



Acts of Contrition

Kirsten Beyer

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An original novel set in the universe of *Star Trek: Voyager*; and the sequel to the *New York Times* bestseller *Protectors*!

Admiral Kathryn Janeway has now taken command of the Full Circle Fleet. Her first mission: return to the Delta Quadrant and open diplomatic relations with the Confederacy of the Worlds of the First Quadrant, a civilization whose power rivals that of the Federation. Captain Chakotay knows that his choices could derail the potential alliance. While grateful to the Confederacy Interstellar Fleet for rescuing the Federation starships from an alien armada, *Voyager*'s captain cannot forget the horrors upon which the Confederacy was founded.

More troubling, it appears that several of *Voyager*'s old adversaries have formed a separate and unlikely pact that is determined to bring down the Confederacy at all costs. Sins of the past haunt the crew members of the Full Circle Fleet as they attempt to chart a course for the future. Will they learn much too late that some sins can never be forgiven... or forgotten?

Acts of Contrition Details

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From Reader Review Acts of Contrition for online ebook

Allison says

So. This was a good one. Possibly my favorite out of the reboots so far. From what I can remember. Which apparently isn't a lot because I forgot half of the non-canon crew.

Anyway.

First Contact is my favorite thing, and the amount and depth of conflict on a social level (and not the age-old SPACE BATTLE trope that ST books tend to fall into) just tickled my pickle.

I also enjoyed the introspective look at capitalism through the eyes of starfleet, even if it was a bit heavy handed..And one sided? In some capacities I do think a space-faring society could exist working off some sort of monetary based system and it surprised me that a lot (perhaps all?) of the POV characters thought otherwise. I think the problem is not with exchanging currency for services at its center but that in the Confederacy there was basically nothing and no one to help the handicap, poor etc. Class division often spurs conflict which deters from advancement, I get that. But is the existence of poverty itself stand for societal infancy in the Space Age? Interesting to think about.

On the nope front: Can we please leave Seven alone for a while? Haven't you ever heard of "working on yourself?" Not only was it wildly inappropriate (even if he "technically" stopped being her counselor) and stupid that she is dating Cambridge, we gotta bring Axom into it? With a bunch of abusive subtext? -- He basically Stockholm Syndrome-d her into having sex with him in some made up faction of his mind. No. I do not want to read about this. I do not see any point to this in the plots development at all, really. Frankly at this point I hope she runs off with a woman because the text only continues to enforce the idea that, in relation to Seven, all men are terrible and make terrible decisions.

On the subject of men in Seven's life... The Doctor. Now, in the last book he was modified to get over "being in love" with Seven. Hopefully when the cast deals with this (next book I imagine) we address how fucked up it is that Zimmerman thought it was OK to do that to a sentient being to "spare him pain" when an integral part of being sentient is... knowing emotional pain??

Why is everyone so obsessed with heterosexual romance anyway? Where are the asexuals, the polyamorous, homosexual people? The nontraditional families?

More nope: Custody battle over Miral. Tom and B'elanna have basically been reduced to Mom and Dad and do not exist out of that. Their plots have revolved around nothing else since Miral was born. Having a kid is a big deal and your life begins to centralize on them but you can have interests and conversations outside of your kid. Let's capitalize on that. I would have liked to see B'elanna's concern about the Fertility clause be taken further.

ULTIMATE NOPE: Ending. How dare you, Beyer? How dare you

M. says

I love Star Trek novels that focus on the on-screen characters. In order to do this well, the writer has to have watched the series and learned the characters well--maybe even come to love them. Beyer is a Voyager expert. It is obvious that she has watched the series closely and that she has nailed the characters. This intimate knowledge makes her novels especially gratifying.

This novel deals with a ticklish situation where Janeway and her fleet are getting to know a new Delta Quadrant "federation" in order to determine whether they would be suitable allies. I was fascinated by the way Beyer gradually revealed the problems and failings of this alien society and by the way the Starfleet people were careful to see what they needed to see instead of what the aliens wanted to show them. I was also interested in what wasn't shared and why. I can't remember a better description of how this process might occur.

A second plot concerns a dangerous disease that is being mishandled by the research arm of Starfleet. I thought it was a great explanation of how a bureaucracy works, how important research might be delegated to someone based on his/her reputation and then inadequately monitored. The Federation and Starfleet are often portrayed as perfect, yet there are times when they fail miserably, only to be discovered and corrected. This situation was handled especially well and kept my attention.

Perhaps the weakest link in the novel is the family issue over custody of children when the parents are in deep space. I thought it went a bit too far; I can't imagine that a family would allow their relationships to get so dysfunctional. The mediation process, in this case, is less than satisfactory, yet I think it is resolved properly. Perhaps in the next novel, there will be better resolution to the family rift.

Finally, I must say that the book builds to a very satisfying and exciting conclusion--that morphs into an even worse problem. Bravo on that. I'm looking forward to the next book, for sure.

If you like Trek in general and Voyager in particular, this is a book made for you. The only things missing (and the reason I didn't give this five stars) are the scenes that explore the relationships between people in depth. I'd love to see more of Janeway/Chakotay or Paris/Torres or Seven/Cambridge (at least we see Seven/Axum in some detail). I feel that Voyager's strength lies in their close family like bond; I would love to see more of that in the novels--and more humor in general.

Buy it! You'll like it! :D

Crystal Bensley says

Great Voyager novel with an interesting group of aliens and several engrossing story lines- the Tom Paris one on Earth being my favourite. Can't wait to see what happens next!

Scott Williams says

I continue to enjoy Beyer's Voyager novels. In this one, she creates a new civilization that both mirrors the Federation and is quite different from the UFP. I enjoyed learning more about these people and seeing

Janeway as a diplomat again. I don't think this is the strongest of these books. It does a lot of set up that pays off at the very end. I think the next instalment will be quite interesting.

John Carter McKnight says

Beyer's Voyager relaunch had been one of the best things to come out of Trek in ten years, but this book flounders. I gave it three stars, but some of its subplots would barely make two, while one gets a solid four. The overall problem with this book is that everyone's been hit with the Idiot Stick, the author's Axe To Grind, or both. And, the story arc just isn't as much fun with Janeway back in command of the fleet: the new Voyager series was both superb and different because it told the story of a full fleet of ships, with a good dozen subplots involving really enjoyable new characters and something of a lesser role for the old Voyager crew. This time out we get the Janeway story and the Seven story, with the new characters largely sidelined.

There are two major plots. The first involves Janeway negotiating with a major interstellar power in the Delta Quadrant, one that's contemporary America with set dressing by The Hunger Games's Capitol. It's hugely axe-grindy: the fleet's senior officers, who have apparently forgotten that the Federation is allied with the Klingons and the Cardassians, is alternately pearl-clutched and mouth-frothingly outraged that this society has inequality, Social Darwinism, and mega-churches.

The other plot involves Seven's involvement with a patently kinky Starfleet Medical team investigating a mysterious, and dubious, plague outbreak. Any reasonably suspicious five year old would be pointing and screaming, but a whole pack of Starfleet's finest takes absurd reassurances at face value and lets Nazi-level medical experimentation roll happily along.

All this is strictly two-star stuff. The novel's saving grace is a smaller plot involving The Doctor (the hologram, not the Time Lord) having a truly terrifying breakdown as the result of his creator's attempt to spare him the pain of relationship heartbreak. It's creepy, moving, solid SF.

Oh, and to top it off, the book ends with a huge cliffhanger: it's actually just half of a single novel published in two volumes. Whether this was the author's choice or the publisher's is unclear, but it's the kind of crap that damaged the Star Trek novel brand seriously in the last decade after a great run. It's not a good sign at all.

Jimyanni says

This is a continuation of the Voyager story, following "Protectors". As usual, Beyer tells a good story, with excellent pacing and competent characterization. There are complex issues explored, and nothing is cut-and-dried as far as what the best actions for the characters would be, but the Voyager crew generally manage to do a fine job of acting in a way that lives up to the ideals of the Federation, even when the rest of the Federation doesn't always. I appreciate the continuing storyarc, as opposed to a collection of one-off stories, but I do wish there would be more feeling of conclusion at the end of each book rather than the continual cliffhanger endings with "to be continued next book" non-endings, especially since these books aren't numbered. It makes it a challenge, sometimes, to make sure that the books are read in their proper order, without which the plots would be nearly incomprehensible. If you aren't current going in to this book, you won't want to read it until you read the previous entries in the series, and once you start, it will be difficult to

stop. But if you've read the previous entries and enjoyed them, you'll definitely want to continue with this one.

Yrag Notsew says

O.K. Now I get it. This is a continuation. Maybe it's a trilogy? Was the first book: "Protectors"? Is the third book: "Atonement"? If you don't realize this, these books are very abrupt. They don't stand alone. They don't say clearly anywhere that they are a series. If we read Kirsten B's mind then we can tell that the bracketed reference: "(Star Trek Voyager: Protectors)" in the "Historian's Note" actually means: "Please read "Protectors" in order to understand the story so far." Otherwise, the reader is thrown into the deep end with a raft of unexplained characters/situations etc.

It's a complex story involving many characters and many foci which readers are forced to jump from and to even within each chapter.

Entertaining. Fairly interesting. Imaginative. Not "gripping" but it holds the reader's attention.

Clever enough basic commentary on theology and social welfare.

Dan says

Once again, Kirsten Beyer has knocked it out of the park. This story was beyond outstanding. I barely touched on the sub-plot that had Tom Paris fighting in family court for custody of his own children against his mother. Scenes in that courtroom were incredibly moving. Also barely mentioned in my review was the catonic plague that Seven and Dr. Sharak are investigating. Kirsten Beyer has said that Acts of Contrition acts as the middle book of a trilogy, consisting of the previous novel, Protectors, and the up-coming Atonement. I believe that we will learn more about this catonic threat in that novel. Unfortunately, it looks as though Atonement won't be released until September of 2015. That's a long time to wait, especially given the cliffhanger ending of this novel! Ah, well. It will most certainly be worth the wait, at least!

Full review: <http://treklit.blogspot.com/2014/10/A...>

Jonathan D says

This one was interesting. I had high hopes for this one and what it could possibly turn out to be. Kirsten Beyer has written some phenomenal Star Trek books(Full Circle and The Eternal Tide), some not so great Voyager books(Protectors) and some decent ones(Unworthy and Children of the Storm). This novel would definitely fit into the "decent" category.

Before I continue, Kirsten is still a great author and is definitely the right choice for being the sole Voyager author for Pocket Books. She knows the characters, plots, planets, and ships backwards and forwards and really makes me feel like I'm reading a two or three episode Voyager arc with each of her books. I believe, however, that this one very obviously is a middle novel and focuses more on the characters than I anticipated.

I really liked reading about Tom Paris and his legal problems with his mother and the custody of Miral. I also really enjoyed reading about the different destinations in the "Confederacy". The problem, however, is that

there are too many ships and characters in the fleet that it's hard to keep up with them all. I remember the captains and maybe the first officers but that's it. I find myself wishing I had the chart of characters which is in "Unworthy" and "Children of the Storm".

While Seven of Nine is my favorite Star Trek character, I was actually disappointed in her arc. It felt anti-climatic and really slow. I completely understand Kirsten's reasoning for this arc but it didn't sit with me well. I really felt bad for Counselor Cambridge and felt that Kirsten meant for me to disagree with him but I actually agreed with him. Some of that has to do with my worldview towards relationships but I do understand her reasoning.

The books ending, however, was slightly interesting and has the best direct hook for the next one. Each book has had a sequel but none of them leave the reader feeling "I need to find out what happens, now." like this one does. Really good job there.

Overall, this one is enjoyable for me the Voyager fan and even for Trek readers, but can't stack up to other Star Trek novels for me. For that reason, I give this one 7.1 out of 10.(4 out of 5 for goodreads purposes)

Jason says

Excellent story line through out! Can't wait to see what happens next!

Nicky2910 says

Star Trek: Voyager: Acts of Contrition by Kirsten Beyer This is the second part of a trilogy that began with Protectors earlier this year. I have to say that this book leaves me ambivalent - there are strong points, but also passages that simply made me angry... angry enough to want to abandon it.

Let's start with those - and they almost exclusively pertain to the trial between Paris and his mother over custody of his daughter. Miral's wellbeing wasn't in any danger, she's a happy, well-adjusted child, living with parents who adore her and would do anything to protect her. So what's really in question here? Tom and B'Elanna's fitness at parenting clearly not. Their characters? Having lied to protect Miral? Having hurt others while doing so? But actually, what does that have to do with them having custody? I don't dispute that Tom and B'Elanna made questionable choices. Choices that had an impact on the people around them. But then again, nobody is exempt from making bad decisions. But if we start there, who's left to be allowed to have children?

Then there's Julia Paris who admits herself that she apparently made mistakes raising Tom... so shouldn't her claim be turned around to herself? Can't it be said: Well, you messed up the education of one child, who says you won't mess up another one? So, what makes her fit to raise Miral? She's a woman who has so much anger for her son that it's not a far leap to predict she'll influence the child against her parents. And while we're at it, her anger stems from the fact that Tom simply doesn't meet her expectations in him, he's a disappointment - but is that Tom's fault? Or is she at fault for not being able to let go of her wishes and see her son for who he really is... with his faults but also his qualities.

And now Starfleet's way of dealing with this issue. First of all, there never should have been a trial or

mediation - the claim should have been dismissed from the start because Miral's wellbeing was never in question, Tom and B'Elanna's characters were and their relationship with family. Do I think this relationship needs work? Sure. But not in a court of law. At the first session at the latest the matter should have been redirected to family counseling. The final ruling, while at least factually correct (thank God, I feared it would go the other way), left quite a bit to desire: Tom's selfish? Where did that judge get that idea from? I grant you he was selfish back in the early TV-seasons, but now? Julia's the only one who acted selfishly in this whole case. *She* felt slighted. *She* was disappointed by her son. *She* felt it necessary to remove Miral. It was all about her feelings, but did she ever wonder why Tom felt he couldn't confide in her? Why their relationship doesn't work? No, it's easier to put the blame squarely on his shoulders.

Secondly, the whole concept of the trial, the possible consequences (every child of B'Elanna and Tom's being removed!) just reeks of the American judicial system where everyone can sue everyone on some ridiculous notion or other. There's got to be some due process, especially in family law - so where was social services, investigating Miral's situation? How's it supposed to be possible to make an objective ruling over what's best for the child if said child's living conditions aren't researched? How's it possible to even consider ruling Tom and B'Elanna unfit parents for all time, thusly making it possible to remove any future child as well? That's just ludicrous... and makes me angry. Removing a child from its parents should be based on the welfare of the child, on the current situation and be judged on a case-by-case base. Not like this. This just goes against everything I believe in a judicial system. And if this is the way Starfleet/the Federation handles such sensitive issues... well, let's leave it at that.

Of course, raising children while on a space ship is, generally speaking, an issue which should be addressed. Is it wise to take children on missions that are potentially dangerous? Is it good for them to have practically no companions close in age and be surrounded only by adults? And how do you get around that general issue? Forbid couples to have children while in service? Or on ship-duty? This, along with the Paris/Torres-family situation, both having their childhood traumas, both being raised by single parents (Tom because his father was on ship-duty, B'Elanna because her father left them), both left with trust issues because of their upbringing. That should have been explored instead of the whole issue being reduced to one woman's problems with her own son and lonely existence. The appearance of B'Elanna's father raising just those trust-issues were very much appreciated. I'd like to see more of him in the future.

Sadly, this whole matter dampened my enjoyment of the rest of the book quite immensely.

The Voyager fleet explores options of an alliance with the Confederacy it met back in Protectors. Again, it's not so much the what, it's the how it's written that bothers me. Everywhere, the Starfleet ships find issues that go against their philosophy: a strong influence of a commerce consortium that withholds technologies from the population to rule the market, minorities being barred from health care, women being relegated to child bearing, no regard for ecological balance in agriculture and the list goes on and on. There's a certain sense of superiority that all the Starfleet officers display that just rankles. Because even if all of the above is going against Federation ideals, one should not forget his or her own history. Just 400 years ago (Star Trek-time), Earth was at the same stage as the Confederacy - and look at where they are now. So instead of frowning, of criticizing, of looking down at the Confederacy's way of life, of judging and finding them lacking, they should just accept things the way they are. And if those differences turn out to be insurmountable, well, then just move on. Is there room for improvement? You bet there is. But it's one thing to address the issue, it's another to try and force your own point of view on others.

One of the things that bothers me most in ST is the fact that there's very rarely a grey area in first contact situations. Either they're with us, which also includes they conform to Starfleet ideals (or learn to do so very quickly and/or at least recognize the error of their ways of life...), or they're against us. It's friend or foe. But

can't there be a treaty without it being all-encompassing? Well, of course, one grey area is: Let's just ignore moral issues if they have something we want (oil... er... dilithium, right of passage...). So it's mostly what's best for us, sometimes regardless of the cost. In this case the Voyager fleet meets someone who in turn asks, what's best for *us*?

Anyway, that plotthread twists and turns - Janeway twists and turns... and considers self-sacrifice when it turns out (again) that her decisions in the past might have unknown consequences. Duh... live with it and move on. But is that a reason to suddenly interfere with internal Confederacy-politics? To actually side with them in battle? And then there's the fact that the Indign and that advanced hologramm Zimmermann created as companion for the Doctor might be influencing the political landscape of the Confederacy... and everything is put in question. I liked the way old enemies turned up - but apparently not of their own volition... So what's coming next here? And how'll the apparent coup d'etat in the Confederacy turn out? And what about the fragile alliance between Chakotay and Mattings, O'Donnell's interference etc? There's quite a lot of room to cover yet.

And that brings me to the last issue - to me the most interesting one which is the catomic plague. Well, and isn't that a mess. Starfleet Medical and its "Commander" reminds me awfully of Section 31 - secrecy, lack of morals in experimentations on living sentient beings, no access... and no one to question it. I wonder why that is. This is another one of those annoying things that puts a dark shadow over Starfleet while it itself frowns upon other peoples' customs. So, what's the Commander really after? Trying to cover up his mistakes? Genetically reviving extinct species - to what purpose? Using Coridan as a huge experiment? Using Seven, Axum and other former Borg as guinea pigs?

While Sharak's plot trying to uncover more about the plague was interesting enough, Seven's was quite lacking. I really don't want to know more about her sex life - and that's what she's been reduced to lately. The Doctor, Cambridge, Axum... Seven's perceptions of her relations with Cambridge contrasting those with Axum - boring, boring, boring.

I was looking forward to seeing her interaction with Axum, because I thought he was the only good thing that happened in "Unimatrix". So I was glad to see him return. But what has he been reduced to? Someone who, again, only lives in a fantasy, and forces others (i.e. Seven) to conform to his wishes? His mentally influencing Seven was just creepy, the deliberations of the sex scenes and the emotions they evoke in Seven due to their mental link... it really gave me the shivers to read this, and I wonder if Seven actually had a choice in any of this, being overwhelmed (subdued?) by Axum's presence in her mind.

From the beginning I doubted if any of it took place in the real world... the isolation, Axum's overwhelming presence, his apparent neglect of events happening around them - something just smelled wrong. And I was happy to be proven right when Seven finally managed to escape her gilded cage and returned to the real world - but to what end?

And then, finally, perhaps the most tragic part of the whole story was the Doctor's disintegration. It reminded me a lot of what happened in "The Swarm" and "Latent Image". Zimmermann tampered with his programme to make him forget his love for Seven - forgetting that the Doctor evolved beyond his programme. How could you excise something so vital to his very being without damaging everything else? And was it right to do that, even if the Doctor himself wanted it? On the other hand, do we "real" people have the chance to just make ourselves forget/not care any longer if something gets too much? And isn't that where many psychological illnesses have their origin - coping mechanisms running awry? So why should it be any different for the Doctor?

Again, there's much shade in this book, but there are the occasional rays of light as well which keep me interested in the overall story. So I guess I'll keep reading and hope that some of the issues will get properly addressed in the final book of this trilogy. There's one thing I've been afraid of since Janeway's return - that is that the focus of the relaunch will once again return to her, with Seven and the Doctor in second place (interspersed with the occasional B'Elanna-Klingon issue) and everyone else taking the backseat again. Cambridge is reduced to pining over Seven, Chakotay wasn't present much, either. B'Elanna's is reduced to her pregnancy, and Harry... well, at least he had something to do other than sitting at some console. O'Donnell had the opportunity to irritate his first officer by being unconventional, again, so that's something. I exaggerate but you catch me drift, I guess.

I think right now the Voyager-relaunch is at a crossroads. Since Children of the Storm, which to me still is its highlight, the quality went down considerably. Some characters, which were so painstakingly introduced, feel stagnant now, some, who were finally allowed to take the spotlight, lost their forward momentum... and the whole character dynamics are on the verge of falling back on old patterns. Which would be a real shame. So I guess, Atonement will be a deciding point for me on whether to keep following the Voyager relaunch.

J says

Acts of Contrition was a fairly well executed continuation of the Voyager story from the previous novel, Protectors.

The Full Circle fleet has begun a diplomatic mission with the Confederacy of the World of the First Quadrant, a coalition of 53 member worlds who's subspace corridors had previously saved the crews of starship Voyager and Demeter. Meanwhile, Seven of Nine has been recalled to Earth to help stop a plague possibly tied to her former Borg nature. And Tom Paris has returned to Earth to face his mothers' charges that he and B'Elanna are unfit parents and should give up their daughter Miral.

The diplomatic story is an easy parallel to Capitalism and how we treat and view the less fortunate in society. Viewed through the lens of the Starfleet personnel sent to evaluate a potential ally. This is something Star Trek does well and Ms. Beyer does not disappoint. The intrigues of two superpowers meeting is not overly simplified, espionage, diplomacy, internal politics, all are present to give the story proper dimension.

The Seven/Sharak story is somewhat muddled. It proceeds slowly and not always in proper sync with events elsewhere but that can be forgiven in the reveal. The portions between Sharak and Samantha Wildman I found the strongest in this portion of the novel as I'd always wanted to understand the Tamarians and their relationship allowed the author to tackle their language head on for the benefit of the reader.

Finally the family story to parallel the mistakes (Sins) that Voyager had made during its first transit through the Delta Quadrant. I feel this also offered the author perhaps a chance to admit her own sins. After all, when my daughter is threatened, I feel faking my death, building a souped up runabout with slipstream drive, transphasic torpedoes and running away to the Delta Quadrant while letting my family believe I'm dead is a reasonable course of action.

Overall a solid novel and did leave me hungry for the continuation (and hopefully some conclusion) "Atonement".

Daniel Kukwa says

The second book of what we will call "the Confederacy" trilogy is a triumph. Multiple plots lines are juggled with extreme care, while an entirely new civilization is explored with great depth & detail. By rights, this book covers so much that it should have imploded under the weight of so much plot & so many expectations to fill...but it manages to succeed in spite of the odds. Easily the best of the "Star Trek-Voyager" novels I've read to date.

Fate's Lady says

This series is beginning to have too many POV characters with disparate plot threads, and it's getting frustrating. Tom Paris has to go to Earth to fight his mom for custody of his daughter (which is extra weird because her case is based on "he hurt my feelings and I'm very angry".) Seven is basically kidnapped by the government to be a lab rat. The Doctor is having a weird meltdown over unrequited love. Each of the captains have their own perspectives because the fleet splits up. I think there are more, but it's exhausting just trying to list them all. It's not that they were hard to keep straight so much as, I wasn't able to stick with any one character or thread long enough to feel invested. On the other hand, this book was almost violently anti-capitalist, which I found delightful and entertaining. More Fife and O'Donnell please! And I want a Declan.

Anyway, the main plot was decent even if the subplots felt gratuitous and like just a way to keep half of this annoyingly huge cast busy.

Steve says

3.5 stars. I am a little torn by this book. Once I had managed to recall parts of the storyline from the first book that I finished quite some time ago, the story once again grabbed me, and the action and the tension ratcheted up until a delicious climax. Sadly, then the wheels fell off, since the resolution resolved nothing whatsoever, and indeed was even worse than that, because all it did was raise more questions. The cliffhanger ending was rather interesting, and makes me want to read the next book in the series now.
