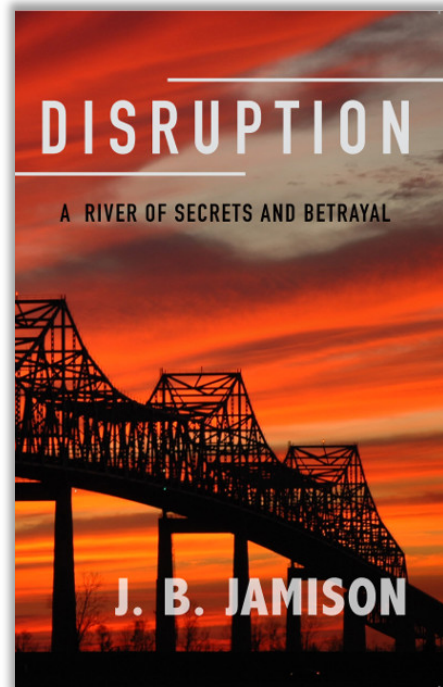


Disruption

By J. B. Jamison

Discussion Questions



NOTE: This material will include information about the story. We recommend using this material after you have completed reading *Disruption*.

We recommend first discussing the questions presented and then looking at the following pages where you will find J. B.'s response to each question.

More about *Disruption* and J. B. Jamison at:

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Discussion Questions for Disruption, by J. B. Jamison.

A few readers have expressed concern about the scene in the first chapter with the visitors from the ski boat. What was your reaction to that four-line scene? Why do you think the author included that scene in the story?

Other than the four lines in the first chapter, is there a specific scene in *Disruption* that stands out in your mind? What is that scene and why is it memorable for you?

After reading *Disruption*, are there characters that stick in your mind? Which characters? What about those characters is memorable to you?

What are your thoughts about the group with Grandpa and Ronnie? Do you believe the existence of a group like that is possible? If so, is the existence of a group like that a good thing, or a bad thing?

What are your thoughts about the vulnerabilities described in *Disruption*: the access to the barges tied-up along the river, the possibility of hijacking a boat, etc? Do you think these are real risks? If so, what could or should be done about them?

Emily Graham is a female character created by a male writer. What thoughts do you have about how Emily is presented in *Disruption*?

J. B. readily admits that he does not give the reader much description of the characters in his stories. Was this an issue for you as you read *Disruption*? Did the lack of physical descriptions or other specific character details interfere with your experience in the story?

What are your thoughts about the ending of *Disruption*?

What other thoughts do you have about the story, the characters and the overall reading experience of *Disruption*? How likely are you to want to read another Emily Graham adventure?

J. B.'s Responses to the Discussion Questions for Disruption:

A few readers have expressed concern about the scene in the first chapter with the visitors from the ski boat. What was your reaction to that four-line scene? Why do you think the author included that scene in the story?

I did spend some time debating whether to include these four lines in the final version of Disruption because I thought some people might question them. I will explain why I kept them there. There are two important things to remember. First, this scene was a true story. I heard it multiple times growing up around towboaters. Second, it is a "flashback" scene, describing how things used to be many years ago, back when things were looked at differently.

The reason that scene is in the story is that I believed it was the most powerful piece that would help readers understand the mind of Captain Charlie Graff. He was burned-out. He was angry. He was fed-up with it all and was ready for his retirement. While he loved his boat and his career, it was also the thing he hated the most. It had brought him joy, and it had made him suffer. The scene was one that he would never forget, and one of those that defined him as Captain. For me to put Charlie Graff in that pilothouse, I felt I had to put all of him there. While I understand how some may disagree, I still believe that was the best decision.

Other than the four lines in the first chapter, is there a specific scene in Disruption that stands out in your mind? What is that scene and why is it memorable for you?

I guess I have a few scenes I'm partial too. One is watching Joey Santiago drive down that dark highway trying to figure out what all those lights are in front of him. That one makes me smile. I like the scene of Bear and Dennis standing on the side of the boat passing Rock Springs. All of the bad things going on and Bear is thinking about ice cream. I like Bear. I like watching old Smitty come around the corner holding that gun in his shaky hand, in a way redeeming himself for all of his past sins. I like that scene when Emily enters the ER room to see the badly burned girl and immediately thinks of an over-done S'more. It makes me wonder what else Emily is going to come up with someday. I like the scene at the Casino restaurant when Chamber shows up with Reyes. Anytime someone can put Emily back on her heels is good for me. And I guess the showdown with Dr. Challenger in the lock is memorable, primarily because I didn't see it coming and had a really long argument with Emily about it.

After reading Disruption, are there characters that stick in your mind? Which characters? What about those characters is memorable to you?

There are several characters I kind of like, but there are two that I probably enjoyed the most. I liked Bear, and his honesty, just doing what he thought he should do for a friend. But if I had to pick a favorite it would have to be poor Joey Santiago.

What are your thoughts about the group with Grandpa and Ronnie? Do you believe the existence of a group like that is possible? If so, is the existence of a group like that a good thing, or a bad thing?

I have never been one of those conspiracy theory guys, but there is a place in my mind where I believe Grandpa's group does exist. Or, I would like to believe it.

What are your thoughts about the vulnerabilities described in Disruption: the access to the barges tied-up along the river, the possibility of hijacking a boat, etc? Do you think these are real risks? If so, what could or should be done about them?

As I've said elsewhere, after initially laughing at the idea of the book and calling it foolish, my dad finally admitted that it was very possible and he just hadn't wanted to think about while he was still on the boats. Real risks? If someone has the time and the funds, most anything like this is possible. Part of my reason for writing was to raise awareness and perhaps spark some discussion about how to reduce the risks. I will also add that modern boats do have systems in place to notify others if something like a hijacking occurs. But as in the story, what happens if sounding the alarm creates even more risks? What then?

Emily Graham is a female character created by a male writer. What thoughts do you have about how Emily is presented in Disruption?

I did not consciously think about any of my characters' gender and make any adjustments for that. In fact, I did not know the FBI Agent was going to be female until she appeared in that meeting in Chapter 14. It was a surprise to me. I am usually introduced to my characters the same way my readers are, and then I just watch, listen, and write what is going on.

J. B. readily admits that he does not give the reader much description of the characters in his stories. Was this an issue for you as you read Disruption? Did the lack of physical descriptions or other details interfere with your experience in the story?

My goal is for you to understand my characters as they live through the story we are sharing. I believe you can add the other things, like hair color, height, and weight, clothing. I will provide that if I think it will help you understand something really important. But overall, I believe that if I help you understand the characters, your imagination will do a much better job of showing them to you. If I can get your imagination working like that, you'll have a much better time in the story. Overall, my goal in my writing is to stay out of the way of the story. If I do it well, you won't even remember that I'm there.

What are your thoughts about the ending of Disruption?

Up until Emily got frustrated, I really thought the story was going to end up near Keokuk, Iowa, on the big curve in the river near Nauvoo, Illinois. And, it was going to involve some big “Bang”, just like most other stories like this involve. So much for my planning. As Emily started confronting Dr. Challenger, I actually stopped writing, sat back in my chair and said, “What the heck is she doing now?” I even tried to convince her to just shut up and let me write the story. Sometimes I think I would have liked my ending better, but you know Emily.

What other thoughts do you have about the story, the characters and the overall reading experience of Disruption? How likely are you to want to read another Emily Graham adventure?

Even before Emily Graham had walked out of that first meeting to answer her phone in Chapter 14, I knew I would be writing about her again. As I finished the second Emily Graham book, Distraction, she was already dropping hints to me about what she was going to be up to next. While you have a choice about reading them, it appears I have no choice about writing them. But, I hope you do keep reading...Distraction!