



## Trading in Danger

By Elizabeth Moon

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Kylara Vatta is the only daughter in a family full of sons, and her father's only child to buck tradition by choosing a military career instead of joining the family business. For Ky, it's no contest: Even running the prestigious Vatta Transport Ltd. shipping concern can't hold a candle to shipping out as an officer aboard an interstellar cruiser. It's adventure, not commerce, that stirs her soul. And despite her family's misgivings, there can be no doubt that a Vatta in the service will prove a valuable asset. But with a single error in judgment, it all comes crumbling down.

Expelled from the Academy in disgrace—and returning home to her humiliated family, a storm of high-profile media coverage, and the gaping void of her own future—Ky is ready to face the inevitable onslaught of anger, disappointment, even pity. But soon after opportunity's door slams shut, Ky finds herself with a ticket to ride— and a shot at redemption—as captain of a Vatta Transport ship.

It's a simple assignment: escorting one of the Vatta fleet's oldest ships on its final voyage . . . to the scrapyard. But keeping it simple has never been Ky's style. And even though her father has provided a crew of seasoned veterans to baby-sit the fledgling captain on her maiden milk run, they can't stop Ky from turning the routine mission into a risky venture—in the name of turning a profit for Vatta Transport, of course.

By snapping up a lucrative delivery contract defaulted on by a rival company, and using part of the proceeds to upgrade her condemned vehicle, Ky aims to prove she's got more going for her than just her family's famous name. But business will soon have to take a backseat to bravery, when Ky's change of plans sails her and the crew straight into the middle of a colonial war. For all her commercial savvy, it's her military training and born-soldier's instincts that Ky will need to call on in the face of deadly combat, dangerous mercenaries, and violent mutiny. . . .

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Noted for her strong heroines and interstellar naval adventures, Moon (*Against the Odds*) stumbles in the first of a new series featuring Kylara Vatta, whose "generous impulses" often get her into trouble. Ky, a favored daughter of a wealthy, interstellar shipping family, gets thrown ignominiously out of the Space Academy because she aided a fellow cadet who used her gullibility to dishonor the service. In consolation, her father gives her an antiquated cargo ship, the *Glennys Jones*, to command. He assumes she'll find a way to make enough profit to keep from having to junk the old tub. But after Ky figures out an angle on buying and selling some tractors, she inadvertently ends up running afoul of an interplanetary civil war. Following another generous impulse, Ky takes some stranded crewmen aboard. They return the favor by nearly getting her killed when mercenaries board her ship. Everyone, from her ship's seasoned crew to random strangers, annoyingly remarks on 21-year-old Kylara's youth and "exceptional" poise. With unusually slow pacing for a space adventure (lacking either the drama or the romance of opera), Moon presents several tableaux that are summarily dropped—such as polo that never gets played, a ship's model with secret instructions that Kylara refuses to decipher and an absentee boyfriend—any of which might have added some spice to this bland adventure.

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From School Library Journal

Adult/High School—Ky Vatta has been groomed for a career in her family's interstellar shipping empire, but yearns for the life of a military officer. Sadly, in her senior year at the Space Academy, she is accused of an indiscretion and forced to resign. When she returns home in disgrace, her father hands her what she feels to be a demeaning assignment, though it does make her a captain: to take an obsolete ship to the scrap yard. But before long, the family talent for commerce emerges, and Ky negotiates an independent contract to supply a struggling colony with agricultural equipment from a nearby planet, hoping to realize sufficient profit to buy and refit her ship. The young woman finds herself in the midst of an interplanetary crisis and must prove her mettle. In this human future, commerce is the common ground where a believable variety of peoples, societies, and religions interact, and integrity and intelligence are essential factors in leadership. Entertainingly, Moon creates suspense and reveals character as much through contractual negotiations as through military action. Some readers might not approve of the author's use of shorthand sci-fi conventions to sidestep scientific issues, but for most others, the human interest, well-wrought story, humor, and rich world-building will more than satisfy. The publisher bills this first in a series as military science fiction. It could equally be described as space opera ... la Robert Heinlein, or a family yarn that can please fans of Anne McCaffrey's "Rowan" saga (Ace).

*Christine C. Menefee, Fairfax County Public Library, VA*

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From [Booklist](#)

Moon's latest begins a new series. The protagonist, young Kylara Vatta, is the daughter of a wealthy merchant family on the planet Slotter's Key. Unfortunately, her initial appearance in the book is inauspicious: she is being tossed out of the naval academy for embarrassing it. Her similarly embarrassed family then gives her a token civilian assignment, commanding an old ship on its final voyage to the scrapyards. Of course, that duty lands her in the middle of a war that, at various times, threatens her profits, her crew, her ship, her reputation, and her life. She finds unlikely allies, however, aboard her ship and among a fleet of high-powered mercenaries, and she learns more about giving her loyalty to those worthy of it. Those discoveries, plus her own formidable, entertaining combination of intelligence, creativity, and naval-

academy training, turn a potential disaster into a profitable triumph for the whole Vatta family. *Roland Green*

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## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

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