

**Star Trek: TOS (#16) – “The Final Reflection”**  
**Pocket Books | May 1984**

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Back Cover:

*Klingon Captain Krenn is a ruthless war strategist. But on a mission to Earth, Krenn learns a lesson in peace. Suddenly he must fight a secret battle of his own. His empire has a covert plan to shatter the Federation. Only Krenn can prevent a war – at the risk of his own life!*

Summary:

The Enterprise is docked at Starbase 12 for a little much-needed R&R. Several of the crew have discovered and begun reading a recently released book entitled “The Final Reflection”. Dr. McCoy gives a copy to Captain Kirk, who settles back into his quarters and begins reading... The book is a tale covering the time period of approximately twenty years since the Federation’s “first contact” with the Klingons, what the consequences were thereof, and contains much insight into the Klingon government, culture and race.

The primary character of the book is a young Klingon named Vrenn, who is a stranger in a strange land; he’s Klingon, but without a house to call his own. In a society that thinks in binary terms – there is "komerex" (that which grows, lives, expands, fights) and "keterex" (that which shrinks, dies, contracts, is defeated) – one cannot live on the fringe of society and expect to be a true Klingon. To be a true Klingon means to fight and expand the empire. Thus we are afforded the opportunity to experience his life from a lineless orphan to the Captain of a warship.

Despite his downfalls, Vrenn has been trained to play the live version of the game Klin’zha, a much more complicated form of chess that has an emphasis on combat. In this particular variation, the “reflective” game, both players take turns playing one set of pieces. By analogy to chess, only the white pieces would be set on the board, though not in their traditional locations; and by alternate turns Player B would be the King, and Player A would direct the other pieces. Thus good form for Player A in his first move would be moving the pieces so that mate would be impossible on the next turn (when the king changes hands and is controlled by the Player A and attacked by Player B) but inevitable on the second turn (when Player A again controls the pieces and can mate Player B). Thus the “reflective” game is a strategy game involving both “backstabbing” and “revenge,” making the game itself an ideal reflection of the key social forces of Klingon society.

During one such match, Vrenn gains the notice of a prominent Klingon admiral and is adopted into the House of Lineless Youth. His new father, “Thought Admiral” Kethas, is a brilliant war strategist who is also unsurpassed at the game of Klin’zha. Kethas schemes to get Vrenn into the Academy, and sends him off. While Vrenn's on a ship, he gets

promoted two ranks due to bravery in combat. Just as he's about to enjoy some well deserved shore leave, he's taken aside for "questioning" by security officers. It seems his father, the Thought Admiral, was a traitor. Or so they say.

Vrenn eventually is forced to take the name of Krenn, as a political expediency, and is made Captain of his own ship. Part of the price of this is he must travel to Earth to bring back a delegate from the Federation. Krenn becomes a key figure in a plot to bring about a war between the Klingon Empire and the Federation. He must determine who he can trust in order to prevent a needless, honorless war.

The rest of the book mostly deals with Vrenn (turned Krenn after he makes Captain) and how he finds out the truth about his parentage, how he forges a friendship with the first Ambassador to the Klingon Empire, Emanuel Tagore, and how he finds his own style of happiness and love -- which isn't that close to human style happiness and love at all.

Particular aspects of Klingon society are depicted within the book:

The fictional Klingon language klingonaase is introduced here, in advance of the creation of the canon version of the Klingon language, tlhIngan Hol. All warriors have names that start with a "K" -- they are those inducted into the Imperial Klingon Navy.

Much is made of the distinction between empire-building races -- such as the Klingons, the Humans and Vulcans with their Federation, and the Romulans -- and less driven races, whom the Klingons use as servants (kuve), and sometimes food. When an American Luddite attempts to inform the Klingon ambassador that not all humans are interested in space colonization, he is informed, "there are only empires, and kuve"; it is implied that the Klingon hopes that the word translates as "slave" -- or even "meat" -- rather than simply as "servant" or "servitor."

There's a scene in which he describes Krenn talking with the Federation ambassador, Talgore. And after a discussion in which Talgore adamantly states that he would oppose any war between the Federation and the Klingons, Krenn confesses that he just doesn't understand. Talgore's response is "That's all right...there's still a little time." It's a reflection of what many people face when coming in contact with a people or culture that's different from their own. Krenn's mindset is that of gaining an upperhand and thinking like that of a captain, while Talgore is there to create peace and understanding - even acceptance - between people of different worlds.

As might be expected from the title and the description of the "Reflective" game above, the novel concerns an intergenerational conflict within the Klingon government, between a faction wanting war with the Federation, and a faction desiring accommodation for fear of Klingon defeat. The Klingon ambassador and his associates play a surprising role in this conflict, one which remains secret until the publication of a "tell-all" book forty years later, one which is read by Captain Kirk

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