



The Moon's Shadow

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At the age of seventeen the young nobleman named Jaibriol Qox became ruler of a vast galactic empire-- and lost everything he had ever valued.

Born of a clandestine liaison between a renegade daughter of the Skolian Imperialate and a scion of the genetically engineered Eubian Traders, Jai Qox grew up in exile, unaware of the powers that coursed through his noble blood. In the waning days of the bloody Radiance War, which ravaged the galaxy, Jai was captured, and returned to the Traders to play a role as a puppet Emperor in their scheme to consolidate their domination of space.

Now Jai must walk a razor's edge, to seize the power that is his by birthright, without succumbing to its dark seduction, in order to avert a conflagration which threatens to engulf a thousand worlds.

The Moon's Shadow Details

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From Reader Review The Moon's Shadow for online ebook

Lois says

This was every bit as good as I remember.

Tina says

Jaibriol Qox III has just assumed the throne of the Eubian Empire. He is the rightful heir to the throne, his DNA says so. But no one else is aware that his DNA also says that he is the son of the Eubian Empire's sworn enemy. Jai was born in exile where his Romeo and Julietesque parents fled after faking their deaths. In the aftermath of a crippling War between his mothers and father's planets, he now believes his parents are really dead and that he has a duty to see that they didn't die in vain.

Realizing he is the only chance the warring worlds have for peace, he reveals himself to the Eubians and thus takes his place as Emperor. But it is harder than Jai thought. He is young and inexperienced. The Hightons, the ruling class on Eube, speak in a florid meandering language that is full of subtext and hidden meaning. Jai can't seem to master the subtleties so he blunders constantly. Making enemies early on, he quickly becomes the target of assassination plots

But Jai gains unlikely allies in the woman he makes his empress, Tarquine Iquar, and his wily adviser Corbal Xir. All three have devastating secrets that if they came to light mean sure death. In Tarquine and Corbal Jai gains access to the experience and ruthlessness necessary to run his empire. But he manages to maintain his own internal idealism and need to meet the Skolians at the peace table.

If you haven't read any of the other books of the series, then this probably isn't the best place to be starting. In the previous seven books, there is so much back-story, so much explanation of the events that lead to Jai taking the throne, that you'd be doing yourself a disservice if you tried to start here.

Reading this book, it made me think of Jai as a narc under deep cover. Constantly watching his back trying not to make a false move. Having to pretend to transcend is kinda like a undercover cop having to commit crime to be accepted. He is deep in enemy territory and one false move could get a slave collar slapped on his throat. The irony, of course, is that he is the rightful emperor and this is his empire. He should be right at home. He should be able to make changes if he wants, but the way of life and the attitudes of the people are so ingrained that his efforts are frightening and make him an assassination target.

But he has Tarquine, who after Soz (Jai's mother), has become my favorite character in these books. She is tough, clever, smart, duplicitous, forward thinking, selfish, compassionate, ruthless, wise and most of all she is looking out for Jai. I thought for sure Corbal would be the power behind Jai, but it is Tarquine who bears watching.

This book has a lot to recommend it. There is Jai who is growing and learning and trying to make a legacy for his parents. There is lots of good sex. There is lots of great action that includes plotting and counter plotting, assassination attempts, murder, lawsuits and espionage. There are old threads tied up a little bit (Kelric and Tarquine). And there are the off screen developments in the Ruby dynasty. I especially love the scenes where Kelric, Roca and Dyhianna are puzzling over Jai's motives, not realizing that he is Soz's child.

Which brings me to the commenting on the whole series. I can't wait to see what happens next. The Skolian

Empire series is an excellent series of books that are wonderfully plotted. I love the fact that the reader has so much great information about the goings on that none of the characters really know. I love the idea that the one of the two people who know everything has conveniently died and that the other person isn't in a position to reveal anything. I can't wait until the Valdorias all find out about Jai. I can't wait until Jai finds out about his parents. I can't wait until poor Roca learns about Soz and Althor.

Elar says

What could be more intriguing than man behind enemy lines trying to survive and save mankind from needless war between two galactic empires. Add thrilling action scenes and vivid romance and you get high value space opera.

Joe Karpierz says

As I was thinking about what I was going to write in this review of THE MOON'S SHADOW by Catherine Asaro, I realized that the saga of the Skolian Empire is, for me a lot like reading Miles Vorkosigan books by Lois McMaster Bujold. They're fun to read (or listen to, I suppose), they have characters that we know and care about, and, most of all, they're almost like comfort food. We go back each time because we feel good being there, pretty much know what to expect from the book and the author, and we have a nice feeling each time we complete one of the books.

And yet, of course, they're different. We may like the characters, but in the Skolian Empire stories, characters, even our favorites, die. The word Empire suggests war and conflict. And indeed there is much war and conflict in the Skolian Empire stories, and war involves death. And while characters have died in the Vorkosigan books, rarely are they characters that we have grown attached to.

I suspect that's one of the strengths of the Skolian Saga books: Asaro makes us care about the characters, and then at times that are appropriate, she does the necessary - she kills them off. While the characters are very important parts of the stories, they don't rule the stories. The plot and storyline are still very important, and if the storyline says "XYZ character must die", then character XYZ dies.

That was a long way to go to get us to THE MOON'S SHADOW, which doesn't have heartstring-tugging deaths in it. What's different about SHADOW is that for the first time in the series, we get told a story from the Eubian side of the conflict. It's a refreshing change of pace which provided an interesting insight into how Asaro views the Eubian Concord.

THE MOON'S SHADOW is the fourth book of a group that simultaneously covers much of the same ground but from differing viewpoints, the others being THE QUANTUM ROSE, ASCENDANT SUN, and SPHERICAL HARMONIC. These four, as I've noted before, explore the aftermath of the Radiance War, wherein one of my favorite characters, Soz Valdoria, is killed. Our main character is Jabriol Qox III, son of Soz and Jabriol Qox (my fingers just do not want to type a Q that is NOT followed by a U) II. The children of that pairing were left on earth while Soz went off and started the Radiance War. A trader was engineered that returned

Jabriol III to the Traders (as they are known), and, at age 17, he immediately ascended to the Carnelian Throne.

So, this is the story of young Jabriol growing in and growing up in his job. Jabriol must learn to rule an

empire that he does not understand and which has a way of life, way of thinking, and a morality that he does not understand. He must deal with backstabbing politics, a wife much older than him, trying to broker a peace with the Skolian Empire, all the while trying, in his own way, to change the way the Eubian Concord operates. He must avoid assassination attempts and scheming relatives. On top of all that, he must hide who and what he really is - a telepath, a person that the rest of the Concord would consider a provider, a pleasure slave for the Aristo class.

Yeah, I'm glad I didn't have such problems when I was 17.

This story has a lot of good stuff going for it. As is usual with the Skolian books, we get a lot of great character interaction and development, and we come to care for the characters, even some of the Eubians. We get to see a 17 year old boy grow up before our eyes as a man, and emperor, and a caring human being. We get to see relationships change and grow. And really, it *is* fun reading a book from the point of view of the other side of the fence, as it were.

One of the things that we've learned throughout the series is that the Eubians have a different way of communicating, especially at the highest levels of their class system. While Skolians and Earth folks speak directly, the Eubians speak in a roundabout manner, always talking around the point while getting to the point. In fact, depending on who is speaking to whom, speaking directly is considered offensive. It's interesting and fun to see Jabriol get frustrated with this communication method and at the same time grow to learn it.

The only thing I found frustrating (at first) about the recording is that we have yet another new narrator, Dennis Holland. So, not only have we changed narrators, but we've gone from female to male. I can't pretend to know how all the contracts and other legalities enter into the decision about who narrates a book, but I find the changes frustrating. Still, Holland grew on me as the book progressed, and I only found a few of his pronunciations of certain words grating. I could get used to him if he stays on the job (yes, I realize they've been recorded already, but "stays" seems a better word here).

All in all, another enjoyable entry in the Skolian Saga.

BobA707 says

Summary: Repetition from the previous books, but from different view points, quite a thoughtful book that moves the overall story forward

Plotline: The basic plot was pretty good and worked well with the premise.

Premise: Interesting. Not fully convinced it would really work, but different too most SF.

Writing: Good bits were good, well described, strong characters

Ending: All set up for next books in the series

Pace: Never a dull moment!

John Loyd says

The Moon's Shadow (2003) 392 pages by Catherine Asaro.

Seventeen year old Jai spent his first fifteen years isolated on the planet Prism with just his mother, Sauscony Valdoria, imperator of the Skolian Imperiate, his father Jaibriol II, in line to be emperor of the Eubian Concord, and his younger siblings. The next two years during the Radiance war between Eube and Skolia, he was Jay Rockworth, foster son of Seth Rockworth. At the end of the Radiance war Jay joins the Dawn Corps, a relief organization sponsored by the Allied worlds. Jay sets up an exchange with the Eubians, himself for the captured Prince Eldrin. He becomes Jaibriol III emperor of the Eubian Concord.

The events in the first half of Moon's Shadow overlap with Ascendent Sun (following Kelric) and Spherical Harmonic (following Dehya) this time giving us more insight into the workings of the Eubians and their rulers, the Aristos. Jai can't just walk in demand that the attitudes and mores of an entire culture change so that he can then talk peace with the Skolians, but he is the only one who can try.

Asaro introduced a lot of the characters in the previous books. Now she builds on that. Corbal Xir and especially Tarquine Iquar have more to them than we could have imagined of an Aristo.

Another great really excellent book. You could start with this one, but I think reading the books in order would be better. Start with Primary Inversion and Radiant Seas.

Bruce says

Asaro continues to successfully spin her her Saga of the Skolian Empire in grand opera style. The stage is vast' the supernumeraries abundant, and the emotions hit the high notes of suspense and passion. In this eighth installment, seventeen-year old telepathically gifted Jaibriol Qox, willingly takes up the crown that his father so hated and readily abandoned, and becomes emperor of Eube, an empire built on sadism and slavery. He means to change that and broker peace after a horrendous war. He finds among the Highton nobility two unexpected allies, an uncle that he meets for the first time, and the Minister of Finance, a woman that he finds irresistible, even though she's his great-great-aunt.

Contains: Passion, palace power plots and plays, tension, and after all, how many science fiction stories can you think of that come with genealogical tables?

Karin Granström says

The adventures of Jaibriol III is a chilling but very interesting read. I always worry lots when the empathis risk capture by the traders and here poor Jai spends the entire book with them! Which of course also gives us more insight in their weird but consistently portrayed culture. It is nice to see Tarquine Iquar again!

Jessica Snell says

Tried this out because I'm always interested in finding a new sci-fi author, and one of the back-cover blurbs compared her to the amazing Bujold. So not Bujold. Don't get me wrong: it's very well-written, but the villainous culture was just so very villainous and repulsive, and the heroes were not super-noble enough to make up for the very despicable villains, if that makes sense.

Alina says

A mixture of space opera and romance, featuring scheming, sadistic interstellar aristocrats and their empath sex slaves in opulent far-future settings. The emperor must hide that he is an empath or be turned into a sex slave. This is number 8 of a series, but the first I've read. Maybe that's part of the reason I couldn't get into it.

Jim says

A seventeen (or eighteen, depending on which history is being used) year old is taken from one life to sit as emperor. This position is based on his bloodline (or perceived bloodline). He hates the way life is lived in his empire. A small group reign supreme and treat all other humans as slaves and not worth their notice.

He wishes all that to change, starting with peace talks with an enemy of long standing. He has to fight his inexperience and ignorance. As he goes along he makes powerful enemies and a few allies of import.

Her description of this society was ugly, and purposely sickening. This book is part of a series, but the review said it could be read without its predecessors. It did close up enough to be a standalone book.

Joy says

Jaibriol III, son of the rulers of implacably opposed star empires, dedicates his life through sacrifice in hope of bringing peace between his two heritages. If his Highton subjects discover that he is not full-blooded Highton, he will be removed from his throne and delivered to a life of torture. Unfamiliar with the twisted, plot-riddled culture of the Hightons he must - very carefully - find supporters who will not betray him in his attempt to negotiate a treaty with Skolia. To find his own decency and compassion in those supporters would be too much to expect.

Ever since Asaro's THE BRONZE SKY was released, I have been listening to audio versions of Skolian novels. THE MOON'S SHADOW is a print book I had previously missed. I found it as emotionally involving as any of the other Skolian books. The writing is worthy of this Nebula award winner.

My favorite Science Fiction New Read of 2017

Cat says

Another one of those missing-story-line books from Asaro, I'd been hoping she'd get to Jaibriol's story eventually. The cover is misleading, however, because it took forever for me to determine who the female

was in the picture. And in my impression, it was Jai's story, not an equal story for Jai and the [I'm not going to give it away] female on the cover.

Oddly enough, the moon-sciences information at the end of the novel was the least interesting (to me) scientific tangent, of all of Asaro's books so far. I'd assumed she had extensive world-building science in her files, and these pages were drier than other "appendix" type additions.

Still, I appreciated that the anomalies in the Trader/Eubian world were further developed. Sadistic evil opponents can be a little one-dimensional, even if that's the point (they are *evil*). I don't think any of the readers will ever truly warm up to the Eubians, but Asaro painstakingly leaves clues that hope can still exist.

Mike says

The Moon's Shadow is the 8th book in Asaro's Skolian Empire series and I think is one of the best, which seems strange for book 8 in a series.

The story follows the new emperor as he finds his feet as leader of the Eubian Traders. I think it is the politics of what happens to someone try to change a world that makes this so good.

Looking forward to the next books.

Josephine says

This series is so filled with intrigue that you wonder how the Author will be get justice for the main characters.
