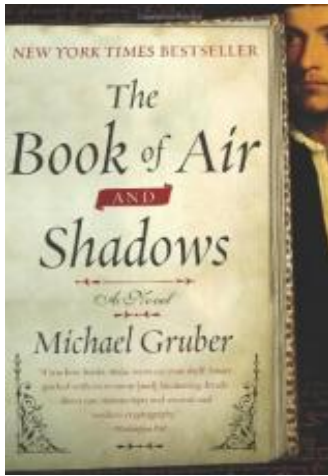


The Book of Air and Shadows

by Michael Gruber



About the Book

Jake Mishkin is an intellectual property lawyer with a fabulously wealthy ex-wife, a brother who's a convict turned Jesuit priest, and a weakness for beautiful women. Albert Crosetti is an aspiring film-maker with a weakness for one woman in particular. Together, as they both search for a lost treasure, they form one of the more unlikely teams in recent memory. But **The Book of Air and Shadows** is so much more than a riveting novel of suspense. Michael Gruber has been called "masterful" (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*), "Superior" (*Seattle Times*) and *The Washington Post* says that Michael's books are "miracles of intelligent fiction . . . among the essential novels of recent years." In this book, Gruber creates an utterly believable, historically accurate portrait of William Shakespeare, as fully realized a character as the contemporary Jake Mishkin and Albert Crosetti.

Discussion Guide

1. What is your view of Jake Mishkin's character? Do his personality and profession aid in the search or are they more of a hindrance? Do his flaws make him more likeable?
2. Albert Crosetti's life is currently on hold when he becomes involved in the mystery. He's saving up to go to film school and living with his mother. Does his stasis make him more susceptible to Carolyn's deception?
3. The Bracegirdle letters create an incredible sense of time and place with richly textured language and thoughtful details. Discuss some of the most vivid images and their importance to the story and to your own experience reading it.
4. What parallels do you see between Jake and Albert? Between Albert and Bracegirdle?
5. How do religious affiliations play an important part in both the past and the modern-day storylines?

6. Comedy and tragedy are both evident in TBOAAS. How do they play off and heighten each other in the narrative?
7. There are numerous correlations between TBOAAS and Shakespeare's **The Tempest**. How many can you find? Harmony through balance is one of the key themes of **The Tempest**. Discuss how that theme is relevant to the various characters in TBOAAS.
8. Travel and moving beyond one's normal, everyday experience, both physically and psychologically, occur many times in the story. How do you think that affects each character's development?
9. Throughout recent history, there have been rumors about lost Shakespeare plays. What do you think would happen if a new Shakespeare play were discovered? Would the quality of the writing be as important as the fact that it was by Shakespeare?

Author Bio

Michael Gruber has a Ph.D. in marine sciences and began freelance writing while working in Washington D.C. as a policy analyst and speech writer for the Environmental Protection Agency. Since 1990, he has been a full-time writer. His novels include the *New York Times* bestseller THE BOOK OF AIR AND SHADOWS, THE FORGERY OF VENUS, NIGHT OF THE JAGUAR and VALLEY OF BONES. He is married, with three grown children and an extremely large dog, and he lives in Seattle.

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Publication Date: February 26, 2008

Genres: Fiction, Thriller

Paperback: 496 pages

Publisher: William Morrow Paperbacks

ISBN-10: 0061456578

ISBN-13: 9780061456572