



Star Trek: Harlan Ellison's City on the Edge of Forever

Harlan Ellison , Scott Tipton , David Tipton , J.K. Woodward , Juan Ortiz

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For the first time ever, a visual presentation of the much-discussed, unrevised, unadulterated version of Harlan Ellison's award-winning Star Trek teleplay script, "The City on the Edge of Forever!" See the story as Mr. Ellison originally intended!

Star Trek: Harlan Ellison's City on the Edge of Forever Details

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From Reader Review Star Trek: Harlan Ellison's City on the Edge of Forever for online ebook

Aron says

Nice! I really enjoyed getting to see the original story play out, it was like getting to watch a long lost episode. But I think I like the version that made it to TV a little better. Don't get me wrong I loved this story but it's totally understandable why changes were made. Number one, the Enterprise is the flagship of the fleet & is crewed by the best & brightest & having a drug dealer serving on the ship kinda goes against the grain, lol. I think I like the single Gardian in the form of a rock archway that also doubles as the portal through time a little better than a handful of codger's. Not saying the codger's weren't cool just didn't like them as much, probably because I identify the rock arch Gardian as one of the franchise's major icons. Fun read, & I highly recommend it to fan of the series.

Lucy says

This was made available as a read-now title on Netgalley. The following thoughts are my own honest ones.

I have never met a Star Trek graphic novel that I didn't like, but this one stands far out from all of the others I've encountered. The art, for starters, is breathtaking. Kirk and Spock looked more like William Shatner and Leonard Nimoy than they have in any other ST comic or graphic novel I've ever read. It's a little pet peeve of mine when I feel like the artist hasn't even tried to make them look the same. I understand why they might feel the need to do that, but I don't like it. If I'm reading about Kirk and Spock, I want them to LOOK like Kirk and Spock. But there were no issues with that here. The artists did a phenomenal job at capturing the expressions and emotions of the characters, even and especially Spock's, which I'm sure is not easy.

As for the plot, this graphic novel stands out again. Not just from other Star Trek comics, but non-Star Trek ones too. I understand that this is not based on the TOS episode of the same name, but the original script. (I may be wrong on that count.) I remember very little of that episode, but that was by no means a hindrance.

I often find that the beginning of a graphic novel is a little hard to follow as you're getting used to the styles of the author and illustrator/s. Not so with this one. This was exceedingly easy to follow. The artwork was realistically detailed but also clean enough to be deciphered at glance, the action sequences were not confusing and the plot was well-expressed through the dialogue of the characters. I flew through it in about a half an hour because it was everything that graphic novels should be: gripping, easy on the eyes, and not difficult to read for any reason.

This should be held as the standard for all graphic novels. A lot of authors and illustrators could learn something from it.

Rating: At least 20/5.

Kate says

4.5*

Disclaimer: I received a copy of this book through Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

I will start by saying that I wasn't that huge a fan of the star trek series although I did watch a number of the episodes growing up, I would never call myself a trekkie. That being said I really enjoyed this read.

The story itself has a rogue crew member, Beckwith, beaming himself down to a planet that appears to be responsible for time anomalies on the ship. Kirk, Spock and a small crew party follow him and come across the Guardians of Forever. They stand guard over the vortex and as they explain how it works, Beckwith escapes past the crew into the vortex as it's set to 1930. The guardian tells Kirk that Beckwith has altered events in the past, Kirk and Spock are then sent back to an earlier time to try and stop his actions and ensure the past stays as it should be.

There is a lot to love in this but best of all was the art, it was absolutely gorgeous. Each panel was beautiful, vibrant and highly detailed. It really is absolutely stunning.

This is so close to the feel of the show it's amazing how well it's been transferred from the teleplay to a graphic novel.

An absolute must for Star Trek fans but really any graphic novel reader will love this.
Highly recommended.

Brendon Schrodinger says

How do you create a new cut of a near 50 year old episode of Star Trek? In comic form of course.

I do not know the reason why the original author did not get the episode that he had written, nor have I seen the episode as I'm slowly working my way through Season 1 of The Original Series at the moment. So I guess that I am an unusual audience in that I am a Star Trek fan, who has been working his way backwards in the chronology and so I come across this new version of an old story before watching it myself.

And what a story! It is a brilliant read, with plenty of great Spock and Kirk moments and a very mature story for the series. It tackles some big issues without being cheesy or flippant. And the artwork is divine and very accurate. I guess the illustrator had the episode to choose stills from, but even then the likenesses in 95% of the cells are uncanny.

It's a pretty fantastic comic and a great way to while away a lazy Saturday afternoon. Maybe I'll be surprised by the differences when I finally get around to watching the episode.

Jessica Strider says

Pros: great artwork, interesting story, thought provoking messages

Cons: story drags a bit in the middle, some unnecessary characters

A drug dealer on the Enterprise teleports to a planet that has been making the chronometers on the ship count

backwards. When an away team follows, the fugitive passes through a portal to Earth in the 1930s. A change there affects the present, forcing Kirk and Spock to go after him.

The story has Kirk fall for a woman who's making things better for those living in the depression era, but Spock discovers that she's fated to die and saving her life is what changed the timeline.

There are a lot of differences between the original screen play and the episode that aired under this name. Several characters are removed entirely or condensed, making the plot tighter. The guardian is the same in essence but not in execution. I thought some of the changes made the story stronger but others changed its ultimate message. See my blog for a spoilery compare/contrast section (<http://scififanletter.blogspot.com/20...>).

The artwork is in a realistic style that I enjoyed. The shading is done in such a way that each panel looks more like an oil painting than a comic book page. Expressions are clear and give added emotion to the story. Even full pages of dialogue have interesting backgrounds and character motion.

Ultimately, I preferred the TV episode to the screenplay, but I think the screenplay has a lot to offer and this comic rendition of it is beautifully done. It's an excellent story and a wonderful tribute to Star Trek fans to make it available.

Albert says

Star Trek: City on the Edge of Forever is a graphic novel based on the Teleplay by Harlan Ellison and not on the Star Trek episode itself. There are subtle differences and how can you tell a story that is almost fifty years old and make it fresh again? In graphic novel form and with the talents of Scott and David Tipton and the artwork of JK Woodward, life is breathed into this tale for future generations whose only sense of the Star Trek mythos are the current JJ Abrams movies.

This is old time Kirk and Spock and science fiction along the lines of Asimov and Bradbury. Its smart, quick and pays the reader the respect to acknowledge that the reader does have the intelligence to follow along.

The story follows the actions of a criminal who has somehow become a Starfleet crew member aboard the Enterprise named Beckwith. After he commits a murder on board the Ship he escapes to the surface of the planet the Enterprise is orbiting. The planet that holds the City on the Edge of Forever. A place where all time and space meet. Kirk and his landing party pursue and find themselves chasing Beckwith back to Earth in the 1930s. They must stop Beckwith whose actions may have repercussions that can change the future forever.

These are themes first set down in The City on the Edge of Forever that will crop up in future episodes of the series and its future generations. Temporal Time Displacement. A ripple in time. The Butterfly effect.

Heady and intelligent stuff. This is what made Star Trek such a phenomenon. It dared to be smart. Which when you consider what television has become, very courageous as well.

Star Trek: City on the Edge of Forever is an enjoyable read and well worth the nostalgia it would give any Trekkie. Or just anyone who enjoys good smart writing.

Andrew Williamson says

"Edith Keeler Must Die".

For decades Harlan Ellison has complained bitterly about how Gene Roddenberry ruined his original script for 'The City on the Edge of Forever', and yet that TV episode is one of the most beloved in Star Trek's long history. So, how good could it have been?

The answer is surprising: it would have been ho-hum.

Ellison should feel himself to be a very lucky man. He is credited with being the sole writer for the produced episode, but only the germ of the idea is his. The script editors performed a miracle to produce a work of TV genius from such mediocore writing.

What's wrong with it, then? (I also have a copy of the script from 'Six Science Fiction Plays' edited by Roger Elwood for reference). Here's a flavour:

There's a drug-dealing Starfleet officer on board, and a spaced-out junkie on the bridge for two hours, almost blowing up the Enterprise without anyone noticing. No!

Awkward phraseology - "twice two hundred thousand years", and ridiculous prophecies from the Guardians (this is science fiction, not fantasy).

Terrible dialogue (yes, worse than the extant TV material), dreadful scene descriptions (things that are inner space - not filmable), and directions for actors (a big no-no).

No McCoy. Doesn't Ellison understand how the chemistry of the future 'Three Musketeers' works?

The marauders' spaceship would not have been where the Enterprise was.

The (human) drug dealer physically gets the better of Spock five times. Really?

Trooper, the character that Ellison states was his best script creation, is a cliched, overused US character from the 1930s onwards. I've seen him in cheaply-made westerns and Jonah Hex comics a million times.

Much clumsy exposition and foreshadowing. Much.

Worst of all, Kirk is prepared to allow the death of millions of people for selfishness. Does Ellison not understand the depths of the greatest starship captain of all time? Kirk preventing McCoy from saving Edith in the TV episode is one of the most poignant moments you'll ever see on the medium.

There's so much more wrong with Ellison's script on top.

What I don't understand is the vitriolic bile Ellison spouts about his Star Trek experience. His arrogance is scorching. He really doesn't get the fact that if his script had been used, no-one would have ever spoken about it again, whereas, as it stands, he is associated with one of the five best episodes of Star Trek (of any colour), ever. Just be happy about that.

About the graphic novel itself:

The text is almost verbatim to the script I have. There's an extra couple of dollars handed over to Trooper,

and a terrible speech at the end added.

The art is very good for the most part. The likenesses of the (static) characters are excellent (no mean feat, if you seen other adaptations), but some of the panels are not quite suitable, and the figures in action poses are terrible.

Ellison states that he was ecstatic over the result, which I'm sure in his mind is all that matters.

Note: while I have given the book an overall two-star rating, that is based purely on Ellison's story; the sequential art is worthy of three stars.

P.S.

Worst crime of all? In the original script, Spock doesn't get to say one of the most chilling sentences in popular TV (see top of review).

Michael says

Considered by many to be the finest hour the original *Star Trek* ever produced, the televised version of "City of the Edge of Forever" is very different from the initial storyline submitted by Harlan Ellison. Ellison has been famously unhappy ever since his story was re-written by various *Trek* staff members including Gene Roddenberry, Gene L. Coon and Dorothy Fontana, even going so far as to publish the original script and various drafts a decade ago, along with a long rant about how terrible Gene Roddenberry was.

As a long time fan of *Star Trek*, I read the book though I'll have to admit that I find reading a television script a bit dry. Years later, IDW got Ellison's blessing to adapt the original script as a comic book and give fans a taste of what the story might have looked like visually had it gone before the cameras as Ellison intended back in 1967.

The result is the five-part mini-series collected in this volume.

I'll be the first to admit that I don't find a lot in Ellison's original draft that is any better or more nuanced than the final version of "City on the Edge of Forever." In fact, I'll even go so far as to say that the televised version is a better episode of *Star Trek* than what we see either in the script book or in this comic book adaptation.

The fascinating part (to borrow a phrase from our favorite Vulcan) is to see how both stories have the same germ of an idea and how each one executes them in different ways. Ellison's story has a drug dealer on board the *Enterprise* who is the catalyst for the changes in time and the decisions Kirk and Spock must make. There's also a bit more tension between Kirk and Spock (Ellison may have been working initially from "Where No Man Has Gone Before" that features a bit more antagonistic relationship between Kirk and his (then) science officer) and the character of Edith Keillor doesn't appear until the third act and is less of a focal point in history than she is in the televised version.

Part of what takes away from Ellison's take is that his characters look and sound like the ones we come to know and love, but they don't feel like the ones we come to know and love. Ellison is willing to allow Kirk to seriously consider throwing away the entire future of humanity to save Edith and have the captain paralyzed by indecision once the fateful moment occurs -- two things that don't feel like the Captain James T. Kirk I know from the television shows and movie. Ellison may argue this shows a different side of our favorite starship captain, but I will (respectfully) disagree with him and say it's not the James T. Kirk I know

and love. There's also the question of having Spock be a bit more jaded and, at times, downright hostile toward Kirk and humanity in the story presented here.

The one thing Ellison's script features that I feel is a strength and one that is not included in the televised version is the character of Trooper, a wounded war vet who Kirk bonds with during the story. I can't help but wonder how the televised version might have benefited from having this character included, though I can see how he was probably dropped for time constraints.

This adaptation of Ellison's script has won high praise among *Trek* fans, for good reason. The artwork is solid and it's easy to recognize the faces of the crew. The highlight of the single issues was the covers from each segment by Juan Ortiz.

If you've heard about the original version of "City" and are curious about it, this volume is worth checking out to see how similar and different what Ellison wrote and what we saw on screen are. It will allow you to decide which you prefer.

And if you haven't heard me ramble on enough about this, you can hear my good friend Barry and I debate the whole Ellison controversy on episode 19 of our All Good Things podcast.

In the interest of full disclosure, I received a digital ARC of this book from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Jesse A says

Interesting to see the original teleplay, knowing how the episode itself turned out. I understand why the changes were made but this was still a good story.

Steve says

I received this from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

This is a graphic novel based on the original teleplay for the Star Trek episode, City on the Edge of Forever, written by Harlan Ellison. This episode is easily one of the most popular of the original series, and arguably one of the best. Most people, however, don't know the sordid history behind it, which included lawsuits and slander against both Gene Roddenberry and Harlan Ellison.

At any rate, the story is well-written, and really captures the emotions of a lonely starship captain who didn't even realize how alone he really was. Sure, he has close friends, but only found "the one" on 1930s Earth. A lot of moral dilemmas presented, with decisions impacting the future of the known universe. No one said being a starship captain was easy.

The artwork was superb, and really captured the emotions in the characters.

Highly recommended!

Titas (I read in bed) says

One problem at a time Mr. Spock

First of all lets make one thing clear: this is a complete old school Star Trek story. This is actually an unchanged visual representation of the famous script "The City on the Edge of Forever!"

Following the trace of a runaway, the crew of USS Enterprise come across the City on the Edge of Forever which is mostly taken as a myth. They chase the convict through the time line of Earth's history and lands at the of 1930s. With emotional dilemma, suspense and action it is an awesome ride towards the last page.

The story uses some really common and familiar elements of Sci-Fi but still it is thoroughly enjoyable and the emotional jabs are really heart warming. Although there are some pages where it feels that the story cold have taken a little pace, once the mind is properly set for the era of William Shatner - its bliss!

Artwork of the book is sadly a bit discontinuous. There are pages where it is so great that it resembles photographs. But then again there are drawings which pop the thought- Am I reading the same book? One more problem is the facial expressions. Actually almost all the faces of Kirk and Spock are drawn from snapshots of the TV series and Movies. Don't get me wrong, the drawing is incredible! But when the faces constantly look like great detailed drawings of snapshots while the figures and surroundings are drawn as basic: the faces stands out like flags over the pages. But apart from that the artwork is mind-blowing and the noir style works great with the story!

But did these all really matter when I got it as a free advance copy of a graphic collection of classic Star Trek??? NO!! I just went gaga over it!

P.S. Thanks to IDW publishers for providing an advance copy at Netgalley.

David says

Beautiful artwork helps to bring Harlan Ellison's vision of his original teleplay for Star Trek to life in this graphic novel. There's much like in his vision of the award winning "City on the Edge of Forever" including space pirates, Spock's awesome lines, a strong and highly competent Janice Rand, and some dubious characters on the Enterprise crew. That said, there is one thing I think the televised version did better and that was convince me of the growing romance between Jim Kirk and Edith Keeler. Don't get me wrong, Ellison has great moments that convince me of that romance, but the televised screenplay spent more time with it. As a Star Trek and Harlan Ellison fan, I found this well worth reading.

Dario Andrade says

Essa HQ é uma adaptação do roteiro original de "A cidade à beira da eternidade", escrito pelo Harlan Ellison, que, apesar de pouco publicado no Brasil, é um dos mais conhecidos escritores de FC. Falecido há poucas semanas, Ellison ficou conhecido pelas polêmicas em que se viu envolvido, a despeito da sua reconhecida genialidade. Ellison escreveu livros, contos, HQs, roteiros de filmes e séries. Enfim, esteve presente na cena da ficção científica americana por mais de meio século.

A cidade à beira da eternidade é considerada por muita gente como o melhor episódio da série clássica de Jornada nas Estrelas. Tendo a concordar com essa opinião.

O roteiro original já havia sido publicado há alguns anos nos Estados Unidos, mas nunca o li. Não sabia dessa quadrinização. Tomei conhecimento da sua existência em razão do falecimento de Ellison, há poucas semanas. Curioso, comprei o livro e posso dizer que realmente é muito bom.

De modo geral, o cerne do roteiro foi transposto para a TV, especialmente o seu elemento mais central, que é o dilema ético enfrentado pelo capitão Kirk: permitir que o passado seja corrigido implica na morte de uma pessoa boa, realmente boa. Não é aquele dilema em que se volta ao passado e se mata um genocida. Não, o Ellison foi mais sutil e mais inteligente: É preciso deixar que alguém bom (insuportavelmente bom) morra, para que outros bilhões tenham um futuro.

As diferenças estão principalmente nos detalhes. Alguns elementos – que não existem em Jornada – estão na HQ, como a ambição e o desejo pelo dinheiro. Além disso, há um vilão claro – o tripulante Beckwith. No episódio, era o Doutor McCoy, que estava sob o efeito de uma dose excessiva de remédios, que retorna no tempo. Há, ainda, temas ausentes na série original, como tripulantes viciados em drogas em razão do estresse excessivo, a alferes Rand muito mais protagonista e o Senhor Spock bastante emocional, ranzinza até. É interessante ficar de olho nessas diferenças e perceber os cacoetes de Star Trek e como Ellison tenta forçar ao máximo os limites da série.

Enfim, vale a pena para todos os que se interessam por Jornada nas Estrelas ou que desejam conhecer um pouquinho do trabalho do Ellison.

Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says

I thought that *Star Trek: City on the Edge of Forever* would be a graphic novel about the episode. What I didn't know was that it would be instead a graphic novel of Harlan Ellison's Star Trek teleplay script; “The City on the Edge of Forever”. *I may have glossed over the fact in my joy of finding a Star Trek graphic novel on NetGalley...*

What about the graphic novel then?

I loved it! I loved the story, I loved the changes in the story from the episode I have seen to the version Harlan Ellison has written. I mean the episode is epic but damn it, this graphic novel is just as good and frankly in some way better because it isn't restricted to a time limit instead it can have many more wonderful scenes (I do miss Kirk's explanation for Spock's ears to the policeman)...

The art?

Breathtaking! I mean it's so gorgeous and so well drawn that every expression on Spock and Kirk's faces is just perfect, it's almost uncanny watching the art and seeing how well the expressions are drawn.

The verdict?

5 stars! I want this volume, I need this volume!

Thank you Netgalley for providing me with a free copy for an honest review!!

Brady says

Very pretty. Sexy matte hardback--stylish, hyper-realistic illustrations--lovely gradients-- lovely technicolor contrast. The noir-looking discussions with Kirk and Spock around Issue 3 get special recognition because goddamn. Likewise, a lot of the full-page panels are good enough to hang on a wall.

Harlan's teleplay is okay. Star Trek (Original Series) had weird strengths, it was so good precisely because it was so bad--bad science, bad effects, bad acting. Bad sci-fi is a joy to watch already, and then Star Trek contrasted it with New-Wavey ponder-this fables and mazy plotlines. Watching it all put together feels like a rush of cool blood.

Now this is a comic book. It doesn't have to worry about acting. The effects are, like I mentioned, beautiful. Everything's been elevated around the teleplay to glorify it, and what you start to notice is that the writing, actually, isn't that great.

Grand book to have laying around anyway, cuz like I said it's pretty. The artists' commentary at the end makes me wanna fill with tears. They're just nerds. They made this for love. As a labor of love it's succeeds on every panel. And then Harlan's afterword talks about how he cried when he saw where his cameo was in the comic. There's a guy who, for all his faults, knows how to be a human
