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Long before Captain Jean-Luc Picard took command of the legendary *Starship Enterprise*,™ he fell deeply and hopelessly in love with Doctor Beverly Crusher. Though, for one reason or another, Picard never acted on his feelings, he found a measure of contentment as Beverly's close friend, colleague, and daily breakfast partner.

But when Doctor Crusher leaves her position on the *Enterprise* to become the chief medical officer of Starfleet, the brightest light in Picard's life is taken from him. And he has hardly resigned himself to his loss when he learns that Beverly has been declared missing in action on a distant planet -- and presumed dead.

Kevratas is a bleak, frozen world on the far side of the Romulan Neutral Zone where the Federation has become the plague-ravaged natives' only real hope of survival and freedom. Starfleet has no recourse but to send in another team to try to save the Kevrata -- and Picard is the natural choice. Critical to the success of his mission are two colleagues who served under him when he commanded the *Starship Stargazer* -- Pug Joseph, a man with a past to live down, and Doctor Carter Greyhorse, who has served time for attempted murder -- as well as a Romulan who left his people years earlier and never expected to return. Together, they follow the trail of Beverly Crusher to Kevratas, determined to succeed where the doctor failed.

On the Romulan homeworld, meanwhile, the political vacuum created by the demise of Praetor Shinzon has been filled by his staunchest supporter, Senator Tal'aura. But there are those who oppose her, including Commander Donatra and the warbird fleets under her command, because of the way Tal'aura has mishandled rebellions on the Empire's subject worlds.

And one rebellion in particular; the movement for self-determination on frigid Kevratas.

So begins a desperate struggle -- not only for the freedom of the long-oppressed Kevrata but also for the soul of the Romulan Empire. Before it's over, destinies will be forged and shattered, the Empire will be shaken to its ancient foundations, and Jean-Luc Picard's life will be changed...forever.

Death in Winter Details

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From Reader Review Death in Winter for online ebook

Felicia Latoya Brown says

Finally a book that dealt with Picard's feelings for Crusher. It's not the best written ST:TNG novel I've read, but I'm glad someone decided to delve into this love that Picard had been caring for almost 30 years before this book was written. We've already seen in episodes the length he would go for Beverly (remember he stayed to be tortured by a Cardassian just because he thought the Cardassian was going to torture Beverly), so it was believable that once again he would risk everything for her (which was something avoided in the movies...ugh).

Mike says

So I'm a Star Trek fan. For those who know me you either already know this or would be totally unsurprised to find this out. In point of fact I'm a Star Trek the Next Generation fan - just to be clear. I doubt I've seen more than a dozen original series episodes and while I enjoyed many of the adventures of Capt. Kirk on the big screen my heart has always been securely on the bridge of the Enterprise-D.

That said, I probably hadn't seen an episode of this show in 20 years when, quite by accident, Rachel and I started watching it just about every night in reruns on MeTV here in Chicago. The picture and sound quality were terrible, sometimes little better than a grainy YouTube video for some reason, but they were showing the entire series from beginning to end and we'd wandered in right at the start. So for the next six months to a year we would watch episode after episode of the show, missed a few here and there, but generally finding ourselves completely hooked - in my case all over again. As a 14 year old in 1987 when STNG premiered I was totally blown away. From then on, for the first three seasons anyway, I was there Friday nights at 9pm to watch the show. As the years went on my obsessive viewing waned, more due to growing up and having better things to do on Friday nights than watch TV, but whenever I would run across it in reruns on the weekend I would still get sucked in and avidly watch it. Like many people I was disappointed by the STNG movies, mostly because I thought they got the shaft on story and budget, and when the last one hit theaters in 2002 and I watched it, shrugged, and let STNG drift off into the void.

However, watching the show again made me realize how very, very good it really was. And after the final two-part episode brought the whole thing to an end I felt like I wanted more adventures with these characters and if it had to be through mass-market paperback novels then so be it. With that in mind Rachel was kind enough to purchase this for me for my birthday this year. This particular book starts a series of novels that pick up right after the end of the final STNG movie and the fingerprints of that film are all over this story, for good or bad.

In short what attracted me to this book was the claim that the romantic (?) relationship between Capt. Picard and Dr. Crusher would be explored and explained. Their history would be told and a new evolution of this relationship would take place within the covers of this book. Watching the show again I found myself really enjoying the weird are-they or aren't-they in love dynamic between Capt. Picard and Dr. Crusher. Obviously any work relationship would be complicated, let alone one between a commanding officer and the only person on the ship who can relieve that officer of command, but add in that Capt. Picard gave the order that got Dr. Crusher's husband, Jack Crusher, killed and that he was hopelessly in love with her at the time he issued that order and that he was Jack Crusher's best friend and you get some particularly excellent romantic complications.

Unfortunately many of those complications are left off limits in this book. While early on some nice details, like Capt. Picard's awkward toast at Dr. Crusher's wedding to Jack Crusher, gave me what I wanted but too often Friedman rolls out ideas only to let them go unexplored or choked off before they can go anywhere - interesting or otherwise. In general, this book reads like a very middle of the road two-part episode of STNG, which is really disappointing since there should be no budget constraints on a novel. I think the fact that Friedman had written some scripts for the original STNG show really hamstrung him here. You could just see all the ways he could have blown open this story only to leave it confined to a sound stage in his head.

In short, the story follows the improbable idea that Dr. Crusher, once again the head of Starfleet Medical, would, for some very flimsy reasons, personally go undercover into the Romulan Empire to cure a race of creatures who live under the heel of the Romulans from a terrible plague. Of course she is found out and captured and it's up to Capt. Picard to complete her mission, and maybe save her if he has time, only after he finally figures out that she is one of the best things about his life. This is a book full of frustrated characters who all seem to be doing something other than the thing they really want to be doing. Capt. Picard is completing a mission while he'd rather be saving Dr. Crusher. Dr. Crusher is trying to save herself from the Romulan Empire when she'd rather be curing the native population of a deadly plague. Geordi and Worf would like to be helping Capt. Picard find Dr. Crusher only they have to keep fixing the new Enterprise-E the whole book. Hell, even the bad guys would all rather be doing something else which, of course, just keeps reminding the reader that they too could be doing something else. Not exactly the kind of thing that keeps you glued to the page.

Anyway, plots are resolved, needless characters are added to appease different rabid nerd populations within the Trek universe (like a cameo by now Admiral Janeway (that's for you Voyager nerds!) and a reference to a brilliant medical paper by Dr. Bashir (that's for you DS9(nerds!) and even a reference to the episode of STNG that Spock appeared in (and... that's for you Original Trek nerds!). In the end if you were to pair away the subplots that go nowhere and just focus on the main plot this book would be about 200 pages long, in big type, with small pages. Probably a three hour read max. As is, the subplots, particularly the Geordi and Worf one which, no kidding, after about five chapters literally ends with Adm. Janeway saying "Hey, boys, whatever your up to knock it off." and then they do, do nothing to enhance the story or any character in it. That's some pretty weak writing.

Anyway, I've always thought Romulans were lame bad guys, just pissed off Vulcans basically, and while I like the whole getting the gang of the Stargazer (Capt. Picard's previous ship before the Enterprise) back together, especially since one of them is in prison for murder, it never really goes anywhere. Look, long story short, I read the whole thing so it's not terrible. Over all I don't feel like I wasted my time, except for that Geordi and Worf subplot (total garbage), and I will likely read another in the series - mainly because I really miss the show. Would I recommend this to anyone? Not really.

So, until my dream comes true (i.e. that HBO remakes STNG or at least an Adventures of Jean-Luc Picard young Starfleet Officer) I'll have to get my newly reawakened STNG fix through these books. I'm okay with that. And, frankly, sometimes it's nice to give your brain a break from awesome writing by slumming it in the mass-market paperbacks. It only makes me appreciate the good books more.

Tyler Volz says

Dangling plot threads and some odd characterization. I'm surprised the relaunch didn't die right here with this novel.

honestly mem says

Subpar and underwhelming, but the same could be said for much of Friedman's work. Far too many unresolved and unnecessary subplots (was there any point at all to the Geordi + Worf storyline?), an abundance of woefully underdeveloped characters, a rushed ending, and little at all to recommend it. On the other hand, Crusher rescues herself! And Picard/Crusher! So, conflict.

Alex says

Okay I'd be ashamed of reading this book...but I just won't.

I mean look at that cover! At first glance you assume it's a book in which Patrick Stewart tells tales regarding his adventures as an actor. Maybe just his Shakespeare work. You see it and you think "man I like Patrick Stewart. He's smart and cool and I bet this would be a good read."

Then you realize it is in the Sci Fi section, and that the shadow isn't Stewart in a wig but an ex-Muppeteer (no really she is), and that it says STAR TREK on the cover.

But you know what? You liked the old show. You liked those characters. That one episode where they could read each other's thoughts was neat. How bad can it be?

Then you realize the first scene is a young Picard mooning over Crusher at her wedding and that you are just reading fan fic written by a guy with a *bitchin'* literary agent.

Then you cry.

But I still refuse to be ashamed because they talk about their *feelings*.

Gilliam says

Perfunctory writing at its best/worst (take your pick). A paint by number "Rescue the Fair Maiden" narrative populated by paper thin characters and pointless plot lines (although it seems likely that any author writing for the Star Trek franchise is obligated to meet some sort of fan service quota, even if it contributes virtually nothing whatsoever to story development).

The most startling aspect of 2005's "Death in Winter" is that it is not Michael Jan Friedman's first book; in fact I was flabbergasted to learn that he has authored at least 60 novels dating back to the early 90's (most of them for the Star Trek franchise). And based on the desultory results on display here I can only imagine (because I don't think I will be following his writing further) the dire product he has brought to market prior.

Zauberlehrling! says

I was waiting very long to read a book about Picard and Crusher, but actually I was expecting something completely different. I did expect a fast running story ... and at last the long waiting lovestory between Jean-

Luc and Beverly. but to get that, one had to wait until the last word. It is quite disappointing, also if there is a happy-end in that story.

I thought it would be something like "Imzadi". That was really good and it doesn't messed up the Star Trek Canon. So why Friedman doesn't write just a nice little P/C-Story ... finally.

Elisha ~My Bohemian Bookshelf~ Goulet says

Perfect weekend read. I really enjoyed it.

Christine says

I wanted to love this book so much, but even my inner shipper couldn't get past the fact that this is basically really terrible fanfiction. There's a subplot with Worf and Geordi that goes nowhere, a needless cameo by Admiral Janeway, and a bunch of Romulans running around plotting against each other that added very little to the story. And yet the random Romulans still managed to be more interesting than the main plotlines with Picard and Crusher. I swear I'd rather have read a whole book about Donatra and Breag. At least they had chemistry. Picard and Crusher, despite the author's best efforts, do not. Picard mopes through the novel, irrationally certain that Crusher is alive when Starfleet thinks she's dead, and more interested in finding her than in completing the official mission of helping to cure a plague. (Which, by the way, he's of use on this mission why?)

I'm sure part of my problem with this book stems from the fact I have seen the basic premise done much better in fanfiction. But that's not all. The Picard I remember from TNG is selfless to a fault - if he has to choose between saving Crusher and saving an entire species, he's going to choose the latter. And suffer in silence about it. Friedman's Picard is a lovesick schoolboy, and all he thinks about is Crusher. All. The. Time.

Crusher does a little better, though seeing her in the role of covert operative after she's just become head of Starfleet Medical again is a bit of a stretch. (As for Starfleet Medical, does no one else want that job?) At least her focus is where it should be- except for totally unnecessary flashbacks to such memorable TNG episodes as the one in which she falls randomly "in love" with a creepy ghost who seemed to be ripped straight from the pages of an Anne Rice novel. But I digress.

Another thing that rubbed me the wrong way was the inclusion of Friedman's Stargazer characters. I vaguely remember them from a 1990's -era read of his novel Reunion, but anyone unfamiliar with them would be lost, and I'm not sure they add anything to the story.

In short, I'd skip this one. If you plan to read others of the TNG relaunch novels, as I do, I think all you need to know is that Picard and Crusher finally get together. Oh, and of course she goes back to the Enterprise. Because a woman should always change her career plans around for a man. A mature, rational discussion about why Crusher was or wasn't staying at Starfleet Medical would not have gone amiss here. I have a feeling, though, that Friedman may have been looking at it from the angle of her choosing to take the post at Starfleet Medical because she couldn't deal with the angst of her feelings about Picard anymore, and once she sorted that out, she could be where she really wanted to be. Which doesn't work for me.

Forrest says

I have read countless Star Trek novels in my life, and this one was an impulse pick at the local library. While I have read other books by Friedman and have enjoyed them, this book seemed a little too formulaic. After finishing the book, I had the impression that I got less out of the story than I might have otherwise if I had read Friedman's Stargazer books beforehand. As I haven't read them, I didn't really get any sense of overall motivation for characters like Pug Joseph or Dr. Greyhorse. They seemed like two-dimensional set pieces to me. Also, the plot for me was a little thin and poorly laid out. Dr. Beverly Crusher, chief medical officer of Starfleet is sent by herself on a secret mission to save an ubiquitous alien race from a deadly plague seemingly right after inviting Picard down for dinner. And of course, she promptly runs into trouble with some stock cookie-cutter scheming Romulan characters. Naturally, only Picard can finish her mission and save her, with the help of some officer who was formerly his chief medical officer on his old ship Stargazer. That this story is to give a deeper meaning to the long-standing hidden love that Picard has held for Crusher throughout the entire Next Generation run of shows and books is clear.

It's just all a little too convenient. Picard coming to save Crusher. The Romulan defector happening to be in the right place at the right time to save her. The Romulan side-plot with characters pulled from past shows and books. There really isn't much depth here.

I would not buy this book, although I wouldn't have a problem recommending that you check it out from your local library.

Elizabeth says

I liked the plot, but this book would've been better if:

1) The sections detailing episodes of TNG weren't so annoyingly detailed. I've seen every single episode of TNG more than once, I know my canon. I didn't need 3 pages reminding me of who Sela was, for example. I can understand wanting to make sure the reader knows some of those details, but are there really people that have never seen Star Trek out there that actively seek out and read Star Trek books? Seriously.

2) The whole Picard and Crusher thing was just poorly done and kind of cheesy, very much UNLIKE their characters. It was like reading someone's boring fanfic. If I wanted to read fanfic, I'd read fanfic. I might go read some fanfic, because I bet the Picard/Crusher thing is better somewhere in fanfic.

Anja Braun says

Beverly is sent to Kevratas to develop a vaccine. She is captured by Sela. Picard teams up w/ Pug Joseph & Dr. Carter Greyhorse. Greyhorse must make a vaccine before a rescue attempt can be made. I loved this book because it went deeper in Jean Luc's & Beverly's feelings for each other. It also went in some detail about how her husband Jack died. The best part though was when she arrives on the Enterprise as the new chief medical officer. I thought there were some pages in the book that were really unnecessary and did not contribute in any way to the story. But all in all though I enjoyed reading it!!

Christopher Jones says

Good story to help move us beyond the events of Nemesis. Picard's feelings for Beverly are something we've always known were there. Clearly they weren't going to be acted upon onscreen, but that's why it's great that we have the literature to move us beyond the constraints of television storytelling.

To be honest, though, the most interesting aspect of Death In Winter is the political upheaval within the Romulan Empire. I wasn't thrilled to have Sela back, if only because I don't like it when familiar faces like her pop up in stories. The same could be said for Tomalak. However, it did make sense in this story that they would be playing pivotal roles in the affairs of the Empire. And Sela's desire for vengeance against Picard gives an added layer to story. The person who did not need to turn up is Admiral Janeway. Completely pointless cameo, but it fell into another part of the story that really felt like filler—the rescue attempt by Worf and Geordi.

The point at which I feel Friedman stumbled a bit comes near the end where [SPOILER ALERT] Picard reveals his feelings to Beverly. The reaction to this felt inappropriate for the situation. Whilst in a life or death situation, a few words from Picard turn into a high school drama show. I cannot believe Beverly would react that way, nor that Picard would fret the way he does. They have known each other too long, are too old, and have had too many shared experiences for this to be the reaction. The final scene is also painfully obvious before it plays out. All of this isn't terrible, but it could have been handled more deftly and given us a more satisfying resolution to the build-up.

All in all, however, Death In Winter is a good story and certainly propels us forward into the rich post-TV literary world of Star Trek.

Talia says

This is a Star Trek book, and considering I haven't read a new one in years, when I saw the subject matter, I snatched this one up. This book focuses on Picard's efforts to rescue Beverly after she is abducted while on an undercover mission to provide a vaccine to a non-Federation world under Romulan control. (I'm geeking out!)

That is the main plot, but it is the subplot that was of monumental interest to me, and no doubt to the other fans who picked up this book. Because - FINALLY - Trek focuses on the relationship of Picard and Crusher, a relationship that was glossed over for the course of 7 seasons on TV.

Although the book didn't deal with their relationship as much as I would've liked (used to that, though), I did like how Friedman (one of Trek's better authors) gave us meaningful insight into Beverly's past and the history of Picard's and her relationship.

And to be honest, the main plot was pretty interesting.

Sadly, Trek books have never been "canon," so on the off chance that we ever get another TNG movie, I'm sure there will be no mention of this whatsoever and Picard will have another passing love interest that the fans could really care less about. *Ahem*

Good book - I recommend if you're a Trek fan.

Joy says

I back tracked and picked up this book, hoping it would fill in some events that led up to the events in Destiny. I admit, I'm a bit disappointed. It filled in a little of the backstory but it had little to do with their relationship and ended up delving into Romulan politics and some of Picard's old crewmates from the Stargazer. It almost seems as if there was a previous book that needed to be read that filled in some information. The characters were very one dimensional and the plot was rather flat.
