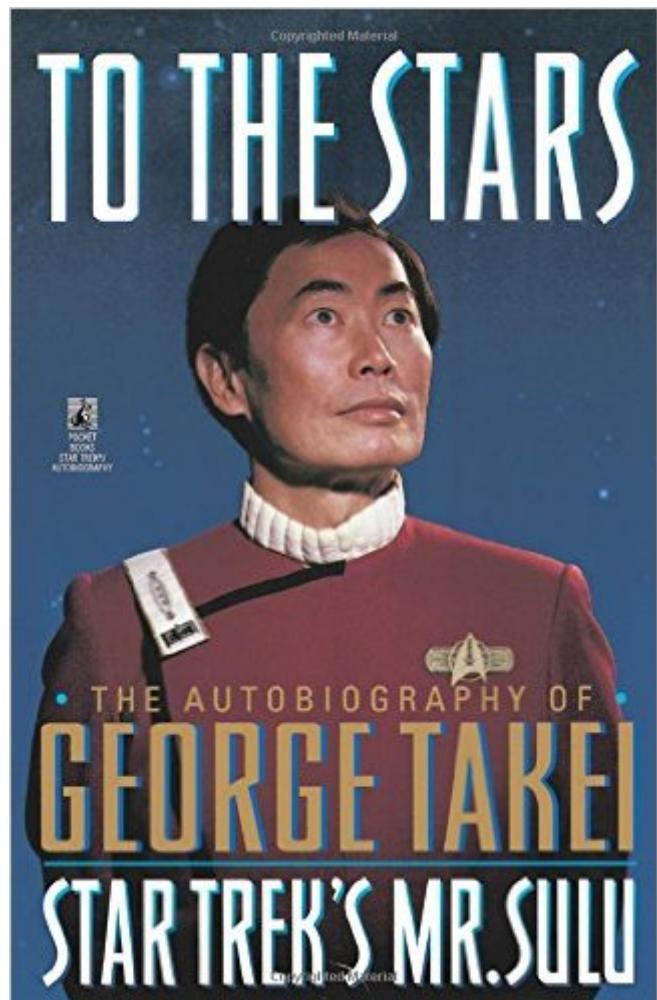


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To The Stars: The Autobiography Of George Takei, Star Trek's Mr. Sulu



Synopsis

Best known as Mr. Sulu, helmsman of the Starship Enterprise™ and Captain of the Starship Excelsior, George Takei is beloved by millions as part of the command team that has taken audiences to new vistas of adventure in Star Trek®--the unprecedented television and feature film phenomenon. From the program's birth in the changing world of the 1960s and death at the hands of the network, to its rebirth in the hearts and minds of loyal fans, the Star Trek story has blazed its own path into our recent cultural history, leading to a series of blockbuster feature films and three new versions of Star Trek for television. The Star Trek story is one of boundless hope and crushing disappointment, wrenching rivalries and incredible achievements. It is also the story of how, after nearly thirty years, the cast of characters from a unique but poorly rated television show have come to be known to millions of Americans and people around the world as family. For George Takei, the Star Trek adventure is intertwined with his personal odyssey through adversity in which four-year-old George and his family were forced by the United States government into internment camps during World War II. Star Trek means much more to George Takei than an extraordinary career that has spanned thirty years. For an American whose ideals faced such a severe test, Star Trek represents a shining embodiment of the American Dream--the promise of an optimistic future in which people from all over the world contribute to a common destiny.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I just finished reading George Takei's autobiography the other night. This guy has led a fascinating

life. When he was younger, he met Eleanor Roosevelt and Martin Luther King, Jr. His first job in show business was helping to dub "Rodan" into English. Before "Star Trek", he did movies with Richard Burton and Alec Guinness. And during the run of the show, he did a movie with John Wayne. Till I read this book, I also didn't know that he had spent 11 years on a commission in L.A. that was responsible for getting their subway system built. Interestingly, he doesn't go into a huge amount of detail about the show, though he makes his (and other cast members') reasons clear for not liking Shatner. And given certain revelations about Takei's personal life over the last few years, any discussion about relationships outside of his family and career are strangely absent from the book. Still, it's a good read. I do agree with other reviewers, however, that even with a length of 400 pages, this book seemed too short. Given that it came out in 1994, I would love to see Takei update and re-release it.

I very much enjoyed Mr. Takei's autobiography, which is actually the story of an Asian man's experience in America, from the time of his internment at the Manzanar concentration camp as a young child, to his student days at UCLA, and his subsequent struggle against ethnic stereotyping at a time of very few opportunities for Asian actors. He shares very painful and personal memories with us of his career and family; his autobiography continues through his Star Trek days of course, up to the present, with many intriguing revelations. What makes this book my favorite is that it is extremely well-written, in his voice, without the help of a ghost-writer. I hope this will not be the last I see of his writing. I don't know why one reviewer harped on George's comments on William Shatner, saying "he couldn't even finish the book" - strange comment, considering George's feelings on Shatner come in the middle, and constitute a few pages out of the entire book. This and Nichelle Nichols are my two favorites from the cast, also written in her own voice, from the perspective of a minority actor in '50's America, and no less fascinating, in that she seems to have worked with or met almost every famous black performer at one time or another.

I've read most of the books from the Star Trek ensemble. I, by far, enjoy most the books that are written by the biographer him/herself, such as George Takei has done. This is a true life story, and not just another soliloquy of Star Trek life. His account of his early life is particularly fascinating (to quote Mr. Spock!). His unique insight, experiences, and literary talents make this book among the best autobiographies of any type. To illustrate just how good this book is, my wife, who is not particularly a Star Trek fan, grabbed up this book and read it before I could! You most definitely DO NOT need to be a Star Trek fan to enjoy this work of art.

Just finished reading George Takei's autobiography and enjoyed it immensely! George is a very talented & gifted writer who paints pictures with prose. He told very engaging stories about his family's triumphs & tribulations in America as well as his eventual rise to Sulu in the Star Trek juggernaut. His book provides a very honest & compelling view of his family's ordeal in the Japanese internment camps in the US during World War II. In spite of this awful abrogation of their constitutional rights by the US government, they still believed and never gave up on the American dream....simply amazing! The only reason I didn't give this book five stars is that his coverage of his days with Star Trek (both television series & movies) was a little thin. Given the colorful cast of characters within Star Trek as well as that dysfunctional bazaar called Hollywood, I have to believe there is more literary & comical gold to be mined from his life story.

This book is worth reading whether or not you're a Sulu fan. I found the chapters on Takei's early years in the WWII Japanese interment camps even more interesting than the Star Trek years. Though the fact of interment, itself, is grim, Takei lets us view life in the camps through the eyes of a child. Innocence and curiosity shine through. His memories are surprisingly upbeat, in spite of the horrors of displacement and prejudice. He recalls childhood friends he met in the camps (two of whom are named Ford and Chevy Nakayama--how wonderfully symbolic of their Japanese and American ancestry!) There are rich descriptions of Takei's own Japanese-American heritage throughout the book, as well. I enjoyed "meeting" his family through this book: his mother, who was determined to keep family life warm and friendly despite their barbed-wire environment; his father, who gave such a meaningful description of American ideals, notwithstanding society's frequent failure to live up to its ideals. George Takei's life is an embodiment of the true human spirit. My only regret is that the book wasn't longer. What was in the unabridged edition, I wonder?

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