

This trek isn't really worth it, Trekkies

WARNING: All Trekkies prepare for disappointment. The Star Trek crowd is losing its touch.

After years of imaginative film and television appearances, the cast and crew of Starship Enterprise find themselves trapped in a foolish plot conceived to "Save the Whales."

While I strongly support conservationist programs, "Star Trek IV: the Voyage Home" (PG) is a bit much — although, true Trekkies will watch anything.

Imagine a gigantic black cylinder floating toward earth. This alien probe extends a giant volleyball from its belly and zaps all Earth power systems.

AS THE INTREPID Mr. Spock discovers, the alien probe came to



the movies
Dan Greenberg

earth to talk to humpback whales. By the 23rd century whales are extinct, so the probe gets angry and turns off all Earth power systems, which means the end of hi-tech civilization.

"Don't mess with Mother Nature" is indeed good advice. It's also true that 20th-century man has overhunted the humpback whale, but that does not support a two-hour film.

Since no humpback whales exist in the 23rd century, it's up to Admiral Kirk to save the day. William Shatner is back with the original cast — a little older, a little heavier and a lot slower but still our favorite intergalactic hero. Once again Leonard Nimoy directs as well as appears as the Vulcan, Mr. Spock.

Admiral Kirk time-travels back to the 20th century to get a couple of humpback whales for the alien probe to whistle at.

Is whale-napping a Federation offense?

Kirk and Crew are in enough trouble without another charge. Remember back in "Star Trek III" when Kirk disobeyed orders in order to save Spock? That led to the destruction of the Starship Enterprise.

IF YOU'VE FORGOTTEN all that, the first 10 or so minutes of "ST-IV" will refresh your memory. All Kirk and crew have to work with is an old Klingon ship, which they proceed to recon in their Vulcan exile.

"Beam me up, Scotty. There's no intelligent life in the script department."

As a matter of fact, the whole enterprise is flat. In an attempt to

lighten the tone, Director Nimoy and his crowd of scenarists produced a film lacking the sparkle and bright style that characterized previous "Star Trek" episodes.

Notably deficient is the acting, with Catherine Hicks as Dr. Gillian Taylor, a 20th-century marine biologist out to save the whales. Along the way she gives one of the bluffer and more unconvincing performances in recent history.

Of course, it may be the script with which she and everyone else is saddled. Even Shatner must bear the burden of lines such as, "C'mon, our world is waiting to be saved." Someone in the crew noted that they were between a rock and a hard place. With scripting like that, it's no wonder.

It's a shame that such a popular, slick entertainment vehicle without budget restrictions can't do better. Nonetheless, it's still fun, and along with all the Trekkies, I'll be waiting for "Star Trek V."

THE DETROIT Film Theater closes out its 26th season with three superb films. It will screen the 1985 Yugoslavian film "When Father Was Away on Business" (R) at 7 and 9:30 p.m. Friday. Winner of the Grand Prize at Cannes, the film tells a marvelously warm, wise and touching story about human jealousy.

Jean Renoir's 1939 classic "Rules of the Game" will be featured at 7 and 9:30 p.m. Saturday. Being shown is a newly struck print of what a 1982 international critics' poll termed one of the 10 greatest films

of all time.

The DFT season completes its retrospective of Kurosawa films at 7 p.m. Sunday with "Ran," an interpretation of "King Lear." Nominated for a number of Oscars, "Ran" won for costume design, reflecting its epic proportions and Kurosawa's

decade of preparation prior to filming.

All DFT screenings are in the auditorium of the Detroit Institute of Arts. The 27th season begins early next year and should, as always, provide a wide range of excellent film programming.



William Shatner, the intergalactic hero, returns in "Star Trek IV: the Voyage Home."



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