



Target: Remnant Trilogy is, as the name suggests, three shorter stories in one place.

The first of these is *Orion Team First Contact* where modern day YooJin has a coming-of-age personal discovery (even if she is thirty-five) that leads to some unforeseen consequences.

After the briefest of pre-ambls we are quickly in the thick of it, as unknowing as YooJin as to what is going on around her. She comes across as confident and vulnerable in a bundle, and the reader is left teased but wanting to know more.

The story quickly pivots to deep space where we start getting interesting ideas. They know about what has just happened to YooJin, they appear to have a quasi-Roman Empire rank structure, and the potential antagonist is 1502 years of age. Just normal stuff!

It's not a spoiler to reveal that YooJin discovers she has powers and the discovery starts with her fears about losing her memory to quickly become humorous, like a young deer suddenly discovering that it can run.

YooJin's personal journey is played with restraint and that is the tone. The reveals from her and the incoming mission team arrive with subtlety, enough given to hook without too big a reveal. It makes turning the page a must.

The space crew have a great conversational tone, feeling like a close-knit group that can joke even when it's serious, and right up until the leader pulls them back on mission.

What really brings this first story together is what we know. On the one hand we have the confused, experimental YooJin who is balancing coming to terms with her new powers with considering if she is losing her mind. On the other we have a hit squad on a mission, observing and planning to take out their target. There's immediate tension as we can see that conflict is coming, that YooJin may be able to protect herself, and that innocent people could get caught up in it all.

And then, as the inevitable battle commences there's a twist. A big twist. And that's all you're getting out of me!

This opener really relishes the shorter format, delivering strong characters that are very believable. The space crew feel very natural, as does the older daughter/Korean mother/neighbour dynamic. It's a fun Sci-Fi start.

The second story, *Refuge Among Humans*, starts with a crash landing of a space craft in 25 AD. It continues in a similar vein in terms of tone. The local, Kadurix, is grounded and accessible, and I really like that he is mostly unphased by the arrival of the alien Gaelle. It's a

nice change – he knows that she is different but also recognises the clear similarities of their lives, of nations invaded, of people lost. By letting him accept from the start allows a bond to be forged quickly.

Again, we see a protagonist finding their way, not only discovering an array of skills, but also coming to terms with their own version of an alien landscape. The change in perspective from the first story is refreshing and the lead characters are endearing. But, of course, we know it can't last! The final confrontation deliberately asks more questions than it offers answers and tees up the finale.

Danger Close is the final part of the trilogy and aside from saying that it brings it all together. Well, if you count a diversion into 1960 Chile as bringing it together! The writing remains sharp and again there is strong characterisation. Even in the brief time there is before an early incident you can immediately understand Sofia and Lucas. And probably more than Lucas understands Sofia... or perhaps not.

I'll leave that there, a tease of my own. The story converges and uses the various timelines well, allowing us to see retrospective reveals. Whatever you do, read this in the order it is presented!

I have consciously focused on the first part of this story as to dig too deeply into the other two would spoil the journey. Throughout the three there really is such a strong sense of character, the main parts brought to life in one or two pages. They just feel natural and are easy to understand instantly. That's a handy feat in this format, where three stories are running in order but both before and after one another, and space is precious.

The alien world feels regimented and cold, those that head from it then coming to life and displaying richer sides to their personalities. Those on earth are instantly relatable. The whole thing bounds along vibrantly and the SciFi elements aren't overwhelming. In fact, it leans into fantasy almost as much.

It's a rich continuing tale that pushes inner turmoil and conflict to the fore, as much a reflection of the folly of revenge as it is anything else. It doesn't get lost in telling us about the inner workings of spacecraft or similar, it just gets on with it, feeling or the more visual as a result. Overall, this is an enjoyable read with a mix of SciFi, fantasy, real life and how we can laugh at it, and strong, vivid characterisation.

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