Star Trek: The Movie

"NO!" — David Shaw

I have never been, nor will I ever be a Trekkie. I used to watch the television series without the religious zeal found among most of the viewers. Thus, when I heard that a movie was being made out of everyone's favorite icon, I withheld my enthusiasm. Thinking that was hyped as much as this movie could possibly live up to expectations. The Star Trek movie not only fails to meet expectations but succeeds in disappointing all but the kids who were weaned on Star Trek.

Let's start at the beginning. We see lots of purple stuff and then a Klingon battle cruiser with pilots that do not look or sound like the old Klingons we came to know and love. What is the purple stuff? If you honestly don't know, I'll answer that for you; we are immediately whisked away to Vulcan, where Spock has just failed his Kohlin training. Will any of these flashbacks make sense? Yes, and that is where Spock has just failed his Kohlin training. Will any of these flashbacks make sense? Yes, and that is where the bordom begins.

An older and paunchier Admiral Kirk and his older, paunchier crew have been assigned to the refit of Enterprise in order to find out what the purple stuff is and to prevent it from eating the Earth. As the plot (or lack thereof) unfolds, we learn that there is a ship in the middle of the aforementioned purpleness, and this ship is inhabited by something/somebody called V Ger. Kirk receives his usual flash of brilliance, and the Earth is saved.

This is, essentially, the plot. It would have been fine as a standard one-hour episode, but cannot possibly entertain for two hours. Leonard Nimoy, William Shatner, DeForest Kelley, Stephen Collins, George Takei, Walter Koenig, Nichelle Nichols, Majel Barrett, Grace Lee Whitney, and Paul Kamazona. Directed by Robert Wise, screenplay by Harold Livingston, story by Alan Dean Foster, produced by Gene Roddenberry. A Paramount Picture.

The five-year mission is over. Two-and-a-half years later, most of television's favorite starship crew have signed up for another hitch aboard the USS Enterprise. The captain, first officer, and medical officer have gone their separate ways. The Enterprise itself is undergoing renovations in an orbiting drydock high above San Francisco. All's right with the galaxy.

Until, true to the laws of fiction, something happens.

A dark blue alien energy cloud of improbable size and uneven temperature surface in from interstellar space, eats a few starships and heads for Earth. A Starfleet bureaucrat decides that the only ship near enough to meet the menace is the partially-refitted Enterprise, with him as commander. That bureaucrat is Admiral James T. Kirk.


The movie begins.

"YES!" — Shawn Wilson

rumored that Star Trek would be revived as either a highly-modernized or a highly-modernized- prided film. Then Star Wars came out, made $400 million and decided for Paramount Pictures that a big movie was in order. That's when the waiting began, mostly by the more rabid of Trek's fans, the omnipresent Trekkies.

They've been waiting long enough, in fact, to make this what is called a "long-awaited movie". The plot, effects, new props and redesigned sets were subject to the highest pre-release secrecy in years. This is what happens when the most expensive ($40 million plus) film in history may not be ready on time.

The Enterprise, as Kirk tells the new Science Officer, has to out off in twelve hours whether it's ready or not. Ah, art imitates life after all. As late as a month before release, Paramount was still cutting and pasting the film, having little (or no) idea if Star Trek would be in the theaters on December 7. Since it was, Paramount did not have to pay the theaters the several million dollars promised in rental guarantees.

Much of this delay — and the increase in budget from $18 million to $45 million — was due to the special-effects mess of last winter. The original effects team, headed by pioneer Robert Abel, was fired. Abel cited creative differences; Paramount said that he failed to deliver a promised camera device. The studio then hired two masters in the field — John Dylkstra (Star Wars, Pleasure Island) for the space set-up, and his brother John Dylkstra (Phantom of the Paradise) for the ground set-up.

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