



Deepsix

By Jack McDevitt

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In the year 2204, tragedy and terror forced a scientific team to prematurely evacuate Maleiva III. Nineteen years later, a rogue moon hurtling through space is about to obliterate the last opportunity to study this rare, life-supporting planet. With less than three weeks left before the disaster, superluminal pilot Priscilla "Hutch" Hutchins -- the only even remotely qualified professional within lightyears of the ill-fated planet -- must lead a small scientific team to the surface to glean whatever they can about its lifeforms and lost civilizations before time runs out. But catastrophe awaits when they are stranded on this strange and complex world of puzzles and impossibilities. And now Hutch and her people must somehow survive on a hostile world going rapidly mad -- as the clock ticks toward apocalypse for a doomed enigma now called...

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Deepsix is concerned with the motivating force that drives all scientists--the quest for truth, for expanding the limits of human knowledge. How much are we willing to risk for that moment of discovery, of knowing what no other soul yet knows? Our time? Our reputations? Our careers? Our lives?

The premise is this: just weeks before the planet *Deepsix* will be destroyed by a collision with a gas giant, ruins are detected on its surface, suggesting the presence of civilization. The Academy diverts scientists from the nearest spaceship to go down and explore, and they are joined by their century's Ellsworth Toohey: a misogynistic, sanctimonious gadfly who has never before been off of Earth's surface. The party's landers are destroyed in an earthquake induced by the approaching gas giant, so now they must find a way to get off of *Deepsix* before it is destroyed by the collision. Needless to say, their excavations are placed on the back burner.

The physics describing the space travel and the archeology used to reconstruct the lost culture of *Deepsix* are interesting and explained well. There is plenty of action and suspense--will the party survive? And the evolving characters and group dynamics are more complex than those usually found in science fiction books, making *Deepsix* a worthwhile read. --*Diana Gitig*

From Publishers Weekly

Those who like their science hard and their alien adventures bloody will enjoy this latest from Philip K. Dick Award runner-up McDevitt (*The Hercules Text*). In the 23rd century *Deepsix* is a planet in deep trouble. In about three weeks a Jovian-sized world will collide with it. Although *Deepsix* is a treasure trove of life, it has been left unexplored for the last 20 years because hostile animals slaughtered most of the first human landing party. Now, with the discovery of traces of an advanced civilization on the planet, a new expedition hastily sets out to rescue bits and pieces of the culture before they are lost forever. To find the lander that was abandoned two decades earlier, the disgraced commander of the original expedition must make a deadly trek across *Deepsix* with (among others) two feisty women and a misogynistic celebrity writer who once pilloried the team leader in the press. Goaded by their off-planet superiors, they also have to solve the mystery inherent in the disappearance of *Deepsix*'s civilization. McDevitt puts his characters into predictable jeopardies while methodically solving the conundrum of the missing aliens. Though the rigorous scientific explanations of the techniques used in the rescue are absorbing, the huge, mostly two-dimensional cast slows down the action. Sadly, McDevitt's world building is frequently sketchy and his otherworldly animals too terrestrial, although the sexual Venus's-flytrap segment does have its creative and amusing moments. 3-city author tour. Agent, Ralph Vicinanza.

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From School Library Journal

Adult/High School-Tourists and scientists have all come to watch the destruction of *Deepsix* by a planetary collision. However, a few days before, signs of intelligent and technological life are found on the planet, and a team is sent to investigate. It includes Randall Nightingale, who led a previous, failed expedition to the planet years before; Priscilla Hutchins, a pilot who ends up in command; and Gregory MacAllister, a journalist who not only wrecked Nightingale's career with a series of articles, but who is also renowned for his sexism. The author makes the alien planet seem real, poses a compelling engineering challenge involving

some of the minor characters, and describes a variety of interesting alien life-forms. The well-rounded characters grow through their adventures, without that growth seeming trite or inevitable. There's even some provocative social commentary. What makes this novel work, however, is the combination of an interesting mystery involving the planet's alien life-forms and the team's thrilling adventure as they try to escape the planet before it is destroyed. Set in the 23rd century, this fast-paced novel should appeal to readers interested in science and technology.

Paul Brink, Fairfax County Public Library System, VA

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

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