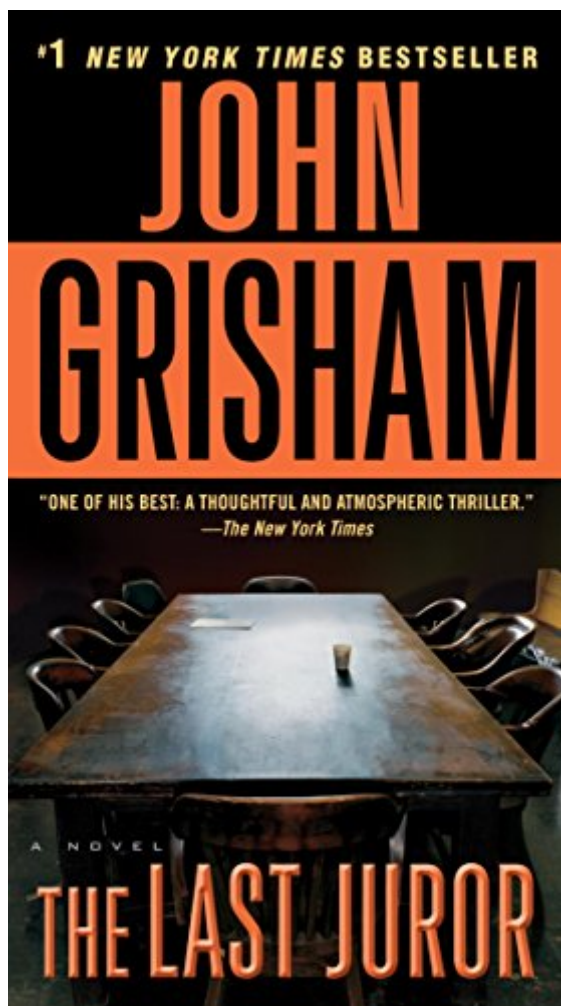


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The Last Juror: A Novel



Synopsis

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLERIn 1970, Willie Traynor comes to Clanton, Mississippi, in a Triumph Spitfire and a fog of vague ambitions. Within a year, the twenty-three-year-old finds himself the owner of Ford County's only newspaper, famous for its well-crafted obituaries. While the rest of America is in the grips of turmoil, Clanton lives on the edge of another age "until the brutal murder of a young mother rocks the town and thrusts Willie into the center of a storm. Daring to report the true horrors of the crime, Willie makes as many friends as enemies in Clanton, and over the next decade he sometimes wonders how he got there in the first place. But he can never escape the crime that shattered his innocence or the criminal whose evil left an indelible stain. Because as the ghosts of the South's past gather around Willie, as tension swirls around Clanton, men and women who served on a jury nine years ago are starting to die one by one "as a killer exacts the ultimate revenge.**BONUS:** This edition includes an excerpt from John Grisham's *The Litigators*.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Life in Clanton, Ford County, MS seen through the eyes of Willie Traynor, a young man who buys the 'Times' the local weekly newspaper. A town still divided by race facing up to the oncoming desegregation of schools - into this steps Willie from 'up north' like a breath of fresh air. Using a gruesome rape & murder, the ensuing trial and it's far reaching consequences as the main plot, Grisham, in this tale of 'The last Juror' paints a panorama of life in Clanton with fully fleshed characters who draw you into their lives. A great read.

Best Grisham book I've read in a while, but still lacks the bite of the first one or two. The main character, a journalist, is quite developed as a character - at least for this form of literature - but most of the others are caricatures. Pity, because the story was interesting and could have been better told by understanding more of the victim and of the accused - but all we learned was bits and pieces of the lives of not-at-all-involved onlookers and jurors. Even the accused's family, whom our journalist narrator blamed for all the ill doings, hardly made an appearance. Still, it was better than last time. When is the real John Grisham going to show up?

In *The Last Juror*, Grisham provides us with a decade long slice of life in Clanton Mississippi. Told through a narrative of the new owner of "the Times," Clanton's weekly newspaper, we are introduced to the town Clanton and Ford County. Through endearing new characters, Grisham gives us another dramatic story unfolding in the stew of racial prejudices, economic disparity, and corruption. The local folks are trying to live out otherwise simple lives while clinging to their patriotism and their individual and collective faith in God. But, the folks in Clanton keep buzzing with opinions and concern as their little community is influenced by ever evolving events and citizens. Though Grisham's skilled story telling, we get to know the citizens of this southern community and the colorful characters who will later interact with young lawyer Jake Brigance. Its folksy, its dramatic, and its enjoyable. We find new people to like and some to not like. Despite all its flaws, we root for Clanton and hope it survives itself. And, looking through the lens of that small community, Grisham allows us to examine our own thoughts on many subjects which permeate America. But, the introspection invited is far less demanding than what erupts in *A Time to Kill*. *The Last Juror* is further enjoyable proof that Grisham can write American life and when doing so, we feel subtle connections to another great American author: Mark Twain.

I have always enjoyed how John Grisham could tell a story. Before the end of the book you felt like you knew the characters personally. *The Last Juror* certainly felt like that. He placed you so firmly in

the mix that you felt like you grew up in Ford County and saw these people on a regular basis. Great read!

John Grisham is at the top of his game. I just sit and wait for him to write his next novel. In this one, you get to follow the storyline of Willie Traynor, newspaper editor, from his unfortunate beginnings to his final great success. The legal twists and turns we find him encounter along the way are mesmerizing. (I have two lawyers in my family.) I love the way Grisham likes to throw in his real feelings about the law as it's too often practiced, as with David Zinc, an attorney who's just had enough, in *The Litigators*. And finally, Grisham's being from Mississippi allows him to include in the novel his knowledge of the plight of the African-American people, as in my favorite, *A Time To Kill*. In fact, I think these three points that we see in so many of his novels, are what draws me to him. But in all of Grisham's novels, it's the constant suspense, the "watch the sun come up" mark of a superior story-teller. (I always read in bed.) There have been only two or three authors in my adult lifetime who have affected me this way. Jeanette

A Grisham novel that we missed when it was first published, but we are happy to have caught it now 12 years later! Interesting dynamics within a small Mississippi town in the 70's with respect to just about everything, including: crime; criminal justice; official corruption; organized crime; race relations racial tension; racial history; economics, poverty, "corporate invasion"; diet and health; mental illness; and a little sex... A story without a "traditional ending"...the momentum of the tide of the "revolution" is clear; the status quo is overthrown both from within and from without; but will what replaces that void "succeed", or even "survive"?

Once again, Grisham tells a story that rings true to its time and locale--his home state of Mississippi. As usual, he brings his characters to life with such vivid detail that the reader feels as if she knows them. Indeed, with my own southern roots, many seem familiar in one way or another. I am always sorry when Grisham's books come to an end and I don't rush through them as a result. I savor each turn of phrase and every word choice. But they inevitably do end and I feel fortunate that he is such a prolific writer because of that.

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