



The Warrior's Apprentice

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Between the seemingly impossible tasks of living up to his warrior-father's legend and surmounting his own physical limitations, Miles Vorkosigan faces some truly daunting challenges.

Shortly after his arrival on Beta Colony, Miles unexpectedly finds himself the owner of an obsolete freighter and in more debt than he ever thought possible. Propelled by his manic "forward momentum," the ever-inventive Miles creates a new identity for himself as the commander of his own mercenary fleet to obtain a lucrative cargo; a shipment of weapons destined for a dangerous warzone.

The Warrior's Apprentice Details

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From Reader Review The Warrior's Apprentice for online ebook

Cathy (cathepsut) says

"Huh. Didn't they give you any medical treatment?"

"Oh, sure. I've had an Inquisition's worth. That's why I can walk around today, instead of being carried in a bucket."

After meeting baby Miles at the end of Barrayar, I finally got to know the main protagonist of the Vorkosigan Saga.

Part of buddy reading the series with SpecFic in chronological order.

This book didn't pull its punches and got right into the middle of the action. Still, I felt no great need to keep going and it took me a week to just get past the first third of the book. Seems to be a pattern for me with this series. The beginning seemingly drags a lot and about 30 to 40% it gets more interesting. I just wish these books would pick up speed a little faster. I know, I am contradicting myself. Maybe it's the narrative of the series in general that doesn't hold my attention? Although, I have to admit that it is quite funny to read about Miles digging the hole he is standing in deeper and deeper...

I was entertained, I laughed, but I also skimmed. Nice plot, but also not really doing it for me. I don't know, I guess I will have to read another one!

3.25 undecided stars...

Maria Dimitrova says

Buddy read with Choko and Evgeny.

The first time I read this book I wasn't impressed. I already knew the characters as they appear in later books thanks to the ridiculous way the publishing house in my country had published them. The awkwardness of many of the interactions was off putting and the angst and drama didn't appeal. Over the years I forgot the good parts and when I joined GR and started adding books I gave TWA an unfair rating.

This is still my least favourite book in the series. The angst and awkwardness are still there and they still make me cringe but are overshadowed by the sheer awesomeness of Miles' boundless energy. His "forward momentum" carries you away and before you know it you're part of the Dendarii Mercenaries.

ATTENTION SPOILERS FOLLOWING!

There are a few key moments in this book and depending on the mood the reader is in they have different impact and lead to a different view of the book. The first time I read TWA the thing that resonated most with me was Miles' need for approval. As all teens I felt that need at the time and could sympathize with him. An overachiever in many ways myself, Miles was a great companion growing up. Seeing his struggle from the perspective of a grown-up, it's even more heartbreaking. The fact that despite everything Miles never gave up is incredible and it makes these books a must read for all people who feel they are unworthy because of some disability.

The scene that made the most emotional impact this time was the one when Elena Bothari's mother shows up in Miles' quarters and the following events. Those of you who have read *Shards of Honor* are familiar with the story around Elena's conception. Since these books are told from the Vorkosigans' POV it's easy to forget that once upon a time Sergeant Bothari was the pet monster of the late Admiral Vorrutyer. And I at least had grown to love the scary Sergeant. In TWA we come face-to-face with the consequences of his actions for the victim. Sure, Bothari has repented and to an extent redeemed himself, but the horror is still very much alive for his victim - Elena Viscounti. I fully understand her need for revenge and her actions after she meets her tormentor again. In her eyes what Bothari did can never be fixed and it doesn't matter that he was under orders and well more than a little crazy at the time. For her he is only the nightmare that has haunted her for 19 years. And so their daughter, Elena, becomes yet another victim of the sick mind of a man long dead. When I first read this book I couldn't grasp why the elder Elena would spurn her daughter. She is innocent after all and a blood of her blood. 15 years of living in this twisted world and seeing how people treat each other has made it possible for me to see through Elena Viscounti's eyes and understand why she can't even look at Elena. Same goes for Elena's reaction to the news. Back then I was like: "But he's your father! He has loved you all your life! Why can't you find it in yourself to forgive him? He was only trying to protect you!" Now, I can see how this broke her, tore the pink-tinted glasses off of her eyes and forced her to confront the real world. And to realise that her life has been a lie. I think that in her shoes I would have vowed to never go back to Barrayar myself. The fact that everyone she loves and respects has been lying to her makes that the only viable option and the only way for her to see who she really is. This tendency by the older generation to shield the younger one, while understandable, leads to many problems and will come back to bite the on the rump in the books to come.

Okay I'll stop on this note because if I don't I'll end up with paragraph after paragraph about everything that happens in this book - from Miles' awkwardness and rashness when it come to his romantic interests to Ivan's waste of potential and Gregor's foolish trust. It's safe to say that there are a lot more things to be experienced by reading this book and I strongly recommend it to everyone who likes existential works masking as space opera.

Evgeny says

Review updated on 16.02.2017.

A buddy read with Choko and Maria.

We finally meet the main hero of the series, Miles Vorkosigan. In the beginning of the book he failed his physical test in a military academy - he had a lot of birth defects; their origin was explained in the previous installment. He also happened to be a son and a grandson of great military leaders, as such he was expected to excel in military field and his expulsion from the academy was a huge disappointment for everybody first of all his grandfather. Miles decided to take a break and visit his mother's home-planet. It began innocently enough, but before he knew it, he was a happy owner of an obsolete spaceship

and an imaginary mercenary company.

This is one of the best space opera I read lately - and it so happened that I read quite a few good ones this year. It has everything: action, betrayals, romance, intrigues, space and ground battles, more action. It also has great characters and character development. Miles himself matured a lot and so are some of his friends. I would like to mention his cousin Ivan as a great newcomer (he was just being born in the previous book). This is book #3 in Vorkosigan saga, but it can be read as a standalone.

It was my first exposure to Ms. Bujold, definitely not the last. Somehow it reminded me of the following well-known space opera in another media:

Highly recommended for any SF fans, 4 solid stars. Seriously if you have not read it, you missed a lot. I would like to make a long story short, say again that the novel is great and shut up right now.

Caro M. says

**UPDATED 2017.04.02 with Worst Cover Gallery - check down below and feel free to comment!
Nature was generous with this one...**

I always knew I'll love Miles Vorkosigan. I only met him once and very long time ago in The Mountains Of Mourning and I recall I liked what I read, but it wasn't a full picture. It still isn't one, considering I have whole series ahead, but **The Warrior's Apprentice** gave me a nice teaser into what I'm going to get on my plate.

Miles Vorkosigan is his parents' true son - while physically challenged, he's precocious, brave and intelligent, and he's immature enough to take crazy responsibilities and lead his people into one trouble after another. I enjoyed it very much, but I missed Cordelia and Aral a little bit, although I know this is not about them anymore. But Bothari was around (at least till some point) and it was also, well, interesting...

Oh, by the way. Am I here the only one who's feeling like there's a shadow of Tyrion Lannister lurking around the place all the time? I'm not implying anything, but there are so many similarities between these two that you simply can't not notice.

Back to Miles - I'm highly enjoying the series and I'm planning to read it all. I absolutely love the world McMaster Bujold created, the diversity of civilizations, the Barrayaran traditions and all.

4.5 stars, only because I expect even better further instalments.

Worst Cover Gallery

My personal fav -

Choko says

***** 4.44 *****

A buddy read with Evgeny and Maria, because we need some FORWARD MOMENTUM in our lives!

I have a new favorite Sci-fi series and this is it! I have been remiss in not picking it up sooner and I am repenting. By reading it a book a week with my friends ?!

I was already in love with the Count and Countess Vorkosigan and I should have known that their progeny would not disappoint either. After all, Miles Vorkosigan is a combination of their genetic material complimented by the influence of their character and upbringing. He should be perfect.... And he is, in ways that truly matter, but neither he nor others see it that way. Miles is smart, charming, born to high nobility,

privileged, and is even in line for the Imperial throne. He is well taken care of, had a happy childhood and parents who love and respect him. But despite all of that, Miles is pitied and excluded by most, finding himself always on the outside looking in... Because when Cordelia was several months pregnant with him, a political enemy of her husband's poisoned her and the baby, the poison destroying the newly forming bones. Only a miracle of medical science and an experimental testing kept Miles alive and gave him a chance to grow. The growth was extremely painful and despite the constant surgeries and top care, Miles is deformed, undergrown, and his bones break all the time, even by just a firm grip or a forceful step. Despite the constant physical suffering, Miles has a great personality and a bright outlook on life, never giving up or falling under depression or outside negativity. His sharp mind and photographic memory serve him well in all situations, particularly at the times he decides to throw himself into adventure.

Being the son of a Count, Miles is given a chance at trying out for the Imperial Military Academy but fails fast and decisively. He returns home morally defeated and in order to give him something to do, his parents send him, his bodyguard's daughter Elena Bothari and the giant Sargent B. to visit his grandmother in Beta Colony for a vacation. Miles is secretly in love with Elena and wants to help her discover more about her mother, hoping this will make her love him too. Things don't go as planned, since at the moment they reach Beta Colony, Miles finds himself the owner of a junk Freight spaceship and a liege Lord to its jump pilot. In order to pay for the ship he takes on some dangerous cargo and gets himself and his friends involved in a war... One thing leads to another and at one point Miles is feet deep in complex issues, having to worry not only about his own life, but being responsible for the lives and payroll of many, many more... The boy has FORWARD MOMENTUM, brains and balls!!!! The situations he falls into are so unlikely, but Miles character is such that you can't help but accept and root for the cause!!!

There is some romance, one very difficult scene with Bothari and his daughter's mother, which just broke my ♥ for all involved, and some romantic disappointment. There was a ton of character development and still our protagonist is given plenty of space to grow. The writing is delightful and the plot has the pacing of a fast developing adventure. I was glued to it from beginning to end and was won over by the flowing storytelling and surprisingly touching details, which made the tale relatable and enjoyable. I would recommend it to everyone, no matter of genre preference!

Now I wish you all Happy Reading and may you always find what you need between the pages of a good book!!!

Lizzy says

Impossible or preposterous are words Miles Naismith Vorkosigan neither understand nor wishes to master. I found The Warrior's Apprentice incredible, hilarious and poignant all at the same time. With every page turned, you will live a spectacular adventure along with Miles (only offspring of Aral and Cordelia Naismith of Shards of Honor) and a delightful group of supporting characters. It's a perfect example of Lous McMaster Bujold brilliant, inspired writing.

Instead of suffering and limiting himself by his physical deficiencies, he bounces into a momentum that goes beyond any idea of triumphing over it all. Everything began by he catastrophically flunking the physical officer's entrance exam of the Barrayaran Imperial Military Service. The discouraged but never beaten Miles Vorkosigan goes on to visit Beta Colony with his faithful bodyguard Bothari and daughter Elena, soon taking possession. But here is where I stop telling you his story, for every reader, should be granted the pleasure of discovering, unprepared, all that is to come.

I was conquered by Miles from the start. He is the heir of a royal house, a flunked officer but also a

commander by his very nature. Always kind and sharp-tongued, ever trying to compensate his disadvantages, he is always brilliant and thrives on proving himself equal to anyone else. But he knows when to give up. He collects followers naturally, and actions tend to heat up around him.

If you haven't met him yet, I strongly recommend *The Warrior's Apprentice*.

Samir says

Are you bored? Are you looking at your evergrowing pile of books to read and can't decide what to read next? Well, let me help you with that, start reading this book and kill two birds with one stone.

It doesn't matter if you're not a fan of sci-fi or space operas, this book will give you an opportunity to meet your new favorite character, or at least a new addition to your favorite characters list, Miles Vorkosigan.

If I had to compare Miles to a contemporary fantasy character I would compare him to Locke Lamora; physically weak with combination of audacity, wit, cunning, assertive nature and sharp intelligence enabling him to improvise his way out of any bad situation just to find himself neck-deep in the next one.

Miles comes from a family of warriors and to continue the family tradition, Miles applies himself into the Barrayaran Military Service Academy and aces the written portion of the entrance exams but unfortunately, due to his weak bones, he fails to pass an obstacle course resulting in breaking both of his legs and ending his military career before he even started it.

Not really knowing what to do with himself, Miles decides to travel to Beta Colony and visit his grandmother, taking with him his bodyguard Bothari and his daughter Elena.

Shortly after their arrival Miles manages, completely by accident, to meet a jump pilot about to have his ship scrapped and that sets in motion the series of events which will make him a leader of a mercenary company, and for Miles, an opportunity to make his father proud.

The story itself is very fast paced with a character driven and emotionally powerful narrative. It offers a plenty of exciting action sequences and unpredictable, and often very funny, situations ensuring not one moment in this book to be classified as boring.

Side characters are giving more depth to this seemingly simple storyline, infusing it with energy which goes hand in hand with Miles's forward momentum making this book next to impossible to put down.

Simply said, this book is pure fun, it's addictive, it will make you grin the whole time reading it and when you're done, you'll want more.

P.S. No birds were harmed while reading this book.

Trish says

This unfortunately didn't do it for me. Oh, sure, it's a heist novel (sort of) that is still better written than many others and it was only really slow at the beginning I guess (well, the first 30-40%). However, nobody is criticizing Bujold's craftmanship.

No, my beef is with the characters, mostly. Even the (former) military personnel was stupid beyond belief. To say nothing of the rest. I can make allowances, of course - initially, for Elena, who simply wanted to get off planet ONCE in her life; or for Bothari, who considers it his duty to stay with Miles. But for every single other person to stay with Miles, to eat up the bullshit like that, to go along with what must be THE stupidest con ... there is only so much suspension of disbelief before I roll my eyes, snort, bang my head against the wall, then get REALLY annoyed because I'm supposed to go along with this nonsense.

It's a testament to Bujold's writing that I didn't DNF the book. Granted, I don't like to DNF books in general and I did like the previous volumes very much so I wanted to allow a fluke.

Nevertheless, it's always a bad sign when even a space heist that turns into some war effort gets so unbelievably out of hand that I get antsy despite the action and just want it to be over.

I just couldn't warm to the crippled rich kid that had never learned any boundaries, was (occasionally) pretty smart but exasperatingly stupid when it counted. Initially, I thought it would be the typical story of a physically disabled person making it his way regardless. I could have warmed to that. But this wasn't that kind of story for me. Sure, Miles is young, but how about him accepting THAT instead of acting like God's gift to the universe and then making everything worse for everyone?!

Not to mention Elena. Since I don't want the rest of this review to get peeped out or for someone to flag it to the GR overlords, I shall refrain from going into details. Suffice it to say that she's an ungrateful little bitch (not just towards her father but also when she doesn't get from Miles whatever she wants like a spoiled little brat) and I still hope she will die slowly and painfully. Seriously, that ruined what little I liked for me.

On top of the problems I had with the story and characters, there was also no humour in this. There have always been comical situations in the previous books, not here.

Maybe the novel tried to do and be too many things at once: novel with a disabled MC; an adventurous heist / space "battles"; the story of female empowerment (that went downhill VERY quickly); a coming-of-age story of not one but two people (one male, one female, probably for emphasis); a slight tinge of politics / cultural differences the people are caught between.

So yeah, there's enough rage and exasperation and I gave this 3 stars solely for the writing (especially when considering the book's age). But I didn't enjoy it much. Nevertheless, I'll continue with the series for now and hope Miles will change for the better (and soon). Oh, and I better not have to see Elena again anytime soon!

Stuart says

The Warrior's Apprentice: The first story of Miles Vorkosigan is a rollicking SF adventure

It's a cliché and publisher's catchphrase to call anything a "rollicking SF adventure", but if any book ever was that, this would be it. Lois McMaster Bujold has quietly and steadily created one of the most popular SF adventure franchises of the past few decades with her stories of Cordelia Naismith and Aral Vorkosigan in **Shards of Honor** and **Barrayer**, but it was **The Warrior's Apprentice**, her second novel, where she introduced her greatest character and got the whole series going. Given how many SF paperbacks are published and disappear into the ether without a trace, and considering that for all those published books there are dozens of unpublished manuscripts that will never see print, it really is quite impressive what Mrs. Bujold has accomplished with the **MILES VORKOSIGAN SAGA**.

After all, the ingredients for the story don't sound that special: a young scion from a military aristocratic family has suffered serious physical handicaps due to a chemical weapons attack before he was born, and faces a host of adversity by using just his wits and his skills to motivate (or use) others to get out of an ever-

spiralling series of predicaments. Of all the different subgenres of SF, the military one has always been of least interest to me, as the whole culture of discipline, order, obedience, and bravery in action just doesn't get me excited, but Bujold has chosen to explore this corner of space with such effortless skill of characterization and plotting that it's almost a mystery why she didn't choose more challenging subject matter.

After all, what distinguishes this space opera is not just its memorable and extremely likable characters, but also how smoothly it transitions from daily conversations to intense space battles, awkward romances to complex political scheming, and from wry humor to sudden tragedy. Those are the keys to making a series that fans (as opposed to just "readers") want to pick up everything Mrs. Bujold chooses to write about Miles and his fellow characters. She imbues them with depth and complexity, yet keeps them very accessible and believable. I think Miles Vorkosigan is someone we'd all love to meet and get to know, even if we are fairly certain he's several degrees smarter and more strategic than we will ever be. He is a great character and an incredibly fascinating person, one as vivid as anyone you know know in real life, and someone you root for to survive each scrape and make it out the other side in better shape, even when he doesn't get everything he wanted.

So it was with great pleasure that I revisited this book for the first time in about 25 years, having completely forgotten all of the plot details and even the names of the characters. It's a great series to read when you are in your teens, but I found it has a lot to offer for older readers as well, especially when you've experienced unrequited love, setbacks, discrimination, pre-judgement, high expectations given your background, and a series of impossible situations.

There's a difference between writing from the perspective of a young and clever man of 17, and writing about one from the perspective of an adult who has been through all that. There are just so many details that ring true in the characters' inner thoughts and behaviors that makes more believable the implausible escapades of Miles as he inadvertently creates a mercenary fleet through a series of lies and cons and clever stratagems. And there are some very compelling side stories such as his unrequited love for Elena, his relationship with the stoic and disturbed Sargent Bothari, and how he brings onto his side all the other 'strays' that he picks up along the way in this, dare I say it, rollicking SF adventure that is just the beginning of an amazing and award-winning space opera series.

mark monday says

so i was engaging in a favorite pastime on friday night, namely verbal one-upmanship slash sadistically using the power of my oh so mighty intellect to tease my poor innocent friends, when the very drunk birthday boy said *"You know you are going to get smacked if you keep on talking like that."* i couldn't help myself: i reached up and gave him a very light & friendly tap on the cheek with the palm of my hand while dropping another dazzling bon mot. sadly, in the middle of my witticism, birthday boy enacted a decidedly non-verbal response and proceeded to smack the shit out of me. later, as i walked drunkenly home, ear still ringing from the horrific attack, it occurred to me that this would never happen to one of my recent heroes, Miles Naismith Vorkosigan of the the space opera lite *The Warrior's Apprentice*.

ah, Miles. what a great creation he is! clever and sharp-tongued, vaguely ambitious, shorter than most, the opposite of a physical threat, kind and even-tempered, clear-eyed in his self-assessments, a little bit self-sacrificing but not in an eye-rolling way, queasy at the thought of causing others harm, full of both self-doubt and ego, always the girl's trusted best friend rather than the object of her passion, the wittiest man in the room and he knows it but he is going to try to keep that to himself so that you don't get upset and take it out on him in surprise smack-attacks. and he talks and he talks and he talks. i love Miles. his character is usually

the supporting character, the hero's best friend, the brother who dies, an amusing cameo. it's a great thing for me to know that there is a whole series practically devoted to this lil' guy. he's endearing i suppose, but i personally don't see him as "endearing" because i don't see him as a cute character type. he feels very *real* to me. part of that may be due to reading all about his parents in the prior books - i know where Miles comes from, i understand the context, i get how his background informs his present. part of that may be due to how much i empathize with him and his various personal travails.

the novel itself is about Miles leaving his home planet of warlike Barrayar and inadvertently creating a mercenary army. oops! for me the plot is really secondary to just sitting back and enjoying Miles. the writing is fine, nothing special but certainly nothing problematic either. Bujold veers towards the bland. style is not the selling point in her skill set - readers come to her for the surprisingly grounded and rich characterization. and so The Warrior's Apprentice may have space battles, mercenaries, revolutionaries, mechanized war-suits, etc, but that's almost besides the point. Miles is the point.

Miles - and Bothari. the latter character - a former brainwashed rapist and sadistic torturer who now acts as Miles' bodyguard - is the other big selling point of the novel. Bujold does not downplay his past or excuse it - although in some ways it can be excused (i would say that brainwashing excuses many things) - nor does she overplay his redemption. she gets the character right, she doesn't leave out the ugly or disturbing parts, and yet she still allows the character grace and dignity within his tragic arc. Bujold definitely knows how to write characters that the reader can *feel*. i felt Bothari, i felt Miles, i felt Elena and Ivan and i am looking forward to feeling the rest of the characters that will be introduced to me in this saga.

Dirk Grobbelaar says

Forward momentum. That's the key here. Miles has it. So has this novel. It's easy to see why this series is such a fan favourite. This is a story that tells itself – the reader is only along for the ride. And it's a rollicking one too. Not many books have this kind of impeccable pacing.

The story is finely balanced between the scampering plot and the ridiculously good character development of the physically challenged Miles Vorkosigan / Naismith. The supporting cast, though not as thoroughly developed, are also highly likeable each in their own fashion (it's because they're all so darn human). This is a grand SF adventure in the best tradition of grand old-school SF adventures... It's touching; it's sad; it's exciting; it's funny. It's story telling at its finest.

I read this first, because it is the *first* novel featuring Miles as a protagonist. However, it is the *second* novel Bujold wrote, and it is the *third* novel in the Vorkosigan Saga. Between the Barrayaran (as opposed to Betan) politics and Vorkosigan genealogies new readers can find themselves in a bit of a muddle. Miles is pretty much a product of two worlds.

You'd be hard pressed to find an on-going Science Fiction (*Space Opera*) series that is universally more revered than the Vorkosigan Saga. Highly recommended.

Daniel Roy says

Having just finished "Shards of Honor" and "Barrayar", I simply couldn't wait to pick up the first book in the Miles Vorkosigan series. Unfortunately for me, it seems Mrs. Bujold has shifted tones when going from

Cordelia to her son Miles.

Where Cordelia's novels were sometimes funny, sometimes inclined to the romantic, but as a whole well-crafted and dramatic, "The Warrior's Apprentice" feels more like a running joke. It seems Mrs. Bujold has decided she would show Miles is human by making him whine, cry, puke his guts out and tremble in fear most of the time, 'in aparté' for the reader. Oh, he also lusts after Elena a lot, and shows us his noble streak by going down the 'unrequited love' path. Bleh.

What is particularly irritating about the novel is the way things just fall in place conveniently for Miles. Miles' genius is that which comes forth in second-rate novels, where it is not so much the protagonist that is intelligent, but the rest of the Universe that is downright dumb. Miles recruits people by stuttering half-baked lies; he exposes imperial schemes by confronting admirals with his sharp wit; he outwits entire armies by concocting plans full of assumptions that his enemies conveniently fall into.

I realize this novel is intended as light reading, but so were "Shards of Honor" and "Barrayar". They were light reading, filled with drama, action and humor, and a certain dose of romance. "The Warrior's Apprentice" feels like a bad imitation of all that made the Cordelia books so great, and all the characters from these two books are here only as cardboard cutouts reminding us of the clichés at the heart of the vibrant characters we grew to love previously.

I wish Miles were more like his mother.

Lindsay says

This review is for my reread of the Vorkosigan Saga with SpecFic Buddy Reads during 2017/18. I read this for the first time sometime during the 1990s directly after the Cordelia books and as a follow-up after reading much later books in the series (Memory and onwards).

Miles Vorkosigan is the teenage son of Aral and Cordelia Vorkosigan. He has several physical issues because of the treatment for soltoxin gas exposure that his mother had to undergo while he was in utero. These include brittle bones and some developmental issues (he's very short) which are immediately at the forefront of this book when he washes out of the Imperial Academy entrance tests with two broken legs. With the goal he has struggled his entire life to achieve now out of his reach he departs Barrayar to clear his head and visit his grandmother on Beta Colony. But only Miles could take a change meeting at the Beta Colony spaceport into an off-world gun-running operation that sees him pretending to be a newly rejuvenated mercenary fleet Admiral.

The story is immensely entertaining, although in some very minor respects it shows its age. There's a sense that the reader is as swept up in Miles's incredible pyramid scheme as much as everyone around him. As pointed out to one of the side-characters after an encounter with a strong stimulant: no they couldn't tell because he really is like that all the time.

It's also a great grounding in the character of this series, even as young as Miles is here. He makes blunders, and often they're as spectacular as his successes, but Miles is never not the center of attention in any room he's in. There's also that the character is always looking outwards while still being loyal to everything he's based in: his family, his home and his Emperor.

A very strong start to Miles' portion of the series.

aPriL does feral sometimes says

Wonderfully fun!

'The Warrior's Apprentice' is book two in the Vorkosigan Saga by publishing date, but I think it is actually book three, following the two books Shards of Honor and Barrayar chronologically in time. 'Shards of Honor' and 'Barrayar' show how the character Miles Vorkosian's parents meet, and why Miles has a deformed body. The rest of the series after these two books follow Miles primarily in his adventures.

Miles clearly is a rascal character similar to Hans Solo of the Star Wars movies, unlike his noble parents, Cordelia Naismith and Aral Vorkosigan. Aral is a high-ranking aristocrat of the planet Barrayar, and he, almost, completely embraces the honor mores of his planet, which appear to be modeled on an 19th-century version of Russia, only with spacecraft and laser guns. Cordelia comes from a liberal planet and a more technologically advanced world, Beta Colony, which, for instance, forces all criminals into intensive mind-remolding psychotherapy rather than prison. It is a debatable which is a worse sentence, but there is no death sentence on Beta, unlike Barrayar where the sentence of hanging for crimes is one of their mildest death sentences.

Miles is seventeen years old. His life seems to be heading for one of incredible boredom as a son of an elite aristocratic Barrayaran family. He failed in his quest to become an officer in the Barrayaran Imperial Military Service, to his enormous grief, because of his weak bones. Plus, his unrequited love for Elena Bothari looks to never be requited. Most Barrayaran men see Miles as someone who should have been exposed to the elements and killed as a newborn, a common occurrence on Barrayar, because of his physical deformities, so most turn their backs on him when it normally is time he join their political parties. Miles is actually a genius, not that anyone on Barrayar cares except for his parents.

Miles is at loose ends, so his parents suggest he visit his grandmother on Beta Colony. As this also happens to coincide with Elena's new curiosity about her mother whose grave may be on Beta Colony or on the planet Escobar, they both go. His parents are relieved. No way could their too intelligent and precocious son get into trouble in such a tame environment as Beta Colony, right? Right?

I was laughing and commiserating very quickly with Miles from the beginning of the book. From the first chapter to the last, Lois McMaster Bujold never lets up on the action and surprises in this comedy-drama series. I never lost interest in this book, and the author never missteps in her writing or plotting. It is very much an atmosphere which reminded me of the Marx Brothers movies.

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marx_...

Bujold is such a GREAT author. She creates fantastic yet plausible worlds in every series she has created, with dramatic atmospheres of suitable seriousness, drama and comedy, depending on the series or character. I highly recommend ALL of her novels.

Milda Page Runner says

RTC maybe, if 'll find more time.

For now I'll just say it's a fun light sci-fi adventure (space opera) and I totally agree with my friends who

compare main character Miles to Locke Lamora or Tyrion Lannister.

Bradley says

Update 1/18/18, Read #3:

On some rather belated reflection and tears after this latest read, I have to say that I'm in love with this series. As if three reads wasn't proof enough, right?

The beginning and the end is completely scaled back from the wild as hell middle, but that's as it should be. Miles is a brilliant and very flawed character, showing signs of megalomania and depression, or perhaps just being a brilliant bipolar case. :) In that respect, he's a lot like Sherlock.

It sure as hell makes for an interesting read when you bring up all the great world-building juxtapositions. His parents and their homeworlds. Miles's desires versus his honor. His momentum versus the pressures. I include both history and gravity for the sake of his poor bones.

I did cry for Bothari. Such a complicated character deserves a bit of silence and a lock of hair. I also cried for Miles. A lot of that was for joy, but not all of it. When he succeeds, it always feels like a house of cards. It's always like he's dancing on the tripwire of a Bouncing Betty. :)

And what a tongue he has!

Miles is just one of those characters that will remain in the annals of memory. :) This is the foundation. The rest of what comes relies even more on that tongue and less from fighting, but that's even more impressive when you think about it. :)

Here comes trouble. If he wasn't so charming, he really should be shot.

And this one is still one of my favorites in the series. Or at least in the top five. :)

Original Review:

It reads as a great YA with the best elements of the best space opera. How do you get back into the military of your homeworld if they don't want you? Start your own army, show them you've got what it takes! It's mostly clever and light, and then it wasn't. It was much more poignant for having read the books in the order of the timeline, although Falling Free doesn't align yet.

This novel was very fast paced and fun, for the most part, and memorable. He's got to begin his fame somewhere!

Veronique says

"I've got forward momentum. There's no virtue in it. It's just a balancing act. I don't dare stop."

Carrying on with my reading of the Vorkosigan Saga by internal chronology (could also be a good starting point to the series). This fourth instalment changes the focus from Cordelia and Aral to their son, Miles, who

is now seventeen and making do with the consequences of the poisoning attempt on his parents when his mother was pregnant with him. Having a boy with brittle bone disease and of a very short stature in a patriarchal and military society where physical prowess is prominent, is quite an endeavour, but a very interesting one. It took me a little while to get used to this new narrator, having loved Cordelia's voice so much, but quickly I was charmed.

Miles is an intriguing combination, displaying characteristics from both his parents. As a child of two societies, he tries to make sense of both, especially in light of his weak body. However, as difficult as his situation is, being often seen as a freak on Barrayar, he still has many huge 'assets', being male and heir of one of the highest Houses. Throughout the novel, we see him dealing with this, making many mistakes, but learning from them too. I must admit, it was so much fun to see him jumping from one problematic situation into a worse one and yet keeping the momentum. I guess this book could be seen as a Young Adult one since the main character is a teenager trying to find his identity and place in the world. Elena goes through the same journey with her own set of difficulties, being female in a misogynist world that kept curtailing her freedom. Following Miles, she escapes this, and with her horizon widening, finds out she is much more than her gender.

Bujold also adds a much darker strand in this novel, mainly revolving around Bothari. He is a difficult character and yet so fascinating! There is no denying that this is not a good man, but he is also much more than this. The author makes us look at something many wouldn't want to and thus make us consider that things are not just black and white. There is a certain poetic justice, but at the same time, I could well understand Cordelia, Aral, and Miles connection to this man, as well as both Elenas.

Looking at the title, I'm still not sure who is the warrior and the apprentice since many combinations would work, the author once more making you think. I am however getting more and more invested in this universe. The first two books were good but felt very old fashioned and it was only with Barrayar that I overlooked this and finally connected. Bujold wrote these in the mid-1980s, which is probably why she set her narratives mostly on the planet/society with the most prejudices. Again, I do wonder how contemporary readers reacted to this. Right now, I can't wait to see where she is going to take Miles - he has a lot to learn still :O)

Becky says

sigh I really wanted to like this book, but...

(That disappointed baby is effing adorable though, so I guess this review won't be ALL bad.)

Well, it wouldn't be ALL bad anyway. I wanted to like this so much. I liked the idea of this book much more than I liked the actuality of it, actually. I feel like I've been disappointed with almost everything I've read lately, and I was really hoping for this to just wow me, for it to make me want to put everything else on hold and read the series and just fall into this universe. I really liked the world-building, and the concept of biomech-enhanced jump pilots was really cool. I liked the idea of an accidental mercenary kid who's ballsy and smart. This story had a lot of potential, but just fell short for me on too many levels. I just felt like it was repetitive and unrealistic and... vanilla.

OK, so the main character, Miles, has a handicap. That's a plus for me because I like realistic characters who have to legitimately struggle to make it. But then he doesn't. At all. He's rich, his family is practically

universally known and respected, he's bi-cultural, he has a lethal bodyguard who is more than willing and more than capable of protecting Miles from any and all danger, be it small armies or stubbed toes, unless ordered otherwise, and pretty much every success just falls in his lap. He stands on the shoulders of those around him, getting by on their ability and sometimes just blind luck, when his position as Vor isn't handy, and shit just falls into line.

It's just... boring. Boring to read about someone who only has to say "I'll think of something!" and then he does. Over and over... all these little episodic crises that never really felt serious or thrilling at all, because two paragraphs later Magic Miles has somehow won the fight, saved the day or whatever else was needed for victory. And did it all with this Mt. Everest-esque moral high ground. (And speaking of the action scenes, ugh, they were just terrible. I felt like I never really knew WHAT was going on, but a bunch of stuff was happening, and then bam, it's all over. Tally up another one for Miles.)

I wanted to know more about Bothari, but I feel like he was given really short shrift, both in character, and in how his situation was handled. I was so curious about him, and I really wanted to know who he was and what his history was and what he wanted and hoped for, etc... Maybe this is addressed in later (or earlier) books, but, well... the whole thing just felt like a cop out. An accusation and then that's it?

[image error]

I just wanted more. More substance. More struggle, more realism. More. I wanted to really like this, and it sucks that I didn't, because a friend recommended it to me, and I respect her opinions. Oh well. Can't win 'em all. =\

Clouds says

Following the resounding success of my Locus Quest, I faced a dilemma: which reading list to follow it up with? Variety is the spice of life, so I've decided to diversify and pursue six different lists simultaneously. This book falls into my FINISHING THE SERIES! list.

I loves me a good series! But I'm terrible for starting a new series before finishing my last - so this reading list is all about trying to close out those series I've got on the go.

Is this my favourite book in the Vorkisgan Saga so far? Good question.

Let's start with the 'so far' part. This is book 2 in the publication order, book 4 in the chronological order, but book 8 in my scattershot order.

We're currently running at:

3 x five-star ratings

5 x four-star ratings

– from which you may deduce that this is a damn fine series, whatever order you read it in.

I loved *The Warrior's Apprentice* – it's Miles at his best.

Normally, if someone's clock-watching at work, it's because they don't like their job and can't wait to go home. For the nine days I had this book on the go, I found myself clock-watching every morning (and I like my job at the moment) because I couldn't wait until my lunch break when I'd have half an hour with Miles!

This is a classic 'lie-that-gets-out-of-control' story. Miles heads off to Beta Colony to visit his maternal grandmother. He takes along his bodyguard, Sergeant Bothari, and the sergeant's beautiful daughter, Elena. In a bid to impress Elena, Miles blags his way onto a repossessed jump-ship being held hostage by the distraught pilot and ends up buying the whole damn ship. To try and make good his purchase, he agrees to a double-or-quits mission to deliver 'agricultural equipment' into a warzone. It's obviously an arms smuggling mission, for which Miles acts the veteran, but when mercenaries at the blockade try and take Elena hostage Miles has no choice but to take their ship (obviously), and then the next crisis rushes up...

Fast paced, quick thinking, backs-to-the-wall, turning strategy on its head – pure, poor, genius Miles! Miles is all about brain over brawn, and the bigger the odds the faster his thinks.

This is very much of the same ilk as *The Vor Game*, which won the Hugo award. If I didn't know any better I could easily believe it was the other way around – they're both excellent. I'd still put *Mirror Dance* a smidgeon ahead of them both as my favourite, because I think Marc adds a little extra dark spin to Miles madcap world.

If I had to be mega critical, I'd say that first leap Miles takes to get involved with Mayhew (the pilot) is a little weakly motivated – but once we're past that hurdle, the rest of the books rolls on majestic and unstoppable.

There are some great scenes with Bothari, the last of which left all the hairs on the back of my neck standing up. For such a light hearted romp, that ability to suddenly tug on the heart strings is part of what makes me admire Bujold so much as a writer. That and her wonderful way with loveable characters.

There are many points at which you can join this series – but *The Warrior's Apprentice* has to be one of the most accessible volumes. If you like a great space adventure, grab a copy today :-)

After this I read: Gillespie and I

Andreea Daia says

I always thought that boys of Miles age (his age as in "The Warrior's Apprentice," that is) are particularly chafing in their self-centeredness, in their self-absorption which prevents them from understanding that their *inoffensive* acts of "proving themselves" are in actuality harmful to the people they love. Ms. Bujold creates such a believable character that two thirds of the book, I wanted to castigate and point out to him the consequences of his "quest." He is young, consumed by self-doubts and lack of identity, frantically searching for a sense of direction, and in his search making mistake after mistake. Ms. Bujold's main character is decidedly *real*.

When I first pondered at the message of this novel and how to write my review, I planned in touching the fact that Miles creates a word in which he belongs, a safe harbor for "broken" people like him, in need of a second chance. But now that I'm writing it, I feel that it's more important to talk about Miles's honor.

He starts his journey a virgin, not sexually but integrity wise. His is a fool, but an innocent one, who yet has to break his word. Despite wading in a river of blunders, he somehow succeeds to hold on to that most important principle he inherited from his parents. When he finally understands that doing the right thing means favoring the loved ones' happiness over his own happiness, he is put in the distressing situation of choosing between his word (which at the time he equals with his honor) and the right thing to do. For Miles, failing to keep a promise is a rite of passage, his transition from childhood to manhood, from phantasms to

reality. And in his decision, he neither fails nor loses his honor.

(view spoiler)
