



Greater than the Sum

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The *Starship Rhea* has discovered a cluster of carbon planets that seems to be the source of the quantum energies rippling through a section of space. A landing party finds unusual life-forms inhabiting one of the planets. One officer, Lieutenant T'Ryssa Chen -- a half-Vulcan -- makes a tenuous connection with them. But before any progress can be made, the *Rhea* comes under attack from the *Einstein* -- a Starfleet vessel now controlled by the Borg. The landing party can only listen in horror as their comrades are assimilated. The Borg descend to the planet, and just as Chen accepts that she will be assimilated, the lieutenant is whisked two thousand light-years away.

A quantum slipstream -- instantaneous transportation -- is controlled by these beings in the cluster, and in the heart of the cluster there is now a Borg ship. Cut off from the rest of the Borg collective, the *Einstein* cannot be allowed to rejoin it. For the sake of humanity, the Borg cannot gain access to quantum slipstream technology.

Starfleet Command gives Captain Picard carte blanche: do whatever he must to help the beings in the cluster, and stop the *Einstein* no matter the cost.

Greater than the Sum Details

Date : Published July 29th 2008 by Star Trek (first published July 2008)

ISBN : 9781416571322

Author : Christopher L. Bennett

Format : Mass Market Paperback 350 pages

Genre : Media Tie In, Star Trek, Science Fiction, Fiction, Star Trek The Next Generation

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From Reader Review Greater than the Sum for online ebook

LaRita says

I was pleasantly surprised at how well written this book is. I occasionally read Star Trek novels as a diversion from my usual love of mysteries. I have found that some of the ST books have good stories but average writing. This story made me feel the emotions of even the more minor characters. Well known characters like Picard and Guinan were developed in ways that let me see them differently.

This book is part of a series, and I haven't read the previous books. Like any well written novel, I was able to follow the story without the backstory. That is hard to achieve, especially in sci fi. I would recommend this book, yet I would have not read it out of order had I realized it was part of a series. I happen to REALLY like reading a series in order. LOL

Derkanus says

Summary: The USS Rhea is exploring a system of carbon planets with a strange lifeform that manifests itself about the crew in the form of "noh angels" (kind of like the tar monster Armus, but not evil) when they are attacked by the assimilated USS Einstein (aka the Frankenstein). The science officer, T'Ryssa Chen, a half-human, half-vulcan, is just about to be assimilated when she is transported via quantum slipstream many lightyears away to Marvel, a planet from her childhood.

Being that she is the only "surviving" member of the Rhea crew that made first contact with the noh angels, Picard (reluctantly due to her insubordinate nature) takes on T'Ryssa as his contact officer and the Enterprise heads to the carbon planets to stop the Borg from assimilating the lifeform(s) and thus gaining quantum slipstream technology. There they find that the USS Rhea has been put in suspended animation by the noh creature, and that with her latent psychic abilities, T'Ryssa can telepathically communicate with the creature. It turns out that the whole planetary system is actually a living entity; the planets have a diamond core that function as a sort of semiconductor, making it essentially a massive, living computer.

When the Enterprise is attacked by the Frankenstein, the noh creature uses its powers to separate the 2 ships because it doesn't like them fighting (when it first made first contact with humanoids it accidentally killed them, and it's felt terrible about it ever since). The Borg eventually make it back to one of the carbon planets, however, and start drilling through to the diamond core to try and assimilate it.

A second Borg ship shows up, but it turns out that it's the Liberator--the Soong-type ship helmed by Hugh and the liberated Borg (TNG: Descent). T'Ryssa and Picard do a mind-meld and Picard convinces the creature that they must fight the Borg, lest they gain the slipstream tech and assimilate the entire galaxy. It reluctantly allows them to engage the Borg, and the Enterprise ultimately defeats them by allowing Hugh to be assimilated while infected with the multivector agent weapon (MVA), a mix of the Endgame virus, the anti-queen hormonal formula developed by Dr. Crusher, and an anti-assimilation nanite. Just as the Borg are beaming onto the Enterprise and assimilating the crew, the MVA kicks in and all the Borg shut down. The noh creature un-freezes the Rhea from time, and the Enterprise medical staff save as many of the dying and assimilated crew as possible.

In the epilogue, a number of Borg cubes attack and destroy a few worlds on the outer perimeter of Federation

space, with a warning that they will be coming to annihilate Earth en masse, and that "resistance is irrelevant, but welcome." Leybenzon (from the previous book) tries to use the MVA on them, but they brutally break his back and analyze the compound, effectively rendering it useless in the future.

Review: I'd rate this book 4.5 stars. While it wasn't non-stop action, I appreciated the time it spent on character building, something drastically missing from the previous post-Nemesis books I've read; it finally made the crew feel like real people, instead of throw-away redshirts. T'Ryssa and Kadhata really feel like they fit in with the original crew now, and chief security officer Choudhury's anti-violence approach to security was neat, especially when Worf started to appreciate how effective it was. The original crew, namely Geordi and Worf, weren't as present as I would've liked, but I guess to build up the new people, it was necessary to let them sit back a bit. Guinan was really a shining star though, and I even quite enjoyed the lovey-dovey Picard and Beverly, who we find out are having a baby at the end. Hugh's sacrifice was kind of sad too, and it was neat that Rebekha [sic] from his crew was one of the original 18 victims taken by the Borg in TNG: Q Who?

Probably the best thing this book did though is retcon all the bad parts of the previous books away with plausible explanations: The "absorption" method of assimilation was explained as advanced nanotechnological assimilation; the supercube was said to be mostly hollow inside, and that it wasn't quite as gigantic as it seemed; the out-of-character behavior of the Enterprise crew was basically waved away as mass hysteria due to the looming Borg threat; there are marked differences between assimilated drones (male or female, with reproductive organs removed) and gestated drones (androgynous); the Borg in the supercube were an offshoot of Borg unlike the rest of the collective; etc. I also liked the philosophical bit about how the cubes aren't really the most efficient shape for their ships, the sphere is, but that perhaps they use the square shape as a form of intimidation--or maybe it's a part of their original culture, long lost to time.

I was also kind of glad that we got to see a new alien species, especially one so distinctly alien, instead of just the Borg. That said, I'm ready to finally tackle the Destiny trilogy now!

Snogged says

I read the *Destiny* trilogy earlier this year so I was pleasantly surprised to discover the existence of a prequel (thanks to a good friend with a stellar *Trek* collection.) It sounds like there are some other books out there as well that lay the ground work for this story, but I thought there was enough explained or at least touched on that I didn't feel lost.

I enjoyed getting to see Guinan show some vulnerability, seeing the return of Hugh, and Jasminder Choudhury. I also enjoyed seeing Picard and Crusher discuss the events of TNG's "The Inner Light." Based on the comments left by other readers here, I know T'ryssa Chen was not everyone's cup of tea, but I enjoyed her sass/sense of humor.

The plot wasn't as fast-paced as I would have liked it to be, but it was still a decent read.

3 1/2 Stars

Blade 68 says

Solid TNG adventure with The Borg. Didn't really care for the subplot of Beverly trying to convince Picard into having children, but there was one reference to the episode The Inner Light between Picard and Beverly that I thought was handled particularly well.

John says

Naturally following the events of "Before Dishonor" is this effort by Christopher L. Bennett, in which Picard and crew take on a Borg-assimilated Federation starship that was part of the Borg's attempt to attack Earth. Unfortunately, the book just didn't live up to its prequel. It was yet another slog filled with pages of character musing and backstory, and comparatively little relevant story. A problem with many Trek authors, and especially Bennett, is the use of narrative voice to give pages of character background and story filler. Readers are not interested in what "had" happened; if you're going to talk about those things, tell them to us in the present tense!

Of particular interest is the character of T'Ryssa Chen, a sort of unlikely hero in the story given her checkered past. What purpose does this character serve? Her disciplinary issues, such as failing to think before speaking, do little to endear her to me, the reader, as perhaps Bennett intended. But of course, Picard selects her as a "diplomatic officer" of sorts despite tons of worthy applicants he had on file for the job. The reason Picard needs her is because she can communicate with a powerful entity and perhaps convince it to allow Enterprise to destroy the Borg (the entity abhors violence). Why dance around the obvious solution of taking her on as a "specialist" and hiring a real, qualified officer to fill the vacancy? This character was mostly an annoyance that could have been written much better.

Then there is the climax, in which Picard gives the alien entity one of his eloquent speeches in Chen's "mind palace." This scene reads like a 1st or 2nd season TNG episode. All this buildup for an exciting SPEECH! Well, the action that follows, in which the Enterprise engages the Borg for the last time, isn't half bad. But it still wasn't worth the wait.

Just another mundane, agenda-driven installment in Treklit. Moving along....

Kristen McQuinn says

Spoiler/rant alert!

First off, the general action part of the plot wasn't too bad. That said, this book read like ****terribly**** written fan fiction. No joke. It was sort of embarrassing that this made it to print.

The character development of T'Ryssa Chen was moderately good, and she was an entertaining character. However, she was NOT someone who could likely ever make her way onto the Enterprise.

The rest of the characters were only marginally in character. Everyone was incredibly brooding and depressed, except Worf. He was practically Mary freaking Poppins compared to his usual self. Picard was all over the emotional map. Certainly that has happened in previous events, but generally it doesn't interfere with his command decisions. Particularly not to the extent they did in this book. Also, his little breakdown about his 2 kids from his memories as Kalen was laughable.

Which leads me to another issue I had. Picard and Beverly getting pregnant? Really? For fuck's sake, they are in their 60s and 70s. Even in the longer-lived world of Star Trek that is just a Very Bad Idea(TM). My little shipper heart was excited in the books that preceded this one that they finally got together. I didn't even mind that they got married. But having a baby? After all the years of building Picard's personality quirks that make him not amenable to children? Or families on his ship? And now that he got married he suddenly wants babies of his own? It's just not plausible to me. It is too much of a change to be believable.

All in all, I honestly think TPTB are trying to run the Trek franchise into the ground. They killed Data. They are marrying off the logical couples (Riker and Troi, Picard and Crusher). They killed Kathryn Janeway (sob!). They are closing down the Trek Experience in Las Vegas. They are tying everything up in a nice little package with a bow on top. If they want to do that, that's fine. It's just not a particularly well wrapped gift. They need to do a much better job of it than this. This book seriously could have been written by a teen or young person who doesn't have a realistic grasp on adult relationships or emotions. It was really sad that this is the apparent quality of Trek now. It would have been better just to stop production of any new Trek books than to let this one make it to print.

I also recognize the irony in that I will likely read the next book in this series since now I want to see how much worse it can get. It's like a train wreck. You want to look away and just can't.

Chris Munro says

I love a Star Trek novel and its been ages since I read one. This is just like an episode of the show, expanded and with a bigger budget for effects and sets! I read this in one sitting, and thoroughly enjoyed it, well written but with A LOT of dialogue. Its so easy to hear the voices of the characters in your head when you know them so well.

Jeff G says

A fairly decent book that I took my time reading. It was decent but felt like a novelized episode of the series. Ends on a interesting point, i would read another by this author.

Pierre says

Wasn't as bad as the previous TNG outing (Before Dishonor) - although it seems like the writers are always getting The Borg involved. ALWAYS. Why?

Richard says

It starts off promisingly with an intriguing action sequence but then it starts to drag and I couldn't finish it. The main reason why it drags is that it focuses on a new character: a commissioned Star Fleet officer who speaks and acts like a mischievous, petulant, 10 year old child. This sort of comic relief character often works in anime to deflate the egos of the very serious regular characters. It even works in Star Trek, if the

character is from an alien race where such behaviour is normal, like the Q. Even within Star Fleet, enlisted crewmen can be quite rough around the edges.

But the one thing we know about Star Fleet academy is that it is very very very difficult to get into. Even genius level characters like Picard and Crusher had to make multiple attempts to gain entry. We don't know how exactly how many students they admit, but we know it's less than 0.001% of those who apply. They are the Galaxy's absolute best. There is simply no way they would even admit this character, let alone let her graduate and become an officer. Therefore every time she opens her mouth it ruins the suspension of disbelief and takes the reader out of the story.

Alejandro says

Great Star Trek adventure!

HARD TO FIND GOOD EMPLOYEES

Captains aren't the only people who count for something

Captain Jean-Luc Picard was lucky, was very lucky, when he selected his Command Crew, back then, when he got command of the *USS Enterprise-D*. Indeed, not only it was an excellent crew, a crew deserved to be in the Federation's flagship, but they become not only his Command Crew, his most trusted officers, they become his family...

...but some of them are now in a different starship, and others died.

Now, commanding the *Enterprise-E*, Picard is still struggling to get back what he got, and it's not easy.

Worf finally embraced his new position as First Officer, and Beverly and Geordi still are in their usual positions as Chief Medical Officer and Chief Engineer Officer, respectively. Picard is thankful for still having familiar faces around him, in fact Beverly became even more familiar since she is now his wife. However, an effective Command Crew needs more members, and the other key positions have been filled with people that for some reason or other, they weren't just the right ones, they weren't what Picard had in the past, and he knows that he is as good as his crew can be.

Captains aren't islands and he needs the right people around him to keep the *Enterprise-E* as truly the Federation's flagship.

And if that wasn't enough, now Picard will engage against the Borg again!

The *Einstein*, a Federation's science vessel, turned into a Borg ship during the events of *Before Dishonor*, is still on the loose and the *USS Rhea* had the bad luck of finding it, in a very special space cluster, where it seems that the Borg are on the brink to assimilate relevant knowledge about slipstream travel mechanics. If so, nobody will be safe in the Federation!

Picard trusts that finally have a good Conn Officer with Joanna Faur, and after a stressing event with his Operations Manager, Miranda Kadohata, it seems that he will be able to keep working with her, but with a

delicate mission involving the Borg, he is just testing new people in key positions like Security and Sciences, and with the additional burden, in the mission, to make first contact with a life form like no other before seen, Picard needs a really good Contact Specialist...

ENTER: T'RYSSA CHEN

We all learn at our own pace.

Lt. T'Ryssa Chen, 26 years old, with 4 years of experience in Starfleet, she is half Vulcan, half human, but if you think that you know what to expect from her...

...you don't know T'Ryssa!

She hates to have Vulcan blood (even she hides, on purpose, her pointy ears with her long hair). She is more emotional than your average full human. She dislikes the military-like structure of Starfleet. Saying that she has family issues doesn't cover it enough.

Picard isn't sure if she is the right choice for his Contact Specialist, even he isn't sure if she is the right material for the *Enterprise*, but she, unexpectedly developed, an unique bond with the new life form that they will meet and maybe T'Ryssa is the only one able to pull off the crucial mission with the safety of the Federation in the balance!

New life forms, new crewmembers, the Borg and the return of a popular recurring character! *Greater than the Sum* is indeed worthy of its title!

Laura says

One of the best Star Trek books I've read in a long time. I don't know how I missed this when it first came out.

Christopher says

The Borg are back in the form of the heavily Borgified and added to USS Einstein currently dubbed the Frankenstein due to its added status! :D The USS Rhea encounters them under the command of the Captain Bazel a long time friend of Picard's in an area of space that seems to suffer spacial anomalies in abundance in addition to having a preponderance of Carbon plants that are unusually to say the least! :D Needless to point out things go a little badly initially for the Rhea resulting in only one crew member Lt.

T'Ryssa who is somewhat of an oddball! :D She finds herself on the planet Maravel where after being retrieved by Starfleet ends up on the Enterprise which is setting out to investigate and take on the Borg once again! :D

Greater Than the Sum that the sum has an earnest feel to it as it is busily setting up the Borg crisis but it does it with cool style! :D T'Ryssa is a crazy character who definitely puts into a spin every character that she encounters for good or bad and her ability to talk to Qinky takes the book off in different directions even allowing for Elves for have a strange resemblance to Vulcan's.....! :D Lol Picard though is confronted with the Borg and his greatest fear of children which gives the book more clever emotional wallops as we see Picard resulting with what it would be not to mention the dagger looks for Crusher! :D We also get to catch up with Hugh of Borg who has grown into the Leader of the Liberated which consists of a group of Borg that are liberated or having developed their own personalities after being liberated from such liberation successes such as Unimatrix Zero! :D We also rediscover one the of the Enterprise D's former Lieutenant's that of Rebekah Grabowski which puts a clever spin on things as through her and Hugh you learn that the Liberated are trying to become a society and this neatly dovetails with Crusher and Picard's family plans giving each scene resonance the really shows of the characters and how much they have been growing brilliantly and at the same neatly tying things into past events and setting up things for future books! :D The idea of a Liberated society is extremely clever as they could seriously develop in unexpected ways perhaps even having a culture like Ensign Torvig from Choblik on Titan and with a little guidance not down the Borg/Terminator route! :D We also get an interlude with the USS Bhutto and catch up with Lt Leybenzon and needless to point he is having a career problems induced by the Borg that neatly set things up for upcoming events!

Greater Than the Sum sees the crew not only battling the Borg but at the same time actually getting some bona-fide exploring and first contact in as well and during the process of the book we get to see the crew gelling as well as the Admiralty getting along with Picard, Nechayev inviting Picard for tea and sandwiches is a neat playback and wink to what he had done for her in the past, and at the same time this enables Picard's to clean house and to have a totally committed and loyal crew! :D This gives the books a very different feel and with T'Ryssa making sure that no one gets complacent ! :D The natural computer intelligence Qinky is cleverly designed as well and the way that it is so different is excellently done with the crew desperate to get across what they mean to it, with the Borg breathing down their necks really gives that action a desperate sense as it continues to ramp up throughout the book! :D The battle are epic as are the personal stakes throughout and the ending of the book really sets up things for future books both on a galaxy wide scale but also on personal level for our characters as the Borg seem to ramming things up for total war setting the stage for a confrontation on the epic scale! :D

Greater Than the Sum sums up it's title brilliantly both on a personal level for the characters and how they work better together but on a galaxy wide level in how people are and species are better standing together than apart and this rammed home spectacularly throughout with all the characters living up to this ideal in true fashion! D Greater Than the Sum is clever, witty, a complete turn around, brilliant fun and action packed! :D Crisp high five! :D Make sure you have the next one! :D

Bill says

A great story with a deep dip into the mind of Capt. Picard.

Plus the return of Hugh.

Apparently, after the last Next Gen Movies, they decided the TNG novel universe would have a tighter continuity with Marvel No-Prize corrections to plot/logic continuities messes.

I approve, except for the fact that Nemesis still seems to part of the official canon.

Crystal Bensley says

An exciting lead in to Destiny! A Borg centred story which introduces some fun new characters to the crew.
