



Marque and Reprisal

Elizabeth Moon

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Kylara Vatta, risk-taking, rule-breaking, can-do heroine of *Trading in Danger*, is back in business—the kind that's anything but usual—in the new military science fiction adventure by ace action storyteller Elizabeth Moon.

The exciting military career she hoped for never got off the ground—but Ky Vatta ended up seeing plenty of combat when she took the helm of one of the commercial transport vessels in her family's fleet . . . and steered it into a full-blown war. Now the lessons she learned in that trial by fire are about to pay off: because this time, the war has come to her. To be exact, someone unknown has launched a full-throttle offensive against Vatta Transport Ltd., Ky's father's interstellar shipping empire. In short order, most of Ky's family is killed, and subsequent attacks sever vital lines of communication, leaving Ky fighting, in every sense, to survive.

Determined to identify the ruthless mystery enemy and avenge her family's name, Ky needs not only firepower but information. And she gets both in spades—from the band of stranded mercenaries she hooks up with, from her black-sheep cousin, Stella, who's been leading a secret life, and from Stella's roguish ex-lover, Rafe. Together they struggle to penetrate the tangled web of political intrigue that's wreaking havoc within Interstellar Communications, whose effective operation their own livelihoods—and perhaps lives—depend on.

But the infighting proves to be infectious, and it isn't long before Ky's hired military muscle are turning their suspicions on the enigmatic Rafe, whose wealth of knowledge about ISC's clashing factions and startling new technologies has begun to make him smell like a rat . . . or a mole. With swift, violent destruction a very real possibility, the last thing Ky needs is a crew divided against itself—and she's prepared to take whatever measures are necessary to ensure that Vatta stays in business, as well as in one piece.

What she's not prepared for is the shocking truth behind the terror—and a confrontation with murderous treachery from a source as unexpected as it is unrelenting.

Marque and Reprisal Details

Date : Published September 28th 2004 by Del Rey

ISBN :

Author : Elizabeth Moon

Format : Kindle Edition 400 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Space, Space Opera, Fiction, War, Military Fiction

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From Reader Review Marque and Reprisal for online ebook

Kristin says

Second book in the Vatta series. First book was Trading in Danger.

I found the second book to be as engaging as the first, if not a little slow to start as we watch the crisis unfold and Kylara stocking up with weapons and supplies. I did notice a trend that anyone in an authority position automatically assume the worst and try to add to Kylara's problems. Once or twice, I could see, but every time?

There is something about Moon's dialog that still seems "off" to me. Again the impression of an almost formal give and take between characters, not the easy flow of two people or a group of people talking.

My main complaint with this book came toward the end (without revealing anything plot-wise) with the whole Sexual Attraction Discussion between her, the Mercenaries, and the ISC man. I think it was meant to be humorous, but it came across as patronizing and out of place. It was awkward, didn't fit with the rest of the book and, dare I say it...downright stupid?

Paraphrasing here:

Mercenary Man: "You're a young female Captain. You must be attracted to this handsome older man."

Kylara, "No, I'm not. He's much too old for me and not my type."

ISC Man, "I don't find her attractive either."

Mercenary Man, "I don't believe you Captain. He's a roughish man, you are a nubile female, you have to be attracted to him and it's impaired your judgement."

Kylara, "No. My judgement is just fine. I don't like his good looks and have no urge to bed him or any other male on my crew."

And so it went for several pages, several pages too many.

Overall, a worthwhile read, a bit predictable, but good for vacation or light reading. Recommended.

Cathy says

I was annoyed for a lot of the book about how perfect Ky was. She's a 22 year-old kid on her first real tour, didn't even finish the academy, but she's somehow way ahead of all of the experienced people because they're just traders and she's bloodthirsty. Ack, annoying. But she made some mistakes near the end that reduced my irritation. On the other hand, Rafe is a problem. That they just happen upon the one guy in the universe with that tech, history and skill set is too absurd; the author should have set it up so that they came upon each other in a more believable way. But I like the new characters of Stella and Toby a lot, the

mercenaries were interesting, and there was more action than trading, so I'll round up from 3.5 to 4 stars.

Guy says

Moon's weaknesses as a writer are starting to dominate in this series. While I still read this book cover to cover more or less in a single sitting, that is definitely much more a reflection of my love for space opera than the quality of the work.

The palette of "real" characters (as opposed to transparent props) has expanded a little, but the new faces don't have serious psychological depth. Perhaps even more serious, *deus ex machina* is reaching ridiculous proportions: in a civilization spanning many, many star systems, what is the likelihood that you'll meet someone you know when you duck into the backdoor of a shop on a space-station you have never visited before? "Of all the bars in all the towns in all the world, she has to walk into mine..."? Indeed.

If I compare this series with C.J. Cherryh's "Alliance-Union" series, or Lee & Miller's "Liaden Universe" books... well, there is no comparison. The other two have created believable and richly textured worlds filled with complex characters. Moon has written a children's book.

But I do love space opera.

Ron says

3.5 stars, rounded down because I expected better. (I'm determined to be less of a "Santa Claus" with ratings in 2014. I've been good about 5 stars, but entirely too liberal with 4.) Oh, Moon's writing was still tight and fast paced. I liked it.

But this book is more like an expanded chapter or short story, than a stand-alone novel. Ky meets new people--some of whom she befriends, some she kills--and stumbles through the remains of her disintegrating universe.

I prefer this series over even the Honor Harrington stories because those, and many multi-volume SF and fantasy series, have become so sprawling that they seem to tell a history rather than a story. (I like history; I've a degree in it. But when I read novels, usually I want a biography, not a history.)

Still, a very good read.

Simone says

This book is exactly the type of science fiction I love to read. Militaristic believability mixed with the good old space trader polish. Ky Vatta is the type of woman that I'd probably fall over myself to impress and follow to the end of the Earth, because she's good even if she's not right.

I'm not sure yet where her loyalties lie exactly, I'm sure that she's working for Vatta - as a family and as a corporation. I'll be interested in finding out where she's going, especially not with the way that the book

ended.

As for the advancing relationships, I adore the way that any romance is being handled, both by the character and the author - not yet. Not no, but not yet. There are bigger problems to handle before anything romantic happens and to me that is entirely believable. Hormones don't shut off but this situation calls for a clear mind and Ky is exactly the type of person that I believe would recognise that.

I'm definitely intrigued as to the direction of the series and will be starting the next book as soon as possible.

JAIME says

I've got to tell you, I'm really enjoying this series. It's pretty serious, all planning and conspiring and technical stuff. A boatload of death. No sexy times. Not even a love interest (unless I've completely missed something) But, I likey.

My only real complaint is Ky's cousin. Who is a selfish bitch.

MORE.

Kara says

“Marque and Reprisal (Vatta’s War #2)” continues the military scifi adventure story of Ky Vatta, her family, the McKinsey Military Assistance Corporation (I just love that name!), the corporate InterStellar Communications Corporation (ISC), and pirates - yes....pirates in space! As a reminder, this series is not lesfic, but that just shows that no series is perfect.

As with Book #1, “Marque and Reprisal” manages to highlight very believable people as individuals, even while adventure and conspiracies and political and corporate and military battles swirl around everyone and everywhere.

“Marque and Reprisal” is more than 14 hours of amazing stories within a story, narrated wonderfully by Cynthia Holloway. Highly recommended with a 5* rating.

Lata says

Was a fast, light read, lots of action, and lots of discussions on how to provision their ship, how they'd make \$, what could they trade, in amidst the fear and constant danger of attack by some unknown entity targeting the Vattas for destruction.

Nothing deep, just a fun, fast read.

Ben Babcock says

I couldn't resist, guys. I liked *Trading in Danger* so much that I couldn't wait any longer, so I got *Marque and Reprisal* when last I went to the library, and here I am reading it, almost two months to the day since I read the first book. Like I said on Twitter, Elizabeth Moon writes books that are like crack—except better, because it turns out that crack is actually very bad for you. The first book introduced us to Ky Vatta and provided an intense, compelling space opera. *Marque and Reprisal* follows up by hugely raising the stakes, dashing our hopes, and then twisting the story arc until you're just as conflicted and exhausted as Ky.

When I say this book raises the stakes, I mean it **raises the stakes**. Remember that time in *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* when the Dominion occupies Betazed, and suddenly this war got real? Same idea here. In the first book, Ky was a screw-up, but she was a *Vatta* screw-up. She had a vast, well-connected, wealthy family supporting her. Moon jettisons that first thing with an attack on the Vattas that leaves almost everyone dead. Eventually, Ky is aware of three other Vattas who are still alive (two of them with her). Not only does she have to deal with the trauma of losing her father, she also has to get to the bottom of who (or what) is trying to kill the Vatta family, and stop it. Fast.

The first part of the book, with Ky on Belinta and then later at Lastway, drags slightly. Moon really doesn't want to skip over large periods of time very often, so while the chapters are action-packed and bleed into one another, it also means time passes pretty slowly. It's like a slightly less strict 24. Once Ky joins up with Stella and Rafe, however, things get *really* interesting. I don't mind at all the way Moon works viewpoints other than Ky's into the novel, because Stella's scenes with Rafe and Toby help establish all these new characters. And I was surprised by how I didn't find Rafe too annoying: it helps that Moon lampshades the "bad boy" character so much that it becomes a non-issue (especially, *especially* at the end there—oh my).

Stella's addition to the cast deserves some attention. This is the first time we get to see Ky interact with any Vatta for a long time. Previously, too, the other Vattas were all senior to her. Stella is more her contemporary, and with the remaining Vattas presumed dead, they are pretty close to top of the command chain now. (Can we also get a cheer for just how wonderful all the diverse women in this book are? Stella the spy, Ky the captain, Quincy the engineer, Gracie the elder, even Mehar and Beeah. This book is not MilSF, true, but it feels MilSF *adjacent*, and it just goes to show you don't need to stuff your cast full of testosterone.) Stella also offers a great contrast to Ky. Both have reputations as a result of their indiscretions and dishonour. Both misunderstand the other, partly because of those reputations, but also because they don't know each other's worlds. I love how Ky keeps deliberating over how much to confess to her cousin: how much should she hold back?

Ky's moral dilemmas that made her so fascinating in the first book are back, and how. She straight up kills a guy in cold blood, and then she's like, "I'd totally stop and enjoy this killing high I get, except I'm icky and have a mine to disarm." That's ultra-badass and, yeah, borderline psychotic (though to be fair, the guy had it coming). I appreciate, though, that Moon moves beyond the simple "I'm weirded out because I like killing people" dilemma. That was great for the first book, when Ky merely had to worry about the survival of her crew. As she shoulders the burden of rebuilding the Vatta trading empire and finding the source of this conspiracy, it's only natural that she faces more complicated questions. Stella probably summarizes it best when she confronts Ky about the letter of marque and asks whether Ky's first loyalty will be to Vatta or to Slottter's Key, conjecturing that a time will come (if it has not already) when those two parties' interests diverge.

It's these underlying problems that really make *Marque and Reprisal* so satisfying. I mean, yes, on one level

it's just an intense SF adventure. There are EMP mines being slingshotted down corridors and out of airlocks, zero-G knife fights, and more mercenary brinkmanship. There are hints of subtle political machinations, the kinds that make me drool. But beneath all that, there are rich canvases of thought and feeling. These characters aren't one-dimensional; this is not a Saturday morning cartoon. Beyond the sheer physical demands placed on them, I find myself just marvelling at the decisions they get asked to make (often on little sleep) and thinking that I probably couldn't do what they do.

Finally, *Marque and Reprisal* kept surprising me. The narrative is so easy to follow, so simply told, Ky's plans telegraphed completely ... but Moon always manages through a spanner into the works somehow. The simple plans get more complex, and suddenly Ky (or someone else) is improvising. So while I predicted many parts of the resolution, I didn't see all of it coming—but I certainly enjoyed the result! This, to me, is a win: I love it when books have the capacity to surprise me, especially books I think I have all figured out.

Marque and Reprisal is an excellent sequel to *Trading in Danger*. It basically replicates the elements of the first book that made it so enjoyable. However, it avoids the most common problems of sequels. Moon *definitely* doesn't hold back and is not afraid to make permanent changes to her universe. Similarly, she continues to find ways to put her characters into interesting situations that reveal more about them, or motivate them to change. The result is that rare combination of a resoundingly *fun* adventure with profound moments and deep themes. It's nothing less than I'd expect from the author of *The Speed of Dark*. I have a feeling I'll be devouring the rest of this series in short order.

My reviews of *Vatta's War*:

← *Trading in Danger* | *Engaging the Enemy* →

Bee says

I'm really enjoying this series. Strongly reminiscent of the Bararray novels by Lois McMaster Bujold, but somehow more enjoyable.

I am straight on to the next one after finishing this, with literally a minute between them ,

Mike (the Paladin) says

Oh good grief... Look, that rating is for the edition I "listened" to. I got the audio version from the library here.

Anyone who's read many of my reviews or been in a "fantasy" group where I'm a member will probably know that Elizabeth Moon's Pakseñarrion books are some of my "all time favorite" reads. I like most everything I've read by Ms. Moon. For all I know this is a very good novel...

So, why oh why did they get one of the poorest readers I've ever heard to read the audio versions of the books?!?!?!? I mean maybe the reader (who I won't name here) has done a good job on other books. Maybe she reads mysteries superbly I have no idea. All I know is I couldn't listen to this book. I found it fairly

interesting occasionally, but stilted narration with pauses about every 3 words for no apparent reason, the stiff delivery..I just couldn't take it. I longed for it to be a book I could throw across the room.

My ears were bleeding.

I checked and for some reason the same reader reads this entire series so if I read it/them it will be the print version. No more of these...really.

I mean really, I greatly dislike the narration of the audio version of this book...really...

Did I mention I don't care for the narration????

Really, run fast, run far...

The Captain says

Ahoy there me mateys! This here be a combined review of the second and third books of the Vatta's War series. While I try to post no spoilers, if ye haven't read the first book and ye keep reading this log then ye have been forewarned and continue at yer own peril . . .

Well book one could have been a standalone but I am extremely glad it wasn't! The second book quickly brings about a major, surprising change for the main character, Ky Vatta, and her family. It was mind-boggling but brilliant. It certainly upped the ante. I loved the crazy mercenary company and how Ky made deals with them. I loved all the space battles. It even makes trading goods interesting.

Ky continues to be a delight. I love watching her get into impossible situations and use her brain and her gusto to solve problems. These books be action-packed, have no real romance, and be filled with admirable women. I particularly love Grandma Grace. She is one tough cookie.

The only minor quibble was the distrust between Ky and her cousin in book three. It made sense in terms of story telling but it did wear on me a bit. I think that overall this book, while enjoyable, felt more like a placeholder set-up book. However, the ending was very satisfying and I am extremely interested in what adventures Ky will get into next.

I have already made plans to get books four and five in me mitts. Arrr!!!

Side note: Much thanks to me matey, Sarah @ brainfluff, for pointing me in the right direction in terms of the recommended readin' sequence for these books!

Check out me other reviews at <https://thecaptainsquartersblog.wordpress.com>...

Emily says

I don't think I'm going to continue this series. I like books that are about characters, and I just don't really care about anyone in this book. It's not awful, I just think the characters are a bit wooden. For example Ky is

told that her family has been attacked and many people died. She doesn't even really seem concerned. Then when she knows for sure that her parents, brother, uncle and cousins are dead she never even cries or seems to grieve. So... I think this series is OK, but not good enough for me to want to read more. It's not in anyway comparable to the Vorkosigan series or even the Liaden series.

Liviu says

short review of the series (huge novel split into 5) under Trading in danger

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

Jim says

A good (OK?) second book to the series. Major crisis & well fought by our heroine, Kylara. I was a little disappointed by the sudden surge in technology. Without spoiling the story, a crucial resource is suddenly not nearly as scarce as we'd been led to think - or the rest of the universe. It stretched my suspension of belief to the breaking point. It was an almost magical fix, something that marks less than great fiction. It was still a good story, but it lost a lot of points with me for that.

Kylara's development has been rather fast too. She's killed & is coming to terms with it unevenly. Those around her are too. Again, it stretched my belief, although not as badly. Other solutions to issues were quite good, as was the portrayal of local police systems. Lots of action & suspense.
