



## Excession

By *Iain M. Banks*

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### **Excession** By Iain M. Banks

Iain M. Banks is a true original, an author whose brilliant speculative fiction has transported us into worlds of unbounded imagination and inimitable revelatory power. Now he takes us on the ultimate trip: to the edge of possibility and to the heart of a cosmic puzzle....

Diplomat Byr Genar-Hofoen has been selected by the Culture to undertake a delicate and dangerous mission. The Department of Special Circumstances--the Culture's espionage and dirty tricks section--has sent him off to investigate a 2,500-year-old mystery: the sudden disappearance of a star fifty times older than the universe itself. But in seeking the secret of the lost sun, Byr risks losing himself.

There is only one way to break the silence of millennia: steal the soul of the long-dead starship captain who first encountered the star, and convince her to be reborn. And in accepting this mission, Byr will be swept into a vast conspiracy that could lead the universe into an age of peace...or to the brink of annihilation.

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

It's not easy to disturb a mega-utopia as vast as the one Iain M. Banks has created in his popular Culture series, where life is devoted to fun and ultra-high-tech is de rigueur. But more than two millennia ago the appearance--and disappearance--of a star older than the universe caused quite a stir. Now the mystery is back, and the key to solving it lies in the mind of the person who witnessed the first disturbance 2,500 years ago. But she's dead, and getting her to cooperate may not be altogether easy.

#### From Kirkus Reviews

From versatile Scottish writer Banks, another sf yarn about the tolerant, diverse, far-future Culture (The Player of Games, 1989, etc.). The Culture is subtly controlled by prodigiously intelligent artificial Minds, who, Banks intimates, spend most of their spare time navel-gazing. Here, a huge, enigmatic object referred to as the Excession appears in space and interacts with the Culture's energy grid in ways previously considered impossible. Diplomat Byr Genar-Hofoen of the Department of Special Circumstances is sent to investigate--but, sidetracked by beautiful, talented, spoiled-brat operative Ulver Seich and by old flame Dajeil Gelian, it will be a long time before he draws near the object. Meanwhile, certain Minds occupying a vast array of self-controlled spaceships suspect that still other Minds are involved in a conspiracy--but to what end? With the Culture thus distracted by the Excession, the cruel, dangerously expansionist alien Affront seize the opportunity to hijack a Culture battle fleet and start a war that they only gradually realize they've been suckered into and can't possibly win. Brilliantly inventive and amusing--whole sections read like strings of knowing jokes--but a mess: Chattering spaceships with splendid if confusing names (e.g., Not Invented Here and Shoot Them Later) don't compensate for the absence of real characters. -- *Copyright ©1996, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

#### Review

"Banks is a phenomenon...wildly successful, fearlessly creative."

--William Gibson

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##### Shannon Silva:

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