

Asterism: Andromeda the TV Show

Intro

Jordan: Hi, I'm Jordan.

Kit: And I'm Kit.

Jordan: Welcome to Starry Time

Kit: Asterisms edition

Jordan: where stars plus lines equals stories

Kit: with an asterisk.

Jordan: In these episodes, we'll explore ideas, concepts, or people that didn't make it into the main show, or just certain things that we want to talk more about.

Kit: In today's episode, we'll be reviewing and discussing episode one of the space opera television show Andromeda. This episode is titled Under the Night.

Background

Jordan: This show was based on work by Gene Roddenberry, of course, of Star Trek fame, and it aired between 2000 and 2005. Spoiler warning. If you somehow not deep dived onto the Andromeda series, we will be discussing this pilot episode in depth. And if you'd like to go and watch it for free, albeit with ads, it is available on YouTube, so give it a watch if you'd like to learn more, feel free to pause now. Come back in approximately one hour.

Recap

Kit: So let's get started with a recap of what happened in this episode as best as we can remember. Because it has been just a little bit of time since we watched it.

Jordan: It's going to be burned into my memory forever. So don't worry too much about me. So of course the show begins with swelling orchestral music in the text. If the Commonwealth's High Guard had a weakness, it was this: its officers were too competent, too caring, and too brave.

Kit: This is like when you, you know, are at a job interview and they're like, what's your biggest weakness? And you're like, I care too much. I work too hard.

Jordan: After a pause, we do wind up seeing that this text is from an in world book entitled the Rise and Fall of the System's Commonwealth.

Kit: Yeah, so we should be gleaning that this is, that there's something has gone wrong with said Commonwealth. So that's what we're supposed to, I think, get from this.

Although I, you know, still was not following.

Jordan: And that's the only sort of guide we're going to get because the first basically 15 or 20 minutes of the show are a long uninterrupted space action sequence.

Kit: Yeah. So we open, there are people running around the ship. They've got blue and red jumpsuits. There's what can only be described as femme bots. And then we have our captain, Captain Dylan Hunt, portrayed by Kevin Sorbo, sort of at peak Kevin Sorbo. And um, all of a sudden he is jumping down like a ship's wide Jeffreys tube. That's what they're called in Star Trek. And the CGI here is, it's like astonishingly bad. Yeah, it's bad. Um, and the hair is flowing and he's jumping down, um, the Jeffrey's tube, um, with some, uh, rapidity.

Jordan: Yes. He is moving basically down what would be like the kind of pneumatic tube you would see at a bank and put like the world's worst green screen behind him because it is not convincing. And you and me, we love some cheap graphics.

Kit: Mhm.

Jordan: But there's something about these graphics here that are particularly dated and particularly probably felt cheap even at the time.

Kit: Yeah. And there's a lot of like strobe effects. So you know, if you're sensitive to that genuinely, like just skip the first 20 minutes of this show because there's a lot of them.

Jordan: Yep. So we are getting strobing, we're getting constant action. We have no idea really what's going on. Within minutes, longer than you'd like, we find out that the ship is doing a drill. We also find out that there are a bunch of aliens aboard this ship.

Kit: Mm. There's a, um, guy with tusks. There's

Jordan: Tusk guy.

Kit: Tusk guy. Uh, there's like a bug pilot lady. What is she? A fly? I think maybe, but like giant.

Jordan: More importantly, we do learn that Andromeda is the name of the ship or the ship's computer. Um, and we are introduced to said Andromeda through a hologram slash avatar image.

Kit: And of course, uh, she's a beautiful woman. And um, BoP, who joined, joined us for just the beginning of this show, decided he did not need to see the entirety of it.

Commented

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Kit: that, um, well, gosh, her, her top was pretty low cut.

Jordan: As you expect from every good operating system in the 23rd century. But yes, we learned the ship's name is Andromeda and the actress who is portraying this avatar is Lexa Doig, whose other credits also include Jason X. Of course, the 10th installment of the Friday the 13th series. I think that's also the one where they go into outer space. Got her reps in here in Andromeda. We also learn through really poor exposition that Captain Hunt is engaged and then his officer says some really gross pronatalist stuff about, you know, how marriage is important not for love or for commitment or for society, but for producing babies explicitly.

Kit: Yeah, I was gross. Um, also worthy of note that both Hunt and his officers have ridiculous superhero jaws. Having an exposition chat. And then suddenly the drill becomes reality and the ship is called to The Hephaestus Star system, which is being exposed to a rogue black hole.

Jordan: A rogue black hole coming in strong. Well, apparently we learn that Hephaestus the star system is home to a large Nietzschean population. And we learn that the Nietzscheans, that they are a, uh, very militaristic, eugenics based faction. And for some reason now there's a battle going on.

Kit: Yeah, this was really confusing. So they get called to the Hephaestus Star system to because of this rogue black hole. And I'm like, so here for it. But then the Nietzscheans are attacking the Commonwealth ship Andromeda, and there's this discussion of it being like an ambush, and that's all I really understood. But then I was like, so is there. But there is definitely a rogue black hole. Um, it will become important later, but, um, basically, yeah, like some kind of battle's ensuing. Andromeda gets caught in the black hole. But don't worry, our courageous captain really, really has a plan about what to do.

Jordan: Yes. I mean, Dylan Hunt, don't doubt him just because they didn't splurge on the cgi. Um, oh, wait. Definitely doubt him because it never really becomes clear what his plan is other than he's assuring everyone to get off the ship. And he has a plan.

Kit: Yes. So he orders the rest of the ship to evacuate except the bug Alien pilot who insists on staying. Like a classic, like, who better to do this, like, uh, you know, piloting, uh, than me. Kind of reminded me of like Erika on the Star Trek, um, strange new worlds. Like I fly the ship. This kind of energy coming from, um, the space bug.

Jordan: Space fly.

Kit: Yes. Ummmm. Oh, yes. And so then Captain, um, one of Captain Hunt's commanders, who we find out is a Nietzschean, also starts murdering people at this time and makes his way to the Bridge.

Jordan: Yeah. All we really know is he's got a very square jaw and he really likes murdering. Everything besides that is still unclear to us.

Kit: Yep. And so the commander, who was again just moments ago talking to Captain Hunt about his, um, upcoming wedding, is murdering, um, people, murders the bug pilot, and then he and Hunt have a battle which is both battle and exposition.

Jordan: Yes. And this battle slash exposition definitely has like a 90s Mortal Kombat feel. It's very cheesy. It looks like a stunt show. Again, low budget. But we do find out these quote, Nietzscheans are some sort of like, Space Nazi, um, of course, really concerned with a perfect eugenics master race type vision. And I guess they're like, not really into this whole Commonwealth systems after all. So then some like, very shady and not very scientific time dilation happens on the ship.

Kit: And it makes no sense. They should not be experiencing time dilation as people on the ship together. You know, Doctor who has a really great time dilation episode with Bill and the Cybermen, but the reason why that works is because the ship is so enormous that like people at the bottom of the ship and the top of the ship experience time differently, but they're literally in the same room fighting each other and they're experiencing time dilation. So that did not make sense to me. I don't think that's right.

Jordan: Eventually though, Hunt kills his square jawed Commander foe and then seems to freeze.

Kit: So next is,

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Kit: I don't recall there being any sort of, um, there's sort of like a fade out. And then we see a ragtag group of um, characters on a salvage ship that we learn is planning to pull Andromeda out of the event horizon because again, it's been caught in the event horizon of this rogue black hole.

Jordan: All right, let's talk about this crew for a second. We have a human captain, Becca Valentine. We have Seamus Harper, who's basically the same character as Walsh from Firefly. They even look quite alike except um, now he's a mechanic. And then we of course have Trance who is a um, medical officer on the ship. Doesn't seem to be like that correlates to her role, at least in this pilot episode. We see her performing no medicine, but she is purple and she has a tail.

Kit: And uh, she's got the most 2000 hair that you've ever seen with like butterfly clips and it's, it's really giving.

Jordan: And her full name, in case you're wondering, is a Trance Gemini. And then of course we also have my favorite character of the show who is Rev, short for Reverend and he is basically a horrifying man- bat. Bat faced guy.

Kit: Mm mhm. The bat people are known as the Magog and we're told they've

committed some kind of genocide in the fight sequence before between Hunt and his uh, you know, commander who he kills.

Jordan: Yeah, and I think that Rev is a sort of snub nosed bat. So he's got a face that looks straight out of 60s Universal horror, which immediately drew me in. He is not the only sentient creature on the ship. We also have Shrew Guy who is the guy paying for this salvage job. And his whole deal is he's kind of sketchy, he's very ornately dressed, very blinged out. And when we say shrew guy, we mean literally. He has a shrew's face. Yes.

Kit: Yeah. So this ragtag crew is able to yank the ship, the Andromeda, out of the event horizon because Harper is, I guess, just a really, really good engineer slash mechanic. And as they pull the ship out of the event horizon, we get back to Hunt, who's now talking to Andromeda. And Andromeda breaks it to Hunt that they have experienced actual time dilation now and they are now 300 years in the future.

Jordan: Time dilation. Wibbly, wobbly. We also find out that Harper has some kind of space measles.

Kit: Mhm.

Jordan: Which Andromeda, the avatar CPU, says was eliminated through vaccines many years ago. And then we get the classic Kevin Sorbo shock face. Everyone we know is dead. All of our missions have failed. We lost the war. The Commonwealth is gone.

Kit: The ragtag team has boarded the Andromeda. So that's sort of what's going on

here. And Andromeda is sort of looking at everybody. And that's how we find out that Harper has measles. And of course, through this whole sequence, Hunt blames himself like, you know, uh, that one thing, that one battle, it must have been his fault. And then, um, he goes about ensuring that this ragtag crew can't take his ship from him. It's all he has left.

Jordan: So, yeah, we get this great moment where Harper runs into Hunt, AKA Kevin Sorbo Harper, coming away from this interaction and saying, quote, I'm telling you, the guy is huge. He's like some kind of Greek god or something, which is just some, incredible lamp shading and callback to Sorbo's prior role as Hercules.

Kit: So as the crew of the salvage ship try to figure out how to defeat Hunt and sort of also Andromeda, um, even though this also again, makes no sense, he's literally one guy. There's a bunch of them and just one of him. So anyways, they're trying to figure out what to do, and then Shrew-guy, who remember is funding this whole endeavor, reveals that he's got secret cargo, uh, a Nietzschean fighter who basically they open up, you know, the doors to the ship and he's there, and he's got guns and guns.

Jordan: And guns.

Kit: Right.

Jordan: Yeah, he's got this proto Rock, proto Jason Momoa. He's uh, a fellow gladiator ready to match forces with our Greek god, Hercules slash Dylan Hunt. We see this giant imposing gladiator figure

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Jordan: and the credits roll.

Kit: And the very first credit is Majel Barrett, who produced the show. Majel plays my favorite character in all of Star Trek history. Lwaxana Troi. She also plays Nurse Chapel in the original series, along with voicing the computer in numerous Star Trek shows. And she was Gene Roddenberry's second wife. Also important to note that the very first thing that you said when we finished was, let's watch another.

Jordan: I was in. I had finally learned all these proper nouns.

Kit: Right.

Jordan: No, no. I was left on this cliffhanger and I was ready to learn how we bring these different sets of characters together.

Character Recap

Kit: So before we, uh, get into the rest of the episode, maybe we'll just do a really rapid fire reminder, um, of the characters. We'll get to some overall opinions, we'll talk favorite and least favorite, and then we'll wrap up as we like to do with some, um, ret constellations of the show. All right, so character one, Dylan Hunt.

Jordan: He is the captain of the Andromeda ship. He is basically a, uh, square job boy scout. What more do you need to know?

Kit: Andromeda,

Jordan: that's the AI ship. Low cut. Uh, we don't know why.

Kit: Becca Valentine,

Jordan: she is the captain of the salvage ship. She has also a very square jaw. So that's how we know that she is ready to be a captain.

Kit: Seamus Harper.

Jordan: Oh, yeah, that's the mechanic guy. The guy who's got the best line in the show. Oh my god. He looks like a Greek god and also has space measles.

Kit: Yeah. Trance Gemini

Jordan: Uh, she's purple. Uh, she's got 90s hair, lots of clips. She's got a long tail.

Kit: Rev Bem.

Jordan: My favorite character. The best character in the show. Snub nose bat guy. Talks kind of like with a growl.

Kit: Gerentex?

Jordan: Gerentex.

Kit: I don't know how to say it. We never heard the name enough for me to know.

Jordan: He looks like a shrew. He's really into leopard print. He wears a lot of gold chains. He's got some real antagonist energy.

Review

Kit: Excellent work. Uh, so what were your overall feelings about the episode?

Acknowledging, of course, that pilots can be hard to judge a show on.

Jordan: Yeah, the show had some real pacing issues. Um, that first 20 minutes of just like you're thrown into chaos without any exposition, but it's just so messy and like I said, disorienting and does not draw you into the world. It's just a very long action, poorly done action shot. Um, that aside, I did find about halfway into the show when they did experience a time dilation. It was 300 years later. Um, I was starting to get more engaged. I didn't hate it. How about you? What were your thoughts?

Favorite/Least Favorites

Kit: Well, overall, it's no Star Trek. Well, although, you know, it kind of does have some original series vibes, but that's not a compliment when it's coming out in the 2000s. Um, but, yeah, I can also see the potential. Um, nothing happened during it that made me want to rage quit. Right? Like, nothing happened that I was like, oh, my gosh. And that doesn't mean that there isn't something that, you know, could come up. Um, I will note that, as I said earlier, uh, BoP started the episode with us, made it 20 minutes in, um, and predicted Andromeda and Hunt, we're going to the future, and then left. Um, so

that was BoP's sort of takeaway, but there was nothing in there that was, you know. Like, I also, I think, would be willing to watch a few more episodes. I wasn't like, I have to watch some more episodes, but I'd be open to trying a few more. Um, maybe when you come to visit, you know, we can, uh, we can undertake that.

Jordan: And I think, um, maybe it's to be said, I don't think BoP. BoP rage quit either. I think he mostly Eye roll quit or,

Kit: yes.

Jordan: Didn't seem like he was inspired, you know, to throw the monitor against the wall in disgust. But no, after 20 minutes of pure chaos and lack of story and bad effects, um, turns out there just wasn't a lot there that he felt like he had to be a part of.

Kit: Yeah, his final verdict was it seemed pretty bad, and it did not leave a good first impression.

Jordan: And he didn't even get to meet bat guy or shrew guy. That's the worst part. Surely that would have changed his interpretation and impression.

Kit: Truly his loss. But overall, um, I was expecting it to be a lot worse. And based on this one episode, you know, I can't really strongly recommend it, but, you know, if you want the first part of this podcast to make more sense. Yeah, go ahead and watch it. If you have nothing else going on, you know, like, you're. You're looking for something while you're doing something else. Um.

Favorite/Least Favorite

Jordan: All right, Kit, before we end with some suggestions to retcon and improve the show, shall we reveal our favorite and least favorite parts

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Jordan: of this pilot episode of television?

Kit: Yeah, we agreed to keep these secret until now. Uh, so I'll be curious to hear what you came up with. So what was your favorite part of this episode, Jordan? What was your one thing that you liked the most.

Jordan: Turns out I can't keep a secret since I've been talking about it this whole time. It's, um, Rev Bem. It's Bat Face guy, like I talked about earlier. He's got these horrific werewolf arms. Like, the more they zoom out on his body and his hands, the more nightmare fuel he becomes. And him and Shrew Guy, you know, they have this real, like Power Rangers bad guy. Um, cheap, cheap, cheap. Um, but still not CGI effects. Um, I did do some reading about Rev. Um, he does not get included in later episode in later seasons because the makeup was such a pain that the actor did not want to participate in the show anymore.

Kit: Wow.

Jordan: Um, but yes, that sort of like, very, um, Halloween discount store costuming. Uh, Rev Bem was my favorite. How about you, Kit? What were your favorite parts of this episode?

Kit: So obviously I loved when Harper, you know, has the Greek god lamp shading line. That was probably the highlight of the show for me. Um, I also liked the aesthetics of the ship, uh, itself. And there's a really cool part in the episode where Trance is sort of wandering around the ship and we see that there's this like giant arboretum with this big tree. And that was really cool. I loved that idea. Um, there's also at one point, Hunt's talking to Andromeda and is standing in a room that seems to have like an observatory floor. So like there's, you know, some kind of banister and then the floor kind of has a window to space. And that was just like, kind of cool looking. Um, yeah, so those were my sort of things that I liked the most, uh, about the episode.

Jordan: You're not going to mention the black hole subplot and how.

Kit: Yeah, that's also

Jordan: well done the time dilation was.

Kit: I mean, I love the appearance of a rogue black hole. I think that is really fun. But it don't feel like it lived to its full potential.

Jordan: So that being said, let's move on to the least favorites. What was yours, Kit?

Kit: Well, all the gross pronatalist stuff at the top. Really. I was like, oh, yucky.

Jordan: Don't like that.

Kit: Uh, don't like, I was like, I don't even want that to be in here to show, like, how bad this character is. Like, I don't want that anywhere. Um, that was awful. I also, I. Rev

Bem, I. No, no, that was the face.

Jordan: He's our secretary bird of Andromeda the TV show.

Kit: And the Shrewface. I did not like looking at them. I wanted a lot less. And that was my least favorite.

Jordan: Do you have any other least favorites you'd like to mention before I get to tell you mine?

Kit: No, I think that was it. How about yours? What were your least favorites?

Jordan: I'll get into more in the ret- constellations about some of the casting. Um, that didn't really win me over. Um, other, other least favorites was again, poor pacing. Um, I didn't really like the orchestral score at the beginning to be fair.

Retcons

Let's talk about what we think Andromeda could have done better.

Kit: All right, sounds good.

Jordan: Well, first, as mentioned in the last segment, we gotta recast Sorbo.

Kit: Mhm.

Jordan: I mean he's not the only guy who can captain uh, a ship.

Kit: Well, my first choice here would be just to cast Lucy Lawless. I think she would do an amazing job. But did you, did you have anybody else that you thought might fill, uh, this role better?

Jordan: Ah, what a great choice. Uh, of course Lucy would have crushed it. Also at her peak in her prime. I had a few ideas for who I would like besides Kevin Sorbo. Um, first I thought this would have been a great vehicle for early Rock. Like late 90s Rock hasn't broken to the mainstream conscious yet. Rock. You would have crushed it.

Kit: What about um, like Arnold Schwarzenegger?

Jordan: Perfect. Yep. Arnold's in my top five actually, you know, would have been the best recast of all, now that I'm thinking about it.

Kit: What?

Jordan: Get your hands on the Shat. Get the Shat back.

Kit: What was he up to in the 90s, is a good question.

Jordan: I mean he was about to star on Boston Legal

Kit: or the 2000s. Yeah, yeah.

Jordan: He was about to start on Boston Legal. But let's bring him back. Let's bring him

back as a new character. Just don't acknowledge that he's like, uh, a uh, fantastically important canon character from

Kit: Star Trek,

Jordan: literally the competitive series. Just bring him back and pretend he doesn't have all that history that you know. If you're not going to go with any of the action stars,

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Jordan: um, that's my suggestion. Bring back the Shat.

Kit: A second retcon would be to give Andromeda just like a better outfit, um, and also just make her fully sentient. She's sitting in this weird intersection where it's not clear if she's an AI. It's not clear how much like is she the ship? You know, there's. It's. Those things are sort of unclear and so maybe it becomes more clear throughout the season. But I think, yeah, just like a. Not necessarily have to be a higher cut outfit, just cooler looking. Like her outfit's just not that cool. And I'd love for it to be clearer, you know, um, that she's sort of the one in charge and she's um. Yeah.

Jordan: Is she, yeah. Is she an Avatar? Or is she like a highly sentient AI?

Kit: Right.

Jordan: We don't know.

Kit: We don't know.

Jordan: But yeah, the uniforms on the show are also just gnarly.

Kit: Mhm.

Jordan: You know, we see the uniforms that they go in when they're walking between the ships and it's basically like they're just walking around and like plastic nuclear radiation bags, you know, they might as well be dressing in garbage bags. Um, so. Yeah. And then of course the Commonwealth uniforms also seem like, you know, bad Star Trek ripoffs. Um, the costuming for everyone save for Rev Bem is pretty questionable.

Kit: Uh, third, get your time dilation straight. Come on now. Come on, come on, come on now. Come on.

Jordan: You're supposed to be a science fiction show and you gotta get the science at least kinda like care a little bit.

Kit: A little bit.

Jordan: If uh, I had any other ret- constellation ideas, just, again, plot based, just bunk the first 20 minutes. Just start with Kevin Sorbo waking up with no memory, uh, on the ship. Just delete all of that. It wasn't helpful. Very confusing.

Kit: Very confused. Um, remaster those graphics. You know, uh, we do it for TV shows now. Maybe, maybe Andromeda needs a little of that. They're bad.

Jordan: Well, Kit, after talking about doing this pod for months. We have done it. We

committed to the task. I would say it's because we were too competent. We were too caring. We were too brave.

Outro

Kit: This has been Kit

Jordan: And Jordan

Kit: Sisters. Lovers of stars and stories.

Jordan: And we'll see you next time on,

Kit: Starry Time

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