



Fearful Symmetry

Olivia Woods

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In our universe, a Cardassian sleeper agent--Iliana Ghemor--was once surgically altered to resemble and replace resistance fighter Kira Nerys, future Starfleet captain and hero of the planet Bajor's liberation. That plan never reached fruition, and the fate of the agent remained unknown...until now. Robbed of the past sixteen years, Iliana Ghemor is back with a vengeance. Over a decade and a half of imprisonment and abuse by her former masters has brought her to the brink of madness, sustained only by the twisted belief that she is, in fact, the real Kira Nerys. She has already made one near-successful attempt on the real Kira's life, but instead of assuming the identity of the woman she was intended to replace, Ghemor has set her sights on the most unexpected target of all: Kira's other double, the malicious Intendent, Bajor's iron-fisted ruler in the alternate reality commonly known as the "Mirror Universe." But far more is unfolding in the Mirror Universe than Ghemor realizes, and the heroes of Deep Space Nine somehow must stop the false Kira without derailing the delicate flow of history that must unfold if both universes, and countless others, are to survive.

Parallel stories set in both universes reflect and build upon each other in this Two-in-One "Flip Book," the continuation of both the ongoing DS9 saga as well as the Mirror Universe line of books.

Fearful Symmetry Details

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Pascal says

The first part, *Side one* as they call it, was ok. It's average but entertaining for the most part. The *side two* however was a real pain to read. It left me with the after taste of a chore you have to get through in order to access the next book in the series. The plot devices are hackneyed and obvious, the characters are stereotypical and boring. I'm a little scared that the same author wrote "Soul Key". I hope it's better than this one.

Greg says

An amazing book that continues the incredible ride that has been the reboot novels. Who would have thought that two novellas would enhance the legend of ds9 and its "universe" by so much? And the evil genius of the Obsidian order, their machinations and their long seated plots to rid the quadrant of the Bajorans and the fighting spirit forever are amazing. Evil, but amazing. My respect for ds9 has just gone into overdrive.

Angela says

Two seperate stories. One in the immediate aftermath of the attack on Kira, where Sisko gets a strange message from the prophets. The second in the mirror universe, following a young cardassians life. This feels short, and though there's a lot of nice character stuff, they feel more like short stories. This is not for the squeemish, as something really bad happens to a cardassian agent, and I mean really bad. A good read.

Adam says

I would rather have given the book a 3.5. It's good - and I especially like the backstory of a long-referenced, but never-seen Star Trek character - but it could have been a bit richer. And while I liked the idea of the books's construction, I felt the format was more window-dressing than substantive.

Filip S?awi?ski says

Olivia Woods made a great expansion of the episode "Second Skin". Iliana Ghemor feels like a classic Trek villain.

Jimyanni says

This continuation of the Deep Space Nine saga is as well-written as most have been, but it is in something of an experimental format which I didn't feel worked particularly well. It hearkens back to the old days of science-fiction pulps, when a book would often be composed of two shortish novellas, back-to-back so that

both "front" and "back" have their own cover art, and no matter which side of the book you held, you seemed to be looking at a "front"; inside, one would read through to roughly the mid-point, and then you would come to the end of the story you were reading and pass on to the end of the other story, upside-down.

This book is in this same format, although it is somewhat better justified in that the two stories are "symmetrical", each telling a story relating to the other from the viewpoint of a different character. Still, I didn't care for this format when it was used in the pulps, and I don't care for it now; I think it would have worked better to either alternate chapters, as is frequently done in stories that have parallel events happening, or better yet, if it had been told in two separate books, each continuing the story a bit farther than this book did. Had it not been for the odd format, I'd definitely have rated this book at five stars.

Maurice Jr. says

This book picked up from where Warpath left off with two different approaches to the same story. One was what we expected- DS9 in the aftermath of Commander Vaughn's mission to Harkoum to capture Taran'atar and rescue Ensign Prynn Tenmei. The Cardassian Woman was revealed to be the Mirror Universe Iliana Ghemor at the end of Warpath- here she explains that she came to this universe to stop her main universe counterpart from killing every Kira Nerys in every universe she can find (she already started with Intendant Kira Nerys of the Mirror Universe) and returning to the Mirror Universe to make herself the Emissary of the Prophets. This Iliana was surgically and psychologically altered from her true Cardassian form to look like Kira Nerys, and she now wants to be the only Kira anyplace. Interrogation of the various thugs captured on Harkoum revealed four to be her inner circle and that one, a Kressari named Shing-Kur, was her trusted right hand. They gave enough information for Captain Kira to figure out their next step.

The other story was Iliana's backstory. She was the only daughter of Legate Tekeny and Inquisitor Kaleen Ghemor, and grew up privileged. She persuaded her parents to send her to art school instead of forcing her to take a traditional role in Cardassian society, but Corbin Entek of the Obsidian Order had other plans. He saw her as a promising candidate for the Order, and did everything in his power to convince her to sign up. It took the death of her fiancée Glin Ataan Rugal to push her away from her artistic leanings and sign up. Glin Rugal was assigned to Gul Pirak's security force on occupied Bajor, and died when a terrorist bombed Pirak's mansion.

Iliana signed up with the Order, and when her training was complete, agreed to a dangerous mission. She was to be surgically and psychologically altered to be Kira Nerys, and inserted into her terrorist cell for a time, long enough to get all their secrets and then destroy them. She underwent the treatment, only to have Gul Dukat pull rank on Corbin Entek and set the real Kira free as a favor to her mother (once his comfort woman). He also took Iliana with him for his own sick purposes. Dukat secreted Iliana/Kira in the lowest level of a remote prison and kept her there for fifteen years while she went slowly insane. One day however, the prison came under attack by the Dominion. She and four other prisoners escaped via Dukat's private transporter to Harkoum with a cache of weapons, which is where Commander Vaughn found them in Warpath.

Zachary says

Literally the only complaint I have is that this novel barely progresses the ongoing plot. Instead we're treated to a small amount of progression and then half a novel of in-depth backstory creating one of the most compelling villains in Trek history and certainly in Trek-lit history. I can't wait to see where the Soul Key

takes things from here, because this novel was nothing like I expected, in the best ways possible.

Bradley says

Not too bad as Star Trek goes. Can't say it was the greatest, but then again I only half-liked the Deep Space Nine series anyhow. Not for me. Definitely not keeping it.

Luke says

The latest in the DS9 relaunch series, Fearful Symmetry is essentially two books in one. The first, titled "side A" follows directly on from the events of Warpath and generally centers around Kira Nerys.

The second, "side b" follows the tale of Illiana Ghemor, an agent of the Obsidian Order, first introduced in the DS9 series episode "Second Skin" The book follows her tale from her youth to her eventual recruitment by the Obsidian Order and later her assignment to replace Kira. The book fills in the back-story of Illiana, as to what happened to her after her assignment and her current motives.

Side a is written in standard third-person prose, and though it might sound a little picky, I was really annoyed with the formatting. The spaces between lines were so big, it was hard to tell if a paragraph was finished or not. That said, I did read this in the Kindle, so it's possible it's a problem unique to the digital version, or I could just have a setting wrong.

Side b is written primarily in the form of letters written to Illiana from a lover stationed on Bajor, which was a really nice touch and interesting to see the Cardassian perspective

Overall, not a bad read. Onto the next!

Daniel says

"Fearful Symmetry" certainly isn't bad, but it isn't amazing either. This is a two part book. The first half focuses on the Kira we all know from the television series and how she is handling her life post-attack. The second part is from the perspective of Iliana, the one from the "Prime" side. The portion that focuses on Kira is rather standard fare for the Deep Space Nine relaunch novels, but the Iliana section is somewhat different. With Kira, the reader sees how she builds herself again after the brutal attack by Taran'atar. With Iliana, they view the story of a woman whose life is turned inside out. This book was absolutely needed to understand how Iliana came to be as she is and why she lost her mind. "Fearful Symmetry" isn't my favorite relaunch novel, but it doesn't live up to the standards set by previous books.

Dan says

While Fearful Symmetry is well written and great insight into the character of Ghemor, it doesn't advance the

overall storyline a great deal. The backstory is very much appreciated, but I found myself wanting the story to get under way. Additionally, due to the fact that I have been spoiled by the very high quality of writing in the Deep Space Nine relaunch series so far, I felt that Fearful Symmetry was just a tiny bit lower on the scale than the previous books. The gimmick of the "flip book" idea was interesting, but it wasn't enough to save the story from getting into over-the-top territory at times with suspect motivations for many of the characters. Still, a welcome entry in the current storyline that helps the reader understand the reasons behind Iliana Ghemor's actions.

Full review: <http://treklit.blogspot.com/2015/06/F...>

Preston Pendergraft says

Outstanding if dark. I read it on Kindle so the flip book part did not come through like a physical book. I really enjoyed this book though the second part started off a little dull, but by the end I was interested in that character.

Crystal Bensley says

The second half of this book was really cool.

Derek Oberg says

I love the post-series Deep Space 9 books. I always wondered what happened to Iliana Ghemor (the Cardassian operative who was surgically altered to look like Major Kira). The previous book revealed that she was the big villain behind the current story line, but this is the first time that you actually get to spend time with her and see what happened to her after the end of the Occupation. Looks like it's off to the Mirror Universe for the resolution. Those stories are always hit-or-miss. We'll see how it goes.
