



Star Trek Beyond: Perhaps the Boldest Adventure Yet

Star Trek Beyond, the 13th film in the *Star Trek* movie franchise and the third in the new reboot series of films produced by JJ Abrams, reunites the cast and crew of the starship USS *Enterprise* (NCC-1701) from the last two *Star Trek* films in what is perhaps their boldest adventure yet. Directed by Justin Lin, best known for his work on *Fast & Furious 6*, and written by Simon Pegg, who portrays the *Enterprise* chief engineer Montgomery "Scotty" Scott, *Star Trek Beyond* delivers fast-paced suspense and a fascinating story that both casual moviegoers and longtime devoted Trekkies (such as yours truly) will enjoy without disappointment.



The film commences with Captain James T. Kirk (played by Chris Pine) on a diplomatic mission to the planet Teenax where things quickly don't go as planned as the planet's indigenous aliens who resemble space alien dogs jump on top of him to attack him. Fortunately Scotty beams up Kirk, but not before his uniform shirt gets tattered and ripped, as was often the case with William Shatner's Captain Kirk in numerous episodes of the original *Star Trek* television series.

We quickly learn from the captain's log that the *Enterprise* is well into the third year of her five-year mission, which began at the end of the last film *Star Trek Into Darkness*. The ship's close quarters in deep space have taken a toll on the crew including the captain, who is only days away from celebrating his birthday.

A complacent Captain Kirk shares a drink with ship's surgeon Dr. Leonard H. McCoy (played by Carl Urban), while he confronts the reality of turning a year older than the age of when his father Lieutenant George Kirk died as he sacrificed himself in order to save the crew of the USS *Kelvin* (NCC-0514) which included James T. Kirk's mother, who was in labor with him.

In much need of respite, the *Enterprise* rendezvous at Starfleet's newest and most advanced space station *Starbase Yorktown* located on the furthest edge of Federation space, somewhat similar to the principal setting of the 1993-1999 series *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*. On the edge of Federation space, *Starbase Yorktown* sits by a dense uncharted nebula on the other side of which lies unexplored space.

The plot of the film quickly takes off when a small damaged and unidentified alien vessel emerges from the nebula toward *Yorktown*. The ship's occupant Kalara (played by Lydia Wilson) pleads for Starfleet to send a ship through the nebula in order to rescue her crew stranded on an M-class, or Minshara-class (that's Earth-like for non-Trekkies), planet called Altamid. With the *Enterprise* being the only available operational ship at *Yorktown*, which is said to be constructing a more advanced starship, it departs the station with Kalara.



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Successfully traversing the nebula, the *Enterprise* finds itself at the doorstep of planet Altamid. Without warning, the *Enterprise* is quickly ambushed by a swarm of unknown alien ships that don't waste any time in pulverizing the *Enterprise*. The swarm slashes through the front of the secondary hull, taking out the ship's main deflector dish. With his ship everely damaged, outnumbered, and outgunned, Captain Kirk orders the crew to warp away. However, the swarm instantly cuts through the ship's two pylon struts that support the warp nacelles. With the nacelles gone, the *Enterprise* loses the ability to engage warp speed. Meanwhile, the ship is also being boarded by enemy troops.

In the midst of the onboard invasion, *Enterprise* first officer and science officer Commander Spock (played by Zachary Quinto) soon learns the identity of the leader of the attack: Krall (played by Idris Elba).

Damaged beyond repair, the *Enterprise's* saucer is caught in the planet's gravity unable to escape. Kirk orders the crew to abandon ship; however, many of the ejecting escape pods are either destroyed or captured by Krall's swarm ships. Kirk, Chekov (played by the late Anton Yelchin who was recently was killed at age 27 by his own car in an accident), Scotty, Spock, and McCoy manage to avoid capture as they each safely arrive on the planet below.

As they are separated in groups at first, Kirk is paired with Chekov. The logical Spock and emotional McCoy are stranded together, making for some of the film's best humorous lines, and Scotty is by himself until he runs into a friendly alien and ally named Jaylah (played by Sofia Boutella). This all quickly takes place early in the film, as it sets the stage for the remaining majority of the film.

Jaylah leads her new friend Scotty to her "house," which fortunately turns out to be a crash-landed but fully intact century-old Federation starship, the USS *Franklin* (NX-365). Launched in the 22nd century and reportedly missing in action in 2163, the *Franklin* was Earth's first starship to attain the speed of Warp 4.

The *Franklin's* design also bears a striking resemblance to the century-older *Enterprise* (NX-01), Earth's first warp 5 ship, commanded by Captain Jonathan Archer (played by Scott Bakula), from the franchise's last incarnation on television *Star Trek: Enterprise*. With the *Franklin*, numerous references to *Star Trek: Enterprise* are made, such as mentions of "spatial torpedoes," "pulse phase cannons," "pulverized hull plating," "MACOs" (pronounced "MAY-ko"), and the year-long "Xindi war," which was the primary story arch for the third season of *Star Trek: Enterprise*.

These and many other references to the various incarnations of *Star Trek* are sure to bring a smile on the face of any hardcore *Star Trek* fan. Also included is a touching tribute to the late Leonard Nimoy (who played the "prime" Spock in the original *Star Trek* series, the first six movies as well as the last two films, and a 1991 two-part episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, entitled "Unification").



Paramount Pictures

In going through the belongings of “prime” Ambassador Spock, Zachary Quinto’s Spock discovers a photo of the original *Enterprise* crew from the 1989 film *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier*. Prominently featured on the screen in tribute to *Star Trek*’s 50th anniversary, this photo (shown above) shows William Shatner as Kirk (center), Leonard Nimoy as Spock, George Takei as Sulu, Walter Koenig as Chekov, James Doohan as Scotty, DeForest Kelley as Dr. McCoy, and Nichelle Nichols as Uhura.

However, the film isn’t intended only for the most diehard of Trekkies; both Justin Lin and Simon Pegg deliver an exciting action-packed film that rivals and perhaps even exceeds many of Marvel’s recent blockbuster superhero movies. The acting is top notch, but Idris Elba steels the film with his strong portrayal of the main antagonist Krall, who has a most complex and torn past that you will have to watch to understand, since we don’t want to give away too much about the film in this review.

The movie is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) for “sequences of sci-fi action and violence.” The film does, however, contain some foul language. Unfortunately, both the script writer Simon Pegg and director Justin Lin also used the movie as an opportunity to interject the politically correct pro-LGBT agenda in the form of small scene implying the character Sulu (played by John Cho) as being homosexual, shortly after the *Enterprise* docks at *Yorktown*.

The innuendo highlights the growing trend to further promote the LGBT agenda in movies. Although only a small part of the movie, it does raise a red flag for those seeking to enjoy a family friendly space adventure film.

The film also confronts political issues such as the impact of Federation territorial expansion, asking the



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question, just how far is too far and is it worth it? And as for the gallant crew of the starship *Enterprise*, their mission has been and *continues* to be one of peace and exploration, boldly going where no man has gone before.

Photos: Paramount Pictures; top photo shows Spock (Zachary Quinto), Jaylah (Sofia Boutella), and McCoy (Carl Urban) from Star Trek Beyond



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