

Women at Warp Episode 22: Guinan: Intergalactic Woman of Mystery and Hats

RO:

Who are you?

GUINAN:

I told you I'm Guinan. I tend bar and I listen.

ANDI:

Hi and welcome to Women at Warp. Join us as our crew of four women Star Trek fans boldly go on our biweekly mission to explore our favorite franchise. My name is Andi and thanks for tuning in. Today I am joined by Jarrah. Hi Jarrah.

JARRAH:

"The idea of fitting in just repels me."

ANDI:

laughs Is it Jarrah or is it Guinan. Who's that?

JARRAH:

pause Both?

ANDI:

You don't have big enough hats to pull off Guinan, I'm sorry Jarrah.

JARRAH:

That's very true. I just have the same attitude today.

ANDI:

OK. Very Zen-like? Sage with great hats. So, you might have guessed that today we're gonna be discussing one of our favorite TNG Characters: Guinan, purveyor of space drinks and wearer of epic hats. To do that we have some lovely guests, including Lindsey.

LINDSAY:

Hey.

ANDI:

Lindsay, why don't you tell us a little bit about yourself?

LINDSAY:

Okay. Well, I'm just a big sci-fi fan. I'm here. I work in education. I'm from New York City. And *pause* yeah. Yeah, that's pretty much it.

ANDI:

Yeah? That's your life.

LINDSAY:
laughs Yeah.

ANDI:
And you like to talk about Star Trek.

LINDSAY:
Pretty much, yeah. I mean, it's kind of funny. So I work and live in Harlem, and I work in advisement of students of color. And so representation pretty much matters to me very much. And Star Trek is all about that. So that's why I love talking about Star Trek.

ANDI:
Yeah, absolutely. I actually *met*, air quotes, *Lindsay laughs* met Lindsay as she follows my Twitter. And we basically had this run of DS9 episodes where I'd say something *Lindsay laughs* she'd be like "Yeah, totally! And then also *this*." I'm like "Oh my God. We're soulmates right now."*Lindsay laughs* So-

LINDSAY:
Pretty much. Pretty much.

ANDI:
So I was like "Hey? You want to talk about Guinan?" And she was like "*Obviously* I want to talk about Guinan." And so here she is. Welcome!

LINDSAY:
And may I just say, your tweets are hilarious. If anyone listening is not following you they really should.

ANDI:
We have a lot of fun with it. I'm glad you are able to be here today. Thanks so much.

LINDSAY:
Yeah, thanks.

ANDI:
And our other guest is Aliza! Aliza Pearl.

ALIZA:
Hi! Hello!

ANDI:

Why don't you tell us about *your* work? Because you've been doing some really cool stuff with regards to Guinan.

ALIZA:

Yes, thank you. Well, I'm Aliza Pearl. I'm an actor and a writer in Los Angeles. And I, similar to Andi, a couple years ago I started watching all of Star Trek from start to finish. And once I got to TNG I was remembering watching it as a kid and remembering how much I love Guinan. And I was like "I really want to see Guinan's backstory. And I want to-" and I searched and looked to see if there were even any like fan fiction, novels, or anything and there was nothing. And I was like *thoughtful voice* "Hmm. Maybe I should create this." So for the past year me and my co-producer Sheldon Perry have been writing and working towards creating a Guinan backstory series.

ANDI:

Yeah, it looks really cool. And I have to say you wear the hat well.

ALIZA:

Oh thank you! That is a high compliment!

ANDI:

laughs I actually- the first time I saw you was the web series Vamp Girls Club. Which basically- if you haven't seen it guys go check it out on YouTube. It's like Katniss, and Michonne, and-

JARRAH:

Bella.

ANDI:

Bella!

JARRAH:

Buffy of course.

ANDI:

-Hermione, just hanging out in a house together.

JARRAH:

It's the best. It really is.

ANDI:

I enjoy how you end up in the corner sharpening your swords all the time, glaring at everyone.

ALIZA:

Thank you. Yeah. Vamp Girls was super super fun, and I met some amazing people I still collaborate with now, from that. I mean, Amanda Troop who was Hermione on Vamp Girls Club. We are in an improvised Star Trek TNG style show here in L.A..

JARRAH:

Aw, so cool!

ALIZA:

Yeah. Yeah it's so much fun. And Star Trek is really, you know, as a child it really formed my identity. And it helped me explore my creativity and my imagination, and then as an adult revisiting it, it's really like expanding my creativity in a new way. As a writer and as an actor. So I'm so happy to be here talking to you.

ANDI:

Yay! Awesome guests! So Guinan. Guinan is mysterious. So, when I was looking into this episode I was like "Well I'm going to look up Guinan's background. Hmm. I don't know where Guinan comes from really." *laughs* She's El-Aurian, but they don't have a whole lot of information about what that means. It seems like a kind of race that is basically human except for they live for a long time and they might have some empathic abilities. But really a lot of her backstory, and a lot of who she is, and a lot of her race is mysterious. Which is one of the things I like about it to be honest.

LINDSAY:

Yeah.

ALIZA:

Yeah. She just kind of- and she also just really pops out of nowhere in that first episode she's in.

LINDSAY:

Right. And no one ever explains like, why she's on the Enterprise, or how she got there in the first place.

ANDI:

It's all very vague. Which is one of the things I like about her, to be honest. Because it lets you wonder, and it keeps her being this kind of unknown quantity. Which I think is really cool, and I think she brings out a lot of cool stuff in the other characters. Her first episode is The Child which, I don't know why we keep having to talk about The Child and I wish I'd never had to talk about it again because I hate it so much, *Lindsay laughs* but that's her first episode. So for those of who you don't remember, The Child is the one where Troi has some sort of energy being impregnate her *snorting, laughter, and groans* and then she has a child.

JARRAH:

I think it's fair to say it's the highlight of the episode. *all laugh*

ANDI:

You mean you don't like it when Rikers stomping around asking "Who is the father?!" *all laugh*

LINDSAY:

Yeah, Maurey should walk in at that point. *all laugh*

ANDI:

I really think that there's not a whole lot to say about her in this episode. Except for the fact that "Hey, she's there and that's cool."

JARRAH:

Well maybe before we get too much like, into her specific episodes I will just throw out this fun fact. Because you know, you're saying she's a very mysterious character so I'm like trying- looking through all my Star Trek reference books to try and find *anything* about like the creation of the character beyond, you know, of course- hopefully people are familiar with the story about why Whoopi Goldberg wanted to be on Star Trek. Which is that she saw Nichelle Nichols on TV as a child and that inspired her to, you know, to go to her mother and exclaim that "There is a black woman on TV and she ain't no maid!" And so that's really cool. So then she heard that Denise Crosby was leaving TNG, and told her friend LeVar Burton "I want to be on Star Trek." And they didn't believe her. Because she was too big-name of a star and to want to be on Star Trek. *laughs* And so eventually she called the offices and said she wanted to be there and they invited her on. The fun fact that I found out was in Larry Nemecek's Star Trek The Next Generation companion, which is that the character was named after "Queen of the nightclubs, Texas Guinan. The toast of Times Square" who was a bartender hostess in the 1920s with the signature greeting "Hello suckers." *all laugh* So I enjoyed that.

LINDSAY:

Oh, I wish Guinan would say that.

ALIZA:

laughs But she'd say it in a really like nice chill way, that you'd be like "Wait, what? *Jarrah laughs* What did you just say?" like you'd never realize.

ANDI:

I don't know. I've always found it interesting that we have this really apparently powerful person and she's tending bar.

LINDSAY:

Yes. Right.

ALIZA:

Yes. So that's- I mean for me like, as a writer, that's when I was like "Wait a minute, who like spends centuries of their life doing something mysterious we don't know about and then

becomes a bartender?" Like, what must she have done before this moment? She must've done everything you know? She must have lived so many different lives and been on so many different planets. And just ...goodness. I see her like just- battles and who knows who knows what she did? But for her to be like "You know what? I'm going to retire. I'm just going to chill and be a bartender." Like, that's very intriguing.

LINDSAY:

Yeah. I feel like she's just there listening to everybody and, you know, just kind of being like this unofficial adviser to Picard. And I feel like she has this- I mean, I say unofficial, but I feel like maybe in the background there was some conversation about you know "I need you on board" or something. But these are just fangirl fantasies perhaps.

ANDI:

I don't know. I kind of like the idea of someone who just wants to wander the galaxy and collect people's stories. I think that's really cool, because there is a lot of stuff going on on the Enterprise. I mean, she definitely learned a lot about people.

LINDSAY:

Yeah. I think at one point, I don't remember what episode it is, but she- I think it might be Times Arrow, somewhere where they're back in the past. And she says, you know, "Did your father send me?" you know or "Did father send you?" You know "I'm not done listening. I'm not done. I'm not done listening to what's going on." So I feel like she just- wherever she is she's just, you know, kind of like the doctor in Doctor Who. She's just there to like experience what's going on, and learn as much as she can, and then move on. You know? Because I mean no matter how long she is anywhere she has all the time in the universe really to just sit and chill and listen.

ANDI:

If you think about it, that's kind of the perfect life. Just wander. Experience life wherever you find it.

LINDSAY:

Yeah, she's just chillin. You know?

ANDI:

Just chillin. Having a good time.

LINDSAY:

Passing out drinks.

ANDI:

laughs With her, what is everyone's first impressions and first thoughts about this super cool character?

LINDSAY:

Well it's funny when I started watching Star Trek, which actually wasn't that long ago. I want to say 2011-2012? I started with TNG. And by the time I got to season two when she first pops up I had remembered seeing her, or seeing TNG on TV just in syndication. I would, you know, go through channels as a kid. And I remember seeing her like "Oh, it's Whoopi Goldberg. She's in this weird show. OK." And so when I went to actually watch it a couple of years ago and I saw her pop up the screen I was like "Oh! Oh, there she is. OK, *this* is that show that I was kind of sort of flipping through as a kid." And I don't know. I was just really excited to see her. I'm a fan of hers anyway. And I was excited to see another black person on the screen, to be honest. I mean, if you can find me another sci fi franchise with like more than one black person with a name, that'd be great. *laughs* But that's one of the things that really excited me about seeing her on the show. As far as first impressions of her character? I just thought she was freaking cool. I mean, she wears these like crazy dresses and these crazy hats and I just loved her. I just loved her.

ANDI:

What about you Jarrah?

JARRAH:

You know, I remember watching her as a kid and just thinking she was so cool. And I just really wanted to be her friend. I don't have a lot of specific recollections about favorite episodes at the time, although I definitely remember her stabbing Q in the hand with the fork as a highlight.

ANDI:

Well, who wouldn't want to stab Q with a fork? Really?

JARRAH:

Exactly. And who else could get away with it? *Lindsay laughs*

ALIZA:

She did what we all wanted to do. What *they* all wanted to do on the ship too.

ANDI:

I'm sure Worf was jealous. He was like "Wait a second, we get to stab him?" *Lindsay laughs* How about you Aliza?

ALIZA:

Yes. Similarly, I think I'm just as an adult really kind of soaking in who Guinan really was and what she meant to the show at that time. As a kid I *did* watch it. And I mean, in general my viewing of TNG as a kid was very spotty because I just watched some episodes here and there. And my dad watched Voyager mostly, he was really into that. And so I remember certain things about Guinan and just, similar to you guys, like the hats were awesome. And like "Who is this mysterious lady? She's pretty special." And she definitely had that effect. Funny enough that Lieutenant Uhura had Whoopi Goldberg, she had that effect on *me*. Because I was like "Oh, it's a black lady in sci-fi. I love sci-fi. Maybe I can do that one day." *laughs* So it's like this nice little

perpetuating legacy that's happening maybe. And so yeah, I guess as an adult coming back to it and watching it, just sitting down and paying attention to it, not watching it as a kid, Guinan- yeah like, the mystery is there. She's this comforting lovely soothing presence. I love that she just pops out of nowhere. But ultimately for me I'm like "I want more of her! I want more!" Like you know, I want to know more about her story and I want to *dive* into it. And it's kind of like, there's this thing with black characters in the 90s where- *laughs* have you ever heard "the magical Negro?" *Lindsay laughs* Okay. Guinan was like that. And it's like this really fun cool thing that would happen, but it became a trope. And it became very just like "Oh, we're going to have an older black person who's wise and who helps the main characters do what they need to do." And that's exactly what Guinan was. So watching it for me, I just kind of like, I want to know more. I want to dive deeper. I want to see how she became who she is.

ANDI:

I mean, one of the things that I was noticing when I was looking through it, because she's in 28 episodes, and I'm looking through them. I don't think you could classify any of them as a "Guinan episode." So we have this character that's so amazing, but really she's a support character, and basically everything- I mean, it depends on who they're pairing her with. I mean they give her moments with Wesley, and they give her moments with Ro, and they give her moments with Riker where she's *supporting them*. Right? She's giving them advice, she's listening to their problems, she's helping them. All that's really cool, and I think she does it in a really it's- I think it's a well-written way. So you're interested and she's interesting, but we don't get anything that's like for her. *Just* for her. And I think that that character could have held up. I think that we could have had a Guinan episode easily. And it could have been awesome. But I don't think that you can really classify them, any of them, as a Guinan episode.

JARRAH:

No that's true. So Whoopi Goldberg after season 4 was sort of asked, you know, "What do you want to happen to your character? What do you think's going to happen?" and she said "I actually don't want her to do too much. I just want her to be able to help them do what they need to do in the gentlest possible way. I don't think Guinan can do too much more than that, or be more than that on the show, because then it would take away from the other characters. So I think that just what she's doing is right." So I'm not saying that is what I think, *laughs* but just the comment on what she said at the time. But it could also just be that she was told that like, you know, "You don't want to be a star of this show, then we're not going to make you the star of an episode." I don't know. But it's for sure- I think there's- I would have liked to see more.

ALIZA:

Yeah. We needed a spin-off series a long time ago. That's what it is.

LINDSAY:

Yes.

ANDI:

Well that's what Aliza is doing. She's giving us our spin-off. *all laugh*

ALIZA:

Yeah!

ANDI:

But I mean, if you think about it in terms of other characters that are recurring, think of Ro. Ro had way less episodes and *way more* like meat. You know? She had episodes that were completely about her, and she had a huge impact on that universe, and they gave her a very specific arc. We don't get that with Guinan and she's in three times as many episodes.

LINDSAY:

Right. Right. I mean, I think something that the Guinan character does very well though, is bring out the best of every other character. So while it kind of sucks that we didn't get to delve more deeply into her character and learn more about her and her background, which I would have loved to have learned about, she still kind of has this amazing function in the show. Where she just, you know, she's the perfect adviser really. She brings up everything that needs to be brought up so that people can do what they need to do and do it well. So, you know. I mean unfortunately, I guess they thought it was one or the other or whatever, but I'm glad that we got that aspect of her.

JARRAH:

I think that, you know, she ended up filling in the counselor role in a way more effective way than they wrote Troi to be able to do. And you see that in a similar situation on Deep Space Nine with Vic Fontaine kind of filling in later when there's still a counselor there, but she doesn't really get to do a lot. And Vic ends up like doing all the major counseling. But I would argue like we probably got more insight into **laughs** hologram Vic Fontaine than into Guinan's background. Which is to say that like, I would definitely hang out with Guinan any day of the week over Vic. **all laugh** Just for the point of comparison.

ALIZA:

Yeah. To get a little literary nerdy on it, the thing is like Guinan? Like, she's written very well because she serves- you're right. She serves exactly that purpose. She kind of comes in just to help aid things along and to counsel people and it's wonderful. And it has a deep- I don't know if the writers- I'm sure the writers did think of this in some way. But there's- have you heard of the Jinn? J-I-N-N. It's this- I'm not even sure how to describe it properly, but it comes from Islamic art and fiction and it's a device that's used in science fiction to kind of- it can be a person or it could be a thing that just appears out of nowhere. And it's as if it almost has always existed but it doesn't. And it only exists like in a certain plane, or parallel universe, or something and it intercepts *our* universe. And so that's what Guinan is. She pops up out of nowhere, she has no real backstory, but she helps things along, she's always been there, and she's always existed. And so she's like this magical Jinn type of thing.

ANDI:

People probably have more of a sense of the Jinn as the kind of a westernized version of the genie. That's where that comes from.

ALIZA:

Exactly.

ANDI:

That's where that concept comes from. It's an Islamic mythological creature basically. And then, you know, the whole idea of the wishes and everything, it's a little bit more Westernized version of it. But I think that's true. She kind of comes when she's needed, basically.

LINDSAY:

Yeah. That's the cool thing, because the second you see Guinan you're like "Oh, something is about to happen! What's going on?" *Aliza laughs*

ANDI:

I really think that we're lucky that we had Whoopi Goldberg, because I feel like with a lesser actress this could have been very one note. And she was able to add so many layers to it that it didn't just become "Oh here's the person that's going to give advice." It was deeper than that. And a lot of that, I think, has to go to just her whole- the whole aura that Whoopi Goldberg was able to bring to her.

ALIZA:

Oh goodness, yes. I would get chills when I would see her little moments with Picard, when they're like "We're much more than friends" and like all that stuff gave me chills. And I think it's because Whoopi is an actress who *can* like hold her own with someone like Patrick Stewart, and they were able to have that strong deep connection as these characters, and probably as actors too. Like, they just vibed very well together.

ANDI:

I don't think there are very many actors that can hold their own with Patrick Stewart. *laughs*

LINDSAY:

laughs Yeah.

ALIZA:

Oh yeah. Whoopi definitely was the one to bring it *laughs*, so to speak, in that role.

ANDI:

So we have a list of episodes for her, as I said she's in twenty eight episodes. But the interesting thing for me when I was looking through them is that for most of them- we marked a handful that we thought might need more discussion. But one thing that I was noticing when I was re-watching some of them and thinking of them is mostly I'm remembering *moments*. So not the episodes so much as, you know, a five five minute moment that she had within it.

LINDSAY:

Yeah, yeah.

ANDI:

So the first one we had was *The Child* in which she was introduced, but the next one, and when we put it out there for people to tell us what they thought of Guinan this is definitely the moment that came up the most, is her scene with Picard in *The Measure Of A Man*. So, *The Measure Of A Man* is my favorite TNG episode. And that scene with Picard and Guinan is actually my favorite scene in all of TNG, and actually *all of Star Trek* that I have seen thus far. And for those of you who don't remember, *Measure Of A Man* is the episode in which Data goes on trial to basically prove his personhood. And there's this lovely scene between Picard and Guinan where Picard's trying to work through the moral dilemma he has here, and she's basically guiding him through that. And we got a lot of comments that basically that was the moment that everyone really connected with, which doesn't surprise me at all to be honest.

LINDSAY:

Yeah. For sure. I mean when I was talking about, you know, representation before and representation matters like this? This for me is the scene that really just brought it out for me. I mean, because she's talking about slavery. She's talking about, you know, colonialism. She's talking about assimilation, and she's talking about what happened to her people. And she's making Picard understand like "Bro, it's not about all this other stuff. It's about who are we going to be? Are we going to be the people who are creating and enslaving people, or making a labor force you know out of beings that are just there? You know? Or are we going to be people who respect life in every form you know?" So yeah, I just love that she's able to bring out that perspective. Just from being who she is and being someone who had that in her past and had that in her, you know, her cultural background, the experience of her people.

ANDI:

Yeah. I mean, the thing that I love so much about it is not just the context within the episode, but the context within television, within our own society. Because you have a black woman talking to a white man through this. They like to have us think that at this point in history that this is not a problem anymore. But they're writing it at a time when it still is very much a problem. So I always thought it was amazing to have those kind of meta levels on top of everything else.

LINDSAY:

Yeah definitely.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Brittany, our listener and previous guest, commented "In *Measure Of A Man* you have a black woman drawing out a response that is forcing a white man in a position of authority to acknowledge a civil injustice. An injustice that is forcing the white male to recognize the humanity and worth of something that lots of people claim is property, or don't recognize has the right to self-determination."

ANDI:

Yeah. I mean, that nails it. And just having that on top of the whole theme of that episode with Data, I think it's really beautifully done. And I don't think that that scene works without those extra- well. *Maybe* it works, but it doesn't work nearly as well without those extra layers.

ALIZA:

Yeah. This is like- that moment, that scene and the whole episode is really Trek doing what it does so well, which is bringing our current like, whatever current political or socio political thing that we still are dealing with, just contextualizing it in a way that makes us think about it deeper.

ANDI:

Yeah. I mean that's the goal of sci-fi really. It's to take us out of all of the baggage we have with the moment and, you know, force us to look at humanity from a different perspective.

LINDSAY:

Yeah, definitely.

ANDI:

Sue and I actually had a chance to talk to Melinda Snodgrass about this episode a little bit when we were at Dragon Con, and Whoopi Goldberg was not supposed to be in this episode. They added her because she was supposed to have- by contract she was supposed to be in a certain amount of episodes per season. And so basically it was a contract decision to have her in this episode, which is amazing.

ALIZA:

in disbelief What?

LINDSAY:

Huh! *all laugh*

ANDI:

Can you imagine-

ALIZA:

What? Oh my god

LINDSAY:

Oh my god.

ANDI:

Oh yeah. Props to Melinda Snodgrass for being like “Well obviously the second I was told I could have Whoopi Goldberg like, I went for it. You know, full force!” *Lindsay laughs* But she was not originally written to be in that episode.

LINDSAY:

I just feel like *that* conversation is such a turning point. Because that's when Picard realizes, you know? And the arguments that he uses afterwards, after that conversation, is really what *frees* Data, for the lack of a better word. You know? So just to think of her not being in that episode is kind of like *laughs* “Bye Data!” *all laugh*

ANDI:

Yeah. And I mean, props to Patrick Stewart here too. Because he plays that moment of dawning realization so perfectly. Where he's like “Wait a second, I never thought about it this way. How did I miss this?” you know, and that is- aw, I could go- we could talk this whole hour about that *laughs*. Now, one thing that I think comes up when we talk about Guinan- well, two things. One is Q. So Q is kind of our trickster character that comes in and out. And Q is actually the person that comes in and makes us realize that Guinan is more than she seems. And the first episode she does that is, Q Who which I know *laughs* I know it's kind of hard to remember which Q episode is what. Q Who is the one where Q throws them forward seven thousand light years and they encounter the Borg for the first time. The Borg being the other kind of- I don't know, you could call *entity* that I think of when I think of Guinan. So this is the episode, Q Who, where we find out that, you know her people were destroyed, that the Borg is introduced and that Q makes it very clear that Guinan is more than she seems.

LINDSAY:

Yeah, I like this episode because she's- I mean this is like the first time where she's like “Hey, something's wrong guys. We should do something.” *laughs*

ANDI:

Yeah, she has this lovely little moment where she calls the bridge and Rikers like “Guinan? OK, you're calling us.” And she's like “What's wrong? What's happening?” He's like *unconvincingly* “Nothing?” “Something's happening, what's going on?” And then we find out that Picard has been kidnapped by Q, as he does, silly Q. *Lindsay laughs* And then we get the Borg for the first time.

JARRAH:

The Borg! No!

ALIZA:

Oh, the good old Borg. *all laugh*

ANDI:

They scare the crap out of me. Especially this first episode. I don't know. Something about-*ugh* everything about them is creepy to me.

LINDSAY:

It's the eye pieces, I think.

ALIZA:

The *implants*. *Lindsay laughs* So gross. So gross! Think about that. Ugh!

ANDI:

Yeah. And then also the cube ship? *noises of agreement* Something about the cube, I don't know. Maybe because we as humans have this idea of what a spaceship should look like, and this is *not it*. *all make noises of agreement* And I mean, the idea of assimilation is a time honored sci-fi tradition. This is like basically the Star Trek version of the Cybermen.

LINDSAY:

Yeah. Yeah, for sure.

ANDI:

But yeah. I mean, seeing Guinan sit down and talk about how her people were lost. I mean this is heartbreaking stuff. *noises of agreement*

ALIZA:

Yeah. And it really helps to show how big of a threat- well, first of all it helps to show like, how powerful Guinan *is*. Yeah, you're right, we still don't really know what- you know what that is with Q, and why he's so afraid of her. But this episode, Q Who, is great because it shows that. It shows who she might have been in the past, or you know, if she and Q had something going on. And then also if someone that powerful is afraid of the Borg? She really helped launch our fear of the Borg I think. Because there are other people, you know, different species on the show that were threats to the Enterprise. And they always kind of came out ahead and it was great and was fine. But when you have someone like Guinan being like "You need to take this seriously Picard. You need to protect-" like she really helped to kind of underline "This is a major major threat. Don't take this lightly."

ANDI:

Yeah. I mean, she kind of defines the stakes for us. The stakes being our entire civilization.

LINDSAY:

Right. And she has these powers that we don't know about. like in that conversation with Q, she puts up these cat claws or something and you're like "What is she going to do *laughs* with the claw hands?" *all laugh* So it's like "Wait, if she has all these powers like, why is she also afraid of the Borg?" You know like-

ALIZA:

Yeah! See?

LINDSAY:
"How bad *is* it?"

ALIZA:
Right?! Yes, the Borg are no joke!

ANDI:
I still want to know what the claw hands do.

LINDSAY:
Seriously.

ALIZA:
Emphatically Mmm-hmm! Yes!

LINDSAY:
Is she like the emperor in Star Wars, where it's like shit comes out of it? *all laugh*

ANDI:
This is why I want Q to come back, and Guinan and Q to fight. I actually want to see that fight, because *Lindsay laughs* they both do like the weird claw hands and I'm like "Please fight." I'm like sitting there like "Fight! Fight! Fight!"

JARRAH:
Yeah!

ALIZA:
That's a big unkept promise. Like, what is that about?

JARRAH:
Do it! Do it! *all laugh*

ANDI:
The thing though that bothers me is that they don't listen to her for the most part. Like, they bring her in for all the meetings but Guinan's like "Run away." *Aliza laughs* She basically tells them, she's like "Run away." and Picards like "Nah. Let's like, stick around and take a look. See what we can find out." I'm like "No man! When Guinan says run away *run away!*" I don't understand.

LINDSAY:
And her face in that scene is so great. She's like "Wait. No. OK. So when I said 'run away' *all laugh* I meant *actually leave.*"

JARRAH:

laughs That would have been a really short episode though. *all laugh*

ANDI:

See, this is why it would be a terrible captain of the Enterprise. Because I would always run away. *all laugh* "This guy? No, no. Someone else can deal with that. I am going to run."

LINDSAY:

"Bye." *laughs*

JARRAH:

"There is always time to wait for backup." *all laugh*

ANDI:

I mean, the number of times in Star Trek where I'm just like, shaking my head on the couch. I'm like the person that's watching the horror movie and being like "Don't run up those stairs!" *Lindsay laughs* I would be terrible at it. There would be no exploration.

JARRAH:

"The Admiral who's overly cautious is probably right. *laughs* Just don't question things too much." *all laugh*

ANDI:

Yes, I would be terrible at it. But it does bother me, because she's the only one with actual experience with them and they don't listen to her. *Maybe* listen to her.

ALIZA:

Yeah. Well I mean, here's the thing though. What's cool about that is- yeah, it's weird that they don't listen to her in that episode. But then look at I Borg where if they *had listened to her* they would have just implanted Hugh with that- wait. Didn't they do that anyway? Okay now I'm forgetting. But that was another episode where-

ANDI:

They are going to implant Hugh with a virus that would shut down the borg collective.

ALIZA:

Right.

ANDI:

And she's all about it. And then they decide "No, no. We're not going to do that."

ALIZA:

Yeah. But that's another episode where she's heavily involved in that. It's her Borg experience coming up again. And they *don't* listen to her. But then she also kind of has a change of heart, and she's like "Oh maybe, you know-" and she has a hard line against the Borg and then Geordi convinces her to go talk to Hugh, and then after she talks to him he gives her a little Guinan moment. He's like "Aren't *you* afraid?" or something like that. Like Hugh totally pulls a Guinan on her.

ANDI:

"Isn't that what you do, you should listen?"

ALIZA:

Right. Yeah. Yeah. And she's like *record scratch noise*

LINDSAY:

Snap!

ANDI:

"Wow." Shocked.

LINDSAY"

Yeah. Well I mean, in all fairness that's the first and only time you see her kind of discriminate against someone. Well, not discriminate, but she makes a judgment before listening to the person. So she needs to be Guinan-d at that point. *all laugh*

ALIZA:

Guinan got Guinan'd

ANDI:

And that's completely understandable. This is the race that destroyed hers. So hard to not have hang ups would be less believable I feel.

LINDSAY:

For Sure.

ANDI:

And it just goes to show that when she does listen *she listens*. You know? She actually- she changes her mind and that's a powerful thing. And then she changes Picard's mind.

JARRAH:

Yeah. We had another listener comment on Facebook about this episode from Roy, who said "My favorite Guinan episode is I Borg. She is so passionate and so 'human'" In quotes "in it, first allowing her fear to drive her to dismiss the drones nascent self-awareness. It was nice to see a character who often was kind of too serene to be true get to have a moment of vulnerability."

ANDI:

Yeah. I mean this whole Borg arc is great for her, I think. And that includes Best Of Both Worlds, because we have- she's there for the beginning. She's there for their biggest battle against them, and she basically keeps Riker together during that time. And then at the very end of this kind of arc with I Borg, she's there to usher in the new era of the Borg. Of you know, humanizing them and taking them forward as a people. I love the Borg episodes, not gonna lie.

LINDSAY:

Oh yeah.

ANDI:

Even though they still scare me.

ALIZA:

But that's why they're awesome.

ANDI:

Yeah it's true. Basically whenever the Borg show up I'm like "Ahhh!" Especially after The Best Of Both Worlds. Which I have to say, was the most *pause* when I was live tweeting that, I mean I just got so many people are like "Waiting... waiting" *all laugh* for me to just freak out. And I did. So like, the moment when Picard is Locutus, I was like crying *mix of laughter and sympathetic noises* "Picard nooooo!" It was worth it for them. They were like "Just wait. Just wait!" Are there other episodes we want talk about? I was thinking about Yesterday's Enterprise. She's pretty great in that too. *noises of agreement*

LINDSAY:

Yeah. The most important part of that episode clearly is the prune juice thing. *Andi laughs*

ALIZA:

Oh! *all laugh*

LINDSAY:

I mean, I started drinking prune juice because of that. *laughs*

ANDI:

Oh man. A true warrior's drink. *Lindsay laughs* Yeah. I love that. I love that line. I love that episode. So Yesterday's Enterprise is another one where I feel like you probably haven't forgotten it, but it's the one where we get two Enterprises and Tasha Yar comes back. And this is another one where we have Guinan being something more. Like she knows- she understands something more than everyone else, she knows something more than everyone else. She clearly has some sort of extra sense of what's going on.

JARRAH:

Yeah and she- you know, she uses that relationship with Picard, and forces him to rethink his decisions, that are founded on the evidence at hand, and to trust in her intuition. Which is really cool. And to go with like what Tasha wants to do based on that. So it's again like, forcing him to recognize that his conventional wisdom and training about this isn't as important as the lived experiences and feelings of these two women characters.

ANDI:

It's so delightful when our male characters actually listen to the women around them, isn't it?

LINDSAY:

Yes! Yes.

ALIZA:

Oh yeah.

ANDI:

It's rarer than I'd like, but when it happens I get excited.

JARRAH:

I also love how like, she sticks by these characters that are kind of underdogs, and helps them get the respect and trust and validation that they deserve from Picard and the other, like honestly, men who are leading the ship. So I mean Ensign Ro is another example of that. In *Suspicious* she convinces Crusher to find out what happened in this mystery, and stick up for herself, and not let herself get kicked out of Starfleet. There's a lot of examples of that and it's really awesome.

LINDSAY:

Barclay.

JARRAH:

Yes!

LINDSAY:

She helps Barclay.

ALIZA:

gasps Barclay! Aw

ANDI:

I mean it's just Guinan always supporting who she needs to support. I've always really loved that Crusher Guinan scene in *Suspicious*, because it's another one where she *leads* them there.

LINDSAY:

Yeah. Yes yes.

ANDI:

That's the best part about Guinan's advice, is she's not *telling* you what to do. She's asking questions, and letting you see things in a different light, until *you* figure out what the right thing is to do.

LINDSAY:

Yes. Yes. And in the end she's just like "Oh no, I don't play tennis" or like whatever the thing is. You know like, she'll let you know that you've been tricked and kind of turn on the light bulb for you like "Oh, OK. Right! I guess I see what you did there. Thank you."

ANDI:

I wish I had a Guinan in my life. *all laugh* We could fence.

ALIZA:

She would have been such an excellent therapist.

LINDSAY:

Hell yeah.

ALIZA:

There could have been a whole school, she could have been like Sigmund Freud. Like there would have been a Guinan school of therapy.

LINDSAY:

Right? Like, didn't she try to kinda steal Troi's job at some point? *laughs*

ALIZA:

Well that was it-

LINDSAY:

"I mean, if you're going to leave though."

ALIZA:

laughs But that was her trickery again.

ANDI:

Okay. So like, in The Loss she's trying to get Troi to understand that she can still do her job.

LINDSAY:

Yeah.

ANDI:

Man, Guinan. You're too good at this. You're so good at it! *Lindsay laughs* I mean can we think of a single character that she hasn't worked through some emotional crisis?

JARRAH:

laughs No. But there are some where she's less directly helpful. Like in- I think my favorite Guinan scene is in The Dauphin *all laugh* where Wesley is asking her for romantic advice. *all continue* And like, Riker just starts complimenting her and then she just like "Yeah, go away Wesley." *all laugh*

ALIZA:

That banter they have, back and forth is sooo- Oh my God it's amazing! So just like, old film noir type of like "Oh, what would you do if I did this?" "I would do this though." It's so good! *laughs*

JARRAH:

Like, what happens after he leaves?

ALIZA:

Oh I know. They go behind the back of the bar.

JARRAH:

You think they didn't go home together after that? *all laugh*

ANDI:

I would love it if they did, to be honest.

JARRAH:

That's my head canon. They're both adults who, I think, would be able to manage their expectations about the situation and just have a good time. *Aliza laughs*

ANDI:

I just like how enthusiastic she is. Like, "Tell me more!"

ALIZA:

dreamy voice "Tell me more about my eyes." *laughs*

ANDI:

The other thing that she does in that episode, which is amazing, is I remember watching this episode and being like "Oh, poor Wesley. He's so out of his depth." And he does that very teenage thing where he's like "I'm never gonna get over her. I'm never gonna feel this way again." She's like "You're right." And I love that. Because you won't. And when most teenagers do that adults dismiss them. They dismiss their feelings. They're like "Oh everything's going to- you know "You're fine, you're overreacting." Guinan doesn't do that. She says "You're right, and this *is* unique, and you will never feel like this again." And I just love that. A+ Guinan, A+.

ALIZA:

Good parenting skills.

ANDI:

We didn't talk about little Guinan yet. *noises of joy* I love that. We're like "little Guinan" and it's like "Yaaaay!"

LINDSAY:

Aw, little Guinan. That actress that played her when she was younger, I mean, where is she now? Because she's great.*laughs*

ANDI:

She's actually not acting anymore. *Lindsay gasps* But we brought this up a little bit when we talked about Ro, because that's also a good Ro episode. That actress, and I can probably find her name if I took two seconds, but that actress is the same actress that plays little Whoopi Goldberg in Sister Act.

LINDSAY:

shocked No!

ANDI:

Yeah! So like the very beginning of Sister Act when she's you know in Catholic school and being bratty, that is the same actress.

ALIZA:

Oh my goodness!

ANDI:

Yeah. So when they were like "Who do we hire to play little Whoopi Goldberg?" They were like "Well I guess we go with the same person." *Lindsay laughs* Yeah. I mean, she's *great*. She's such a good little Guinan.

LINDSAY:

And she's just so calm, and poised, and just very Guinan. Oh God, that's so amazing. I was just thrilled to see her do Guinan but, you know, *not be* Guinan. *laughs*

ANDI:

Yeah. I mean, she does a good job of being like Whoopi Goldberg without doing a like impression, kind of? I like that. It's more organic feeling.

ALIZA:

It feels so real. You know? When she says "It's been a long time since I was young. I'm gonna enjoy it." Like, it just really feels like "Yeah, that's Guinan." Because, you know, sometimes you

see child actors on TV shows and it feels a little weird or it's a little stilted. But with that actress, yeah! That performance is really great. She just really kind of nails it.

ANDI:

And that's how Guinan *would* be. Guinan would be like "Oh this happened? Well I'll make the best of it." "What's the positive upside to this?" And again, helping Ro find the positive. Lord. The Enterprise would have fallen out of the sky without Guinan, let's just say that. *Lindsay laughs*

ALIZA:

Everyone would just have all these neuroses that they didn't deal with, and all these relationship issues. Wait, have we talked about Geordi and Leah yet?

ANDI:

laughs Oh, no we haven't.

ALIZA:

I feel like that's the toughest love Guinan gave *anyone*. Geordi, in regards to Leah. She's like "Stop it. You're being ridiculous. You made this up in your head." *Lindsay laughs*

ANDI:

I get so mad about the whole Geordi Leah Brahms thing, because he's being such a typical "nice guy." When I say Nice Guy this is not a guy who is nice, ok? A *nice guy* is someone who thinks that he's owed something from a woman *noises of understanding*, usually sex, sometimes just gratitude or attention because he was *nice* to her. So like, in this episode he makes her pasta or something and apparently that means she should, I don't know, fall in love with him? *Lindsay laughs* And I just love that Guinan is like *harshly* "No! No Geordi!" and I just picture like tapping his nose, like he's bad. *Lindsay laughs* "No!"

JARRAH:

What do you guys think about Time's Arrow? Because I think that's like super interesting. It's really fun to see her in the past and in this role, but it also read to me like no one addressed that it was kind of in contradiction to the position that black women *mostly* would have been in at that period in time?

LINDSAY:

Yeeeah I don't know how I felt about that aspect of it. I was re-watching it in the last few days, and yeah. I mean, it's not just her either. So if it was just her you could say maybe, you know, they just saw her as extraordinary or something and they just ignored the fact that she was black. But then there's other black actors in the background. And so you're just like "Wait a minute" *laughs* like, totally not addressing this. Like there's that episode in DS9 where it's addressed, you know? So it's just weird to see it not addressed.

JARRAH:

Yeah. And I guess Geordi is walking around in that episode too, like hanging out with the other people. And yeah.

ALIZA:

Yeah. I think it's there-

JARRAH:

Wait, is he?

ALIZA:

Yeah. He goes to yeah he goes to that time period too.

LINDSAY:

And they ignore his visor as well. **all laugh** I mean, there's a few times he takes it off but there's other times where he's just like **laughs** walking around with this metal on his face and everyone's like "There's a dude. Okay." **all laugh**

JARRAH:

Yeah. Cause yeah, I don't know. I feel like I don't know how they could have worked it in. But I don't love just, you know, pretending that history was more egalitarian than it was.

LINDSAY:

Right.

ALIZA:

Well for me, as a writer again, like I think "Yeah it's weird" it was weird to see that. But then my mind was like "Oh maybe this and maybe that" I kind of like explained it away in ways that might have made sense. Back then it was like super *super* rare for someone to be of that status and be black. But, you know, there are small ways that that could have happened. Like if she appeared out of nowhere and she's like "Oh I'm from this country and I'm royalty there" then they would've been like "Oh wow! That's interesting. OK we get it." That would have been like *one* possible way. Another is- I don't know, if she just came from afar. That's **laughs** really the only way I can imagine her showing up-

JARRAH:

Yeah. Or if she had been like, an illegitimate daughter of a super wealthy white man who had **noises of agreement** legitimized her or something?

LINDSAY:

Yeah.

ALIZA:

Yeah, yeah exactly. They would've been like "Oh she has money, she's from this family." So they would have-

JARRAH:

"And like this white guy's going to vouch for her."

ALIZA:

So there *are* ways that it *could* have been possible. But then for me, again, like I watch it I'm like "What's the story?" Like, what was it like when she first got to earth and she's like *incredulous* "What is this slavery thing?" But then something-oh! Well, going back to Measure Of A Man you get- I get the sense from her, you know, that scene we talked about with her and Picard that she *did* witness slavery when she went to Earth. So she, you know, she has an idea of it. She knows, she experienced it in some way with her own eyes. And so I think, yeah, I think during that time she has some amazing way of being revered and being accepted by society, high society at that. But also she probably did come across people who were enslaved at that time. And I think, again, it just informs like who she is and who she becomes throughout the series and throughout her life.

ANDI:

I mean, this is the issue with time travel stories across sci fi. I mean we had that problem with Dr. Who and Martha where it's like "How do you show that, respectfully without sugarcoating it, but also without putting your black characters in uncomfortable situations that are terrible"

LINDSAY:

Right.

ANDI:

It's a really tough thing to write I would imagine.

LINDSAY:

Yeah I mean, just to speak about Martha and Dr. Who for a second. There's this scene where they go back in time and the doctor stuck there and she's stuck there as well trying to kind of look over him. And they subtle-y addressed it a little bit? Because they're like "Oh how do you even know about medical stuff?" and like "Shut up" you know? But she's just there like "Uuugh! Gosh I can't say anything, but I want to slap everybody." *laughs*

JARRAH:

I hate that episode, because she literally has to be a maid for a *significant* amount of time while he basically has self-induced amnesia. And so it does address it, but I just really dislike how. And then at the end *he's* mad at *her* for like pulling him out of this really nice fantasy where he could have had like a love relationship. And she's like *sarcastic* "Oh yeah, I'm sorry. I should have just gone back to being a maid forever and scrubbing floors and having no one respect me." *Lindsay laughs*

ANDI:

It was really hard to watch some of the scenes where she's like on her hands and knees scrubbing, while all the white characters are walking around, and it's super cringe worthy.

LINDSAY:

Well, some of her facial expressions are like "Just wait till I can slap you." *laughs*

ANDI:

Good for her. But I mean, going back to Times Arrow, like would we have preferred that? *Aliza laughs* It's awesome to see Guinan be really powerful here. Is that accurate? Maybe not. But then the other side of it is "Do we want to see Guinan being oppressed?"

ALL:

No.

LINDSAY:

Yeah. I feel like she would peace out at that point. She'd be like "Oh, okay." *laughs*

ANDI:

"You are not up to my standards. Get yourself together. I'll be back later. If you can handle it."

JARRAH:

Yeah. I don't even think that was on the menu of options for what to do with Guinan In that episode. But you know like, no one even remarked on the fact.

ANDI:

Yeah.

ALIZA:

Yeah. Yeah, I think I like that they were more creative with it. And like you said, because we think the thing is like we've seen so many characters who- black actors who play slaves and we've seen that. And it's good, we need to keep revisiting history and working through some things *laughs* in our culture. But also I think there are other ways to work through them that are more creative and more empowering. I think that's what they did with Time's Arrow and with Guinan.

ANDI:

It was pretty awesome to see her own the room. *Lindsay laughs*

JARRAH:

Yeah. And I mean, part of the problem is honestly just like when Trek decides to do time travel or even like holodeck adventures in history it's *almost always* like white Eurocentric European or American history. So you know, you're *always* putting yourself in that dilemma versus being

more creative and actually trying to explore more global history. Or just even like, you know, history that's not the most conventional stories about white men. *noises of agreement*

ANDI:

I mean, how awesome would it be to see all of the white dudes on the Enterprise be awkward? *Lindsay laughs uproariously* In like ancient China or something? *all laugh* That would be so much better! Now I'm wishing that we could see that. Thank you for putting that in my mind Jarrah.

ALIZA:

Or like Harlem! What if they all went to Harlem in the 20s or 30s? *Andi laughs*

LINDSAY:

Oh! How rad would that be? Oh my Gosh!

ALIZA:

That would be so awesome!

ANDI

I'm ok with anything that makes Picard awkward...so. *all laugh* Awkward Picard is one of my favorite things. *noises of agreement*

JARRAH:

I feel like we should talk a little bit about Star Trek Generations, because I think that's like where we learn the most about Guinan's background. Plus she gets to ride a miniature merry go round and be on *the unicorn* *all laugh* in Picard's imaginary Victorian Christmas living room. And as much as I'm- Generations is not among my favorite movies, I think Guinan is really awesome in it, and she plays a really significant part.

ALIZA:

I think that was one, maybe I'm aging myself here, but I think I saw that in the theater with my dad. And I remember- Oh God! Seriously! Like just- sorry, just to go back to like the pure fangirl side of things? Just seeing Whoopi on screen in that movie just gave me such joy, and I was just like "She belongs there. This feels so good! Yes!" *all laugh* But yeah like, going back to the story side of things. Yes! It was so lovely that we got to delve deeper into her backstory and she was integral to the main story. You know? Sor-what his name?

JARRAH:

Soren?

JARRAH:

Soren?

ALIZA:

Soren. Yeah. You know, his wanting to get back to the Nexus, him being El-Aurian and I love that we just got to see that, you know?

JARRAH:

dramatic voice "Time is the fire in which we burn!"

ALIZA:

Yes! Epic! One of the *many* epic lines. Yeah, I just love that we got to see- learn more about El-Aurians and have her be integral to the main story. Just the simple things. That's all, you know? Just more Guinan in integral ways. That's all we need!

LINDSAY:

More Guinan.

ALIZA:

Yeah. When in doubt add more Guinan. *all laugh*

JARRAH:

It also then makes her absence in First Contact pretty glaring. Especially because she has that background with the Borg, that you can really picture her in those final scenes. I love Lily. I would have loved if they could have had *both*. But it was like, "Wait, what happened to Guinan? Why doesn't she care about how Picard's going all Ahab on the Borg?" Is she just like having shore leave or something?

LINDSAY:

She's about had it with the Borg. She's like "You know what guys? I'm going to just go off somewhere, *Aliza laughs* pick me up on Risa. I'll see you later" *Laughs*

ANDI:

Were there any other episodes we had to discuss?

LINDSAY:

Oh! There was this one episode, I think it's season two I think, where she's- she just kind of mentions that she's attracted to bald men *all laugh* and like "One of them took care of me when I was hurting." Or whatever. Like, "When I was in pain" or something. I was like "Okay. *laughs* I hear you Guinan. I hear you."

ALIZA:

I mean I think that was- call me crazy, but I think she- was she referring to Time's Arrow? With Picard? Because Picard helps her when they're stuck in the cave, everyone goes back to the Enterprise. But she's like "You stayed behind to help me." He's like "Yes, I want to make sure you're OK." And she's like "Ooh!"

LINDSAY:

That was such a tender moment.

ALIZA:

Yes! See all those Picard Guinan moments *aww* just get me! They get me, man.

LINDSAY:

Is this ship a thing? Like, let's put it out there: is that a thing? Like, is there fanfic? *laughs*

ANDI:

OK. There is no grouping of characters that is not a ship for someone somewhere.

ALIZA:

How could Picard and Guinan *not* have been a thing at some point?

LINDSAY:

Seriously.

ALIZA:

Just briefly, you know? And then they became friends because that's a deeper connection. *agreement noises* You know?

LINDSAY:

I can see it. It's official guys, it's official.

ANDI:

What would their ship name be?

LINDSAY:

Oooh.

ALIZA:

Ooooh!

ANDI:

Picainan. *all laugh*

JARRAH:

Gui-card. *all laugh*

ANDI:

Any last thoughts on Guinan?

LINDSAY:

She's amazing! More Guinan.

ALIZA:

dreamily Oh! More Guinan! We love her.

JARRAH:

All right. So that's about all we have to say about Guinan. We also wanted to remind you about our Women at Warp Patreon, which is at patron.com/WomenatWarp. If you'd like to support us directly, you can visit us there and pledge even a small donation. It gives you access to cool behind the scenes exclusive patron content, and things like that. And it helps us be able to keep our podcast going, and promote it, attend conventions and that kind of thing, to help spread the word. If you want to support us in another way, a really helpful way is to subscribe and review us on iTunes, if you're not already. This helps new audiences discover our podcast. So we would appreciate your feedback there.

ANDI:

Thanks so much for joining us! Lindsay, where can people find you?

LINDSAY:

They can find me on the internets. I'm on Twitter and Instagram @shakesqueery.

ANDI:

And Aliza, where can people find you?

ALIZA:

Yes! Also on the Internet @AlizaPearl, A L I Z A- Pearl on Twitter and Instagram. And then my series Guinan: the series. It's that, *laughs* @guinanseries on Twitter and Instagram and also on Facebook.

ANDI:

If you haven't had a chance yet guys, check out the kind of teaser trailer that they put together for Guinan: The series. It looks really really awesome. And you'll be able to see her rock the hat. And Jarrah, where can people find you?

JARRAH:

You can find me at Trekkiefeminist.Tumblr.com or @Jarrahpenguin on Twitter, that's @J A R R A H-Penguin.

ANDI:

And I'm Andi. You can find me most easily at [@firsttimetrek](#) where I'm live tweeting my first time through Star Trek. And you can find Women at Warp at [WomenatWarp.com](#) or on our Facebook page, Women at Warp. Thanks so much for tuning in!