



Hello Out There (The Hercules Text / A Talent for War)

By Jack McDevitt

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Here, together in a single volume, are the two novels that launched Jack McDevitt's reputation as a writer of suspenseful, thoughtful, sense-of-wonder science fiction. Hello, Out There contains The Hercules Text, winner of the 1986 Philip K. Dick Special Award, and A Talent for War. The Hercules Text has been totally rewritten and updated for this edition. Most of us are attracted to the idea that the human race is not alone. Encountering other beings, we believe, will be romantic, exciting, thought-provoking, intriguing. And possibly dangerous. After all, one of our time-honored notions since H.G. Wells is that we may well be perceived by Others as little more than snacks, or subjects for religious conversion, or creatures of such insignificance as to be simply swept aside. No matter, we think cheerfully. We will take the risk. McDevitt suggests the hazards may be far more subtle. In Hello, Out There, contact with alien species forces us to rethink who we are and what we are about. The Hercules Text recounts a clash of wills in which the mere knowledge that someone is out there ignites profound changes in religious, political, and social behavior. In its companion novel, A Talent for War, contact forces us to rethink a cherished mythology, and ask ourselves whether truth might not sometimes demand too high a price. Here are two voyages into the unknown, twin expeditions to demonstrate that when we finally encounter whatever other intelligences Darwin has cast onto the cosmic beach, we may discover that the face looking back at us is our own. The Hercules Text (Revised Edition) From the direction of the constellation Hercules, a message has been detected. The continuous beats of a pulsar have become odd, irregular...artificial. It can only be a deliberate transmission. Frantically, a research team struggles to decipher the meaning, while the very fact of reception shakes the foundations of empires around the world, from Wall Street to the Vatican to the White House. And the fate of nations ultimately lies in the hands of a lone frightened bureaucrat. A Talent for War Everyone knew the legend of Christopher Sim. Teacher. Fighter. Leader. An interstellar hero with a rare talent for war, Sim changed history forever when he forged a ragtag band of misfits into a brilliant fighting force during mankind's darkest hour, broke the back of the only aliens the human race had ever encountered, and sacrificed himself in the effort. But now, two centuries later, Alex Benedict has found a startling bit of information, long buried in an ancient computer file. If it is true, then there is another, darker, side to the tale. For his own sake, for the sake of history, Alex

Benedict must follow the track of the legend, where he will confront a truth far stranger than he could have imagined.

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Editorial Review

Review

"...it seems to me that he is the logical heir to Isaac Asimov and Arthur C. Clarke." -- *Stephen King*

"A superlative novel...bridges the gap between literary and commercial SF with rare facility and belongs in every collection." -- *Booklist*

"An old-fashioned sense of wonder." -- *Denver Post*

"Magnificent vision." -- *Locus*

About the Author

Jack McDevitt is the author of seven novels and approximately fifty short stories, which have been published in the major science fiction magazines and in several original anthologies. His first novel, *The Hercules Text* (Ace, 1986) was an Ace Special, and won the Philip K. Dick Special Award and the Locus Award for Best First Novel. It appears here in a substantially different form.

Other novels are *A Talent for War* (Ace, 1989); *The Engines of God* (Ace, 1994), an Arthur C. Clarke Award finalist; *Ancient Shores* (HarperPrism, 1996), a Nebula finalist; *Eternity Road* (HarperPrism, 1997), winner of the Darrell Award; *Moonfall* (HarperPrism, 1998), a Nebula finalist; and *Infinity Beach*, (HarperPrism, 2000).

Several pieces of shorter fiction have been short-listed for the Nebula and the Hugo, and "Ships in the Night" won the \$10,000 first prize in the UPC International Novella competition in 1992. A collection of McDevitt's short fiction, *Standard Candles*, is available from Tachyon Press.

McDevitt has been a Philadelphia taxi driver, a naval officer, an English teacher, a customs officer, and a motivational trainer for federal and state law enforcement officials. He lives in Brunswick, Georgia, with his wife Maureen.

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