



## **Victory Conditions**

*Elizabeth Moon*

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## **Victory Conditions** Elizabeth Moon

Elizabeth Moon's thrilling Vatta's War series, featuring the no-holds-barred space-faring heroine Kylara Vatta, has secured her reputation as a master of first-rate military science fiction. Now Commander Vatta is back-locked and loaded and ready to win the fight against the marauding forces of ruthless space pirate Gammis Turek.

For Ky, it's not just about liberating the star systems subjugated by Turek and defending the rest of the galaxy's freedom. There's also a score to be settled and payback to be meted out for the obliteration of the Vatta Transport dynasty . . . and the slaughter of Ky's family. But the enemy have their own escalation efforts under way—including the placement of covert agents among the allies with whom Ky and the surviving Vattas are collaborating in the war effort. And when a spy ring linked to a wealthy businessman is exposed, a cracked pirate code reveals a galaxywide conspiracy fueling the proliferation of Turek's warship fleet.

Matching the invaders' swelling firepower will mean marshaling an armada of battle-ready ships for Ky to lead into combat. But a violent skirmish leaves Ky reeling—and presumed dead by her enemies. Now, as Turek readies an all-out attack on the Nexus system—a key conquest that could seal the rest of the galaxy's doom—Ky must rally to the challenge, draw upon every last reserve of her strategic skills, and reach deep if she is to tear from the ashes of tragedy her most decisive victory.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

## **Victory Conditions Details**

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Author : Elizabeth Moon

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# From Reader Review Victory Conditions for online ebook

## Benjamin Thomas says

No, this isn't a blog entry about my Swedish campaign game in Empire Total War. Rather "Victory Conditions" is the name of the 5th and final book in Elizabeth Moon's "Vatta's War" series. This is a science fiction series that I started unexpectedly last year. You see, I was on a business trip and had run out of reading material. Now that's not a bad thing in my brain because it means I get to go to the bookstore and buy something that looks good to me right then and there. Since I have such a back load of unread books in my house, I sometimes feel like I "have" to read such and such because I've had it for so long. Many times I'll open a book that I have long anticipated only to feel like this is "old" stuff. So, there I was at the book store in...San Diego I think, and I had the chance to buy something "fresh". I spent a lot of time browsing trying to narrow down my choices. I really wanted to try a new author. I finally settled on the first book of this series, "Trading in Danger". It appealed to me because I really wasn't looking for hard science fiction but I figured a nice space opera would be fine. And it wasn't a straight military science fiction story either, more about traders and merchants.

So I read that book and loved it, forcing me to buy the rest of the series. Although I do like to mix up my reading with different genres all the time, I still like to read an entire series during the course of the year. It makes my cataloging easier when I write my "Year in Review." But to my chagrin, the final book of the series wasn't yet published! I had to wait until this year, at least for the paperback version and so there has been a bit of a gap from my reading of the first four to this one.

But you know what? That gap didn't matter. These books are so well written that I easily slipped back into the story line. Ms Moon writes with an easy, familiar style, that makes complicated situations much easier to comprehend. And the plot of this series is a wonderful progression of adventure. The characters interact delightfully and drive the action of the novels. I really enjoyed the way the protagonist, Ky Vatta, was thrust into very difficult circumstances and was able to bring a different way of thinking to the situation and resolve it. I also liked the behind-the-scenes action. In other words, take a different space opera universe like Star Trek. You get lots of info on the main plot, action, etc. but in Ms Moon's books we get to see how "normal" people deal with everyday situations. It ain't easy trying to get basic supplies from a trade depot when you don't have security identification.

This last volume of the series wrapped it all up in fine style. My only complaint is that the ending seemed a little rushed, as if the author was trying to wrap up too many loose ends. There was, however, a definite resolution to the main conflicts and an overall satisfying ending. I definitely plan to check out Elizabeth Moon's other books.

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## The Captain says

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

Well book four started out in an odd fashion. Book three ended suggesting a certain direction and then that didn't happen. I really wanted to visit a specific planet. Alas. I also know I said that book three felt like a

placeholder but this one did too. That said I actually enjoyed this one better. This book follows primarily Rafe and Ky. But the other favourites still make appearances. I continue to adore Aunt Grace. I love the flamboyant ship captain. He makes me so happy. Those who have read prior books will know exactly which one. Ky of course remains the highlight even though she doesn't get all the page time. This book certainly picked up the pace!

As for the final book, I adored it and thought it be an excellent conclusion to the series. Ky truly is a fantastic leader and I loved watching all of her experience and hardships come together and led to success. Part of the fun of this installment was watching the author's surprise resolutions for many of me favourite characters. Three in particular made me incredibly happy. Which three ye ask? Spoilers matey, spoilers.

I did want to point out a specific aspect of these novels which is how post-traumatic stress gets dealt with. First of all people actually have realistic issues after experiencing horrible things. Secondly, suffering people are supported and get help to deal with their problems. Characters actually take time to process their situations and talk about feelings and emotions. The emotional toll doesn't just disappear magically. Now granted it is an advanced society where there is medical treatment that current science cannot provide. But there are also meds, therapy sessions, and taking time to heal, reflect, and rest. It was a refreshing viewpoint for military sci-fi.

I am so very glad to have read this series and highly recommend it to me crew. I have already made plans to get the companion series, *vatta's peace*, 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>...

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### **Jennifer says**

Bottom line: I really enjoyed this series. Not ground-breaking, but everything about this series is solid.

The character development, plot, action, and military/political setup are solid, and this consistently better-than-adequate "quality," combined with how fun the series is, and fantastic (and discernibly different an believable) female characters, makes this a great read. I binged these suckers like I would marathon sci-fi television.

*Vatta's War* doesn't take itself too seriously, and it's not trying to be DEEP, though it does have both poignant moments and interesting space opera politics sometimes. The series has a pretty standard trajectory, more commonly seen with female protagonists in fantasy series (which makes sense, since Elizabeth Moon killed the fat fantasy genre before writing this space opera series), of a young girl with a lot of potential maturing as she's thrown into circumstances bigger than herself. There's a love interest thrown in, but it's not a huge element, and everyone likes a rogue-ish space spy.

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### **Liviu says**

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

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

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### **Ron says**

"If there's been a completely honest government in the history of humankind, no history book's ever mentioned it."

Excellent. Moon drew all the essential threads into a satisfying climax, and left enough to remind the reader that life goes on. Moon's forte is interpersonal relationships over interstellar distances. It's easy to get out of sync, and she explores many of the ways complex, if-bigger-than-life people get cross ways with each other and the world(s).

A good read of the space opera variety.

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### **Kara says**

“Victory Conditions (Vatta’s War #5)” concludes the epic military scifi adventure story of Ky Vatta as she builds a unified space force to stand against pirates, and as her friends and family try to rebuild the economic empires of Vatta and InterStellar Communications Corporation (ISC) .

Politics, personalities, space battles, abductions, killings, deceptions, betrayals, declarations of love and fade to black (hetero) sex....this book covers lots of ground!

Raf still annoys me for some reason, but I’ve grown to like his sister Penny. Ky really comes into her own, and is an admirable admiral. Nearly everything is wrapped up with this book, and various secondary characters generally get what we hoped for...mostly good...and one bad.

There is a very interesting teaser at the end between Master Sergeant Pitt and a character. I wouldn’t call it a cliffhanger, exactly, but I wonder if that teaser plays into what became the next book in the extended series - “Cold Welcome (Vatta’s Peace #1)”, published in April 2017, eight years after “Victory Conditions”.

Happily, the audiobook is already out, so after I catch my breath from Vatta’s war, I won’t have to wait for Ky’s next adventure!

“Victory Conditions” is an entertaining and satisfying end to a terrific series, and the narration is excellent. Highly recommended with a 5\* rating.

BTW, part of the reason for author Elizabeth Moon’s ability to write convincing details of the tedium, the adventure, the politics and the personalities of military life undoubtedly is that she served in the United States Marine Corps from 1968-1971!

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## **Kat Hooper says**

Originally posted at FanLit. <http://www.fantasyliterature.com/>

Victory Conditions is the fifth and final book in Elizabeth Moon's VATTA'S WAR saga. This has been a solidly entertaining story with appealing characters and an unpredictable plot but it never quite pulls itself past its classification of "space opera." If space opera is what you're looking for, VATTA'S WAR delivers and this last installment, Victory Conditions, brings the Vatta story to a satisfying end. If you haven't read the first four books, go find the first book, Trading in Danger. If you've read Trading in Danger, Marque and Reprisal, Engaging the Enemy and Command Decision, there's no reason to stop now.

The pirate responsible for knocking out the ansibles and targeting the Vatta family has been identified — Kylara Vatta finally knows who her enemy is. Working with her competent crew, beautiful cousin Stella, formidable Aunt Grace, and a couple of unexpected allies, Ky sets out to take down Gammis Turek, freeing the universe from his tyranny and getting revenge for what he did to the Vatta family.

Meanwhile Rafe is still on his home planet, trying to run ISC and helping his family through their ordeal. Rafe's sister Penny, a grieving widow and mother, turns out to be another of Elizabeth Moon's competent women. When the pirates target their planet, Rafe and Penny get involved with the government's response.

We all know that our heroes will be successful, but at what price? Despite the book's name, there's lots of loss in Victory Conditions. Our heroes will have to make hard decisions and deal with the consequences and the guilt that follows. All of this is piled atop the trouble and grief that's been stacking up since the first book. Elizabeth Moon successfully shows us that war is a necessary evil and an ugly business — the thrill of victory is more bitter than sweet.

The "flaws" in Victory Conditions are mostly the same ones I've noted in the previous books: a few dodgy plot elements, too many meetings with too much dialogue, and way too many plot rehashings (often in the guise of Ky once again explaining her leadership credentials). I also had trouble believing in Ky and Rafe's romance. It's been clear for a while that Moon was setting this up, but she never shows us enough evidence of their feelings for each other. Most disappointing, though, is that Moon's universe never feels substantial. It seems small (it's easy to find your friends and enemies even when communication has been shut down) and the cultural differences between planets seem silly rather than significant. I am fairly certain that Moon wants them to seem silly (it's social satire a la Jack Vance) but it doesn't quite fit the tone of the story.

On the bright side, Victory Conditions includes exciting space battles, a kidnapping, espionage, political and corporate intrigue, assassination attempts, and even a budding romance for teenager Toby Vatta. Some of these subplots — especially the kidnapping and espionage — are resolved way too quickly and I found myself wishing that Moon had stretched them out for more tension. But it all works out okay if you don't take it too seriously. As "space opera" it works quite well, in fact. If you've enjoyed VATTA'S WAR up to this point, I think you'll be satisfied with its conclusion.

I listened to VATTA'S WAR in audio format. Tantor Audio produced these a few years ago. The narrator, Cynthia Holloway, has a pleasant voice and excellent pacing. She brings Elizabeth Moon's characters to life. I recommend this version.

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### **erforscherin says**

Somewhere - belatedly - around the halfway mark of *Victory Conditions*, I started wondering what exactly I was trying to prove by slogging through this series. I'd already given it a second and third chance to redeem itself, and each book seemed worse than the one before: characters behaved erratically, the plot made no sense whatsoever, Chekhov's whole freaking armory lay forgotten and gathering dust...

I'm sorry to report this one isn't any better. I don't know that I'd say it's the *weakest* installment of the series - mostly because that would mean actually remembering what happened in the other books for comparison, and my brain has apparently taken the last few weeks to reclaim those neurons for more useful things - but it's certainly not something I'd care to reread, either.

Under different circumstances, I think the glaring flaws of this series... would still have been glaring. It's generally never a good sign when you start wondering whether the characters would make any *more* sense if you could just assume they were all robots who are very bad at pretending to pass as humans. ((view spoiler))

Part of it was probably just a "wrong book, wrong time" issue too, to be fair: I was hoping for a "merchant's disgraced heir reluctantly learns the family business and at last finds she's pretty good at it after all" story, but instead I got a "military golden child stuns everyone with implausibly advanced knowledge of tactics at a young age, and is also always right and is beautiful enough to get all the men, effortlessly"... which may, in fact, be the polar opposite kind of story. And the "oo-rah, military is always right, and also awesome, and everyone else is disposable scum"... was, for various reasons, a message that managed to hit a remarkable amount of my personal red-alert buttons at once.

In any case - I'm glad this one's over with. Here's to happier ventures ahead... and better choices of reading material. I think it's going to be quite some time before I try anything military-SF-related again.

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### **Dan says**

Reread..

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### **Lisa says**

A remarkably fast read, with all the ends tied up nicely. Moon is the first author I've read whose space battles include discussions of debris fields and how shields help with that. I was also intrigued by the idea that the brain implants could become overloaded with unmaleable memories that, over time, become a problem for regular human consciousness. The very end seemed a bit sparse, but I'm probably just being greedy.

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### **Althea Ann says**

Vatta's War series  
1 Trading in Danger

- 2 Marque and Reprisal
- 3 Engaging the Enemy
- 4 Command Decision
- 5 Victory Conditions

These 5 books are not so much a series as one long novel - there's one story arc, and you really need to read all five to get to the (satisfying) conclusion. (I somehow had the misapprehension that there were only 4 in the series - luckily the public library came through and got me #5 expediently!)

Due to a misjudgement, Kylara Vatta, scion of an interstellar shipping business, gets kicked out of military academy shortly before graduation. She's pretty crushed by the end of her hopes for a military career, but there's always the family business to fall back on... or is there? Someone's apparently got it out for her family, and before Ky knows it, she's catapulted into the midst of a space war, seeking justice and vengeance against an unsavory alliance of pirates.

These are first and foremost action-adventure books, with plenty of shoot-em-up scenes and an uncomplicated moral compass - you know who the 'bad guys' are, and although Ky is normally affected by the trauma of war (even seeking therapy at one point), she's always clearly on the side of right. The one thing I wished the story had was more exploration of the bad guys' motivations - OK, we know they're racist, and bigoted against 'modified' humans (people who've had either genetic or physical/technological augmentation), and of course they want power - but what's the story behind it all?

However, the characters of the 'good guys' are well-drawn, and the story's definitely recommended for those who like strong female characters: there's Ky, with her military and strategic brilliance, her cousin Stella, who has the financial and business acumen to bring Vatta Enterprises back from the brink - and there's their grandmother, Grace, who is far from being the harmless old lady people might assume. (Grace might be my favorite character - it's wonderful to see an older woman portrayed with such verve.)

As many have mentioned, there are some definite parallels here with Lois McMaster Bujold's Vorkosigan saga. I'm not sure these are \*quite\* as good, but if you like one, I'd guess you'll like the other.

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### **Choko says**

I know I am going high with the 5 stars, but it is for the all-together feel of the series. I know it is light, I know it is a bit corny, and I even know it is no where close to perfect, but I thoroughly enjoyed it, and am sad it is finished... I hope Ms. Moon gives us some sequels, for which the structure of the story is perfectly set up.

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### **Lexxi Kitty says**

I rather dislike Rafe.

December 5 2017

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I rarely reread - much more so recently, but still I rarely reread. So the number of series I've reread, completely, can be counted on one hand. There's this series here - the Vatta War one (yes, it continues in Vatta Peace, but I've never read that one). Then, hmms, Jae's Hollywood series. Oh, heh, that's it. Those two.

I came really close to rereading Jae's Shape-shifter series, I've read all but the last book and last two short stories, but . . . my energy ran out I guess. So - I reread every book in this series here and Jae's Hollywood series.

'Vatta's War' had never been my favorite series by Elizabeth Moon, that'd probably be either the Deed of Parksenarrion or Paladin's Legacy series. Both fantasy, and, chronologically, Deed is second and Paladin's is third in the same fantasy universe. I've never read the first series in that universe, The Legacy of Gird - not exactly sure why though Parksenarrion isn't in the first series, and does pop up on occasion in the third series (plus, the story of Gird is basically told over the course of the other two series). So it is easy for me to say that I've always liked Moon more as a Fantasy writer than a Science Fiction writer, though I also did like The Serrano Legacy series.

One of the things I had forgotten before the reread was the part where the series does not actually follow Ky Vatta. Though I probably should have realized/remembered that, since that's something Moon likes doing in her series – follow a bunch of characters, not just one. Still, I forgot. Most of the books in the series do include significant sections devoted to Ky's point of view, but there are books, and sections of books, that are almost exclusively devoted to other characters – like, if I recall correctly, both book 4 and 5 have significant time spent with Rafe and his family/business issues, with book 5 having a large chunk also devoted to Toby and his 'stuff'. There's still significant Ky action in book 5, but, by the end of the series, I kind of forgotten the character amongst all the others. Though I did see and recognize the character growth curve.

So, what did happen in book five? Plotline 1: Toby, the youngster (13? 15?) from prior books, does stuff on the space station he lives on, like go to school, invent stuff, date a girl his own age, have to deal with the parents of that girl, be kidnapped, etc.

Plotline 2: Rafe continues reluctantly guiding his family and business affairs. Though in terms of family, mostly just his sister (who he is kind of condescending to until he realizes she's not 'just' his young sister but an actual individual who also happens to be an adult). The business part involves him dealing with being 'temp'/acting' CEO for his ill father's company. Oh, and he is also still lusting after Ky.

Plotline 3: Ky continues work on creating a fleet to defeat the 'pirates'. Reminds me – there's a ton of talk about 'traitor's' that seemed very misplaced. How exactly were all these people traitors? Sure, some of them are, but just because someone is your enemy doesn't magically make them into 'traitors'. Sorry, that came up a lot, that word, though more in other people's sections than Ky's. Where was I? Oh, right, Ky continues creating fleet, gets into battles, matures, continues being condescended to because of her age and gender ('of course she's going to be distracted by pretty pretty boys!!!' bah).

Plotline 4: Aunt Grace & her boy toy McRoberts (or was that MacRoberts?) doing stuff important related to the defense of Ky's home system (what was that again, Slotter Key or something like that?).

Right, so, that's the series. Relatively interesting and well written. Certain melodramatic parts (like the villain literally poses as a kind of soap opera villain, though there are no sections devoted to him and it is explained why he is acting that way – purposefully, so, okay).

I liked the books well enough. Though my purpose was to set myself up to read book 1 of the follow-up series before book 2 appears shortly. But I somewhat failed since I'm kind of burned out now on Vatta issues. \*shrugs\* Happens.

Rating: something around 3.75, since that's the shelf I put it on on the 5th of December.

December 7 2017

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### **Miki Habryn says**

I read this entire series over the past week, and, until the final volume, it was acceptably mediocre. *Victory Conditions*, however, is just terrible.

Space Opera inevitably descends into munchkin power gaming, and this is a prime example of how not to do it. *Dei ex machina*, painfully predictable plot coupons, and, when a whole bunch of minor characters who had spanned much of the series die violently, a three page gesture towards sorrow in an attempt to give the lead character some depth. Feh.

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### **Sbuchler says**

Genre: Space Opera/Military Sci Fi

This is probably the weakest book of the *Vatta's War* series, it wrapped everything up all neat and tidy but it took too many short-cuts. Despite the relationship between Gammis Turek (pirate leader) and Lew Parmina (former head of ISC, biggest company in the known universe) being critical to the success of the pirates in earlier books, it's never explained WHY they were working together, or even that they WERE directly working together. It's hinted at a lot, but not elucidated. The only motivation we're given for either's power grabs (both using extremely despicable means) is a lust for power. I feel cheated.

The sub-plots were also somewhat weak. The sub-plot of Toby falling for the teenaged daughter of a pirate was interesting, but the resolution was a cop out – instead of slowly discovering that the dad was a traitor over the course of the book and having that interact with the larger story, everyone simultaneously intuits the fact that he's a pirate. (Oh, and everyone – political authorities included – condemn this as vehemently as the Vatta's who have personal cause for a vendetta.) To make matters even more black-and-white, he's got to be suddenly revealed as an abusive spouse as well. Totally unnecessary vilification, in my opinion. It would have been much more interesting if he was a likeable fellow. The result of this sub-plot is equally incredulous - it doesn't even cause a stutter in Toby's romance!

Speaking of romance, I found the romance between Rafe and Ky completely unbelievable. Yes, it's been foreshadowed ever since we met Rafe, however, they both independently decide they're in love with each other without ever talking after he leaves her 2 books ago! Not believable. Especially when there is a lot of pressure against a relationship, and they're both deeply busy with other things. Partiality for each other I have no trouble believing. Deciding the other person is the love of your life without any communication what-so-ever is too much for me to swallow. Especially when Moon set up a perfectly reasonable way for them to keep in secret contact; she could've developed that plot/relationship over the course of the book in a much more believable and less melodramatic way.

It was still a fun book, full of action and adventure and amusement. However it could've been so much MORE then it was.

