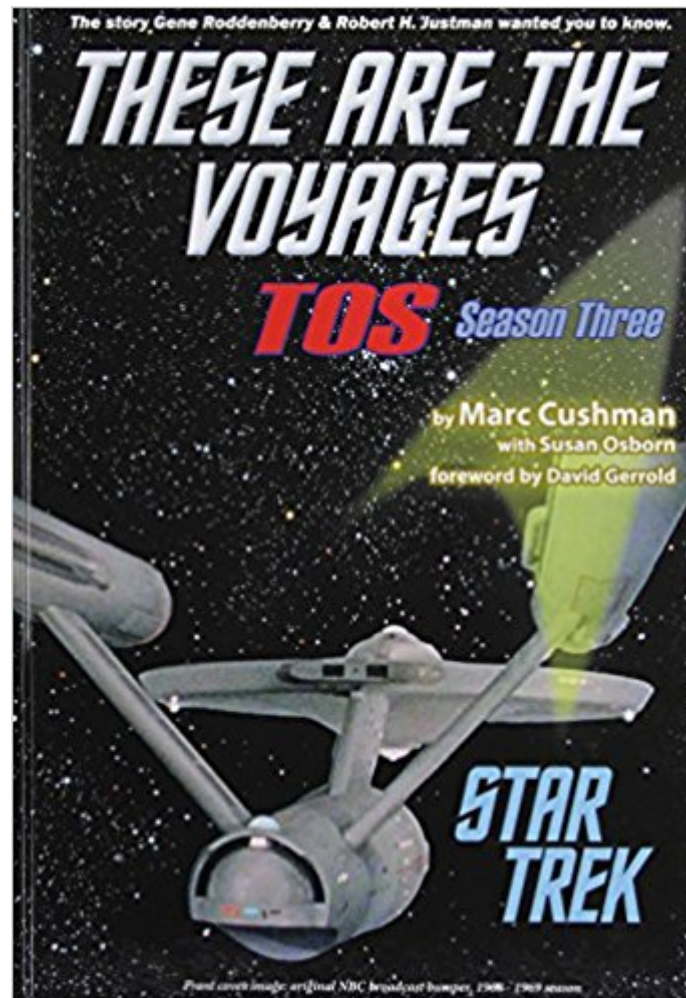




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These Are The Voyages: Tos: Season 3 (Star Trek: These Are The Voyages)



Synopsis

Marc Cushman's biography of Star Trek® the original series (TOS) takes you back in time for the final season of this iconic television show, to the production offices, the writers' room, onto the soundstages, and in front of your TV sets for what many thought would be Star Trek's final voyage. Included are hundreds of memos between Roddenberry, the producers and staff, production schedules, budgets, fan letters, behind-the-scene images, and the TV ratings. You'll find out the real reason Star Trek® was cancelled. So buckle your seat belts, this final trek gets really bumpy.

--This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Book Information

Series: Star Trek: These Are the Voyages

Hardcover: 736 pages

Publisher: Jacobs Brown Press; 1st edition (January 2, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0989238172

ISBN-13: 978-0989238175

Product Dimensions: 1.8 x 7.2 x 10.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars 78 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #520,117 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #114 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Television > Reference #183 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Television > Guides & Reviews #465 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Television > History & Criticism

Customer Reviews

Marc Cushman is an author and Los Angeles based screenwriter and director. His television writing assignments include scripts for Star Trek: The Next Generation, Beyond Belief: Fact or Fiction, and Diagnosis: Murder. His feature film credits include Desperately Seeking Paul McCartney, The Magic of Christmas, and In The Eyes Of A Killer. As a writer/producer, Marc created and served as show runner for two TV series: the cult comedy Channel K and its spin-off, the original Bachelor Pad. Marc is the author of the "biography of a TV show," I Spy: A History Of The Groundbreaking Television Series (McFarland & Co., 2007), and the definitive examination of the making of the original Star Trek series, with his 1,700 page, three-volume set, These Are The Voyages, TOS.

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I have had the chance to read these books from the very beginning, courtesy of the publishing group. Lucky me. I have also posted this review under the first two volumes of this trilogy, so if you've read those reviews, then this will just be a reminder of how essential these books are to the real Star Trek mavens. History is hard to pin down, especially when it can be viewed from so many perspectives. With that in mind, Marc Cushman has done the most remarkable history of Star Trek TOS that I've read in my long association and love affair with iconic Trek. Marc has talked to those who were really there in the trenches during the three seasons that Trek graced prime time NBC television. He has read thousands of documents and reconstructed how this show began, its initial growing pains, and the harshness of its last gasps for life. Riddled with quotes from Bobby Justman's infamous memos and crackling with notes from actors, writers, directors, ADs (assistant directors, the heart of the set) and countless other production folk, Marc's trilogy of "These are the Voyages" books read like high drama. We are brought right into studio and sound stages as the show is conceived, reconceived, cast, recast, and finally bursts into the world's consciousness. I was lucky enough to have written for Star Trek, and even luckier to have had a thirty year television writing and producing career jump-started by breaking into Trek with "The Tholian Web". I went through the process of "spec-ing" a script, selling the idea and then writing the script through a final draft. I was amazed that Marc seemed to have been in the script editor's room as that script was pounded into the episode that was finally shot. I know from first-hand experience that he has captured the whole process as no other Trek historian has been able to do. That doesn't mean that other books haven't brilliantly elucidated some aspect of Trek, whether as actors, writers, producers and below the line talent, but it does mean that Marc has given us a PH.D. quality analysis of the whole enchilada. Sometimes this set of books show us things we might not want to know, such as realizing that Harlan Ellison's original wonderful script, "City of the Edge of Forever," did NOT make it to the screen. That much loved show was dismantled piece by piece as the producers tried to fit the story into a budget that could not handle Harlan's concept. Even with a WGA award winning sci-fi writer, the exigencies of money and production won out, and yet we still got one of the best Star Trek episodes ever aired. We learn, step by step, how that script morphed, and sometimes that learning is painful. On the other hand, Marc displays much grace and veracity in showing that the much maligned writing and

producing staff members of the third season were not the failures they have often been rumored to be. I knew Fred Freiberger and Arthur Singer. I worked with them throughout my career, and I found them to be both knowledgeable and creative writers. They were bound by network demands, budget chains and Paramount disinterest in ways that former producers and writers were not, or at least not to the same extent. I watched the wonderful director Ralph Senensky get fired from "The Tholian Web" for taking the time he had to have and doing the job they were paying him to do, when shows from the first two seasons went over in days and dollars and did not lose their directors. One of the major difficulties for any writer is accepting criticism. We all take it personally, even if the comments are usually offered with the best intentions. After working in Hollywood for years, I taught screenwriting at UCLA and UCR. If Marc's books had been available when I was teaching, I would have required all three books as reading for my classes because of the wealth of script critiques held in the memos and letters sent between production, studio and writers. If you are thinking of buying a "how-to" book on scripting or production, buy these books. You will find a treasury of information between the book covers. Finally, in summation, Marc Cushman has reported the problems of the third season with a wise eye and deft pen. He's commented on Trek in perhaps the most riveting account of a show we thought we already knew and taught us there was so much more for us to learn and love. Thanks for all those hours, Marc Cushman. This is the ultimate Trek Bible.

This whole series goes above and beyond. This is NOT recycled stuff from other ST books, this is new stuff. This person took the time and energy to do it RIGHT. This is WORTH every fan of TOS to read. All three books. The first behind-the-scenes books in a LONG time I felt were truly worthwhile. So much so that I was waiting, and checking often, for the third season one to come out. And bought it the instant it did. I've been... less than complimentary about other ST books. For reason. You may or may not agree with my reasoning. THIS WHOLE SERIES... has been very good and a breath of fresh air. Offering NEW information. For a change. I have a huge problem with others just... feeding off the Star Trek food-tank WITHOUT actually creating anything NEW. So many so-called "authors" have just, well, for lack of a better term, regurgitated... information that is readily available in, in some cases, MANY other places. This ENTIRE SERIES does NOT do that. It does, from time to time, re-tell a few of the ST stories. But by and large, no. What you get is a different look at Trek and some of it will surprise you. It surprised me. LOVE this series of books.

What an accomplishment! These three volumes go episode by episode in excruciating (or, for me, ecstatic) detail. I always thought these stories sprung from the author's head mostly fully formed -- this could not be further from the truth. Marc Cushman has put together a fascinating look at the creation of one of the most iconic TV shows of all time. Each volume is based on hundreds of sources, including magazine articles dating back to the 60s, his personal interviews with dozens of actors (even those with minor parts) and crew, and lots more. If you are a hardcore fan like me that is into this stuff, this, along with its two companion books, is the ultimate in behind-the-scenes Star Trek.

Each of the three volumes of this series is the most incredibly detailed and nuanced episode-by-episode and blow-by-blow description of what went on behind the scenes of the making of the original 'Star Trek' TV series. Sometimes the accounts you've heard about the principals involved, good and bad, turn out to be overly simplistic. With access to all the original memos, and interviews both past and specifically for this book, a very complete picture is presented. What's impressed me in all three volumes is how much effort and trouble went into taking a good 'Trek' story and making it better, and still doing it affordably. In this, the third season, where several chances to get a better time slot than the Friday 10pm graveyard are one by one taken away by bad luck, and the network obviously wants to kill the show, you do see that start to slip. With a bare-bones budget, a new producer, and chances of renewal getting dimmer by the week, the principal players start to walk away, either fully or in a day-to-day sense. Still, the third season produced some real gems.

For many fans, the third season of Star Trek did not seem to be as high a quality as the first two. There are many reasons this was so, and this book dives into them all. It's done with great care and love, however, absolving, for the most part, the new producer who was charged with putting the show out ON BUDGET, and been scapegoated every since. It does not wholly absolve "Saint Gene" Roddenberry, who made some questionable decisions which also impacted the quality of the show. But it finds something praiseworthy in every episode, even "Spock's Brain" and "The Turnabout Intruder." If you read this book, and then watch each episode, as I did (yay streaming video!) you will get a lot more appreciation for the show, the writers, the cast, the crew. Truly an extraordinary voyage.

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