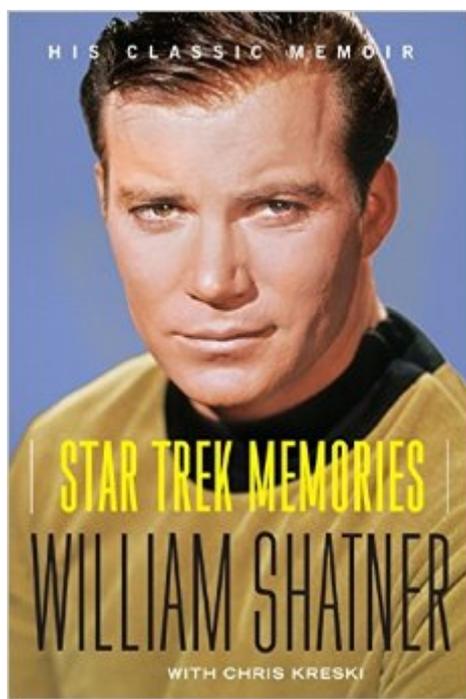


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Star Trek Memories



Synopsis

A living pop culture legend and one of American film and television's most enduring stars, William Shatner will forever be associated with the role of James T. Kirk, captain of the starship Enterprise. *Star Trek Memories* is Shatner's classic behind-the-scenes look at the legendary series that continues to put forth movies, books, and series spin-offs decades after the last episode aired. A television phenomenon that suffered from shaky ratings from its first broadcast in 1966 through its entire run, *Star Trek* nevertheless exploded into a worldwide, billion-dollar industry. Avid Trekkers who were onboard at the launch, as well as fans of the later *Trek* incarnations, will be delighted with this eye-opening, eminently fascinating "captain's log" from James Kirk himself.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Before I start my review, let me address what I think is a bit of revisionism going on among *Star Trek* fans. Some reviews of "*Star Trek Memories*" (written by "Next Generation" snobs, no doubt) suggest that William Shatner had nothing to do with the success of "*Star Trek*," and that his career would have gone nowhere had he not been lucky enough to win the role of James T. Kirk. First, I would argue that after Gene Roddenberry, William Shatner is probably more responsible for the phenomenal success of *Star Trek* than any other person. Without his bold, histrionic, over-the-top performance as Kirk, I seriously doubt *Star Trek* would have achieved cult status shortly after its original cancellation in 1969. And without the development of that cult following into massive proportions, there would have been no movies, no "*Next Generation*," no "*Deep Space Nine*" or

"Voyager" or "Enterprise" - none of it. Second, Shatner was already established when he joined the "Star Trek" cast. Before Trek, Shatner had already played Shakespeare on stage, starred on Broadway, and appeared in major motion pictures (notably "Judgement at Nuremberg"). Love him or hate him, you can't deny that Shatner brought a unique talent to the original "Star Trek" that was crucial to the show's popularity. Anyway, on to the video review. "Star Trek Memories" is a highly condensed documentary based on Shatner and Chris Kreski's book of the same name. I recommend the book over the video - you've seen all the clips already, and after a while the documentary succumbs to "talking head" syndrome. But there are definitely some worthwhile moments here, thanks to generous allotments of time to Shatner's costars.

I saw this book in the bargain bin at the local Borders bookstore and being a fan of the original Star Trek movies, I couldn't resist it. Would this be a huge ego-trip recounting (and inventing) all of William Shatner's triumphs at the expense of his cast-mates? Would he spend too much time talking about his own brilliance instead of the input of the writers and directors? Would I hurl the book against the wall in disgust, vowing never to read another Star Trek autobiography again?

Surprisingly, the answer to all of these questions was "no". From his reputation I never thought I would say this, but Shatner really does not talk about himself enough in this book. I'll wait a moment while you digest this fact. The bulk of the book is spent describing the relationship between the writers and the directors, the producers and the writers, the producers and the directors, the producers and the studio, the writers and the studio, and everyone and Gene Roddenberry. Since Shatner was never involved in any of these early negotiations (with the exception of Star Trek 5) quite a lot of the story is told by large quotations of the people involved. This leads to a somewhat balanced, though occasionally dry, representation of all that goes on behind the scenes of a multi-million dollar movie franchise. Fortunately the stories of the back-stabbing and double-dealing are wildly entertaining in their own right, so the book doesn't suffer much as a result of this. There aren't a lot of amusing or entertaining anecdotes here nor is there much of anything resembling personal remembrances. At times, one has to stop and remember that this was actually written by someone who was part of the cast and not some random Trek fan doing research and interviews.

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