



## Moving Targets and Other Tales of Valdemar

*Mercedes Lackey (editor / contributor) , Janni Lee Simner (contributor) , Mickey Zucker Reichert (contributor) , Richard Lee Byers (contributor) , Tanya Huff (contributor) , Michael Z. Williamson (contributor) , Nancy Asire (contributor) , Brenda Cooper (contributor) , more... Rosemary Edghill (contributor) , Fiona Patton (contributor) , Judith Tarr (contributor) , Larry Dixon (Contributor) , Sarah A. Hoyt (Contributor) , Stephanie D. Shaver (contributor) , Kate Paulk (Contributor) , Kristin Schwengel (contributor) ...less*

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**Fourteen original stories set in Mercedes Lackey's Valdemar universe, including a new novella by Mercedes Lackey!**

Today's hottest fantasy authors visit Mercedes Lackey's bestselling world of Valdemar, adding their own special touches to the ancient land where Heralds chosen from all walks of life by magical horse-like Companions patrol their ancient kingdom, dispensing justice, facing adversaries, and protecting their monarch from whatever threatens. Travel with Tanya Huff, Mickey Zucker Reichert, Fiona Patton, Judith Tarr, Rosemary Edghill, and others in this exciting, all-new anthology.

Included are:

*Moving Targets* by Mercedes Lackey and Larry Dixon

*An Unexpected Guest* by Nancy Asire

*The Power of Three* by Brenda Cooper

*What Fire Is* by Janni Lee Simner

*Dreams of Mountain Clover* by Mickey Zucker Reichert

*The Cheat* by Richard Lee Byers

*A Dream Deferred* by Kristin Schwengel

*The Sworddancer* by Michael Z. Williamson

*Broken Bones* by Stephanie Shaver

*Live On* by Tanya Huff

*Passage at Arms* by Rosemary Edghill

*Heart, Home and Hearth* by Sarah Hoyt and Kate Paulk

*Haven's Own* by Fiona Patton

*Widdershins* by Judith Tarr

## Moving Targets and Other Tales of Valdemar Details

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Mercedes Lackey (editor / contributor) , Janni Lee Simner (contributor) , Mickey Zucker Reichert (contributor) , Richard Lee Byers (contributor) , Tanya Huff (contributor) , Michael Z. Williamson (contributor) , Nancy Asire (contributor) , Brenda Cooper (contributor) , more...  
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# From Reader Review **Moving Targets and Other Tales of Valdemar** for online ebook

## **Ryan says**

I used to be such a huge fantasy fan, devouring almost every book I could get my hands on. Over the years though, that passion for the genre has died down a bit, but I still have a handful of authors that I will read every chance I get. Mercedes Lackey is one of them, and her Valdemar books are my favorite of all. As usual, I love every time I get to escape into Valdemar and get immersed in the stories of the Heralds and their Companions. Valdemar is that fictional kingdom, that if it actually existed, I would have ran away from home to go live there.

Because of that, when I got this one for Christmas, I couldn't wait to dive in and get lost once again. Now this collection actually is before the other two anthologies that I have already reviewed. I'm not sure how I managed to miss this one, but I'm glad that has been corrected as of now.

The biggest reason I loved this one was I got to see Ree and Jem again. The stars of my favorite short stories from the last two anthologies I read, Ree and Jem already feel like old friends to me. Instead of writing their own stories, as they did in the other two books, Sarah A. Hoyt and Kate Paulk wrote "Heart, Home, and Hearth" together. I got to meet Ree and Jem before they make it to the old man's house and the relative safety he provided for them. It was nice to see the two young men (one completely human, the other a changechild) again. They are such a terrific couple, who always look out for each other in a world that is dead set against them, a world that would be willing to kill one of them. This story is about how Ree has to find shelter for the sickly Jem before the bitterness of winter really kicks in. It's that journey that sends them stumbling into what they think is a abandoned farm house. But instead of it being vacated by those who previously lived there, the two young me find the family and support that they are so desperately needing.

I've just now realized that I haven't read the anthology that comes before this one either, I'm hoping that one will tell me how these two young men met in the first place.

I don't think there was a story in this collection that I didn't love or feel as if it added to the history of Valdemar and it's people, but there was one other that just had me falling in love and hooting with laughter. The title story "Moving Targets" is Mercedes Lackey's contribution. I found the story to be a wonderful homage to Scooby-Doo, what is there not to like about that. In the story a Herald Elyn is assigned the task of taking a group of four Herald Trainees out on their first circuit, as circuit that if successful will make all four full Heralds. These four students though, while talented and uniquely gifted, are a tight knit group that just can't seem to stay out of trouble. Because of the size of their group, they travel with a covered wagon. In the fist hint of Scooby-Doo, the wagon is painted in the same colors as the Mystery Machine. That paint is quickly covered up, but it's a great hint for what's to come.

Once out on the road they are caught up in what looks like a haunting designed to get people to flee their village. It's through some careful investigation, trap setting, and mishaps that the foursome discover the truth. The whole thing was set up by an old coot who needed people to leave so he could mine gold out of the stream. When he's caught, he even whines about how he almost got away with it, it if just wasn't for those darn kids. The story was hilarious, and for a kid who grew up with Scooby-Doo, it was wonderful.

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## **Stasha says**

Absolutely loved the first story, love that it ties in to a single line in Foundation. Have I ever mentioned I love allegory in stories?

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## **Red Risa says**

### **Old friends**

I greatly enjoyed catching up with a number of old friends from previous anthologies. Most notably Jen and Ree, who have left the city to try to make a go of it in the possibly even more dangerous environs of the forests.

The Dann family is fleshed out further with the history of their father's demise, and why the oldest brother got passed over for the promotion by the younger.

Even the mercenary Toughs employed by Miklamar make an appearance.

There are many more interesting, well written stories than almost any other collection I've read of it's size. That's a big win for Valdemar fans, like me..now buying and re-reading them on my Kindle, and donating my paperback editions.

'Tis the season!

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## **Carol Gibson says**

This book had a lot of great stories in it. Some of my favorite authors have stories in this collection this includes Tanya Huff, Rosemary Edgehill, Fiona Patton and Judith Tarr.

I have a love hate relationship with Mercedes Lackey's work. I love the world of Vlademar as a horse crazy woman the companions really appeal to me. The issue to me is Lackey can't help but add silly things and make angst filled whiny characters when writing for Valdemar luckily this trends does not seem to be an issue with her other works.

Her story was the weakest. Moving Targets is basically a retelling of Scooby Doo cartoon with heralds and companions. I enjoy tongue in cheek humor in fantasy novels but not when it is done in what is supposed to be a serious world. Then it is just to jarring for me it reminds me that this is not a real world but just a creation in a book.

I would have given this book six stars if Moving Target had been a good story. But one would hope that the author who created the world would have one of the best stories not the worst one which is why I took a star away.

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## **Latharia says**

4/2/09: I've read 9 of the short stories thus far ... and only 3 of them are mildly appealing. So far, this book is

a huge disappointment. It definitely did not help that the lead story (NOT a novella, IMHO) is essentially a Scooby Doo episode, complete with Scooby, Shaggy, Fred, Velma, and Daphne, their van, AND a "I'd've gotten away with it, too, if it hadn't been for those meddling kids" line! Ick!

4/4/09: I finished the book this afternoon & have to say there was exactly ONE story (Tanya Huff's) in it that I found enjoyable & entertaining. The others were dull and lifeless. PLUS, although the book is supposedly "Tales of Valdemar," less than half of the tales actually took place in Valdemar. If I wanted stories from Iftel, Karse, or Rethwellan, I'd look for those volumes, thanks very much!

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### **Jeremy Preacher says**

This series of collections has falling into a steady rhythm - familiar contributors, mostly familiar stories. It's good, solid Valdemar stuff, and Heralds are particularly well-suited to episodic stories.

The title story by Lackey is worth a note - it is, of all things, a Scooby-Doo pastiche. It's dreadfully irreverent, and kind of note-perfect. I thought it was moderately hilarious, although I would not like it to represent a trend.

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### **Kaye says**

This was a very pleasant collection of stories about the world of Valdemar. My favorite was "An Unexpected Guest," which turned out to be a prequel to a story in another collection of stories, "The Cat Who Came to Dinner" from The Sun in Glory. The Companions, as usual, are wonderful!

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### **Tribefan says**

Enjoyed this one just like I enjoy all books set in Valdemar!

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### **Rebecca says**

Fourteen stories set in Mercedes Lackey's world, which includes Valdemar. 1. Moving Targets is Lackey's fairly cheesy tribute to Scooby Doo--would have worked better with a longer story. 2. Unexpected Guests--A stranger coming to a rural town needs to be protected from assassins tailing him. This wasn't bad, but I didn't love it. 3. Power of Three--Twins with a lifelong, somewhat mystic bond are forced to spend time apart, and it doesn't go well. Not really sure what the point was, here. 4. What Fire Is--In Karse, children with magical gifts are removed from their parents and many are burned at the stake. But what happens if their gift is fire? A sad story, and I'm not sure I understood the end. 5. Dreams of Mountain Clover--The servant to a dying Herald dreams that clover from a particular mountain will cure the Herald, and goes off to find it, having adventures along the way. Fairly typical story, didn't do much for me. 6. The Cheat--An armsmaster in Rethwellan keeps losing students to duels with another master, and is convinced the other armsmaster is cheating. I liked this one--creative solution. 7. Dream Deferred--A female horsemaster near the Pelagiris Forest helps a kyree whose pups have been stolen to be sold. This one didn't have a lot of plot--not sure what

the point of it was. 8. Sword Dancer--A girl from a merchant clan in a land on the edge of war must serve as a guide to refugees to help them through the land, even though their leader doesn't want to follow a girl. Interesting culture, but very little plot. 9. Broken Bones--While trying to fall out of love, a bard ventures into the far reaches of Valdemar and stays in a village where one young woman seems a bit odd, and she investigates. This one wasn't bad, but a little gruesome. 10. Live On--Herald Jors accompanies the elderly and crotchety Herald Tamis on an 'easy' road trip, and discovers that you can never discount a Herald, no matter what his age. I liked this one--there aren't enough stories about elderly Heralds, mostly because they don't live that long. 11. Passage At Arms--A Herald trainee worries endlessly because she thinks she's not a good enough person to be a Herald. There wasn't much plot to this--it's all character, and not that interesting, alas. 12. Heart, Home, and Hearth--The second (?) installment in the tale of hobgoblin Ree and his lover Jem in the Eastern Empire. Starving and sick, they find a farm with an injured old man, and help out in return for food, shelter, and a possible future. This was my favorite story--the whole saga should be compiled at some point. 13. Haven's Own--Another tale of the Haven constabulary, represented by the Dann family. There was a fire on Iron Street, and blame is being thrown around. Didn't love this one--it's nice to see a different side of Haven than just Heralds, but still, not too exciting. 14. Widdershins--Stay-at-home Herald Egil is sent with one of his least-favorite former students to investigate a strangeness in a small town, and discovers something far more out of whack than he anticipates--and that only he can fix. I liked this one; unusual magic and a novel idea.

Overall, this was my least favorite of the collections I've read. I like the collections because when you already know the world, they're very undemanding to read. I also like them because they are not always about quests and swordfights and magical battles, but can also be about relationships, characters, and interesting settings. This one was just not as interesting as the others, unfortunately, though there were some good stories.

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## **Tina Bartholoma says**

I cannot believe it!! M.L.'s contribution to this collection of short stories is a spoof! I laughed so hard when it hit me, and I couldn't explain it to anyone because they wouldn't have understood why it was so unexpected.

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## **Ria says**

I'm not usually one for compilations, but this being a Valdemar book, I couldn't resist another foray into my favourite fantasy world. Some contributing authors I'd heard of before, others were completely new to me. And I enjoyed most of the stories inside.

What disappointed me the most, however, was Mercedes Lackey's own contribution to the book. Yes, it was as well-written, stylistically, as anything else I've read of hers in recent years. But it seemed so very out of place for Valdemar, comic relief where relief was not needed. I'd say it was a thinly-veiled homage to Scooby Doo, but there was no veil there at all, thin or otherwise. It was glaringly obvious, and quite unrealistic even when put into the bounds of a fantasy world. Ryu's presence was utterly pointless, the Heralds more annoying than helpful, and the whole point of the story was baffling.

That being said, I can understand the urge to want to have a little fun with the world you've created. It is, after all, your world, and if you want to throw in homages to old cartoon shows, it's your own right to do so.

But in this instance, I found all the other stories in the book more enjoyable than the one written by the world's creator, and that, to me, isn't exactly a good thing.

Still, in spite of that, it's a book I considered well worth the money I spent on it, since I am such a fan of Valdemar and the world of Velgarth. If, out of all the books and stories she's written in that world, only one short story evokes this reaction in me, then I'd still have to say she's doing something right, and I eagerly await the next novel she writes.

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## **Marina says**

I had to buy the book again in 2018. I think it got lost in Hurricane Sandy. =0/

Read the book for the 2nd time. Most of the stories were ok but nothing amazing. That is why I give this antho a 3 star rating.

1.Mercedes Lackey and Larry Dixon's "Moving Targets"-4 stars it was good.I liked the characters a lot. Loved the Pelagirs kyree story aspect. Would love to read more!=0)

3.Brenda Cooper's "The Power of Three"-4 stars it was good. Beautiful story. I would like more adventures from the sisters.

5.Mickey Zuker Reichert's "Dreams of Mountain Clover"-4 stars it was good.

9.Stephanie Shaver's "Broken Bones"-4 stars it was good.

10.Tanya Huff's "Live On"-4 stars it was good.I cried. Sad end but fitting.

13.Fiona Patton's "Haven's Own"-4 stars it was good. Love the stories about this family. =0)

14.Judith Tarr's "Widdershins"-4 stars it was fascinating. Would like more stories about these two characters. =0p

Thanks Kathy Davie for the following info.

Short Series within the Valdemar Anthologies:

"Heart, Home, and Hearth" (Ree & Jem)

"Haven's Own" (Dann Family of Haven)

"Broken Bones" (Wil & Leila)

"The Power of Three" (Rhi and Dionne)

"Live On" (Herald Jors)

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Spoiler

Note to Self:

1.Mercedes Lackey and Larry Dixon's "Moving Targets";

Herald Elyn & Mayar(her Companion)

Trainee Laurel(empathy gift,Chosen)



Trainee Alma(ex-artificer in training,Chosen)

Trainee Arville (gift luck,Chosen) & Pelas(his Companion) and Ryu(kyree,Pelagirs,Chosen of Arville)

Trainee Rod(son of guildmaster)

Guildmaster Fredrich(Goldsmith,dad,rich)

2.Nancy Asire's "An Unexpected Guest"-Set in Karse. Their story continues in another antho. It was an ok story.

Sosha(farmer,widow)

Torgon(ex-retainer to Lord Jhasko merchant,guard)

Beckor(village healer and Priest),

3.Brenda Cooper's "The Power of Three"-

Rhiannon(Bard, twin sis)

Dionne(Healer,twin sis)

Mari(journeyman healer, empathy gift)

Deckert(Border Herald, Deck) & Kadey(his Companion)

Cienda(Herald) & Tani(her Companion)

Bard Breda

Gavin(Master healer)

Bard Lleryn

Bard Stefan

4.Janni Lee Simner's "What Fire Is"-Karse. Sad and confusing story,ok. The idea behind it is good. I understand why it ended the way it did but I did not want that end. Sigh.

Tamar(farmer's son,9yo,gift fire,pal,died/suicide)

Cara(9yo,gift farsight,merchant's daughter,pal,died/killed)

Andaran(Priest)

5.Mickey Zuker Reichert's "Dreams of Mountain Clover"-

Herald Charlin(died) & Elborik(his Companion)

Mola(handmaiden,new Chosen Herald) & Melahar(her Companion)

Corry(Herald,30yo) & Rexla(his Companion)

Sietra(Healer)

6.Richard Lee Byers' "The Cheat"-ok.

Master Selden(fencing master,pal)

Dromis(fencing master)

Marissa(fencing master,pal)

Falnac(fencing student died)

Alsagad(fencing student)

7.Kristin Schwengel's "A Dream Deferred"-Pelagris,ok. Liked it was about kyree and Tarma was mentioned. Would like more to this story like Rris adventures.=Op

Laeka(horse trainer,mom,Clan Liha'irden)

Rheena(kyree mom,Hyrrull Pack)

Jeatha(her daughter)

Meros(guard)

Warrl(kyree,cousin,famous)

Rris (kyree pup)

(Tarma shena Tale'sedrin)

8. Michael Z. Williamson's "The Sworddancer"-ok

Riga Gundesdati(sis, Sworddancer, merchant's daughter, Kossaki, pal)

Erki Gundesdati(bro)

Herald Bellan

Swordmistress Morle

Karlinu the Quick(Kari, Scout Spear, pal)

Ruti

Snorru

Arwen

Lar(uncle)

Rabal(nephew)

Brandur

9. Stephanie Shaver's "Broken Bones"-

Lelia(Bard, twin sis, pal, in love with herald Wil)

Maresa(Bard, pal)

Lyle(twin bro, Herald)

Herald Wil(mentor to Lyle)

Kerithwyn(healer)

Artel(village healer)

Olli(inn keeper)

10. Tanya Huff's "Live On"-

Jors(Herald, yearmate, pal) & Gervis(his Companion)

Herald Tamis(elderly, historian, great uncle, died) & Verati(elderly, his Companion)

Erica(yearmate, pal) & Raya(her Companion)

Petrin(Herald trainee) & Serrin(his Companion)

Dean Carlech

Bardi(15yo, village girl)

11. Rosemary Edghill's "Passage at Arms"-ok

Aellele Calot(12yo, empathy gift, middle child of 7, Chosen, trainee) & Tases(her Companion)

Kailyon(servant)

Tavis

Master Alberich

12. Sarah Hoyt and Kate Paulk's "Heart, Home, and Hearth"-ok

Ree(hobgoblin, rat & cat change circle, orphan, pal)

Jem(human, orphan, pal)

Garrad(old farmer)

13. Fiona Patton's "Haven's Own"-

Hektor Dann(Haven City Watch, bro, new Serg.)

Sergeant Egan Dann(their dad, died)

Aidan Dann(oldest bro, Haven City Watch)+ Sulia Dann(sis-in-law, mom)=Egan Dann(3yo, nephew, bro) and

Leila(6month baby, niece, sis)

Jakon

Raik  
Kasiath Dann(13yo, sis)  
Padreic Dann(11yo, youngest bro)  
Kiel Wright(his patrol mate)  
Capt. Travin Torell(Haven City Watch)  
Daedrus(artificer, pal1)  
Markus(Healer, pal1)

14. Judith Tarr's "Widdershins"-  
Egil(Herald, logic and history teacher, cousin) & Cynara(his Companion)  
Herald Bronwen(intern, chosen at 10yo, now 16yo, Ashkevron) & Rohanan(her Companion, stallion)  
Codric(his cousin, horse trainer)  
Madame Larissa(horse trainer, school owner)  
Queen Selenay

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## **Kristin says**

Read from 12/8 to 12/10. Lackluster collection with a few good tales. Lackey should be horsewhipped for the Valdemar version of Scooby Doo. No, I'm not kidding.

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## **Elizabeth says**

Some stories were just great, absolutely loved them. And then there were those that barely even fit into the Valdemar universe. They wouldn't have at all in fact if they didn't have one word or one named location. And those kinda sucked. Over all a good read.

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## **Kathy Davie says**

The fourth anthology in the Tales of Valdemar short stories includes 14 stories and revolves around Mercedes Lackey's fantasy world of Valdemar.

### **Short Series within the Valdemar Anthologies:**

"Heart, Home, and Hearth" (Heart, a.k.a., Ree & Jem)  
"Haven's Own" (Dann Family of Haven)  
"Broken Bones" (Wil & Leila)  
"The Power of Three" (Rhi and Dionne)  
"Live On" (Herald Jors)

### **The Stories**

**Mercedes Lackey and Larry Dixon's "Moving Targets"** is cute, and I have to admit my judgment is partly influenced by the elaborately painted gypsy caravan. I want to re-organize it and try it out for myself as this trainee group heads out on a year-long circuit. I also adore Rod's inventiveness. Once we get into the story itself, we finally get to the purpose behind the story.

It's certainly a useful shakedown trip. In more ways than one, lol.

**Nancy Asire's "An Unexpected Guest"** falls into Sweetwater and is approved by a Fire-cat. In spite of it being a scary day in the village as the "guest" is hunted by assassins, it's actually quite sweet.

**Brenda Cooper's "The Power of Three"** is an interesting experiment, and fortunately, the Collegium is willing to be flexible. A cute story of the connectedness of twins.

**Janni Lee Simner's "What Fire Is"** is a sad story that will make you cry and anger you with its religious ignorance.

**Mickey Zuker Reichert's "Dreams of Mountain Clover"** is sweetly terrifying if a bit juvenile. A frightened servant hopes to save her mistress and heads out on a very adventurous quest.

**Richard Lee Byers' "The Cheat"** could be set anywhere and is between two fencing masters, one of whom is cheating. It's an ingenious answer to the problem.

**Kristin Schwengel's "A Dream Deferred"** is a confusion. I have no idea how the title relates to the story. That whine mentioned, I did like the story. It's a tale of an unlikely rescue and an unlikelier partnership.

**Michael Z. Williamson's "The Sworddancer"** seems to be Riga's first exposure to guiding a party of refugees as well as to battle. It's a brief glimpse with her romantic notions of war turned on its head. Curious, but not a favorite as there was too little information as to the *whys*.

**Stephanie Shaver's "Broken Bones"** finds us reading of Bard Leila (Shaver has her own miniseries going with Leila) and the advice she gets on writing a song and soothing her unrequited love. Good thing Shaver told me the lesson I was supposed to learn, as I don't think I'd've gotten it.

**Tanya Huff's "Live On"** is a querulous trip with an old historian repeating the same stories over and over and complaining about cold, impersonal reports. But Tanis is a herald first, last, and always when he and his Companion, Verati, give their all to rescue a kidnapped girl.

Shaver could do with seeing how an experienced writer gets the point across without having to be so obvious.

**Rosemary Edghill's "Passage at Arms"** follows two stories. One is of a new, young, and insecure Trainee and the other is at the other end of the age spectrum in an old servant who loves to serve the Collegium. I do like his philosophy about the students and his evenhanded approach to the anonymity. And he has a lovely story that will help young Aellele.

Gotta wonder if Edghill ever read any of Lackey's Valdemar stories about the Companions. She's got Companions coming back to Haven to seek rest and healing without their riders.

**Sarah Hoyt and Kate Paulk's "Heart, Home, and Hearth"** is all about Jem and Ree's finding the farm with an injured Garrard. Hoyt/Paulk milk this a bit much emotionally, but I enjoyed it.

I've been working my way backward through the anthologies and by the second one (that I read) I realized that Jem and Ree were a recurring short, so it was a treat to finally read this one. I'm still working my way back, and I'm curious if I'll ever find the Ree and Jem story that is the first one.

**Fiona Patton's "Haven's Own"** is a Hektor Dann story (yep, another recurring short) that sees Hektor receiving his sergeancy and demonstrating his street smarts. I do like this short series. It's very homey with great characters.

**Judith Tarr's "Widdershins"** find Heralds Egil and Bronwen riding for days and never making any progress through the awful storms that besiege them. It's innocuous and safe and a dance that Egil and Cynara love. It would be too easy to fall into the complacency and beauty of this dance.

A cute story with a clever twist. It's rare to get a story about an average man, be he ever so much a Herald.

### **The Cover and Title**

The cover is consistent and yet different from other Valdemar covers. It has the inset shield bordered in a riveted gold with a Companion's head emerging from within, a woods in the background. The end point of the shield is covered by another shield of a red gryphon on a black background. The shield itself is backed by a rectangle of weathered leather which is all backed by the black of the cover's background. A bordered rectangle of deep red provides a background for the title in white, and it looks like bats flying between the title and the shield. Superimposed on all this between the shield and title is yet another shield in a bright orange (or a pale red?) with a quick blurb about the contents of *Moving Targets and Other Tales of Valdemar*.

The title is a metaphor for each story's protagonists. It's really a bit of a leap on my part. All stories have a character who is that story's center, a *Moving Target* for the conflicts that arise within each one.

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