



Probe

Margaret Wander Bonanno

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Die Sonde, die schon einmal beinahe die Erde zerstört hätte, kehrt zurück

Der Romulanische Imperator ist tot, und damit stürzt das Empire ins Chaos. Auf einem kleinen Planeten in der neutralen Zone treffen sich Vertreter der Föderation und des Imperiums zu Friedensverhandlungen. Doch diese finden ein jähes Ende, als die Nachricht vom Wiederscheinen jener mysteriösen Sonde eintrifft, die schon einmal beinahe die Erde zerstört hätte. Damals reiste die Enterprise-Crew "Zurück in die Gegenwart", um die Katastrophe abzuwenden. Jetzt sehen sich Captain Kirk, Mr. Spock und die restlichen Offiziere erneut der drohenden Gefahr gegenüber.

Probe Details

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Author : Margaret Wander Bonanno

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Rebecca says

OK, full disclosure, I spent most of the early 90s camped out in the library reading Star Trek novels. When a few boxes of old ST paperbacks showed up at the bookstore yesterday, I told my boss to keep me away from them. He replied "Oh, I'm just going to recycle those, help yourself." Uh oh. As if I didn't have enough distraction from my to-read list, at that moment I knew I was destined to spiral downward into one of my Trekkie phases. It happens every few years.

Once I pawed through the boxes I knew this book would be my gateway drug. The author also penned *Strangers From the Sky*, one of my all-time favorite books, and the only trek novel I keep at hand to reread even between relapses. And best of all, this one is billed as a sequel to Star Trek IV, my favorite ST movie! (Yes, the one with the whales. See my blog.) Took it home and cracked it open immediately.

You can see from the 3 stars I was a bit disappointed. The book was entertaining enough, but a bit heavy-handed on the Romulan cold war intrigue. Bonanno usually writes deep, character driven novels, and I expected her to develop the themes of music and archeology further. Well, thank god for goodreads is all I can say. When I started to review this, I noticed a link to her website. Turns out, she didn't really write *Probe* at all! The victim of publishing politics, it was rewritten beyond recognition. But miracle of miracles, she has made a pdf copy of her original manuscript, *Music of the Spheres*, available! (Which she apparently used to auction off at cons to raise money for charity. I kind of love her.) So I got to email her and ask her for a copy! Squee!

Oh yes. I can feel that trekkie fire running through my veins again. This is bad, people.

The Fizza says

Captain's Log, Stardate 8475.3: What was once known only to Starfleet Command is now common knowledge: the Romulan Praetor, said by some to have been "third in rank but first in power" in governing the Empire, is dead...

With the Praetor dead, the **Romulan Star Empire** is split over the direction it will take moving forward... as a result the moderates have reached out to the **United Federation of Planets** in order to confer over the future of the quadrant and their respective places in it.

The newly christened Enterprise A is called into service as Captain Kirk, Mr Spock, Doctor McCoy are sent out with a delegation from the Federation Ambassadorial Corps to meet with the Romulans. But, as it is often the way with Romulans there may be more going on than what is seen.

Even on the planet Tamaris Four, deep inside the Federation/Romulan Neutral Zone, very real dangers are lay in wait. While representatives from the Federation, headed by the now Commander Kevin Riley, and the Romulans meet in an attempt to, not only talk of peace but to work together in excavating a major archaeological site of the Erisian Ascendancy: A treasure-trove of history which has remained untouched for a hundred years because of the Neutral Zone accords.

Since it has only been a short time since the Enterprise crew has Voyaged Home from exile to save the Earth by rescuing the humpback whale from extinction, Kirk and Company are still investigating the alien probe which wreaked so much havoc upon the Sol System.

As both the strands of mysterious alien space probe and the Romulan probe into finding a different way to relate with their neighbors begin to come into focus and merge the future of both space faring culture comes into question...

A sequel to **Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home**, this story does an excellent job in staying true to the characters as it takes us *where no man has gone before....* Highly recommended for TOS fans who've seen **The Voyage Home** and wanted more: 3.5★

Robert says

I started off really enjoying this book for the first two or three chapters because it brought back fond memories of the original Star Trek and its characters. However as the story continued it seemed to narrow down primarily to only Kirk with just brief interactions with the others. Of course that meant more characters that were new but that caused it to lose some of the magic. The story was reasonable enough but hardly great. So in the end I could only give it three stars.

John Barclay says

An interesting one. A follow up to Star Trek IV (the one with the whales), following the story of the Probe and encounters with the Romulans. Interesting ideas and well written.

Alejandro says

The sequel to "Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home"!

BEFORE ENGAGING THIS NOVEL...

This is a wonderful novel.

Probe is a direct sequel to the events portrayed in the theatrical film *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*.

So, if you haven't watched that film yet, I suggest you to watch first that movie and/or reading the novelization.

To avoid to feel a little lost in the setting of this story, and being able to enjoy to the fullest the novel.

EARTH IS SAFE AGAIN BUT...

Earth is safe again thanks to the efforts of Captain James T. Kirk and his crew.

However, there are still many questions about the powerful probe that it was in a brink to destroy all life on Earth.

A probe that for some unknown reasons looked to communicate with the species of hunchback whales.

A probe that can left without energy any starship that tries to get near of it.

Who built it?

Why?

Is it a hostile weapon or a defensive system?

There are too many questions, so Starfleet orders Captain Kirk and the newly named *USS Enterprise NCC-1701-A* to investigate the origin and purpose of the deadly probe.

SHOCKING REVELATIONS!

This a really entertained book and a worthy sequel to the extraordinaire film *The Voyage Home*.

Developing an engaging process analyzing the clues left by the probe to solve this mystery.

Spock, once again proves (pun intended) his astonishing logical mind to analyze such mystery that will take the *Enterprise-A* to places...

...where no one has gone before!

At least no one from Earth, for not saying any other member of the Federation neither.

The solution to this great mystery will shock you...

...more that you can imagine!

Since it will make a subtle (or maybe not so subtle) to elements of *The Next Generation*...

...if you know how to read between lines in the development of this wonderful novel.

The Final Frontier is out there...

...waiting for you!

Violet says

This is only my second Star Trek book, and I enjoyed both immensely ("Spock's World" was the other one). I have been surprised by how much I enjoy them, and that both got high marks from me. In fact, I am beginning to think I might be a more deeply geek person than originally thought. Either that, or I just love a good, well-told story. :)

Highly recommended for geeks and non-geeks alike.

Oleta Blaylock says

This story picks up almost immediately after THE VOYAGE HOME. As such if anyone hasn't seen the movie it might help to watch and then read the book. I am glad that I picked this book up and read it. It is a fascinating story of the crew of the Enterprise trying to find a way to bring about peaceful relations with the Romulans. The Romulans, or some of them, want to sabotage the conference.

This whole thing starts with the death of the Praetor, the ruler of the Romulan people. His death leaves a vacuum that is filled by a moderate group wanting peace with the Federation. However it wouldn't be a Star Trek adventure if there wasn't a problem that could affect not just the Empire but the Federation as well. The Probe that nearly destroyed Earth is headed to the Romulan Empire. The Romulans are not listening to the Federation about the dangers of the Probe saying that it doesn't exist. There is also things happening on the planet that the conference is being held close to that could start a war at any time. Yes just another day for the Enterprise crew.

I enjoyed this story and added history that it provided to the Star Trek universe. There is something about the whole universe that is uplifting and enjoyable. Yes, I know that is a much romanticized universe but I think sometimes that it would be a nice place to live. I have enjoyed all the books that I have read linked to the STAR TREK: TOS every much.

Alexandre says

It is nice continuation of Star Trek IV.

Lois says

I don't know if the book would have been better, but the audiobook while great with the narration of James Doohan, the romulan stuff was just too boring, but the stuff with the probe was good but too little of it.

Mario says

The second half of the book is okay, which is about as far as I can go. The first half is slow and full of

characters and plots that are simply annoying and serve no purpose. Those largely disappear for the second half (until the epilogue) and the story gets a little faster paced and finally develops a clear plot. The second half is interesting enough to be worth reading, but it's not worth reading the first half to get there.

Bookreader1972 says

I read this a twenty plus years ago. I just gave it 3 stars, because I don't fully remember it, however i read about two years ago a short article fro the "author" who claims this book, despite have her name on it is not her book. The editors made numerous major changes, & she has disowned this book, & would like it if her name was not on it.

The manuscript that she did write & submitted in 1990 was titled "Music of the Spheres".

Seven percent of "Music of the Spheres" was used in Probe by Gene DeWeese which was published in 1992.

Shane Amazon says

General Synopsis:]]]Spoilers Ahead[[[

Ten years after the events of Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home, the Federation and Starfleet are keeping a close eye on the mysterious Probe that nearly destroyed Earth in its search for whales. After finding what it was looking for the Probe left Earth orbit and began a long trek towards the Federation/Romulan neutral zone. Meanwhile, the Federation also learns that the Romulan Praetor has died and that the transitional government has requested diplomatic talks with the Federation in order to maintain peace.

Along with requesting peace talks the transitional government has also requested that certain Federation citizens also attend the peace talks. Although the people selected all have talents and professions that may be required during the talks, it strikes the Federation odd that the Romulan government would select citizens that are relatively unknown. With this in mind the powers that be tell the Enterprise captain and its crew to keep an eye out for Romulan treachery.

Characters:

The main character at the beginning of the book is a Federation ambassador named Kevin Riley, a keen negotiator that was trained under Sarek himself. Although an odd pick by the Romulans to be selected for such intense talks, it is quickly learned that the Romulan government suspects that the first talks may break down and that a reason for such failure can be laid on the lap of an inexperienced ambassador rather than someone as talented as Sarek. This leaves an opening for further talks if the first fail, also giving an excuse for both sides to save face.

Although Riley's character is well thought out and portrayed in the book the story doesn't provide enough backstory for a true connection to be established between the character and the reader. As the book progresses the characters actions become important to saving Kirk's life and the success of the mission, but by the end Riley ends up being thrown to the side only to be neglected and forgotten after the first half of the book.

This theme is also attached to several other characters that in the beginning where intrical to the plot but after

their purpose was fulfilled they were thrown to the wayside. Included are a Federation archeologist and a Romulan musician. Both characters were incredibly important to setting up the story but by the end their role was quickly watered down to near irrelevancy.

Unfortunately, the Enterprise crew was grossly under used as well. The first two-thirds of the book had them chaperoning the Romulan delegation and babysitting the Romulan crew, giving them tours and having small talk about pretty much nothing.

Final thoughts:

Although the author Margaret Wander Bonanno has stated that this book was not the book she submitted for publication, I can only hope that the complete lack of anything worth reading in this story can be attributed to the editors and publication house that produced it. The whole tale is so watered down and uneventful that its only redeeming quality is that it is a relatively light read. Although the story is ok, there is nothing for the reader to latch on to. There is no emotional connection between the reader and the story, there is no space battles, not once did the Enterprise raise shields or power weapons, Kirk never once punched someone in the face, and in the end after 330 pages I, as the reader, was left with no more than I began with. After two days of reading I learned that the Romulan Praetor died and that the probe was created by super-dolphins.

For that I can only give the story three stars. It wasn't horrible and it wasn't great, it was just...eh.

Lee says

Two and a Half Stars.

On her web site, Margaret Wander Bonanno claims that the finished book bears little resemblance to the copy she submitted. That there were re-writes that she wasn't invited to participate in and that she tends to distance herself from this book as a finished product. I haven't read her copy called 'Music of the Spheres', although I'd like to do so some day.

The book that is left isn't terrible. Perhaps I could say that it's a little better than 'okay' but I only just barely liked it enough to say so. Perhaps my sympathies for the (not)author kept me from my usual 3 star enjoyment of what I lovingly call 'Starlequins'.

Anyway. Its an okay story. And a reasonably satisfactory read. But I can't really praise much more than that.
Shrug

Michael Bedford says

I recently finished reading Star Trek: Probe by Margaret Wander Bonanno, a Star Trek novel that was given to me by my friend Liam Morris. I don't know if Liam gave me the book ironically because of the title. If he did, no worse for it. Probe engaged in some serious science fiction acrobatics featuring such topics as xenolinguistics, superdolphins, travel at warp 30, and intra-galactic peace conferences...with Romulans no less! The novel is set between the events of Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home and Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country, strangely enough the [cough] "cinematic masterpiece" Star Trek V: The Final

Frontier is barely mentioned throughout the book.*

The basic premise is that the Romulan Star Empire, upon its leader's death, is interested in making peace with the United Federation of Planets. This is happening during the wake of the events of ST4; wherein a gigantic alien probe nearly destroyed Earth but prematurely ended its onslaught when it was able to communicate with 2 humpbacked whales that Kirk et al recovered from the 20th century. As ridiculous as the movie's premise was, ST4 was incredibly popular at the time so it's not that surprising that this book was written or that it spent time on the New York Times bestseller list. Since the probe just took off without any real information about whether or not it would be back or where it might be going at the end of ST4 it's set up effectively as a rogue obstacle towards Federation/Romulan peace in this spin-off novel.

The peace conference, held on a planet of extreme archaeological worth within the Romulan/Federation neutral zone which has been off limits to both interests for the duration of their tense intra-galactic relationship, is thwarted by crooked Romulan diplomacy, shocker, and discontinued when it is learned that the probe has started heading back to Earth.

After several bold captaining moves, Kirk and company win the day. The alien language of the probe is translated, up to a point anyway, and it is learned that it is the last remnant of a long-gone alien species of "superdolphins" from what is probably the delta quadrant. This civilization was wiped out by a familiar-sounding, to TNG fans, alien race who travel in "cubes"...**

That's pretty much the payoff for the story so far as the probe from ST4 is concerned. Peace between the Romulans and the Federation, of course, is not in the cards at this point. But Kirk and a primary Romulan character Commander Hiran share a nice diplomatic walk in a park while pontificating about a future peace.

Read this book if you love Star Trek, especially if you liked ST4 & 6, but you'll probably want to avoid it otherwise. This type of story gets told more aptly by writers outside of the Star Trek milieu. One's attachment to the fictional world of the franchise assists in perpetuating one's suspension of disbelief. Some geeky highlights were the weaving in of events which transpired in the Lost Years novels including the use of Commander Ambassador Kevin Riley who serves as the official Federation ambassador during the peace talks.

All in all, 2286 was a busy year for the crew of the USS Enterprise 1701-A.

*Ask me in person on my pet theory as to why this is...if you dare.

**Geek-shiver

Sud666 says

This book ended up being a "must read" for me. It is the "sequel" to the excellent movie Star Trek IV- A Voyage Home. This tells the story of the Probe and what it has been up to since nearly destroying the Earth (as seen in the movie). The Probe left earth at the end of the movie when the whales were returned to the sea. The book starts a few months after that. It seems the Probe left the Federation sector and was last seen heading towards the Neutral Zone.

At the same time Capt. Kirk and the Enterprise have been called to Temaris IV in the NZ to have a diplomatic conference with the Romulan Empire. As the story develops we find that the Romulans have noticed the Probe coming into their territory and when it does make contact with a Romulan world it manges

to destroy two warbirds and the planet. This is unknown to the Federation as it sets up this peace conference. While this is a huge opportunity for peace, no one really trusts the Romulan Empire. It seems the old Praetor has died and a new Committee is in charge. The Committee is truly interested in putting out peace feelers, but some in the Romulan High Command do not agree. Thus all is not as it seems with the delegation sent to negotiate. In the midst of all this the Probe reappears and both the Romulan ship and the Enterprise are captured by the Probe. The rest of the story fills in the details of the Probes mission and the creators of the Probe. I shall stop here since the rest would be spoilers.

This was an excellent Star Trek book and I am glad I read it. Well written and tackling the tricky situation with the Romulan Star Empire, as well as filling in the gaps about the Probe make this a must read for a Trekkie. The interactions of the crew and of Kirk with his Romulan counterpart are well done. It is also a good look inside the machinations of the Romulans.

But perhaps the best part of the story is the Probe and what its mission was. It closes the book on the tale from ST IV. For that reason alone, I am glad I took the time to read it-though it was so well written that I managed to devour it in a day. If you like Star Trek or enjoyed the movie I'm sure you will devour it as eagerly as I.
