



## Indistinguishable from Magic

*David A. McIntee*

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The most talented Starfleet engineers of two generations unite to solve a two-hundred-year-old technological mystery that turns out to be only the beginning of a wider quest.

With the support of Guinan and Nog, as well as the crew of the *U.S.S. Challenger*, Geordi La Forge and Montgomery Scott soon find themselves drawn into a larger, deadlier, and far more personal adventure. Helped by old friends and hindered by old enemies, their investigation will come to threaten everything they hold dear. Seeking out the new, and going where no one has gone before, Geordi, Scotty, and Guinan find that their pasts are very much of the present, and must determine whether any sufficiently advanced technology is really indistinguishable from magic.

## Indistinguishable from Magic Details

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## From Reader Review Indistinguishable from Magic for online ebook

### Jamie says

The book started off well enough. However it would have been better had they done two books rather than the one. It felt like two separate books, with an underlying storyline. It'll be a while if ever that I read it again

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### Steven Harsch says

Last year, I started reading the post-Nemesis books from the various series in order. I love how they are taking story threads and weaving them through different books - it really makes the different Star Trek series feel like one universe. This book, however, was a real letdown. To me, it read like a piece of fan fiction.

The author brings in several secondary characters, and some of them felt forced into the story based on the other continuing story lines in the post-Nemesis series. Additionally, unlike most A-plot, B-plot story lines, the two plots did not run concurrently; A-plot has a conclusion before the start of B-plot. Unfortunately, that made it feel like I was reading two disconnected stories that were forced under a single title.

I'm not sure if this author has any other post-Nemesis credits to his name, but if he does, I hope it's a better experience than this book was . . .

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### Michael says

Maybe I'm just getting too old for *Star Trek* novels. Or maybe I've reached my saturation point with them and need to step away from them for a while. But curse them for having interesting cover blurbs and intriguing sounding concepts that keep pulling me back in.

Such is the case with "Indistinguishable From Magic." Set in the post-*Nemesis* continuity, the novel is a virtual who's who of guest stars from various *TNG* episodes all brought back together again. When an old NX starship suddenly turns up after being listed as destroyed, a crack team of engineers is sent out to look into it. This includes Geordi, Scotty, Nog, Leah Brahms and Reg Barclay. Also included is Rasmussen from the fifth season *TNG* episode "A Matter of Time." And, of course, he has an ulterior motive and soon another old foe has returned with a plan that involves the newly found ship and time travel.

And that's just the first half to two thirds of the novel.

I've read that this one was proposed as a dual novel storyline but condensed down to a single entry. And because of that, you'd think you were getting twice as much story for half the price.

Frustratingly enough, that's not the case. Author David A. McIntee frustratingly spends a lot of time focusing on all the wrong elements of the story, drawing some things out far past the point of interest and compressing the interesting details down to a few scant paragraphs. What you end up with is a *Trek* novel with some interesting ideas, concepts and potential character exploration that ends up sagging and collapsing under its

own weight.

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### **Jerry says**

This one was a big mess.

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### **Paul Lloyd says**

The book went up and down in terms of enjoyment, some parts good others bad.

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### **Barry says**

Geordi La Forge takes command of his first ship, together with a host of well known Trek characters for a bumpy ride whilst investigating the appearance of an old (and lost) NX ship. Together the crew battle nefarious Ferengi, Romulans and an alien life-form which routinely forgets to put it's headlamps on.

David A. McIntee has done a good job despite the difficult position he's been put in with this book. It's a frustrating read as it was originally meant to be two books, and continuity-wise it's majorly flawed. That said, the author does his best with what he's given and the second half is a triumph, albeit all tied up quite quickly - and then seemingly forgotten.

The author is clearly Scottish and that reflects through in the (sometimes bad) language used - not that I have a problem with that, but when you notice another 'bollocks', it's probably one 'bollocks' too many. The real problem comes, however, in that the author spends too much time talking about the wrong elements of the story (i.e. the interesting stuff) and forgets about some of the character development of the wonderful crew he's been told to include.

There's also moments where some 'speech' indicators would be of benefit as the dialogue can sometimes be a bit confusing.

I think some of the reviews here are a little harsh for the wrong reasons but everyone is entitled to their own opinion.

The Trek side of things is pretty solid and although you have to 'remove' this book from the general continuity, there's plenty to keep a Trek fan happy.

All said, I liked it, but it isn't the greatest Trek novel out there.

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### **Kenneth says**

First things first: the plot is not all that strong, and bringing Rasmussen into it was.... I literally cannot even describe how ridiculous and pointless it was. Also, the book did that "overly technical" thing that can be disorienting.

## SPOILER ALERT FROM THIS POINT FORWARD!

Having said that, it's still a great book. It takes Star Trek to places it's never been before, using a cast of characters we've come to love. It solves old mysteries, and gives a beautiful end (We assume.) to a beloved character.

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### **Judith Paterson says**

This book feels like it should be 2 books. It is long for a Star Trek novel and I felt in places I wanted them to get on with the story and stop chatting and prattling about. But then it would be quite dramatic for a bit. Nice to read about old favourite characters, Nog, Geordie, Guinan and of course Scotty. The 'science' of these warp and transwarp conduits etc is a bit incomprehensible to me.

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### **Maurice Jr. says**

Another fine addition to the Star Trek Universe, featuring one of my favorite characters. Geordi LaForge. His erstwhile girlfriend Dr. Tamala Harstad was transferred to another ship, and Geordi found himself wondering if the relationship would survive. Before he could spend too much time wondering, the Enterprise happened across a mystery: the starship Intrepid, reported destroyed 200 years ago and a long way from their current location. After their initial investigation, they reluctantly left the area, reported their findings and gave their recommendation that an engineering vessel be sent back for a more thorough inspection.

Captain Montgomery "Scotty" Scott's engineering ship Challenger is assigned to the task, and Scotty asked for Geordi to be temporarily assigned to his command to help solve the mystery. Guinan opted to tag along for reasons only known to her.

I always enjoy seeing loose ends from the TV series tied up, and here we got two of those for the price of one. First, the return of former Daimon Bok and erstwhile time traveler Berlinghoff Rasmussen. Both of those were interesting characters, and it was good to see more about them.

Since the ship has a chief engineer already, Geordi was brought in as second officer/ops. Scotty's crew (which includes Lieutenant Commander Reg Barclay, Lieutenant Commander Nog, Dr. (formerly Nurse) Ogawa and the lovely Dr. Leah Brahms as a civilian advisor) can barely get going with their investigation before Bok comes sniffing around as part of his latest plot. Rasmussen was assigned to the Challenger because the Intrepid is a ship from his time and Starfleet felt his knowledge would be useful. However, Bok is determined to deal with his obsession over his dead son once and for all, and he wants Rasmussen to help him do it.

In the course of handling Bok, Challenger took casualties. Scotty was injured badly, and declared unfit for further Starfleet service. The first officer was killed, which left Geordi next in the chain of command. He had just gotten used to having gotten past prior awkwardness and into a relationship with Leah Brahms when Scotty talked him into becoming the second Captain LaForge (the first being his mother Silva, missing in action along with her ship, the Hera).

In the second story, Captain LaForge's first assignment is to investigate the phenomenon that swept the

Intrepid millions of light years from its last position. It puts current slipstream drives to shame, and Starfleet wants to know what it is. So do the Romulans. Before either of them can investigate this "trans-slipstream" force further, the Challenger and the Romulan warbird Stormcrow (with Sela aboard) are both swept away by the same force and deposited outside of the galaxy, beyond the galactic barrier.

As the crews of both ships work together to get back home, Captain LaForge makes a startling discovery- the Hera! Like the Intrepid and both the Challenger and the Stormcrow (and other ships over the centuries), the Hera was also swept away by this unknown trans-slipstream force, which is why it went missing eleven years ago. It was intriguing to learn that the unknown force was really an unknown life-form, so huge that, when they traversed the galaxies, they picked up entire starships in their wake.

It was good to see Captain LaForge get the closure he needed in his mother's disappearance and the chance to start something new with Leah Brahms. For once, Geordi came out ahead of the game instead of always falling just short of being happy.

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### **Snogged says**

I'm having a hard time coming up with a review for this novel. There were things I liked about the book and things I really didn't like at all.

I enjoyed seeing Geordi La Forge take the lead in this story and appreciated his character development. It was also wonderful seeing Geordi and Scotty working together again ("Relics" is one of my favorite TNG episodes.) It was nice to see Leah Brahms again and Vol was a fun alien addition to the engineering crew.

There was a lot of techno-babble and repetition though that affected the flow and pace of the book. There were also some "special guest stars" that I could have lived without.

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### **Jeff says**

It is a tradition and a standard feature of star trek novels to pay homage to past incidents, characters, and places for the sake of continuity and as a treat for fans. But too much of these references to the past can be quite a distraction. McIntee piles on the references to the point of making me wonder if he needed filler to achieve a novel length story.

The characters are secondary to the plot in this book, which is a shame with so many interesting characters brought back for this romp of the Star Fleet Corps of Engineers' USS Challenger. We have Rasmussen Berlinghof (the 22nd c. inventor/time traveler who tried to steal Data); the obsessed Ferengi, Bok; Director of the Tal Shiar, Sela; starship designer Dr. Leah Brahms and others. But everyone is stilted and rote, dialogue is weak, inner monologues oddly repetitive.

There is far more techno-babble than usual which makes an already choppy plotline even harder to follow.

But, not to give too much away, by the end of this novel a major event in the entire Star Trek Continuum has occurred. Too bad it had to transpire in such a mediocre effort.

Unfortunately, even with that major event, this book is UNdistinguished and far from magical.

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### **Jeffrey says**

Okay, I've read every Star Trek TNG book out there and not many disappoint me. This one was an exception. This book had so much potential but for some odd reason they chose to end it very abruptly! With all my experience reading these books, they sure missed several potential story lines and twists they could have pursued. Disappointingly, this book IS a must read. It adds to the La Forge and Scotty history in ways you need to be aware of if you are a ST:TNG reader as I am. Don't get me wrong, the book is entertaining and has a very good storyline in my opinion, they just seem to leave many lose strings dangling that drive me nuts. Maybe they weren't aware of the magnified imaginations that most Trek readers encompass, but I tell ya, I could write a few "last" chapters that would make this jump from a 3 star to a 5. One other gripe...they truly "forced" the term "Indistinguishable from magic" into this book. McIntee never made it feel natural for me. I must wonder what happened while he was writing this book...surely there was a disaster of sorts.

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### **Crystal Bensley says**

Good Geordi / Scotty based story but a tad too much technobabble for me.

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### **David says**

With so many big changes in the Trek universe, you kind of wish they had taken place in a better book that's not all over the place. Short, punchy sections of prose can be good. Short, punchy sections of character development, on the other hand, just seem out of place.

Way too much is packed into it, from the development of the Leah/Geordi relationship to an analysis of just what makes Sela tick, all the way to Scotty and Guinan, Nog, Rasmussen (from an old TNG episode), the Ferengi named Bok (who is after revenge on Picard for killing his son) and so much more.

Not to mention it takes forever to get going in the first place.

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### **Scott Williams says**

I had a lot of fun with this book. It was sort of like a TNG reunion with lots of great guest stars coming back to continue or tie up their stories. Of course there were a lot of very convenient plot points to make this happen but I forgave those by the end.

I really enjoyed spending time with Scotty again and I'm disappointed to find that McIntee hasn't written much more in the Trek universe. I hope he'll come back to it.

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