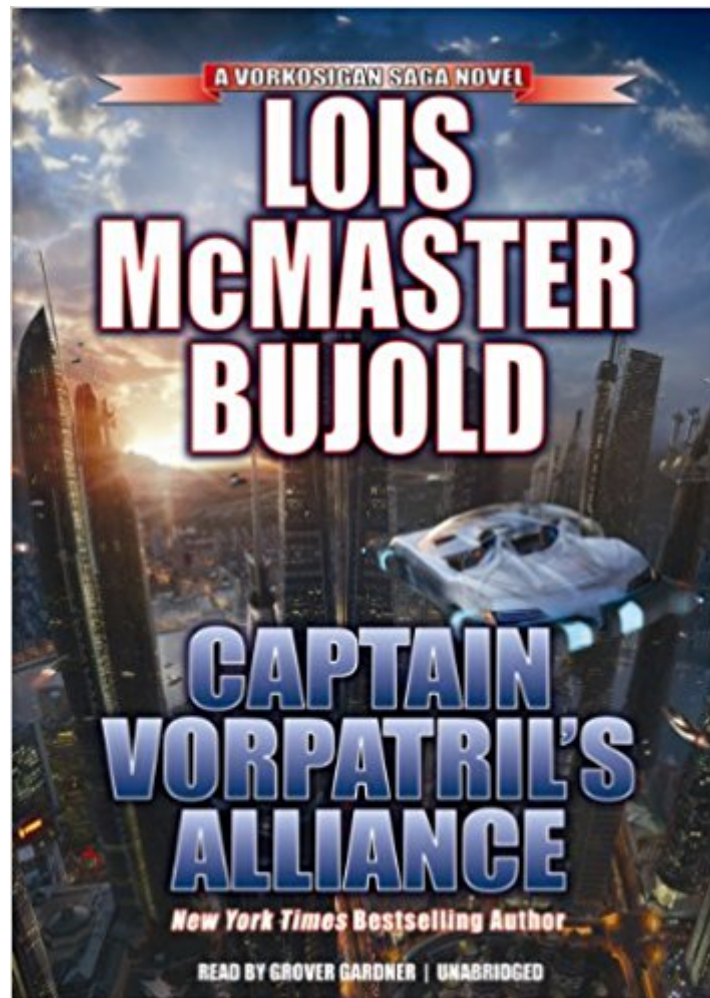




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Captain Vorpatril's Alliance (Miles Vorkosigan Adventures)



Synopsis

[Read by Grover Gardner] Captain Ivan Vorpatril is happy with his relatively uneventful bachelor's life as a staff officer to a Barrayaran admiral. Cousin to imperial troubleshooter Miles Vorkosigan, Ivan is not far down the hereditary list for the emperorship. Thankfully, new heirs have directed that headache elsewhere, leaving Ivan to enjoy his life on Komarr, far from the byzantine court politics of his home system. But when an old friend in Barrayaran intelligence asks Ivan to protect an attractive young woman who may be on the hit list of a criminal syndicate, his chivalrous nature takes over. It seems danger and adventure have once more found Captain Vorpatril. Tej Arqua and her half-sister and servant Rish are fleeing the violent overthrow of their clan on free-for-all planet Jackson's Whole. Now it seems Tej may possess a secret of which even she may not be aware -- a secret that could corrupt the heart of a highly regarded Barrayaran family and provide the final advantage for the thugs who seek to overthrow Tej's homeworld. But none of Tej's formidable adversaries have counted on Ivan Vorpatril. For behind Ivan's facade of wry and self-effacing humor lies a true and cunning protector who will never leave a distressed lady in the lurch -- making the ultimate sacrifice to keep her from harm -- the treasured and hard-won freedom from his own fate as a scion of Barrayar. [This is the 14th book in Lois McMaster Bujold's 'Miles Vorkosigan' series.]

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review Set a few years before the most recent Miles Vorkosigan story (Cryoburn, 2011),

this may be one of the most anticipated and long-awaited entries to Bujold's acclaimed Vorkosigan saga. For years fans have clamored for Ivan Vorpatrik's story, and at last Bujold delivers something that will both thrill the devoted audience and entrance new readers. For many years, Ivan has been perfectly content to live a quiet bachelor life and serve as a staff officer to a Barrayaran admiral. With no desire for the imperial throne or the types of death-defying adventures that his cousin Miles so adores, Ivan has become a master at avoiding political intrigue and entangling alliances. Asked to look after a young woman during a brief trip to Komarr, Ivan is happy to oblige. But when his attempt to ask the woman out ends up with her handmaiden knocking him out and tying him to a chair, Ivan realizes that something very bad is going on. It quickly becomes clear that the only way Ivan can save himself and his charge is to marry Tej Arqua and bring her home to Barrayar. Longtime readers will love seeing a new side of Ivan as well as hearing his views on many of the series characters. New readers can enjoy Ivan's story on its own but will miss many of the nuances that add depth and character; best to begin at the beginning. Essential for all SF collections and a must-read for Bujold and Vorkosigan fans. HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY: In the SF world, a new release doesn't get much bigger than this one. The wait is finally over for Bujold's followers. --Jessica Moyer --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

LOIS McMASTER BUJOLD is one of the most honored writers in the fields of science fiction and fantasy, having won five Hugo Awards and three Nebula Awards. Her second novel, *The Warrior's Apprentice*, introduced young Miles Vorkosigan, one of the most popular characters in science fiction. The mother of two, she lives in Minneapolis.

It has been observed that most human males die before reaching maturity. Lord Ivan Xav Vorpatrik has nearly managed that several times in his short life. The earliest such occasion occurred about an hour before he was born, during an attempt on the throne of Barrayar in which his mother and father were caught by forces loyal to the pretender. His father died while friends tried to rescue them; his mother managed to escape with them and give birth to Ivan while in hiding afterwards. So, given that early pre-natal conditioning as it were, Ivan has spent most of his life trying to avoid politics or attracting too much attention to himself while attempting to live a comfortable life. Not an easy task for someone potentially in line for the throne, and made even less easy by his manic cousin Miles Vorkosigan, who has an absolute genius for attracting chaos in his wake - and dragging Ivan into it. And it doesn't help that Ivan's determination to avoid living up to all of his

potential too visibly is made all the more conspicuous by contrast with the friends and family around him. By age 34, Ivan has managed to work himself into a fairly comfortable position: a taste for good food and drink, comfortable lodgings, and a job as Captain and aide to a high ranking admiral in the Barrayarran armed forces where he serves ably. A certain amount of status, a job challenging enough to be interesting without the headaches of high rank, enough leisure and status to attract a fair number of bedmates on a regular basis, and distance from his mother, who is still waiting for Ivan to get on with his life. True, most of Ivan's old girlfriends seem to have all gotten married. Even his cousin Miles has managed to settle down and start raising a family. And things don't seem to be quite as much fun as they were when he was younger... Nonetheless, despite his efforts to keep a low profile, avoid politics, and romantic commitment, Ivan can't help himself when his sensibilities override his normal caution. He's proved himself able to act swiftly and intelligently when circumstances force it on him, and his proven loyalty to the Emperor (and family connections) have of late earned him some respect - and attention - in his own right. So it's not entirely unexpected that an otherwise routine assignment would be interrupted by a undercover agent of Imperial Security in a tight spot calling on him without warning for help. Nothing too dangerous, nothing too arduous - Byerly Vorrutyer just wants him to see if he can make the acquaintance of a young woman and find out why the dangerous people the agent is trying to corral are so interested in her. Ivan reluctantly agrees. (It doesn't hurt that she's beautiful after all.) Boy meets girl; girl rebuffs boy; boy persists; girl's unexpected female companion stuns boy and the two of them drag him into their apartment and tie him up while they figure out what to do next. It seems Ivan's target is on the run from a rather nasty power struggle, doesn't know if the others in her family have survived, and is about out of options. Tej and her exotic companion Rish are refugees from Jackson's Whole and figure Ivan is an assassin. Ivan manages to convince them of his bona fides by frustrating an attempt to kidnap the two women - while still tied to the chair! And after that, it begins to get really interesting. Ancient secrets, complex familial relationships, deadly adventures, sheer comedy, pathos, romance, Imperial crogglement - Bujold has crafted another richly satisfying tale. Ivan Vorpatrik has been in the Vorkosigan saga as long as Miles. He's grown from being a comedic foil and butt of jokes to an interesting character in his own right. (A running gag in the series has been his constant disparagement as "Ivan-You-Idiot". This time around a character is impressed enough to comment "Your mother told me she didn't think you could be an idiot.") This novel is Ivan's first full story, and continues the growth that began in *À Memory* (Miles Vorkosigan Adventures) *À* and flowered in *À A Civil Campaign* *À* to a satisfying fulfillment. Along the way, we also get some wonderful glimpses of how Miles and his wife Ekaterin are getting along, not to

mention Duv Galeni and Delia. And what happens to Imp Sec is worth the price of admission all by itself. (An additional note: this story takes place about 4 years before Miles most recent novel: *À Cryoburn* (The Vorkosigan Saga).)

Book number 15 of a 16+ loosely linked series of books with several other short story books. Note, this book was published after *À Cryburn* but is about five years before *À Cryoburn*. Also note that this book was nominated for the 2013 Hugo Award but sadly lost to Scalzi's *À Redshirts* novel (which I have yet to read). I have really missed the Vorkosigan saga which peaked for me in *À A Civil Campaign*. *À Cryoburn*, while very good, is not a great story. Well, I've got a new story for you here about Ivan and I am finding it to be the second best book in the series. When I first heard about this book, I went, "a book about Ivan?". Yes, the book is firmly about Ivan and Ms. Bujold nailed it. It has just the right amount of space opera, romance, intrigue, back stabbing, snarkiness and just all around things that make you stay up until 3 am just reading a "few" more chapters. BTW, I wanted to rate this book 6 out of 5 stars but would not let me.

Here comes a very small spoiler from page 1- as soon as Byerly knocked on Ivan's door on page one I knew I was glad I had bought this book. The intertwining of plots involving these two characters in *A Civil Campaign* was marvelous fun so it set the tone for a great romp through this book. Some of the characters in this book are familiar and yet the balance of which characters are focused on completely changes the tone of this book from the others. The plot has plenty of twists and turns to hold your attention and the characters are highly entertaining. I could not put it down. I laughed a lot! And I am so pleased to see Ivan taking the lime light in his own right! So I give Bujold five stars, but I give Baen Books 1 star for not releasing directly to Kindle via . If you go to their site you find sets of instructions for a variety of really cumbersome many-step ways to get the ibook, including some that let you arrive at having it on your kindle but nothing allowing the book to download straight onto the Kindle for iPad as does it. Baen's options read like a laundry list of cumbersome 1995 options. However, I am not scoring the book based on my complaints against Baen Books because I think these scores need to be about the book and the author and not about a beef with the vendor. So Lois gets five stars and Baen gets one.

Ivan has been in many books in the series featuring his cousin Miles, but this one developed his character instead of using him as Miles' buffoon sidekick. This was one of the first books I read in the Vorkosigan series. I enjoyed it the first time, and was fully able to follow the story. However, upon

acquiring almost all the books in the series, I read the books in order. There are definitely nuances I picked up the second time I missed the first and they made it an even better book.

After waiting for so long for a new Vorkosigan Saga book, I read this one in one day! Oops, should have savored it. As a fan of everything LMB has written, I give it five stars. For new readers, maybe start with something else, because this is not her best. On the other hand, if you love romance novels and aren't as interested in science fiction, this and 'A Civil Campaign' are perfect for you. It has a somewhat familiar romance novel plot - and it has all the pleasures of my favorite romance novels (especially my all time favorite, Georgette Heyer) - without the annoying aspects of far too many of them (why is every damsel pursued by homicidal crazies, or forced into sham marriages for protection? Oh, wait, this book has those too. But it does avoid excruciatingly detailed and repetitive love scenes and irrational plot twists.) I missed Miles, but it was a pleasure to see Ivan's strengths no longer overshadowed.

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