

One L: The Turbulent True Story of a First Year at Harvard Law School Study Guide

One L: The Turbulent True Story of a First Year at Harvard Law School by Scott Turow

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Plot Summary

One L, The Turbulent True Story of a First Year at Harvard Law School is the story of author Scott Turow's first year at Harvard Law School. Turow enters the prestigious educational institution in the fall of 1975 and endures challenges to his ego, his personal life and his ethics.

Each year 550 students begin at Harvard Law School and are divided into four sections. These students are designated as "One Ls" denoting their first-year status. The people in the sections attend the same classes as a group for the entire year, creating both friendships and educational alliances. Scott notes that most of the One Ls are younger than he, with just a sprinkling of women and black people.

Scott had been an instructor of Creative Writing in the English department at Stanford University in California for the past three years. Scott's fascination with the law prompts him to take the LSAT (Law School Admissions Test) in 1974 and his high scores and aptitude for the discipline make it clear that Scott has several options for law school. Scott chooses Harvard Law School for its reputation not only in the legal profession but also for its prominence in political and government channels.

Scott's wife, Annette, moves to Boston with Scott and finds a job teaching art at an elementary school. The couple's relationship is tested as Scott struggles with the grueling demands of study and class time. The couple has very little time together and looks forward to the breaks afforded by holidays for some rest and relaxation.

Scott plunges into his studies and finds that in spite of the exhausting schedule and study commitments, he is intellectually stimulated. Since there is little time for socializing, Scott's friends during his first year at Harvard become the men in his small study group. As the year progresses, Scott can see differences in the men's characters as the pressure to succeed and make exemplary exam grades increases.

As the year unfolds, Scott struggles with his own personal demons of jealousy and competitiveness and works hard to maintain a sense of personal ethics and integrity in a world where being number one is the preeminent goal.

The challenges of study and learning to love the law are both supported and complicated by an interesting array of professors whose varying styles teach Scott lessons not only in designated subject matters but also in the areas of human decency and diplomacy.

As the year ends, Scott hopes for changes for future One Ls that will include smaller classroom settings to improve student and faculty relationships; different formats for evaluating student performance; and making Law Review without regard to grades. Scott hopes for one thing overall and that is the removal of fear and humiliation from the law school experience, created by some professors who stringently believe in the Socratic method of instruction.



Registration: Meeting My Enemy

Registration: Meeting My Enemy Summary and Analysis

In September 1975, Scott Turow enters Harvard Law School, one of 550 first-year law students referred to as "One Ls." Each year the One Ls are divided into sections each containing 140 students each. The people in the sections attend the same classes as a group for the entire year creating both friendships and educational alliances. Scott notes that most of the One Ls are younger than he with just a sprinkling of women and black people. Scott learns from another One L that a professor named Perini is noted for being difficult while another one named Morris is more likable.

Harvard Law School is the largest law school in the United States and has a formidable reputation for producing lawyers of excellent skill and aptitude. Although Yale Law School has a lower student to teacher ratio, Harvard is still considered to be the best in the country.

Scott has some doubts about his commitment to the upcoming year because he is three or four years older than his peers but he has realized his interest in the law and wants to study with the best. Scott had been working as a professor of Creative Writing in the English department at Stanford University in California for the past three years. After taking the LSAT (Law School Admissions Test) in 1974 it becomes clear that Scott has several options for law school and decides on Harvard for its reputation.

Scott does have moments of wondering whether or not he should leave his teaching career but a friend advises Scott that by going to law school Scott will meet his enemy and that Scott will surely find his enemy at Harvard. Scott is not entirely sure what this will mean for him but does know that he wants to meet his enemy head on and hopes that his decision will be the right one for his life.

On the day of registration Scott also signs up for the married students group so that he and his wife, Annette, will have social contact with others experiencing the challenges of Harvard Law School. Scott also attends a meeting of a Legal Methods course where he meets a new friend, Terry Nazzario. The course instructor informs the students that they will be working on a fictional case throughout the course and advises the students to take periodic breaks from the demands of studying law over the coming year.

Scott checks the posted reading assignments for the first day of class the following Monday and joins his classmates as the Dean of the Law School welcomes and encourages the One Ls and advises them to use the time wisely. As Scott meets some of his new classmates he is struck by the stellar intellectuals with whom he will now be associating. Admittance into Harvard Law School is based on undergraduate grades and LSAT scores and most of the students come from other Ivy League schools.



Later that night Scott plunges into his first case assignment and finds that the four pages he thought would take a short time to read have taken him three hours to absorb. Scott is not quite sure what he has read and is baffled by the next part of the assignment to write a brief of the case facts. Scott's learns the next day in class that his attempt at writing the brief is not even close to the required format but discovers that none of his classmates has done any better. This is just the first time that Scott will feel inept during his first year at law school and he resigns himself to keeping a positive outlook and sense of humor.

Scott's section also meets Peter Geocaris, a Board of Student Advisors representative, who counsels the students on procedures, social interactions and class assignments. Peter also sheds some light on the professors, adding that Nicky Morris is young and well liked by most One Ls. Peter also warns the group about how hard Professor Perini can be on students and advises them to thoroughly prepare for classes.

In the opening section Turow sets up the parameters for his own and others' entrance into the prestigious Harvard Law School. Scott's friend has told him that law school is the best place to find your enemy and that Scott will surely find his at Harvard. By the end of the section Scott notes that "I was too ashamed to notice that I had already been lured onto enemy ground." (Registration: Meeting My Enemy, p. 21). During the course of the book Turow will learn to identify his enemy and will be surprised by the revelation.



September and October: Learning to Love the Law

September and October: Learning to Love the Law Summary and Analysis

On the first official day of classes Scott writes in his diary that this semester's classes will include Contracts, Civil Procedure, Criminal Law and Torts. These courses will be taught by full professors in the Socratic method, the style employed when instructing large groups. Students tend to fear this style because the professor will call on a student at random and grill him or her usually to the student's humiliation for lack of preparation or understanding of the material.

Despite its negative reputation most law professors defend the Socratic method because it is the best way to teach students not only law terminology but also how to think analytically. Scott is wary of the tactics of the Socratic method as he takes his assigned seat in his Criminal Law class. Seat assignments are also important because they are the only way that professors can identify students in the large group. Refusal to sit in assigned seats in preference to a seat in the back row is called backbenching.

The Criminal Law class is taught by Professor Mann whom Scott identifies immediately as an average instructor because Mann lectures and stares continually at the ceiling. Although relieved not to be called upon, Scott silently declares the class challenging because of the lack of animation and energy from the professor.

Scott joins Terry for lunch and a trip to the Lawbook Thrift Shop before their next class in Contracts. Scott learns the different types of books available to law students, including casebooks, hornbooks and supplementary study aids such as Gilbert Law Summaries. Casebooks are huge volumes containing various cases applicable to areas of legal study and hornbooks are summaries of cases written by legal scholars.

Terry tells Scott that he and his wife had owned a chain of electronics stores and sold them at a very handsome profit enabling Terry to attend law school. Terry purchases a hornbook co-authored by Rudolph Perini, the professor for the section's Contracts class.

The Contracts class begins with the appearance of Professor Perini whose expressionless demeanor both confuses and frightens the students. Perini explains that he is not an easy person and that he does not tolerate any student refraining from answering when called upon. Perini demands that any student who will not be able to attend class must inform Perini's secretary via written note at least two hours before the start of class.

Near the end of the class period the students are lulled into a false sense of security when Perini unexpectedly calls on one of the students to prove his mastery of the



Socratic method. Perini grills the student unmercifully and the rest of the class cowers and watches the clock for the end of the session. Ultimately the student prevails and his classmates gather around him with congratulations. Scott is dismayed by both Perini's demeanor as well as the atmosphere of panic in the room, which is unlike any classroom setting Scott has ever experienced.

Scott decides that he will need all the assistance he can find and buys hornbooks and other study aids to help him survive. Scott finds that his studies cover completely unfamiliar topics but also words that seem as if they are from a foreign language. What Scott finds most amazing, though, is the amount of time necessary to complete the assigned reading for each class. Simple one- or two-page documents can consume hours of time due to the necessity for legal reference material and the levels of analytic thinking involved.

In spite of the shocking adjustments to his life, Scott finds that he is in love with law school and feels like he is on the precipice of finding answers to questions which have haunted him for years.

Toward the end of the first week of classes the section meets Professor Zechman who teaches the Torts class. Zechman is a slight man with a formal demeanor and Scott finds Zechman's deliberate manner of evading answers to be very frustrating. Although Zechman's style is intended to make the students think for themselves and come to their own conclusions, Scott and the others students in the section reach high levels of anxiety and wish that the professor would take a stance on issues. One student in particular, Karen Sondergard, finds the class so frustrating that she breaks down in tears, a trait which will continue throughout the semester.

The students find welcome relief in their Civil Procedures professor, Nicky Morris. Morris is an intellectual and an athlete having graduated Harvard Law School at the age of twenty three. Morris is slightly older than his students and has a much more casual style than that of his colleagues.

Scott's diary entries indicate his enjoyment of law school to this point but he is overwhelmed by the amount of reading and class preparation demanded of him. Scott finds himself reading until the early hours each night and is unable to relax even on the weekends. Scott's only consolation is the commiseration of his classmates who feel the same way Scott does.

One day Scott is approached by a classmate named Aubrey Drake who asks Scott to join a study group. Study groups meet regularly to discuss course work and take on special importance during exam times. Scott joins the group and invites Terry who accepts the invitation. Three more men join the group: Kyle Schick, Stephen Litowitz and Sandy Stern. The study group will provide not only an educational purpose but also a social one as the men become friends in an environment with little or no free time to pursue friendships.



One day Scott volunteers a correct answer in Perini's class and meets with the awe and admiration of his classmates after surviving Perini's scrutiny. As the days go by though Scott realizes a silent hostility toward anyone willingly speaking up in class because of a spirit of aggressiveness or competitiveness in the other students. Each of the One Ls has had to be competitive in order to achieve his or her status but the mode of behavior now is to hide any competitive spirit from the others. Scott finds that although no one speaks outright about it he and the others are constantly being sized up and compared to each other silently.

Study and class time consume Scott's life and he spends very little time with Annette who tolerates Scott's continual thoughts and conversations about the law.

As the weeks progress Scott seeks out Peter Geocaris for advice and Peter constantly stresses the need for excellence, especially in those pursuing publication in the Harvard Law Review, a journal edited by second- and third-year law students. Being accepted for the Harvard Law Review is a highly coveted honor but one which requires an inordinate amount of dedicated time from the contributors. Although those participating in the journal are second- and third-year law students, the selection is based on first-year grades, a fact which instills silent anguish in the students.

The students also learn how to think and reason like lawyers; being able to suspend beliefs to believe anything and also to not believe anything. With the accompanying legal jargon the students are immersed in the beginning stages of the profession and Scott's wife accuses him of using legal tactics in their domestic disagreements.

At the beginning of October Scott notices that the upper class law students appear in professional dress, indicating the start of interviewing season. Scott learns that it is easiest for the students to find employment at big law firms in metropolitan areas but that nearly all deserving Harvard Law graduates will find suitable employment. Scott also learns the importance of first-year grades in employment selection criteria. Another area of enlightenment is the salaries expected by law school graduates. Fully-tenured professors teaching in the English Department at Stanford University probably make \$22,000 a year, the same salary expected by first-year Harvard Law School graduates.

Peter advises Scott not to be embarrassed about the salary he can expect upon graduation in comparison to other professions. The study of law, especially at Harvard Law School, is an arduous process and combined with the natural abilities of the students, entitles the graduates to higher salaries.

Scott spends most of his time studying and going to class, leaving only five or six hours to sleep each night. This unrelenting schedule is also experienced by Scott's classmates who do not all share Scott's continuing enthusiasm for the law. Scott is grateful for an October weekend away with Annette and another law school couple to a cabin in upstate New York. Scott and Annette are able to spend a little time together for the first time in the six weeks since law school began. Annette is working as an art teacher in an elementary school and has had her own adjustments to a new life in Boston so the relaxed weekend is a welcome respite for both Scott and Annette.

This is the longest chapter in the book and Turow breaks it up with several diary entries, a technique he utilizes throughout the book. Turow's style is to provide a diary entry followed by explanation or a retelling of an event. The diary entries are used primarily to indicate Turow's personal thoughts and emotions as he navigates his educational and private lives.

It is also interesting to note the differences in lifestyle issues from today to the time of the book's creation in 1975. For example, Turow writes about the three-piece suits worn by interviewing law students, a fashion statement which is considered out of date today. Probably the biggest difference is salaries. A stellar starting salary for first year Harvard Law School graduates is \$22,000 while the expectation today is likely to be ten times that amount.



October and November: Disgrace

October and November: Disgrace Summary and Analysis

By the middle of October Scott senses that law school seems to be entering a second phase, one with less competitiveness and more good will among classmates. The workload is not diminishing but Scott is unbowed and especially enjoys Zechman's class on Torts. Scott's other classes are not as enjoyable and Scott and his classmates continue to dread the possibility of exposure in Perini's class.

Scott's precarious mood is emphasized by the grey of the coming winter descending on Cambridge and Scott soon realizes that he is mentally and physically exhausted by the first six weeks of classes. Not surprisingly, Scott's classmates experience the same feelings yet everyone in Scott's section decide to stay with the program. Attendance at classes drops off and backbenching becomes more prevalent and students become more outspoken with their criticisms and even hiss at the professors' unpopular comments, an old Harvard tradition.

Student protests and criticisms are led by members of the Harvard Law Guild, a group of students dedicated to structural and educational improvements in the law school. The most outspoken member of the guild is Wade Strunk, a man from Alabama who is unrelenting in his criticism of the law school and its professors.

Scott's study group takes on more importance to him and the members renew their intensity although most feel that the group has grown to an unmanageable number. The group discusses the possibilities and eventually evicts Sandy Stern primarily because Sandy is already a member of another study group. Scott is dismayed by the group behavior and has his initial brush with the negative side of group dynamics.

Toward the end of the month, Scott and the other members of the study group take Perini and Zechman to lunch on separate occasions. To the amazement of the students, Perini is a congenial dining companion and shares his rich history of consulting with government officials. Lunch with Zechman is a little more reserved with the professor telling the students about the times he had appeared before the Supreme Court in Washington. Both the students and the professors seem to enjoy the lunches as a rare opportunity to bond outside the classroom.

November arrives and Scott and Annette have dark moods, both weary of law school life. Annette spends much of her time outside the classroom alone because Scott is preoccupied with study and there is no real social life among the law students and their spouses. Scott's guilt over the situation of his marriage is eclipsed only by his relentless drive to succeed at the law.



Scott finds one bright spot during the heavy November days when he attends a talk given by Ralph Nader, a Harvard Law School graduate and public figure known for speaking out on civil, political and environmental issues. Scott emerges from Nader's talk energized and poised for change in attitudes at law school and life in general.

One day Annette accompanies Scott to class to observe the professors and proceedings about which Scott so often speaks. During Perini's class, Perini humiliates a student who declares that he is not prepared to answer, an intolerable situation according to Perini. Perini threatens the student and demands a better performance at the next class session. Scott and his classmates are appalled by Perini's especially egregious behavior today and after considering several options for showing their displeasure, decide to draft a letter of complaint.

Scott seriously weighs the consequences of signing the letter against Perini but is reminded of Ralph Nader's advice to not hesitate when common sense makes an issue perfectly clear. The letter is a balance of praise for Perini's scholarly skills and a hope that Perini's cruel behavior be tempered. Scott is one of only 29 of the 140 students in the section to sign the letter, an act which will soon become known as "the Incident."

Scott is asked to join a hastily formed extension of the Harvard Law Guild called Section 100 whose purpose is to notify other One Ls of the dissent over Perini's behavior. During the next session of Perini's class, Perini does not call on the humiliated student and tries to appease the rest of the class with humor but many of the students will not be satisfied until Perini apologizes for this and many other incidents. The Section 100 group issues an invitation for those who are tired of intolerable classroom practices to meet the following week.

Scott is shocked to find out that news of "the Incident" is published in a national newspaper and feels responsible for what will surely be public humiliation for Perini. Word gets out that Perini is livid about the article and is holding all who signed the letter responsible for its publication. This unexpected turn of events sends Scott into a downward emotional spiral and he visits the on-campus psychiatrist's office only to receive an appointment in a couple weeks after the Thanksgiving holiday. Having some time off during the holiday provides Scott with some much needed rest and some perspective on his situation so he cancels the psychiatrist appointment.

Turow uses both symbolism and foreshadowing when describing the bleak arrival of November at Harvard Law School. Turow writes, "That gray cap which hovers over Cambridge at least six months a year had begun to appear. The squirrels were burrowing, storing nuts. Winter, cold and slushy and despised—the first this temporary Californian had been through in five years—was nearing," (October and November: Disgrace, p. 95). The gray cap is symbolic of the overcast skies, much of the time heavy with snow, which hangs over the Boston area for much of the fall and winter months.

This explanation of the gray scenario also foreshadows the upcoming bleak mood of Scott and his classmates as they trudge through endless hours of study and also

confront personal crises such as "the Incident" stemming from Perini's inappropriate and abusive behavior toward students.



December and January: Exams (First Act)

December and January: Exams (First Act) Summary and Analysis

As December begins the One Ls anticipate with dread the exams which will be given after the Christmas holiday. As a way to take away some of the anguish, the law school publishes red books which contain the text of the previous year's final exams. The students scramble to get copies of the coveted books in the hopes of gaining insight into the questions to be posed on this year's exams by the different professors. One of Scott's study group colleagues, Stephen, is obsessed with excellence and determines a plan for a detailed outline and supporting material for the group's study of the Criminal Law class material.

Once more the topic of achieving Law Review enters into daily discussions and students dig into their studies even deeper than before. As Christmas approaches a pall of anxiety covers the section with the increase of study group time and the purchase of additional hornbooks and other supplemental aides. Tensions increase in the study group as both Kyle and Terry announce that they cannot complete their commitments before the Christmas break.

Scott and Annette travel to Chicago to spend Christmas with their families and Scott is able to relax for a few days before immersing himself in his studies again. The day after New Year's, Scott and Annette return to Boston and Scott can feel the apprehension and anxiety about exams creeping in. Scott finds that he and his study group colleagues want to approach their exam studies differently so the study group sessions are minimized, leaving Scott to study on his own for 16 hours each day.

The night before the first big exam, Torts, Scott cannot sleep despite the help of some alcohol and a sleeping pill. Bleary and exhausted, Scott packs his thermos of coffee and his electric typewriter and heads to campus to find that others are in the same state of exhaustion. Fortunately Scott's adrenaline kicks in and he manages to complete the exam in the four-hour timeframe. Two days later, Scott does not find the same energy level for the Criminal exam and feels low about his performance.

Scott and Annette join a few other friends to celebrate the end of the first term of law school but instead of feeling jubilant Scott feels exhausted and disappointed in himself. A mental review indicates that Scott need not be quite so diligent in preparations for class because much of the material he had considered critical had not even been covered on the exams. Scott's classmates feel the same way and live in suspended disbelief that the scores of cursory exams will be the benchmarks of their education, not the full breadth of their gained knowledge.



This chapter represents a minor climax of the book and the point to which the events have been leading. The mental and physical exhaustion from studies and anxiety reach a critical point prior to the exams and the students relax a bit afterwards. In the aftermath, the students are able to evaluate their first term with more objectivity and become more seasoned legal thinkers and law students after this point.



February and March: Getting By

February and March: Getting By Summary and Analysis

As the second term begins Scott feels boredom instead of the apprehension of last term and vows to allow himself more personal time from now until the end of the school year. Scott does find one of the new courses, Law and Public Policy, interesting but does not enjoy the professor who employs some of Perini's fear tactics in the classroom.

Scott is further intrigued and challenged by the moot court competition named after a renowned Harvard Law professor, James Barr Ames. The competition is known on campus simply as "Ames." The moot court is essentially a lesson to help students understand what it is like to be a lawyer in a courtroom setting. Scott is partnered with Terry and they separately launch into their discovery and research. Scott is perplexed by Terry's obscure findings which are validated by Margo Sakarian, the duo's moot court mentor.

Terry's interest level in the Ames is lackluster and he bristles at Margo's admonitions that he improve. Ultimately Margo informs Terry that his arguments in the case are incredulous and the two enter into a verbal battle, leaving Margo in tears. Scott is appalled by Terry's behavior and maintains a distance until the time of the moot court.

In mid February the level of anxiety among the students rises again with the approaching announcement of exam grades from last term. These grades are important not only for class ranking and future employment but also to determine who will make Law Review. As the time comes closer, Scott finds that he is becoming more interested in the prestige of attaining Law Review, a topic he had passed off last term. It is generally understood that anyone who receives two Bs on the exams will probably not be Law Review contenders.

Scott receives an A-minus in Criminal Law and a B-plus in Torts, and although he will not make Law Review, Scott is elated to have come through such a challenging period with such good exam grades. Of Scott's friends, Stephen is the only one to receive the appropriate grades which will most likely earn him Law Review and the others congratulate Stephen while secretly bemoaning their own lack of accomplishment in this area. Even though most of Scott's group receives A's and B's, they are glum because of their competitive spirits and their almost effortless achievements up to this point in their lives.

While Scott and most of his group will not achieve Law Review, Scott is encouraged that, for the first time in the Review's history, a woman has been named president. Scott also considers it a positive sign that more women and minorities are becoming members of the Review at a school where women were not even admitted until 1950.



The area of law, especially at Harvard, had typically been a male bastion and Scott is optimistic that the changes occurring in the country are being reflected at the school.

Scott notices that some of the professors seem uncomfortable with the women in the classrooms and tone down their interrogations of them. Scott feels that this stems from the innate nature of law to be combative and men are not comfortable confronting or going to battle against a woman.

In the middle of March, Scott and Terry reach the end of their moot court competition when they deliver their individual arguments. The judges in the mock trial include a 2L BSA student, a local Boston attorney and a sitting Superior Court judge and Harvard professor. Terry's weak and disjointed arguments do not hold up in the proceedings and Terry loses his temper when grilled by the judges. Scott feels relatively confident of his subject matter and preparation and delivers his arguments capably.

Scott, Terry and their two opponents drink beer and chat while the judges deliberate and it is soon announced that Scott and Terry have won the verdict. Scott is approached by the judges with praise and his confidence soars with his newfound skills and validation.

As the term nears the mid-point, there is a definite division between those who had received good grades and those who did not. Those with good grades hope for Law Review and the rest seem depressed and resigned to their fate. There seems to be an overwhelming aura of despondency as if the students have given up after the first term. When Perini chooses eight people for summer jobs, they are the ones with the highest grades, a fact which further solidifies the importance of exam grades to success and achievement during and after law school.

Now the focus turns to the spring exams which will mark the end of the first year of law school but first the students enjoy a well-needed spring break.

It is interesting to note the people and issues which are part of Scott's experience which are now part of American history and popular culture. Two of the most notable people in America are figures during Scott's time at Harvard in the early 1970's: Ralph Nader and Archibald Cox. At the time, Ralph Nader is an outspoken politician and consumer activist well known for his humanitarian and environmental causes. Archibald Cox, a Harvard Law School graduate, serves as a special prosecutor in the Watergate Scandal. During Scott's time at Harvard, the issues of women's and minority rights are emerging on American political and societal fronts.



April and May: Exams (Last Act) and Epilogue

April and May: Exams (Last Act) and Epilogue Summary and Analysis

During spring break Scott and Annette take a trip to Cape Cod to enjoy a little free time before the pressure of final exams overtakes Scott. The next terms begin on April 6 and Scott realizes that he has to pay for the lenient schedule he kept during the first half of this term. Scott begins the rigorous schedule he maintained during the first term: five hours of sleep each night, some all-nighters and weekends crammed with study.

The class knows Nicky Morris' eight-hour Procedures exam will be especially trying and Scott and Stephen feel more confident of their grasp of the subject due to the outline they have already begun preparing. Other members of the class learn of the study outline and try to join the study group or at least make copies of the document. Terry and the others in the study group balk at both prospects because they do not want to give away any advantage to anyone who has not been originally included in the major part of the work.

Scott becomes particularly concerned with Stephen whose zeal for better grades has changed his personality. Stephen had spent time interviewing for summer jobs and realizes the critical importance of grades even for temporary positions. Stephen's quest for grades almost eliminates any social interaction with the study group except for the few times Stephen phones Scott for moral support.

At the end of April, the registrar's office releases course information so that the 1Ls and 2Ls may sign up for next year's courses. Still embroiled in the frenzy of studying for final exams, Scott is both panicked and pleased at the thought that he will be moving on to the next year of law school. As a 2L, Scott will have more free time and will be able to pursue other activities offered by the law school. Another appealing aspect about being an upperclassman is the flexibility to select the courses which are most appropriate to each individual's proposed area of law practice.

Scott seeks the advice of other students and faculty members and registers for the basic courses as well as Legal History, Evidence, Law and Philosophy, Antitrust and Labor Law. More importantly, Scott does research on the professors teaching the courses in order to avoid any more instances of humiliation and fear suffered in Perini's classrooms. Scott also signs up for classes with smaller enrollments in order to have more time with the professor.

One day Scott and the others are shocked when Professor Morris announces plans to alter his exam so that both individuals and those in study groups will be on a more level playing field. This change is in response to those individuals who feel they are



overpowered by the study groups who appear to have an unfair advantage in preparing for the final exam.

Unfortunately the reaction by the students is not what Professor Morris had intended and the students frantically attempt to join established study groups, thinking this is the method that Professor Morris endorses. Scott feels bad about the unintentional panic that his own study group has created among his fellow students and eventually the study group admits new members in order to prepare for the Procedures exam. Scott suggests giving photo copies of the outline to those who want it but the others in the study group adamantly refuse to cooperate, leaving Scott feeling estranged from his colleagues.

At last the last day of classes arrives and Scott is both pleased and pensive that he has survived the grueling first year of law school. Scott says goodbye to the friends he has made in the section and prepares for final exams which are to begin in just a few days. Scott emerges from four exams reasonably well and has the Memorial Day weekend to prepare for Perini's Contracts exam. As expected, Perini's exam is the most difficult of any, yet Scott perseveres and celebrates the conclusion of his first year at Harvard Law School.

In retrospect, Scott acknowledges that changes will come to Harvard to make the law school experience an even better one for future students. Scott hopes for smaller classes that will allow better faculty and student interactions; different formats for evaluating student performance; and making Law Review without regard to grades. Scott hopes for one thing overall and that is the removal of fear and humiliation from the law school experience created by some professors who stringently believe in the Socratic method of instruction.

In July, Scott receives his grades, a split between A's and B's, and is pleased with his performance. For the next few weeks Scott speaks to his classmates about their own grades and laments the fact that the zealous competitive spirit and feelings of jealousy are still alive in all of them, including Scott. Whether part of the personality or the process, Harvard Law School has introduced Scott to his enemy and Scott knows he will have to contend with this enemy his whole life.

Scott completes his year as a One L and emerges with more than an ability to memorize facts and case details. Scott has also gained an education in the study of human dynamics and emotional thresholds, also important to a practicing lawyer. The story has come full circle from the point where Scott's California friend had warned Scott that Scott would find his enemy at Harvard Law School. At the time Scott had not been completely clear on his friend's meaning but now, at the conclusion of an exceedingly trying year, Scott knows that his enemy is his own emotional state and sense of ethics, both of which have been tested during this grueling year.



Characters

Scott Turow

Scott Turow is a noted attorney and author of several novels related to the practice of law. In this book Scott serves as narrator and principal character. Turow is an instructor of Creative Writing in the English Department of Stanford University in California in the early 1970's when his love and fascination for the law prompts him to take the LSAT (Law School Admissions Test) in 1974. Scott's exemplary test score opens up many law school options all over the country but Scott chooses Harvard Law School for its pre-eminent reputation as being the finest law school in the U.S. Scott and his wife, Annette, move to Boston and Scott begins his first year at law school in the fall of 1975. The grueling workload pushes Scott physically and intellectually yet he maintains his love for the law. Scott finds friendships with the men in his class section and smaller study group and relates the dynamics of the relationships as the pressures and stress increase with the progression of the year. Scott vows to not give in to the pressures of personal achievement at the risk of losing integrity and struggles with his own style and code of ethics as he is further immersed in the study and practical aspects of the law profession, the company of the professors at Harvard Law School and his own colleagues. Scott emerges from his first year at law school with very admirable grades and his self-respect still intact.

Professor Rudolph Perini

Professor Rudolph Perini is the instructor for Scott's section's Contracts class. Perini's expressionless and unapproachable demeanor both confuses and frightens the students, a fact that seems to delight Perini. Perini explains at the onset that he is not an easy person and that he does not tolerate students being unprepared in his class. Perini is a staunch supporter of the Socratic method of instruction which involves random interrogation of students who are grilled mercilessly by Perini. Although the method is thought to be a cost-effective solution for teaching, the student humiliation and fear induced by the process is heightened by Perini's cold, calculating manner. Student attempts to connect with Perini are for the most part deflected but he does entertain lunches with some students on rare occasions. After one particularly humiliating classroom session, students in Scott's section draft a letter of complaint against Perini. When the letter is inadvertently published in a major newspaper, Perini is furious at the betrayal and steels himself to be even more intense in the classroom. Perini is an old-school professor with a self-righteous code in stark contrast to Nicky Morris, a younger, more compassionate professor with whom the students more closely identify and respect for his humane teaching style and code of ethics.



Annette Turow

Annette Turow is Scott Turow's wife. Annette has moved from California to Boston with Scott so that Scott may attend Harvard Law School. Due to Scott's grueling study schedule, Annette spends much time alone in the new city and takes care of managing the household. Although Annette has no active part in the law school experience per se, her presence supports Scott so that he may pursue his dream.

Terry Nazzario

Terry Nazzario is a friend of Scott's who comes from New Jersey. Terry has an aggressive East coast style personality which comes in conflict with many in the reserved environment of Harvard. Terry increasingly rejects other's opinions of him as well as inappropriate instructor behavior and ultimately veers off on his own to end the first year independently.

One Ls

One Ls are first-year law students at Harvard Law School.

Peter Geocarlis

Peter Geocarlis is the Board of Student Advisors representative assigned to Scott's section of classmates.

Board of Student Advisors (BSA)

The Board of Student Advisors is a group of second-year and third-year law students who mentor One Ls throughout the first year.

Professor Zechman

Professor Zechman teaches the Torts class to Scott's section. Zechman has returned to the Harvard Law School faculty after a period of teaching at a university in England.

Karen Sondergard

Karen Sondergard is a woman in Scott's section and is known for being emotional and easily frustrated by the pressures of law school.



Nicky Morris

Nicky Morris is the Civil Procedures professor for Scott's section. Morris is an intellectual and an athlete, having graduated Harvard Law School at the age of twenty-three. Morris is slightly older than his students and has a much more casual style than those of his colleagues.

Aubrey Drake

Aubrey Drake is a classmate of Scott's who invites Scott to join a study group during the first semester of the year.

Kyle Schick, Stephen Litowitz and Sandy Stern

Kyle, Stephen and Sandy join Aubrey, Terry and Scott to form a study group during the first semester of the year.

Wade Strunk

Wade Strunk is an Alabama man and member of the Harvard Law Guild and the member who is most unrelenting in his criticism of the law school and its professors.

Ralph Nader

Ralph Nader is a Harvard Law School graduate and public figure known for speaking out on civil, political and environmental issues.

Margo Sakarian

Margo Sakarian is the BSA representative assigned as moot court mentor to Scott and Terry as they prepare for their trial.



Objects/Places

Harvard Law School

Harvard Law School is on the northern side of the Harvard University campus in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Cambridge, Massachusetts

Cambridge, Massachusetts is a city in the Boston area and home to Harvard University.

LSAT

LSAT is an abbreviation for the Law School Admissions Test, a national admissions test for all prospective law students.

Case Report

A Case Report is a summary of facts leading up to a lawsuit; the legal issues raised; and a judge's comments regarding the case.

The Socratic Method

The Socratic Method is a popular style of teaching large groups and is especially popular in law schools for training in legal terminology and analytical thinking.

Lawbook Thrift Shop

The Lawbook Thrift Shop is located on the Harvard campus and is the site where students can buy new and used text books at reduced prices.

Casebooks

Casebooks are huge volumes containing various cases applicable to areas of legal study.

Hornbooks

Hornbooks are summaries of cases written by legal scholars.



Gilbert Law Summaries

Gilbert Law Summaries are well-known legal subject matter outlines and summaries used as supplemental study aids.

Harvard Law Review

The Harvard Law Review is a journal published by second- and third-year law students and is considered to be the most prestigious law review in the United States.

Harvard Law Guild

The Harvard Law Guild is a group of students dedicated to structural and educational improvements in the law school.

Section 100

Section 100 is an extension of the Harvard Law Guild formed to oppose intolerable classroom tactics and inexcusable behavior exhibited by professors.

Red Books

Red books are published each fall by the law school and contain the text of the previous year's final exams.



Themes

Integrity

Integrity is an important theme throughout the book as Scott watches the changing behavior of his professors and peers and struggles to hold on to his own code of ethics. Scott's fascination with the law turns into harsh reality when exposed to some of the questionable tactics and precedents presented. Scott is also bothered by the importance of nearly perfect exam grades as the measure of a person's worth as opposed to the overall value a student may offer in terms of ethics and life experiences. Scott's sense of fair play and ethical behavior is particularly challenged in some classroom settings, especially Perini's class where Perini's cruel and humiliating tactics instill fear and hatred in the students. As the book progresses Scott shares his observations of his peers' changing behavior as the reality of surviving law school turns them into jealous, driven competitors instead of friends and colleagues. The need to succeed is so great among the students in Scott's section that common decency is sometimes ignored or pushed aside in preference to winning. Scott finds this happening especially prior to the final exams in the spring when it becomes clear that Scott's study group has developed an outline which will greatly benefit the other students. None of his study group partners wish to share the study aids and Scott struggles with this unwillingness to help other people and reminds himself that he must never stop being a decent human being even if that means losing other things in the process.

Perseverance

As soon as Scott enters law school he is aware that his life will never be the same again. From the very first day the demanding workload and study schedule is unlike anything Scott has ever experienced in his academic career. However, in spite of unrelenting class assignments, abbreviated nights of sleep and little or no personal life, Scott perseveres in order to obtain his goal. Scott learns from upperclassmen that the first year of law school is the hardest thing Scott will ever attempt yet he pushes past the exhaustion and humiliation to keep moving forward. Fortunately, Scott has a devoted wife, Annette, who supports Scott and whose presence allows Scott to dedicate himself to his studies. Although the book is primarily Scott's story, Annette figures prominently too in that she must move to a strange city with her husband, establish her career in a new teaching position and run the household virtually single-handedly while Scott attends law school. This relationship is built on mutual respect and the achievement of goals, both personal and professional, and the fact that neither one gives up is the foundation for their success. Scott is also surrounded by high-achieving classmates whose dedication equals or exceeds Scott's perseverance and the book is threaded with stories of success and disappointment as a result of varying degrees of initiative.

Commitment to Excellence

Scott finds himself both attracted to and repelled by the pressure for excellence at Harvard Law School. Harvard Law School is revered as the best law school in the United States and those who graduate have an almost guaranteed life of privilege and success. It is understood that those who enroll and are admitted to the law school have excellent grades and credentials, a fact which levels the playing field among the One Ls for a short time. Each of the One Ls has reached or surpassed personal and professional goals and thrives on competition of some sort. It is this prior success that drives the students and also forces them to compare themselves and their grades to other people in the class. Scott rejects this practice at first but as the year progresses finds himself doing comparisons in order to gauge his success. While exam grades are the benchmarks to measure student success, Scott is also plagued by the lapse in character he sees in others and has to halt in himself. Scott's commitment to excellence certainly includes his study habits and exam grades but also his focus on maintaining his integrity and decency, qualities which are real measures of excellent character for Scott.

Style

Perspective

This nonfiction book is written in the first person narrative perspective. This means that the person telling the story is the author himself and he delivers his views and relates events according to his own perception of them. The author does not supply any insight into the motives, feelings or actions of any other people and can only relate instances about these people from his own point of view. When there are conversations detailed, the author can simply relate what the other person says, and although the author may guess at the other person's thoughts, he cannot share them with the reader. Since the book is a nonfiction account of a person's philosophy on different topics, there is little room for any other points of view. This relaying of personal thoughts is punctuated at times by the retelling of events or incidents to add some dimension to the book, and everything is still from the author's own experiences and perspective. While this technique can be viewed as limiting, the author is able to provide much detail on his own thoughts and emotions which would not otherwise be available to the reader and this is in complete alignment with the nature of the work.

Tone

The tone of the book is very informal and engaging, almost as if the reader is having a one-on-one meeting with the author. The language is informal and casual to define the author's personality and energy. There are a few slang usages of words but they are in context with the dialogue and appropriate for the work. The narrative is also very high energy with a sophisticated wit belying the author's own personal style of speaking and managing his interactions with his student colleagues and professors. Turow utilizes language and slang current with the early 1970s for additional authenticity and to enhance the reader's experience. While the piece is very high energy, there is an undercurrent of authenticity and sincerity throughout the book which makes the story believable. This is important because a non-fiction biography can be a dry retelling of notable points on a timeline but this book rushes in with enthusiasm and pulls in the reader who is anxious to share Turow's experience from the very first page. The book has the perfect mix of energy and excitement tempered with maturity and obligation to the topic and the reader, which makes it a very engaging piece.

Structure

The book is divided into six chapters and a very brief epilogue. These divisions are consistent with the calendar year of Scott's first year at Harvard Law School and the chapters are named by month and Scott's overall impression of each particular time period, for example, "October and November: Disgrace." During the first couple of chapters, Scott struggles to adapt to life in law school; the intensity increases as the



year progresses; and finally at the close of the school year, Scott has reached a philosophical state about his academic experience. The narrative is a blend of related activities with supporting journal entries to explain Scott's state of mind. A couple of the chapters are extremely long, as if to mirror Scott's personal experience of days and weeks of unrelenting pressures and ennui. This technique helps the reader to appreciate Scott's experience as the pages in those chapters seem to be never ending just as some of Scott's days must have seemed to him at the time. In contrast, the chapter containing the events surrounding first term exams is relatively short to denote the abrupt and final nature of the events which end the first term.

Quotes

"When I toured the law school in the summer, it had all looked so solid, so enduring, that I'd felt a majestic thrill to think I'd soon be allied with this and the time-ennobled traditions of the law. Now, getting off the bus, I felt mostly my nerves, which were lit all the way down to my knees," (Registration: Meeting My Enemy, p. 2).

"'Look,' he told me, 'if I was going to law school, I would be going because I wanted to meet my enemy. I think that's a good thing to do. And if I wanted to meet my enemy, I would go to Harvard, because I'd be surest of meeting him there,'" (Registration: Meeting My Enemy, p. 6).

"Despite student pain and protest, most law professors, including those who are liberal—even radical—on other issues in legal education, defend the Socratic method. They feel that Socratic instruction offers the best means of training students to speak in the law's unfamiliar language, and also of acquainting them with the layered, inquiring style of analysis which is a prominent part of thinking like a lawyer," (September and October: Learning to Love the Law, p. 26).

"'I expect you to be very well prepared, every day. I want to be absolutely clear on that. I have never heard the word 'pass.' I do not know what 'unprepared' means. Now and then, of course, there are personal problems—we all have them at times—which make full preparation impossible. If that is the case, then I want a written note to be handed to my secretary at least two hours before class. You can find her on the second floor of the Faculty Office Building in room two eighty-one,'" (September and October: Learning to Love the Law, p. 34).

"All your life you've been good in school. All your life it's been something you could count on. You know that it's a privilege to be here. You've studied hours on a case that is a half page long. You couldn't understand most of what you read at first, but you have turned the passage inside out, drawn diagrams, written briefs. You could not be more prepared. And when you get to class that demigod who knows all the answers finds another student to say things you never could have. Clearer statements, more precise. And worse—far worse—notions, concepts, whole constellations of ideas that never turned inside your head," (September and October: Learning to Love the Law, p. 39).

"But for all of that, I loved it. That has to be said. 'Learning to love the law' is a phrase which, with its undertone of coercion, is used ironically by first-year students to describe their education. But for me it fit. Harried, fearful, weary, I nonetheless never resisted that sensation of being taken, overwhelmed. The sense which brought me to law school, that a knowledge of the law would somehow amplify my understanding of the routines of daily life, was instantly fulfilled," (September and October: Learning to Love the Law, p. 43).



"Maybe it'll get easier soon. Last night we went to the orientation dinner of the Harvard Law School Community Association—the married students' group—and the topic of conversation all evening was how hard people work as 1Ls, especially in the beginning. The dean talked about it in the speech he gave, and so did the association secretary. It was the subject of dinner conversation as we ate our meal. 'That first week or so,' one man, a 2L, said, 'those were the longest days of my life.' A woman sitting at the table said, 'Amen.' Amen," (September and October: Learning to Love the Law, p. 50).

"To me as a 1L, the Harvard Law Review was an object of deepening mystery. I knew a little bit about it, but I could not understand why the words 'the Review' were such a constant, if suppressed, murmur around us. Professors on occasion mentioned 'the Review' in class, and there seemed to be an article about the Law Review in the law-school newspaper each week. Before I'd started law school, lawyer friends had teased me by saying they were sure I'd 'make the Review.' Now and then, even other 1Ls would mention the Law Review. By the end of September, the Law Review had begun to seem the centerpiece of that world of upper-year privilege in which 1Ls were not included," (September and October: Learning to Love the Law, p. 66).

"At home, Annette told me that I had started to 'lawyer' her when we quarreled, badgering and cross-examining her much as the professors did students in class. And it seemed to me there were other habits to be cautious of. It was a grimly literal, linear, step-by-step process of thought that we were learning. The kind of highly structured problem-solving method taught in each of Perini's classes, for instance—that business of sorting through details, then moving outward toward the broadest implications—was an immensely useful technical skill, but I feared it would calcify my approach to other subjects. And besides rigidity, there was a sort of mood to legal thinking which I found plainly unattractive," (September and October: Learning to Love the Law, p. 75).

"One of the clearest messages that emerged to me as a member of the first-year class, just watching and listening during interview season, was of the paramount importance of grades. During the first weeks of school, I had thought that our marks were used only to measure off the lofty types fit for Law Review. But as interviews progressed and upperclassmen talked, it became apparent to me and my classmates that grades were a kind of tag and weight fastened to you by the faculty which determined exactly how high in the legal world you were going to rise at graduation," (September and October: Learning to Love the Law, p. 80).

"'I'm worth it,' he said. 'I've gone to school for a long time, I've developed a skill, and people are willing to pay me for it. I'm not stealing from anybody. I'll work like hell for what I make. I probably like law enough to work like hell for a lot less than what they'll give me, but I'm gonna get it, and I don't mind. The truth is that I'm the kind of person who knows how to enjoy the things that you can do with a lot of money—and dammit, I'm gonna enjoy them,'" (September and October: Learning to Love the Law, p. 83).



"However, whatever their reasons, I know that people are sincere when they talk about how unhappy they are. I've heard more than one person describe the past month as the worst in his life. It's some sign of the crazy intensity of the experience that from my own perspective, I'd have to call it one of the best," (September and October: Learning to Love the Law, p. 87).

"Toward me Annette had maintained a generous good humor. She told me she considered this year a period when we were 'living on our savings,' the fund of love, regard, good feeling accumulated through five years of a good marriage. But despite her tolerance, I knew it was no fun. She was alone and tired, and also stuck with most of the housework," (September and October: Learning to Love the Law, p. 88).

"I asked David how he'd describe his state of mind during his first year of law school. 'Looking back,' he said solemnly, 'I think I was crazy.' 'I think I am too,' I said. 'Well, don't worry about it,' he answered, 'it always seems to pass, and around the law school, no one will ever notice. People there would all tell you the same thing.' David hoarsened his voice in imitation of an unknown elder and clapped me once soundly on the back. 'My boy,' he said, 'you're just learning to love the law,'" (September and October: Learning to Love the Law, p. 89).

"With the realization that I was not missing some clear solution to all of the problems, Zechman's class suddenly has begun to make sense. I now see him as a sort of jeweler of ideas. He uses his questions like a goldsmith's hammer, working the concepts down to an incredible fineness and shine," (October and November: Disgrace, p. 93).

"November arrives with drizzle and depression. Lord, but I feel bum. It seems as if I'm living in a tunnel. It's dark when I get up; it's dark when I go home. I keep moving straight ahead but there's no sign of light," (October and November: Disgrace, p. 120).

"The work cannot be done thoroughly or precisely. I'll have to give up briefing for the week and I'm not sure I can get through it all anyway. And I'm not sure how much I care. Nearly everybody feels almost as bad as me. Too much pressure and no sleep. Three hours. Four. A lot of all-nighters. And the air in the place almost seems to smell of the very effluvium of people's bad feelings about themselves and the rigors of what they're going through. Heavy times. The gray season is upon us," (October and November: Disgrace, p. 121).

"I am a Nader admirer. I take him for a zealot, but I also think he is a person of uncommon imagination, somebody who sees beyond the flak and baloney most of us buy in thinking about social institutions. The institutions Nader was going to speak about that evening were Harvard Law School and legal education in general. Nader is an HLS grad, but he is hardly an enamored alumnus. In a biography, he's quoted as describing



the law school as a place where students were 'taught the freedom to roam in their cages.' In my funk, I was eager to hear his criticisms. I was ready to believe that there was more causing my bleak feeling than my own neuroses," (October and November: Disgrace, p. 125).

"No doubt, some of us who've had our hard times during the first year of law school are carrying around a lot of delicate psychological china that's bound to be damaged somewhat with any abnormal shaking and strain. But I resist, in general, the suggestion that the many HLS students who sink into prolonged bouts of panic, anxiety, and despair should bear all the blame on their own," (October and November: Disgrace, p.).

"Final exams play on a law student's world like some weirdly orbiting moon. They are always in sight: but while they're at a distance, they serve merely to create the tensions which swell daily like tides—to read, to keep pace, to understand. As exams draw close, however, in December and May, their gravitational force starts to shake the whole place to pieces," (December and January: Exams (First Act), p. 150).

"I feel rotten. I feel wasted. I have finished my first term at the law," (December and January: Exams (First Act), p. 171).

"Before I came to law school, there were even times when I thought of myself as an intellectual," (February and March: Getting By, p. 176).

"Late in the year, when I described HLS to a friend who is a doctor he compared it to a hospital ward. He said that both were places where the inmates frequently found it hard to stay close with anyone. People were under too much tension, in extremity, often too busy saving themselves to think about preserving relationships," (February and March: Getting By, p. 201).

"The day after grades came out, we all spoke of nothing else. It was another of the times Annette had come with me to school, and when we got home she told me how offended she had been by the constant gossip about marks, the ceaseless comparisons. It seemed to her ugly and obsessive and adolescent. No doubt it was. But most of us—aside from the few with two A's—needed the reassurance of knowing how other had done, just to be certain that a B was not a sign of incompetence," (February and March: Getting By, p. 208).

"A lot of people will tell you,' Mike said, 'even a lot of professors, that grades are essentially for employers. The alumni give quite a bit of money to this law school, and most of them are members of the firms which interview here. They want to have some way of believing they're making meaningful distinctions between applicants. They see somebody for what—a twenty-minute interview? They know they need something else to go on. If a firm does a lot of real-estate law, then maybe they can pick between two



people because one had a B-plus in Property and the other one had a B-minus. It's all crazy," (February and March: Getting By, p. 210).

"The long-standing prejudice against women among the male legal establishment may well be due to the competitive nature of the law as a profession. In the courtroom, there are always victor and vanquished, and a gentleman is not supposed to feel at ease engaging in combat with a lady," (February and March: Getting By, p. 214).

"Anyway, I still felt high when I got out of bed yesterday morning and a trace of the tingle remains today. I can see now what makes a trial lawyer's life go round. All those victories in the courtroom, clean and unequivocal, and the sweet purring of your ugly little enemy when he is finally satisfied," (February and March: Getting By, p. 220).

"A week away from the Mighty H: Harvard, Harvard, Harvard—I cannot describe how sick I am of hearing that name. The whole university is suffused in such crazy pretense, a kind of puritan faith in the divine specialness of the place and its inhabitants. Its upper-class parochialism. I was told a story recently about a secretary who was fired after her first day on the job because she did not know how to spell the name of the university's president," (February and March: Getting By, p. 228).

"Back in school after vacation. I know a little bit now of how the astronauts feel, snatched out of free flight and returned to earth. Even today I could feel the incipient pressure of exams. My stomach already is tight as a fist," (April and May: Exams (Last Act), p. 233).

"That night I sat in my study and counseled myself. It had been a tumultuous year, I decided. I had been up. And I had been down. I had lost track of myself at moments, but because of whatever generosity I'd extended my own spirit, I had not lost my self-respect. But it would not stretch much further. I knew that if I gave in again to that welling, frightened avarice as I had this afternoon, I would pay for a long time in the way I thought about myself," (April and May: Exams (Last Act), p. 253).

"It's a tough place, I told myself. Bad things are happening. Work hard. Do your best. Learn the law. But don't suffer, I thought. Don't fear. And for God's sake, don't give up your decency," (April and May: Exams (Last Act), p. 253).

"After that Thursday afternoon in that classroom, I tried not to let myself fall into that tangle of fears again. There were times I felt it happening and would work hard to resist. One day I found myself pacing back and forth in the law-school gym, muttering, 'I'm okay, I'm okay,' trying to keep in mind that I had some worth which would outlast exams. But I felt it was important not to give in. I knew where I stood now. I knew what I was against. I had finally met my enemy, I figured, face to face," (April and May: Exams (Last Act), p. 254).

"I know that it is hard to think of law students, headed for a life of privilege, as being among the downtrodden; and I also recognize that classroom terror has been a fixed



aspect of legal education for at least a century. But the risk, the ultimate risk, of allowing students to make their first acquaintance with the law in such an atmosphere, in that state of hopeless fright, is that they will come away with a tacit but ineradicable impression that it is somehow characteristically 'legal' to be heartless, to be brutal, and will carry that attitude with them into the execution of their professional tasks," (April and May: Exams (Last Act), p. 264).

Topics for Discussion

One of the most daunting experiences for Scott to overcome is the Socratic method of instruction. Put yourself in Scott's place and describe why this creates such angst.

Discuss your perceptions of Harvard Law School and how they may have changed based on what Scott Turow has shared.

Scott entered Harvard Law School in 1975. What differences do you think he would find there today and would he like what he discover?

Why do people enter law school knowing how difficult it will be? Explain.

Scott manages his academic experience with integrity and a strong code of ethics while some of his classmates begin to veer from that course. Discuss the outside elements that affect people's behaviors as pressure intensifies.

In addition to being a great law student, Scott is an ardent student of human dynamics. Note instances in the book that prove this to be true.

Annette Turow does not have an active role in the narrative of the book but she is a critical part of the outcome. Discuss Annette's role and the pivotal part she plays.