

SPECULATIVE FICTION REVIEW by Stephanie Young

TITLE *Shards of Honor*
AUTHOR Lois McMaster Bujold
PUBLISHER Baen
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PRINTING 1996
COVER ART Alan Gutierrez

Précis Betan Cordelia Naismith is doing a survey of a planet that just happens to have wormhole access to Escobar. Barrayaran Captain Aral Vorkosigan is leading a team to establish a beachhead on this planet in order to attack Escobar.

Cordelia ends up as Aral's prisoner and the two find out much about each other and their world's very different cultures. Cordelia ends up embroiled in a massive scheme to discredit some Barrayaran higher ups, and survives an incident that while ugly, could have been far uglier.

The Betans end up on the side of Escobar and help thwart an invasion and when Cordelia returns to Beta she is a public hero but behind the scenes a suspected double agent via brainwashing.

She escapes to Barrayar where she gets together with Aral and decides life as Lady Vorkosigan is better than life as a suspect on Beta.

Protagonist Cordelia Naismith
Antagonist The Vor culture of Barrayar

What I liked The characters, the plot, the humor and the emotion.

What I didn't like If I nitpick I could say that Lois uses a few too many worn phrases and adverbs and that Aral is awful lucky in the way some things go.

Final Comments This series is one of the first series I read over 10 years ago when my partner got me reading science fiction again. She started me out with *The Warrior's Apprentice* since it is the first book to have Miles Vorkosigan in it and he is the main character in the series. I didn't read this book until after a few of the Miles books. This time I thought I would start in the Vorverse chronological order.

This and *WA* along with a third book were the first ones Bujold sold to Baen and it shows in the writing. While strong in story and character you can see the rough edges of an early writer, but by the time she gets to *Mirror Dance* and *Memory*, the edges are polished and the writing is intense and flawless.

This whole series is top notch and there is no better series out there in science fiction. By the time you finish you will feel a part of the Vorkosigan family and will join the multitude of Lois fans drooling for the next Vorkosigan novel, which she is writing and will probably be available in 2010.

Rating 🍊🍊🍊🍊🍊