

## Chasing Shakespeare

**RLK**

Dorrance Publishing

(386pp)

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*A journalist travels the world covering a range of events in the action-driven novel Chasing Shakespeare.*

While tracking a renowned author, a reporter uncovers corruption in RLK's suspenseful novel, *Chasing Shakespeare*.

For her next big story, Janice heads to a small town in search of an author whom other journalists have been unable to find. At the place she thought the author might be staying, she meets a senator's wife who is hiding from her abusive husband. The senator, she learns, is involved in corruption. After his case is made public, Janice is sent to a secret military base in the Middle East, where she is to provide firsthand reports of events related to the base.

The novel moves with speed between its different incidents, including an armed resistance movement organized by rebels in a fictional African country, a feud between nations, and an investigation into the disappearance of a Seneca tribe during the American Revolution. These unrelated threads result in many narrative surprises, including a blast that kills numerous soldiers in the Middle East, and a fatal clash that leaves many wounded and dead. Later, Janice's interview with a criminal reveals a concealed base for a powerful drug cartel; she also speaks with a survivor of human trafficking.

Cliffhanger chapter endings increase the sense of suspense, as when Janice is stopped by the FBI after leaving the senator's wife; with news about the death and the planned burial location of a close friend; and with Janice's notification of interview requests from former presidents. Janice is constructed most in terms of these experiences and not far beyond them, though the book also incorporates evidence of her romantic relationships and hints of her past. The book's secondary characters back her up well, including Randy, her loyal cameraman; and Frank and Leone, whom Janice meets while seeking the author, and with whom she develops a family-like bond, even coming to view Frank's daughter as a sister.

Still, the novel rushes through its many events with such speed that emotional connections to its characters and situations are impeded. Details that are essential to understanding the sped-through events are handled in a too-casual manner, as well, so that significant information is often buried and obscured. The book evades thorough narrative development in the service of excitement, and its many disparate events are not made to tie together beyond Janice's experiences of them.

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EDITH WAIRIMU (August 10, 2021)

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