for the rest of her life in order for her father to be proud of her. That's horrible.

Jarrah: Oh, totally.

Anika: That scene resonates with me on a personal level because my mother died when I was 13, so my father became my sole parent throughout teenage years, which is important changes happen and everything. So, I was also desperate for my father's attention and desperate for his approval and for him to say with words, "I am proud of you." And not only did I never get that, but then he died when I was 21 and I never had the chance to try to get that as an adult, as Janeway does.

And sometimes, I just so overrelate with it that I'm like, "This is my father telling me that he was proud," that I can look back over the seven years where he was my sole parent and say that was a moment when he didn't tell me but I remember it as, "Oh, he must have been proud of me in that moment." It was there. I don't know, maybe too much information. But I really appreciate that scene and it's why I understand the devastation after the deaths, I feel that as well because I understand having this relationship is so important to you. So, as much as I'd love Justin to be super important to her, I really take it as more that it was her father dying that really broke her.

Jarrah: Absolutely. And thanks for sharing that. I think that's fundamental. When we're reading books or even watching *Star Trek*, the way that we interpret it is always also like partly through the lens of our own experience. And it's really important. And we do use books and TV and other media to process a lot of our own feelings, so yeah. She has two other family members that we meet who are her mother, Gretchen, and her sister, Phoebe. Her mother is-- I don't really feel like we got a really clear sense of her other than she's really good at baking brownies. She's a traditionalist.

Anika: She cooks. She [crosstalk] oven.

Sue: Yeah. I mean, it's pretty much clear that Kathryn is attached to her father and Phoebe, her sister, is attached to her mother.

Jarrah: Mm-hmm. Phoebe is described as artsy and emotional, but Gretchen isn't described as super emotional. She's described as very practical, but I guess maybe more demonstrative with her feelings than Janeway's dad, Edward. So, did anyone have any more thoughts on her family?

Anika: I really like Phoebe. I wish there was more of her.

Jarrah: Yeah. We get to see the most of her. In the chapter that you were saying was your favorite, or I guess maybe is it-- Yeah, the chapter where she's dealing with-- [crosstalk]

Anika: The depression. The depressive.

Jarrah: Yeah. So, why is that your favorite?

Anika: Well, I mean, I guess it does really resonate with me, just as it's Janeway at her absolute worst which, as the commenter said, "Do you see that in *Night?*" and I would say also in *Endgame*. The lesson is that if you hold in your emotions all the time, eventually you can't deal with them at all. And there's just so much raw emotion in that chapter. From the beginning, she's just so devastated, she can't even get out of bed. And then, it turns out that months have gone by, and she hasn't even noticed. And her sister drags her out and says,

“Look, you have to start living. If not for yourself, then do it for me. Do it for your mother, who can't grieve because she's so worried about you.”

And so, Janeway goes through the motions and starts pretending like she's okay, which is good, fake it till you make it does help. Although, she's saying that she's just doing it until she gets a position on an outpost far from her family, and then she can just sleep whenever she wants and fall back into a depression. But she goes for a walk, and it's a dark, snowy night in Indiana, and she gets a little bit lost because she's not really trying not to get lost. And she's really contemplating whether she wants to live or not, whether it's worth trying to find her way back home, or if she should just let herself fall asleep in the snow and not worry about it anymore. And instead, she finds a puppy, which is why I say that dogs are super important in this story, [laughs] because Janeway realizes that she has saved this puppy from the snow, and it's going to die with her if they stay out here. So, she has to get the dog back home.

And that is exactly what she does in the show. She realizes that they're not going home. Whether or not she gets home is not what's important. It's getting everybody else on Voyager home, and it's all the people she collects along the way. It's making sure that they get to what they need to survive, because she's already a survivor. That's who she is. I think the trauma doesn't create her as a survivor. She was deciding that she had to be in control of her emotions when she was five years old is how she becomes resilient. And the only way that she can get through the trauma is remembering who she really is and what her real story is. And that's getting this puppy home and taking care of it.

Jarrah: I wish that Captain Jamie Nelson said, “Let's get this puppy home.” [laughter] But yeah, I think that's a great description.

Sue: I feel like she's a survivor because she is a protector.

Jarrah: Mm-hmm.

Sue: Anytime that she has had to make that choice for herself, there has been someone else involved or something else involved. I have to protect this dog. I have to protect this crew. It makes me wonder, if it were just her, would it have been different? It's always someone else or something else that jump-starts her when she has this depression.

Anika: Even in that ridiculous haunted house scene, she stands up to Cheb for the first time because she's going to protect some old woman stranger who she knows nothing about, but it's still a person. She's like, “No one else is going to stand up and take care of this person, so I'm going to have to do it.”

Sue: And I actually feel like this narrative, the whole thing goes to great lengths to show Janeway as not only a protector, but as sort of a nurturer. There are descriptions of her seeing that one of her crew members is not necessarily feeling great. So, she arranges to have tea with them. There is the scene on the Academy grounds where a dog, again, got away from somebody else, and she's like, “Maybe I just need a dog to love.” So, there's this whole ongoing thing about she needs something to take care of.

Anika: Yes.

Jarrah: Interesting. Yeah, I agree with that totally. But I think it's interesting that it's not out of a sense of desperation.

Sue: No, no, not at all.

Jarrah: Need for something to be dependent on her, which I think is more a negative stereotype or sometimes people are like that in reality, where you are very focused on taking care of other people because you don't know how to take care of yourself. And in her case, it's more just that she does find meaning in getting the puppies home, but she's also sharing what she's learned and her confidence with other people.

Anika: Yes. So, in preparation for this, I watched the episode, *Coda*, because that's the one that features her father and brings in a lot of these details. There are a few other episodes that say like the tennis match and stuff like that, but that's the one that features Edward Janeway, or a fake Edward Janeway, I should say. And the funeral scene, that's basically what B'Elanna says is her gift was seeing the best part of us and bringing it out. And so, yeah, I think that you're right that it's not like she needs the validation of another creature or anything. She's just connected to people in this very specific way.

I call her a collector of people all the time. She just has this bubble around her that she brings all of the people into her bubble, and even people that she starts out thinking are her enemy sometimes get to be in the bubble. She decides that it's better to save people than to roll over them.

Jarrah: So, the last puppy appearance is upon the return of another character who is now no longer named Hobbes [laughter] but is now named Mark.

Anika: Oh, Mark.

Jarrah: Who's shocked?

Sue: I mean, good choice, Mark.

Jarrah: Sue, having read this for the first time, did you see that coming from the very beginning? I don't think I did as a kid, but I don't know for sure.

Sue: I don't know if it was from his first appearance, but by the water caves, yeah. I was like, "I think that's Mark."

Anika: Oh, I wish I could say that I now like Mark. It's still just like, "Fine, you can have that relationship if you really want to."

Jarrah: He comes back, and he is slightly less boring and slightly more good looking, and she's like, "Done. Let's get married."

Sue: I don't think we ever really know enough about Mark for me to have a real [laughs] opinion on him.

Jarrah: He likes dogs. Therefore, better than Justin. Wait, does Chakotay like dogs? Did we ever explore this?

[laughter]

Sue: He likes lizard babies.

Anika: He likes dogs.

[laughter]

Sue: It's not the book, of course, but of course, in *Caretaker*, all we really know about him from the show until the Dear Jane letter is that Janeway loves him.

Jarrah: And he loves dogs, does not know how to get them spayed.

Anika: I have so many problems. Like, first of all, if Mark literally waited his entire life for Janeway to agree to marry him and be with him, why does he give up on her after three years? [laughter] What kind of a person are you? I don't understand. But in *Caretaker*, I mean, I love that scene because it just makes me laugh every time because she's literally reading reports rather than saying goodbye. Obviously, she doesn't know that she's going to get lost for so many years, but it is like, "I'm going away for six months. And instead of spending any time with my fiancé, I'm going to read reports." It doesn't seem to be this amazing relationship.

But it's sweet. It's cute. I guess I generally really like relationships where they met as children and eventually fall for each other or reconnect later on. But it's like, I sort of would rather have that with- I don't know. I just don't have strong feelings for Mark.

Sue: He's like an afterthought, right?

Anika: That's a good way of putting it.

Sue: He needed to be there to show she had some connection to home in *Caretaker* that she would be losing. And he's almost an afterthought in the book as well. It's sort of like, "Okay, now we've got to get Mark in before she goes to *Voyager*."

Jarrah: No.

Anika: He's not even a lot like-- We get Tuvok. Tuvok gets to be the last relationship highlighted in the past, which is great. I love Tuvok [chuckles] and I want Tuvok to be a more important person. But it's like, in one half of a chapter, Tuvok has more of a relationship with her than Mark through-- And maybe it's just because of the show and I already love that relationship, but it just seems like Mark doesn't have an impact.

Sue: Well, it was pretty clear that Hobbes was going to become Mark, in my opinion, but there was also no real reason for it. It could have been a totally different person, and it wouldn't have mattered.

Anika: Yeah, exactly.

Jarrah: I mean, we do get the scene where he finds her in her tree and listens to her and holds her while she cries. And he's clearly someone who, his whole life, he's not been pushing his own ideas onto her. So that was one thing I liked about it, that basically, almost all the other men had expectations that she had to live up to. And Mark was not someone like that. He's just like, "I just expect you to be your best self." But yeah, I mean, I think for me, what was missing was it didn't bridge the gap between why he would be more than a friend.

Sue: He likes dogs. Haven't you been listening?

Jarrah: Oh, my gosh. I know. So, I want to talk about some more of the characters she interacts with that are characters from other shows. But first, just wanted to throw in a Goodreads comment from Louise, who said, "I would have loved to see more about her early relationship with Tuvok. Again, it would have provided more emotional depth to the series. Here, I'm particularly thinking about Tuvok's betrayal in *Prime Factors* or her goodbye in the

Year of Hell. I was also a bit uncomfortable with the use of the term, Vulky, which I mentioned earlier she uses when she thinks of Hobbes a lot, calls him Vulky Hobbes Johnson, and also thought it might be a racial slur, which is not okay. A quick look on Memory Alpha suggests it is short for Vulcan, and I verified that, so I'm assuming it means like he was nerdy or geeky. It's like a futuristic slur for that, which seems bizarre."

Anika: Terrible.

Jarrah: Yes.

Sue: That's not okay.

Jarrah: And Louise continues, "Another nitpick I had was Janeway's lack of mentorship or friendship with other women. I acknowledge that not all women seek out other women in one or either context, but as someone who does, I found it a bit jarring."

Sue: That is an excellent point and something I was thinking about with this novel is that all of the relationships, or I should say the majority of the relationships we see Kathryn in are with men, whether they're romantic or not, it's relationship after relationship where she's defined by the man in the relationship.

Jarrah: Even her chapter with Phoebe is about coping with the death of men that they know.

Anika: Phoebe is the closest we get because she really does not get to interact with her mother enough to have her much of a handle on that relationship.

Jarrah: There is the old lady in the burning Irish castle.

Sue: I don't know if I'd call that a relationship.

Anika: She doesn't have a name--[crosstalk]

Jarrah: And her annoying-

Sue: --who owns the dog.

Jarrah: Annoying wimpy girlfriends that won't go cave diving with her.

Anika: Her roommate.

Jarrah: Oh, right.

Anika: I think her name is Lisa.

Jarrah: Yeah. So, Lisa sets her up with someone very special. Who wants to talk about that scene?

Anika: I love that scene. I love that it happens.

Jarrah: Okay, so we are talking about the time that Janeway went on a date with none other than William T. Riker.

Anika: A blind date.

Jarrah: Oh, my God, yes.

Sue: I mean, of course she did.

Anika: I wish that-- I mean, if only they had hit it off.

Jarrah: I think he likes dogs.

Anika: Yeah, he likes dogs. He is also from a traditionalist family.

Sue: But he hates cats.

Jarrah: Yes.

Anika: And I guess he has a true love. But other than that, perfect.

Jarrah: But at this point, he doesn't because he met Troi on assignment, right?

Anika: That's right.

Sue: That's true.

Jarrah: Yeah. So, yeah, alternate timeline.

Anika: It actually does bother me a little because it's like wouldn't it have been nice for Janeway to have a healthy relationship that was casual and not-- She goes from Cheb, which is not a healthy relationship, to Justin, which is questionably healthy, but ends horribly to Mark. And so, we don't have any sort of Janeway, simple, casual, I can do this kind of relationship.

Jarrah: Yeah. She is clearly regretting that she didn't bone Riker. Yeah. The reason I like this scene is that Riker is really interested in her research and her intellect. And we see that elsewhere in *TNG* when we talked about this in the show before, that Riker gets this reputation same as Kirk is a ladies' man, but he's very interested in women's capabilities not just their overt physical attractiveness. He can be very respectful and open about what he wants in a situation. And then, what happens in this situation is that Janeway just freaks out. She's like, "Too soon. Can't do this. I'm working on this big paper."

Anika: It reminds her of Cheb because he's charming and the big guy on campus.

Sue: He also has dark hair and blue eyes.

Jarrah: Yes.

Sue: And she has a paper to write.

Anika: He's just too much her type. But see, if they had a simple relationship, then she could understand that healthy relationships exist, because I think that even in the series, she really has problems with whether or not she is allowed to have a relationship.

Jarrah: So, we also see-- I'm going to call them cameos, even though obviously the actors aren't in them because it's a book. But we get to see Janeway interacting with Data, which is, I think, really adorable when she's a child and Data takes her and her dad up to Mars.

Sue: That is super cute.

Jarrah: Yeah. And you talked a bit about how there's a little scene with Tuvok, although I wished it would have shown how they became friends instead of how they originally were antagonists.

Anika: That's in *Pathways*.

Jarrah: Oh, okay, cool.

Anika: It does exist. And so, to whoever the commenter was, you can read it and you can just read that chapter if she doesn't want to read the whole book.

Jarrah: Good to know.

Anika: It's a great chapter.

Jarrah: Oh, sweet.

Anika: *Pathways* is half great and half "What is this?"

Jarrah: Awesome.

Anika: But I do like the connective story better in that one. So, I read it actually when I reread the book.

Jarrah: Cool. Well, I guess my question was given that this is a novel so Jeri Taylor could write Janeway meeting any character in the entire *Star Trek* universe, basically assuming they weren't dead in the timeline, who would you have liked to see her interacting with that she didn't, if anyone?

Anika: I mean, I guess I would say Picard, but I liked the Riker scene. So, I don't really need Picard or a woman.

Jarrah: Yeah, I was thinking--

Anika: The women-- [laughs]

Jarrah: I was thinking about Dax although-

Anika: But would it be Curzon?

Jarrah: Because it could have been pre-joying Jadzia.

Anika: Which would be a wholly different thing, which could be very interesting.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Sue: Would that timeline match up? I guess probably.

Jarrah: Yeah. I mean, they wouldn't have been in the exact same year, but who else?

Sue: We could have seen, I don't know, Beverly Howard be her TA or something?

Jarrah: Yeah.

Sue: In a science class. [laughs]

Jarrah: I mean, I feel like the choices were pretty good.

Sue: I think that Geordi is an obvious choice though too. I know we were listing off women, but if she is in engineering classes around that same time, I feel she would know Geordi La Forge.

Jarrah: Yeah, science, math, engineering.

Sue: Sonia Gomez, [laughs] I don't know.

Anika: We're pulling things out.

Jarrah: But even like Sisko.

Anika: Sisko's wife.

Jarrah: Oh my gosh. I think--[crosstalk]

Anika: Jennifer Sisko.

Jarrah: Although she wasn't in Starfleet, she was on the ship as a civilian, I believe. So, I'm not sure how they would have met unless they were just like on the same star base or something. But I actually would have really liked that because I think Jennifer Sisko comes across as like very one dimensional. She's very much a sacrificing angel character. Even mirror Jennifer Sisko turns out that way. So, I think, I mean, I'm down for more complexity on the Jennifer Sisko friend any day.

All right, so we go through all of these experiences with Janeway's relationships and basically what do we learn from all of this? At the end of the day, what do you think are some of the key messages or takeaways about Janeway?

Sue: Well, I think it's trying to give us the same moral of the story that *Tapestry* does or at least attempts to, in that all of these things that occur in your life make you who you are and if even one of those things changes, then you wouldn't be the person you are today. So, all of your experiences are important and meaningful and formative.

Jarrah: They make up the mosaic of your life, as it were.

Anika: Yeah, they even have the same title.

Jarrah: They already use tapestry in *TNG*, so.

Anika: Right, exactly. I mean, that's definitely what the coda to the novel is. I mean, there's a whole long passage defining mosaic and saying how it relates to her life. But I think that it's a portrait of Janeway as a resilient, perseverant person, which I mean, we get right away, even just from *Caretaker*, we get that. And also, that as much as-- the last chapter is it all hits all at once and is a little strange to me. But she does realize that the reason that in trying to save both people and not making a decision about who to save, she lost both people.

Anika: And I think that, going forward from that moment, certainly in *Voyager*, she's constantly making these really hard decisions that come down to, you just have to-- Like, none of these choices are good, you just have to make one of them. And she does it, over and over and over again. And she regrets some of them and she beats herself up over some of them, and sometimes they're the wrong ones. But she has to make a choice in order to

move forward. And I think that in the depression, it's the same. In order to save this puppy, we have to make a decision to live. And I think that certainly, again, just in the series, she's constantly making these choices that are the best of terrible, right from the beginning, where she has to blow up the Caretaker's array.

Jarrah: Yeah, I think that is definitely a key point of the book. Basically, when she crashed on the ice planet with her dad and Justin, she's struggling throughout the book with this repressed memory of the incident. And so, she keeps going through these old memories and coming to this block that is preventing her from fully remembering that she had this ability to choose to save one of them, and she wasn't able to choose, and that's why they both died. So, it's pretty powerful. Interesting that I was just watching *Coming of Age* in which Wesley has to pass that exact test before being admitted to the Academy. So, go Wesley.

[laughter]

So, are there any other final thoughts on *Mosaic*? Oh, I will mention that there is one time that I thought I didn't totally buy where she drifts off to sleep in the captain's chair and has one of these memories.

Anika: Oh, right.

Jarrah: I was like, I don't buy that. No one would notice. I buy that—[crosstalk]

Anika: While there's a crisis going on.

Jarrah: Yeah, literally, that I feel like she would have been embarrassed when she woke up if that had happened or that there would have been weird looks or something but instead it was like, "Yeah, this happens all the time."

Anika: And then they applaud-- I'm not saying she doesn't deserve the applause for making the decision to go back and get her crew and saving them--

Jarrah: That doesn't happen very often on the show.

Anika: Why would that happen? [laughs]

Jarrah: Yeah. Compared to any other.

Anika: I know she does that all the time and doesn't get applause. But okay.

Jarrah: Yeah, for sure.

Sue: The one other thing that I noticed which I thought was really, really weird, was that they keep describing Janeway's hair as fine and thin.

Anika: I'm so glad-

Jarrah: All of which is true.

Anika: That's all I have something to say, it's about her hair. I do really like that they have been a recurring theme that she doesn't know what to do with her hair. She does not do the styling. It's like, "Oh, my goodness. I love that." Because that's like the in joke.

Sue: But it is neither fine nor thin.

Anika: Yeah, it is neither fine nor thin. Also, she hates it so much. And I'm just like, "No, your hair is fabulous. Stop it."

Jarrah: [laughs] All right, well, it was great reading *Mosaic* by Jeri Taylor with you all, but this is just one of the many topics being discussed on the Trek.fm network recently. So, here's a quick look at some of the other things you may have missed elsewhere on the network.

Jarrah: We also just wanted to let you know about how you can support our show and the *trek.fm* network. Trek.fm is a listener-supported network. You can help us keep the *Star Trek* discussion coming by pledging a donation at patreon.com/trekfm. Every little bit helps keep the Trek.fm podcast up and running. That pays for things like our audio hosting. Or if you'd like to support our show directly, you can donate at patreon.com/womenatwarp and that pays for things like promoting our show at conventions with things like business cards and going to conventions and doing convention reporting. So, if you're able to, hop on over to patreon.com/trekfm and or patreon.com/womenatwarp and support the show and/or the network. So, Anika, where can people find you elsewhere on the Internet?

Anika: My Tumblr is pixiedane.tumblr.com and over in the sidebar there are links to all of my different places. I'm Pixie Dane in most places. On Twitter I'm [@manicpixiedane](https://twitter.com/manicpixiedane) and or you can go to my web portal which is manicpixiedust.com which again just lists everywhere and has a bunch of links to my writing and my projects and all of the different things that I'm doing.

Jarrah: Awesome. Well, thank you so much for joining us today. Sue, where can people find you elsewhere on the internet?

Sue: You can find me on Twitter [@spaltor](https://twitter.com/spaltor) or over at anomalypodcast.com.

Jarrah: Awesome. And I'm Jarrah Hodge and you can find me at trekkiefeminist.tumblr.com or [@jarrahpenguin](https://twitter.com/jarrahpenguin) on Twitter. If you'd like to contact our show, you can find us on Facebook [@womenatwarp](https://www.facebook.com/womenatwarp), on Twitter [@womenatwarp](https://twitter.com/womenatwarp). You can email us at crew@womenatwarp.com or you can go on iTunes and leave us a review, or you can go to our website, womenatwarp.com. Thanks so much for joining us.

[Transcript provided by [SpeechDocs Podcast Transcription](#)]