



## Última misión: Margolia

*Jack McDevitt , Beatriz Ruiz Jara (Translator)*

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**CON ESTA NOVELA, GALARDONADA CON EL PREMIO NEBULA, MCDEVITT DA UN PASO MÁS EN LA SERIE DE ALEX BENEDICT.**

**Sinopsis:** Miles de años después de que una colonia entera, instalada en la mítica Margolia, desapareciera misteriosamente, llega a manos del marchante de antigüedades Alex Benedict un objeto proveniente, en apariencia, de la Buscadora, una de las naves margolianas. Investigando la procedencia del objeto en cuestión, Alex y su ayudante, Chase Kolpath, siguen una pista mortal hasta dicha nave, que, extrañamente, se encuentra a la deriva en un sistema carente de mundos habitables. Sin embargo, su descubrimiento plantea más preguntas que respuestas, atrayendo a Alex y a Chase hacia el mismísimo origen del peligro...

## Última misión: Margolia Details

Date : Published October 5th 2012 by La Factoría de Ideas (first published November 2005)

ISBN :

Author : Jack McDevitt , Beatriz Ruiz Jara (Translator)

Format : Kindle Edition 320 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Fiction, Mystery

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## From Reader Review **Última misión: Margolia for online ebook**

### **Daniel Shellenbarger says**

Seeker is actually the third book in Jack McDevitt's Alex Benedict series, but I picked up "A Talent for War" (book 1) some time ago and couldn't build any interest before putting it down and my library didn't have "Polaris" (book 2), so when the urge took me to give McDevitt another shot, Seeker is where my attention landed. Anyway, the basic premise is that protagonist Alex Hunter and his assistant/narrator Chase are antiquarians (grave robbers if you prefer) in the far future (ca. 10,000 A.D. (C.E., whatever)) and make their living by hunting down artifacts with special history and selling them to the highest bidder. Of course, the better the story behind the artifact (and the more unique), the better the price. The world they inhabit reminded me a lot of the universes of Jack Vance (Demon Princes) and Matthew Hughes (Hengist Hapthorn). Not so much because of their themes of Earth on the brink of destruction (much less their near-magical technology), but the musty feel of a universe that's had a LOT of living and dying done in it, where mankind has risen and fallen on countless worlds through many dark ages and renaissances. In Seeker, Alex and Chase are presented with a cup which turns out to be the only known artifact ever recovered from the "Seeker" a 27th century interstellar colony ship belonging to a group that fled from an oppressive totalitarian regime in North America to a secret world known as Margolia and was never heard from again, a legend that (to the people of Alex and Chase's time) has taken on the aspects of Atlantis, a lost world populated by a colony of dreamers. Working from the scanty clues available to them, they gradually piece together the fate of Margolia and its colonists while dodging the efforts of their rivals and archaeologists outraged at their "pillaging". Seeker's greatest strength is the mystery of the Seeker and of Margolia, it's an interesting problem and Jack McDevitt explores every side of the legend and the means by which his protagonists solve the dilemma is neither too clever nor too simplistic. Likewise, I enjoyed the realistic quality of McDevitt's universe, it isn't a terribly dynamic place (unlike, say, David Weber's writing), the aliens are hideous and telepathic but a lot like us otherwise, and the technology isn't really that flashy but it has (as I noted above) a lived-in feel that makes the characters and mystery the more believable. I have mixed feelings about the characters, Alex and Chase are both interesting and have large-as-life personalities, but most of the rest of the characters are completely utilitarian, filling holes in the story as useful assistants (or appropriately unlikeable antagonists; oddly, McDevitt's weakest moments are the action scenes, which feel out of place in the otherwise sedate pacing of the story) and then getting out of the way without much lasting impact. The best thing I can say is that at times, McDevitt's protagonists' personalities and methodology reminded me of Sayers Lord Peter Wimsey and Bunter or of Margery Allingham's Campion and Lugg, but the feeling never lasted. All in all, I found Seeker to be an enjoyable book (enough so that I'll probably check out some more of Jack McDevitt's work), but it is undeniably a slow and rather academic sort of mystery novel, so don't go in expecting Indiana Jones (or Philip Marlowe) in Space.

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### **Jerry says**

I read this some years ago and enjoyed it...and did the same this time as well!

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### **Hugo Ortega says**

I stumbled onto this book when going over a list of Nebula Award winners. I must say as a sci-fi story it

plays differently than most of the other books in the genre. It's a mix of Indiana Jones with Marco Polo set in the distant future. It's a "lost civilization" story where the main characters are treasure hunters looking for rare items from the distant past. The story takes place 10,000 years into the future; humans have been traveling in space for so long that space faring civilizations have risen and fallen.

It is part of a series of books called the "Alex Benedict" series. However this is a strange thing because the majority of the story is about Alex's partner, Chase Kolpath. Alex plays almost like a minor character, pushing Chase further and farther into the assignment.

The story is about the search for a lost colony. Not just any lost colony, this is one of the first space colonization attempts made by humans 10,000 years ago. This colony was started by a group of separatist who wanted to escape the tyranny and oppression of the Earth. The legend goes that the colonist made every effort to ensure that no one could find their colony, and they succeeded.

Chase, the main character of the story, goes off on different assignments in search of clues that could help locate this colony. Mixed in with the mystery of the lost colony of Margolia are interweaving mysteries on how the original clue managed to reach the light of day and a mysterious killer who is taking out treasure hunters.

The story is a bit slow at times but there are wonderful action moments and tension scattered about to keep the story going. The real gem in this story is the setting and the description of both the utopian present day world that Chase lives in and the horror of the ancient past where freedom is non-existent. Here the author is able to make critical statements about the state of our society through the mind of Chase; who is baffled by the idea the humans could submit to blind faith in religious authority and all free thought and critical thinking is branded as "unpatriotic and heretical" as the Earth the Margolian's attempt to flee is caught in the grips of a religious hegemon who is both the leader of the Church and the State and whose authority comes from the will of God. It also has what I think is the best description of inter-species interactions. In this future there is one other sentient species; a race of telepaths that ironically look like demons; red skin and fanged teeth. Due to their appearance and the fact that direct communication is limited this makes any interactions difficult and uncomfortable.

The story climaxes into a great thriller ending with a little scooby-doo thrown in when the attacker is finally revealed. My only disappointment was the overly happy ending with the lost colony revealed. But the imagery painted by McDevitt is very well done and except for some moments where the story drags he manages to captivate me with the wonderful universe he creates.

Anyone interested in a sci-fi story that is not the usual space war/ soap opera/space fantasy and tries to put hard science into the story in ways that moves the story forward should give this a shot. The best part of those moments was when Chase, an experienced shuttle pilot, uses her knowledge of zero-g and her piloting skill to narrowly avoid death using only inertia.

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### **Toby Udstuen says**

This is book three of the Benedict series. All the Alex Benedict books are set about 10,000 years in the future. So when one of Benedict clients come to him with a cup that came from a colony ship lost 9,000

years ago Alex sits up and takes notice. How did the cup get back to the known worlds? Where was the 9,000 year old ship it came from? Did the ship make it to its mysterious destination? Is there a colony there now? These are the questions Alex and his partner have to answer.

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### **Patricia says**

Great mix of sci-fi, mystery and adventure.

This book reminds me of a mix of Sherlock Holmes and Indiana Jones thrown into a sci-fi setting. (A mystery story set in the future, with an antiquities dealer as the main protagonist.) In this universe the human race has been in space for about 20,000 years. In that time many ships, colonies and valuable items have gone missing. Alex Benedict, with the help of Chase Kolpath, specializes in finding missing and valuable items.

Seeker is the story of Margolia, a lost colony that disappeared long ago and has become a legend much like modern day Atlantis. One of the interesting concepts in the book, and McDevitt's writing, is the use of computer generated avatars of long dead people that are recreated through what is left behind and known of the person. In this case, Harry Williams the founder of the lost colony is used to help with the search. While he does not know where the colony is, or what happened to it, the avatar allows Benedict and Kolpath to get some unique perspectives on the colony and its foundation. In the end the avatar becomes a very sympathetic character.

This is a fun, quick book offers many twists and turns with a very satisfactory ending. Although it is the third book in Jack McDevitt's Alex Benedict series, these books can be read completely independent of each other.

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### **Bradley says**

Good Grief. I just lost my review.

Here's a summary, alas.

'06 Nebula winner, equal parts Space Opera and Noir Mystery, but that really translates mostly into Future History Archeology, with a treasure-hunting bent, twists and turns, lots of interesting characters, and lost spacecraft and lost colonies.

Was I really happy about the last twist and the epilogue? Hell yes.

All this takes place about 10k in the future, but there's a legend of a lost colony gone 9k ago before the advent of FTL travel or communications, and it's the subject of much attention and drama. Atlantis, anyone? Well what happens when weird things start showing up, crazy mysteries get unearthed, and our favorite team get involved in the hunt?

It's a mystery! Most of the fun is all in the reveals and the character interactions, and I'll be honest, I like Chase better as the narrator because she just might be smarter than the titular MC who's getting kinda pushed out of his own series. :) It's not a bad alteration. :) She's a tough Noir investigator.

I'm having a lot of fun with these novels! It's pretty much the most fun I've had with archeology novels I've had, but perhaps that's because I just haven't read the right ones. Still, I love the mix with Space Opera. :)

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## Tim Martin says

*\_Seeker\_* is essentially a mystery novel set in the far, far future. How far into the future? In this setting, humanity has been out among the stars for an astounding 15,000 years. Empires rose and fell, new religions, languages, and civilizations came and went. Dark Ages and Renaissances and new Dark Ages (three different ones apparently) have happened, with humanity on different worlds alternately turning towards the stars and then away from them for decades, centuries, millennia. Author Jack McDevitt does an outstanding job in this book of portraying a sense of the great depths of time, giving the reader a real feeling of just how much civilization has changed over the many centuries since humans initially left Earth. Extinct empires, dynasties, and great historical figures that are for us in the unimaginably distant future are for the people in this setting more distant to them than the Pyramids are to us.

The main characters in this book are two antiquarians, treasure hunters basically, the famed antiquities dealer Alex Benedict and his very capable assistant Chase Kolpath (in fact the book is written from her point of view). Benedict and Kolpath make their living finding artifacts from long dead empires, failed colonies, famous ship disasters, and the like, buying and selling items to private collectors mostly. They also do a lot of legwork to uncover where a derelict ship or centuries forgotten base might be, lost among the stars, journeying there themselves at often some personal risk, hoping that frustratingly fragmentary clues pan out and that they beat treasure hunters that may gotten there centuries before.

Devastated that a long lost research colony was ransacked shortly before they got to it, apparently by one of their competitors who somehow knew where Kolpath and Benedict were going, the two antiquities dealers are sitting around rather depressed when they get a call from a woman. Can she show them a strange cup she has; she thinks it is old, maybe worth something?

Calls like this are common and most of the items turn out to be junk or at least not worth very much. You never know though, so they agree to meet her. The item she has is indeed interesting, a cup emblazoned with an eagle and what they discern to be English writing. Borrowing the cup, they translate the writings and analyze its age. To their amazement, it turns out to be nine thousand years old and connected to a long lost, very famous ship, the *\_Seeker\_*. The *\_Seeker\_* and another ship, the *\_Bremerhaven\_*, were connected with the first large-scale colonial exodus from Earth, way back in the 28th century. Research quickly showed that the two ships carried thousands of settlers from a then oppressive Earth to a colony world that was dubbed Margolia. Deliberately keeping the location safe from Earth, after several flights back and forth to Earth the colonists were never heard from again and the colony, after nine thousand years, had never been located.

Was this cup really from the *\_Seeker\_*? How did the woman come by it? Were there more of these artifacts? Did someone in fact know where the *\_Seeker\_* might be or in fact where Margolia was?

What follows is a great mystery story, as Kolpath and Benedict follow many leads, interviewing people, investigating any clues that may lead them to the famed lost colony. The search takes them over much of the

galaxy, including to some surprising places and is not without considerable personal danger to the two of them as it becomes clear that they have enemies, people who want Kolpath and Benedict dead. Who wants to kill them? Why do they want to kill them? There are several suspects and there is obviously a leak somewhere, but where? Is one of their trusted friends and colleagues secretly plotting against them or is there a mole somewhere? Or both?

McDevitt did a good job with the mystery, the investigation of who was after them and where Margolia might be was riveting, and I really liked the sense of anticipation he built up about Margolia, of the many popular views held about the colony, all the popular speculation as to their ultimate fate, a blank slate that many scholars, writers, movie-producers, and even occultists and conspiracy theorists had imaginatively filled in. He did a wonderful job foreshadowing, hinting at how extraordinary a place might be, whether it was old Earth or non-human space, and then taking the reader there. The ending was fantastic as well, it did not disappoint.

For those of you who have read his Academy novels (I myself have read *Chindi* and *Omega* in that rather loosely connected series), this, the first book in the Alex Benedict series I have read (the third one published) has a decidedly different feel to it. It is also not in the same universe, so the mysteries of one setting remain with those particular novels. I would definitely read more in the series. The characters seem more distinct in this novel than the characters in the Academy novels, but then that may be in part because there are so many more characters in the Academy series

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### **Michael says**

This was the Nebula Award winner for 2006, so I thought I'd be in for a treat. The premise sounded pretty good: 9,000 years in the future, two antiquities/salvage experts find a relic from a lost colony ship which leads to big adventure and lots of danger.

There are a lot of cool ideas about future technology. I especially liked the avatars of famous historical persons, assembled from all available data on the net. The alien-relations the humans have with the "Mutes" is fairly interesting — Humans and Mutes find each other so repulsive they can't be in the same room without feeling physically revolted. Other than scraps of clever ideas, the writing is pretty pedestrian and the dialogue borders on dreadful ("It was you all along..."). The main characters have the depth and flexibility of balsa wood. I really had to struggle through the last 100 pages or so. The plot was essentially constructed as a mystery... and a pretty lame mystery at that, with little suspense or tension. The villain in the story is supposed to be a surprise, but the author clumsily tips his hand and you find yourself guessing far in advance of the final showdown.

My main beef with a lot of Science Fiction and Fantasy is the lack of attention given to world-building. A world is one of THE major characters in a SciFi/Fantasy book (Middle Earth...Hogwarts...Dune). The world of Rimway and the broader galaxy this book presents feels like it could be 30 to 50 years in the future, not 9,000 years in the future!

Can't really recommend this one.

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## **Tamahome says**

3.5 stars. Pretty good. Along the way I was wishing for more action, like in Engines of God, but the ending is really good. McDevitt has an above average amount of humanity in his books, and that kept me going.

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## **Ian says**

Seeker is the most original, interesting, and thoughtful of the Alex Benedict novels. Like the others, so long as you don't take it too seriously, you can have some fun reading it. I give this one four stars (instead of three like the others) because it has some really cool, original ideas woven in.

I'm not a big McDevitt fan, but I like the Alex Benedict novels. They're reasonably well crafted. Just think of this book as a little "roughage" for your mind.

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## **Joe says**

First of all, this is the most entertaining science fiction novel I've read in ten years, since I discovered the Hyperion Cantos. I have read quite a bit of scifi, and this is among the best of the best. I honestly do not understand why there are not more five star reviews.

Here's why I loved it. It takes place in ten thousand years but it ascertains that human beings will be largely the same. History gets lost the older you go back. Lessons from history are still the same. Mystery begets interest.

This is a mystery novel wrapped in scifi and it really works well equally in both genres. Which is an amazing accomplishment. It casually packs in so many ideas that it is brilliant how McDevitt decides what to emphasize for the purposes of plot. Which he does do exceedingly well. Hidden motivations of the past and present abound. I love Chase, she is just a great female detective. A totally believable one at that.

The worlds that McDevitt creates are all so believable because they are so easy to relate to. Even if a character is traveling through a world with the one other alien species we manage to contact in this future, with telepathic bug aliens we find hideous, there is still the ability for the author to tap into the experience of feeling alone in a foreign land. It is that sense of adventure that really propels this into a category all of its own.

But you should read this book because it is about the human love of discovery. Discovery isn't always flashy. Sometimes it is about hard work and researching your ass off. It is rewarding in the end when you discover something unique. That is what the book is about but there is plenty of action and mayhem to satisfy just about any hardcore fan of either archaeological thrillers or scifi or detective fiction. HIGHLY recommended if you're in the mood to take off to strange new worlds.

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## **Joe A says**

Another great McDevitt story. I would have rated it higher, except the narrator's voice started to get to me in the last 1/4 of the book.

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## **Lianne Pheno says**

<http://delivreenlivres.blogspot.fr/20...>

Ce troisième tome est toujours dans la même veine que les précédents et donc aussi sympa à lire et distrayant. Il a beau être le troisième tome, c'est le seul de la série qui a été traduit et il peut très bien être lu indépendamment des autres.

Le Seeker était l'un des deux vaisseaux qui ont amené les Margoliens vers leur colonie. A l'époque le monde n'était pas un bon endroit pour y vivre et toutes les autres tentatives de colonie précédentes avaient échoué. Mais ceux-ci ont quand même tenté le coup parce qu'ils ne pouvaient plus vivre dans la terre dystopique de l'époque. Ils avaient sous disant trouvé la première planète parfaite, celle qui accueillerait les humains sans les rejeter.

Mais les Margoliens ont disparu, en fait personne ne sait où ils sont partis. Et au fil des 9000 années suivantes et malgré la colonisation de centaines de planètes dans la zone, ils n'ont jamais été retrouvés, morts ou vifs.

Du coup quand Chase et Alex se trouvent en possession d'un bol aux armes du Seeker il ne peuvent pas résister, même si il y a des chances que ce bol n'ai jamais vu l'intérieur du vaisseaux lui-même ...

Nous sommes toujours dans une enquête archéologique dans le futur, nos héros qui sont vendeurs d'antiquités traquent les restes des civilisations perdues et tentent de résoudre les mystères de certaines.

Cette histoire fait tout de suite penser à l'Atlantis bien sûr, une civilisation en avance sur son temps, qui a totalement disparu depuis 9000 ans ... Mais encore une fois finalement ce qui amène Chase et Alex sur la voie ce n'est pas les restes d'il y a 9000 ans, non. Car évidemment ils ne sont pas les seuls à les avoir recherchés dans les milliers d'années qui se sont écoulées depuis leur disparition.

En fait ils font plus une enquête actuelle, pour savoir d'où provient le vase en question, quels ont été ses précédents propriétaire et en remontant le temps ainsi pour essayer de voir qui a bien pu trouver le Seeker et ne jamais en parler parce que si ça avait été le cas, ça aurait été la découverte du siècle ...

Pour s'aider ils utiliser des avatars. En fait un avatar est une personnalité créée par une AI avec l'aide de toutes les informations qui existent sur la personne en question dans le réseau. Et du coup Chase et Alex font le voyage avec Harry Williams, le fondateur de la colonie perdue. L'avatar ne sait bien entendu pas les secrets qui n'existent pas dans les informations mais ils sont quand même capable de créer une personnalité réelle de la personne et donc de voir si les informations qu'ils trouvent sont improbable ou peuvent vraiment s'être passé en fonction des réactions de l'avatar.

J'ai bien aimé aussi le fait que ça soit le premier tome de la série qui s'approche de notre temps. En effet, la colonie en question est censé avoir quitté la terre durant le troisième millénaire en 2600 environ, ce qui donne l'occasion de passer en revue ce qu'il s'est passé dans le monde avant et donc d'avoir de petits clin

d'œils à notre époque.

On nous raconte aussi que malgré toute la technologie, toute l'histoire humaine même après le départ vers les étoiles n'est qu'une succession de temps noirs où l'humanité se renferme sur elle-même et revient en arrière niveau mœurs et de temps d'évolution et d'exploration où la liberté redevient primordiale. Comme quoi l'homme n'évolue jamais vraiment et retombe toujours dans ses vieux travers.

Et du coup c'était intéressant de voir Chase s'insurger sur le manque de liberté de l'époque où sont partis les colons, Le monde où vivent nos héros est en effet proche d'un utopie car tout semble être idéal, sans crime, sans manquement à la liberté ... Le contraste entre les deux est énorme.

Au final j'ai vraiment bien apprécié ma lecture. Je n'ai pas repéré de répétition par rapport aux tomes précédents, l'auteur n'a pas renouvelé l'erreur du tome précédent, ouf. Le rythme est bon, il n'y a pas de lenteur. C'est vrai que la série reste importante en infodump mais c'est logique vu le sujet, il y a plein de choses à expliquer et finalement l'auteur s'en sort bien en ne nous écrasant pas sous les informations. Du coup je n'ai pas trouvé de défaut à ce livre en particulier. Je sais que les gens n'ayant pas lu les tomes précédents trouvent que les personnages principaux manquent un peu de développement mais c'est logique vu que tout le premier tome est centré sur leur rencontre et leur background, et donc ici en effet on n'en parle pas du tout.

Mais en dehors de ça ce tome peut très bien se lire indépendamment des autres. Il n'y a quasiment pas de référence aux tomes précédents, et même les personnages secondaires sont différents ce qui fait que rien ne gêne sa lecture.

Une bonne lecture donc, l'auteur a su se renouveler sans réitérer les erreurs des tomes précédents. Une histoire distrayante et fun qui a su me divertir.

16.5/20

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## Melanie says

I listened to the audio book, don't do that. The woman who reads this is terrible. There is no drama in her voice. She differentiates the different women characters by making them more or less breathy. That's just too much for me to stand.

I cannot believe this is a Nebula Award winner. At first the plot was fairly interesting, although there is a ton of info-dumping going on. But it kept going long past when it should and the ending was unfulfilling. Plus there is bad science.

I don't have the patience to discuss everything so I'm just going to talk about the science.

1) The alien race, the "mutes" are telepathic. Okay, I can live with that. But on more than one occasion the book mentions that they are probably moving toward a hive mind and that humans will probably evolve to become telepaths. Really? What biological forces would do that? Where is the selection pressure for either a hive mind in the mutes or telepathy in the humans? Since humans have spread among at least dozens of star systems, they must number in the trillions. Are they *\*all\** going to "evolve" into telepaths? This demonstrates such a basic lack of understanding of evolution and biology that I just can't get past it.

2) The two planets of the Margolians both underwent extreme climatic change (to put it mildly) around nine thousand years ago that must have resulted in mass extinctions. One planet was thrown into a highly elliptical orbit that gave it very short, extremely hot summers and absolutely frigid winters. (As if it is even the elliptical nature of Earth that even causes the seasons!) The other planet was ripped from its sun and brought into a very close, tidally-locked orbit of a brown dwarf. And 9,000 years later they both had apparently stable ecosystems with large animals and dense forests. That's not 9 million years, it's 9 thousand. Ugh!

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### Mike says

It was ok but nothing in this book really needs to be scifi, it could be set in any time from the past to now. Just a detective story that happens to occur 10,000+ years in the future (although there is little that seems much different from now besides instantaneous FTL travel). Surprised to find out this was an award winner. Some of his other books are much better. **2 Brown Dwarf Stars**

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