

Darkness Overwhelming in New 'Star Trek' Film

The beginning of *Star Trek Into Darkness* has Captain James T. Kirk (Chris Pine) doing what he does best: breaking the rules.

While exploring a primitive planet, Spock (Zachary Quinto) nearly dies in an attempt to stop a volcano from erupting. The Vulcan tells Kirk to leave him behind and not risk being seen by the planet's inhabitants. "The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few!" Spock insists.

But Kirk orders the *USS Enterprise* to save Spock anyway. "So they saw us," Kirk says. "What's the big deal?"

The big deal is that their prime directive was not to interfere with other cultures. Capt. Christopher Pike (Bruce Greenwood) demotes Kirk to first officer, and Spock is assigned to another ship.

However, before anyone splits up, a terrorist named John Harrison (Benedict Cumberbatch) attacks the Federation's headquarters—killing a number of its officers, including Pike. The *Enterprise's* chief engineer, Scotty (Simon Pegg), discovers that the villain escaped to Kronos, a hostile planet likely to start a war if the Federation goes anywhere near it.

Kirk asks Admiral Marcus (Peter Weller) if he can be the one to take out Harrison, and the admiral agrees surprisingly quickly. He even arms the *Enterprise* with 72 photon torpedoes to shoot at the terrorist from afar so they can avoid starting a galactic war.

But as the logical Spock points out, it is inhumane to kill the man without judging him fairly. So he convinces Kirk to capture Harrison and bring him back to Earth for a trial. The Vulcan's conscience and inability to lie are the perfect

balance to Kirk's affinity for carelessness and offers a morality to the film.

It is Spock, however, who declares with certainty, "There are no such things," when a crew member calls it a miracle after the failing *Enterprise's* electricity is restored, denying the fact that they could have received any sort of heavenly guidance. In this case, though, he was correct. Kirk was willing to sacrifice his life in order to save his ship, diving into a radiation-filled room.

Content Watch: J.J. Abrams' *Into Darkness* displays a plethora of questionable content. There is a brief bedroom scene with Kirk and two alien women, and we see a female crew member in just her bra and panties as she's changing clothes. The language is also quite crude, from dozens of curse words to misusing God's name several times. As we saw in 2009's *Star Trek*, there is also some brief drinking. And of course, there is plenty of violence. Though Kirk and his team take care not to waste any lives, the same cannot be said for Harrison and Marcus. Near the beginning, Harrison persuades a Federation employee to blow up a building, where 42 people die. Later, he plows a massive starship through a futuristic San Francisco, plausibly killing thousands. In addition, we see close-up combat fighting with casualties, people sucked through openings in the *Enterprise* and much more.

Because of this, it is advised that parents do not bring young children to this PG-13 flick, and extreme caution is suggested for older children. *Star Trek* fans should enjoy the plot, which alludes to previous *Star Trek* films and brings back all the favorite characters from Abrams' previous endeavor, including Uhura (Zoe Saldana), Dr. "Bones" McCoy (Karl Urban), Chekov (Anton Yelchin) and Sulu (John Cho).

Despite everything, the film does have themes of loyalty to family, self-sacrifice and moral values. In the end, good does prevail over evil—but at great cost to the protagonists.