

= Spock Must Die ! =

Spock Must Die ! is a novel based on the American science fiction television series Star Trek : The Original Series . It was published in 1970 by Bantam Books , and was the first original novel for adults based on the series . The only previous works had been comic books , short @-@ story adaptations of the television episodes and the children 's book Mission to Horatius . The novel details the creation of a tachyon copy of Spock to investigate the destruction of the Organians ; without the intervention of the Organians , war erupts between the Klingons and the Federation . Confusion about the two Spocks allows the new Spock to defect to the Klingons . With the war going badly for Starfleet , the Enterprise travels to Organia to investigate .

The novel was written by James Blish , who had written the adaptations of the television episodes . Blish wanted to kill off the popular Spock character to surprise readers . It was the only original novel for adults based on the franchise until 1976 's Spock , Messiah ! , and was reprinted numerous times with different covers . It was included in 1978 's The Star Trek Reader IV . Critics reviewing the novel shortly after its release praised the book as a good example of character duplication in science fiction , but later reviews were mixed . Criticism was directed at the character viewpoints presented in the novel , and later reviewers were less enthusiastic about the work overall .

= = Plot = =

Doctor Leonard McCoy and Engineer Montgomery Scott discuss McCoy 's fear of the transporter . McCoy posits that an original person is killed upon dematerialization and a duplicate is created at the destination . Scotty explains that the technology converts matter into energy , transmits it and reassembles it into the same original object , but McCoy is not convinced and he wonders what happens to the soul in a transporter beam . The conversation is interrupted by the news that the Organians appear to have been destroyed by the Klingon Empire . The Organians had been enforcing a peace treaty between the Klingons and the Federation . The Enterprise is currently a long way from Federation space .

As they journey towards the Klingon neutral zone , Scotty tinkers with the transporter . He develops a method to make a temporary tachyon copy of a crewman that could be transported a much greater distance than the standard range of a transporter beam , enabling the Enterprise to place an agent on Organia long before the ship could reach the planet . Spock is chosen , but a permanent duplicate is created unexpectedly upon transportation ? something at Organia has functioned as a perfect , impenetrable mirror for the tachyons . When the duplicate returns , the crew is confused by the two Spocks . The two Spocks are psychically linked , and the original determines that the copy is acting as an agent for the Klingons . After faking a mental breakdown and barricading himself in sick bay , the copy escapes on a shuttlecraft . ( The copy had needed time and facilities to manufacture chirality @-@ reversed amino acids . He had undergone a total left @-@ to @-@ right inversion , down to the atomic scale ; to survive , he had to include the inverse forms of amino acids in his diet . )

The Enterprise receives communiqués indicating that the war is going badly for the Federation . Arriving at Organia , the crew are affected by a powerful mental disturbance centered on the planet ; the effects are worse for Kirk , Scotty , and Spock when they transport down to the planet surface . Kirk identifies this Spock as the duplicate . Realizing their danger via the psychic link , the real Spock arrives on the planet and saves Kirk and Scotty by killing the duplicate . They discover that the Organians are not dead , but imprisoned ; however , the Organians report that a thought @-@ screen device , deployed there by the Klingons to block the Organians ' powerful mental abilities , would ultimately destroy their race . Scotty disables the Klingon device , freeing the Organians and disabling the thought screen around the planet . In retaliation , the Organians imprison the Klingon race on their homeworld for a thousand years . The Enterprise departs and continues on its five @-@ year mission of exploration .

= = Production = =

The first works of fiction based in the Star Trek universe were the Star Trek comic books , which began publication in 1967 . These were followed by short story adaptations of the episodes of Star Trek : The Original Series by James Blish during the same year . In 1968 , the children 's book Mission to Horatius was published , which was the first novel based on Star Trek to feature an original story . For the first original novel for adults , Blish wanted to kill off a highly popular character to surprise readers . Unexpectedly , Spock had been the most popular character in the TV series , more popular than Captain Kirk . Blish discussed the plot with his wife , Judy , who also preferred Spock to Kirk . So Blish chose to kill off Spock .

The plot , featuring both the Klingons and the Organians , follows up to the episode " Errand of Mercy " , which had previously been adapted into a short story by Blish . The story also features references to other works of fiction . Mervyn Peake 's Gormenghast series of novels is referenced in the name of an alien species called " Gormanghastlies " , and one of the plot points is based around a language featured in James Joyce 's Finnegans Wake . It also uses the word " mathom " which was later considered to be a deliberate reference to J. R. R. Tolkien 's The Lord of the Rings universe . The novel doesn 't reset the universe once more to that seen in the television series , something unusual for the book line . Instead , the Klingon Empire is left unable to make any space flight for a thousand years , and the character of Koloth is stuck forever in an asymptotically slowing distortion of local time .

Spock Must Die ! was published in February 1970 , and due to the cancellation of Star Trek a year earlier it included a message from Blish for fans to rally in order to renew the series . Sales of the book were good , and it was intended that Blish would continue to write new original novels set in the Star Trek universe . This plan was cancelled after Blish 's death , and a further novel for adults would not be released until 1976 's Spock , Messiah ! by Theodore R. Cogswell and Charles A. Spano , Jr .. In the meanwhile between those two books , Alan Dean Foster wrote further adaptations of the animated episodes from the series which began to be published in 1974 . It was also included in The Star Trek Reader IV , a 473 @-@ page anthology published in 1978 . Spock Must Die ! has been reprinted multiple times ; by 1984 it had been printed 17 times by Bantam Books . It has had a number of cover redesigns in later editions . By 2006 , an original paperback edition was valued at between \$ 5 to \$ 15 .

= = Reception = =

Brian M. Stableford 's 1979 work about James Blish 's career , A Clash of Symbols , described the book as a " combination of space opera and whimsy , quite typical of the Star Trek mythos " . He thought that the sequences in the book would have been too expensive for the television series , although it was structured in a similar manner as an episode with " sub @-@ climaxes that one can easily imagine would bracket commercial breaks " . In Strother B. Purdy 's The Hole in the Fabric ( 1979 ) , Spock Must Die ! was referred to as a " rather well @-@ written " example of the duplication of characters in science fiction . It was considered to be a play on elements of Martin Gardner 's The Ambidextrous Universe and Lewis Carroll 's Through the Looking @-@ Glass . It was described as an " intriguing idea " by astrobiologist Daniel Glavin in New Scientist magazine in 2010 .

The review by Science Fiction and Fantasy Book Review magazine in 1979 described the novel as " one of the better original novels written from the series " . In Don D 'Amassa 's Encyclopedia of Science Fiction ( 2005 ) , the book was described as " interesting historically , but it is a mediocre piece of fiction . " British writer George Mann criticised Blish 's Star Trek work , including Spock Must Die ! in the relevant entry in The Mammoth Encyclopedia of Science Fiction ( 2001 ) . He said that they " were obviously written primarily for money and do not display the literary and intellectual skill evident in his earlier work " . Ellen Cheeseman @-@ Meyer read the book for Tor.com in 2012 . She felt that the plotline involving the women on board the Enterprise sexually desiring the new Spock was " unsettling " as she thought it said " that sex with Spock ... is the cure for racism that 23rd century women cannot find anywhere else " and stated that Janice Rand deliberately pursued men so as not to become involved with Captain Kirk . However , Cheeseman @-@ Meyer said that it was

" worth reading as a celebration of the world Star Trek envisioned , however strange that could sometimes be . "