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Cold Welcome: Vatta's Peace, Book 1



Synopsis

After nearly a decade away, Nebula Award-winning author Elizabeth Moon makes a triumphant return to science fiction with this installment in a thrilling new series featuring the daring hero of her acclaimed *Vatta's War* sequence. Summoned to the home planet of her family's business empire, space-fleet commander Kylara Vatta is told to expect a hero's welcome. But instead she is thrown into danger unlike any other she has faced and finds herself isolated, unable to communicate with the outside world, commanding a motley group of unfamiliar troops, and struggling day by day to survive in a deadly environment with sabotaged gear. Only her undeniable talent for command can give her ragtag band a fighting chance. Yet even as Ky leads her team from one crisis to another, her family and friends refuse to give up hope, endeavoring to mount a rescue from halfway around the planet - a task that is complicated as Ky and her supporters find secrets others will kill to protect: a conspiracy infecting both government and military that threatens not only her own group's survival but her entire home planet.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Moon returns to science fiction after nine years away writing more fantasy in the Paksenarrion universe. This one returns to the universe of the *Vatta's War* series, with Ky Vatta as the central character. She's been summoned back to her home planet of Slotter Key on family business - she owns a sizable enough share of Vatta Corporation stock that her vote is necessary to ratify her cousin Stella assuming the duties of its CEO. She's planning on just a

brief stay there to sign the necessary paperwork, but the shuttle that is bringing her from the orbital spaceport to the planet's surface has been sabotaged, and it has to make a crash landing in an Antarctic ocean. And thus begins an adventure of getting the survivors of the shuttle's passengers to the nearest land—a continent that hadn't been terraformed when the rest of the planet was a few hundred years earlier—and then finding a way to survive on the continent in the heart of a severe winter. The weather is too bad for any rescue mission to be mounted at the beginning, and then there's the question of whether a rescue mission is going to reach them before a force from whoever had done the sabotage on the shuttle finds them and kills them all. I enjoyed this book a lot, and look forward to sequels. (This series is being called "Vatta's Peace," though so far there doesn't seem to be much peace involved.)

I've been reading Elizabeth Moon for about 20 years now. A fellow teacher gave me the book called *Once a Hero*. I read it and most of the sequels before discovering it was set in the same universe as a previous trilogy. Elizabeth Moon was a former marine in the late 60s and her military sci-fi novels reflect that experience. I've read the first of her fantasy novels but haven't finished them. Anyway, *Cold Welcome* continues the adventures of Admiral Ky Vatta. The last of the finale of Vatta's War quintet came nearly a decade ago. (If you haven't read those, you really kind of need to. They are heavily referenced characters Return with little introduction. And they are great). The story, simply summarized, follows Ky's return home, only to crash in an inhospitable wasteland. Beyond the fight for survival looms a larger mystery and setup for this cycle of books. Even a decade gone, slipping back into Vatta's universe is pretty easy. There's enough reflection on the previous stories to recall the events without bogging the story down. While much of the book was interesting, the finale, especially the wrap up, seemed rushed. I think that was mainly in service to set up the next book, and I'm fine with that.

I really love Elizabeth Moon and the previous Ky Vatta books. I have them all and they are in my keeper books, which I re-read many times. I was very divided on this book. The first 100 pages were very flat to me, and it seemed like it took her a while to get back into the characters and the world of Ky Vatta. I loved the next 300 or so pages of the book, which was exciting and the characters were again themselves. Then there was the ending, which seemed beyond credible to me. Some of the other commenters on the book also mentioned their frustration with the ending of the book. I took

one star off for the first flat 100 pages, and the other for the ending. After saying that, I will probably still buy the next book, but will probably do what I did with this book, and buy the paperback from England, instead of the expensive hardcover copy.

The plot was mostly predictable and the only twist looks to be answered many books in the future. The characters were not developed - so much so that it was a little boring. A disappointing return to this series.

This is a hard review to make, because I wanted to like it, the writing style of Moon that draws me in is there, and certainly there were interesting elements. However, there are simply too many parts that don't click, that feel like they were manufactured to move the characters/plot forward rather than organically occurring, and they occur at all levels of the story. There are the parts that are background to the plot that are way more important (and implausible) than they're treated, like Toby going from revolutionizing communications to making better engines. Aside from being completely different technologies, we had a reason for ansibles stagnating; the monopoly and suppression of ISC. But there's no such logic to justify a high school kid leapfrogging past all the shipbuilders in the galaxy. "He's smart" just doesn't cut it anymore, and "oh, our couriers are faster now, but we haven't otherwise bothered to monetize this technology that cuts travel time by days" is baffling. The B plot of those working to rescue Ky is also frustrating, from the lack of communication to all the ways characters I used to respect the intelligence of fail to detect or allow their actions to be dictated by the enemy. Their secrecy bites them again and again, and seems to have been decided on to draw out the plot rather than sound strategic thinking, because their reasons feel like hand waves. Everything about Slotter Key not knowing squat about the continent or having long distance aircraft that can handle winter weather breaks my suspension of disbelief. Okay, the imagery is bad, but how is it not even known that the continent is vegetated? How are they more terrible at aircraft or boat building than we are? How has this been completely missed by everyone for hundreds of years? Again, the justifications in story are not convincing. Finally, Kylara's plot suffers from compression of noteworthy events into what's directly shown rather than much of note happening off screen, which leads to days or weeks of people with every opportunity to communicate and understand apparently being missed until they're on screen again. This goes both for the ansible communications, which always seem weirdly rushed, and for all the interpersonal stuff that Ky shouldn't have been as oblivious to as she was required to be by the plot. And then there was the ending, where character motivations suddenly change, assets suddenly change, and in general it

feels like a rushed set up for the next story. This review would be two stars if it weren't coasting on established characterization and setting. There's a bit of original sin here; the previous series also had an issue of shadowy enemies with little explanation and unlikely effectiveness, but it managed to justify that as existing criminal syndicates working together. Here, that's being delved into more, and the explanations so far for how they've remained hidden and effective just aren't satisfying anymore.

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