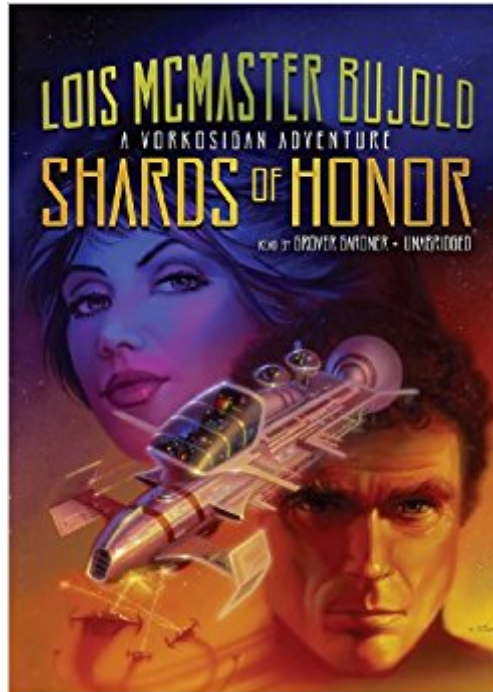


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Shards Of Honor (Vorkosigan Saga) (Cordelia Naismith)



Synopsis

[Read by Grover Gardner] Shards of Honor introduces Barrayar and Aral Vorkosigan, Beta Colony and Cordelia Naismith, thus beginning a multigenerational saga spanning time as well as space. Recognized as the current exemplar of character-based science fiction, Bujold debuts her beloved Vorkosigan saga with this tale about the future parents of Miles Vorkosigan. Captain Cordelia Naismith of the Betan Expeditionary Force was on a routine mission to study the life forms on an uninhabited, neutral planet. Little did she know that the enemy Barrayarans had chosen this place as their secret base for an as-yet undeclared war. Separated from her team, Cordelia is captured by Lord Aral Vorkosigan, the leader in charge of the Barrayaran mission. Aral himself is caught in a web of political intrigue that has led to a recent attempt on his life. As the two strangers struggle together across the unfriendly terrain of the foreign planet toward Aral's ship, they discover that their greatest danger may be the romance inconveniently developing between them, on the brink of a war that will divide their peoples more strongly than ever.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Series fiction has requirements very different from the single novel, or even multiple books forming one long story such as Tolkien's Ring Trilogy. The multi-book single storyline can be - probably is - so self-referential you have to read every book in the series, in order, to understand what's happening in later books. But the author of a true open-ended series like Lois McMaster Bujold's

Miles Vorkosigan novels knows readers may start with any book in the series, and read them in utterly random order. Thus, while each book must build on, and ideally add to and enrich what's come before, it must also be self-contained and not require having read any other book in the series to enjoy. Bujold has always been aware of this, thus for new readers interested in her tales of Miles Vorkosigan, it's not really necessary to begin with *Shards of Honor*. On the other hand, if you are a brand-new reader to this series, why NOT start at the beginning? (Bujold's novel *Falling Free* takes place within the same fictional universe but, being set approximately 200 years before Miles' birth, features none of the series' familiar characters. Eventually you'll want to read *Falling Free*, but it doesn't matter when; you can insert it into your Bujold reading experience anytime.) *Shards of Honor* is Bujold's first novel (not merely the first novel she ever sold, but the first she ever wrote, thus disproving the axiom, "All first novels are unsaleable trash"). She begins writing it in December 1982. In mid-'83, having worked through the *Shards* material and about a third into what would eventually become *Barrayer*, Bujold realizes her manuscript is becoming too long to submit as one book (the "wisdom" at the time being a thin manuscript is more likely to be picked off the slush pile than a thick one).

I was reading a book yesterday which made me feel like I was in an exciting new world. I absolutely fell in love with the main characters, and there were moments of excitement, true love and romance, terror, mirth and of delight. The experience was lovely. After finishing the book, I found that I was so in love with the characters and the experience of sharing their lives, that I felt sadness, even grief over not being able to continue in the world created by this author. After all, one can only read a book once in awhile to experience it fully, because the feelings evoked, the sense of interest and excitement fades with familiarity. After this experience, I found myself pondering what was so important to me about this book, what made this experience so positive, so important. Why did I wish with all my heart that these people lived in my world? Why did I yearn to be a part of their lives in a real way? Why did I want to be them, or know them? As I pondered my feelings, I realized that these characters, which so fascinated me, lived with a very deep code of honor, sometimes at great personal expense. This code was an intrinsic part of the make up of their being. The ongoing struggle to live according to these deep values was exciting, and created tension and drama. Over and over again, it was evident that these characters struggled with the importance of personal honor, of keeping one's word, of living consistently by their code. Sometimes they succeeded, and sometimes they had to set aside the code, for the greater good. Does living by a code of honor make things humorous; I don't know. Or perhaps honor gives one a way of looking at the world that

facilitates laughter sometimes, and then tears as well, sometimes.

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