

= Star Trek : Voyager (season 4) =

The fourth season of the American science fiction television series Star Trek : Voyager commenced airing on UPN in the United States on September 3 , 1997 , and concluded on May 20 , 1998 , after airing 26 episodes . Set in the 24th century , the series follows the adventures of the Starfleet and Maquis crew of the starship USS Voyager after they were stranded in the Delta Quadrant , far from the rest of the Federation . Series four featured the debut of new main cast member Jeri Ryan as Seven of Nine (Seven) , and the departure after two episodes of Jennifer Lien , who portrayed Kes during the first three seasons of the show .

Following the end of the third season , executive producer Michael Piller left the staff . Brannon Braga was brought on as co @-@ executive producer because Jeri Taylor was intending to leave the show and wanted a hand @-@ over period . When she left at the end of the season , Braga became executive producer in her place . With the addition of Seven , a series of episodes focused on her backstory and relationship with other characters . The season opened with a Nielsen rating of 8 @.@ 8 % for " Scorpion " , which was higher than any episode since the pilot . " Unforgettable " received the lowest rating with 3 @.@ 4 % .

The fanbase initially responded negatively to Ryan 's addition to the cast , raising concerns over Seven 's sexual attractiveness , which had the potential to overshadow the story . But following the airing of the episodes , critics applauded Ryan 's acting skills and her role as Seven , noting that it would improve the quality of the stories and the series itself . Acclaimed episodes like " Scorpion " , " Year of Hell " , and " Hope and Fear " , led critics to describe the fourth season as one of the best . The episode " Living Witness " , directed by Tim Russ , received special critical accommodation as one of the best episodes of the entire series .

= = Plot overview = =

The fourth season of Voyager introduces Seven of Nine (Seven) as a new crew member as she becomes separated from the Borg collective after the crew help the Borg to defeat Species 8472 . Captain Kathryn Janeway mentors Seven and helps her to rediscover her individuality and her humanity . Kes leaves the vessel after her powers increase , but pushes Voyager ten years closer to home as she departs . B 'Elanna Torres faces her Klingon heritage , while the Doctor confronts the rights of sentient holograms for the first time .

After the construction of a new Astrometrics lab , the crew enter Krenim space and go through the " Year of Hell " foretold in the season three episode " Before and After " . But the events of this year are undone with the destruction of the Krenim timeship . Voyager continues to encounter the Borg and enters Hirogen space , establishing contact with Starfleet for the first time since being stranded in the Delta Quadrant . The crew are cloned by an intelligent silver liquid on a demon class planet and the season ends with an alien seeking revenge who tries to trick the crew with a fake Starfleet vessel that can take them home to Earth .

= = Cast = =

= = = Main cast = = =

= = = Recurring cast = = =

= = Episodes = =

= = Production = =

== = Casting == =

An audition process was held for Seven of Nine (Seven) , a new character in the fourth season . Jeri Ryan attended for readings , and was cast in the role . She previously appeared in the science fiction television series Dark Skies on NBC , and found the change of characters amusing . " I was fighting the collective , the Hive on ' Dark Skies ' . Now I 'm part of the collective , the Borg " , she remarked . Ryan described Seven as " a dark character , stronger and more forceful than many female characters have been on Star Trek so far . " The initial fan reaction to Seven was mixed . Some fans accused the show of adding her to attract more 18 ? 35 male audience members , which co @-@ executive producer Brannon Braga denied .

The original Borg costume Ryan wore during the second part of " Scorpion " took approximately two and a half hours to apply . When Ryan was first measured for the outfit , the costume designers failed to take into account the full head prosthetic required for the first and second episodes of the season . Because of this error in measurement , the costume cut off Ryan 's carotid artery , causing her to pass out . After a nurse was called twice to supply oxygen , the costume was modified to prevent it from happening again .

A new costume was required for Ryan once Seven had the majority of her Borg implants removed . She wore a new silver jumpsuit for the following several episodes . During the filming of the episode " Day of Honor " , director Jesús Salvador Treviño criticized the outfit , saying that " almost any camera angle inevitably winds up emphasizing her sexuality . " Ryan described the new costume as " a little snug " ; she wore a corset @-@ like device which gave her the appearance of mechanical ribs . Treviño praised Ryan 's third costume , which replaced the silver jumpsuit , noting how it reduced her sexual characteristics : " It is much more sensible , because she 's still an attractive person but then you get away from that titillation stuff which I think is so demeaning not only to the audience , but it 's kinda of demeaning to what Star Trek is about " .

Season four also saw the departure of Jennifer Lien as Kes after her contract was not renewed . Lien appeared in the first two episodes of the season before being written out . Braga said that the character was not working on the show and that they needed to make room for Ryan in the cast . Lien later reprised her role as Kes in the season six episode " Fury " . Robert Picardo thought that the writers were partly responsible for the problems with Lien 's character due to the limitations they placed on Kes in the original concept for Voyager . As a member of the Ocampa species , for example , Kes was only allowed a short , seven @-@ year lifespan . Tim Russ , who portrays Tuvok , described the departure of Kess from the series as " gracious " and " poignant " .

== = Writing == =

Michael Piller left the staff of Voyager after the third season to work with Rick Berman on the script for the film Star Trek : Insurrection (1998) . Previously , he had worked as a consultant script editor for the series . Brannon Braga came in as a co @-@ executive producer after Jeri Taylor sought to reduce her involvement on the show . Braga originally joined the franchise when he was an intern on Star Trek : The Next Generation ; he went on to write more than 40 episodes as well as Star Trek Generations (1994) and Star Trek : First Contact (1996) . Taylor was initially daunted by the departure of Piller , but found that it opened up the ability to explore other types of stories . For example , the episode " Distant Origin " would not have been made with Piller on the staff because of its unusual plot structure ; the story focuses first on an alien race , not just the crew of Voyager . After watching the episode , Piller believed it was the best installment of Voyager at that time . After Taylor left the show at the end of the season , Braga became the executive producer .

With the addition of Seven to the crew , the writers incorporated the character 's backstory into the show . " The Raven " explores how Seven arrived in the Delta quadrant , while a variety of episodes show Seven rediscovering her humanity . Seven also brought a third @-@ party view of humanity that had previously been missing from Voyager . This outsider perspective was used earlier in the

franchise , with the roles of Spock in Star Trek : The Original Series and Data in Star Trek : The Next Generation . Russ felt that the majority of the episodes during the fourth season concentrated on the new character of Seven .

The writers also introduced relationships between Voyager 's crew , focusing on developing the connection between Tom Paris and B 'Elanna Torres , Tuvok and Neelix , and Kathryn Janeway and Chakotay . Both Russ and Kate Mulgrew believed that the writing improved during the fourth season .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

The season opened to a Nielsen rating of 8 @. @ 8 percent for the second part of " Scorpion " when it aired on September 3 , 1997 . A Nielsen rating of 8 @. @ 8 percent means the episode was watched by 8 @. @ 8 percent of those watching television at the time of broadcast . This was the highest rating for the series since " Caretaker " , the original pilot episode . Ratings for " The Gift " , the second episode of the fourth season , dropped to 5 @. @ 6 percent . However , only two other episodes during season four had ratings of 5 percent or higher , with " Revulsion " and the second part of " Year of Hell " gaining ratings of 5 percent and 5 @. @ 2 percent respectively . " Unforgettable " received the lowest rating of the season with 3 @. @ 4 percent . The season closed with " Hope and Fear " , which received a Nielsen rating of 4 @. @ 1 % .

The series remained UPN 's highest rated show . In September 1997 , Dean Valentine , the incoming chief of the network , promised to increase promotion of the show . In November 1997 , Voyager swapped timeslots with The Sentinel , moving from a 9 p.m. to 8 p.m. slot . The timeslot was changed because Voyager received higher ratings . It was hoped that the swap would have a lead @- @ in effect into The Sentinel . This timeslot change placed Voyager in direct competition against 3rd Rock from the Sun on NBC , The Drew Carey Show on ABC and Party of Five on Fox . Nevertheless , local providers started to swap from UPN to The WB in early 1998 , and ratings suffered . To combat this problem , the series was moved back to 9 p.m. from May onwards .

= = = Reviews = = =

Some members of the online Star Trek community complained about the addition of Seven of Nine (Seven) to the show before the season premiere , referring to Voyager as " Melrose Space " . The nickname amused Ryan , who hoped the fans would be won over during the course of the season . Once the episodes started to air for the first time , Ryan 's character increased in popularity amongst the fan base . Two months after the start of the season , Ryan attended her first science fiction convention ; she was overwhelmed by the fan response . The critics credited Seven 's presence on Voyager as a significant improvement , with the Seattle Post @- @ Intelligencer concluding that Voyager had " finally ... found its groove " . Writing for Dreamwatch , Gary Russell said that Ryan 's character worked well on the season from her first appearance . However , the Boston Herald argued that the show had swapped " sci @- @ fi for sex appeal " during the fourth season , but acknowledged Ryan was a good actress . It gave the season three out of five stars at the time of the DVD release .

In a review of " Scorpion , Part II " , the first episode of the fourth season , Tony Norman of the Pittsburgh Post @- @ Gazette noted several new elements . The episode , according to Norman , established the first ideological debate between Janeway and Chakotay since the original series pilot . Norman also noted that the new character of Seven would create a " source of tension " and " infuse the show with the edginess it desperately needs " . The addition of a Borg crew member , Norman argued , was the same type of " bold move " that occurred when Worf was added to the USS Enterprise in Star Trek : The Next Generation .

Writing for Den of Geek , Juliette Harrison described the fourth season as the best of the series .

She praised Seven 's introduction as an opportunity for existing characters , such as Tuvok . Harrisson highlighted several of the episodes of the season , pointing to " Living Witness " as a candidate for the best of the entire series . She criticized " Mortal Coil " and " Retrospect " for concentrating too much on the relationship between Seven and Janeway , to the detriment of other characters .

On the website Blastr , Lisa Granshaw included " Scorpion " , " Year of Hell " , " Living Witness " and " Hope and Fear in an unordered list of the top ten episodes of Voyager .

= = = Accolades = = =

The series was nominated for two Emmy Awards following the fourth season : " Year of Hell " was nominated for Outstanding Special Visual Effects for a Series , while " The Killing Game " received a nomination for Outstanding Hairstyling for a Series . Kate Mulgrew won the Saturn Award for Best Actress on Television for her performance as Captain Janeway . The Satellite Award for Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Series - Drama was awarded to Jeri Ryan at the 3rd Golden Satellite Awards .

= = Home media release = =