

Mirror Dance

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Injured in his mother's womb, Lord Miles Naismith Vorkosigan, born a dwarf with brittle bones, faces off against his brother, a cloned stranger created to murder Miles and replace him. 35,000 first printing.

Miles Vorkosigan faces more than his share of troubles as the protagonist in Mirror Dance. Not only is he deformed and undersized but he has a cloned brother who gets into a jam in the free enterprise plague spot known as Jackson's Whole. Miles tries to help his brother but ends up injured, placed on cryogenic suspension and then lost in intergalactic limbo. And that's just in the first 100 pages. The following 300 pages add a wealth more to this fantastic tale that's both humorous and finely written. Mirror Dance won the 1995 Hugo Award for Science Fiction. Author's Note:

A Bujold Reading-Order Guide

The Fantasy Novels

My fantasy novels are not hard to order. Easiest of all is The Spirit Ring, which is a stand-alone, or aquel, as some wag once dubbed books that for some obscure reason failed to spawn a subsequent series. Nexteasiest are the four volumes of The Sharing Knife--in order, Beguilement, Legacy, Passage, and Horizon--which I broke down and actually numbered, as this is one continuous tale.

What were called the Chalion books after the setting of its first two volumes, but which now that the geographic scope has widened I'm dubbing the World of the Five Gods, were written to be stand-alones as part of a larger whole. However, the second volume certainly contains spoilers for the first, so Curse-Paladin is the recommended reading order. The third is in effect an independent prequel, not sharing characters or setting with the other two, so readers of the prior volumes need to adjust their expectations going in. In any case, the publication order is:

The Curse of Chalion
Paladin of Souls
The Hallowed Hunt

In terms of internal world chronology, The Hallowed Hunt would fall first, the Penric novellas perhaps a hundred and fifty years later, and The Curse of Chalion and Paladin of Souls would follow a century or so after that.

Current internal chronology of the Penric & Desdemona tales is:

"Penric's Demon"
"Penric and the Shaman"
"Penric's Fox"
"Penric's Mission"
"Mira's Last Dance"
Other Original E-books

The short story collection ProtoZoa contains five very early tales--three (1980s) contemporary fantasy, two science fiction--all previously published but not in this handy format. The novelette "Dreamweaver's Dilemma" may be of interest to Vorkosigan completists, as it is the first story in which that proto-universe began, mentioning Beta Colony but before Barrayar was even thought of.

Sidelines: Talks and Essays is just what it says on the tin--a collection of three decades of my nonfiction writings, including convention speeches, essays, travelogues, introductions, and some less formal pieces. I hope it will prove an interesting companion piece to my fiction.

The Vorkosigan Stories

Many pixels have been expended debating the 'best' order in which to read what have come to be known as the Vorkosigan Books (or Saga), the Vorkosiverse, the Miles books, and other names. The debate mainly revolves around publication order versus internal-chronological order. I favor internal chronological, with a few adjustments.

Shards of Honor and Barrayar. The first two books in the series proper, they detail the adventures of Cordelia Naismith of Beta Colony and Aral Vorkosigan of Barrayar. Shards was my very first novel ever; Barrayar was actually my eighth, but continues the tale the next day after the end of Shards. For readers who want to be sure of beginning at the beginning, or who are very spoiler-sensitive, start with these two.

The Warrior's Apprentice and The Vor Game (with, perhaps, the novella "The Mountains of Mourning" tucked in between.) The Warrior's Apprentice introduces the character who became the series' linchpin, Miles Vorkosigan; the first book tells how he created a space mercenary fleet by accident; the second how he fixed his mistakes from the first round. Space opera and military-esque adventure (and a number of other things one can best discover for oneself). The Warrior's Apprentice makes another good place to jump into the series for readers who prefer a young male protagonist.

After that: Brothers in Arms should be read before Mirror Dance, and both, ideally, before Memory.

Komarr makes another alternate entry point for the series, picking up Miles's second career at its start. It should be read before A Civil Campaign.

Borders of Infinity, a collection of three of the five currently extant novellas, makes a good Miles Vorkosigan early-adventure sampler platter. I always thought, for readers who don't want to commit themselves to length. (But it may make more sense if read after The Warrior's Apprentice.) Take care not to confuse the collection-as-a-whole with its title story, "The Borders of Infinity".

Falling Free takes place 200 years earlier in the timeline and does not share settings or

characters with the main body of the series. Most readers recommend picking up this story later. It should likely be read before *Diplomatic Immunity*, however, which revisits the "quaddies", a bioengineered race of free-fall dwellers, in Miles's time.

The novels in the internal-chronological list below appear in italics; the novellas (officially defined as a story between 17,500 word sand 40,000 words) in quote marks.

Falling Free
Shards of Honor
Barrayar
The Warrior's Apprentice
"The Mountains of Mourning"
"Weatherman"
The Vor Game
Cetaganda
Ethan of Athos
Borders of Infinity
"Labyrinth"
"The Borders of Infinity"
Brothers in Arms
Mirror Dance
Memory
Komarr
A Civil Campaign
"Winterfair Gifts"
Diplomatic Immunity
Captain Vorpatril's Alliance
CryoBurn
Gentleman Jole and the Red Queen

Caveats:

The novella "Weatherman" is an out-take from the beginning of the novel *The Vor Game*. If you already have *The Vor Game*, you likely don't need this.

The original 'novel' *Borders of Infinity* was a fix-up collection containing the three novellas "The Mountains of Mourning", "Labyrinth", and "The Borders of Infinity", together with a frame to tie the pieces together. Again, beware duplication. The frame story does not stand alone.

Happy reading!

-- Lois McMaster Bujold

Other Books

Here/There, An examination of telepresence technologies through the lens of contemporary artistic experiments, from early video art through current "drone vision"

works. "Telepresence" allows us to feel present—through vision, hearing, and even touch—at a remote location by means of real-time communication technology. Networked devices such as video cameras and telerobots extend our corporeal agency into distant spaces. In *Here/There*, Kris Paulsen examines telepresence technologies through the lens of contemporary artistic experiments, from early video art through current "drone vision" works. Paulsen traces an arc of increasing interactivity, as video screens became spaces for communication and physical, tactile intervention. She explores the work of artists who took up these technological tools and questioned the aesthetic, social, and ethical stakes of media that allow us to manipulate and affect far-off environments and other people—to touch, metaphorically and literally, those who cannot touch us back. Paulsen examines 1970s video artworks by Vito Acconci and Joan Jonas, live satellite performance projects by Kit Galloway and Sherrie Rabinowitz, and CCTV installations by Chris Burden. These early works, she argues, can help us make sense of the expansion of our senses by technologies that privilege real time over real space and model strategies for engagement and interaction with mediated others. They establish a political, aesthetic, and technological history for later works using cable TV infrastructures and the World Wide Web, including telerobotic works by Ken Goldberg and Wafaa Bilal and artworks about military drones by Trevor Paglen, Omar Fast, Hito Steyerl, and others. These works become a meeting place for here and there.

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