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For nearly thirty years Nichelle Nichols has been part of the Star Trek mythos. As Lieutenant Uhura, communications officer of the Starship Enterprise, she was the first African-American woman to have a major continuing role on television. Her candid and insightful autobiography takes readers on her life's voyage of personal discovery and professional triumph - beyond Uhura. Granddaughter of the rebellious son of a slave owner, Nichelle Nichols grew up in a socially progressive family. By the age of sixteen the young singer-dancer had already been praised by Josephine Baker and had worked with Duke Ellington. With tenacity and talent, she established herself as a first-rate performer in nightclubs, onstage, and eventually in film. From the beginning of her Hollywood career, some would say, she had two strikes against her: she was Black and she was a woman. In the face of racism, a brush with the mob, and an attempted rape, she fought courageously against the injustices that stood between her and her dreams. Through an early job in television - years before Star Trek - Nichols met Gene Roddenberry. Describing her pivotal role in the Star Trek universe, she takes readers where no book has gone before: into the heart and mind of this man, the series' creator, for a time her lover and afterward a friend. She also reveals the true story behind the scenes with the Star Trek family, and details the evolution of the Trekker phenomenon with humor, affection, and respect. A symbol of hope and promise for millions of viewers, Nichols continues to work toward the same goals Lieutenant Uhura and, indeed, all of Star Trek embody. Whether spearheading a national recruitment drive to bring minorities and women into the NASA astronaut corps, or producing space-oriented educational films and programs for young people, Nichols remains devoted to inspiring a sense of wonder and promise for humankind's real-life future among the stars. Her autobiography is a moving testament to the

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From Reader Review Beyond Uhura: Star Trek and Other Memories for online ebook

Kerry says

This is a well-written story about a fascinating life. I think the most impressive thing about the book is the readability: it is absorbing and so positive. It is usually the negative that makes a good story, yet Ms. Nichols maintains her positive outlook throughout the book and still holds your attention. Well done!

Wendy says

This is an excellent example of fame going to a person's head, making them feel as though they are more intelligent than they actually are. Ms. Nichols gives off the unfortunate (and hopefully unintentional) impression that she thinks she is always right and always *in* the right, except perhaps where her relationship with her mother and her romantic relationships are concerned. She doesn't recount experiences where she was wrong, or even where she was embarrassed, unless she was embarrassed because of another person's wrongdoing. She comes off as always having a sassy retort for any situation, and that's simply not possible.

Also, despite apparently belonging to the 'Church of Science' or the 'Science of Mind', she does not think very critically. Despite being a fanatical fan of 'Gene Roddenberry's vision' (as she refers to it), she doesn't approach the world, life, or her relationships in a very rational way. One expects more from someone who purports to believe in humanity's future.

A specific, but not the only, example of this is her relations with William Shatner. In the past, I had no opinion on this 'feud' because I loved all of the cast of *Star Trek* and didn't know enough to really have a 'side'. But the more I hear from George Takei, James Doohan and Ms. Nichols...the more I can't help siding with William Shatner, which is completely the opposite of their intent in complaining about him, I should think. If he was really so bad, if he really hurt you so much and made your lives miserable, why did you wait until twenty years after the series was over to start telling people, and most importantly Mr. Shatner himself? Why didn't you confront him back when the problem was actually happening, rather than complaining to one another and making jokes about it where he couldn't hear? Why did you wait to confront him until after it was too late for him to do anything about his behavior? Did you really never consider that maybe he acts like it was no big deal because it's been over twenty-five years and he can't change it now? Or maybe he thinks it *couldn't* have been that big a deal since you waited so long to say anything? In the end, *he*, for all his egotistical nature, comes out looking better than the other side of the Shatner vs. *Enterprise* crew war. He looks like the adult in this situation, not Ms. Nichols, George Takei and the rest--at least by my way of thinking. Of course, the only real winners in this war are Leonard Nimoy, who wrote not one but *two* autobiographies that managed to not snipe at any of his former castmates about anything (furthering his well-deserved reputation as a gentleman), and DeForest Kelley, who died without writing an autobiography or, as far as I can tell, saying a single mean word in public about any of his former castmates. Everyone else loses.

That brings up a point I've noticed, so far in Ms. Nichols' book and in George Takei and William Shatner's media arguments--they all three seem to want to correct each other's versions of events, when really, all of them are old and all of them are trying to remember things that happened more than twenty years ago (in the case of the series, at least--usually ten or less for the movies, depending on which movie and when the book or statement was written/said). How can any of them claim to remember better than any of the others? The

chances of any of their memories of any given event being crystal-clear are slim to none, regardless of Ms. Nichols' claims of being able to remember everything with crystal clarity since she was six or seven months old (come on!). And that's not even taking into account the large amounts of research that show memories are not stored like files in a file cabinet, but actually reconstructed every time you 'remember' them, which makes them highly susceptible to hindsight and influences from what you're currently seeing, feeling and experiencing (see *You Are Not So Smart* for a better explanation).

Oh, and Ms. Nichols believes in star signs (Leo, Gemini and so forth), and thinks her mother had psychic powers. She has no proof that these things work, and has apparently not bothered to think critically about them in any way at all. That's not approaching life with a scientific mind, in my opinion.

So as you've probably guessed by now, I was very disappointed. This book, amazingly enough, did not diminish my love for the character Uhura, but I'm afraid it distanced me from Ms. Nichols herself. Her whole tone, somewhat condescending and egocentric, was off-putting. Her stories were all over the place, so you don't get a good sense of the chronology of her life, and people are introduced only to disappear into the ether--for example, we never find out how or why her second marriage ended, or what happened to her second ex-husband afterward. It's not well-organized. She did go through some hardships (almost getting raped, facing racists in various situations, barely escaping the clutches of a mob boss) that inspire respect. It's just that the tone is so alienating. I really think I would skip this one unless you just can't bear not to read it.

Stephen Robert Collins says

Uruha The famous Black kiss the woman who infused females to become top NASA scientists like other books from Star Trek stars this is lot more than just Trek
Unlike Bill who admitted he couldn't rember his time as Kirk all other stars could

AJ says

This was an overall adequate autobiography. I love Star Trek, but must admit that the first series is a bit too dated for me. I grew up with TNG, DS9 and Voyager and those are my true loves. However, I have always been interested in and root for women who go against the grain, and Nichelle Nichols is one of those women. Obviously not being alive at the time of TOS, it is hard for me to appreciate just how big of a deal it was to have a character like Uhura on a TV show, so maybe one of her greatest legacies is that I can watch a black woman character in the 23rd century and just think "cool, no big deal."

The memoir itself was, as I mentioned, adequate. There were a lot of people named Jimmy and Jim which I found confusing. One of her marriages was summed up in maybe two sentences. I was definitely more interested in the Star Trek aspect of the memoir and not the steamy personal life, so that was fine with me; it was a bit disorienting to be reading about Star Trek and then all of a sudden she mentions that she'd remarried. As far as the steamy personal life, there really isn't much of that in this book. Which is fine with me. To be honest, I found her writings about her work with NASA to be some of the more interesting content. I was hoping for her opinions about TNG but she didn't really discuss the Star Trek legacy after the three seasons and six movies that she starred in.

Recommended if you're a Star Trek fan. It gives a nice glimpse of what the world of shooting the show and

movies looked like, and did give me a bit more insight onto how the show became what it is today.

Nicole says

Nichelle Nichols did it her way and is still doing it her way. Head strong as a child, she made decisions fully aware that she was ready for whatever consequences came from those decisions. From her "freedom" marriage while already pregnant to man many years her senior to her fateful meeting and romance with Gene Roddenberry (the Great Bird of the Galaxy) to always keeping music and dance in her life in some form even when doing contracted work with NASA, Nichols was more than what most know about her as Uhura.

Mel says

I am very glad I read Nichelle Nichols' autobiography. She had me in tears so many times reading this. The amount of racism that she had to deal with was just staggering. I think most people who like Star Trek have heard her tell the story of how she was going to quit after the first season but Martin Luther King told her how important it was that she stay. Now she says that she was quitting because she wanted to return to musical theatre, or because her part was too small. But in the book it is very clear it was because of the racism within the studio and on the set. She had to deal with the studio refusing to give her a regular contract because she was a black woman, instead she got a day rate and Gene Roddenberry made damn sure she was on the set every day so they'd have to pay her more than if she had a contract. She didn't get her fan mail, and faced racial abuse by make up people and security.

Yet despite all that she was fearless and strong. She was very proud of what she achieved. It was fascinating to read her early family history. Her mixed race grandparents who married at the end of slavery, moving north and being entirely cut off from her grandfather's rich white (ex-slaveowning) family. The way she was treated as the "black" daughter of a "white" man. It was an incredible glimpse of social history.

Then it was fascinating to learn about how she was involved in promoting more equality in NASA and managed to have a real and huge impact on the number of applicants they were having from women and BME people.

It was disappointing to read on here that despite these struggles hard core Shatner fans are still slamming her book cause they think she was too hard on him. Personally I thought she was very balanced, giving stories where she saw him at his best as well as his worst.

I thought it was an entertaining and inspiring book. One that directly addresses America's racist past and looks with hope towards a better future.

Lindsay Stares says

This was an awesome memoir.

The Trek stories were fun of course, but it was really the span of Nichols' career and interests that intrigued me most. She was often in the right place at the right time to meet important directors and performers, and

it's always enjoyable to get new perspectives on important movements in theater and dance.

[Image] I feel a little silly saying it, but it is more affecting to have some stories told by someone you feel like you know – even if you only 'know' them from being a fan. Stories like when she loses a big contract when she refuses to sleep with a producer. or is assaulted and threatened when on an out of town job alone. A personal account of sexism and racism is simply more moving than statistics.

The chapters dealing with her family and her heritage were fascinating: both moving and highly entertaining to read.

Her account of every part of her life seemed very fair-minded. Her verbal pictures, especially of the people involved with Star Trek, were highly nuanced. No one came off as a bastard or as a saint, just as people, which makes me think her depictions are probably pretty close to the truth. She calmly explains various incidents with charm and grace toward all concerned, even when she was angry at the time.

I was also impressed to read more about Nichols' work with NASA and other science organizations, promoting women astronauts, science education, etc.

This was a great read.

More Reviews at The Blue Fairy's Bookshelf

Sue says

While I agree with Wendy's review somewhat - mostly that this book is self-indulgent, disjointed, and maybe even egotistical - I feel those issues arise in many autobiographies, especially from people in the entertainment industry. You have to know what you're getting into. I decided to pick this up after seeing Ms. Nichols relate some of her stories at Dragon*Con 2012, and there can be no argument that she and Uhura have been great inspirations to people of many races, genders, and generations. I enjoyed learning more about this woman, her life, and the creation of her most famous character - even if I do take all of the tales of her cool demeanor, perfection, and incredible magnetism with a grain of salt.

Chibineko says

My review is more from the memory of reading this book years ago than from any current readings. The short & sweet of this autobiography is that Nichelle writes about her life before, during, & after Star Trek. Rather than go the same route as other ST alumni, she tries her hardest to avoid badmouthing the Shatner (even though he makes it VERY hard for her to stay neutral) which she mostly succeeds at.

Miss Nichols has lead an amazing life. She not only starred in one of the most popular & well known series ever, but she's met famous political figures & Hollywood stars. She's gone through incredible hardships in order to get where she is today, and she writes a fantastic book to boot! The autobiography is easily accessible to both fans of ST & those who just want a nice book to read. Unfortunately this book has gone out of print, but it's well worth the time to track down a copy to own. The book has to be one of the most well written autobiographies I've read in a while, and that includes the ones I've read in the years since.

Mallory says

Let's face it, who doesn't love Nichelle Nichols? She's had an amazing career in entertainment, rubbed elbows with some of the most influential people of our time and she inspired millions of little girls to strive to get on to their own Enterprise, whatever it may be. I thought her book was brilliant and honest. As far as I'm concerned, she's royalty, Hollywood or otherwise.

Mauojenn ~ *Mouthy Jenn* ~ says

The lovely Nichelle Nichols is one of my idols, since I was a kid.

I grew up on watching reruns of Star Trek and then of course going to see all the Star Trek movies. I wanted to be her. How cool was she... **VERY!** I absolutely loved this book and am now purchasing it to have my own copy. :)

Peter Hofstra says

Loved the behind the scenes on Star Trek. I read one review where they found her biography to be very self-indulgent. I disagree. I think she gave us so much of who she is as Nichelle Nichols other than Uhura. Understanding that give me deeper insight into her love and affinity for Star Trek, and for the enduring power of the Star Trek universe.

Two things I did not know, one was a relationship with Gene Roddenberry, The other far more personally intriguing was her conversation with Martin Luther King Jr.

Emily Saaen says

This one could have been named "The world revolves around ME". In this book Ms. Nichols comes across as a very self-indulgent person. Hard-working, no doubt, but too ideal and all winged-haloed, beautiful, faultless, fierce, independent, strong, loving, insert_anything_positive_here. Even when she speaks about someone else - it screams "Look, how good it is of ME to value this other person!" Probably, it's not her fault, but her editors and co-authors could have done a better job, should they tried to make her less one-dimensional and more human.

After reading this book (and it took me whopping 3 days, it just dragged on and on) I like Uhura much more than I like Nichols.

Bev says

In *Beyond Uhura*, Nichelle Nichols tells her story from the beginnings growing up in a socially progressive family through her teen years as a young singer/dancer who had already been praised by Josephine Baker and worked with Duke Ellington. She got her first job at the age of fourteen working in a cast at the Sherman House Hotel which portrayed many of the tremendous acts which had been staged at the Sherman House's College Inn supper club in the twenties: Fred and Adele Astaire, Duke Ellington, Al Jolson, Irving Berlin and others. Ms. Nichols helped re-create the appearance of Katherine Dunham and her troupe. From those early years, she went on to travel solo as a singer/dancer and finally worked her way to her first television screen appearance in a new show by a new producer--*The Lieutenant* by Gene Roddenberry.

Little did she know what working with Roddenberry on that first series would lead to. Nichelle is, as far as I'm concerned, the first lady of *Star Trek*. (Yes, I know that title is most often given to Majel Barrett as Gene's wife.) She is beautiful, a great actress, and an even better singer. She had a tremendous effect on the entry of women and minorities into the space program. Yes, her autobiography is just a little self-indulgent--but she's earned it. (Show me someone in the entertainment world who isn't. Most are even more so.) And..she manages through each of the negative incidents in her life--from being not only a woman in Hollywood, but a black woman in Hollywood--to remain very positive throughout.

A fascinating (to quote Mr. Spock) read. I have always enjoyed her as Uhura. I enjoyed this book and its look at her life before and outside of *Star Trek*.

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Judy says

Nichelle reveals the Hollywood shuffle game and tells us of conservative suits behind the scenes. *Star Trek*- big ideas, big egos, and big legends...
