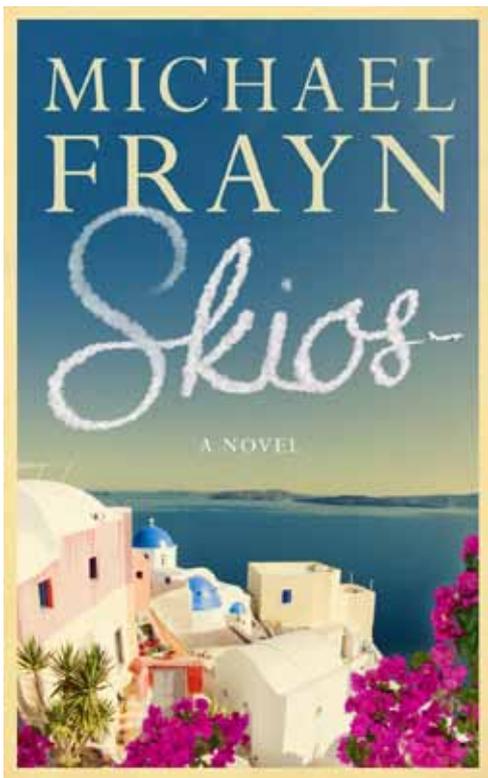


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## Reader's Guide



### Other novels by Michael Frayn

*Spies* (2002)

*Headlong* (1999)

*Now You Know* (1993)

*A Landing on the Sun* (1991)

*The Trick of It* (1989)

*Sweet Dreams* (1973)

*A Very Private Life* (1968)

*Towards the End of the Morning* (1967)

*The Russian Interpreter* (1966)

*The Tin Men* (1965)

# Skios

## Michael Frayn

Faber and Faber

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## About the author

Michael Frayn was born in London in 1933 and began his career as a journalist on *The Guardian* and *The Observer*. His novels include *Towards the End of the Morning*, *The Trick of It*, *A Landing on the Sun* and *Headlong* which was shortlisted for the 1999 Booker Prize. His plays range from *Noises Off* to *Copenhagen*. He has translated a number of works, mostly from the Russian. Michael Frayn lives in Surrey.

## Skios

On the Greek island of Skios, the Fred Toppler Foundation's annual lecture is to be given by Dr Norman Wilfred, the world-famous authority on the scientific organisation of science. He turns out to be surprisingly young and charming and the Foundation's guests are soon eating out of his hand. Meanwhile, in a remote village at the other end of the island, is a balding old gent called Dr Norman Wilfred, who has lost his whereabouts, his luggage, his temper and increasingly all normal sense of reality...

## Discussion points

Michael Frayn describes *Skios* as 'an experiment to see you if you can write a farce as a novel without the communal response that helps farce to work in the theatre'. Do you think he is successful?

In what ways are comedy and philosophy intertwined in *Skios*?

Farce usually relies on skilfully exploited situation and less on character, but *Skios* has been praised for comedic force that the characters bring to the novel. Most of the characters are described by their physical attributes: does this give the reader a sufficiently three-dimensional view of the key protagonists?

How successfully does Michael Frayn use technology, such as mobile phones, to maintain the farce?

'Prior to the culminating chaos, the Toppler Foundation's guests have been downing flutes of champagne. *Skios* leaves you floating with so much euphoria, you feel you have, too.' Peter Kemp, *The Times*. Did *Skios* leave you feeling the same?

## Themed reading

Kingsley Amis *Lucky Jim*  
David Lodge *Small World*  
PG Wodehouse *The Blandings Stories*

## Useful links

[Publisher's website](http://www.faber.co.uk)

<http://www.faber.co.uk>

[The Guardian interview](http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2012/apr/29/michael-frayn-skios-interview)

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