



# Moonglow: A Novel

*Michael Chabon*

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## **Moonglow: A Novel** Michael Chabon

Following on the heels of his *New York Times*-bestselling novel *Telegraph Avenue*, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Michael Chabon delivers another literary masterpiece: a novel of truth and lies, family legends, and existential adventure—and the forces that work to destroy us.

In 1989, fresh from the publication of his first novel, *The Mysteries of Pittsburgh*, Michael Chabon traveled to his mother's home in Oakland, California, to visit his terminally ill grandfather. Tongue loosened by powerful painkillers, memory stirred by the imminence of death, Chabon's grandfather shared recollections and told stories the younger man had never heard before, uncovering bits and pieces of a history long buried and forgotten. That dreamlike week of revelations forms the basis of the novel *Moonglow*, the latest feat of legerdemain in the ongoing magic act that is the art of Michael Chabon.

*Moonglow* unfolds as the deathbed confession, made to his grandson, of a man the narrator refers to only as "my grandfather." It is a tale of madness, of war and adventure, of sex and desire and ordinary love, of existential doubt and model rocketry, of the shining aspirations and demonic underpinnings of American technological accomplishment at mid-century and, above all, of the destructive impact—and the creative power—of the keeping of secrets and the telling of lies. A gripping, poignant, tragicomic, scrupulously researched and wholly imaginary transcript of a life that spanned the dark heart of the twentieth century, *Moonglow* is also a tour de force of speculative history in which Chabon attempts to reconstruct the mysterious origins and fate of Chabon Scientific, Co., an authentic mail-order novelty company whose ads for scale models of human skeletons, combustion engines and space rockets were once a fixture in the back pages of *Esquire*, *Popular Mechanics* and *Boy's Life*. Along the way Chabon devises and reveals, in bits and pieces whose hallucinatory intensity is matched only by their comic vigor and the radiant moonglow of his prose, a secret history of his own imagination.

From the Jewish slums of prewar South Philadelphia to the invasion of Germany, from a Florida retirement village to the penal utopia of New York's Wallkill Prison, from the heyday of the space program to the twilight of "the American Century," *Moonglow* collapses an era into a single life and a lifetime into a single week. A lie that tells the truth, a work of fictional non-fiction, an autobiography wrapped in a novel disguised as a memoir, *Moonglow* is Chabon at his most daring, his most moving, his most Chabonesque.

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