

Final Frontier

Diane Carey , Leonard Nimoy (Read by) , James Doohan (Read by)

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Commander George Samuel Kirk was aboard the Enterprise under the command of Captain Robert April before his famous son was born. Starfleet has just been founded and the Enterprise has just been built, and is sent on its first mission. The mission takes the Enterprise into the heart of hostile Romulan territory, where cosmopolitical machinations and advanced weapons technology will decide the fate of a hundred innocent worlds.

Final Frontier Details

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From Reader Review Final Frontier for online ebook

Tommy Verhaegen says

A rescue mission goes horribly wrong due to sabotage. With a captain that only sees the positive side of things this gives way to a lot of psychological implications and a lot of action. People grow beyond themselves and their capabilities through sheer necessity (or just anger or refusal to give up).

We get a lot of background on James T. Kirk's father and his dealing with him during his youth. Two timelines, 1 present with mostly a psychological conflict and 1 in the past with tons of action. They may both be necessary and are certainly usefull for the global understanding of Star Trek but i certainly prefer the action part.

The cover could be better and is in my opinion even misleading. Although it becomes irrelevant as soon you are immersed in the story.

Louisa Jenness says

Doesn't really get started until 150 pages in, but goes into the issue of interfering with foreign governments. Very interesting stuff.

John Barclay says

This was a good distractions of a book. Early mythology of the world of Trek. A bit pompous for my liking, but it's an interesting read and the retro future tech stuff is fun.

Michael Fitzgerald says

Final Frontier is one of the best Classic Trek Novels our there.

Octavia Cade says

3.5, rounding up to 4 stars. This bears a strong similarity to the earlier *Web of the Romulans*, but I enjoyed both of them so the repetition bothers me less than it might have. What *does* bother me is that both the Federation and Romulan sides of this conflict appear to adhere firmly to the Smurfette principle - and the single woman with any focus on each side is stuck with the stereotypical storylines of her gender. One's a glorified and nurturing love interest, the other gets fridged. Deeply irritating. Overwhelming that irritation, however, and the thing that drags this story up almost single-handedly from the average *Trek* outing, is the fair and well-explored clash in philosophy between Robert April and George Kirk. As always in this series, diversity of opinion tends to lead to illumination, and in particular I'd like to see more of the idealist April in the future.

M. Milner says

Kind of melodramatic at points, but overall an enjoyable enough story that you could probably blast through in a day or two

Neil says

I enjoyed this book. I had read it once before, back when it first came out. It has a good flow to it; it is broken up into two parts - a 'current' storyline and a 'past history' story line. The 'current' storyline takes place after the television episode "The City on the Edge of Forever" where Kirk is still mourning over the death of Edith Keeler and contemplating resigning from Star Fleet. The 'past history' story tells of the first unofficial mission of the Enterprise - she is going to be used to save a colony vessel in an ion storm when she is thrown off course (view spoiler).

It is interesting, as James Kirk reads letters from his father, because the author then goes into the backstory behind the letters, letting us get to know a side of George Kirk that his sons never knew. I felt it was a good plot device, as James tried to discern meaning behind the precious papers sent to him by his father during his childhood. It is also interesting in that Kirk remembers how he felt as a child reading the letters and discovers nuances reading them as an adult that he missed seeing as a child. Granted, I did not see the nuances, either, but that is neither here nor there. I think the gist of it was that George was trying to put on a brave face to his sons and lying instead of being honest with them. By the end of the story, however, the tone of his letters and his attitude had changed [becoming more positive].

I liked how the author showed various sides, various attitudes, in the novel. The 'temporary' captain of this new vessel wished to have a fleet of exploratory vessels that doubled as ambassadorial ships as well. George Kirk, bamboozled into acting as the ship's Security Officer, was able to see the starship for what it was - a powerful weapon that could be used by the military potentially to end all wars and bend other races to the will and whim of the Federation. T'Cael [the 'enemy' commander], despite coming from a warrior race, refused to see every unknown experience as a potential threat. The ship's doctor only wished to work with animals, her emotions nearly overwhelming her when people were injured in the course of the mission. I felt the author did a nice job of explaining each person's position[s] and ideologies and then twisting their beliefs around as they had new experiences so that they were faced with making difficult choices that could have severe consequences.

The 'werewolf-bear' getting loose onboard ship was funny while it lasted.

(view spoiler)

Even though it has been will nigh twenty years since I read this book, I did enjoy reading it a second time around. I felt it has done a good job standing up to the test of time, as it were, and remains a well-told story.

Oleta Blaylock says

This is two stories one involves Jim Kirk just after the incident with The Guardian of Forever and Edith Keeler and the other is about George Kirk and his first mission as first officer of an unfinished Enterprise. Jim is in mourning over the death of Edith and is considering a drastic change in career. while making his decision he reads the letters that his father sent up to the point he leaves for a secret mission to save a colony transport that is stranded in an ion storm.

George Kirk isn't very happy with his life. At the beginning of the story he in charge of security at a starbase. His marriage is not a happy one and he is trying to keep things going for his children. He sends his sons letters so they have something to save for the future. He is kidnapped and transport to a space dock where the Enterprise is being assembled. Enterprise isn't finished and hasn't yet been named. The mission is to save the colonists with the new ship. Enterprise can reach the disabled ship in minutes instead of days or weeks. It wouldn't be a Star Trek story without something going wrong. The wrong is sabotage and a trip into Romulan territory.

We get a good taste of the Romulans and how their military is sent up at this point. They are planning on invading the Federation and stopping the ships that are being assembled so they can invade. The Romulans are a warrior race that only allows advancement through victory over one's opponents. They have also evolved enough to be different when scanned with a medical tricorder.

I enjoyed this book, especially the letters that George Kirk wrote to his boys. It is always nice to see the original crew get together and start on new adventures, of course that doesn't happen until the end of the story. There isn't a lot of action until the last third or so of the book so it is more about the characters and the ideals that they hope to impart those that will take over the Enterprise. There is lots of moralizing and it never gets to be lecturing. It is a good book and worth a read for those that love the original series.

Jerry says

Not quite as epic as I'd hoped.

Betsy says

I'm rediscovering my love for Star Trek books *is ashamed because of extremely long to-read list involving supposedly better books*

All the same, I LOVE early Starfleet books...all that stuff that was never talked about in the various series. The books are the only place to hear about it, and I love it. Plus, Captain Kirk's father. And Captain April (that one is always a plus to me, for some reason I've always liked Captain April). The Enterprise's very first mission...and I mean first, not first with Kirk, or Pike, or after a refit, or first official mission. First. Ever. She actually gets her name here, which I think is an awesome historical moment of epicness, because, come ON,

it's the Enterprise, being named, with all the history yet to come.

Now for the geekery...some continuity quibbles that you are free to ignore, because, after all, this isn't canon. Which is why they don't bother me too much, but I do like things to be accurate.

First, the obvious. The Federation doesn't see Romulans until Balance of Terror, in TOS season 1. OK, the situation in this book was plausible, and cool because Romulans are cool. Plus, I liked the Romulan commander (most of them are awesome, aren't they?). Sets the stage for a lot of the Romulans struggling against their oppressive society thing that became prominent in the series (especially TNG).

Second, and this was more important, I was always under the impression that April commanded the Enterprise for at least a full five-year mission. Here he's taking her out on her very first cruise, but is supposedly not going to command her. That seemed to me to go against canon, but it is from the 80s, so maybe that piece of canon hadn't been established yet? Either way, I liked him as a character, but I thought his ideals were a little limiting...a captain should have the great and wonderful ideas of Star Trek, but not to the point where it's seriously limiting their options, which is what was happening here. I found it unlikely someone who was too good a person, like to the point where they're indecisive, could have risen to Captain, especially in these early days when diplomacy wasn't required as often as it was in the 24th century.

I had also always assumed that the USS Constitution would be the first of the Constitution-class starships, given that the line is named for her. I mean, it's awesome that it's the Enterprise here, because who doesn't love the Enterprise? And I guess it makes sense to name the line something else (they'd have to name every line the Enterprise-class, given each ship's reputation).

Lastly, the smaller story involving Capt. James Kirk is supposedly set after City on the Edge of Forever (it doesn't state whether Operation: Annihilate! has taken place yet, but I assumed not). But Chekov is on the bridge. Hey guys, you're making the same mistake Khan did! Chekov wasn't on the bridge until season 2.

OK, now that I outed myself as way too big a Star Trek geek, I can say that I did enjoy the book, although I do prefer books with a heavier helping of Spock. If you like early Starfleet, the Enterprise under April, and Jim Kirk's family history, go read Best Destiny. That one has all of that, plus way more of our TOS crew.

Mary JL says

This book contains the backstory of the first, secret voyage of the Enterprise. Captain Robert April and his executive officer, GEORGE Samuel Kirk, are sent into Romulan space for a secret mission.

I am not going to give spoilers but this is good Star Trek. Jim Kirk's father is an interesting character and his relationship with Captain April is well developed---including their conflicts.

Starfleet has just been formed so this book is set before the opening of the original series. It is a nice trip into Star Trek's past--showing where some of Starfleet's early history and telling a good story.

Recommended for any fan of the original Star Trek series;also of interest to most science fiction readers.

Read before I joined Gr so no dates available.

Rob says

This was a cool episode that through the power of letter writing to his sons Kirk's father shares his first experience on a Star Ship that he names Enterprise. This was a Good Read.

Laura says

I pulled this one off the shelf next because I've been ripping into Diane Carey lately, and she deserved a chance to redeem herself. She manages it here, because despite its many flaws, *Final Frontier* is a really fun and enjoyable read.

The switch from a first-person to a third-person narrator does wonders for Carey's writing style. It cuts down a little on the endless interior monologues that were so annoying in the Lt. Piper books.

The background and plot sequence are reasonable if perhaps a little contrived. There is a too much tendency to tell rather than show - whether it's that a certain character is undergoing emotional turmoil, or that a certain passage is thematically important to the book. Memo: if we can't pick up on it without being told explicitly, you didn't do it right, and beating us over the head won't help!

The characters have distinct voices and personalities and are very fun and likable, if lacking in complexity. The villains in particular feel like cardboard cutouts. (But hey, this isn't *Hamlet*.) Carey is particularly good at humorous banter; add in lots of situational irony and amusing references to other incidents in the TOS canon and there's enough to keep you chuckling and happy throughout the book.

What I liked most about *Final Frontier* was how well it embodied the spirit of the original TV series: a fun space adventure with good guys trying to do the right thing, bad guys you love to hate, a couple of good battles, a couple of good jokes, and just enough of a serious theme to make it interesting.

Matt R. R. says

It's been 20 years since I've first read this, and I probably love it even more now than I did then... I'm definitely picking up on things that I didn't when I was in high school. Besides the action-packed space battles, piano-wire tension, and superbly-written look at the Enterprise's maiden (and secret) first voyage, there's layers here that intrigue and delight me... the duel of wills and philosophy between Robert April and George Kirk is fascinating.

Though there's some contradictions between this novel and now-established canon, that doesn't take away from this being a fantastic story, regardless of small detail differences... the heart of this story is just as valid now as it was in 1988, and it's a damned good book.

Mike Crate says

Final Frontier was one of the "giant" Star Trek novels of the time and for me it went alongside Diane Duane's work in shaping my view of Starfleet and the Kirk family, I believe the term is head canon and for the most part superior to anything seen on tv or the movies:)

The novel tells the story of the very first mission of the very first Constitution class Starship, a new cutting edge design making use of the latest computer tech often spoken of within the tv series which would have been set a few years after these events. Captain Robert April who oversaw the building of the ship shanghai's George Kirk and his fellow security officer Francis Drake Reed to fill spots on the ship as it attempts a high priority but clandestine rescue mission. Captain April is worried that the ship and it's power will be seen as being overly aggressive by both the Federation members and the many enemies looking in, an epic rescue mission as an introduction for the ship will ease her into the spotlight. Almost immediately there are issues with the ship's tech but the skeleton crew pull together and warp towards the huge ion storm which has trapped a colony ship which is adrift without power, the families on board doomed to die with the media spotlight listening to every transmission. The ship ventures into the storm using it's vastly improved navigation and shield systems but the gravity system malfunctions and incapacitates the crew, they awake much later adrift in an unknown part of the galaxy and not far away an alien starship is looking on prepared to defend her space from the "invaders".

Yeah I love this novel, this is how I picture George Kirk even though JJ did the character proud in his first big screen adventure but I still like this idea better. The introduction of the Enterprise also suits my own view that the Constitution design was a quantum leap in starship design not just a small advance on a design which seems to be everywhere in the canon franchise. Once again I love how the aliens are described both the overall culture and the individual character traits and no question the combat sequences are very well written. There is plenty of humour as well and I do get a little tingle when Pike is describing the sort of Captain who will eventually take this ship and venture into the void, a combination of the courage and tenacity of George Kirk and the intellect and compassion of April. The novel is so far from canon yet for me it is Star Trek or at least what came before the Star Trek we got to know, highly recommended.
