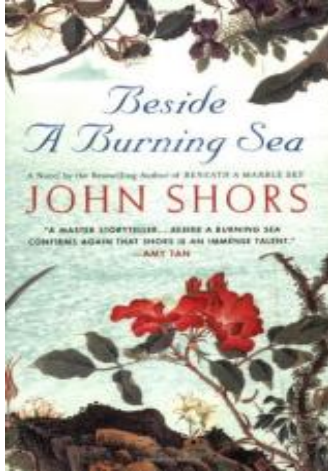


Beside a Burning Sea

by John Shors



About the Book

From the author of **Beneath a Marble Sky** comes an inspiring new novel of a man and a woman from different worlds whose love is put to the ultimate test as they struggle to survive an extraordinary set of circumstances.

One moment, the World War II hospital ship *Benevolence* is patrolling the South Pacific on a mission of mercy—to save wounded American soldiers. The next, *Benevolence* is split in two by a torpedo, killing almost everyone on board. A small band of survivors, including an injured Japanese soldier and a young American nurse whom he saves from drowning, makes it to the deserted shore of a nearby island.

Akira has suffered five years of bloodshed and horror fighting for the Japanese empire. Now, surrounded by enemies he is supposed to hate, he instead finds solace in their company—and rediscovers his love of poetry. While sharing the mystery and beauty of this passion with Annie, the captivating but tormented woman he rescued, Akira grapples with the pain of his past while helping Annie uncover the promise of her future. Meanwhile, the remaining castaways endure a world not of their making—a world as barbaric as it is beautiful, as hateful as it is loving.

With the blend of epic storytelling and emotional intensity that distinguishes him as a unique talent, John Shors reveals a powerful story of redemption focusing on unlikely lovers, heroes and villains, and war-torn countries—all, in their own ways, fighting to survive.

Discussion Guide

1. Discuss the significance of the title **Beside a Burning Sea**. Additionally, the original title was **The Poet Makers**. Which title do you prefer? Why?

2. Did **Beside a Burning Sea** provide you with a better understanding of World War II? If so, how?
3. Would you consider **Beside a Burning Sea** an antiwar novel?
4. Who was your favorite character and why?
5. Are you interested in learning more about haikus?
6. Is this a novel that would lend itself well to the silver screen? If so, who would you imagine playing the various characters?
7. Are you more interested in reading a novel set somewhere you haven't been, or would you prefer a locale that you're familiar with?
8. What do you think was the biggest challenge that John Shors faced when writing **Beside a Burning Sea**?
9. Did you connect more with Annie or Isabelle? Why?
10. Of the three main relationships in the novel (Annie and Akira, Isabelle and Joshua, Ratu and Jake), which did you most enjoy? For what reasons?
11. How effective was the character Roger as a villain?
12. What was your favorite scene within **Beside a Burning Sea**?

Author Bio

John Shors is the internationally bestselling author of 10 novels, which have been translated into nearly 30 languages. In addition to *The Demon Seekers* trilogy, he's written BENEATH A MARBLE SKY, BESIDE A BURNING SEA, DRAGON HOUSE, THE WISHING TREES, CROSS CURRENTS, TEMPLE OF A THOUSAND FACES and UNBOUND. He has won multiple awards for his writing, and several of his novels have been optioned by Hollywood.

In an unprecedented effort to connect with readers, John has spoken (mostly via speakerphone) with more than 3,000 book clubs on six continents. He also leads occasional literary tours to the settings of his novels through his travel company, John Shors Travel.

Boulder, Colorado, is home to John and his family. In his free time, he enjoys traveling the world, reading and fishing.

Critical Praise

"A master storyteller?Shors weaves psychological intrigue by looking at his characters? competing desires: love, revenge, and meaning. Both lyrical and deeply imaginative, **Beside a Burning Sea** confirms again that Shors is an immense talent."

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