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They are a race of warriors, a noble people to whom honor is all. They are cousin to the Vulcan, ally to the Klingon, and Starfleet's most feared and cunning adversary. They are the Romulans, and for eight years, Federation Agent Terise LoBrutto has hidden in their midst. Now the presence of a captured Starfleet officer forces her to make a fateful choice between exposure and the chance to escape: maintain her cover -- or save the life of Dr. Leonard McCoy?

Here, in a startlingly different adventure, is the truth behind one of the most fascinating alien races ever created in "Star Trek" -- the Romulans.

The Romulan Way Details

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Stephen says

Thanks to a recent conversation with a fellow Trekkie at work I picked this up for the first time in about thirty years. I skipped the history parts and just read the McCoy storyline, and it still holds up after all these years. I suspect I am missing something having not read the author's previous books, but it is still a delight to delve into this world and to hang out with my favorite southern doctor on the home world of my favorite sci-fi villains. (If whoever wrote the movie Nemesis had read this book before crafting their version of the Romulans it might have been a decent film.)

Hannah Givens says

I love the idea of this, but in practice it doesn't land. Every other chapter is a history of the Rihannsu, and while they're my favorite Trek race except for Vulcans and I found the content interesting, it absolutely kills any momentum the book might've had. I also enjoyed the characters, but with no momentum and only half the space of a regular novel, they don't really have a chance to be fleshed out or to interact with each other much. I love Naraht, but he seemed like an extraneous addition here, as did the random Starfleet officer at the end. Worth reading for me personally as a fan, but it's a slog, especially for what should be a gripping spy novel.

Brian says

Either my first or second Star Trek book ever, this is phenomenal. A fantastic book on the origins of an offshoot race (Romulans from the Vulcans), I found the backstory chapters (interspersed with the 'modern time' chapters) far more interesting. Its also when I ran into the difference between "canon" and "non-canon", as well as my first introduction into the mind-bogglingly lame and obnoxious Trekkie tendency to worship TV canon (to the point of needing to actively disparage book stories). That, and how trek fandom went off the deep end (see also the hella lame "call us Trekk-ERS" movement; if you're too sensitive to proudly call yourself a Trekkie and reclaim the word from the naysayers, get the F out) is what eventually killed my interest in most things Trek (that and Next Generation).

Ahem. Anyway, the book is awesome. So there.

Jerry says

Definitely not my favorite of the series.

Michelle Hanson says

a bit dry.. like reading a history book

Juliana says

I enjoyed the Romulan culture stuff (as usual, Duane should've been asked to write anything in the movies involving the Rihansu), but found the premise of the McCoy plot and the ending to be rather implausible and over the top for my personal taste. But, well, it's Star Trek.

Skylar says

While the dialogue is a little forced (and completely implausible towards the end for some of the characters), Duane crafted a history of the Romulans that I found more interesting and compelling than the history that actually got used in "canon".

David - proud Gleeman in Branwen's adventuring party says

I just received this book as an early Christmas present from the amazing and wonderful Branwen! She recently convinced me to start watching Star Trek, and I have been loving it. This book was a perfect gift, since she knows "Balance of Terror" with the Romulans has been my favorite episode so far...plus how much I love the ornery-but-so-good-at-being-ornery Dr. McCoy! :D

Sheryl Tribble says

I enjoyed this, but I'm not sure it's going to wear well for re-reads. Every other chapter is a run down on Romulan history, and that could get a bit dry at times.

I think it'd also bug people who like to see the series characters interact; McCoy is the only one you see much of. I quite like Duane's original character and the story she and McCoy are in is good, but I'm less enthused about the book as a whole.

Wetdryvac Wetdryvac says

This one keeps growing on me over time.

Travis says

Nice look at the Romulan empire through the eyes of a deep cover spy for the Federation. Makes them come

alive and feel like more than token bad guys.

Back in the day, when there was only about a half dozen people writing Trek novels, Diane Duane was one of the ones that I'd always buy. You knew you'd get a solid read.

Amber says

The Romulan Way is widely considered one of the best classic Trek novels for good reason. Written before *Star Trek: The Next Generation* began to form a more solid canon interpretation of the Romulans, the novel gives an insight into the culture and history of a race millennia old, similar to Duane's treatment of the Vulcans in *Spock's World*. The Romulans are rendered in careful detail as a powerful, passionate, honorable, and highly independent people who are at the same time extremely distrustful of outsiders and deeply isolationist. In order to prevent a civil war on Vulcan between the followers of Surak, who prized logic and restraint, and the followers of the Romulan founder S'task, who valued passion and power, the Romulans left to find a new home, and invented their own language and religion along the way.

Interwoven with this account of Romulan history is a framing story involving Dr. McCoy's capture and imprisonment for war crimes by the Romulans -- an incident planned by Starfleet in order to send McCoy to investigate a deep-cover Federation spy on ch'Rihan (Romulus) whom they fear has "gone native." We see the current state of the Star Empire -- in a politically fractious place after the events of the preceding novel, *My Enemy, My Ally*, in which a high-ranking Romulan officer betrays her own people to prevent government-sponsored atrocities -- through the eyes of both McCoy and the spy, Arrhae, who is masquerading as a servant in a Romulan noble house. Arrhae -- born Terise Haleakala-LoBrutto -- still recalls her loyalty to the Federation, but has grown to love the Romulan people and worlds as well, and the tension between these serves to drive much of her story.

As usual, Diane Duane is a master of her craft; she writes both humans and aliens with believability and fluidity, in a distinctive, lyrical language. The characters always feel like real people, rather than cardboard cutouts. Her cowriter (and husband) Peter Morwood is as skilled an author; to this day I can't tell who wrote what, which I suppose must be a good thing.

Most of all, both of these authors love *Star Trek*, and it shows.

Peter says

This is a horribly written book, fan fiction at its worst. There is honestly nothing of merit here, it is a ponderous read, like trying to run with your feet glued inside the trainers AND then glued to the ground. YECHHHH.

Do you want to know what's really embarrassing? my copy is signed by the authors.

I wonder, could I get a refund as my copy has been scribbled in?

P.S. It really is signed, I am not joking.

Victor says

An unfortunate collision of two things that could have been much better had they been kept apart. On one hand there's a pretty neat history of Romulans. Though rendered noncanon, it's a great work of imagination. I found it to be the more compelling half of the book.

The other half is a stilted Heart of Darkness kind of story. Leonard McCoy is sent to exfiltrate a sleeper agent who has been living as a Romulan for years. Of course, she decides to stay. McCoy gets out of harms way with the help of a lovely Horta named Naraht. McCoy gets a chance to filibuster his trial. The circumstances of his capture and death sentence on Romulus just kind of exist. They were naturally arranged by Starfleet.

It's all kind of jumbled. And since chapters alternate between the two stories, the history, and the present stuff with McCoy, the plot details get kind of lost in the shuffle. Arrhae (the sleeper agent) has a barely noticeable arc. I was never quite sure if she was aware of her status as a sleeper. It could have been a cool little thing, her grappling with her past identity, but it's not really expanded upon. McCoy spends most of his time sitting in a room smug with his plan.

I wish it was worthwhile to gripe about why the hell McCoy of all people was chosen for this mission. The reason is because the books won't sell without one or all of the main characters on the cover. It's thoroughly unlikely that McCoy would've gone, even with the contrivance of the Romulans wanting someone from the Enterprise. They'd want anyone from the Federation, really. And they wouldn't kill them, they'd try to extract as much information on the Federation as they could. Definitely wouldn't let them stay in some house for a few weeks.

The history half was cool, the other stuff was fine but not really much to latch onto.

Craig says

I really wanted to enjoy this book but I was getting kind of bored with the main story as I was not very entertained by what appeared to be a Romulan Jane Austen book mixed with chapters of Romulan history. At least the end got good but I was fighting to read through this one.

It reminded me of the The Final Reflection in its establishing of history of one of the big powers in Star Trek but since these books are not canon it eventually all becomes a moot point with the Next Generation and all those series giving more history to these powers and seeming ignore the books. I wish there was more of a certain couple characters who showed up near the end of book and probably would have made it more interesting if they were there from the start.

Ronald Wilcox says

Main storyline: 2 stars. Recounting of the history of the Rihannsu: 4 stars.

The main storyline is about a secret agent in deep cover from the Federation at the Romulan home world

who for the last two years had stopped sending reports back to the Federation. McCoy gets himself purposefully captured by the Romulans so that he can make contact with her. Storyline was kind of weak and hard to follow at times and the climax was kind of hokey.

But ...

The descriptions of the history of how the Rihannsu or Romulan people came about as an breakout from the Vulcans and the development of their culture over the centuries was very imaginative and fascinating to read about but did not seem to tie into the main storyline.

Almost like two separate books just mashed together.

James says

Mind-numbingly bad, but a must-read for Star Trek: TOS fans anyway.

Terence says

As "Balance of Terror" is one of my favorite *Star Trek* episodes, in my youth I followed Diane Duane's collection of novels avidly as they explored who and what the Romulans really were.

I do not "agree" with her version of the Romulans (I have my own "private" Star Trek universe with my own take on these Vulcan offshoots; you can see some of it on my blog: <http://spocksbro.blogspot.com/>).

Ms. Duane is, nevertheless, a pretty good author and I like the character of Ael. I'm not so taken with Duane's rather simplistic view of "good," "evil" and "honor" but this isn't a likely prospect for a new Western Literary Canon, it's just good, solid, escapist fun.

Debbie says

This novel, 2nd of 4 of the "Rihannsu" series, encompasses three stories - the struggle of Arrhae, a Federation spy, to immerse herself in the culture and build relationships with the Romulans on one of their home planets, the rescue of Doctor McCoy from the Romulans, and the history of how the Romulans came to be.

Pros:

It's always fun to read another Star Trek novel. I'm kind of a sucker for "honor" stories and aliens with special powers.

Diane Duane is a good writer and includes lots of new to me "look up" words such as singlet, chiton, gestalt and viridian.

Cons:

The ancient history of the Vulcans and Rhiannsu (the name the Romulans call themselves) is interspersed between chapters of Arrhae's story. Although I really enjoyed learning about their history, cluture and

philosophy, I found this back and forth feature at times distracting. I'm also not a fan of including the difficult Rihannsa names and terminology. I keep trying to pronounce them and get distracted.

My favorite part of the book centered on Chapter 10, "The Flowering". It explains why people are the key to civilization and scientific minds are to be treasured. The struggle to get to their new home planets inspire vision and innovation in the Rihannsu. Once they arrive and establish themselves, the elders began to die off and the current generation begins to get complacent. I also found interesting their "religion of things" where things exist and deserve attention. Naming and caretaking matters. It kind of reminds me of the current Konmari way of thinking that is popular now.

The last part of the book, McCoy's rescue and the battle in space is also exciting.

Darran Summerfield says

Loved Dr McCoy getting some of the attention
