



# The Romulan War: To Brave the Storm

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EARTH STANDS ALONE

The Coalition of Planets has shattered, with Vulcan, Andor, and Tellar abrogating the treaty. Their pledge to come to the mutual defense of any power that is attacked has been shunted aside. Horrified by how easily the Romulans can seize control of their advanced starships, turning them into weapons, Andor and Tellar have joined Vulcan on the sidelines. Humanity is now the only thing that stands between the Romulan Star Empire and total domination of the galaxy.

To drive humans from the stars, the Romulans employ ruthless and murderous tactics . . . and even dare to strike on the Vulcan homeworld with the hopes of demoralizing their Vulcan brethren. Heartened by their victories, the Romulans carry their all-out war assault closer to the heart of humanity--Earth.

But the tattered remains of Starfleet stand unwavering, with the resolution that never again would any enemy strike ever reach Earth. On the front lines of the Earth-Romulan War is the United Earth flagship, the "Starship Enterprise." Her captain, Jonathan Archer, has seen his vessel of exploration become a battleship. Once hailed for his work bringing the Coalition of Planets into existence, Archer is now a pariah. Undaunted, the captain keeps fighting, searching for allies and determined to do his duty: to save Earth and forge a new federation of planets.

## The Romulan War: To Brave the Storm Details

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# From Reader Review The Romulan War: To Brave the Storm for online ebook

## Ethan Hulbert says

Really loved this book. I mean, I'm a gigantic fan of Star Trek: Enterprise - it's tied for my favorite along with TOS. Certainly this book is better than any of the reboot movies or the godawful STD on CBS right now. But this book was absolutely ENT at its prime. Archer's strategies, the Romulans more fierce and interesting here than they have ever been on screen or in movies, \*ever\*, and the finale... oof wow. Great book.

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## Camille says

I deliberated long and hard over the rating of this book. Four stars or five? "Pretty good" or "brilliant"?

In short, *To Brave the Storm* strikes me as a slight oddity. While *The Romulan War: Beneath the Raptor's Wing* incorporated dozens of characters into it's detailed coverage of the "universal" effects of the War, it's successor essentially went back to basics and was more in the style of *Kobayashi Maru*. Instead of comprehensively covering each of the major plot points as the story progressed, the book instead consistently jumped ahead around a month at a time, providing 'glimpses' into the Enterprise crew, Trip, T'Pol and the Romulans over the remaining seven years of the War. It was almost as if the author was wrapping everything up more quickly than he intended - but this change was welcome, and the pace was a lot more consistent and comfortable than the novel's predecessor.

Format aside, I felt that the first half of the book was good, but nothing particularly special. The story's climax, however, was amazing. At one stage I was almost crying out of emotional angst, but maybe I'm just a hysterical fangirl. I found that even though the plot started a bit flat, it ended on a high and made my efforts feel worthwhile.

All in all, the book felt like a rewarding end to the Romulan War arc, and I'm looking forward to reading Christopher L. Bennett's *Rise of the Federation* series - although I think I'll miss the splendid talent of (solo) Michael A. Martin.

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## Kiri says

Yay! It is finally here \*dives on in\*  
---finishes ---  
Ala Stephen there will be images..

Ok.. I'm not certain there is much I can write a review upon that will not give out major (massive?) spoilers. I can say that this is a novel that has A LOT packed onto it, it does feel like it should have been perhaps three separate volumes for all the ground/territory it covered. Which is not to say that it was not good.. cause it

was. I think it could have gone into more depth and still been just as readable.. and given the author a chance to tell everything they were bursting to write.

There is something for every Star Trek fan in this. Literally. No I mean it. Next Gen Fan? well how about a little background and history of some of your favorite characters? Deep Space Nine? Hi Dax! The Original Series? well.. you'll just have to read those bits.. ;) We get some time on Vulcan too. Plenty of Aliens, lots of action, Mystery, Suspense, a smidge of various Romances. Romulans! Did I mention the Romulans?

Oh and a major hat-tip for including Young Owen Salazar-Tucker [Trip's nephew for those of you wondering] as a new MACO and how he joined them. (Hint: His fathers were not pleased he joined up so young!)

*I have no idea who this man is.. he is cute however. Apparently he was on his way to Paris. Where is a transporter when you need one. :D But I needed something to post instead of a picture of the main character.. (cause that'd be a spoiler) :D*

Oh and the main star of the novel. We get a resolution to that tale too. Mr. Martin how deliciously evil of you to leave us hanging right at the end of the story and up until nearly the VERY LAST PAGE of the epilogue! I was literally turning the pages asking.. *"But what happened to [censored]!! You cannot kill [censored] after ALL THIS!!"* Yes sadly I was that wrapped up in the story... *\*deep breath\**

Isn't that pretty? no I'm not going to let on what happened. But there are flowers and other plants at the end too! =)

I sincerely hope that this will not be the last Enterprise novel. I so looked forward to this one and would deeply enjoy having more stories from this series.

To the publishers and authors of this series...

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## **Tony says**

An entertaining conclusion of the Romulan War. This is a good read for anyone who is a fan of the Star Trek: Enterprise series. I know a few other Star Trek books have touched and gone in depth with Romulan War, but this is mostly from the point of view from the Enterprise NX-01.

Much of the background information has been built up in the previous novel, though the author does a good job recapping anything important. There are a few things that don't quite make the transition though. For instance, the earlier novel highlights the Romulan's telecapture system. This does not make a big impact here. In fact, it does not come up until the end of the novel.

The scope of the book is very big, but at the same time, the author is confined to a certain timeline. And I feel that this was a bit of a constraint, keeping him from expanding the story in certain areas. There was also large leaps in time, which if you're not careful, can be a bit jarring.

Overall, I really enjoyed the book and the continuing adventures of the Enterprise NX-01 crew. It is a great read for anyone interested in Star Trek, and the two book Romulan War series is entertaining for anyone who wants a good sci-fi read.

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## David King says

"To Brave The Storm" by Michael A. Martin is the concluding book in the Romulan War series which started with "Beneath The Raptor's Wing". After my enjoyment of the first book in the series I was really looking forward to reading this one. This was enhanced by my knowledge that there are no new Enterprise novels expected for the foreseeable future so this could be the last new story in that franchise that I read for quite a while.

The novel chronicles the final years of the Earth-Romulan war with the main focus being on humanity's continued fight against the Romulans whilst their allies opt to sit out the war. The outnumbered Starfleet struggles to hold the line and the prospects for Earth become increasingly grimmer as the years pass. Meanwhile Trip Tucker continues to conduct espionage in Romulan territory hoping that somehow his work behind the lines will help Starfleet avoid seemingly inevitable defeat.

After finishing the novel I have to say that I do have some mixed feelings about it. The overall plot and direction were decent and I really did find myself hooked as I followed humanity's struggle for survival. In addition, it does wrap up the story of the Romulan war in a competent enough manner which was good to see, especially considering I am not sure when we will see a new Enterprise novel again. However, there was just something a little bit unsatisfying about the entire reading experience due to a rushed feeling that pervaded the entire book.

This can easily be seen in the way that the first book covered 1 year in the war whilst this one covered a full 6 years in fewer pages. This results in many of the plotlines being quickly closed down without any real fleshing out or enhancement. In addition, the narrative jumps months and even years in between chapters which spoils both the flow of the novel and the ability of the individual scenes to sink in emotionally with a reader.

It was also a big let down to see such a narrow focus on just the main characters and events considering the previous novel had done such a great job in giving a more panoramic view of the war and how it affected everyone, including regular citizens. Then again, considering characters such as Mayweather, Sato, Phlox and Reed got hardly a mention either it probably isn't surprising that Martin didn't have room to fit in a more epic look at the war.

I also felt that the rushed nature of the novel had an effect on the characters that were focused on as well. Whilst I think the main characters were portrayed well, several of the character arcs were rather stunted. A prime example of this was towards the end of the novel in regards to Trip's return from his espionage mission. There was so much around this that could have been delved into yet we see none of it, all we get is a little epilogue in the future showing the reader that he is happily living with T'Pol.

In Summary, whilst this review may imply that I didn't really enjoy the book you shouldn't be fooled. It is an enjoyable and entertaining enough read but the rushed nature of the plot was a let down considering what I had read in "Beneath The Raptor's Wing". Perhaps things would have been so different had Martin been able to write the Romulan War over three novels instead of two but alas we will never know.

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## **Dan says**

I seemed to enjoy this novel more than most, but I still very much found it lacking due to the rushed nature of the narrative. I really wish that we had gotten our trilogy, and while I enjoy Michael A. Martin's writing, the story suffered horribly from the editorial decisions. I also really worry that this spells the end of the Enterprise novel line, which is unfortunate as there is still a rich history to cover and many gaps to fill. Perhaps a resurgence of some sort of "Lost Era" line would be in order?

Full review: <http://treklit.blogspot.com/2011/11/t...>

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## **Jennie Lanz says**

This book redeemed the finale of Enterprise for me!

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## **David Johnston says**

A book in the middle of the series of Star Trek Enterprise books. Plowing through this book, so we can get to the end of the Romulan War and back onto developing the 'Federation' as an organization. Had to read this to get to the next one.

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## **Daniel says**

To Brave the Storm is the final book in the Romulan War series of Star Trek Enterprise and showcases humanity's, and by extension the Coalition's, last attempt to thwart the Romulan advance. Whereas the previous books in the series strived to set up the ongoing war, this one pulls it all together and ties it up. Unlike the previous installments, To Brave the Storm is more action heavy and features several engagements with Romulan forces.

To Brave the Storm is a bit different than the rest of the books in the Romulan War series in that it is more action heavy and attempts to resolve all open story threads. Having watched the original series of Star Trek, I kept wondering, "What did the Romulans do to provoke such a response from Starfleet?" Now we know. The Romulans favorite tactic is to crash their ships into planets at warp speeds causing tremendous devastation. Moreover, they also deploy nuclear weapons on fighter craft and use them against ships and planets equally. We also see the enemy launch such an attack at Earth.

I found To Brave the Storm much more engaging than the previous books and I didn't have to keep track of the multitude of characters from the other novels, even though they were touched on briefly. The author was successful in showing just how close Earth was to losing the war; they were down to the final battle and this section of the book was very suspenseful. This novel could be considered the final chapter in Star Trek Enterprise and could have easily doubled as a series finale, after, of course, several more seasons and a suitable build-up. In fact, the last few chapters indicate as much with a "Where are they now?" portion and

Enterprise NX-01 being decommissioned. Obviously, there will be more books slotted into the Enterprise book series, but this does add a more well-rounded conclusion.

After reading *To Brave the Storm*, I was left with the following thought: "Who would have thought the Klingons would help Earth and indirectly create the Federation?"

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## Terence says

The Earth-Romulan War of a century ago (or a century hence, depending on your temporal POV) is one of the iconic "historical" events of the Star Trek universe. As Mr. Spock explains to the *Enterprise* crew in "The Balance of Terror,"\* it was a war fought "with primitive atomic weapons, and in primitive space vessels, which allowed no quarter, no captives. Nor was there even ship-to-ship visual communication."

That latter fact is hedged quite a bit in this novel and its predecessor as the Vulcans know precisely who Earth is fighting and Earth's Starfleet Intelligence knows from whence the Romulans come.

*To Brave the Storm* follows on from the story told in *Beneath the Raptor's Wing* and the reservations I had about that book continue here, with a few additions:

1. In this novel, the Romulans' computer virus that allowed them to take over enemy ships in the first book has become largely useless. I remember from *Beneath the Raptor's Wing* that Earth had very nearly overcome this handicap but I don't recall that they had resolved it by the end of that novel so its absence in this one comes as a shock.
2. I never bought the idea that Trip could pass himself off as a Vulcan or as a Romulan for any length of time. Kirk could get away with it in "The Enterprise Incident" because he only had to pretend for the time it took him to find the cloaking device and get off the flagship with it. Trip, however, has to spend *years* on Vulcan and months among Romulans. He doesn't even appear to be trying to be Vulcan as he continues to use English idioms in his conversations. And where is he getting the drugs that keep his blood looking the proper Vulcan green?

A much more realistic (if I can use that term) depiction of a deep-cover Federation agent can be found in Diane Duane's *The Romulan Way* (Star Trek, #35).

3. It was established in "The Balance of Terror" that the Romulans do not surrender and would rather blow their ships up than suffer capture but in *To Brave the Storm* they are genocidally suicidal. Not once but three times does a Romulan commander slam his ship into an inhabited planet at translight velocities.

I can't imagine that the Romulan government would be supportive of a policy that rendered so many potentially useful worlds useless. Take out as many of your enemies as possible? Sure. But leave the real estate intact.

4. Too many last minute rescues. At the climactic Battle of Cheron, the Earth fleet is saved twice by the sudden appearance of allied ships. I think it would have been a much stronger story if Earth could have won the battle on its own or the Klingon, Andorian and Vulcan allies had arrived before the battle (it still would have surprised the Romulans).

4b. In a related vein, I don't like the fact that the canonical ST universe introduces the Klingons so early in the chronology. Granted, it's ambiguous in the original series when they were first encountered by humans but I subscribe to the idea that it occurred after the Earth-Romulan War.

In general, Martin is a competent, if not great, writer but I do have to highlight one of the worst similes I've ever read:

Abandon ship? So that our enemies can swoop in and pick off our escape pods like so many lobe-finned *in'hhui* along the northern Apnex shore? (p. 288)

All is not complaint, however.

Two things that I thought Martin dealt with reasonably well (though not as fully as I would have wanted) are Archer's misgivings about his role in the war and T'Pol's struggle with reconciling Surak's teachings with events in the real world. Archer wants to be an explorer and diplomat above all else and it pains him to find himself in the role of soldier. And T'Pol reluctantly recognizes that the Romulans are not amenable to discussing peace. Vulcan either aids Earth now or it too will stand alone when its cousins finish with the humans.

I cautiously recommend this book and it's prequel to the Trekkies amongst my GR following. It's not great but if you need something to read before bedtime or you're decompressing after a particularly hard book, it may do.

\* When I went to Ireland in the mid-'90s, I was part of a tour group that included Paul Schneider and his wife, who wrote that episode (though his wife didn't get any of the credit).

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## Shadowdenizen says

3.5 stars.

This duology seems rushed is the first thought that crossed my mind.

For all the build-up(the idea of the Romulan War has been teased since TOS) the payoff just doesn't seem to have the weight/impact I felt it should.

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## Michael T Bradley says

Yeesh. All of my minor complaints about part 1 just blossomed into the entirety of part 2 :( I finally got to the point where I just gave up on this book. Which is frustrating because I really want to know how things turned out. Oh, well. Everyone seems to agree that the Rise of Federation stuff is much better than anything that came before, so I'll be curious to give it a shot.

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## Krista D. says

I struggled a lot with this one. Parts of it where fine, such as the Archer POV chapters. I confess I was skimming and later skipping non-Enterprise main crew chapters by the mid-way point. I just didn't care about them. I was really disappointed because I was engaged in some chapters...and others didn't appeal at all. It really killed the enjoyment of the book.

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## Pashi says

Waste of time.

EDIT: Okay, so I finished this last night and was pretty annoyed. After sleeping on it and with my mind afresh, this afternoon I reflect on why this book left me in such a surly mood.

Watching this video which talks, in part, about "bad" writing helped me articulate a big reason why this book left a bitter taste.

She speaks about pseudo-artistic word usage and when I heard that I instantly thought of this book. Now let me preface this by saying that I don't think the author was trying to be artistic or using words in a way that deviates from their common meaning, although there may have been a few instances of that. (As a side note, I have read authors who do try to use words in new ways and it annoys the shit out of me. To authors who do this I would say, "You've misused a perfectly good word, now look at it, it's awkward." I'm glad I now have a term to use when I see an author doing this). I think Martin employs vocabulary throughout this book that just seem too pat, too complex, or too clever. One may ask, why use several words when simply one will do? I see your point, and raise you this question: people don't always talk like textbooks. People communicate with different types of language styles. Now, much of this book, and Star Trek in general, involves technical language because it is science fiction, as well as very politically based. Yet many movies, tv, and books can be of these genres and still communicate well to an audience without seeming overdone. To cut to the chase: I felt Martin was trying too hard to be technical or *correct* with the language both as the narrator and when writing dialogue. Use language that is fitting but not jarring. Don't try to write as a pseudo-techie or a pseudo-scholar. Remember, you're writing a book based on a tv show people watch for entertainment (not only, if it's well done it will also make you think philosophically, but entertainment is the main goal at least) not to ensure that it's as realistic as possible. Do I think he was trying to write *too* formally and not adding any entertainment/humor? Somewhat. Star Trek is not such srs bsns that you should forget to have fun with the story and characters you are writing. And for me, that should reflect in the writing. Because I felt that the writing was trying too hard I was continually brought out of the story to frown at the out of place/unnecessary word choices.

But wait, that wasn't the only thing I didn't like about the writing. Much of the descriptions felt superfluous and awkward. Ever since I've considered a profession in editing, I've become more and more aware of bad writing. It seemed to me the editor of this book was out of town and gave a brief look at the manuscript in their hotel before giving their okay to publish. As with word choice, I felt the writing was just cringe-inducing and in dire need of truncation. There is nothing I hate more than irrelevant details. As a junior in my college career I have become more and more prone to scouting for the relevant details and ignoring what

I don't need to analyze, be aware of, and/or study. This has carried over into my leisure reading as well. It's not to say I no longer appreciate lush writing and only want the meat and potatoes of a story. It is the case, however, that everyone knows what they like and everyone has their own litmus test on how the book will be based. As all reading is subjective, I have to say that the writing here was particularly bad. Too much stuff and nonsense composed of awkwardly constructed sentences that offered no further insight or enrichment to the scene, story, train of thought, topic of paragraph, or character development. Some people read for the technicalities some read for content, some read for both. Getting deterred by the writing has too much of an impact on me when reading, therefore I can't separate my feelings for the content and how much the writing affected me.

I didn't DNF this because I *do* like Star Trek, and even though the writing was disagreeable, the content remained somewhat of interest. That is not to say the content was completely enticing. Like most Trek books I've read, I disagree with some of choices the author made because it is out of character, clashes with canon, or not particularly to my liking. (view spoiler) I ended up skimming a lot.

I think a lot of the Trek novels I've read suffer from these problems I've just laid down. Why do I keep reading them (and so many in a row, even. I've read a lot of Trek novels this year and many were let downs)? I've seen all 726 episodes and 13 movies of Star Trek ad nauseam. I love the world but need something new. I've read two amazing Trek books and the rest have usually left me ambivalent or apathetic. I suppose it's the risk you run when reading a book that is based on a pre-existing franchise. The reigns have been passed to someone who is undoubtedly going to envision the world in a different way.

In summary, the writing was overdone, in need of major editing, disagreed with me in one too many ways in the way of plot unfolding, and ultimately did feel like a waste of my time.

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## **Bjoern says**

To start i'm a little disappointed that the coordination and the will to construct a proper time line seems to be so poorly at Simon and Schuster that the great Romulan War that has accompanied us since 1967 and the early TOS stories is only "worth" two not too long volumes and especially this second installment feels quite rushed and forced with it's many temporal jumps. I'd think that the story that could have been told and the willingness of the Enterprise fans to buy such books would have justified at least a five parter and maybe even a whole series like the "Time to" or Gateway titles - if need would have been there even with installments in the nearly related series for TOS, Vanguard or SCE dealing with aspects and persons that would reach further than only the ENT cast and landscape. But enough with this point, let's have a look at the action itself...

Which is the next disappointment... Where the war started in Beneath the Raptor's wing as a coalition effort and everybody pulled their weight here rapidly the Earthers are left alone and have to bear the brunt of the force of the vastly larger Romulan Star Empire, that way losing quickly whatever ground the desperate allied efforts might have won in the opening stages of the conflict. It's a small wonder that Starfleet even lasts five years throughout this long despearate series of almost pyrrhic victories and abysmal losses. It's nearly massacre after massacre and you have to wonder where Earth might have got so many ships to lose from, during five seasons of Enterprise there certainly was no 150 ship strong Daedalus Class in service that was used here heavily to bolster the ranks (Not that i didn't like the Daedalus, it's a very cool retro Design out of the golden Days of Scifi and in most other contexts i would have been happy to see her in such a prominent role, but this? It's a bit much to swallow after ENT only showed us a handfull of triangular Warp three ships

as Earth's Defense or Starfleets reaction forces... But then, without them Earth wouldn't have the chance of a snowball in hell on a hot summer's day!

While Earth is stopping the unbreakable tide of onrushing Romulan warships by damming them with expendable ships of their own the Romulans try to bring their dangerous Warp 7 Project to life, desperately relying on the prowess of a certain Cunaehr... better known as Trip Tucker in his secret Vulcan/Romulan deep cover personality. While Trip tries to stay alive at the same time he is aware that with a whole fleet of Warp 7 able ships Romulus would be invincible and the war would be lost for Earth so he stalls for time and seeks every opportunity for sabotage. But will it be enough?

Some fast forwards later that show just more of the same we finally arrive at the great showdown... through the mental link Trip has instructed T'Pol of the staging Area for the Romulan attack on Earth that shall decide the course of the war in the mind of Admiral Valdore. It's the fifth world of Leonis 83 A, better known as Cheron and both sides gamble the core strength of their fleets on this adventure. Archer's fight seems to be hopeless, he's outnumbered if not outmatched three to one and the battle quickly deplores his forces to half their initial strength, when finally the cavalry arrives. Shran of Andoria and Kolos of Qonos have assembled outlaws, pirates, smugglers and Mercenaries to deliver an unofficial auxiliary force where their governments still keep back. This 31 ships almost balance the numbers of the two fleets still smashing at another with all they've got.

Then the tides of war turn once again, as Romulan reinforcements arrive and the smaller and not so heavily armed vessels of the rag tag armada get quickly devastated, just to give a last glimmer of hope to the Coalition warriors when Lazarus (the secret service tag for Commander Tucker) sends a secret code meant to weaken the attacking Romulan vessels. After some experimenting with the right commands to use the aggressors finally start exploding from breaching warp cores and their numbers dwindle. But still they're the stronger force in the system and any fight of attrition must leave the Allies annihilated and the Romulans with a free flight path to the Core worlds. In this moment the missing fleets from the unwilling Coalition Planets do arrive, dozens and dozens of Vulcan, Tellurian and Andorian battle ships turning the tides of war definitely in favor of the Coalition. The Romulans turn to flee and whatever ships are no longer able to go to warp destroy themselves. It's over and the war is won.

A year later Admiral Valdore reports that peace negotiations are under way that will lead to the installation of a neutral zone and the chance for the Empire to rebuild its strength and keep a sharp eye on its now united enemies on the coalition front. An enraged first consul executes him for this cowardice, only to be killed herself by the present Commander of Valdore's staff (And I've already a big grudge against the darned Klingons with their stupid knife games and murderous honor-intrigues now the Romulans turn out just the same... D'Oh!)

The treaty is negotiated through Subspace radio on the demand of the Romulans that fear like their Vulcan brethren that uncovering their relation would only threaten the blossoming peace, Commodore Archer and Prime Minister T'Pol are present at the asteroid based Earth Outpost 1 for the final signing of the treaty. Vulcan will seek redemption for their part in the war (which T'Pol sees as very un-Surakian acting) by demilitarising their world and using the hulls of their main battle ships as ground structure for several new outposts for the neutral zone where the Earth and her Colonies will deliver the personnel (just like TOS shows us with the fleet ;))

Next we see Archer at the Signing of the Federation Founding Charter and witnessing when T'Pol declines President Samuels offer to become the first Vulcan representative to the Council, stating that she doesn't see her place in life as a leader anymore and instead proposing a surrogate that finally gets accepted. (T'Marjan, not that I think it will be of much importance for future stories)

A last scene sets on 2186, on the day before the 25th birthday of the federation. A young newswoman has flown to Vulcan to finish a series of interviews with the old ENTERPRISE veterans and the only story left from the senior officers is that of T'Pol. An astonished reporter meets a human male in the house's garden and is then politely sent away by two kids, recognizing that against all odds and in spite of all rumors Commander Tucker has returned to the side of his T'Pol.

Well with that short recollection of the story put down i must say that i've not been the greatest fan of ENTERPRISE while it ran under its first producers Braga and Berman. But this book is far more in the tradition of the single Manny Coto Year 5 than the other three so it's more to my gusto and i already liked the two books before. In general i must say this book is NO exception, it's telling a solid story and it's full of small hints and mentions of stuff from all the Star Trek series of course with the main focus on the Enterprise television stories, but to count all this little easter eggs would take days of cross referencing on- and offline and end in something like the annotations indutrious fans have published for the Diskworld books or similar works of fiction... THAT part of the book is more than excellent and would have justified even a full five stars. Sadly there's also the part where the author is forced through five years of a dire and grim war and for a large part we only get the perspective of an Enterprise that's banned from the front lines much like the sixth of her offsprings will be during the Dominion War and Borg invasion two hundred and ten/fifteen years later (First Contact). In the light of his famous reputation as amurderer gained through the Kobayashi Maru incident Archer is involved in a goodwill initiative that aims to win a bit of cooperation of the lesser powers in the quadrant that have yet not decided on a position in the Earth-Romulan war. That's nice for any general book from any of the ongoing series, but as the second part of a war time chronology it's rather poor. The few looks at the concurring front battles we get are rather sketchy and far in between, the few actions involving the Enterprise itself are rather devastating and do not tend to raise much hope for the outcome. Lastly through all this sketchiness, rapid scene jumping and hasty counting down of the years of this war we get cheated quite a bit of our most important good as readers of an ongoing series... any character development. Essentially we get three characters with enough inner view to speak of even a rudimentary development: Captain Archer that is heavily burdened by his guilt about the Kobayashi Maru, the high casualty count on the front and his not so active role in the war effort (which is not really countered by successes in his sideline jobs...), T'Pol which is slowly breaking under the combination of Stress and the continuing influence of her bonding with Trip that's not too well going to truly cheer her up [close to two years Trip is trapped inside a warp incapable vessel going high sublight speed and thus falling under the laws of time dillation messing with the time synchronization of the bond] and of course suffering from the constant stench of unwashed humans, farting dogs and aromatic aliens and finally Charles Tucker III himself who's most of the time in a cell or under interrogation. Most of these conditions do not change over the course of the book and so don't the characters living through them.

as a final conclusion: It's a nice book in the best tradition of the illustrious last Enterprise Season and 50 years of Star Trek Story telling. But it's also not everything it could have been and as the main representation of one of the most monumental moments in Trek history it's doing a pathetically poor job of inspiring awe with this historic events. The writing and the care with the original research are well over average which is the main reason for my good grading of the book, but it would not have taken magic to turn a well written book into an extraordinary one and much of this missing impact is IMO to charge towards the editors which have decided that a single book of 320 pages would be enough to cover this wide field. J'Accuse!

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