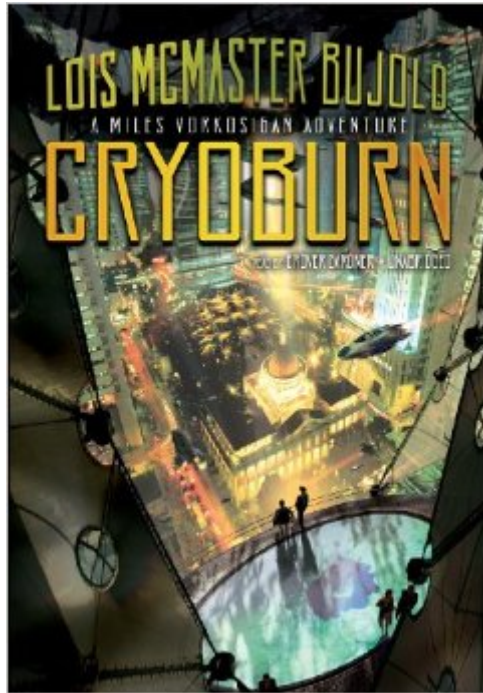


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Cryoburn (A Miles Vorkosigan Adventure) (Miles Vorkosigan Adventures)



Synopsis

Miles Vorkosigan is back! Kibou-daini is a planet obsessed with cheating death. Barrayaran Imperial Auditor Miles Vorkosigan can hardly disapprove -- he's been cheating death his whole life, on the theory that turnabout is fair play. But when a Kibou-daini cryocorp -- an immortal company whose job it is to shepherd its all-too-mortal frozen patrons into an unknown future -- attempts to expand its franchise into the Barrayaran Empire, Emperor Gregor dispatches his top troubleshooter, Miles, to check it out. On Kibou-daini, Miles discovers generational conflict over money and resources is heating up, even as refugees displaced in time skew the meaning of "generation" past repair. Here he finds a young boy with a passion for pets and a dangerous secret, a Snow White trapped in an icy coffin who burns to rewrite her own tale, and a mysterious crone who is the very embodiment of the warning "Don't mess with the secretary." Bribery, corruption, conspiracy, kidnapping -- something is rotten on Kibou-daini, and it isn't due to power outages in the Cryocombs. And Miles is in the middle -- of trouble!

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is the umpteenth Vorkosigan Saga novel, long salivated after by all right and proper fans (whose ranks do include me, as fair warning), and like all books in the series it functions as a stand-alone and even would serve as a decent introduction to the series. It's not the best introduction, but anyone who comes to the series through this novel will have no trouble keeping up

with the plot here and will also not be spoiled on any major events from earlier on, except for Mirror Dance (Miles Vorkosigan Adventures) -- but to be fair, just knowing that the series continues is a spoiler for Mirror Dance. What makes the Vorkosigan Saga unique in my experience (and if there are any other series that share this quality, please, let me know!) is that it is a very long-running series where each book does stand-alone yet which carries the same set of characters throughout (with the occasional addition or subtraction) and in which the characters undergo fundamental change throughout, significant, life-altering experiences that can't be brushed off or reset in the next volume. The best volumes in the series are, in fact, those that deal with those life-altering experiences. Cryoburn does not fall into that category. Instead, it falls into the slightly-less-satisfying but still exceptional category of Vorkosigan Saga novels that use the science fiction setting to explore the effect of technological innovation on human society. Unlike many science fiction writers, Bujold has little interest in the physics of her universe; she hand-waved some wormhole-aided space travel technology and then never gave it another thought.

Lois Bujold's strengths are, as usual, on display with this book. Her strong characterization is on prominent display, with the two characters we know a bit older and more mature, but still the comfortable characters fans of the series have grown to love. The new characters, primarily Jin, are well fleshed out and believable, and we quickly come to care for him. The returning minor character (Raven Durova) gets a good fleshing out. Ms. Bujold's fascination with medical/life technology and its effect on society is once again on display, and once again she creates an interesting society based on those changes. How would easy, convenient cryogenics affect society? This is something that could happen before long, and it could have a large impact on society. While the scenario she paints in this book is far fetched, it does a good job of illustrating the kinds of things society will face at some point. The story is fun, the action exciting, the humor laugh out loud. Pacing is perfect. So why does it fall short? Well, to be honest it really doesn't, except in comparison to her own earlier work in the series. The first thing to note is that except for Miles and Roic, the rest of the large cast of characters we love to read about simply are not there, or only there briefly. No Cordelia, no Aral, no Ivan, no Simon, no Alys, no Gregor, no Ekaterin, no Pym. Mark and Kareen show up, but briefly. This is very frustrating to longtime fans, as [art of the pleasure of the Vorkosigan books is seeing how all those characters grow and interrelate. More importantly, while the story is fine, it's not up to the standards of most of Bujold's books.

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