



Triple Zero

Karen Traviss

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Following the eruption of the bloody Clone Wars at the battle of Geonosis, both sides remain deadlocked in a stalemate that can be broken only by elite warrior teams like Omega Squad, clone commandos with terrifying combat skills and a lethal arsenal. . . .

For Omega Squad, deployed deep behind enemy lines, it's the same old special ops grind: sabotage, espionage, ambush, and assassination. But when Omega Squad is rushed to Coruscant, the war's most dangerous new hotspot, the commandos discover they're not the only ones penetrating the heart of the enemy.

A surge in Separatist attacks has been traced to a network of Sep terror cells in the Republic's capital, masterminded by a mole in Command Headquarters. To identify and destroy a Separatist spy and terror network in a city full of civilians will require special talents and skills. Not even the leadership of Jedi generals, along with the assistance of Delta squad and a certain notorious ARC trooper, can even the odds against the Republic Commandos. And while success may not bring victory in the Clone Wars, failure means certain defeat.

Also includes the bonus story Omega Squad: Targets by Karen Traviss!

Triple Zero Details

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From Reader Review Triple Zero for online ebook

Matthew McAndrew says

Once again, Karen Traviss makes you not want to put the book down. True to her style, she keeps you on the edge of your seat with suspenseful action scenes, entertaining dialogue and intriguing characters dealing with complicated moral issues. And for bonus points, she put Delta Squad from the video game into this installment!

Robert says

Karen Traviss' Contribution to the Extended Star Wars universe has been uneven to say the least. Responsible for two brutally tedious and entirely forgettable Clone Wars books, she also penned Hard Contact which - of the twenty-five Star Wars novels I've read to date - is easily the best. Triple Zero is the sequel to that latter tale and it contains little of what made that book so very good. There are a ton of Clone Troopers in Triple Zero and Traviss tries to give them each as distinct a personality as makes sense. Here's the rub though, characterisation is not her strong point. The Mandalorian sergeant Skirata is supposed to be a charismatic father-figure and tactical genius but comes across rather more like a maudlin has-been while his colleague Waylon Vau never really suggests the cold-hearted taskmaster, but rather is just plain dull and mean-spirited. Traviss' distaste for Jedi seeps from every pore as Etain makes the transition from incompetent to only partially incompetent while and fellow Jedi Jusik acts like some kind of wannabe schoolkid on uppers.

Putting aside such flimsy personalities, the action on offer is well-realised with many genuinely tense scenes, particularly those where the Troopers find them themselves surveilling suspected terrorists through the insanely complex and vast urban jungle of Coruscant. It's just a shame that in attempting to prove just how unstoppable the Republic Commandos are, Traviss never really puts them in harm's way. The real star of Triple Zero is the Null-class ARC Trooper Ordo, effectively the Elite of the Elite and a fun character as he transitions from super-soldier to spy to military intelligence. More of him and less of everyone else would have been a vast improvement.

What also shines through is Traviss' cynicism towards the more questionable aspects of The Clone Wars such as the dubious idea of immediately elevating every Jedi to the rank of general and why no-one seems to have a problem with The Republic's usage of a vast slave army in its war against the Separatists. Prosecute Yoda for war-crimes, I say.

Unfortunately, one great character and a bit of social commentary isn't really enough to save this book which seems all the more pedestrian in the shadow of its magnificent predecessor.

Marita says

Bow chick a wow wow Jedi and clone now.

Marsha Stokes says

This is the second book in Karen Traviss's Republic Commando series. The first book, Hard Contact, I really enjoyed and probably would have given it a higher "star rating" than I am giving Triple Zero. The thing I enjoyed so much about the first book in the series is that it was the first Clone Wars novel I had read that really went into the minds of the Clone Troopers and turned them into real people with thoughts and feelings, instead of the emotionless "robot" men that they appear to be in the movies. That new perspective was very captivating to me.

This book resumes with the same characters from the first book and takes you on another adventure. However, there is a lot of "soldier talk" in this book that is hard for me to get through and be interested in. I am not so keen on learning the names of all the weapons, equipment and other soldiering terminology. I don't remember it being so prolific in the first book. While the story over all was still good, it definitely was not a book that I couldn't put down for days at a time. I still enjoyed it, I might read it again some day, and I have the next book in the series waiting on my night stand... but it definitely was not as good to me as the first book.

May the Force be with you! :)

Collin Henderson says

Omega squad is deployed on coruscant, aka Triple Zero to work with fellow commandos Delta squad and the Null ARC trooper Ordo to take down a separatist terrorist cell lying right in the heart of the republic.

If the first RC novel was a well paced action movie, this one is a slow burn action drama. A lot of time is spent on the large cast interacting with one another and spending time outside of battle. It's all good stuff. The downside is that it can at times feel a bit bloated and that Skirata at times comes across as a bit of a Mary sue but on the whole this is a worthwhile second installment in one of the better Star Wars Lengends series

Jim C says

This is a sequel to *Hard Contact*. This could be read as a stand alone novel but Omega Squad is back in this novel and some other characters from the first book. You will have a better understanding if you read the first novel. In this book, the unit has an undercover assignment on Coruscant and they are joined by Delta Squad and the two men that trained them on Kamino.

The author has a nice little niche where this series explores the introduction of clones into the galaxy. These stories take place early in the Clone Wars and she explores how clones are introduced into common everyday situations and also explores developing feelings towards other people.

I did like the first book better though. This one used too much Mandalorian lingo that took away from the story. In the first novel, there were military descriptions and tactics that added to the story. In this book, these descriptions were explored deeply and at times took my attention away from the plotline.

All in all, this is one of the better series in this universe and I look forward to continuing this series.

David Drent says

So far so good. This series keeps getting better, more tension and more important stakes. Love my wife for getting me this series.

Brett says

This book is not quite as good as Hard Contact (the first book in this series) but it was still an enjoyable read. The plot is somewhat convoluted and is really secondary to Traviss's forced character development of the troopers and their Seargent, Skirata.

For those that have read Traviss's LoTF books, this book really delves into those characters that come back and you can see her big picture story arc coming together. Unfortunately this book is where her personal hatred for the Jedi starts to rear its ugly head. Instead of showing how the clones and Jedi are similar in how they are raised, she tries to make the Jedi seem as bad and clueless as possible even unhuman, and make the clones seem like innocent victims of the Jedi's war. The only Jedi she seems to like is one who's gone completely native, so to speak, and just wants to be one of the troopers.

I hope this doesn't continue into the next book as much as Im afraid it does. Traviss seems very self indulgent, and has done everything she possibly can to give the Star Wars universe their own Klingon race. While I like seeing the "real" side of the clones, and giving them characterization, I don't buy into all the Mando "culture" spreading through the ranks, and frankly I have a hard time buying into Skirata's little club.

I don't think this is a bad book, and in fact it made me actually slightly interested in the Mando stuff Traviss forced into her LoTF books. I do however believe that Traviss has trouble keeping her own (strange) biases out of the forefront of her writing, and she veered away from her LucasFilm mandate so wildly that I have a hard time recommending her novels to anyone else. Her personal actions in the latter days of her time with the SW universe further cement her in my crazy column.

If you read and liked Hard Contact this is a decent follow-up that further's the characters but drags in spots and goes further than you probably want as far as looking into the lives of the clones.

Olivia says

I wanted to like this book a lot more than I actually did by the end of it. Traviss is one of the better Star Wars authors and I really like her work in general. Unfortunately, her Mary Sue lead Kal Skirata just killed the book for me. The more I read, the more I grew weary of everyone's worship of the man and his ridiculous self-righteousness. I wish the author had provided more nuance to the ethical question of the Republic's usage of clones in the war. Instead, the message that is continually crammed down the readers' throat is "All that is Mandalorian is great and wonderful; all that is of the Republic is inferior and wrong."

By the time I got to Skirata's final dressing down of Etain for, gods-forbid, daring to get pregnant, I was sick

of the book and dead sick of Skirata. He berates her for robbing Darman of choice, as though she is solely to blame for her pregnancy and then demands that the child be raised by him...WTF??? We are supposed to believe that the Republic's control of the clones' lives is bad, but that Skirata's control of his squads is good and nurturing, but I don't see much difference between the two. He controls when Darman is informed about his impending fatherhood and exerts complete control over the unborn child's future within days of its conception. Combine that with Skirata's immediate suspicion and apparent disdain for basically all the women in the book (which he lovingly passed on to Ordo as well...and wait, wasn't Mando culture supposed to be egalitarian across gender lines?) and I just can't give this book any more than two stars. What a shame.

Crystal Starr Light says

I did not think that I would like Hard Contact. I was afraid it would be another crappy Clone Wars novel (along the lines of Jedi Trial and The Cestus Deception). This is why it took me forever to purchase it. But when I finally got around to reading it, I was extremely impressed. Couple extraordinary characterization with an uncharted plot about clone commandos during the Clone Wars, and you have one of the best--if not the best--Clone Wars novels written. So, when I saw there was a sequel, I didn't think twice about purchasing.

Plot:

A Separatist cell is discovered on Coruscant. Delta Squad along with rival squad, Omega Squad, are sent to flush out the enemies and dispel the threat. Further, Etain is reunited with Delta Squad and Kal Skirata joins the young clones he trained to aid them in their mission.

WARNING: Possible spoilers!

Good:

Karen Traviss is a good author. She writes in a clear manner and appears to actually know what she is writing about (she doesn't skip over the tough stuff and focus on the easy stuff).

It's great to see our favorite clone squad, Delta Squad, along with another squad instead of the typical Anakin, Obi-Wan, and gang. Further, it was cool to see the men who helped train the clones and to learn more about the enigmatic Mando culture. I liked learning about the culture and enjoyed the characters using the language (but more on this later). Etain, Skirata, Ordo, and Fi--whom I greatly enjoyed reading about--have good solid characters. And the plot--a terrorist cell--was something we can easily associate with, especially after the events of 9/11.

Bad:

The first chapter was good, but it quickly got drenched and bogged down in sluggish movement and introducing too many characters. Six characters are either exceedingly minor (such as Laseema, the unimportant Enacca, and Qibbu) and make you wonder how they attained a slot in the Dramatis Personae. Perhaps, it was to bear more resemblance to the established Star Wars Universe.

The plot is not convoluted--disarming a terrorist cell--yet Traviss does not seem to know how she wants to proceed. The whole plot occurs over many pages that are mostly devoted to dialogue such as "I feel guilty about making/using these boys as slaves" from Skirata and Etain. The actual terrorist cell dismantling occurs over a very short period of time, which is cut up and placed in small doses between the large amounts of talking about what people are going to do.

Which brings me to my next problem: Etain. She was mildly annoying in HC but now she is unbearable. Leaving Darman in HC, I felt they were more of friends. Now, after no contact (other than Etain's perpetual

"reaching out to Darman in the Force" which she either does or talks about doing each time anything is written in her view), Darman and Etain fling themselves at each other the moment they reunite. What could have been a sweet, slow romance is ruined with the "I couldn't stop thinking of you" "Me neither--let's hop in bed" routine. And how she ends up pregnant--please. This happened in TCD and didn't work. Now, it crops up here (borderline plagiarism). Does every stinking Clone Wars novel have to contain a battle romance (although no where near as corny as Odie and Erk's romance in Jedi Trial) and an illegitimate child?

Another problem I had with this book was paradoxically also one of the few things that I loved about this book--the Mando Language and culture. While I loved learning about the language and culture, I found the in-text definition and the glossary repetitive. I almost felt Traviss was treating me like a complete, incompetent idiot who is incapable of turning a couple of pages to the glossary. Further, the in-text definition slowed down the read and felt unnatural.

Characters I longed to know more about--Atin, Vau, Jusik, even Niner from HC--were mostly neglected. Even Darman's feelings about his forbidden romance with Etain are ignored (those would have been very interesting). The entire Delta squad we know and love from HC was overlooked in an attempt to cover all 16 characters presented in the book.

Dialogue/Sexual Situations/Violence:

Language is restricted primarily to made up Star Wars phrases. Darman and Etain sleep with each other.

Violence is typical Star Wars fare.

Overall:

All in all, this book does not live up to its predecessor, HC, but is no where near as bad as TCD or JT. The plot is not bad. The pacing is too slow, many of the characters are mere cardboard faces, and the Mando language is forcibly hammered into the reader's head. The book could easily have been condensed from its 400+ page format into something more enjoyable. Three stars is probably too high, but two stars (the same I gave for TCD) is too low. If I had the choice, I would give 2.75 for good writing and a new story.

Katie says

FB post from 7 years ago: "finished Triple Zero and was a mite disappointed."

I have no idea how that translates into stars. Probably a three?

Ron says

Most readers, myself included, like a happy ending. In fact, J. R. R. Tolkien suggested that a "eucatastrophe"--an unexpected overcoming of seeming impossible peril--is the best ending for a fantasy-type story. But *Triple Zero*'s happy ending seemed pre-ordained and inevitable. The reader, much less the characters, hardly broke into a sweat. It was too easy. Complicated, yes, but easy.

I understand the limitations Fan Fiction puts on the author, but Traviss merely followed the "formula" of *Hard Contact* and doubled the cast. Faced with the inevitability of all her main characters surviving, Traviss tried to dish up a little internal conflict. And it was good, but too easily resolved. In fact, over and over, she has the loser (whose point of view those scenes are always reported from) agreeing with the winner.

At least she could have made the external conflict seem more threatening, but her bad guys were often

dismissed as "amateurs" by the good guys...after they'd effortlessly blown them away.

She has a good story. it's the storytelling which needs to be pumped up.

Okay, all that might be forgiven if it weren't for the sticky, sweet ending. There was so much honey, the last pages of the book stuck together! Everyone loves everyone--the L-word is used almost as much as in chic lit--or at least accepts the others as buddies or brothers.

Did appreciate the timeline, list of characters, and glossary. (The reader can learn *Mando'a* to irritate those Klingon-spouting trekkies.)

Thomas says

After liking Hard Contact as much as I did, I was eager to read Traviss' next book in the Republic Commando series. It took me a bit longer than usual to finish the book, thanks to regular life getting in the way, and I was pleased to see that the style and tone she set in the first book carried over to the second one. This makes me eager to want to read the next three books in the series, as well as everything else Traviss wrote for the Expanded Universe.

Like she did in Hard Contact, Traviss focuses on humanizing the clones and making the story about them. This time, instead of having them fight a battle on the front lines, she puts them on Coruscant, where they're trying to stop a group of insurgents who are bombing the city. The story involves a lot of espionage, infiltration, and assassinations, but instead of the Jedi fighting to prevent these things, this time the protagonists are the ones doing these things, often with the help of some of the Jedi. It's not a typical Star Wars story, but based on Hard Contact, it is a typical Karen Traviss story.

In Hard Contact, the heart of the story was an insecure Jedi coming into her own when she's put in command of a team of Republic Commandos. The story eschews the stereotype of the arrogant Jedi, instead making the clones she commands the heroes of the story. In Triple Zero, the entire exercise is performed with the established team (plus a few extras), so that aspect of the story was missing. A large part of what made Hard Contact work for me was that progression of character, so Triple Zero didn't resonate as much with me. That's not to say it didn't resonate at all; it just didn't have the same effect on me.

Traviss uses some of the same characters she used in the first book in this series, which makes sense, since the series is called Republic Commando. To suddenly shift to another commando team wouldn't make sense, but she does bring new commandos onto the team. The problem is that she now has double the number of characters in the novel, and I had a hard enough time keeping up with them all in Hard Contact that I'd rather not have to deal with that many more again. That's not the author's fault by any means, but it was a deterrent on my part.

On the bright side, she creates good characters, and once again avoids the standard Jedi story and instead focuses on the clones. In fact, the story doesn't feature or even mention any of the usual Star Wars characters, save for one off-the-cuff mention of General Kenobi. She blazes her own trail again, and it fits well in the Expanded Universe, despite the fact that the inclusion of interrogation, assassinations, and the propensity of violence and anger don't scream "Star Wars" for a lot of readers.

Triple Zero isn't quite as good as Hard Contact, but that's to be expected, since much of the first novel was

introducing us to the central characters of the Republic Commandos. It was still a good novel, with thoughtful passages, an interesting plot, and engaging characters. The novel sets up events for the next book in the series, and it's one I look forward to reading. In fact, anything Traviss writes -- Star Wars or otherwise -- will likely wind up on my future reading lists.

Danial says

In the second book in the Republic Commando series, we take a deeper look into Etain's growth from a failing, inconsequential, and pathetic padawan into a warrior who dons armor, weilds two lightsabers, and cares for her troops. The focus of this book on Etain's personal development really gives readers their first look into a Jedi Knight that isn't single minded, boring, and completely self-absorbed.

Etain has to struggle with some very real problems in this novel, and she is forced to decide just how far she's willing to allow the ends to justify the means to keep her troops safe. Along the way, she also grows closer to a commando named Darman, and we see that relationship challenge the status-quo for not only the Jedi and the commando, but the squad as a whole.

The author does a great job in not only keeping you engaged in the story line (counter terrorism operations), and the development of the two primary protagonists (Etain and Darman), but also in defining what clone life was like during the Clone Wars. Clone life was heavily influenced by Mandalorian society, so readers are given an opportunity to glean some more history of the Mandalorians that isn't possible anywhere else except KOTOR.

The first book of this series was pretty spot on, but it was an introduction, and book two really does a lot to carry the story forward. I was a little concerned during the transition between the books, but the old gang was reunited through a series of unfortunate events, and the story arc picked up right where it left off.

For those of you who have been reading my reviews as I work my way through the Star Wars Extended Universe from "Dawn of the Jedi" to the Thrawn Trilogy, you'll know that Darth Bane has been the gold standard in which I've been gauging all other storylines. Republic Commando is quickly shaping up to be a rival for that illustrious title.

I've still got two more books to read in this series, but so far this is a can't miss story line

Stephen says

Finally...a quality **Star Wars** novel that allows us **fanboys** (and fangirls) to hold our **helmeted heads** up high.

The *Republic Commando* series is what the Star Wars EU is supposed to be and it has me **slooging** and **leaking** happy like a sieve. Ever since **Timothy Zhan** single-handedly jumpstarted the Star Wars EU, most of the examples I've read have left me somewhere between **Meh** and downright **hacked off**. Only R.A. Salvatore's *Vector Prime* had really warmed my **cockles**.

To that exclusive list of one, I now add the Republic Commando series which has set my **cockles aflame** (*a*

potentially life threatening condition if one happens to be dasypygal and hasn't kept their rump properly waxed...but I digress).

After reading the first of the Republic Commando novels, Hard Contact, I was negligent in failing to mention how genuinely impressed I was with both the story's concept and Ms. Traviss' execution. Therefore, I'll try to make partial amends for my earlier oversight by tossing some her way now because she praising really is doing a **WOW** job with this series. This is good solid SF in its own right, not just good compared to other Star Wars stories. For better or worse, Ms. Traviss' stellar effort will keep me picking up Star Wars EU novels because she shows that, when done well, this can be among the greatest science fiction backyards in which to play.

Before I background the series and do the plot summary, I want to address two preconceptions I had going into this series in case others are thinking along similar lines. When I picked up Hard Contact, I did so thinking that, at best, I was in for a light diversion and a fast, fun read (3 stars if it really worked hard).

Why?

First, it's Star Wars. Now don't get me wrong, I love me some Star Wars (and Star Trek, Babylon 5, Firefly...yes, go on and say it...NERD!!) and I've read a handful of the tie-in books that I've enjoyed. However, normally I read them with the expectation of a briskly paced, "non-neuron taxing" story that is the literary equivalent to a burger and a beer (or several). They taste great and fill you up but beyond that are soon fairly forgettable.

Second, and MUCH worse in my opinion, is that this is a tie-in novel for the **video game**, "*Star Wars: Republic Commando*." I've never played the game and wasn't aware that this was a tie in series when I purchased Hard Contact so it's safe to say that you do not need to be familiar with the game to enjoy the book. However, on the "poor preconception scale," a video game tie in book for a popular video game that is also part of a major brand like Star Wars ~~often...usually...~~...almost always contains a major "schlock" factor because authors are just "mailing it in" to cash a check.

Well, in this case, my preconceptions were...just...plain...wrong!!

I'm here to tell you that Karen Traviss showed up with her "**A**" **game**, took a terrific premise and then wrote as good a Star Wars novel as I've read. Still fun, still briskly paced, but with some surprising character depth and a really, really good story.

SERIES BACKGROUND:

The series takes place in between the events of *Star Wars II: Attack of the Clones* and *Star Wars III: The Revenge of the Sith* and revolves around the fight between the Grand Army of the Republic made up of clones and the droid-based army of the Separatists. The series main characters are the most ubiquitous in the Star Wars universe (i.e., the clone soldiers of the Grand Army of the Republic) and yet, until now, have been mostly invisible as characters.

This series changes that.

The stories focus on **Omega Squad**, an elite group of clone "commandos" who are the **black ops** division of the Clone Army, handling assassinations, sabotage, espionage, etc.... These specialized clones have much greater fighting skills and intelligence as well as more individuality and a tremendous sense of loyalty

towards their fellow soldiers. However, despite rating **uber** on the badassery scale, Traviss manages to “humanize” these soldiers allowing the reader to care about them. Part of this is accomplished through the immense loyalty they have for one another and the dangers they willing face to protect their comrades.

This emotional connection with the characters made a world of difference in my enjoyment of the story because the tension and drama became less vicarious and detached and more palpable and intimate.

PLOT SUMMARY:

This installment has Omega Squad on Coruscant having traced an upsurge in separatist attacks to the Republic’s capital. It appears the separatists may have a mole on the inside and are planning an attack that could devastate the capital and cripple the republic. Traviss deftly lays out the plot and keeps the narrative tension pretty high. In addition, the reader is also show, through a series of flashbacks, the brutal training of the commandos and how they way they were treated as little more than “fodder” by the Republic chain of command. This evoking of empathy for the characters’ “upbringing” added to my connection with the story.

THOUGHTS:

This is a terrific story/series for SF fans even if they do not normally read Star Wars EU novels. Karen Traviss is an excellent writer and if you haven’t checked out her own series beginning with *City of Pearl*, I would strongly recommend that you do. *City of Pearl* is light years ahead of most debut novels I’ve read and I thought it was amazing.

As for *Triple Zero*, it’s a wonderful story told by a skilled author with characters about whom you can really sink your heart into and care. The fact that this novel is also set within the Star Wars universe is a nice bonus, but it is certainly not the crutch that it has been for lesser writers.

4.0 stars. **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.**
