

Using Miles in the Game

Miles is likely to attempt to take over any situation in which he is involved. He is hyperactive, motivated, and, given his wide range of capabilities, liable to steal the storyline. (If he doesn't at least *try* to sort everything out himself, then he's not being played right.) If he is being used as a PC, the GM should take care to create situations and complications for which Miles lacks experience or skills, and where other characters can enjoy the spotlight.

As an NPC, Miles Vorkosigan makes a wonderful plot device. His wide range of interests and frequent leaps into the unknown on missions for ImpSec or Gregor – or even Dendarii jobs without a secret Barrayaran motive – mean that he can turn up literally anywhere. The aim here, however, is to keep the focus on the heroes, rather than to let Miles save the day, rout the villain, and end up with the tall brunette. Miles may be a major character in the campaign, but ultimately, the PCs are the protagonists and should expect to make the vital difference.

Miles can serve as an employer, supervisor, or superior officer; he generally allows his junior officers a reasonable amount of initiative, and (despite his tendencies) doesn't try to micromanage his field commanders. It wouldn't be out of character for him to hand over an entire avenue of investigation to junior officers or allied experts. He is also extremely busy these days as an Auditor – he might well ask the PCs, as subordinates, colleagues, or friends, to look into something that has come to his attention but that he doesn't have the time to investigate. It is *not* recommended that he be a junior officer serving under one of the PCs, unless the GM feels that the PC in question deserves such a disadvantage! Miles has a record of reorganizing tasks to suit his own priorities or judgment, taking command of field missions and reinterpreting the orders, second-guessing his superior

officers, and so on. While he may do his job extremely well, any superior officer of less mettle than Illyan – or the Emperor himself – is liable to develop a nervous twitch, or worse.

Miles can also provide a good start to an adventure or campaign . . . by vanishing in the line of duty. He has needed rescuing more than once after getting into a situation that turned out to be unexpectedly dangerous; characters might well be given his “last known location” and turned loose to find him. This might be a job for a team working with ImpSec, the Dendarii Mercenaries, or on a private commission for Lord Mark or for Miles' parents. They might even be working on what they believe to be a totally unrelated investigation when they discover a rather short Imperial Auditor locked up in the house they just raided – and Miles will be delighted to explain how working on *his* project serves *their* best interests.

Although Miles has learned to rein himself back – to some extent – he still tends to be extremely manic and hyper when in full operating mode. He is liable to burst onto the scene, hand out assignments or request information, and then vanish for a while. Just because he is personally averse to handing in reports until the end of a case doesn't mean that he'll accept that from subordinates. Those interacting with him should see his very real concern for Barrayar and its people, and the qualities which make him an excellent tactician and leader of men. They may also soon wish he were at the other end of the galaxy, if his view on how to approach the current situation differs from theirs. Finally, Miles has a good memory for contacts and useful people – if the investigators show themselves to be talented and capable, then he or ImpSec may well call on them at some future time . . .

LADY EKATERIN VORKOSIGAN

245 points

Ekaterin Nile Vorkosigan, formerly Ekaterin Nile Vorvayne Vorsoisson, is an intelligent, educated woman with a growing expertise in landscape and garden design. A widow with a pre-teen son, she recently married Lord Auditor Miles Vorkosigan.

Although her first marriage was traumatic, Ekaterin has managed to recover her sense of self-worth. She intends to continue with her education and career, even though she is now wed to the Lord Auditor – and Miles Vorkosigan wouldn't have it any other way.

Ekaterin's father, Sasha Vorvayne, was a minor provincial bureaucrat in Vandeville, a Southern Continent frontier town; he kept a very traditional Vor household, and Ekaterin's mother taught her a Vor woman's proper duties toward men. She also taught the young Ekaterin to “become

stone” – to deal with aggression and irrationality from others by reacting passively. At the age of 20, shortly after her mother's death, Ekaterin married Etienne (Tien) Vorsoisson, a young bureaucrat with a promising career. Ekaterin bore a son, Nikolai (Nikki), by traditional body-birth. Sometime thereafter, Tien discovered he had Vorzohn's Dystrophy, a Barrayaran genetic disorder. He refused to seek treatment for himself – or for Nikki, who might also have it – for fear of being exposed as a “mutant.” He shifted from job to job and became increasingly difficult to live with, jumping between suspicions, arguments, accusations, and a desperate need for attention. Ekaterin slowly lost her love for him, but remained with him, bound by her duties and incapable of abandoning her marriage vows.

Eventually the couple moved to Komarr, where Tien took a post as an administrator. Soon after, he accepted a bribe to cover up a large-scale embezzlement. Tien did not survive the collapse of the conspiracy, though Ekaterin helped to capture his killers.