

A Time to Kill Study Guide

A Time to Kill by John Grisham

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Plot Summary

A Time to Kill was John Grisham's first novel, although it did not draw attention until after the publication of *The Firm*. Based on an actual rape case that Grisham witnessed, the book poses this question: Is a father justified in killing a man who rapes his young daughter? However, when the rapists are two white men and the victim is a ten-year-old black girl, another question surfaces: Is a black man ever justified in killing a white man? Thus begin the events of the novel, when Carl Lee Hailey murders his little girl's rapists and hires young Jake Brigance to defend him. The ensuing courtroom battle brings the local black citizenry, backed by the NAACP, in toe-to-toe combat with the Ku Klux Klan. Can Hailey get a fair trial by a jury of his peers when his peers are almost exclusively white, and how do god-fearing, upstanding white citizens behave when the clear moral issue is clouded by racial bias? These are the obstacles facing Jake Brigance as he accepts the case that will make or break his future as a lawyer.

One May in the early 1980s in northern Mississippi, two white good-for-nothings are repeatedly raping the young black girl they have kidnapped. Beaten and bloody, the girl hallucinates that her daddy is coming to save her. When finished with her, the men throw her in a shallow ravine. After she is discovered and hospitalized, the black sheriff quickly takes the two worthless white men into custody as the girl, Tonya Hailey, lies in surgery.

Jake Brigance, a young "street lawyer" with a wife and daughter, works alone in the historic Wilbanks building, having begun his career as an associate of the pedigreed but dissolute Lucien Wilbanks. Disbarred, Wilbanks has given his entire practice to Jake, a liberal who represents poor, blue-collar workers.

Carl Lee Hailey, Tonya's father, quickly makes it clear to Jake that the two men who raped his daughter will be killed. When Carl Lee's brother Lester arrives from Chicago, the two men plot revenge. Lester knows the courthouse, having been acquitted of murder a few years ago, represented by Jake Brigance. Carl Lee hides in the courthouse at closing and plans his attack.

"Cat" Bruster, a former Vietnam War comrade of Carl Lee's, now a wealthy master of the underground, provides an M-16. On Monday morning, Cobb and Willard appear in court, and as they are escorted down the back stairs, Carl Lee Hailey emerges from a closet and opens fire on them with an M-16, accidentally wounding a deputy. Then he throws the gun down, walks out to his vehicle and drives home. In his office across the street, Jake hears the commotion and runs over to investigate. A few minutes later, Carl Lee surrenders peacefully at his home and is taken into custody. He cooperates fully and is treated with respect and kindness by the understanding sheriff and deputies.

Jake Brigance takes on the case of Carl Lee Hailey, realizing that he will earn less than \$1,000 for his efforts but hoping for great publicity. As the press descends on Clanton, the town becomes a media circus, and death threats begin arriving. All concerned with the case are intimidated and frightened. Indicted on three counts, Carl Lee could get the



death penalty. Insanity seems to be his only defense. As the grand jury is empanelled, the Ku Klux Klan reinstates itself in Ford County. Jake's only hope will be a hung jury, providing he can get just one black juror in this mostly white county. The trial is set for July 22.

Over the next two months, Jake Brigance struggles to get an acquittal for a man who coldly planned a double murder and carried it out before eyewitnesses. Offered Cat's big-time Memphis lawyer, all expenses paid, Carl Lee temporarily fires Jake who, in turn, escalates his deception and manipulation to win back the case. Local black pastors raise funds for the Hailey family's needs and defense expenses, each skimming just a bit of the take, and they bring in the NAACP to ramp up the racial tension. The Klan responds by burning a cross in Jake's front yard.

As the trial date nears, nerves are frayed, and racial tensions increase. The judge imposes a gag order. The confessed murderer, now a hometown hero to the black population, emerges as the player with the greatest integrity. Having wrested the case away from both the rich Memphis lawyer and the NAACP, Jake Brigance now becomes a serious target of the Klan. When a would-be bomber is apprehended just outside his bedroom window, Jake sends his wife and daughter away to safety.

Without the stabilizing influence of Jake's wife, he slides quickly into immature, irresponsible behavior, surrounding himself with a colorful team of intelligent but eccentric advisers who share one common interest: drinking. One of these is a twenty-five-year-old third-year law student named Ellen Roark, attractive, sexy and brilliant. She provides expert clerking services to Jake along with some serious distraction. Meanwhile, the Klan burns crosses in the yards of prospective jurors. They assault and seriously injure the husband of Jake's secretary. As the defense team becomes intoxicated on margaritas, hundreds of black citizens hold a candlelight vigil across the street. The next day, the Klan arrives on the courthouse lawn to counter the rally of the blacks, and a furious altercation erupts.

Now the National Guard takes up residence on the courthouse lawn. The all-white jury of ten women and two men is sequestered out of town, and testimony takes only a few days. The state's key witness, the black deputy accidentally shot by Carl Lee, is sympathetic with the defense and well coached by Jake. He makes an excellent case for Carl Lee's temporary insanity. Near the end of the brief trial, as Jake enters the courthouse under heavy guard, a sniper makes an attempt on Jake's life, severely wounding and paralyzing a National Guardsman. That night his clerk, Ellen Roark, is kidnapped by the Klan and severely injured. She is ultimately hospitalized through the trial's end. The defense's expert witness, a depraved, semi-retired psychiatrist, is discredited on the stand, rendering the insanity plea virtually hopeless. Lucien Wilbanks, in desperation, has initiated an attempt to "buy" one degenerate juror. As testimony ends, Jake's house is burned to the ground as he sleeps safely at Lucien's. Jake wishes he had never heard of Carl Lee Hailey. The next day, though, delivering his closing arguments in borrowed clothes, Jake enjoys his finest hour.



As the jury deliberates, busloads of blacks are brought in, thanks to Lucien's efforts. They protest loudly and actually frighten the Klan away and intimidate the all-white jury. After several excruciating days, following a near deadlock, the jury returns a miraculous not-guilty verdict. Exultant, Jake flies to North Carolina to be reunited with his family. He is broke, without a home. His practice is at a standstill, but he is victorious in this case and riding a wave of adulation.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

Before the reader meets Carl Lee Hailey and Jake Brigance, the rape scene is played out in horrific detail. Readers meet the little black girl whose rape will incite her father to cold-blooded murder and the white rapists who are just about to commit their final crime in this world. Two rednecks, Billy Ray Cobb and Pete Willard, perch on Billy Ray's tailgate, drinking and smoking pot. They take turns raping a ten-year-old black girl. Cobb, who has done time in prison, profits from a lucrative narcotics business. Willard, older and less intelligent, pretty much "works for" Cobb, paid mostly in dope. The two white men picked up the little girl on a gravel road, walking with a bag of groceries. She is on the ground in a clearing, naked and tied with nylon rope in spread-eagle fashion, bruised and bloodied. Willard slaps her when he is finished, and she cries softly as the men roll on the ground laughing. They have vowed to kill her if she is not quiet.

Willard heaves his half-empty beer can at the girl, but she is motionless. Willard wonders whether she is dead. Cobb explains that it takes much more than rape to "dispose of a nigger." As Cobb rapes her again, the girl sees her daddy running through the woods toward her, yelling. As she cries out for him, he disappears, and she blacks out. When she awakens, the men have fallen asleep, but she is unable to escape the ropes. The next time she awakens, the men are stirring, and one of them cuts the ropes. Then Cobb fashions a noose and puts it around her neck, teasing her by tightening it and releasing it.

Suddenly the men hear a car approaching. They throw the girl into the truck bed with a promise to kill her if she gets up. They speed away. They decide to throw the girl off a bridge to dispose of her. Black fishermen wearing straw hats populate every bridge Cobb comes to. Willard has passed out, and Billy Ray is getting worried. In desperation, he throws the girl in a small ravine.

At home, Gwen Hailey worries because Tonya has not returned. Her groceries have now been found on the road. Gwen summons her husband, Carl Lee, from work. She has done this several times out of needless worry, so he does not hurry. When Carl Lee arrives at home, the yard is filled with cars. He finds his daughter lying on the sofa, covered with towels, bleeding from top to bottom. Deputy Willie Hastings tells how she was found and what they know of the crime perpetrated against her. Then an ambulance arrives. Carl Lee carries his daughter to the vehicle and gets in with her.

Chapter 1 Analysis

The main point of this opening chapter is to introduce the crime in all its horrific detail. The reader will move forward knowing exactly what happened and who the perpetrators are, making this not a story about whodunit but a story about what the family can and



will do as a result of the crime against their daughter. The way Grisham relates the criminal behavior, matter-of-factly, straightforwardly and in lurid detail, makes it even more repulsive. He is preparing us to move to a much deeper, more complex level of analysis than degree of guilt or innocence, clearly establishing the guilt and willful, premeditated intent right from the start.



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

Ozzie Walls is the sheriff of Ford County, his birthplace. He was elected by a white majority and is proud of it because he is the only black sheriff in Mississippi. He is beloved and respected by the citizenry in general. Now he is investigating the Hailey rape case, and Billy Ray Cobb, with his mean streak, is his prime suspect. Ozzie sends his deputies out to find but not arrest Cobb. Walls and Deputy Hastings travel together to the hospital where Tonya Hailey is in surgery. Carl Lee and Gwen are in shock and non-responsive, so Gwen's brother explains that Tonya has been repeatedly raped. She has broken bones and a concussion. Gwen's brother suggests that the sheriff place the culprits, when apprehended, in a jail in another town, for their own safety.

Ozzie goes to one of his best informants, Bobby Bumpous, and tells him to find Cobb at Huey's and pump him for information. Bumpous agrees, and Ozzie explains to his deputy that Bumpous has little choice whether to be an informant. The sheriff caught him, previously, violating his parole by possessing drugs. Instead of arresting him, Ozzie put him on probation and now uses him as he needs him. The sheriff and his deputy, along with several other squad cars, stake out Huey's. (When first elected, Ozzie closed all the "tonks," but crime soared and the local ministers begged him to reopen the clubs. He agreed, and Ford County became much safer.) For two hours they watch.

Finally Bumpous reveals that Cobb has confessed to raping the young virgin, and everyone is laughing about it. Pete Willard is in there with him. The sheriff gets two arrest warrants within twenty minutes. At 11:00 the sheriff and his deputies enter the tonk and approach Cobb's table, producing the warrants. Willard surrenders quickly, but Cobb refuses to move until he is manhandled into the squad car. The sheriff returns to the hospital where Tonya is out of surgery and listed as critical. He tells the family that they have arrested the perpetrators.

Chapter 2 Analysis

Now the reader meets the highly respected black sheriff. It is important to establish that he is related to most of the black citizens but respected and loved by all the citizens, black and white. Ozzie Walls appears to be a clear-thinking lawman who plans strategically and operates within the law. The point about his closing the tonks and then reopening them to cut down on crime shows that he is also a practical leader who listens to his advisers.

The locals are depicted as raw, trashy hoodlums, urinating outside, fighting without cause and, worst of all, laughing about the alleged rape of a very young girl. The criminals are not smart enough to keep quiet about their crime. At this point, the crime is

essentially "solved," Bumpous and others having heard Cobb's confession. The perpetrators are in jail. Now we need only wait to see whether Tonya survives.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

Jake Brigance, a thirty-two-year-old attorney, follows his own rules meticulously, arising at 5:30, arriving at the coffee shop by 6:00 a.m. and entering his office no later than 7:00. After kissing his wife, he briefly thinks of the occasional mornings when he does more than kiss her. He kisses the cheek of his sleeping daughter, four-year-old Hanna, and makes coffee for his wife, Carla. It is May 15, and Jake feels summer approaching.

Jake and Carla own one of the two homes in Ford County that appear on the National Register of Historic Places, a lovely Victorian with an expensive paint job and many unique architectural features. They borrowed heavily to buy the home, which had been vacant for twenty years.

Jake enters his red Saab, the only Saab in Ford County, and drives to the north side of the well-manicured Clanton Square, which features the Ford County Courthouse. He enters the "Coffee Shop," one of three coffee shops in Clanton. Two are traditionally for the whites, and one is traditionally for the blacks. (On Fridays, Jake eats barbecue at Claude's, the black coffee shop. He is a white liberal.) A blue-collar establishment with conversation focused on local, not national, concerns, the Coffee Shop welcomes Jake as one of the few "white collars." Many of the patrons have been his clients, and he eats breakfast with three of them, a mechanic and two shoe factory men.

Three deputies dining in a nearby booth tell about Tonya Hailey's rape. Jake has represented many of the Hailey clan, and he thinks of his own little Hanna. The men discuss the crime and Tonya's condition, revealing that the preliminary hearing will be at 1:00 p.m. today. Then, Jake answers the deputies' legal questions, explaining that, based on the charges, Cobb could get life plus forty years, if convicted on all counts. He could be paroled in as little as thirteen years if the little girl lives.

Jake is a "street lawyer," meaning he does not belong to the pompous Sullivan firm. He represents the little people with little money. Like all of downtown Clanton, his office is in a historic brick building. He practices alone in a huge suite, using only five of the ten rooms. His own second-floor office is thirty feet square and filled with century-old furnishings and books. A balcony faces the courthouse. He has the finest office in Clanton, though his monthly rent is a mere four hundred dollars, paid to Lucien Wilbanks, his former employer and the descendant of the Wilbanks family that built Clanton. Lucien was disbarred in 1979.

When Lucien inherited the firm in 1965, he kept his father's favorite secretary, Ethel Twitty, and fired everyone else. Ethel had borne a retarded boy who looked just like Lucien and was rumored to be Lucien's half-brother. Keeping Ethel employed was his insurance against scandal and loss of the estate. A different breed than his ancestors, Lucien strove to be a radical criminal lawyer, suing wildly for liberal causes and making



the firm more lucrative than ever. He became a wild, intimidating drunk. By the time he hired Jake, his twelfth try at hiring and keeping an associate, he was a full-fledged alcoholic who still managed to practice law. Representing a labor union, Lucien was involved in a picket line riot. He was convicted and disbarred. After six months in the Cayman Islands, he simply gave the practice to Jake, and thus began Jake's law career in 1978.

Jake works quietly, with the door locked, ignoring the phone, until 8:30 a.m., another one of his rules. He is always in court or seeing clients by 9:00 and returning phone calls religiously by 11:00. Ethel enters at 8:30 and reads the mail. Jake calls her "Ethel" instead of her preferred "Mrs. Twitty." Ethel is a young-looking sixty-four-year-old who has worked here for forty-one years. She announces that Earnestine Willard, mother of Pete, is here and wants to see no lawyer but Jake. Brigance is not interested in her. Meanwhile, Carl Lee Hailey has visited his battered, bandaged daughter, sent his sedated wife to her mother's house and his boys to their uncle's and spent the night in the waiting room with Ozzie Walls.

Cobb and Willard awaken in the county jail with Ozzie yelling at them and a host of black prisoners eyeing them. Sheriff Walls brings Pete Willard to his office for questioning in the presence of four other law enforcement officers and two tape recorders. He tells the prisoner his rights and questions him. Willard admits that he and Cobb were at the lake yesterday but refuses to talk further. Now Walls mentions Parchman and the racially disparate population. There are five blacks for every "white boy." Walls offers Willard as much leniency as possible if he will cooperate in the case against Cobb, and Willard finally agrees to talk. He admits to kidnapping and raping the girl, but he is otherwise vague.

Chapter 3 Analysis

The main purpose of this chapter is to provide background on Jake Brigance who, readers assume, will play a vital role in the upcoming court case. We find him to be very young and inexperienced but intensely disciplined. He is likely to be most sympathetic to the Hailey family plight for several reasons. He has represented many of them before. He has a daughter of his own. He started in this very liberal practice right out of law school, and he socializes with the blue-collar set. When Earnestine Willard enters his law offices and requests to see him, the reader is relatively confident that Jake will become involved in this court case in some way. Will he represent Willard or the Haileys?

Jake's story is a sort of "Cinderella story." He was literally handed a lucrative law practice in the finest facility in town. He has "inherited" Ethel, the secretary of forty-one years, but there is a mention that he began calling her "Ethel" after he fired her." This is inexplicable at this point. Readers will look for further explanation in future chapters. Jake is also depicted as a loving husband of an attractive teacher and the father of a beautiful young daughter. The family lives in a very expensive, steeply mortgaged,

historical home, and he drives an expensive car, overtly suggesting that his firm is doing well.

Readers also get an initial introduction to Clanton, discovering obvious vestiges of racial segregation. Still, harmony, including racial harmony, seems to prevail. The reader is left uncertain of Tonya Hailey's prognosis but sure now that Pete Willard will help Sheriff Wall and the D.A. construct a good case against Billy Ray Cobb.

At this point, Grisham is weaving three distinct threads through his plot. One thread follows the Jake Brigance story. Another follows the Hailey story specifically, which is the "Clanton black" story more generally, and the third follows Cobb and Willard story, which might be more generally viewed as the "Clanton white trash" story.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

Percy Bullard, a diminutive County Court judge, fidgets in his chambers just prior to the opening of the preliminary hearing. A thirteen-year court veteran, he has reached his pinnacle. Mr. Pate, the old courtroom deputy, enters and reports that half the courtroom is filled with blacks. Carl Lee Hailey is there, surrounded by relatives. Security is tight, Pate tells the judge, and everyone has been screened. The sheriff will arrive soon with "the boys." Meanwhile, a Memphis TV crew has requested permission to film the trial. Judge Bullard instructs Pate to throw them out. Sheriff Ozzie Walls drives the suspects to the courthouse, where they are ushered in under heavy protection.

Jake Brigrance dashes over from his office across the street and sits in the jury box just as the judge enters. The defendants enter and sit at the defense table with public defender Drew Jack Tyndale. County Prosecutor Rocky Childers is seated at a table next to it. Both the defendants' mothers are in court, protected by deputies. Carl Lee looks at the backs of the heads of the mangy, filthy men who raped his daughter. Deputies carefully watch him.

The judge reminds people that this is a preliminary hearing to determine whether the defendants should be bound over to the Grand Jury. However, Jake and others realize that Bullard turns every defendant over to the Grand Jury. Sheriff Walls is called to testify for the prosecution. He reveals that Tonya is in critical condition. He testifies that they found her shirt and a lot of blood in Billy Ray Cobb's pickup truck. Then he reveals, much to the shock of Billy Ray, that Willard has signed a confession. Ozzie reads the signed statement aloud and is dismissed. Jake notes that Tyndale wisely passes on an opportunity to cross-examine, preferring to listen and take notes. He knows Tyndale will not allow the defendants to testify at the preliminary hearing either, and he approves. The defendants are bound over without bond, but a bail hearing is set for the following Monday. Court is adjourned, and deputies handcuff the defendants and quickly usher them back to the waiting squad car.

Carl Lee signals Jake to meet him outside, and they walk to the exit together, talking over the case. Jake discovers that Lester, Carl Lee's brother, who has married a white woman in Chicago, is on his way home to see Tonya. Immediately suspicious, Jake asks whether they're "planning something." Carl Lee says no, but then he asks Jake what he would do if this crime had been perpetrated on his little girl. Jake admits that he would kill the rapists. Against all advice from Jake, Carl Lee makes it clear that the defendants will be killed. Jake points out that a black man is unlikely to get acquitted, even under the circumstances, but Carl Lee assures Jake that he can get him off, as he did Lester and two other blacks accused of murder. He requests that Jake meet him at the jail when they arrest him, and Jake nods without thinking as Carl Lee smiles and walks away.



Chapter 4 Analysis

This twenty-minute hearing provides a wealth of information for the reader. In the chapter's closing dialogue, we learn that Carl Lee will take the law into his own hands. We are even led to believe that he will shoot the defendants as they are escorted in or out of the courtroom. Further, we realize that Jake Brigance will represent Carl Lee when he stands trial for the murder of the two white rapists.

Jake's liberal bent is clearly revealed here, along with a bit of his courtroom philosophy and something of his background. We now know that he has been the defense lawyer in murder cases three times. In each case the defendant was black and was acquitted. We see that he and Carl Lee have a confidential, trusting relationship and are comfortable with each other. The prosecution seems to have a strong case, with physical evidence and the signed confession of one of the defendants. Judge Bullard seems to be a high-strung, somewhat insensitive man who follows the letter of the law and is primarily interested in keeping his hands clean and getting re-elected.



Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

Lester Hailey has driven from Chicago to Clanton by himself. He is the only Hailey who has ever married "mixed," and the family might not too warmly welcome his wife. He arrives at the hospital late Wednesday night and seeks out Carl Lee. The two of them find a deserted waiting room and plot their revenge, drawing diagrams of the courthouse on napkins. On Thursday, Tonya is released from intensive care. She has two broken jaws, and her wounds hurt. She is on regular pain medication. The Memphis TV station reports the story of her attack, and she sees the blurry image of the two white men on the screen.

On Friday, when the courthouse closes at 4:30, Carl Lee is hiding in a restroom. When the building is deserted, he prowls around. He imagines himself a prisoner brought in for trial, counting the steps and practicing the route he would take to the holding room upstairs and then into the adjoining courtroom. He surveys the courtroom from various angles, locating each important feature. Hands still behind his back, as though handcuffed, he retraces his steps through the holding room and back down the stairs, noting that, from the landing halfway up, he has a perfect view of the exit doors and the adjacent vestibule. Next to the exit, he finds a dusty janitor's closet. From it, he gazes up toward the stairs. For another hour he wanders all over the courthouse. He traces and retraces the movements that Willard and Cobb will make, exploring until seven p.m. when he escapes through a window.

On the Brigances' front swing, Carla is urging Jake to report the crime that Carl Lee is planning, but Jake is not certain a crime is being planned. Perhaps Carl Lee was just talking like a father would talk. Jake admits that, if Carl Lee kills those boys, he would like to represent him. He asks Carla whether she would convict, were she on the jury. After consideration, she says it would be hard to convict. Jake smells victory and explains that there will be opportunity for the crime while the prisoners are being transported as well as after they get out on bail, which could be as early as next Monday. He explains that the trial will probably be in late summer, and then he ignores her final plea to report the plot.

Chapter 5 Analysis

Three significant plot developments unfold now. Following Lester's arrival, the immediate discussion between him and Carl Lee concerning the courthouse floor plan convinces readers that the two brothers are committed to seeking revenge. As we watch Carl Lee prowl the courtroom, coolly and purposefully, we understand, without question, that he will carry out his plan. Very likely, he will succeed in some measure, considering his careful preparations. We are also aware of the general place in which he plans to

strike. We also know for sure now that Jake Brigrance has correctly inferred Carl Lee's intention and sides with him emotionally if not rationally.

This chapter exposes two key relationships. Carl Lee and Lester have complete faith in and devotion to each other, and Jake and Carla are accustomed to open discussion of his cases and practice. Further, Jake is portrayed as emotionally loyal to the murderous act that he is relatively sure Carl Lee will attempt. In a sense, he is backing the plot, subconsciously, as any loving father might do. He is able to think like Carl Lee.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

K.T. "Cat" Bruster is the only one-eyed black millionaire in Memphis. He owns a string of strip clubs, a block of rental property and two churches, all legal. He keeps the locals and their elected politicians happy with his generosity. Law enforcement has never been able to convict him of selling women, cocaine, credit cards, stolen goods and other sundries. He left his eye in a rice paddy in Vietnam, and the wounded soldier who carried him out was none other than Carl Lee Hailey. The hashish he brought back to Memphis from 'Nam bought him a saloon from which he started his string of black topless joints. Above one of his clubs, in the roughest section of Memphis, he has his office.

At the "Brown Sugar," Carl Lee and Lester are ushered upstairs to a gaudy, closely guarded office. Cat enters and bear hugs Carl Lee, delighted to see his old buddy. Cat again offers Carl Lee a job, and as he has done for ten years, Carl Lee refuses. He does ask to buy an illegal automatic M-16, and Cat insists on giving him one free, no questions asked. They take a private elevator down to the basement and enter a limo from among Cat's expensive car collection. Thus begins another tour of Cat's properties and business interests. At the end of a dead-end street, they stop and have the illegal rifle in the trunk in less than a minute. Cat takes them to lunch at one of his clubs, where Lester gets drunk. After the meal, Cat announces that Lester's Eldorado now has something special in the trunk.

Jake Brigance is at work on Saturday morning, as usual. At 11:00, he calls Sheriff Ozzie Walls to say he'll be over soon. Brigance and Walls have a cordial relationship going back to their high school days when they played football for opposing teams. Lucien Wilbanks has financed Ozzie's campaigns, and Jake has openly campaigned for him. Ozzie calls Jake "buddy."

Jake reveals, in confidence, his concern that Carl Lee might try to murder the suspects. The two speculate as to how they would feel if they were in his shoes, and they agree that they would entertain murder. They recall Lester's murder trial and discuss the importance of "the right jury" to get an acquittal. Jake mentions his suspicions about Lester's recent return, and Ozzie assures him they are watching Lester too. On Sunday Tonya is taken home by her parents and three brothers, surrounded by a throng.

Chapter 6 Analysis

There can be no question now of Carl Lee's intentions, having procured the automatic rifle. His interaction with Cat in Memphis offers some other important glimpses. Readers note that Lester tends to drink too much and talk too much, a concern for someone relying on his discretion. We also learn that Carl Lee is a wounded Vietnam veteran who



has lived on the straight and narrow in spite of numerous opportunities to join the lucrative Memphis underworld.

Jake's intimations to the sheriff surprise the reader. In the previous chapter, we were assured that he would not report Carl Lee's suspected plans. Another interesting relationship is revealed here. Jake and Ozzie, white lawyer and black sheriff, go back a long way. Now we have a perspective on the Jake-Ozzie friendship as well as on the Carl Lee-Cat Bruster friendship. Lester appears to be potential loose cannon as the Hailey family attempts to put the pieces of their lives back together and find healing for Tonya.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

Rocky Childers, aged forty-two, has been Ford County's prosecutor for more years than he can remember, having sacrificed his prospective law practice for this elected, \$15,000-a-year "part time" job that takes all his time. Rocky once considered a political career, but the voters, along with the District Attorney of Polk County, Rufus Buckley, have put an end to those dreams. He is mostly resigned to his fate, except when something interesting like the Hailey rape case comes up. Concerning the upcoming bond hearing of Cobb and Willard, Childers has received numerous calls from concerned blacks who want to see the white boys kept in jail until their trial. He explains that the bonds are set by Judge Bullard.

In chambers Monday, the judge asks Childers and Walls what figure they'd like for the bonds, but all realize this is just a charade. Both lawyers know that the bonds will be extremely high, pleasing the bail bondsmen who charge ten percent. As a result, the criminals will remain in jail, which will please the black minority, numbering twenty-six percent in the county. The judge decides on \$100,000 for Willard and \$200,000 for Cobb, although he plans to give them "a fair hearing" first. Willard is broke. Cobb's financial status is unknown, since his funds come mostly from illegal drugs. He has hired an expensive Memphis attorney.

After the sheriff and prosecutor leave, the judge gulps vodka nervously and then barges into the courtroom. The defendants are brought in to join their lawyers. The courtroom is packed with blacks, including Lester but not Carl Lee. Judge Bullard sips vodka from a foam cup and briefly considers dismissing the nine deputies and throwing the white boys "to the niggers." Childers asks for maximum bonds due to the nature of the crimes and the age of the victim, specifying, "a half million dollars."

Bernard, Cobb's lawyer, calls Cobb's brother and mother. Both testify that Billy Ray is an upstanding citizen with ties to the county and unlikely to flee. Tyndale goes through the same motions with Willard's family. When it is time for Bullard to set the bonds, he is furious at Childers for putting him in this awkward position. Setting the bond much lower might make him look weak to the blacks who elected him. Still, he stays with his original figures. Court is dismissed, and the crowd begins to move out, except for Lester. He watches the defendants, lowers his head, says a prayer and listens. Meanwhile, Jake is in his office across the street. As he is accustomed to do often during the day, he walks through the French doors onto his balcony and lights a cigar. A silence engulfs Clanton, Mississippi.

As the defendants descend the stairs toward the back exit, Carl Lee jumps from the janitor closet and sprays them with machine gun fire. Deputy Looney is hit but manages to escape to safety. The machine gun fire goes on and on, accompanied by the hysterical laughter of Carl Lee. Then Carl Lee throws the gun on the two corpses, walks



to his truck and drives home. Lester has heard the gunfire. Hearing no responding handguns, he rises and leaves the courtroom. The judge has crawled under his desk with a half-pint of vodka. The corpses are in a heap, blood flooding the entire staircase.

Hearing the gunfire, Jake runs to the courthouse where he sees Ozzie Walls. The sheriff motions to Jake, and the two walk to the rear stairway and view the carnage. Walls sends Jake away before they begin taking photos and collecting evidence, but he promises not to interrogate Carl Lee without Jake's presence. Two hours later, Ozzie leads a caravan of five patrol cars to the Hailey residence. The Hailey family emerges as a unit, Carl Lee holding his daughter. Ozzie asks Carl Lee to come with him, and he does so, without handcuffs, having handed his daughter to Lester and kissed his wife.

Chapter 7 Analysis

Now readers have the inciting incident, the event that will propel the main characters into a new direction. Until now the Hailey rape case was moving in a predictable direction. No one could be sure whether the two white rapists would be convicted, but they could predict the motions through which the principal characters were destined to move. By committing this act of premeditated murder, Carl Lee has changed the course of his life and Jake's. This is the beginning of the real plot of Grisham's novel.

This chapter also gives readers new insight into the judge, who is not only extremely nervous about his decisions but is also a tippler. We learn a little about Childers too, realizing that he is in a dead-end job. Finally, the reader cannot help but feel some respect for Carl Lee, despite his horrific act. He has planned and executed the murder perfectly, accepting the impact it will have on his family and his own future. He has managed to minister to his family as well as possible before being incarcerated, and he surrenders peacefully while his family watches.



Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

Jake is at the sheriff's office as Carl Lee is being escorted to the facility. Television vans from all the surrounding cities have parked in the lot, having heard of the double murder in the courthouse. Looney is in the hospital with a slight wound to the leg. When the caravan arrives, Carl Lee is sitting in the front seat, without handcuffs, next to Ozzie who is driving. They enter the building casually and the jailer takes Carl Lee into custody. Ozzie briefly discusses with Jake the eyewitnesses to the crime and tells Jake he can see Carl Lee in about thirty minutes. Jake calls Carla to remind her to tape the news.

Ozzie faces the microphones and states that Carl Lee is in custody and charged with two murders. Meanwhile Carl Lee is processed and then allowed to visit with his lawyer, Jake. Carl Lee says he feels better, although he wishes none of it had happened. He is confident Jake will get him off as he did Lester, but Jake is not so confident. Carl Lee states that Lester had no part in it, and his brother will stay and take care of the family for awhile. Jake explains that the preliminary hearing will be before Judge Bullard and that the trial will be in Circuit Court with Judge Noose, probably in late summer.

Jake looks over the contract for legal services. He realizes that Carl Lee will not be able to pay much. Lester paid Jake \$5,000 over three years. He asks Carl Lee for \$10,000 because he is facing three charges. The two negotiate and finally settle on \$1,000 now and a note that Jake will hold for \$6,500. Asked how much he would charge a client with money, Jake says, "\$50,000." He refuses to answer any further questions now, and Carl Lee is placed in his cell. As Jake leaves the jail he is stopped by a reporter and faces the cameras quite willingly. Ozzie looks out and notes that Jake loves the cameras.

At home, sitting in the swing with Carla, Jake learns that the case is national news, and Carla has taped as many reports as possible. They watch the late news, and Jake feels good about how he looks on camera. He fantasizes about publicity and affluence. Later Jake talks to the press, calls Gwen and Carl Lee's employer and then receives his first anonymous death threat, in which he is called a nigger-lover.

Chapter 8 Analysis

Chapter 8 is actually a very positive chapter. Now that the blood has been shed and the Hailey family torn apart, the deep respect the key players have for each other becomes a factor. Although the media is hungry for headlines and details, things inside the jail are really quite calm. Ozzie and Jake have an almost affectionate regard for each other, and Ozzie has deep respect and concern for Carl Lee. Jake and Carl Lee have known each other for a long time, and they also share mutual respect and admiration. In addition, all three parties were aware in advance of what would probably transpire, so no one is

reacting out of complete surprise. It is almost as if a group of friends has come together to play out a script that they have agreed on.

The one new piece of news readers get about Jake Brigance is that he loves publicity and enjoys being interviewed on camera. Although he has been portrayed up until now as a liberal, decent lawyer who loves to look after the underdog, we now realize that he sees the Carl Lee Hailey murder case as his ticket to the big time. Somehow he is not quite as pure as we had imagined.



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

All of Clanton's coffee shops are abuzz with talk of the murders Tuesday morning, and rumors are rampant. Jake has appeared on the front page of the Tupelo paper. Finding the atmosphere rather cool at the Coffee Shop, he eats and leaves. At 9:00 Judge Bullard calls to discuss the preliminary hearing, hoping Jake will waive it. Jake never waives a preliminary, though, and they set the hearing for tomorrow at 2:00 p.m. Soon reporters arrive from Memphis and Jackson, and Jake meets with them in the conference room, delighted. Jake, knowing the grand jurors have not been selected yet and will probably see this on television tonight, states that they might not indict. He answers numerous questions about the trial and then is given an opportunity to "tell a little about Carl Lee Hailey." He gives a glowing report. Jake also has a chance to explain the options the jury will have in a capital murder case in Mississippi: manslaughter for twenty years, capital murder for life or death and not guilty.

At 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, Cobb and Willard are laid to rest in a brief ceremony. The Cobb family gathers at Mrs. Cobb's house, and the women prepare lunch. The men sip whiskey, chew tobacco and talk about lynching niggers, the Klan and how niggers used to know their place. One cousin is authorized to contact a Klan member he knows. They remember that the "nigger" is having his preliminary hearing today, and they head for the courthouse.

Representatives of the media interviewing people overrun Clanton, but there seems to be no consensus concerning Carl Lee's fate. Ozzie Walls endures a half-dozen interviews and then delegates the responsibility to Moss, who enjoys leading the press astray with outrageous lies. Judge Bullard, hounded by reporters and hiding behind his office door with his vodka, begs Jake to waive the preliminary, to no avail. Reporters even request permission to film the funerals.

Wednesday morning the Coffee Shop is filled with strangers, and the regulars fall silent. At noon Jake visits his client and discovers that Carl Lee eats with Ozzie in his office, plays cards with him and even watches TV. Carl Lee has seen Jake on TV and realizes that he's going to make his lawyer famous. Jake explains the purpose of the preliminary hearing and warns Carl Lee to speak to no one, advising that this will be an unusual preliminary because of all the press. Jake leaves and avoids the reporters but is very aware of the cameras. He hides in the third-floor law library of the courthouse.

At 1:45, with the jail parking lot crowded with reporters and camera crews, Ozzie is worried about transporting Carl Lee. He comes up with a plan involving another prisoner, Curtis Todd, who resembles Carl Lee. Todd is escorted to the waiting patrol car with unfastened handcuffs. As instructed, he breaks and runs into the woods, where he removes the handcuffs and begins his parole, as promised, one week early. As the reporters pursue, Ozzie calmly escorts Carl Lee to the courthouse.



The judge is beside himself, facing a packed courtroom full of "niggers," "rednecks" and the press. He finishes a half-pint of vodka, cursing Jake for not waiving the preliminary and terrified that he will fail to be reelected if he does not please both sides. Billy Ray Cobb's male relatives are present in force, intoxicated. The judge enters and instructs Childers to call his first witness who is, of course, Sheriff Walls. Ozzie presents all the evidence, including a statement by an eyewitness, Deputy Looney. Officer Rady, who interviewed the other eyewitness, a janitor named Murphy, takes the stand. Jake requests that Murphy be brought in himself to testify, since he works in the building. Bullard refuses on the grounds that he does not want to listen to Murphy stutter. Rady testifies that Murphy identified Carl Lee as the shooter, and then court is adjourned. Reporters ask to speak to Jake, and he tells them he will meet with them in the rotunda shortly. He keeps them waiting, and then he answers a few questions and expresses his opinion about the D.A. That night Deputy Looney's lower leg is amputated in the hospital.

Chapter 9 Analysis

In direct contrast to the calm of Chapter 8, this chapter depicts Clanton as a media circus that will not be itself again for many months. Grisham displays the silly antics of the press as well as the gullibility of reporters, as he portrays the locals as clever and resourceful. Jake's manipulation of the press, especially his desire to be on camera, gives his character a bit of an unlikable edge. Still, he appears genuinely concerned for his client who, at this point, can be perceived only as a good man who is respected by all who know him. It is ironic that Sheriff Walls eats his meals and plays cards with the very prisoner against whom he must soon testify in court. Such facts, along with the clever ruse used to fool the press surrounding the jail and the judge's excessive consumption of alcohol, contribute to the general atmosphere of a silly circus. The final lines of the chapter, though, stating that Looney's leg has been amputated, provide an ominous note, preparing the reader for another striking change of mood as the page is turned.



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

Rufus Buckley, District Attorney, reads with relish the newspaper accounts that mention his name. He is even happy that Brigance has disparaged him. At least he is now getting some publicity. He harbors no ill will against Jake, and he recognizes Jake's ability to manipulate the press, just as Lucien Wilbanks taught Jake. Rufus, age forty-one, with nine years on the job, has political ambitions that go all the way to Washington, D.C., and he needs a conviction in a big, messy murder trial to establish his name statewide. He is "loud, abrasive, and sanctimonious," and he boasts a ninety-percent conviction rate. The press is awaiting Rufus Buckley in the Polk County Courthouse, where he asserts that Jake Brigance is an able defense attorney, but he is confident he will get a conviction. He will seek the death penalty.

Back in Jake's office, Ethel has had threatening phone calls both at home and at the office. Then Lucien calls and wants Jake to bring some files to him for their monthly meeting. Lucien, an alcoholic who now does little more than drink on his front porch, play the stock market recklessly and read case files from Jake's practice, expects Jake to visit regularly. He is never seen downtown, but he knows about Jake's cases and gives him unsolicited advice, something that annoys Jake.

Lucien advises Jake to seek a change of venue for the Hailey case in an attempt to get at least one black juror. An all-white jury will convict, he says, but one black can hang the jury and cause a mistrial. The request will be denied, Lucien explains, but that will give him grounds for an appeal after Carl Lee is convicted. Lucien insists that Jake's only defense will be insanity, and he does not have high hopes for an acquittal. He explains that an insanity defense gives a sympathetic jury a way out. Then Lucien drops the bombshell. Looney's leg has been cut off. How will Jake get that past the jury? Finally Lucien confides that he wishes he had the case himself and commits to helping Jake with the case.

At home Jake and Carla discuss the threatening phone calls. If he gets worried, he says, he will withdraw from the case rather than endanger his family. "Carla was not impressed." Lester pays Jake \$900 as down payment on the case and then goes to several banks to try to borrow the rest in Carl Lee's name. No one will loan the money, however, because they assume Carl Lee will go to death row and never earn another dime.

Chapter 10 Analysis

Jake begins to see the case being mounted against him, whether in a court of law or on the public streets. Rufus Buckley will be a formidable opponent in court. The request for a change of venue, hoping to avoid an all-white jury, is unlikely to be granted.



Threatening phone calls have become a much more serious matter with this case than with previous cases. The fact that Deputy Looney has lost part of his leg will make it hard to maintain jury sympathy. Even worse, the two people Jake who most needs at his side through this ordeal, his wife and his mentor, Lucien Wilbanks, both have their doubts. Carla knows that Jake will take any risks to win the notoriety this case promises, and Lucien understands that this defendant is absolutely guilty of a meticulously planned premeditated murder that has cost a deputy his leg. He is excited about the case, but not optimistic. The final insult comes when Jake discovers that he will probably never be paid more than a total of \$900 for the case. In contrast to Jake's enthusiasm and vanity, the odds are greatly stacked against him.



Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

Jake has lunch at Claude's coffee shop, the cafe that caters to the black crowd, with Stan Atcavage, the banker who denied Lester the loan. It is Friday, and Claude's crowd is half-white on this day of the week due to his barbecued pork shoulder. Claude whispers encouragement to Jake. A reporter from the *New York Times* approaches Jake's table and arranges an interview for 4:00 p.m. Stan suggests that this case will make Jake famous, but Jake reminds him that it won't make him rich. Only if he wins will it make him famous. He explains that running a law office, even for one lawyer, involves overhead. He further explains that lawyers are jealous, and every lawyer in town wants to see him lose this one.

The reporter, McKittrick, arrives for an interview later and is surprised to see a tape recorder on Jake's desk. After some discussion, they agree that both will record the conversation. The two have a spirited exchange, during which Jake tries to make McKittrick understand the reality of racism and other biases all around the country. The sparring ends with an invitation from the reporter to finish the conversation over a beer someday. Jake says, off the record, that he does not drink.

Jake and Carla, raised Methodist and Baptist, respectively, have compromised to become Presbyterian. They sit in their usual pew with their daughter this Sunday morning and ignore the sermon but enjoy their membership in the church. Then they drive to Karaway to have dinner with Jake's parents, a retired couple who will begin their annual summer RV tour tomorrow. Carla's parents, from Knoxville, are already in Wilmington for the summer. Jake's parents have called and discovered that his number is changed and unlisted. The parents wish to discuss the case, but Jake and Carla do not.

Meanwhile, at the Mt. Zion Chapel CME, the Hailey family walks in just as the preacher has aroused the congregation to fever pitch. The entire congregation converges on the Hailey girl, singing, weeping and shrieking their faith. Carl Lee is in jail, of course. He still takes his meals with the sheriff, and the other prisoners are terrified of him. He wishes he could speak to the reporters and explain why he did what he did, but his lawyer has said no. In the afternoon Carl Lee, Ozzie and Moss Junior sneak out the back of the jail and visit Looney in the hospital. Carl Lee apologizes for what he did, and Looney accepts the apology. When Jake comes to visit his client later, he is appalled that Carl Lee has been speaking to the state's star witness without benefit of counsel. They briefly discuss Jake's fee, and Carl Lee offers him the deed to his property. Jake insists on \$6,500, but Carl Lee says he will pay when he can. Jake tells him a little about the grand jury and the arraignment. Carl Lee says that he has already lost his job.



Chapter 11 Analysis

This chapter serves as a reality check, helping the reader get his or her bearings and get a "fix" on each main character and that persons' current circumstances. Jake has become a media icon of sorts. He will probably suffer great financial hardship in defending this client, and he has a sincere interest in Carl Lee. The latter is in the interesting position of being the most feared murderer in the jail and yet, to the law enforcement crowd, a completely trusted and respected inmate. Carl Lee is calm and serene, confident that he has done the right thing and sure that Jake will get him an acquittal as he did for his brother, Lester. Carl Lee is also naive. Apologizing to Looney in front of the sheriff and a deputy could be tantamount to a confession. Meanwhile, Jake and Carla are trying to maintain a fairly normal life by going to church and visiting his folks. It is clear, however, from the discussion about the change of telephone number, that Jake's extended family is already feeling the heat. Things are just starting to warm up in Clanton.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

Judge Omar Noose began his career as a mediocre attorney with good political skills. Elected to the state legislature, he served five terms, during which he managed to develop a most affluent and dishonest lifestyle. After his defeat, he was allowed to complete the unexpired term of a judge who died, and that was the beginning of his career on the bench. He has been reelected a number of times and has now applied himself to the law, becoming a wise, respected and well paid judge at age sixty-three. His rulings are generally upheld by the state Supreme Court. Due to his lanky frame, long nose and wild hair, lawyers have dubbed him "Ichabod." Today he is in Clanton to officially open the May term of the Ford County Circuit Court. All the lawyers in the county are required to be present, as are potential jurors. The docket is called, after which the lawyers may be excused and the grand jury will be empanelled.

Jake attempts to look bored, but this is his opportunity to keep tabs on his competition. The Sullivan senior partners have sent their lieutenants, and Jake contemplates the money they make from insurance companies that are too stupid to settle and pay. Jake, on the other hand, the street lawyer, represents the plaintiffs that sue the insurance companies. Jake hates insurance companies and their lawyers, especially the junior Sullivan lawyers who would cut his throat to become partner and make a big salary. After the civil docket is called, the attorneys are dismissed.

Judge Noose begins jury empanelment, and ultimately, eighteen jurors are selected and administered the oath. Jake recognizes seven of the eighteen, who comprise a mixed bag racially. All are rural. The judge now explains how the grand jury will work, and he introduces Buckley and Musgrove as the jury's "sort of supervisors." He appoints black Lavern Gossett as foreman, as the previous foreman was a white male. The jury is dismissed as Buckley tells reporters that the Hailey case will be introduced today, and he will have indictments for his 4:00 press conference.

Once the jurors are warmed up, they quickly return five indictments for five cases. Buckley feels the time is right for the Hailey case. He invites Ozzie into the room and instructs him to begin with Hailey. Ozzie states clearly that he wants an indictment of Carl Lee. He explains that two of the charges carry the death penalty. The D.A., who prides himself on reading jurors, is worried about the response he sees. A white juror named Crowell asks Ozzie, point blank, what he would do, were his little girl raped and if he got his hands on the perpetrators. When Buckley nervously states that Ozzie does not have to answer, Crowell, an unemployed truck driver, tells him to shut up and sit down.

Crowell threatens to ask the judge to have him removed if he does not allow them to discuss the case at length. He asks his fellow jurors if they would have done what Carl Lee did, under the same circumstances, and seven or eight affirm they would. Crowell



then suggests they send him home rather than indict. Buckley explains that the grand jury must indict if the State has shown evidence that a crime was committed. Ozzie agrees, but Crowell moves not to indict. The motion fails on a vote. At Buckley's coaching, Mrs. Gossett moves to indict. The motion is seconded and passed, twelve to six. At his press conference later, Buckley waves the Carl Lee Hailey indictments and lectures and raves until all of the reporters finally leave.

Chapter 12 Analysis

This chapter is important to the reader for two reasons. It acquaints the unschooled with the empanelment and operations of a grand jury, a process both informative and interesting. It also demonstrates the mixed opinions of the "man on the street" concerning the Carl Lee Hailey case, and those opinions are both interesting and encouraging. It is heartening to see that the first person to speak on Carl Lee's behalf is a white man. The reader, at this point, is quite impressed with Hailey's integrity and probably cheering for him and hoping for his acquittal. This is also a nice opportunity to see D.A. Buckley at work, and humiliated. We have come to regard Jake Brigrance as our "hero," and this man is clearly his strongest opposition.

Ozzie's testimony must be very difficult for him. He is absolutely professional and unbiased in his speech and behavior, although secretly gratified that six of the jurors initially vote not to indict. By the end of the chapter, the reader has learned some interesting things about the workings of the circuit court and the grand jury. We are encouraged by the support Carl Lee is receiving and yet forewarned that, if the grand jury proceedings are any indication, the upcoming trial will be fraught with emotion and discord.



Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

In Nettles County, 230 miles south of Clanton, the Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan meets with fellow Klansmen deep in the woods. Freddie Cobb, Billy Ray's brother, is there, and he tells them that this "nigger" has killed his brother in cold blood. The Klansmen have followed the news, and they know Billy Ray Cobb got what he deserved, "but at the hands of a nigger." This could be a great opportunity to stir up anger and inspire new recruits. They ask Freddie Cobb to get them names and addresses. If he wants to participate, he must join the Klan and recruit five or six new members. He reveals that Cobb's grandfather was a Klansman, and now the Kluxers know they must get involved. Jake laughs to discover that every TV station has ignored Buckley's press conference and the Hailey indictments until a brief mention on the 10:00 news. That news segment over, he and Carla engage in some spontaneous sex on the sofa, the TV muted.

Chapter 13 Analysis

This chapter is quite a contrast to the recent view of the sober grand jury and circuit court, but Grisham is a master of contrast. This brief chapter portrays the unbridled passion that simmers unseen, below the surface, when a town faces a crisis such as the Hailey murder trial. Our first glimpse is of the reckless hatred of the Ku Klux Klan, just waiting for an opportunity to engage. Their hatred will likely grow and expand far beyond what we have seen in the woods of Nettles County. The passion on the Brigance sofa, on the other hand, is most likely a last flash of contentment and security. In the coming months, life in this home will probably take on a very different flavor.



Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

Harry Rex Vonner, a fat slob of an attorney but a friend to Jake, reports that Judge Noose wants Jake in court at 10:30 to discuss the Hailey case. He goes on to tell Jake how the grand jury voted on the Hailey indictment, something no one could legitimately know. However, Vonner, always the first one to know everything, is notorious for having snitches and other means of getting information. After telling Jake about the twelve to six vote, he affirms his faith that Jake will get an acquittal, even if only by hanging the jury. He even asserts that the two of them will "buy the jury." Jake responds, "I didn't hear that."

Jake enters the judge's chambers and engages in planning for the Hailey case. The arraignment will be the next morning. Jake asks for sixty days to prepare for the trial, and Buckley is incredulous, insisting the state could be ready tomorrow. Jake mentions that he will ask for a change of venue and will be using an insanity plea, which will take longer due to the need for psychiatric evaluations. Buckley and Jake agree that the trial itself should take only about three to four days, but they continue to needle each other about playing to the cameras. The trial date is set for July 22.

When Jake visits Ozzie at the jail, the latter has seen the indictments and has many questions. He realizes that it finally comes down to two chances at the gas chamber and one life sentence without parole. Jake reminds him that he still has a trial, which might change all that. Carl Lee now says he must go home. Gwen can't find a job, and Lester might have to leave soon. Jake explains that he will remain in jail until after the trial. Jake quickly explains how the arraignment will go tomorrow, and then Carl Lee asks him how much Lester paid him so far. He considers the \$900, realizing Gwen has only a hundred dollars left, but he hesitates to ask Jake for a loan. Jake is used to being asked by his black clients to return part of the fee, and he absolutely will not part with this \$900. Carl Lee wants to say his piece to the judge, but Jake firmly tells him that he will not speak. Meanwhile, Gwen takes Tonya to the doctor for a check-up. She is healing but still in pain.

Chapter 14 Analysis

The reader now encounters a number of possible paths the story might take in the future, this chapter serving to whet our appetites for more. Will Harry Rex Vonner play a role in trying to fix the jury, and if so, will it get Jake in trouble? Will Jake end up returning all or part of the measly \$900 fee he has collected? Will Carl Lee open his mouth and speak at the wrong time, jeopardizing Jake's chances of getting him an acquittal? Will Jake find a psychiatrist to testify to Carl Lee's temporary insanity? While all of this is going through our heads, we get a brief glimpse of Tonya and the suffering that put it all in motion.



Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

In the Coffee Shop at 5:00 a.m., unable to sleep and also unable to find a case to support his request for bail, Jake engages his favorite waitress, Dell, in conversation about the case, trying to get a sense of how the "man on the street" is viewing the case. Dell admits that, if she were serving on the jury, a plausible insanity case would cause her to acquit, even though she knows he's guilty. As for the shooting of Looney, even though it was clearly an accident, since he lost a leg, the problem is a little trickier. It now occurs to Jake that he cannot claim Carl Lee was insane when he shot the two white boys but just making a mistake when he shot the deputy.

Back at the office, Jake sees the camera crews setting up near the back door of the courthouse. He feels a rush of adrenaline thinking about being on the news again. As he descends the stairs, he encounters reporters who wish to interview him, so he announces that he will hold a press conference at 3:00 p.m. with the Hailey family in attendance.

The jail is still surrounded by media types, and Ozzie has received two dozen death threats, some of which sounded serious. The deputies hustle Carl Lee off to court where he is called to the bench for his arraignment. To Jake's disgust, Buckley approaches also. The judge reads the indictment, and Carl Lee affirms that he knows he could be sentenced to the gas chamber and then enters his plea of not guilty. Noose announces the trial date, and Buckley opposes a request for bail before one has even been made. He and Jake come close to exchanging blows.

The entire Hailey family is briefly reunited in Jake's conference room. At 3:00 reporters cram into the room where Tonya is seated on her daddy's lap. Jake knows the prospective jurors will be watching. He announces that he will do all the talking, and then he introduces each member of the family. Asked to describe "what this has done to the Hailey family," Jake sings the praises of Carl Lee and portrays his family in a sympathetic light. He openly admits that the defense will be temporary insanity. The press conference is a big hit on television, and the group photo appears on the newspaper's front page.

Chapter 15 Analysis

Jake is now seriously assessing the attitudes prospective jurors will bring into the courtroom with them as he continues to cleverly manipulate the press to his advantage. He takes every opportunity to make Rufus Buckley look and sound bad and every opportunity to garner sympathy for Carl Lee. Jake is laying the foundation for the trial that is still two months away. At the same time, he is securing plenty of media attention for himself, since fame is all he will get out of this trial that will drain his resources for

months. Jake Brigance's ability and willingness to manipulate people for his own ends commands both respect and apprehension.



Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary

Lester's wife is calling continuously, suspicious of her husband's activities. He visits Carl Lee in his cell to tell him that he must leave now, but he will be back for the trial.

Afterwards Jake visits, red-eyed and irritable, informing Carl Lee that a psychiatrist's opinion will cost \$1,000. The defendant must come up with that sum, or else Jake will have little chance of proving his insanity plea. Jake demands the money and walks out, slamming the door. Carl Lee has been in jail twelve days now, and he is realizing that things have not turned out as he had imagined they would.

Cat Bruster shows up at the jail and asks to speak to the sheriff on behalf of his friend Carl Lee Hailey. He recounts their shared Vietnam experience, adding that Carl Lee was decorated for his heroism. Ozzie brings Carl Lee in and leaves them to talk. After Carl Lee affirms that he does not regret what he has done but worries about his family, Cat suggests that Carl Lee should have the dirty Memphis lawyer, Bo Marsharfsky, who got him acquitted five times when he was absolutely guilty. Cat keeps the lawyer on retainer and will pay for him to represent Carl Lee. He will also pay for the expert witnesses with whom Marsharfsky already has connections. Cat states that Jake is too young, although Carl Lee remembers how well Jake did for Lester at an even younger age. As Carl Lee considers, Cat demands to know how much he has already paid Jake, the "young kid" who might make one fatal mistake in the trial. When Carl Lee says he has paid \$900, Cat stuffs \$900 into Carl Lee's shirt pocket along with an extra \$1,000 "for the kids." Finally Carl Lee agrees to fire Jake and hire Marsharfsky. Cat phones the Memphis lawyer immediately. Marsharfsky's first act is to prepare a press release.

At 6:30 Saturday morning, Lucien awakens Jake to tell him of the headlines in the Memphis paper: Brigance out, Marsharfsky in. Carl Lee is pictured there and called the "vigilante killer." Jake gets no words of comfort from Lucien. The latter admires the sleazy lawyer called "The Shark." Jake confronts Carl Lee with the news. His client reasons that it was his only choice. Someone else is paying The Shark, and he himself cannot afford to pay Jake. He makes no apology and will not tell Jake who is footing the bill. Jake inquires whether Lester knows, and he is informed to keep Lester out of it. Back at home, Jake exchanges few words with Carla who has already been informed by a reporter who has called. He plans to call Lester, and he vows not to return to the Coffee Shop.

Chapter 16 Analysis

The focus turns to Carl Lee instead of Jake, and the reader gets to see what pressures he is facing and what will trigger a change of course for him. Ironically, what it all comes down to is money. Even though Marsharfsky is the biggest criminal lawyer in Memphis, Carl Lee would be content to keep Jake on if only he could pay him. Cat has tried to



convince his friend that he needs a more mature, more devious lawyer than Jake, but it is only the knowledge that the fees will be completely paid that moves him to agree to the change. He is, of course, thinking of his family.

The reader should note Cat's casual regard for truth and justice. He is a pragmatist. If it will get him what he wants, he will do it. Carl Lee certainly does not share this value system. Were it not for his family's needs, he would surely not entertain such a reversal of his course. Jake disappoints a bit by thinking immediately of his image. He now regrets all the TV footage and impulsively decides to hide from the locals by avoiding the Coffee Shop. Cat may be a conscienceless crook, but Jake is a self-serving egoist. Paradoxically, the "hero" of this chapter is Carl Lee, the "vigilante killer" who stiffes his good friend.



Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

The Haileys' pastor, Ollie Agee, convenes the Council of Ministers, a twenty-three-member board of the local black ministers who meet regularly to wield their political clout on behalf of the black community. Agee proposes a defense fund for Carl Lee as well as a support fund for his family, offering to administer the funds. The Council unanimously agrees. They agree further that the NAACP must be brought in, as this is clearly a case of racism.

Jake and Carla skip church on Sunday morning and, after a leisurely breakfast, take Hanna on a picnic to the lake. Hanna was born ten weeks premature, Jake remembers, and the doctors suggested no more children. She is now a beautiful, perfect child whose voice can still bring tears to her father's eyes. As Hanna plays, Jake and Carla relax and talk about lawyers' ethics. He reveals his plan to contact Lester, hoping to get the case back, and Carla clearly disapproves, accusing him of trying to solicit the case. Jake contemplates how Lucien would handle the situation - hardly ethically. He admits to Carla that he's both disappointed and embarrassed.

Before dawn Monday morning, someone plants a nine-foot burning cross on Jake's front lawn and then calls the emergency dispatcher to report it. Deputy Prather responds to the call and wakes Jake at 3:30 a.m. They decide to just let it burn rather than disturbing the sleeping neighbors with a fire truck. Jake summons Carla, and the three of them surmise that the Klan has returned. At Carla's insistence, Jake considers dousing the flames. Then, he admits to Prather that the Klan "got the wrong lawyer." They wonder whether outsiders did the deed, the Klan having disbanded in this area many years ago. Then again, this might mean a renewal of local Klan activities. Either way, it is a problem. Jake agrees to let the deputy douse the flames with a garden hose. Carla and Jake snuggle in the swing, where she confesses her fear and her relief that Jake is off the case.

In the office, Ethel is typing Jake's motion to withdraw as counsel of record when Marsharfsky phones and asks Jake to be his local associate. Jake, of course, refuses, accusing The Shark of solicitation and threatening to report him or even have him reviewed by the grand jury. Then Walter Sullivan of the Sullivan firm calls to say that he has been retained as local associate. Jake hangs up on him.

Chapter 17 Analysis

All the activity of this chapter is aimed at ramping up the tension. First the ministers decide to bring in the NAACP, making a racism case of this, whether it is one or not. Then Carla warns Jake of the ethical consequences of calling Lester. Next comes the burning cross, surely a most ominous sign that the ugly behavior is only just beginning.

The two phone calls, from Marsharfsky and Sullivan, only add salt to the wounds Jake has recently experienced. It is clear to the reader, though, that the wheels of change are turning, and Jake might have the case snatched out from under him whether he calls Lester or not. It is also interesting to note that, when he is stumped or cornered, the person Jake always turns to is his wild, dissolute, unethical landlord and mentor.



Chapter 18

Chapter 18 Summary

Jake makes numerous attempts to find Lester's phone number in Chicago, finally asking the owner of Tank's Tonk, Lester's favorite club in the area, to get the number from Lester's local girlfriend, Iris. Tank reveals that Lester and Iris have a longstanding relationship and have two children together. Jake's practice is now returning to normal, but he finds it hard to concentrate and carefully avoids the courthouse and the Coffee Shop. He obsesses over Carl Lee, wondering why he was betrayed. He recalls Marsharfsky's hateful grandstanding and lying on behalf of pimps and drug dealers. By Wednesday afternoon, The Shark has not yet been seen in Clanton. At 3:30, Jake goes to Judge Noose's chambers to give an explanation for his withdrawal. The judge is most understanding, and Jake shares with Noose the facts that Marsharfsky is not licensed in Mississippi and that he has referred to this area as "out in the country." Two lowly Sullivan associates enter and a sarcastic exchange ensues.

Returning to the office suite, Jake is informed by Ethel that Buckley is waiting for him in his office. Seething, Jake threatens to fire Ethel, reminding her that no one enters his office when he is not there. He insists that Ethel relocate Buckley to the conference room, where Jake keeps him waiting for fifteen minutes. A heated, sarcastic argument follows, Jake refusing to give up anything about the Hailey case. He does taunt Buckley with his insider knowledge of the grand jury fiasco, however. Buckley storms out.

Jake's practice is picking up now, due to the grand jury indictments. He is representing two young men, one white and one black. Currently jailed, these two give Jake an opportunity to visit the jail and Ozzie. It turns out that Marsharfsky has not appeared or even called. Jake visits with Leroy Glass, his stabbing case, and cleverly plants the seed in Leroy's mind to warn Carl Lee that he has hired a lawyer not licensed in this state. Jake makes Leroy promise not to share this news with Carl Lee. Stepping outside, Jake finds Tank with two phone numbers for Lester in Chicago.

At 8:00 p.m., Jake heads back to his office, knowing Carla is waiting dinner for him but unwilling to call Lester from home. He considers the ethics of what he is about to do and decides to just call Lester and let the conversation take its own course. Lester agrees with little prompting to drive down to Clanton to have a talk with Carl Lee. That will occur on Saturday, and Jake promises he will be in his office. Then he goes home and eats dinner at 10:30 with Carla, who thinks the worst is behind them.

Chapter 18 Analysis

The reader is now fully aware of how much this Hailey case means to Jake and to what extent he will go to get it back. We watch him go from place to place, sowing seeds of discontent and suspicion, manipulating the judge and Lester and even his newest client.



Jake Brigance is shaping up to be a lawyer who does a good job of controlling others but has developed little self-control. He is skirting the edge of unethical practice now while he continues to hurl sarcastic remarks in every direction, not making any friends in the process. We are especially concerned that he is deceiving his staunchest, most loyal ally, his wife. It is becoming harder to cheer for the Jake we met in the early chapters.



Chapter 19

Chapter 19 Summary

On Friday afternoon, Jake slips into the clerk's office and quickly surveys the Carl Lee Hailey file. He notes that nothing has been added since his motion to withdraw. Leroy Glass is still in jail, facing a bond of \$10,000 that his family cannot raise. Jake has connections and could spring Glass, but he needs Leroy to stay in jail. Leroy explains the convoluted situation that brought him to jail, and Jake thinks what a circus his trial will be. Then, he inquires whether Leroy has betrayed his confidence about Carl Lee's case, and he is assured Leroy has not. He adds the new information that nothing has been added to Carl Lee's file all week, reminding Leroy not to say anything. He goes on to assert that Carl Lee will be convicted because of the busy, big-time lawyer he has hired, but he draws the line at promising that he, if he represented Carl Lee, he could get an acquittal.

Back in their cell, Leroy and Carl Lee converse. Leroy is careful not to repeat the things Jake has told him, but he intimates that Jake is worried about him. At Leroy's refusal to talk, Carl Lee strikes an intimidating pose, giving Leroy the reason he needs to spill the beans. After hearing the bad news, Carl Lee contemplates his position. He really has no one to trust but Jake, and he has fired Jake. He reflects on Marsharfsky's regular clientele and realizes that he does not want to be associated with him.

Ozzie calls the jail from home at 6:30 a.m. to alert Moss that Ford County's first NAACP member, Rev. Isaiah Street, a quiet, compassionate man who has effected civil rights improvements without bloodshed, is on his way to see Carl Lee. Carl Lee is awakened and brought to Ozzie's office where Rev. Street explains the importance of this case to all black people. An acquittal by a white jury would be the greatest phenomenon since school desegregation. Street has followed the career of Marsharfsky, and he knows that the clients he represents, even if acquitted, are always guilty. He fears Carl Lee will be presumed guilty by association. The reverend makes his point and then leaves.

Lester is on his way to Mississippi, reflecting on his failing marriage and his hopes to marry Iris. The north is where he lives and works, but the south is home. Still, he will never live in the south again because he cannot tolerate the ignorance and abject poverty of southern blacks. It is intolerably depressing, but he looks forward to seeing his family. He is proud of what Carl Lee has done.

Carl Lee is again invited into Ozzie's office for a visit that "might take awhile." Jake spends most of Saturday in his office, waiting for Lester to call. Finally at 2:15, Ozzie summons him to meet with Lester and Carl Lee. Frustrated, Jake is about to leave when Carl Lee finally says that he wishes to rehire Jake because "Lester wants me to." Jake is furious, but Carl Lee persists in his obstinate behavior. Finally he admits that he trusts Jake and wants his representation. The Hailey brothers will fire Marsharfsky this afternoon and then call Jake. The payment terms remain the same. Jake says they will



find a way to pay the psychiatrists. On the way out, Jake encounters a reporter looking for Marsharfsky. Jake says that, if he arrives, tell him he's too late. Meanwhile the brothers call Cat Bruster, who will inform Marsharfsky he is fired.

Chapter 19 Analysis

In this chapter, there is, again, a complete reversal of Jake's fortunes! Still, this chapter is more about Carl Lee than about Jake. Carl Lee is under pressure from every direction now, beginning with Leroy's warning, "They're gonna fry you," continuing with the reasoned plea of the Reverend Street and followed by the emotional argument of Lester. The only person who seems to think Marsharfsky is the best lawyer for him, besides Marsharfsky, is Cat, and he is back in Memphis, keeping busy. It is eminently clear that Carl Lee should rehire Jake, and he realizes Jake is the only person in the locale that he can trust. Still, it is hard for him to admit his mistake to this educated white man.

Jake demonstrates as little maturity and as much deception as we are now accustomed to witnessing in him. He deceives his wife about his long Saturday in the office, and he "plays dumb" when he visits with Carl Lee and Lester. Since we know this case will only drain his financial reserves, we have to assume that the promise of fame is what motivates him to press so hard to regain Carl Lee as a client.



Chapter 20

Chapter 20 Summary

On Sunday morning Jake finds nothing in the newspapers about his resumption of the Hailey case. He hopes to make the news tomorrow. Until he is publicly resurrected, he will hide himself. He imagines how the Sullivan crew will find out that they are no longer needed, and he relishes the anger and frustration it will bring. Jake plans to write a letter to Judge Noose and send a copy to Buckley.

Jake phones Lucien and shares the news, requesting that Lucien quickly find him a psychiatrist, "a cheap one who'll say anything." At breakfast Carla repeats last night's concerns about the threats, the burning cross and the potential for violence. Jake suggests that she and Hanna visit her parents in North Carolina until the trial is over, but she has no intention of being away from him for six weeks. Changing the subject, she asks whether he is going to church today, now that he is a star again. His response is that no one yet knows he is a star again, so he will wait until next Sunday. In all the black churches, collections are taken up for Carl Lee Hailey and his family, after which each pastor, including Reverend Agee, skims his take before passing the money on.

On Sunday afternoon the Hailey family is allowed a visit with Carl Lee. Gwen spreads a picnic lunch for the family and shares the news about the funds being raised on their behalf. Then she reports what the doctors say about Tonya. Her jaw is healing well, but she has such extensive damage to her female organs that she will probably never have children. She is to see a specialist in Memphis in a month. Tonya also suffers from nightmares and will need to see a psychiatrist. Gwen reports that the boys have been wonderful, but they miss their daddy. Carl Lee then tells her that he has hired Jake back. He reflects on the torture the two dead white boys inflicted on his daughter and the long-lasting effects it apparently will have. He recalls the macabre scene of their deaths and smiles, still proud of what he did. Killing "gooks" in Vietnam bothered him more than this.

Jake pens two terse letters. One is to Judge Noose, with a copy to Buckley, reinstating himself as counsel of record for Carl Lee, and the other is to Walter Sullivan, telling him that his firm's assistance will no longer be needed. Bo Marsharfsky calls and threatens that, if he wants the Hailey case, he'll get it. Jake laughs for ten minutes and lights a cheap cigar as he begins writing his request for change of venue.

Two days later, Lucien summons Jake to his house to meet Dr. W.T. Bass, retired psychiatrist, with whom he has worked in the past. Drinking buddies, they share Jack Daniels together, waiting for Jake. Dr. Bass wants to examine Carl Lee and form an opinion, but Lucien reminds him that, if his opinion is not the right one, he will not get to testify and enjoy all the publicity. Bass keeps reminding him that this has not worked well in the past. Two men he testified were insane are still in Parchman. As they drink, the two of them banter back and forth about the favors they have done each other, none



of the cases seeming to have been particularly successful for either one. It turns out that Lucien has helped Bass in three divorce suits and a malpractice suit, all alleging adultery.

When Jake arrives, both men are drunk. Bass is passed out in the swing. Lucien shares a little information about the doctor, including the facts that he still retains his license and that he peddles a little dope and prescribes narcotics legally but not necessarily ethically. The doctor falls off the swing, and Jake leaves in disgust. Meanwhile, Deputy Looney is released and drives with his family to the jail where there is a small reception for him. He will now be a dispatcher, retaining his badge.

Chapter 20 Analysis

Everything about this chapter is ugly, nasty and depraved. Jake begins with a quest to find himself in the newspapers and the decision to stay away from church until he is "recognized" again. He stubbornly dismisses Carla's rational arguments, although the reader plainly sees the handwriting on the wall. He relishes the opportunity to kick sand in the faces of the Sullivan crew, especially Lotterhouse, and the puffed up D.A., Buckley. Even the slick and dirty Marshafsky cannot scare the presumptuous Jake Brigrance. Jake is clearly suffering from the arrogant pride called "hubris."

Sadly, readers discover that even the black preachers are just a little bit crooked, each skimming from the collection a bit of what was given for the Haileys. Making it even worse, Carl Lee knows it! Making the most of their awful situation, the Hailey family begins with a pleasant jail-yard picnic that dissolves into tears for Gwen and Tonya. The relating of the horrific effects the assault is having on the little girl is heart wrenching, and Carl Lee is ghoulishly proud as he reflects on the murders he has committed.

This revolting chapter ends appropriately with the arrogant young lawyer facing his two most important assistants, both helplessly drunk on the front porch, having been imbibing since breakfast. As long as Bass is willing to lie and not charge anything for it, though, Jake will have him. In sad juxtaposition to the depraved hilarity on Lucien's porch, Deputy Looney now drives his family home with a large part of one leg missing. His career is effectively over, and now two black families have been destroyed.



Chapter 21

Chapter 21 Summary

In the city's largest black church, Reverend Agee, joined by NAACP leaders, holds a press conference, Gwen Hailey by his side. He announces the formation of the Carl Lee Hailey defense fund, and the two NAACP leaders contribute \$10,000. Agee rants for forty-five minutes about his favorite issues. Next the national NAACP director holds forth for thirty minutes, haranguing the crowd of two hundred with national statistics on racism in the court system. Highly exercised now, he exhorts the local blacks to give until it hurts and then promises marches and demonstrations. He goes on to reveal that the NAACP will provide lawyers, its capital defense unit handling all aspects of the trial, and he is sure they will raise in excess of \$50,000 for legal fees. Then all stand and sing "We Shall Overcome." Jake reads about the speeches in the newspaper and is angry. Will the six NAACP capital defense lawyers, nicknamed "the death squad," descend on Clanton and take away his case? If Carl Lee refuses their help, sticking with Jake, will the money be withdrawn?

Carl Lee must travel to Whitfield for examination by the state's psychiatrists. Ozzie will drive him there, accompanied by four deputies, with three shotguns in each car. He will probably have to stay several days. As Carl Lee quickly devours a very early breakfast, Jake tries to brief him, but Carl Lee acts silly, refusing to take the situation seriously. Jake storms out.

Preparing for the change of venue hearing, Jake struggles to find credible witnesses who will testify that Carl Lee is unlikely to receive a fair trial in Clanton. He knows that Buckley will parade a string of the state's finest through the courtroom, making a convincing argument against Jake's case. In fact, Jake would personally prefer to keep the trial on his own turf, across the street from his office, three minutes from home, with Carl Lee in the Ford County jail and better chances for media coverage. As Lucien has pointed out, venue really does not matter, as every prospective juror in the state has already heard about the case and been prejudiced in some way. The main problem, though, is the color of the jury. Jake prefers black jurors, and they are scarce in Ford County. One black could hang the jury. A majority might force an acquittal. Jake is willing to give up the pleasures of home for that chance. Lucien has thoroughly researched the venue issue and instructs Jake for three hours on his front porch.

A few miles from Jackson, the squad cars arrive at Whitfield to face a throng of crazed reporters. Once again the deputies fool the press about the whereabouts of Carl Lee Hailey. The law officers deliver Carl Lee and return to Clanton. Hailey is placed in a cell, interviewed for two hours and then handcuffed and driven by golf cart to the office of Dr. Wilbert Rodeheaver, head of staff.

Chapter 21 Analysis

The events in this chapter demonstrate the ridiculous extent to which almost all people will go in response to a crisis. Most of those involved, like Reverend Agee, the NAACP director and Jake Brigance, are in it for the fame and acclaim. They make fools of themselves in the television camera's bright lights and on the newspapers' front pages, seemingly unable to rein in their lust for media coverage. Jake is unable to let go of the media's strong pull even as he considers the change of venue motion, fantasizing about the reporters who might follow him from his office to the courthouse each day.

The black community in general now rallies behind Carl Lee as if he is a hometown hero just come back from war. They seem to forget that, although his violent act was, to a certain extent, justified, it was still cold, calculated, pre-meditated murder of two human beings. Carl Lee himself is filled with a riot of emotions, worrying about his family, enraged at what has happened to his precious daughter, confused about the legal system and his place in it and emasculated by his incarceration. His refusal to take seriously the impending examination at Whitfield angers Jake, but the reader understands his crazy antics in Ozzie's office, straws up his nose and hands flailing at invisible butterflies. Carl Lee is in a pressure cooker, and this is probably the first chance he has had, since his little girl's rape, to let off steam. Still, his behavior, for a man in his position, can be called ridiculous.

Finally, the reporters have now wound themselves up to a ridiculous frenzy, actually buying the scam that Carl Lee has been deputized and put behind the wheel of a sheriff's vehicle. The law enforcement officers might be said to behave somewhat ridiculously themselves, although their hilarious outwitting of the press (not for the first time) seems an appropriate response, considering the three-ring circus in which they find themselves.



Chapter 22

Chapter 22 Summary

Clanton is "on the map," but the locals have become disenchanted with their visitors, tired of seeing themselves referred to in print as backward, racist rednecks. Visitors now find little cooperation or sympathy in Clanton. On the morning of the venue hearing, the first real skirmish of this battle, reporters are all over the courthouse, and Jake is tingling with excitement and feeling well prepared.

Noose convenes the court for the venue hearing. Jake has filed notice of the insanity defense, and both his own psychiatrist and those at Whitfield have examined Carl Lee. Jake now moves to summons more than the usual number of prospective jurors. Buckley's opposition immediately cuts him off. The judge lectures Buckley sternly, offering him "ample opportunity after we adjourn to perform for the media," a mean retort, out of character for this judge.

As Noose moves to the change of venue motion, Carl Lee, by his own choice, is seated next to Jake, and his family is in the front row. Jake asserts that he will call three witnesses. Buckley has twenty-one. The judge advises Buckley to pick his best five. Jake rises to calmly give his rationale for change of venue, but the judge challenges him, stating that everyone in the state has read or heard the details of the case.

Jake calls Harry Rex Vonner as his first witness. Harry Rex describes the kind of media coverage he saw on the night of the murders. When Jake prompts Vonner to tell what he has heard of the rape, Buckley objects loudly, earning another lecture from the judge. Vonner tells what he has heard and insists that everyone has discussed the entire case throughout the county, everywhere he has gone. Asked whether he believes the report that Carl Lee murdered the two men, Vonner responds, "I know it's true." He goes on to say that he has encountered not one person who believes that Carl Lee did not kill the two white boys, explaining that it would be impossible to find any impartial jurors. On cross-examination by Buckley, Vonner states that he would never convict Carl Lee Hailey and that, if his daughter were raped, he hopes he would do the same as Hailey has done. He concedes that people have formed opinions on both sides of the question, but he becomes sarcastic and is dismissed.

Jake now calls Reverend Ollie Agee, who testifies to the same facts as Vonner did. He testifies articulately though, with restraint. Buckley's only question is whether Agee knows of a single black who would vote to convict, and Agee says no. Jake then smiles at Buckley and calls sheriff Ozzie Walls, causing consternation at the D.A.'s table. The sheriff answers questions at length, giving boring and repetitious data on the rape and concluding that Ford County does not have twelve people who do not know every detail of the rape and murder. All have their minds made up.



At recess, in chambers, Noose suggests that he might impose a gag order. Buckley looks pale and shaken, but Jake agrees, saying he had thought of requesting that. Noose explains that the biggest media problem is two lawyers fighting for the same spotlight. He does indeed decide to impose the gag order and then questions Buckley about his prospective witnesses when the hearing resumes. One name he mentions causes Jake to remark that the man has been indicted by the FBI. That silences Buckley for awhile. Noose finally agrees to hear six state's witnesses. Then, each man will have five minutes for summary. He will decide on the motion within two weeks.

Chapter 22 Analysis

This activity is in sharp contrast to the hilarity and frivolity of some of the previous chapters. This is serious business, although readers realize that Jake has little hope of getting a change of venue. Remember, he is requesting it at Lucien's suggestion so that he will have its denial to fall back on if he loses the case and must appeal. Jake would also love to keep the trial in Clanton. The hearing is an exercise in fairly useless motion. Testimony is exactly what everyone would expect. Note that Grisham does not even bother to share Buckley's witnesses with us, as we already know exactly what they will say. On this level, the hearing is rather silly, but at least we are moving forward. The wheels of justice are beginning to turn. At this point, we have no further idea as to Carl Lee's fate.

What readers do know is that Jake's fate has taken a twist. The gag order, which he so nobly supported in the judge's chambers, effectively squeezes him out of the spotlight. This action on the part of Noose demonstrates astute thinking. He sees through all the foolishness. We must take note, though, that there are rumors the judge is ill, and he certainly does not seem himself, according to Jake. Is this a foreshadowing of another major shift to watch for?

Harry Rex is a rather comic character, and his freewheeling testimony lightens the story a little. Like any good lawyer, he warms to his subject and rises to a fever pitch. Judge Noose smartly brings him down, though, when he goes too far. Buckley, the District Attorney, is often portrayed as a bit of a buffoon, and we see that side of him in this chapter. Such little chuckles are welcome comic relief in a story that is, at times, terribly dark.



Chapter 23

Chapter 23 Summary

As Jake reluctantly dodges reporters, his secretary Ethel calls his attention to \$4,000 in unpaid bills, some overdue, mentioning that he has only \$1,900 in the bank. She reminds Jake that he no longer sees clients or returns phone calls or drops off promised files. These observations seem to Jake like a lecture. When he tells her to keep her mouth shut or quit, she tearfully tells him of threatening phone calls and her husband's ill health. He says he will get the money.

Deputy Willie Hastings, uncle to Tonya, takes his turn to sleep on Gwen Hailey's couch. Every night an adult male family member sleeps there, and every night Tonya has night terrors and dreams. She insists that every light in the house remain on. She sees and hears the men who raped her, and she is sure they are hiding in the house. Gwen continues to sleep with her. Tonya awakens screaming and insists Willie sit under her bedroom window where she saw the men looking in at her. Her brothers sleep on the floor around her bed until Willie carries them to their beds.

Jake eats ribs with Stan Atcavage at Claude's where they discuss a \$5,000 loan Jake is asking for, unsecured. Atcavage appeared in court during the venue hearing, Jake notes, unlike a banker, and would have testified if needed. Jake reminds Atcavage that his bank refused to loan Carl Lee Hailey money against his property, which is why Jake has no money. He also reminds his friend that his bank holds the lien on his car. Atcavage agrees to the loan. He says the check will be ready at 3:00 p.m.

In the jail yard, the Hailey family has Sunday picnic dinner on a hot, humid afternoon. Carl Lee reports what happened at Whitfield, stating that he was treated well by his guards, both of whom told him they were proud of him for what he did. He explains about the drunken psychiatrist Jake has hired for no fee. Gwen needs a couple hundred dollars to make ends meet at home, and Carl Lee tells her he will see what he can do. When she questions him, he reminds her that he is still the man of the family.

Chapter 23 Analysis

In this brief chapter, readers are brought up to date on the reality of the main characters' lives. The upcoming trial is taking a heavy toll on each of them. Jake has been silenced, although we recall that the only thing he plans to get out of this trial is fame, since he will get no money. Money is something he desperately needs. Even Ethel Twitty is suffering emotionally from the threatening phone calls and her inability to pay the practice's bills.

The Haileys too are short on money, but that is only one of their many problems. It is clear that Tonya is making no emotional recovery from the attack, and her problems are causing a serious mental and physical strain on the whole family, even the extended

family. When Carl Lee tells Gwen he will "see what I can do" to get some money, we can only speculate that he will ask Reverend Agee for some money from his legal defense fund, but he might have other plans in mind. We read on.



Chapter 24

Chapter 24 Summary

Reverend Agee has summoned the council of black ministers for strategic planning. He has deposited nearly \$6,000 (out of \$7,000) in the Hailey defense fund and will seek NAACP advice on disbursement. Council members arrive in their Cadillacs and Lincolns. On Monday the thirty-year-old Jewish supervisor of the NAACP "death squad" arrives in Clanton. Norman Reinfeld, a Harvard Law School graduate, passed up a Wall Street job in the family law firm to save blacks from death row in the Deep South. He is "arrogant and insolent by nature" and totally committed to his task. He turns a blind eye to the guilt of many of his clients. After Agee introduces Reinfeld, he asks for an immediate meeting with Hailey and his local lawyer. Jake will be asked to help with the defense "to ease the pain." That is arranged for tomorrow morning. Then Reinfeld expresses disapproval over the small sum of money the council and the state NAACP have raised. He says it will buy an adequate defense, but not at all what is needed. They need to raise \$50,000 to \$100,000, he tells them. Agee answers that the poor blacks in Mississippi can do no such thing.

Sheriff Walls invites Jake to the impending meeting between Carl Lee and Reinfeld. Jake has heard of Reinfeld, and he says he will be there. He wants to meet with his client immediately, alone, though. The next day, Jake and Carl Lee meet with Reinfeld, Agee and two other ministers. Jake finds he must work against Reinfeld's insolence. As the two trade sarcastic remarks, Carl Lee remains mute. Finally Jake leads Carl Lee to ask how much the NAACP plans to spend on his case. Jake howls at the \$20,000 figure, rattling off much greater sums they have spent on recent cases which resulted in convictions! Reinfeld implores Agee to speak to Hailey, but Carl Lee only questions Agee about the local fund that has been collected and how much has been offered to Gwen, knowing she has received nothing.

Since Jake has made it clear that he will not work as the NAACP "gofer," Carl Lee now asks what will become of the \$20,000 if he decides to keep only Jake as his lawyer. Agee impatiently lectures Carl Lee. Finally it is clear that the NAACP funds will go to Hailey only if he uses that organization's lawyers. As for the other \$6,000, raised locally, "we ain't discussed that yet." Reinfeld insists on an instant decision, and Carl Lee tells him to catch his plane. "I'll take my chances with my friend Jake."

Chapter 24 Analysis

This scene certainly pits David against Goliath, but it is more complicated than that. Goliath (the NAACP "death squad") is offering to help Carl Lee and not even hurt David (Jake Brigance) in the process. However, Jake's hubris will not allow him to play second fiddle to anyone, whether or not the "big lawyer" might offer his client an advantage. To further complicate matters, both lawyers are white, and everyone else involved is black.



The black ministers cannot treat Carl Lee as they would like, "talk to him like a nigger," in front of these whites. When pressed to tell what they have done and will do to help, however, they must reveal that they have given no money to Carl Lee's family and have not committed to any help in the future if the NAACP is not actively involved.

In the final analysis, every person in the scene is looking out for number one. Everyone is acting out of personal greed, to some extent. The black ministers are holding back some of the money. Norman Reinfeld is simply looking for the next big case, not for a chance to help Carl Lee out of any conviction that he needs and deserves help. Jake is wallowing in his pride, as usual. No one has lifted a finger to help the Hailey family. Although loyalty peeps through here and there, for the most part this is the scene in which Grisham's negative themes - greed, bigotry and hubris - all come together. These people look very small now. In fact, at the end of the meeting, the best person in the room is the confessed murderer.



Chapter 25

Chapter 25 Summary

On Thursday, July 11, the Ku Klux Klan is reborn in Ford County. The new Klavern, with its six members, is established deep in the woods in the dead of night. Freddie Cobb is among them. Before a burning cross, the six are hooded and chanted over. Then, whiskey is poured in a nearby cabin. No uninvited guests intrude as the group of about thirty Klansmen discusses the Carl Lee Hailey trial.

At three minutes after midnight, an anonymous caller tips off the Ford County Sheriff's deputy that Jake Brigrance's house will be blown up within the next three hours. The dispatcher summons Ozzie as Deputy Pirtle races to Jake's house and takes up residence on the darkened front porch. All seems in order as Ozzie and another deputy arrive. The deputies stand watch as Ozzie wakes Jake and instructs him to get dressed and take up a position with his rifle. Ozzie reasons that this is likely the work of the Klan, as there are enough people involved to allow for a leak. If it were just a few "freelancers," then who would have made the call? Jake would like to scare them off, but Ozzie would like to catch them.

Soon a lone figure appears, walking with a case. As he places it next to the house, Ozzie's nightstick crashes into his skull, and Ozzie proceeds to break both of the man's ankles, trying to extract information about what is in the ticking case. The man confirms that it is dynamite. Jake quickly puts Carla and Hanna in the car with instructions to leave the area. They handcuff the man to the gas meter and convince him to try to defuse the bomb, which they have now placed between his broken legs. No one knows him. Within a few minutes, he defuses the bomb, but he will not tell where his accomplices are until Ozzie begins to break his ribs. When he gives the information, Ozzie orders the squad cars.

When Carla returns, with Hanna still asleep in the backseat, Jake has called Carla's father. Jake now insists that she take the child and stay with her parents until the trial is over. She reminds him that he promised to withdraw if the danger became real, but he says he cannot back out, only ten days from trial. Carla says that she feels, somehow, he has lied to her, but she begins packing. At 6:30 a.m. the two are on the plane to North Carolina. At 7:30 Jake is back in Ozzie's office. The bombing suspect seems to be a professional brought in from the outside. His accomplice, also beaten because he resisted arrest and interrogation, is Terrell Grist, a local redneck, now also in the hospital. Ozzie assigns Deputy Nesbitt to Jake around the clock until the trial is over, and they all vow to try to keep the incident a secret.

Jake retreats to his office, where he naps for an hour until he is awakened by a call from Judge Noose inviting him to lunch. He drives to the Nooses' antebellum house in neighboring Chester where the two of them discuss the venue motion. The judge has discovered that people four hundred miles from Clanton have an opinion on Carl Lee's



guilt or innocence. He has, therefore, overruled the motion and asks Jake to file his order with the clerk. Jake agrees and thinks of his wife and daughter and his home.

This Friday afternoon, like all of them, reminds Jake of law school, and he reminisces about the carefree lifestyle, the freedom of poverty, the social drinking and meeting Carla. He remembers that she was beautiful but insecure; that she was a Dean's List student with no career ambitions and that she came from a wealthy family. He wanted a wife who would stay home and stay beautiful. Carla influenced him to give up the beer, and they were married six months later. To this day, he misses beer.

Jake buys a six-pack at a little grocery store and drinks it all the way back to Clanton, stopping for another along the way. He drives to Lucien's where they drink together and discuss Noose's order to overrule the venue motion. Then Lucien reveals that the ambitious D.A. has riled many influential "nigger-haters" to threaten the judge's reelection chances if the trial is moved. Noose has also had death threats. When Jake concedes that he knows how that feels, Lucien reveals that he knows about the dynamite. Jake has no idea how Lucien would know, but the latter invites him to stay there. Meanwhile, the two drink themselves into a stupor, and Jake is passed out on the swing when Ozzie arrives to report that Carla has been calling, worried. Jake staggers to the phone to call her.

Chapter 25 Analysis

The big, black, downward spiral has begun now. All of the things that could go wrong because Jake has taken on this case are now in motion. The threats to his home and family are real, and although his family is now probably safe, Jake will miss them for the next month. The judge's actions are no longer predictable because he is under threat himself. Although Jake was not confident in the motion for change of venue, he was confident that its denial would be grounds for appeal. Now he realizes that Noose has already sought support for his decision all the way to the Supreme Court.

Without the steadying influence of his wife, Jake easily (and very quickly) backslides into the irresponsible behavior of his youth. It is appropriate that he goes to Lucien at a time like this, when he is on the way to getting drunk and facing the biggest challenge of his career. Lucien will assist him on both counts: the drinking and the legal advice. When Ozzie finds Jake passed out in the swing, readers cannot help but recall Jake's disgust, some pages earlier, when he found the pathetic psychiatrist passed out in the very same swing.



Chapter 26

Chapter 26 Summary

Jake awakens with a killer hangover and manages to get to his office, where he sits in the shower for an hour. Then he lies on his conference table and hopes to die. Eventually he gets to work. He knows that Carla could tell on the phone last night that he was drunk. He has called her again, but she is not impressed. It is now nine days until the trial. Eventually he hears knocking on the front door. After fifteen minutes he finally admits the slender, good-looking young woman who has been so persistent. She is Ellen Roark, a law student at Ole Miss, bored during this summer before her final semester.

Jake asks Ellen to state her credentials, and Ellen tells a tale of family genius, growing up in her father's firm of eighteen lawyers. She has experience in writing briefs and witnessing executions, and her aspiration is to be a "radical criminal lawyer" like her father and stamp out the death penalty. Her father is filthy rich, and she has more money than Jake. She will work for free, doing research, typing, answering the phone and even making coffee. She is twenty-five years old and quite attractive, and she just wants to be part of a big, meaningful jury trial. She promises not to be in the way, and Jake hires her on the spot.

After Jake has a nap and Ellen does some research, they converse over lunch at Claude's. They discuss his recent binge and current hangover, and he tells her about the death threats and bombing attempt, warning her that the job she has just taken could be dangerous. She informs him she carries a licensed snub-nosed pistol in her purse and has used it to avoid abduction. Their conversation turns to the death penalty, and their voices rise as Jake defends it and Ellen attacks it. They find a few other points of contention, such as the ACLU, to which she belongs, and then they discuss the Hailey trial. Jake gives Ellen her first two assignments: a brief on every Mississippi M'Naghten insanity decision in the past fifty years and research on ways to keep photos of the dead boys' bodies away from the jury while introducing as many details of the rape as possible. Finally, he suggests she wear a bra to work. He says he doesn't "need the distraction."

Chapter 26 Analysis

Jake faces the woman in his life, and he is gratified to hear the ice melt and feel some concern for him on her part. He knows that he has let her down and that she is disappointed in his behavior the previous night. How ironic, then, that he meets Ellen Roark this very day. She is a feisty, capable, attractive young woman who, he notices immediately, is not wearing a bra. Ellen is the antithesis of the absent Carla. She is career-oriented, "not beautiful, not cute," with a layer of bitchiness just below the surface. Apparently she is going to make Jake's life a lot easier rather than more

complicated, and he will not have to pay her a dime for it. In addition, she will surely be a distraction and a temptation, and here she is, the day after he sends his wife away! Like Lucien, Ellen is likely to become a valuable resource that might also distract Jake from his work or, at the least, be a source of frustration. Thus Grisham introduces a new twist to his plot.



Chapter 27

Chapter 27 Summary

One week before the trial opens, Clanton prepares to be in the national spotlight. Public facilities are being cleaned and rejuvenated, and merchants are ordering extra inventory. Judge Noose has carefully orchestrated the calling of the jury in order to avoid any missteps that might later cause his decision to be overturned. One hundred and fifty potential jurors have been randomly drawn from voter rolls, picked from a drum by two clerks, one white and one black. Ozzie is instructed in how his men are to serve the summonses, not mentioning the name of the case or anything about it. All are to be delivered between 4:00 p.m. and midnight, and the names are to remain confidential until Wednesday. Jake appears within seconds to flirt with the secretaries in the clerk's office and demand the juror list from the clerk, Jean Gillespie. She refuses. Jake reminds her how he has helped her family and that he helped her get reelected, but to no avail. He gets no list and storms out as Jean cries.

Two hours later Harry Rex barges into Jake's office with the jury list, annotated in his own hand. It seems unhelpful, but Jake appreciates it nonetheless. He invites Harry Rex to meet with Lucien, Ellen and himself on Wednesday evening to discuss jury selection and the list. Harry Rex cautions against picking women, as they would oppose Carl Lee's violent act, but Jake reports that Lucien advises to go with women due to their sympathy. One person on the list is a former client of Harry's. He thinks he can influence her. He promises to be in court Monday morning to watch and give advice.

Ellen appears for work and is immediately confronted by Ethel, who does not like her appearance, especially her lack of a bra. Ellen lies that Jake is paying her a hundred dollars per hour and that he told her to dispense with her bra. Jake and Harry eavesdrop, highly amused. Ellen and Harry Rex are introduced and exchange friendly banter, and Ellen reports that research is proceeding slowly.

After dark Jake visits Tank's Tonk, where Tank introduces him as Carl Lee's attorney. He becomes an instant hero. Jake hands Tank the jury list. He instructs Tank to identify blacks and anyone else he knows and to find out about the rest. This is the twelfth and final copy of the list Jake has distributed. Even Ozzie has received one. At the same time, Ethel Twitty is at home working in her kitchen, when her husband Bud is dragged silently from his front porch and beaten by two thugs. Ethel comes out to investigate. She is immobilized and made to watch silently as the men beat her husband. Three figures in long white robes and hoods watch, and then all six disappear. After midnight Jake leaves the hospital where Bud is clinging to life and not expected to last. Ethel has accosted Jake and blamed him for her husband's recent heart attack and broken bones.



Chapter 27 Analysis

The circle of vulnerable persons has widened considerably, and the Klansmen have made it clear that they mean to continue their assault on Clanton. Judge Noose's precautions with jury selection, especially keeping the names secret, signals more than a concern about being overturned. He is also fearful for the danger into which these one hundred and fifty lives are being placed. Now Ellen Roark and Harry Rex are implicated because they are playing an active role in pretrial preparations. Surprisingly, Ethel, the one player who is least privy to the details of the case and least likely to ally herself with Jake, suffers the severest blow. If there was any doubt about the Klan's intentions, this chapter wipes it away.

Jury selection will be critical. Readers see Jake taking the process most seriously and doing everything in his power to influence the process in favor of Carl Lee. After several opportunities to see Jake Brigance as arrogant and self-indulgent, this chapter gives us an opportunity to view him as a competent, serious lawyer.



Chapter 28

Chapter 28 Summary

Gwen Hailey calls Jake early Tuesday morning to say that she needs money badly. She has missed two house payments and the utilities might be shut off. She affirms that she has received nothing from the church council. Jake asks her to be in his office at 2:00 p.m. with the children. Then he calls Reverend Agee and asks him to come at 2:00 to discuss his testimony in Carl Lee's trial.

In the conference room, Jake brings the family face-to-face with the pastor, who insists the money is for Carl Lee's trial, since that is the best way to use it. Pressed by Jake, Agee admits that the NAACP has advised him to hang onto the money until after Jake loses the case, at which time he will hire the "death squad" to represent Carl Lee on appeal and apply the money for that purpose. Gwen tells the pastor the troubles she faces and reminds him that she sat in church and heard him say this collection was a "love offering for the Hailey family." As Jake's blood boils, Agee insists the money is Carl Lee's to spend, and Jake demands to know how Carl Lee would like the money spent.

When no answer is forthcoming, Jake opens the door to a side office and ushers in Carl Lee and Ozzie. Carl Lee sternly instructs him to give the money to Gwen for family expenses. He proceeds to threaten the pastor, saying he will "tell ever nigger I know that you're a lyin' crook." When Agee claims to be hurt, Ozzie steps in and reminds Agee of all the dirty little secrets he could tell the congregation, such as the purchase of a stolen Lincoln, kickbacks from a funeral home, a DUI and even an encounter with "a woman of ill repute." Agee says he can get the money to the Haileys "awful damn quick."

While the Hailey family enjoys a private visit, Jake takes Ozzie upstairs to meet Ellen. The three discuss recent Klan activities. Ozzie notes that the bomber has not been identified, and Bud Twitty is still in critical condition. However, Ozzie now has an informant who calls himself Mickey Mouse. He promises to call if someone is in danger, as he did when Jake's house was to be bombed. The Klan will march in Clanton on Thursday, and the NAACP will march on Wednesday. Ozzie has asked the governor to keep the highway patrol on standby. He promises to have his jury notes to Jake tomorrow.

Joe Frank Perryman and his wife Lela, an older farming couple from outside Karaway, sit on their front porch in the evening, drinking iced tea and talking about the crops. Will Tierce, former president of the county board of supervisors, shows up and joins them for a chat. Tierce has been good to Perryman, lending him special favors at county expense, and Perryman has, in turn, supported Tierce's reelection. Now Tierce mentions that he's heard Joe Frank has been summoned as a juror in "that nigger's case." He explains the danger of letting a black man be acquitted of murdering two white men just because he was insane at the time, helping Joe Frank and Lela see how



that would lead to a dangerous state in which "the niggers would go crazy" and carry guns, shooting whites at will because they were temporarily "insane." Joe Frank understands, and Will urges him to serve on the jury if he gets the chance. Back at home, Tierce writes, "okay" next to the Perryman name, one of six assigned to him by Rufus Buckley a few days ago. He has contacted and approved all six for Buckley to select. In return, Will Tierce's nephew will escape dope charges.

Ellen and Jake have dinner with a very drunken Lucien. He calls Jake a right-wing, knee-jerk, conservative Republican and reveals that he is the county's only ACLU member and the third white man in Mississippi to join the NAACP. Jake reminds him of tomorrow evening's meeting at his office to discuss jury selection. There will be no alcohol. Lucien threatens to bring a case of whiskey. The conversation deteriorates as Lucien's drunkenness claims him, and Ellen leaves. Jake goes to his temporary quarters and calls Carla. He does not mention Bud Twitty.

Chapter 28 Analysis

This chapter gives the reader an opportunity to check the score. Jake scores a big victory in the opening by cleverly using the Haileys and Ozzie Walls to pressure the crooked pastor into placing the money, rightfully, in Gwen's hands. However, he is totally unaware that Rufus Buckley has received the jury list, certainly by illicit means, since it was to stay private until tomorrow. Buckley has shared it with loyal peons who will do his bidding. Jury selection might be even more difficult than Jake has anticipated. Later on, at Lucien's dinner table, Jake scores no victory. The banter is lighthearted and silly, showing how well Ellen fits into the picture, but Lucien's drunkenness is worrisome. He is a key player on Jake's team, and Jake needs him sober. His threat to bring a case of whiskey, reminding Jake who owns the building, crosses the line from silly banter to a nagging concern. In addition, knowing that both the NAACP and the Klan will be marching in the streets of Clanton only brings more dark clouds to linger over Jake's efforts on behalf of Carl Lee Hailey. Tension is mounting now in Clanton as well as in the reader.



Chapter 29

Chapter 29 Summary

A convoy of thirty-one church buses carrying elderly blacks converges on the courthouse lawn where Reverend Agee is preparing a rally. Soon the square is congested as throngs come to participate. In the hundred-degree heat, the chant begins, "Free Carl Lee." Stores empty as gawkers come to see the sight, and the press follows as Agee and the other ministers approach the podium. For fifteen minutes, the pastor whips the crowd into a frenzy. Then he invites Rev. Roosevelt in front of the cameras to say a prayer, after which the crowd sings, chants some more and finally falls silent for Rev. Agee's "sermon."

Jake's jury strategy team meets in his office while the black citizens maintain a candlelight vigil around the courthouse. Lucien arrives late and half-drunk, carrying an open bottle. He lectures Jake and sends Ellen for beer. Harry Rex gives in and adds whiskey to his coffee as Jake opens the meeting. Jake asks the group to "decide on a model juror." Realizing they are unlikely to get black jurors, they identify important characteristics of the model white juror. Then Jake starts going through the list of names, considering each prospective juror. Lucien manages to drop in a frustrating rebuke to about just about every opinion given. By now Jake is the only one not drinking.

The name Clyde Sisco stirs conversation as Lucien tells how he "bought" Sisco in a previous case. He urges Jake to do the same, but Jake declines. They move on. Around 10:30, Jake has his first beer. An hour later the case is gone, and forty names remain. Lucien sends deputy Nesbit for more beer, and after midnight, Nesbit takes Lucien, Atcavage and Vonner home in his patrol car. Jake and Ellen sit on the balcony where he gives her instructions on preparing Dr. Bass, the psychiatrist. Ellen sleeps on the couch in the office, and Jake drives to his home, followed by Nesbit.

Chapter 29 Analysis

In this chapter, readers witness the forces of good at work on behalf of Carl Lee Hailey, and we see just how flawed they are. The demonstration on the courthouse lawn features the earnest goodwill of just about every black citizen in Ford County, pure of heart and committed to justice as they view it. What a wonderful outpouring of support for the defendant! However, the scene is marred by the self-serving theatrics of Agee and Roosevelt and the other preachers, reminding us that these religious leaders who exhort their poor congregations to give until it hurts drive Lincolns and Cadillacs.

The same tortured good intentions stalk the meeting in Jake's office, ironically just across the street, where the best minds available to the defense slowly get plastered within a stone's throw of the solemn candlelight vigil. For all his good intentions, Jake

can discipline neither his advisers nor himself. One has to sigh for poor Carl Lee Hailey at this point, wondering whether he has made a big mistake in turning away the NAACP.



Chapter 30

Chapter 30 Summary

Forty Klansmen have gathered at the cabin in the woods, donning white robes and hoods, encouraged by their leader, Stump Sisson. They clamber into vehicles and head for town to launch their peaceful, permitted demonstration. The town is all aflutter. No one now alive has ever witnessed a KKK march in Clanton, and Ozzie is nervous. The forty white-robed marchers circle the courthouse and gather around a podium on the lawn where reporters hastily set up microphones and cameras. Young black men gather under an oak tree, and Ozzie stations himself there while his men work the crowd.

As Jake watches from the clerk's office window, Sisson reveals his identity as Mississippi's Imperial Wizard. The crowd of blacks inches closer and grows quickly, now outnumbering the Klansmen ten to one. Ozzie and six deputies step between the two groups as Sisson shouts into the microphone. The blacks begin to chant "Free Carl Lee." Sisson yells for the sheriff, remarking that this is the behavior you get "when you elect niggers to public office." From the third floor of the courthouse, someone throws a firebomb, igniting Sisson, and the riot erupts. The two groups brawl in hand-to-hand combat. Each Klansman is armed with a nightstick, and the blacks have clubs and rocks. Ozzie is the first victim to fall. Even the press is mauled in the melee. Three deputies fire their revolvers into the air and quell the riot. Reinforcements arrive, along with rescue vehicles, and the riot is over. As Jake, Ellen and Harry Rex watch the CBS coverage that evening, eating pizza in the conference room, Carla phones. She wants to leave Hanna in Wilmington and come home to be with Jake, but he will not hear of it.

At midnight, in the cabin in the woods, the Klansmen who have been released from hospitals with bandages meet with their admiring brothers to drink whiskey and relive the glory of the courthouse lawn. Stump Sisson has sent word to move on with the plan. On a map of the county, they locate the homes of the twenty prospective jurors to be targeted tonight. Five pickup trucks carry four-man teams out into the countryside with nine-foot crosses, drenched with kerosene. Nineteen of the targets are addressed without a hitch, but Luther Picket has been awakened by a noise and sits on his porch with his shotgun. He shoots at the team that drops a cross in his yard, spraying the truck but harming no one. From a phone booth, a Kluxer calls each of the twenty and invites them to look out into their front yard.

Chapter 30 Analysis

Readers begin to learn how ugly this thing can get. As the Ku Klux Klan makes it absolutely clear that they mean business, the reader understands that the veneer of peaceful coexistence between the races in Clanton does not run deep. In matters of life and death, the blacks gather on one side of the line and the whites on the other. Although the citizens of Clanton might have gone on indefinitely maintaining their



peaceful coexistence, the whites can be riled and incited by wild talk of "niggers" taking over, shooting at will and getting away with crimes. Stump Sisson's words are ironic in that he screams that he is "sick and tired of niggers stealin,' rapin,' killin' and getting by with it," and yet it was a gang rape by two *white* men that started the entire standoff.

Carla is justified in her anxiety, although Jake is certainly wise to refuse to let her come home. When the sheriff is the first victim to fall, anything might transpire. Perhaps the most sobering message of these chapters involving the Klan is the absolute sincerity and self-righteousness of the racists, men who believe with all their hearts that they are doing the right and just thing for their community. It should be noted that there is no ambivalence on the part of the black crowds chanting for Carl Lee's freedom or on the part of the extremists in hoods who fear his potential freedom as the death knell of their own. This is raw, unvarnished racial fury bred of fear and misperception. The fact that Jake can watch it safely from a courthouse window and then review it with his staff over pizza lends an air of comic unreality to the heartfelt savagery.



Chapter 31

Chapter 31 Summary

Jake visits Judge Noose and requests a change of venue, based on the activities of the past twenty-four hours. Noose sarcastically suggests that Jake would like a blacker county from which to pick jurors, and Jake says that anywhere other than Ford County would be fine. Noose considers various options and finally asserts that he will simply do nothing. He will excuse the twenty jurors who have been intimidated and then move forward as planned. Jake is sure now that Lucien was right. Someone got to the judge. Noose proclaims that the trial will remain in Clanton because it would do no good to move it.

Ellen has done a masterful job of the M'Naghten brief, summarizing a century and a half of legal history in seventy-five pages, with a direct application at the end to the Hailey trial. In a shorter brief, she explains that it will be impossible to keep the gory pictures of Cobb and Willard's bodies from the jury. She also has produced a brief that demonstrates why justifiable homicide would not work as a defense, a job Jake did not authorize and which now annoys him. In addition, Ellen has done a fine job preparing Dr. Bass, including a twenty-five-page dialogue of the questions Jake will ask and the psychiatrist's answers. Now she is working on an encouraging brief supporting the revelation before the jury of the details of the rape.

Jake asks Ellen to begin to focus on Dr. Wilbert Rodeheaver, the state's psychiatrist, especially on cases in which acquittal was the result. He suspects that Rodeheaver is reluctant to declare anyone "insane," and he wants proof of the results of that reluctance. No hurry on this one, Jake tells her, but the rape brief must be done by Sunday. He tells her not to make dinner plans.

Jake adjourns to Lucien's house and makes use of the huge law library in the study, working on the jury, considering each person in turn. When he considers Gerald Ault, he recalls a story no one else knows. The first Negro he had ever seen saved Gerald from a burning building as a boy. The man was very brave, and as a result, Gerald is a supporter of black men. Jake continues for six hours, going through the entire list, minus the twenty, feeling confident he has an edge over Buckley.

Jake takes Ellen in his Saab to a restaurant in Robinsonville, ninety minutes away. Both sip beer as he drives. As Ellen leans back and closes her eyes, he reminds her that this is strictly business, and there will be no seduction. She challenges his suggestion that he is irresistible to her, and she finds it hard to believe that, in the south, men cannot have female friends and women cannot have male friends. "That's what I love about the south," she says, "The people are so tolerant." Ellen continues to quiz him about his "liberalism" and tease him concerning the nature of their relationship.



At "The Hollywood," the restaurant that appears to be a dry goods store, Jake takes a bottle of Chablis in and orders for them. They talk about their law careers and enjoy the greasy, fried food and the wine. At midnight, when the restaurant closes, they leave, somewhat drunk, considering spending the night together rather than driving home. They exchange a long, meaningful look and head to Clanton.

On Saturday morning, "Mickey Mouse" tips off Ozzie that Klansmen from other states are coming, and there will be large-scale retaliation for Thursday's riot. Ozzie summons Jake and the mayor, requesting that the mayor contact the governor and ask for the National Guard. The mayor considers the political fallout. After dark on Saturday, Ozzie and Hastings take Carl Lee to his home for a special dinner with family and about a hundred relatives and friends. Ozzie worries about Carl Lee's safety, moving back and forth between jail and courthouse. After dinner, the folks crowd around Carl Lee, their hero, realizing that he is being tried for one thing only: for being black. At midnight Ozzie takes Carl Lee back to jail. Bud Twitty dies during the night, and Jake makes a note to send flowers.

Chapter 31 Analysis

Jake and Ozzie make every attempt possible to proceed with this trial in the best interests of Carl Lee Hailey without further civil unrest or bloodshed. If someone has, indeed, gotten to the judge and intimidated him, the trial's outcome could be a foregone conclusion. Ellen is doing a remarkable job. In fact, Jake's case will be much stronger since she has wandered into his camp. However, she and her work are far from invincible. The flirtation she and Jake share on Friday night might symbolize their vulnerability. Just as a misstep with Ellen could bring on the collapse of Jake's marriage, a misstep with the jury could bring on the collapse of their case. Always, they walk a very fine line.

The news from the Klan is neither subtle nor encouraging. While the use of National Guard troops makes perfect sense to Ozzie, from a safety standpoint, and to Jake, from a position of having to demonstrate his justified need for a change of venue, the mayor drags his feet, thinking of his political future. Once again the route to success seems clear, but it is littered with unrelated, corollary obstacles. Bud Twitty's death is ominous to the reader. If white jurors were ready to stand up to the Klan on Saturday, they just might change their minds on Sunday.

Carl Lee's visit to his home and family and friends at this late date seems to signify foreboding on the part of the sheriff. Should Carl Lee be found guilty, he will be immediately remanded to the state prison and out of Ozzie's jurisdiction. This might be Ozzie's last chance to do something good for the Hailey family, and that makes the reader nervous.

Finally, the book revisits a theme from the previous chapter: the unwavering faith each side has in its own righteousness. The black folks who gather around Carl Lee at his home believe, to the core of their being, that he is being tried strictly for being black.



They are not making these notions up. Such conviction emanates directly from their authentic psyches, just as the Klansmen's convictions emanate from deep within them, honestly and irrevocably. Tensions could hardly be higher as the trial looms only twenty-four hours away.



Chapter 32

Chapter 32 Summary

On the day before the trial opens, Sunday, Jake awakens on the couch in his office at 5:00 a.m. Strange sounds draw him to the balcony. From there, he watches the National Guard take control of Clanton Square. He estimates that about two hundred troops are setting up command posts and barricades. Jake takes Nesbit a cup of coffee and dismisses him for the day just as Ozzie and a deputy arrive on the scene. Jake knows that Judge Noose will be furious that he was not consulted, but both Jake and Ozzie advised the mayor that it was the mayor's job, not the judge's, to keep Clanton safe. Within an hour the "vultures" (reporters) arrive on the scene and begin conducting mindless interviews. After church, local citizens come to see the display of force as Jake sits on the balcony, memorizing his jury notecards. He calls Carla to inform her of the army that is now protecting him. He misses his two girls very much.

In the evening, Ellen Roark arrives at the office suite with a thick, professional brief on the rape admissibility issue and goes to make margaritas. Jake fills her in on the National Guard activity of the day, stating that he will be forced to renew his plea for change of venue, ask for a mistrial, and then be certain the record shows that the trial is being conducted in "a three-ring circus." Ellen brings in the second round of margaritas and quizzes Jake on his jury cards. They invite Harry Rex to join them on the balcony but decide against inviting Lucien. Jake is sick of him. The three drink until midnight, sing, yell at the soldiers and work on the jury cards. Nesbit drives Ellen to Lucien's house to sleep.

Chapter 32 Analysis

The main purpose of this chapter is to establish the entry of the National Guard into Clanton and to allow Jake to express the impact it will have on his case. He knows he will not win either motion, for a change of venue or for a mistrial, but he will file them in order to make them a matter of public record. It is not looking good for the home team. Prospective jurors who enter the courthouse through this circus act will likely blame Carl Lee for the goings-on and become further prejudiced against him. Noose will be angrier than ever, and Jake and Ellen will probably be hung over. Although Jake has been studying his jury cards with dedication, his constant references to being better prepared than Buckley strike the reader as omens that just the reverse will be true. We have to wonder, once again, whether hubris plays a part in Jake's foolish decisions to drink excessively right before the trial of his career. As for Ellen, although she has provided invaluable clerking services, probably to a more professional degree than Jake might have had from anyone else, she continues to serve as a significant distraction also.



Chapter 33

Chapter 33 Summary

After three hours of sleep, Jake bolts awake on the morning of the trial and has Nesbit take him home for a shower and shave. Nattily dressed and back in his office, he goes through his case files, impressed by Ellen's organizational skills. At 5:00 Harry Rex arrives with a sack of biscuit sandwiches sent by Dell. He gobbles as Jake reviews cards and briefs and they talk about Ellen's credentials. The phone rings, and Harry humorously deflects a hate call meant for Jake. The latter calls Carla and brings her up to date, telling her that his only fear is of the twelve jurors chosen and what they will do to his client. Ellen arrives, looking "as much like a lawyer as a woman could look," according to Harry Rex. Over the remnants of breakfast, Jake briefs his two assistants, instructing Ellen to sit near the rail and Harry Rex to loiter behind the clerk's table, taking notes. Only Ellen will be invited into chambers.

At daybreak, the troops become active, and the press arrives and sets up shop. A line forms at the entrance to the courthouse. Black marchers arrive, singing and holding placards, and mill peaceably on the courthouse lawn. At 8:00 admittance to the courthouse is gained through a metal detector, following a search of each person. Two dozen Kluxers arrive in full regalia and are ushered to their "turf" on the lawn, told by Ozzie that they are surrounded and outnumbered but have the right to be here as long as they do not cause trouble. As the blacks chant "Free Carl Lee," the Klan shouts "Fry Carl Lee," and the troops take up stations between the two groups. Prospective jurors arrive and walk the gauntlet between the two groups, protected by the soldiers. Buckley arrives and is unable to resist the reporters. He consistently violates the gag order, smiling all the time.

Jake is a nervous wreck, nauseated and pacing. He recalls Lucien's advice about fear, that he should welcome it and remember that the jurors are afraid too. Ellen and Jake walk through the reporters, saying "no comment," and reach the courtroom where Jake shakes Carl Lee's hand and smiles. Then he approaches the Hailey family, drawing the jurors' eyes to them, greeting them and hugging Tonya.

In chambers, Jake immediately loses his composure when Buckley objects to his request for a change of venue. Noose intervenes and sets the ground rules for civility in the courtroom and in chambers. Jake's motion for venue change is denied, although he manages to make a record of the circus atmosphere on the courthouse lawn. He moves to strike the entire jury pool on grounds of threats and intimidation by the Klan, but Noose adamantly overrules him. The twenty who suffered the cross-burnings are discreetly excused. Ninety-four remain in the courtroom.

The jury is empanelled, and Jake, Ellen and Harry Rex agree that it does not look good. Jake will be allowed twelve peremptory strikes with no explanation. Judge Noose rambles on until 12:30, at which time he recesses until 2:00. Dell delivers hot



sandwiches to Jake's conference room. Studying the ninety-four names, the three agree on the likelihood of a white female jury, their worst nightmare. They discuss all the angles as Harry Rex stuffs himself. Ellen suggests that there is still hope in that females, as a very general rule, will tend to be more sympathetic than males. The one female juror that Harry Rex is confident he can influence is number seventy-four, "too far back."

Called to interrogate the panel, Buckley opens grandly, reminding them that they have elected him, admitting to fear and portraying himself as the underdog trying to save the people from harm. After ten minutes of his smooth oratory, Jake objects, and Noose instructs Buckley to sit down if he has no questions for the panel. Buckley apologizes and then launches into a three-hour marathon of meticulous questions, using every question Jake has thought of and many he has failed to consider. Jake and his two assistants take copious notes as Buckley does a masterful job of interrogating the jurors. At 5:00, court is recessed for the day, and Carl Lee, after hugging his family, goes back to jail.

Chapter 33 Analysis

The scene is set for the big trial now. There is a veritable circus on the lawn, with the possibility of violence. The defense team looks very professional, but its leader is hung over and terrified. The D.A. is pompous and verbose, questioning a harried and unsettled panel of prospective jurors. The nervous judge might have been "bought" in some way, and the panel of ninety-four jurors offers very few possible black, male father-of-daughter ideal jurors that Jake wants. The town is in an uproar. The stage is set. Tomorrow, the reader will see how well Jake and his young clerk can make lemonade from these lemons.



Chapter 34

Chapter 34 Summary

Day two of the trial begins with a hot, sunny morning, and all the "players" obediently take their places on the front lawn. The shouting gets underway as the news cameras roll. Buckley has grandly announced that he has no further questions, and Jake, rubber-legged with anxiety, approaches the jurors and drops a bombshell: Do any of you believe insanity should never be used as a defense? If we prove Carl Lee Hailey was insane when he shot Cobb and Willard, are any of you incapable of finding him not guilty? No hands go up, but he has confused them. On the other hand, he has them thinking "insanity." He has no further questions, declaring that "the panel looks fine to me."

Noose calls the attorneys to chambers and begins to summon jurors individually, questioning each about his or her position on the death penalty. Gerald Ault, Jake's ace-in-the-hole, number five, enthusiastically states that he cannot, under any circumstances, impose the death penalty. At Buckley's motion, Ault is summarily excused from jury duty. Juror number six, a black man, lies about his feelings on capital punishment and is allowed to remain. Later, he explains to the other black jurors how they will be questioned and how to answer in order not to be dismissed.

At recess, Jake and his advisors review the cards that are left and strategize. In chambers, Buckley strikes all blacks and all men, as if he is reading Jake's mind. Finally, the jury and two alternates are selected. As they fill the jury box, Carl Lee is aghast at an all-white jury of ten women and two men. Of the two alternates, one is a black male. Noose explains to the jury that they will be sequestered in a motel outside of Clanton. By 7:00 p.m., the jurors board a bus for their motel.

During the night, Stump Sisson dies, bringing to four the total of deaths related to Tonya's rape. In the cabin in the woods, the Klan inducts five recruits from Ford County and dedicates itself to revenge. Meanwhile, Jake practices his opening statement in front of Ellen as they drink margaritas. Then, on the balcony, Ellen massages Jake's neck and shoulders and attempts a seduction. Jake cuts her short and sends her to her apartment in Oxford, courtesy of Nesbit.

Chapter 34 Analysis

Jake asks one question, while Buckley grills the prospective jurors for three hours. Whom are they going to like? This is a classy start for Jake Brigance! The jurors are brought in for individual questioning, which is required by law, since each must be willing to at least consider the death penalty. The atmosphere becomes a little tenser. When Gerald Ault is dismissed, the reader can almost feel Jake's guts twisting. In characteristic fashion, though, Grisham brings the roller coaster back to the top when



the next black juror figures out the system and clues the others in on it. Now readers have hope that Jake might get some black jurors.

Once the striking begins in chambers, Jake's fate (and Carl Lee's) is quickly decided, but not without its hairpin turns. Jake and Ellen confer with twenty-nine jurors still remaining, and both sides hold four more challenges. Tension could not be higher. As Jake reports, it looks right now like an all-white, female jury, exactly what he hoped to avoid. When the jury is finally seated, readers are grateful for one black alternate, a far cry from what we had been hoping to see in earlier chapters. Now we can add an all-white jury, ninety-percent female, to all the other variables that, combined, paint a very bleak picture for Jake's success and Carl Lee's survival. When Ellen begins her most overt seduction to date, we almost cheer for Jake as he sends her on her way. Another pitfall avoided by our flawed hero!



Chapter 35

Chapter 35 Summary

At her father's Wilmington beach house, Carla reads the news of the all-white jury in the newspaper. Meanwhile, the jurors she reads about are sequestered under guard at the Temple Inn, otherwise abandoned. It is forty-eight miles from Clanton. The two alternate jurors, one black male and one white female, have separate rooms. All the rest are rooming in same-sex pairs. They are cut off from the media. On the bus to the courthouse, they avoid any discussion of the case, but they have been discussing it in their rooms. In court at 9:00, Judge Noose asks whether anyone has tried to influence them or whether they have discussed the case. They are to notify him if anyone attempts to engage them in that way.

Buckley begins with his opening statement, predictably flowery and endearing. He openly discusses the rape of Tonya Hailey, pleasantly surprising Jake and Ellen. He rants about the justice system, depicting the jurors as the guardian angels of justice. He points out that Carl Lee Hailey wants a fair trial, something he stole from Billy Ray Cobb and Pete Willard. Buckley waves in front of the jurors the M-16 used by Hailey, pointing out that Hailey had to plan carefully in order to procure such an illegal weapon. Finally he mentions the tragic shooting of Deputy Looney and his partially amputated leg. He contends that "it was an accident" is no defense. He talks for an hour and a half, boring most everyone.

Following Buckley's diatribe, Jake mercifully cuts his opening to fourteen minutes, beginning by talking of daughters' vulnerability and moving to the brutal details of the rape, to which Buckley objects. Buckley calls Billy Ray Cobb's mother as his first witness. She testifies that her son was killed in this building at the age of twenty-three, and she cries a bit. Jake, who would normally pass up the invitation to cross-examine this witness, sees an opportunity to set the tone and get people aroused. He asks two questions: Was your son ever convicted of selling marijuana, and how many other children did he rape? Buckley objects furiously, and as the sobbing woman is removed, Noose instructs the jury to ignore that last question.

Now Buckley calls Earnestine Willard, and on cross-examination, Jake asks her the same question: How many other children did your son rape? Buckley's objections are sustained again, and Noose calls a recess, inviting counsel to his chambers. After the conference, Jake and his two advisers eat lunch on Jake's balcony, again compliments of the Coffee Shop. Harry Rex drinks "like a sailor," but Jake and Ellen have just a small margarita each. When Jake refuses to tell what happened in chambers and finally goes to the rest room, Ellen shares the story with Harry Rex. She characterizes Jake's objectionable questions as a brilliant move to show that he owns the courtroom and is afraid of no one. She claims that Jake is the best she's seen, "for his age," and Harry Rex says his closing will be even better.



Ozzie Walls is the next witness for the state. After tedious testimony, Buckley shows the gruesome photos of the dead bodies. He has had them enlarged and mounted, and he passes them among the jury for thirty minutes. Jake reflects that such photos are inflammatory and prejudicial but, by Mississippi law, always admissible. Next Buckley thrusts the M-16 at Ozzie, who affirms that it is the recovered murder weapon. Jake now cross-examines Ozzie, asking whether Pete Willard signed a confession before his death. Again Buckley objects wildly. Jake withdraws the question, and the jury is instructed to disregard it. Still, Ozzie has already nodded affirmatively in answer. After the state's fingerprint and ballistics witnesses testify, court is recessed until morning.

Chapter 35 Analysis

Just as Jake Brigance is determined to show the jury, from the very first, that he owns the courtroom and fears no one, Grisham seems determined to show the reader how differently Jake works in contrast to Buckley. The louder the D.A. gets, the more soft-spoken Jake becomes. The more long-winded Buckley is, the more concise Brigance is. The more Buckley insists on lingering over every tedious, obvious little detail, the more likely Jake is to cut to the quick with a sharp, objectionable question. This chapter brings the two lawyers head-to-head in stark contrast with each other. Buckley might be said to be a literary foil for Jake. The more he is unlike Jake, the clearer our mental perception of Jake becomes. We are now seeing a new side of Jake Brigance, confident, cocky, risk-tolerant and cut-throat. This is in direct contrast to the Jake we have seen in recent chapters, drunk, consorting with a young woman while his wife is away, wasting precious time and anxious to the point of distraction. When the battle is joined, Jake Brigance is clearly equal to the task.

Notice how cleverly Grisham allows Ellen to report to Harry Rex what transpired in chambers. While Jake is in the rest room, having been reluctant to relate the story, Ellen has an opportunity not only to tell what happened, but also to comment on the event and pay a serious compliment to Jake. In this way the reader's appreciation for the main character is developed without any need for him to sing his own praises. Jake's stock is once more climbing in our estimation.



Chapter 36

Chapter 36 Summary

Boredom is quickly settling in on the jury now, the Temple Inn having become more a prison than a haven. Phones have been removed from the rooms, and there are no interesting magazines to read. Jurors play cards, buy sodas from the machine and discuss the trial. On the fourth day of the trial, Thursday, the courtroom is again filled, with Reverend Agee in the second row behind the Hailey family. Across from him are the families of the victims. Agee alternates sitting in the courtroom and running the outside demonstration. Courtroom duty feels safer, but he misses the cameras and reporters. Buckley opens the session by calling a pathologist from the state crime lab, who will use charts and autopsy photos to prove what everyone already knows, although Jake has already offered to stipulate to cause of death for each victim. In three hours of "prosecutorial overkill," Buckley insists on "proving" while Jake interrupts every thirty minutes to offer to stipulate to cause of death. By noon the jury is numb, and Noose declares a two-hour lunch break.

Hinky Myrick is the entrepreneurial kid who will become a self-made millionaire, and every small southern town has one just like him. From his first lemonade stand through paper routes, Hinky has raised capital by his wits and work. Now he sells sandwiches and plate lunches in the courtroom, purchased from Claude's and resold at astronomical prices to the spectators who are reluctant to leave their precious seats during the lunch break. Claude is making a fortune off the trial, having bought card tables and chairs to accommodate the overflow black lunch crowd. Clanton is used to a lunch hour of pretty secretaries on the square, eating and shopping and doing errands. Now the downtown area is so congested that the secretaries do their errands and eat at their desks. The talk, however, is only about the trial. At the Tea Shoppe, the white collars condemn the Klan for ruining the town's reputation and cuss the press for keeping the Klan in Clanton. In the Coffee Shop, Dell serves to a crowded house, but no one gives the press the time of day anymore. Locals are disgusted with the way their town has been portrayed by total strangers, especially at the way the press has focused on the rowdier elements. Some patrons in the Coffee Shop watch a reporter from Channel 4 and speculate about the makeup she is wearing. They were disgusted with her report last night.

Murphy the janitor is called as a state's witness Thursday afternoon. It is a gut-wrenching ordeal as he stutters and spits for an hour. Finally the testimony is pieced together, and Murphy has reported that he was sitting on the opposing stairway, drinking a Coke, before the boys were brought down the other stairs. He did not think anything about the black man who kept peeking out of the closet, and then the victims came into view. "That man, the black one" shot them, threw down the gun and left. When Jake is offered a chance to cross-examine, he terrifies the entire courtroom by appearing ready to ask questions. Then, he says he has no questions for the witness, to everyone's relief.



Officer Rady provides insignificant testimony, and then Officer Looney is called. He limps to the stand with a cane and tells, matter-of-factly and concisely, what happened on the day of the shooting, identifying Carl Lee as the shooter. Buckley, however, wanting to give him a chance to limp around in front of the jury, reassembles his charts and has Looney trace everyone's steps on the fateful day. On cross-examination, Jake simply asks Looney whether Carl Lee was looking at him as he was shooting. Looney proceeds to explain, at length, that Hailey "just aimed at those boys." Then he talks at length about how Carl Lee "screamed and laughed like he was crazy." Over all the noise, he says, I could hear him "laughing that crazy laugh." The answer is so perfect that Jake wants to smile. He and Looney have worked on it a hundred times. The jury is enthralled.

Jake pauses before asking the most important questions of the trial. He gets Looney to assert that Carl Lee shot him only by accident and should not be punished for his deed. "He did what I would've done," Looney claims and, over the objections of Buckley, shouts, "I don't want him convicted. He's a hero. Give him a trophy." After Noose instructs the jury to disregard the testimony, the state rests, and the judge adjourns the court, calling the lawyers to his chambers for motions.

Chapter 36 Analysis

This chapter offers a wonderfully subtle, perfectly orchestrated move of the entire trial in Jake's favor. The jury is getting bored, and it surely is not Jake who is boring them. As Buckley hauls out one expert after another, executing a plan that Jake calls "prosecutorial overkill," Jake undercuts him with one or two slashing questions. His offers to stipulate to points that Buckley feels must be proven only demonstrate his willingness to expedite the whole process. There is no doubt here who is wasting the jury's time and who is trying to move the thing along. Jake wins points at every step. Even when he knowingly asks objectionable questions, he manages to plant a seed in the jurors' minds before the judge instructs them to disregard the answer. He certainly wins points by deciding not to cross-examine the stuttering janitor. Of course, he never intended to ask Murphy any questions, but standing with his notepad and appearing ready to cross-examine makes his "decision" even more welcome.

In fact, Jake emerges in this chapter as the more masterful counselor in every respect. His real coup is preparing the state's own witness, Deputy Looney, to say the very words Jake needs said in regard to Carl Lee's behavior during the shooting, using the word "crazy" several times. He knows when to pause, when to remain silent, exactly how much to say and how many questions to ask. His timing is perfect. A few chapters back readers saw Jake struggling through jury selection. It seemed that nothing was going his way. Those were events beyond his control. Once the trial actually opens, we see Jake take control, and now his fortunes are rising.

One might wonder what the bit about Hinky Myrick adds to the chapter (other than a little comic relief). It is thrown in right in the middle. The little vignette serves to remind readers of the circus atmosphere that surrounds the trial. Hinky is like a peanut or hot

dog vendor at a ballgame or carnival. When spectators refuse to leave their seats for lunch, so that Hinky must deliver right in the courtroom, we realize how important this trial is in the lives of Clanton's citizens and to what extent things have gone.



Chapter 37

Chapter 37 Summary

Before 5:00 a.m., Ozzie and Nesbit awaken Jake to tell him that "Mickey Mouse" has called. The Klan plans to kill Jake today, the day they are burying Stump Sisson. He hurriedly showers and dresses. At 5:30, they rush him to his office and lock the door. At 8:00 National Guardsmen escort Jake to the courthouse. Meanwhile a Klansman is sipping whiskey and aiming a rifle from a forgotten silo less than three blocks away. He shoots into the squadron of soldiers, and one of them shrieks in pain. He is hit in the throat. Jake and Ozzie escape into the courthouse as the gunman jumps into the waiting pickup that will take him and the driver to Stump's funeral.

When the shooting seems over, the colonel sends a jeep up the hill in the direction from which Ozzie thinks the shots came. As Ellen and Harry Rex watch from the steps, standing where Cobb and Willard fell when slain, Jake struggles to regain his composure. There are flecks of blood on his suit, and he is sure the soldier is dead. He is escorted back across the street to change clothes. Harry Rex locks the door and suggests Ellen ("Row Ark") make margaritas. Ozzie explains the situation to Noose, who calls Jake. Jake, sipping his second drink, refuses to come to court today. He claims he will be drunk this afternoon, but he can come back on Saturday morning. Noose is speechless as Jake hangs up on him. Jake calls Carla after three drinks and tries to get her father to calm her down.

This is the day that Dr. Bass is supposed to testify, and he and Lucien enter the back door of Jake's office suite at 10:00. Lucien has kept Bass sober all night, and now he is furious that testimony will be postponed a day. Harry Rex and Ellen mix a coffeepot full of margaritas, and the serious drinking begins all around. Ozzie calls to say that the soldier has survived surgery and will likely be paralyzed. Lester Hailey knocks at the back door and is admitted. He asks for a drink with whiskey in it, and Harry Rex is off to the liquor store again, with Lucien's hundred dollars this time.

At 9:30 p.m., Ellen awakes and tiptoes out, leaving Jake asleep on the floor and Nesbit to guard him. She is sober and drives herself to Oxford. Almost there, she is pulled over by two plainclothesmen in a car with flashing blue lights. They wrap her in a quilt, tie her up and throw her in the trunk of her car. They drive her car into the woods where some Kluxers are gathered around a burning cross. They tie her to a stake, bound and gagged, facing the burning cross, and she sees their white robes and hoods. One man with a Midwestern accent steps forward, calls her a nigger-loving bitch and cuts her clothes from her immobilized body. When he takes out a bull whip and aims for her back, he is stopped by a comrade. Instead, he cuts off her hair with a knife. Then the men torch Ellen's car and leave her, tied to the stake, sweating from the heat. "Mickey Mouse" emerges from the bushes, cuts her from the stake, covers her as best he can and leaves her in a small clearing. He calls the Lafayette County sheriff.



Chapter 37 Analysis

True to the author's pattern, and like many intriguing novels, the hero's fortunes, so high and filled with expectation in the previous chapter, are now dashed by a blast from a high-powered rifle. If things could not have gone better in Chapter 36, they could not have gone worse in Chapter 37. A soldier lies paralyzed in the hospital. Jake lies drunk on the floor, and Ellen ("Row Ark") Roark lies in the wilderness, humiliated, terrified and, for all we know, injured. Carl Lee has been jilted by the attorney he trusted and left in a packed courtroom with the jury waiting. Dr. Bass has remained sober for nothing, and Lucien thinks of "all the drinking they have missed since Thursday" and is furious. The judge has a sequestered jury with absolutely nothing to do for an entire day. The wonder of it all is that even Buckley is speechless.

As readers may expect, Jake and his followers turn to alcohol in excess to deal with the tragedy. One does have to respect Jake, though, for taking so seriously the sacrifice that the young guardsman has made on his behalf. Jake's first words from the courtroom floor, after ten minutes of unresponsiveness, are "He's dead, isn't he? I heard his neck pop." That his first thoughts are for the man who took the bullet for him provides a measure of dignity to our fallen hero. At the end of the chapter, we meet Mickey Mouse again. Who is "Mickey Mouse," and why is he aligned with the Klan but snitching on them? That final intrigue is left us as the chapter closes.



Chapter 38

Chapter 38 Summary

On Saturday morning all of Clanton turns out to breakfast near the square and get a glimpse of the trial or its principals. The rumor is that the shooters claim to have been Jake's former clients. It turns out that yesterday both Lucien and Bass had to be escorted home by Nesbit, blind drunk at the end of the afternoon. Now Jake sips a Bloody Mary and prays that Bass is sober. At 9:00 the trial resumes, minus Ellen Roark. Jake calls Dr. Bass, who appears quite sober and cerebral in spite of the ostrich skin boots Jake had preferred he not wear. Lucien had argued that the jury would relate to boots.

Bass opens well, and Jake is finally able to draw a breath. His witness actually does sound like an expert. Jake offers Bass to the judge as an expert witness, after which Buckley is allowed a few questions. The D.A. quickly douses the psychiatrist's confidence and demonstrates that he has few qualifications. He challenges Bass's status as an expert witness and is overruled. Now Jake is allowed to develop his argument through Bass's testimony. Bass mentions Carl Lee's history as a Vietnam veteran. As Bass talks, Carl Lee muses that the doctor has greatly overestimated the time he spent examining him. He also recalls telling the doctor that neither Vietnam nor the shooting of the two rapists made him feel anything but normal and happy to have it behind him.

Asked to explain what the rape of Carl Lee's daughter, the only other significant trauma in Carl Lee's life, had done to the man, Bass insists he has time only to summarize. As he does so, Lucien is able to make eye contact with juror Clyde Sisco and mouth the words "How much?" Sisco signals "five" with his fingers, and Lucien knows he will pay him whatever it takes to hang the jury. At the morning recess, Lucien and Bass, against argument by Jake, insist on going to Jake's office for one drink.

After recess, Bass looks through glazed eyes and continues, now explaining the M'Naghten test for insanity. Then Jake asks the important question: What is your opinion of Carl Lee Hailey's mental state at the time of the shooting on May 20? Bass clearly and compellingly portrays Carl Lee as having "snapped... He broke with reality." Bass effectively states that Carl Lee did not know right from wrong and was incapable of appreciating the nature of what he was doing. Now it is Buckley's turn to ask "a few questions." He quickly leads Bass to divulge his full name and a partial name by which he was formerly known, and then he asks Bass whether or not he was once convicted of statutory rape. Jake has trouble maintaining his poker face. Buckley makes his case, silences Bass and enters into evidence police photos of Bass as he pled guilty to statutory rape in 1956. Jake is helpless, realizing that he and Carl Lee are finished. Asked to call his next witness, Jake can barely stand and ask for a recess. He lies, saying that his next witness is not yet present. The lawyers are summoned to chambers. On his way there, Jake visits a nearby restroom and vomits. In chambers,



Ozzie breaks the news to Jake that Ellen has been beaten by the Klan and is in the hospital. Judge Noose compassionately extends the recess until 2:00.

Later that evening Jake has thoughts of beating both Lucien and Bass, but Lucien, drinking on his porch, explains that Bass told him that the record of the statutory rape was expunged after three years. Now Jake pours himself a glass of whiskey and listens as Lucien explains Bass's history. He impregnated and married the girl, whose father (a judge) had originally pressed the rape charges. Once Bass produced a grandson for the judge, the rape conviction was expunged. His wife and child were killed in an accident, and Bass turned to alcohol. Lucien reminds Jake that, of course he knew nothing of this before, or he himself would never have allowed Bass to testify in the past.

Asked how court went in the afternoon, Jake recounts Carl Lee's "fair" testimony, admitting that he failed to score any points with the jury. Both lawyers are quite resigned now to a conviction. In fact, Carl Lee has once again tried to fire Jake. The conversation turns to Row Ark, who is stable but in serious condition, and Jake says he feels the attack was his fault. He admits that he is ready to surrender, if only he could find the enemy, but Lucien reminds him that it's not over until it's over.

Just after midnight, Nesbit is asleep in his patrol car in front of Lucien's house, an empty beer can in his lap. He is awakened by his radio and instructed to take Jake to his home immediately. "It's an emergency." When they arrive at Adams Street, Jake's house is completely engulfed in flames, as are Carla's car and a strange, small car next to it. The chief explains that the strange Volkswagen in the driveway was the source of the fire, probably set by remote control. He points out what a "good" fire it is, burning evenly in every part of the house, perpetrated by someone who knew what he was doing. Jake asks Nesbit to pick up Harry Rex and bring him over. "I'd hate for him to miss this." By 4:00 a.m. the house has burned to the ground, and the dog, Max, is dead. Jake and Harry Rex head to the truck stop for breakfast and on to Oxford to visit Ellen. Meanwhile, Lucien gets an early morning phone call stating that Clyde Sisco's price is \$50,000.

Chapter 38 Analysis

Readers thought that things were bad for Jake and Carl Lee in the previous chapter, but Jake has fallen to a new depth. The reader sees Jake rallying after a lost day of drunken debauchery. While Dr. Bass testifies like a true expert, we cheer for Jake, knowing what has befallen his clerk and happy to see the tide turning again in his favor. Then the strikes come. First he is defeated in the courtroom by a D.A. who did better research than Jake's team has done, probably because Jake relied too heavily on Lucien. Then Jake must deal with the news of Ellen's attack and injuries. Next, Carl Lee, who has been so well prepared for this moment, falls apart. The jury is now viciously prejudiced against him by Jake's own expert witness, assuming only a convicted felon would testify on behalf of this defendant. Realizing his hopeless situation, Carl Lee resorts to sarcasm and anger with Buckley, only reducing his status in the eyes of the



jury. One cannot blame Carl Lee for seeking to fire the lawyer who has let him down so badly.

Readers gain some understanding and even a morsel of resignation after Lucien explains to Jake the entire story of Dr. Bass's early life and convinces both Jake and the reader that he truly did not know Bass was a convicted felon. As the two men sleep in the Wilbanks home and Nesbit dozes in the driveway, we think we have seen the worst of it. Surely there will be some hope at dawn. After all, Lucien has reminded Jake, "It's not over 'til it's over." We know that he has plans to pay off one of the jurors. Maybe we have reached the bottom and things will start to look up. Then comes the house fire, obviously another heinous act by the Klan. Now Jake will have to break the news to Carla. We wonder whether it has also occurred to him that Ellen Roark will soon be on the national news, named as Jake Brigrance's law clerk. That will be news to Carla! No, there is no hope, until Lucien gets the call concerning Sisco's demand. We know Lucien has the money and is willing to pay. What we do not know are these things: Will Sisco successfully hang the jury? If so, will Jake find out? Will anyone else find out? How will Jake deal with this, from an ethical standpoint, if it comes to his attention? Jake, our "hero," surely is at his lowest point. The events of the next few chapters will test his mettle even further as he attempts to deal with this string of threats and defeats.



Chapter 39

Chapter 39 Summary

Sheldon Roark, father of Ellen, is at her bedside in a Memphis hospital reading the news about the trial. Jake and Harry Rex arrive and battle with the on-duty nurse to enter before visiting hours. Sheldon explains to them that Ellen was not beaten. Her head wounds, which have required thirty-nine stitches, were self-inflicted. Apparently she beat her head against the pole, sure that they were going to rape and kill her. Sheldon mentions "Mickey Mouse" as the informant who saved her.

In the hospital cafeteria, Harry Rex eats and makes morbid jokes at Jake's expense as they discuss the trial. Sheldon feels Jake has done all he can with a pretty hopeless situation. Jake invites Sheldon to come to court on Monday and sit in chambers with him. Jake then visits Woody Mackenvale, the wounded and paralyzed national guardsman, in the hospital and speaks to his wife and two young sons. He assures her that her husband saved his life.

At noon on Sunday, Jake buys a six-pack at Bates Grocery, and he and Harry Rex drive to the lake in the latter's filthy, littered red pickup that has not been registered in four years. Jake's Saab might have been a target for snipers, but not this truck, Harry Rex has argued. A storm breaks, and they watch the black fishermen huddle under overpasses. They stop for food and then cross the dam and watch the rain batter Lake Chatulla. Jake drinks, and Harry Rex eats as Jake sums up what will be his condition in two weeks. He will be bankrupt with "no wife, no daughter, no house, no practice, no clients, no money, nothing." The two jokingly banter about Jake's future, considering whether Carla will sue for divorce. Getting serious, they agree that Carl Lee will be convicted, and quickly. Jake wishes he had never heard of Carl Lee Hailey, but Harry Rex notes that it is too late for that.

Later Jake visits Lucien and finds him sober and working on Jake's summation, "a spellbinding performance... the greatest closing argument in the history of jurisprudence." Lucien goes on to say that he is a better lawyer drunk than Jake is sober, to which Jake retorts, "At least I'm a lawyer." Jake now bemoans his unfair portion, but Lucien tells him he can still win. Miracles do happen. Jake calls Carla and talks for an hour, but he still does not mention the house.

Chapter 39 Analysis

This is a chapter for bringing together all the details and ensuring that the reader is ready to move forward. We now know the details of Ellen's attack, as well as her prognosis. Jake has achieved some closure concerning the guardsman who took his bullet. Harry Rex serves as an excellent sounding board, allowing Jake to recount his losses, painting for the reader the picture of his immediate and distant future as he sees



it. Lucien also gives Jake an opportunity to pull all the pieces together and create an image of total and irretrievable failure. However, the two friends do not play identical roles. Harry Rex is a buffoon, a comic character who hangs on Jake's coattails, unlikely ever to rise to the stature of Jake Brigance, and simultaneously keeping Jake anchored to reality. Lucien, who is occasionally a comic figure also, is Jake's intellectual superior. He pulls Jake up to higher levels and challenges him to move forward. Ironically, Harry Rex, who has become as enthusiastic a drinker as Lucien, now agrees with Jake that his fate is terrible defeat, while Lucien, now sober, has the two keys to success: the wonderful summation, about which both Jake and the reader are doubtful, and the chance to buy a juror, about which Jake knows nothing and the reader is only cautiously optimistic.



Chapter 40

Chapter 40 Summary

On Monday morning Clanton is back in "trial mode." The Klan is heartened, having scored a direct hit on Jake's house and smelling victory following Bass's exposure. Noose summons the lawyers to chambers to see if everyone "is alive and well," to which Jake responds "kiss my ass." In answer to the judge's question, Jake affirms that the Klan attacked Ellen, and then he offers a litany of everything the Klan has done to prejudice this jury. Noose counters that, if Jake cannot prove the Klan was behind each of those incidents, "leave it alone."

Asked for his rebuttal to the defense, Buckley calls Dr. Rodeheaver and establishes him as a most credible psychiatric expert. Rodeheaver provides testimony about Carl Lee's state of mind in direct contrast to Bass's testimony and stipulates that Carl Lee was perfectly sane and normal during examination and at the time of the shooting. Asked to respond to Bass's contrary testimony, he says he finds it preposterous. Jake muses that it does, indeed, seem preposterous now.

Lucien avoids Sisco's eyes, knowing that a nod or a wink will consummate the deal. He wants to review it with Jake first. Following the completion of Rodeheaver's testimony, court recesses for fifteen minutes, and Jake flies up to the law library. Harry Rex is there and assures him that none of the regional papers has mentioned his house fire or Row Ark, so Carla cannot know. Now he proposes that Jake allow him to approach Musgrove, assistant D.A., and offer a plea bargain. Jake adamantly refuses.

Back in court, Jake recalls that he has never won an argument with an expert witness, so he declines to argue with Rodeheaver. He turns to the research Ellen has prepared concerning the doctor's perfect record of testifying "not insane." He first gets the doctor to admit that he works for the state and has testified only for the state, never for a defendant. Then he leads him to admit that, in three cases, he single-handedly opposed several psychiatrists for the defense, and the defendant was found insane and sent to his care at Whitfield. Jake asks, "Do you generally treat and retain sane people at a psychiatric hospital?" Buckley has no re-direct. Carl Lee congratulates Jake, and the attorneys adjourn to chambers.

During the three-hour recess, Jake avoids Harry Rex and drives to his childhood home in Karaway where he visits his boyhood room. It has remained unchanged. He remembers Hanna's room, now burned. Then, he rehearses his closing argument using his own notes, not Lucien's.

When Jake addresses the jury, he first apologizes for Dr. Bass, but then shares with them the untold truths about Dr. Bass's life thirty years ago. Jake refers to facts not in evidence and Buckley objects. He points out how silly it would be to wonder now whether Dr. Rodeheaver might have had sex with an underage girl when he was young.



He reminds the jury that Rodeheaver, who treats thousands of people for insanity, cannot consider insanity when a crime has been committed. Jake asks the jury to forgive him his mistakes, as he is not nearly as experienced as Buckley.

Then, Jake talks about daughters, his own and Tonya Hailey, again covering inadmissible data that must be withdrawn. He contrasts rape with murder, explaining that a murder victim is released, but a rape victim must deal with the crime every day of her life. It is even worse for a child, he explains, because a child cannot understand the reason for the attack. Twice Jake mentions that Tonya will never bear children, and twice he must withdraw the statement. He helps the jury imagine Carl Lee's thought patterns after the rape and asks them what they would do, reminding them that Buckley has said he'd turn the other cheek. He admits that he, in Carl Lee's shoes, would "blow the bastard's head off."

Jake talks of Cobb and Willard as society's offal, stating that Ford County is better off without them. Then he points out how DeWayne Looney, who is missing a leg thanks to Carl Lee, has forgiven him and says he should be sent home to his family. Finally he tells of how Tonya, hallucinating during the attack, saw her daddy and called out for him, and then he disappeared. She needs him now, Jake says. "She waits on the front row for her daddy. Let him go home to his family." One juror wipes away a tear, and Jake feels a glimmer of hope for the first time.

At four o'clock, the case is given to the jury, and Jake, Lucien and Harry Rex adjourn to the office for a liquid dinner. Barry Acker becomes the jury foreman and takes an informal poll. After his vote, the count is five guilty, five undecided, one pass and one not guilty. The jury is excused at six o'clock. There is no verdict yet.

Chapter 40 Analysis

The closing argument is Jake Brigance's finest hour, and it is a long time coming. It is surely worth waiting for, though, after watching him suffer one brutal defeat after another. Jake is humble and sincere, but he is also clever enough to quickly introduce information that he knows is important, even though it will draw an objection. Readers are heartened to see that Ellen's hard work pays off as Jake neatly demonstrates Dr. Rodeheaver's bias against the insanity defense, using Ellen's notes. Jake's line of questioning is superb. His closing is, of course, brilliantly composed and flawlessly delivered. The reader cannot help but agree with him. We cheer just a little when, in his boyhood bedroom, the notes he places on the dresser are his, not Lucien's. In fact, one now wonders whether it might be unnecessary for Lucien to "buy" Sisco, especially after hearing that one juror has voted "not guilty" on the initial vote.



Chapter 41

Chapter 41 Summary

Back on Lucien's front porch, Jake and Lucien drink silently, refusing Sallie's offer of dinner. Even Nesbit helps himself to a beer. Lucien broaches the subject of buying Sisco. It will cost \$25,000 for a hung jury or \$50,000 for an acquittal. When Jake objects, Lucien responds that he, personally, has more money than he cares for and absolutely no morals or ethics. Then he reveals his plan to bring in 10,000 screaming blacks tomorrow, thronging the courthouse and chanting "Free Carl Lee" to intimidate the jury.

At the Temple Inn, Barry Acker, Clyde Sisco's roommate, goes down the hall for a Coke. Two thugs jump him and tell him at knifepoint that they know where his family is. "If that nigger walks free, you'll be sorry," they caution him, and then they vanish.

Chapter 41 Analysis

This chapter is a short roller coaster ride with tremendously high peaks and low valleys. It is clear that Lucien likely holds the outcome of Jake's case in the palm of his unethical hand. With the demonstrators he will bring in and the juror he is more than willing to buy, Lucien could hand Jake a hung jury, possibly even an acquittal. After all that Jake has been through, the reader almost wants him to buy into Lucien's plan, since no other hope is visible. Then the action breaks away to the sequestered jury. The readers find that our two best hopes, Acker and Sisco, are roommates. Acker is the foreman, the one person who has voted "not guilty" on the first round. They could secretly agree to support each other in their quest for a "not guilty" vote. What could be better? When Acker goes for his cold drink, though, the roller coaster takes another plunge. Can we really expect him to expose his wife and children to serious danger just to save the life of a black man? We are, once again, down as low as we can go. In this chapter, both sides are trying to influence the jury. Lucien arranges for demonstrators and is prepared to buy them off. The Klan has more direct methods of intimidation, attacking a juror at knifepoint. Can a jury under these conditions hope to deliver justice?



Chapter 42

Chapter 42 Summary

The blacks of northern Mississippi know Lucien Wilbanks well as the only radical white NAACP lawyer in their area. He is the white man who filed more race discrimination lawsuits than can be counted. The northern blacks now board church buses before dawn and converge on the Ford County Courthouse. They are peacefully settled in and chanting by 8:00, with a nervous National Guard colonel and Ozzie watching. Reverend Agee, with a bullhorn, manages the masses. When a few Kluxers show up in white robes, the blacks are incensed and taunt them, actually frightening the Klansmen, who remain silent. Clanton experiences gridlock, and the judge and lawyers have to walk blocks from parking places to the courthouse. The jurors' bus is late arriving, and the fourteen jurors are dumbstruck by what they see on the courthouse lawn. Noose welcomes them and invites them to deliberate until lunch.

As the jury assembles, Foreman Acker reflects on the thousands of county residents who have sat at this table and deliberated, wondering how many others had, like him, been threatened. Clyde Sisco is already contemplating his payoff, once again, for delivering "another just and true verdict," although his messenger has not contacted him. Rita Mae Plunk opens by expressing her commitment to a guilty verdict for "that nigger," which starts a feisty exchange about use of the N-word during deliberations. All but Rita agree they would prefer it not be used. Then Sue Williams suggests sympathy for Carl Lee, since a parent whose daughter is raped cannot possibly be stable. Sisco attempts a few jokes, which are not well received. Conversation gradually leads to a tendency toward "guilty," based primarily on the six days of planning and premeditation on the part of Carl Lee. Sisco and two women lean toward acquittal. All the others are in favor of "guilty," but Barry Acker is noticeably noncommittal.

In the town square, the black ministers have now started a parade behind a fifteen-foot banner proclaiming "Free Carl Lee." Merchants are closing their shops, and the guardsmen, now greatly outnumbered, ring the courthouse and plan to stand firm. Ozzie convinces the handful of Klansmen to leave for their own safety. As the parade passes under the jury room window, all twelve jurors share one thought: I didn't know there were that many blacks in Ford County. Buckley and Musgrove are furious, assuming Jake shipped the demonstrators in. Judge Noose is concerned with the jury's ability to concentrate.

The court assembles at noon to find that the jury has no verdict. The jury is instructed to enjoy a ninety-minute lunch without deliberation, and the judge apologizes for the disruptive atmosphere. Buckley is livid, referring to jury intimidation. Jake's response is simply, "Free Carl Lee." He reminds them that he begged for a venue change, saying they look pretty foolish complaining now. During lunch the black crowd grows to 15,000. All the coffee shops except Claude's are closed for lunch. Jake, Harry Rex and Lucien



drink margaritas on the balcony, where Lucien claims to be the only white in Ford County who knows all the words to "We Shall Overcome." At 1:30, the parade resumes.

In the jury room, Reba Betts converts from undecided to "not guilty," bringing the tally to a standoff with two undecided. Finally one juror mentions her concern about their safety as the noisy march goes on. When it is clear they cannot deliberate further today, someone suggests reporting a deadlock, but Acker explains that a new trial would take place in a few months. He suggests they call it a day.

Carl Lee, in the courtroom with his children, opens a window with a small balcony beyond. With a nod from the deputy, he steps out onto the balcony with Tonya and the boys, and the blacks surge toward him. The family waves. By now Jake is staggering across the street, having been summoned to chambers. Buckley, overruled in his motion for a mistrial, suggests the jury be allowed to deliberate at the motel, but Jake has research showing there is no statutory provision for such an action. Noose recalls all parties to court. The jury reports its indecision, adding that they have reached a point where they have considered giving up. At Acker's suggestion, Noose sends the jury to the motel to rest until tomorrow morning. Jake explains to Carl Lee that a temporary deadlock means little at this point. Barry Acker passes a note to the bailiff instructing his wife to pack the kids and go to her mother's immediately and silently. The bailiff promises to make the call.

In the cabin in the woods, Tim Nunley, a mechanic, Coffee Shop regular and former client of Jake Brigance, drinks with his Klan brothers, curious about whispering he has heard recently. Suddenly he is jumped, tied to a stake in front of a burning cross, stripped, whipped and torched. Mickey Mouse is silenced, and the Klan leaves Ford County for good.

Chapter 42 Analysis

The tide has turned markedly in favor of the black community. Whether that will mean anything for Carl Lee remains to be seen, but the jury's vote is encouraging, considering where the group started. This is a great victory for Jake. He is innocent of the accusation that he organized the black rally, and he can now say "I told you so" to Buckley and Noose when the subject of venue comes up. Carl Lee's appearance on the balcony with Tonya, the rape victim, galvanizes the crowd as if it is responding to a movie star or the Pope. All of these factors put pressure on the jury, whether the jurors realize it or not.

Two final events, miniscule in contrast with the marching of 15,000, signal danger ahead, however. Barry Acker's decision to move his family suggests that he might intend to vote for acquittal and take the risk. On the other hand, he might be simply acting out of a sense of prudence, ready to give in after all. Tim Nunley's death, though, silencing "Mickey Mouse," is truly a dark moment. Now the Klan is free to wreak havoc unreported, although signs indicate that they plan to leave the county for good. Even worse, a good man has died to save Jake and others on the side of Carl Lee. Now

Jake's life has been purchased with the death of another and the permanent paralysis of a second.



Chapter 43

Chapter 43 Summary

After an eight-hour sleep, the first in weeks, Jake showers in the office and dresses in Stan Atcavage's suit. He returns to the Coffee Shop where the regulars wish him luck. When someone mentions that the black demonstration must scare the jurors, Jake hopes so. He retires to his balcony, drinking coffee and reminiscing about the simple, peaceful life he used to enjoy. He thinks that he was not meant for the big-time. The crowd again grows, to Jake's satisfaction.

This time, as the jurors' bus arrives, it is escorted by soldiers, and Ozzie personally escorts the jurors through an armed human passageway into the courthouse. Eula Dell Yates continues to cry, as she has been doing lately, finally claiming that she cares nothing for the verdict. She just wants this to end. Clyde Sisco finds opportunities to hold her hand and soothe her. A "soft guilty" voter agrees that she cannot go on like this. Barry Acker, at the window, realizes that a guilty verdict will bring a riot, and they will probably not even reach the bus in safety. Another woman feels "like a hostage," and Clyde ministers to her. Wanda Womack stands and gets them all to agree that giving in to a deadlock would be shirking their responsibility. Then she asks them to close their eyes and pretend with her for a moment. They listen to her voice only.

Jake lies on his office couch as Lucien again spins tales of his ancestors, explaining that his family once owned most of the black families in the area. That is why so many blacks today are named "Wilbanks." He confirms that Ethel's retarded son is his half-brother and that his family grew rich by taking advantage of everybody. He was raised by black servants and played exclusively with black children as a child. In first grade, he reports, he decided he hated money because his family's money caused him to be so hated by the children of Clanton. As Jake closes his eyes, Jean Gillespie calls to say the jury is ready. Lucien cautions Jake to maintain his cool and be careful what he says. "If you win, watch what you say to the press," he warns. Harry Rex adds, "If you lose, run like hell, because those niggers will storm the courthouse."

Agee calls the black demonstrators to order, and they pray for an acquittal. The nervous soldiers also pray silently for an acquittal. Spectators in the courtroom, especially the Hailey family, are clearly nervous. Noose assumes the bench in perfect silence, inside and out. He advises the crowd that he will endure no outbursts, and then the jury is seated. It is obvious that most have been crying. After a few tense moments during which Jake feels sick, the verdict is read: on all counts, not guilty by reason of insanity. Pandemonium breaks loose as the Haileys celebrate. Jake, near tears, is paralyzed. A youngster yells the verdict from the front steps, and bedlam erupts. Ozzie restores order, and Carl Lee sits next to Jake and drapes his arm around his lawyer. Noose proclaims Carl Lee a free man and adjourns the court. Jake announces a press conference in his office at 2:00 p.m.



The jury is locked in the jury room to await their final bus ride, but Barry Acker requests personal protection, which Ozzie grants. After thirty minutes, Jake, Carl Lee and the Hailey family appear on the courthouse steps and wave to the crowd of 20,000. Then Jake, Lucien and Harry Rex evade the reporters and head for Lucien's house. Sallie serves lunch on the porch, and they enjoy champagne as they discuss Jake's upcoming press conference.

Chapter 43 Analysis

Every detail of this chapter points toward success. From the back-slapping in the Coffee Shop to the anxiety of the sequestered jurors, it looks like things are going to go Jake's way. Readers do note that Clyde Sisco is taking advantage of every opportunity to ingratiate himself with the anxious jurors, making his message of acquittal more palatable when he must deliver it. That moment never comes, however, as Wanda Womack somehow sways the jury in a different, and perfectly ethical, manner. The reader is relieved that Jake does not have the burden of a bought jury on his shoulders when the verdict is delivered. Still, there is absolutely no doubt that the black demonstrators outside have considerably shaken and intimidated this jury. Lucien's role in staging that demonstration, however, is totally ethical and moral and will be a black mark on nobody's conscience.

Now readers see Lucien Wilbanks in a new light. He gets a chance to explain himself and account for his affluence and rebelliousness. He seems to be sober as he spins his stories in Jake's office, and the reader feels a level of sympathy for him. He too has been a victim of circumstances beyond his control and has had to find his own way out of the unethical quandary that was his birthright.

As the final chapter approaches, readers will be looking for resolution in a few areas. How will Carla react to the tragedy of her house fire in light of Jake's tremendous success? Will we hear more of Ellen Roark (or her father who never showed up in court, as far as we know)? What will Jake say at his press conference? Will we ever learn what Wanda Womack said to get those jurors to agree on an acquittal? Will Lucien confirm that he never actually entered into a deal with Clyde Sisco?



Chapter 44

Chapter 44 Summary

The three compatriots pile into Harry Rex's filthy Bronco and head to the lake. On the way, Lucien confirms that he never consummated a deal with Clyde Sisco. Suddenly Jake recognizes the street on which Wanda Womack lives, and they pull over. A strange man answers the door, and it turns out to be Mack Loyd Crowell, the grand juror who told Buckley to shut up and sit down. Crowell and Wanda live together, and she has told him how she swayed the jury. Crowell now explains that Wanda asked them to imagine little Tonya was a white girl being raped by two drunken black men, and that she belonged to them. Then they voted as to whether they would "kill those black bastards if they got the chance," and all voted "yes." Wanda said she would sit there until Christmas, but she would never give in to a "guilty" verdict. Finally the last juror caved. Wanda approaches, and Jake thanks her.

The three drive to the Hailey residence where Jake is greeted warmly by a huge crowd. Carl Lee thanks him, and the two "great men" sit in the swing and answer questions about the trial. Back at his office, Jake is drinking coffee while his friends are downing margaritas. Jake calls Carla, telling her he will be in North Carolina by 10:00, assuring her that everything is fine. He plans to call Ellen tomorrow. His friends plead with him to stay in town a few days, now that he has the press in the palm of his hand, but his mind is made up. He heads to his press conference.

Chapter 44 Analysis

In this chapter, readers gain resolution and closure. Jake will not bask in the glory of his victory but will return to his family. We assume he will tell Carla in person about the burning of her house, and we assume he will call Ellen to thank her sincerely and wish her well - and probably never talk to her again. We suspect that Jake is now relieved that he never entered into an intimate affair with Ellen. He also seems ready to leave the booze behind now and go back to the simple life he was contemplating just this morning. We will never know exactly what Jake says at his press conference, but it would not have held any surprises for us anyway. At least we know how Wanda swayed the jury to acquittal, and we are assured that Clyde Sisco was never bought. Jake Brigrance seems to be on the threshold of a new beginning which will include a most active and lucrative law practice.



Characters

Jake Brigance

A thirty-two-year-old attorney and a native of Karaway, Mississippi, Jake hired on with the declining Wilbanks law firm in Clanton, Mississippi, in 1978. He quickly made it into his own practice. Now Jake lives with his wife Carla and four-year-old daughter Hanna in a restored Victorian home that is on the National Register of Historic Places. He is a liberal who easily mixes with all social classes but prefers the "average man" to the stuffed shirts of politics and the law. Most of Jake's clients are blue-collar workers, predominantly black, generally unable to pay what he deserves to earn. As the book opens, Jake has successfully defended three murder suspects, including Lester Hailey, brother of the man whose case will soon become central to Jake's life.

Jake is admirably self-disciplined, organized and in control of his life at the outset. The reader soon learns that wife Carla is the anchor who helps Jake maintain these positive qualities. Brigance is a bright, ambitious lawyer whose family is his first priority, with a thriving, lucrative law practice (just a dream at this point) running a very close second. He has a habit of fooling himself about his motives, although he cannot fool Carla. He is driven to succeed, thoroughly enjoying publicity and basking in the admiration of the local citizenry.

Unfortunately, Jake is seriously flawed in a few ways. Away from his wife and under pressure, he loses all self-discipline. Even more important, he is plagued by hubris, an arrogant pride that blinds him to his own weaknesses and drives him to take extreme risks and threaten relationships through self-centered behavior. He is sometimes endearing, sometimes pathetic and sometimes funny. He is always brilliant, sexy and attractive and generally just human.

Carl Lee Hailey

Carl Lee is a black man, probably in his mid-thirties. He is a steady worker at a local factory and a devoted husband and father of three sons and one daughter. He holds title to the small piece of land that surrounds his modest home on the outskirts of Clanton. He has a reputation as a level-headed, steady and reliable citizen with no police record. Carl Lee is a proud Vietnam veteran who was wounded in the leg, carried a buddy to safety and was decorated for bravery. He has had numerous opportunities to make a lot of money quickly through unsavory means, and he has never given those options a second thought.

In this novel, Carl Lee is "Everyman," the typical father whose actions and thought processes are scrutinized from every angle throughout the book. Each character asks, "If I were in Carl Lee Hailey's shoes, would I have acted in the same way?" Ultimately the reader must ask the same question. Carl Lee demonstrates restraint and quiet,



humble reserve when such behavior is called for. However, when attacked at his very core by the rape of his ten-year-old daughter, Carl Lee unleashes a violent, murderous fury. Except for the very moment of his violent act, however, he behaves with calm, prudent discretion, displaying extreme self-discipline and an ability to strategize meticulously and remain calm under pressure. Carl Lee Hailey's double murder trial forms the centerpiece of the novel.

Lucien Wilbanks

A dissolute, brilliant and wealthy disbarred lawyer, Lucien is the final remnant of the family that built Clanton - and owned much of it and most of its black slaves - in a bygone era. He learned to hate money at a very young age because he saw how despicable his family's wealth made him to other children. Because his parents were devoted to maintaining their affluent and prestigious lifestyle, he was raised by black domestic help and spent most of his childhood playing with black children.

Lucien naturally became a flaming liberal, "the scourge of Clanton," devoted to the cause of civil rights. He was the only white NAACP lawyer in Mississippi, an angry and unpredictable man determined to use his family's wealth to further liberal causes. He claims to be the only white man in Mississippi who knows all the words to all the verses of "We Shall Overcome." Eccentric and volatile, he has never managed to keep a law partner for long. His one permanent employee has been Ethel Twitty, long-term secretary to the firm, who has borne at least one bastard child to Lucien's father. Lucien kept her on to keep her quiet and avoid embarrassment.

Lucien hired Jake Brigance as his partner and then, within a few years, turned over to Jake the palatial, historic Wilbanks building along with the entire practice, asking only that Jake consult with him monthly. Now Lucien spends every day on the front porch of his mansion, drinking Jack Daniels from morning until midnight, served by a black woman named Sallie with whom he also sleeps. Sober or semi-sober, he remains a brilliant legal strategist and adviser to his protygy, Jake Brigance. Drunk, he is witty but unattractive and argumentative.

Sheriff Ozzie Walls

Ozzie Walls has the distinction of being a successful and respected black sheriff, the only one in the state, in a white Mississippi town. About thirty-five years of age, he commands the respect and support of the white voters while enjoying a warm, trusting relationship with the black community. Walls is a low-key leader who avoids publicity, keeps a level head and takes his job seriously. He has a history with Jake Brigance. They were football rivals in high school, Ozzie having been a few years ahead of Jake in school.

As the novel unfolds, Ozzie has many opportunities to demonstrate both his humanitarianism and his cleverness. On a number of occasions he provides opportunities for his famous prisoner to quietly meet with his family. He also proves to



be a master of evasion when the press converges on Clanton and makes life for the locals difficult. Events of the novel allow Ozzie to demonstrate the unusual combination of qualities that has, no doubt, led to his success as a law enforcement officer. He shows depth of human compassion and dedication to public peace and safety, administered justly and with little fanfare. He consistently earns and maintains the respect of everyone, without exception, from Circuit Court judge to common criminal.

Carla Brigance

Jake's wife, a schoolteacher in her early thirties, Carla is strikingly beautiful, "almost perfect" as Jake sees her. She is the only child of wealthy parents, a very bright and capable woman who perfectly complements Jake Brigance. When they met in college, Carla was a sorority girl with brains but no real career aspirations, just what Jake wanted.

Carla has had trouble carrying a pregnancy to term and almost died when Hanna was born four years ago. She is a devoted mother and a frank, realistic wife who loves her man, but not blindly. Carla is perceptive and insightful, seeing through Jake's bravado and charm. She challenges him, sometimes edgily, and makes it clear that, while he might fool others, he does not fool her.

Harry Rex Vonner

Harry Rex is a local lawyer who serves as the lovable buffoon in the novel. He is important because he is in Jake's inner circle. He is particularly helpful in moving the plot forward because he is known to have snitches and to be always the first one to know a secret. He is probably in his late thirties. Harry Rex is sloppily overweight, totally undisciplined and taken seriously by no one. Still, he is loyal, dogged and hard to dislike. He eats at every opportunity and imbibes whenever someone else is paying for the liquor. Harry Rex has a realistic view of himself, knowing that he is regarded as average or below. He is confident in his own wit, happy just to go along and be part of the crowd. He has been married and divorced four times and considers himself an expert divorce lawyer. His witty dialogue and extreme behavior provide comic relief throughout the novel, and he serves as a sounding board for Jake, allowing the reader to know Jake's mind.

Ellen Roark ("Row Ark")

A brilliant, sexy twenty-five-year-old third-year law student, Ellen pounds on Jake's office door a few days after Carla has flown to safety, intending to clerk for Jake at no cost, since her father has made her independently wealthy. She is a slim, seductive redhead, not pretty or beautiful, but most attractive. Her expert research and analysis provide Jake crucial background information necessary to make the most of a very weak defense. Ellen is tireless in her intellectual efforts as well as in her efforts to keep the liquid refreshments available and turn Jake's head while his wife is away. Ultimately she



misses the finest moments of the trial because she is kidnapped, threatened and molested by the Ku Klux Klan.

Very much like Jake Brigance in temperament, intellect and aspiration, Ellen provides a foil for a number of other main characters. Although she drinks like Lucien and shares his uncommon brainpower, she has a bright future in contrast to the downward spiral of alcoholism into which Lucien has sunk. Ellen stands in direct contrast to Harry Rex. She is neat and tidy, both mentally and physically, and exhibits a strong self-image and an amazing ability to get the job done. Finally, Ellen serves as a foil to Carla Brigance, Jake's beloved wife. Without Carla's classic beauty, she is, in her own way, sexy and appealing, reminding Jake constantly of what he is missing with his wife away. Furthermore, Ellen has high expectations for a career and is wildly dedicated to liberal causes, in stark contrast to Carla who appealed to Jake for her lack of career aspirations and her willingness to stay home and raise a family.

Judge Omar Noose

A wise and respected Circuit Court judge at the age of sixty-three, with a background in the state legislature, Judge Omar Noose is the elected judge who presides over the Ford County Circuit Court twice each year. He has to hear the Carl Lee Hailey murder trial. Due to his lanky frame, long nose and wild hair, lawyers have dubbed him "Ichabod." He is a colorful judge, serious, no-nonsense, but most unusual in appearance and temperament.

Ethel Twitty

About sixty-four years old, married with grown children, Ethel has been an employee of the Wilbanks family for more than forty years. She is said to have been the best looking woman in Ford County when she was young, and she was taken as a mistress by one of the Wilbanks boys, Lucien's father, to whom she bore a bastard son of limited mental capacity. When readers meet Ethel, she is past her prime, overweight, buxom, sour of disposition, whiny and generally annoying to her employer, Jake Brigance.

Billy Ray Cobb and Pete Willard

Cobb and Willard are the two white men who kidnap and rape Tonya Hailey while drunk and stoned. They are good-for-nothing rednecks in their early twenties with no future and little appeal. Cobb has done time and makes his living pushing drugs. Willard is his lackey. The two are murdered and buried in the opening pages of the novel, and their murder sets in motion the events of the plot.



Tonya Hailey

Ten-year-old Tonya is the little girl who is tied spread-eagle, raped and beaten as the novel opens. She is her daddy's girl and, in fact, hallucinates about her daddy coming to save her as she is being assaulted. Both her jaws are broken, and she is beaten and bloodied from head to foot. After a few days in the hospital, at times in critical condition, she comes home to play with her brothers, but the emotional scars never heal. She suffers night terrors consistently throughout the trial.

Lester Hailey

Lester Hailey is the shrewd brother of Carl Lee, acquitted of murder charges three years ago under the representation of Jake Brigance. Lester now resides in Chicago. Lester returns to Clanton to assist Carl Lee's family during the incarceration and trial. He is complicit in Carl Lee's plans to kill the two white rapists.

Gwen Hailey

Wife of Carl Lee and mother of four, Gwen is very dependent on her husband emotionally as well as financially. She requires the assistance of a male family member or law enforcement representative while her husband is away. Carl Lee sometimes characterizes her as "crazy," although she keeps body and soul together under stress.

Reverend Ollie Agee

Leader of the CME church to which the Haileys belong, Reverend Agee is a leader of the black pastors' council that imposes political influence on behalf of the black community. He is an opportunist who uses the Hailey case as a chance to look important to the NAACP, but he is also on the take and a manipulator. He successfully rouses and controls the black throngs on the courthouse lawn, although he is motivated, to a great extent, by his desire for fame and recognition. He withholds the funds he has collected on behalf of the Haileys, preferring to use the money to impress the NAACP.

Judge Percy Bullard

The diminutive county judge Percy Bullard must preside over the preliminary hearings of both the pair of rapists and their murderer, Carl Lee Hailey. Judge Bullard is a pathetically comic character who drinks vodka while on the bench to control his nerves and worries constantly about his chances for reelection.



K. T. "Cat" Bruster

Colorful Vietnam veteran, Cat is the "only one-eyed black millionaire in Memphis." He owns a string of strip joints, a block of rental property and two churches, all legal. Cat actually makes his millions in a variety of illegal ways. He is eternally grateful to Carl Lee Hailey for saving his life in Vietnam and will do anything to repay him. Cat provides the illegal murder weapon and an all-expenses-paid lawyer.

Deputy Looney

Deputy Looney is the black deputy who is escorting Cobb and Willard down the back steps of the courthouse when Carl Lee Hailey mows them down. He takes an accidental bullet in the leg and later loses the leg below the knee. He is transferred to a desk job. He remains loyal and forgiving to Carl Lee and becomes the key witness in demonstrating Carl Lee's temporary insanity, although he is actually called as a state's witness.

Rufus Buckley

Rufus Buckley is the pompous, posturing forty-one-year-old District Attorney. He has nine years on the job. Jake must argue his case against Buckley, who is known for his record of success. He commands Jake's respect if not his friendship. Buckley has obvious political aspirations and fumes each time Jake refers to him as "governor." He claims a ninety-percent success rate at winning convictions.

Dr. W. T. Bass

Dr. W. T. Bass is the debauched, semi-retired, alcoholic psychiatrist "who will say anything" who is procured by Lucien to serve as Jake's expert witness concerning Carl Lee's temporary insanity. It becomes Lucien's job to keep Bass sober for the trial. On the stand, under cross-examination, D.A. Buckley humiliates Bass when Buckley reveals that Bass was convicted of statutory rape in Texas when he was a very young man. The reader subsequently learns that Bass was a decent man who married the young woman and supported their child until both wife and child were killed in an accident, the point at which Bass's life entered a downward spiral.

Dr. Wilbert Rodeheaver

The State's expert witness concerning insanity, Dr. Rodeheaver is the head of Psychiatry at the state hospital in Whitfield. He examines Carl Lee at that facility. Jake and Ellen have researched Rodeheaver's record as a witness and discover that he never allows that a defendant might be insane. Then, he treats those very defendants for



insanity after they are convicted, a fact that embarrasses and discredits the doctor upon cross-examination by Jake.

Bo Marsharfsky

Bo Marsharfsky is the Memphis lawyer who consistently represents Cat Bruster and other underworld thugs. His services are offered to Carl Lee free of charge, to be paid for by Cat, but Bo never shows his face in Clanton. Carl Lee fires him and replaces him with Jake Brigance.

Clyde Sisco

A member of the jury in Carl Lee's trial, Clyde Sisco is willing to throw the verdict for pay, as he has done before. His services are never actually needed, as Jake wins an acquittal verdict honestly.

Mr. Pate

Mr. Pate is the elderly courtroom deputy charged with keeping order in the courtroom and keeping Judge Bullard's vodka cup filled.

"Mickey Mouse" (Tim Nunley)

The Ku Klux Klan informant and a former client of Jake Brigance, Tim Nunley is ultimately tortured and killed by the Klan after he tips off law enforcement on numerous occasions to save lives, including Jake's and Ellen's.

Deputy Nesbitt

An inept Ford County deputy, Deputy Nesbitt is ultimately assigned to be Jake's bodyguard, a job he performs while sleeping, drinking the occasional can of beer and serving as designated driver for Jake's drunken advisers.

Stump Sisson

The Imperial Wizard of the Mississippi Ku Klux Klan, Stump Sisson is the leader of the Klan demonstration in Clanton Square. He is torched by a firebomb thrown from a courthouse window and later dies of his burns.

Hanna Brigance

Hanna Brigance is the four-year-old daughter of Jake and Carla Brigance.



Deputy Willie Hastings

Willie Hastings is Tonya Hailey's uncle, and he is the first deputy on the scene when she is discovered after the rape. He takes his turn sleeping in the Hailey home while Carl Lee is in jail, helping to manage Tonya's night terrors.

Norman Reinfeld

The thirty-year-old Jewish supervisor of the NAACP "death squad," Reinfeld is a Harvard Law School graduate, committed to saving blacks from death row in the Deep South. He is "arrogant and insolent by nature." He assumes he will represent Carl Lee Hailey, but he never gets the job. He moves quickly on to the next crisis. He supervises a staff of eight.

Murphy

Longtime janitor in the Ford County Courthouse, Murphy is an eyewitness to the murder of Cobb and Willard by Carl Lee. He stutters so badly that no one wants to hear him testify, but they must.

Stan Atcavage

Atcavage is a banker who holds the title to Jake's Saab and also denies Lester Hailey a loan to pay Jake's fee. Stan and Jake lunch together occasionally, and Stan loans Jake a suit after his house is burned down.

Mack Lloyd Crowell

A white, unemployed truck driver, Mack Lloyd Crowell is summoned for grand jury duty and agitates for refusing to indict Carl Lee, saying he deserves a trophy. Crowell tells Rufus Buckley to shut up and sit down. He turns out to be a friend of Wanda Womack, a pivotal juror in the murder trial.

Dell

Jake's favorite waitress at the Coffee Shop, Dell sometimes serves as a sounding board for his ideas early in the morning. She brings sandwiches to Jake's conference room during the trial.



Leroy Glass

Leroy Glass is a black inmate who is easily manipulated by Jake to plant concerns in Carl Lee's mind and unwittingly convince him to rehire Jake as his lawyer.

Reverend Isaiah Street

Ford County's first NAACP member, Reverend Street is a respected old man who comes to the jail to speak to Carl Lee about the mistake he has made in hiring a Memphis lawyer of ill repute.



Objects/Places

The Ford County Courthouse and Clanton Square

A symbol of local government and justice, the courthouse is the scene of all the novel's trials, preliminary and Circuit Court, as well as the site of the bond hearings, grand jury deliberations and trial jury deliberations. It is the gathering place of all citizens, both black and white, who come to see that justice, as they interpret it, is done. The grassy lawn of the square is the setting of the blacks' candlelight vigil on behalf of Carl Lee Hailey as well as of the bloody clashes between the black demonstrators and the Ku Klux Klan. Around this square, the imported black marchers parade. The square and its courthouse lie across the street from Jake Brigrance's offices and are easily viewed from his second-story balcony.

Jake's Law Office

A spacious piece of Clanton's architectural history, the Wilbanks building symbolizes the wealth and gentility squandered by Lucien Wilbanks and sought by Jake Brigrance. Here Jake sequesters and immerses himself in the day's priority work. Early in the novel, his office suite is the place where he exhibits his self-discipline and dedication to duty. As the novel unfolds, the office suite serves other purposes as Jake's priorities shift. The conference room is the setting for his manipulation of the press and of Reverend Agee. The balcony, at first a serene retreat, serves as the arena from which Jake watches the activities on the courthouse square, comes very close to seduction by Ellen Roark and drinks to excess with his friends and advisers. The office itself, beautifully appointed and filled with priceless antiques, serves as the "war room" for the motley crew that makes up Carl Lee Hailey's defense team.

The Coffee Shop

One of two "white" coffee shops, where Jake has breakfast each morning, provides his link to the blue-collar class that makes up most of his clientele. This is the arena in which Jake, of the white collars, successfully crosses into the territory of the blue collars. Here he finds support, encouragement and a sense of validation. Interestingly, during the brief period when Jake has lost the Hailey case and suffers from humiliation, he refuses to enter the Coffee Shop.

Lucien Wilbanks' Front Porch

The scene of greatest depravity, the Wilbanks' front porch is where Jake goes for legal advice from his brilliant, alcoholic mentor. Here Jake, Lucien and Dr. Bass, psychiatrist, pass out from drunkenness. This is also the place where Lucien Wilbanks sits and drinks from morning until midnight, daily.



Jake's Red Saab

Jake's fancy car, like no other in Ford County, for which he makes monthly payments, represents Jake's aspirations to affluence and prestige. Although he cannot really afford such a vehicle, it is a must-have for him because it keeps him in touch with his materialistic dream.

The Brigance Home

On the National Register of Historic Places, this Victorian mansion, mortgaged to the hilt and displaying an unbelievably costly paint job, is Jake and Carla's shared symbol of the affluent lifestyle to which they are committed. It represents the new generation of successful, materialistic intellectuals, the nouveau riche class to which Jake aspires. The home's elegance reflects the dream Jake had in law school to marry a beautiful woman with no career plans who will stay home, raise a family and allow herself to be supported by her man. When the lovely home is burned to the ground by the Klan, Jake's priorities begin to shift away from the facade of materialism he has worked so hard to establish.

Porch Swing

The porch swing on the Brigance property is where Jake and Carla tend to have their serious discussions about Jake's practice in general and the Hailey case in particular. It also allows them to watch little Hanna play while they talk. The porch swing offers privacy and freedom from electronic eavesdropping, but it is also reminiscent of comfort and relaxation, a sort of symbol of security.

Claude's

This "black" coffee shop is the setting for Jake's successful cross-over into black territory, a symbol of his liberalism as well as the personal integrity that has earned him the trust of both blacks and whites. While the white citizens avoid Claude's all week, they are not above patronizing the coffee shop for its highly reputed Friday barbecue. Claude himself, the proprietor, provides a bit of comic relief as he hurls epithets at his Friday lunch customers and times their use of his tables.

"A Cabin in the Woods"

The phrase "a cabin in the woods" is the only identification given the site of the Ku Klux Klan activities in the novel. The cabin is the place where local white hoodlums are initiated into the Klan, where cross burnings and abductions are planned, where whiskey flows and racial slurs are exchanged and where "Mickey Mouse" is ultimately found out and killed.



M-16

The illegal, automatic rifle Carl Lee Hailey uses to murder Cobb and Willard is identical to the weapon he was taught to use, and used successfully, to kill the enemy in Vietnam. This one is procured from an unsavory, powerful underworld character who was, ironically, a Vietnam comrade.

Whitfield

Whitfield is the state hospital where patients are treated for insanity and mental illness under the direction of Dr. Wilbert Rodeheaver. This is where Carl Lee is transported to be examined by Rodeheaver.



Social Sensitivity

A Time to Kill takes place in the town of Clanton, in Ford County, a fictionalized version of Grisham's home region, northern Mississippi. The area is rural, removed from the bustle of life in the city. The town's population is 8,000, 74% of them white, but the black presence is quite visible. This environment recalls the settings of a multitude of Southern novels, notably William Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha saga set in the same region.

A crime with profound racial overtones disrupts the region. Two rednecks kidnap, repeatedly rape, and leave for dead a ten-year-old black girl.

Her father, Carl Lee Hailey, blows the attackers apart with an M-16 as they leave the courtroom after their bail hearing. Grisham claims that he created this plot in response to watching a similar girl agonizingly testify in a rape case. Most of Clanton's citizens agree that if a white father had committed such vigilantism against two black rapists, he would not suffer any legal penalties. But as a black man, Carl Lee faces capital murder charges and is eligible for the death penalty if he is convicted. Because Carl Lee clearly planned and carried out the offense, his most obvious defense strategy is to plead not guilty by reason of temporary insanity.

As an account of Carl Lee's case, A Time to Kill provides one of fullest literary representations of the sequence of legal procedures in a murder case: preliminary hearing — bail hearing — grand jury deliberation — arraignment — hearing for motions — actual trial.

The book further dramatizes the shattering impact of this case on the region; Grisham makes his book a portrait of the attitudes, lifeways, and nether side of the contemporary Deep South. The portrait, done with fine humorous touches and an appreciation for the region, is not always flattering; Grisham presents deeply-ingrained corruption, racism, and proclivities for violence.

Within a large cast, the book centers on Carl Lee's white attorney, Jake Brigance. Jake defines himself by contrast with Clanton's Sullivan firm: "They [the Sullivan lawyers] had the big farmers, the banks, the insurance companies, the railroads, everybody with money. The other fourteen lawyers in the county picked up the scraps and represented people — living, breathing human souls, most of whom had very little money. These were the 'street lawyers' — those in the trenches helping people in trouble. Jake was proud to be a street lawyer." Although he may have idealism for his job, he defends these people in trouble by whatever means possible. Grisham explains Jake's views on taking black clients who face assault charges: "Jake enjoyed the stabbings because acquittals were possible; just get an all-white jury full of rednecks who could care less if all niggers stabbed each other. They were just having a little fun down at the tonk, things got out of hand, one got stabbed, but didn't die. No harm, no conviction." These are hardly the thoughts of an idealist. Jake is quite willing to use discomforting, even morally dubious tactics to win his cases. Carl Lee's case provides significant incentives



to win: Jake feels great empathy with Carl Lee, and Jake realizes that winning will make him the hottest lawyer in Ford County. So Jake will do what it takes to win.

Jake's attitudes toward his cases exemplify the American adversarial system of justice. Unlike some European systems in which trial participants sift evidence before a panel of judges, the trial procedure in America pits two sides against each other in a contest in which strategies often matter more than the unbiased presentation of evidence. The lawyers become advocates, champions, even servants of their respective sides rather than to the truth or to justice. Jake and his adversary, ambitious District Attorney Rufus Buckley (fictional prosecutors are always politically ambitious), may believe in the Tightness of their positions, but they also relish the thrill of the contest and allow the trial to take on a momentum of its own.

As both lawyers desperately want to win, both readily use tactics that stretch taste and ethics. Both sides get early access to the list of potential jurors. Both sides employ psychiatrists who will say in court whatever the case demands regardless of the real mental condition of the defendant. Jake needles Rufus to upset him, embraces Carl Lee's family in a show of sympathy to impress the jury, and brutalizes the rapists' mothers during cross-examination — tactics which may not advance the cause of justice but which do win advantages for Jake's side.

As unsettling as Jake's actions may seem, he fights a larger, more malevolent evil. The revived Ku Klux Klan, galvanized by the racial aspects of the case, tries to bomb Jake's house, kills an officer who was guarding him, and intimidates potential jurors. This last act means that they have access to the jury list, and haunting the plot is the strong possibility that they got it from Rufus, that the D.A. is totally corrupted.

Grisham refuses to cast Jake as a noble, always-by-the-rules, idealistic attorney, but Grisham also renders Jake's enemies as far greater offenders than he; Jake cannot adequately defend Carl Lee unless he resorts to questionable tactics.

The book presents an overall atmosphere of deception. Black jurors, who tend to oppose the death penalty, know to lie and say they support it so that they can stay in the jury pool and thus maybe serve for Carl Lee's case. A black minister hoards money intended for the relief of the Hailey family and refuses to release it. Sheriff Ozzie Walls, a very appealing character, illegally coerces a confession from one of the rapists and then tortures a confession from a bomber. As repulsive as Ozzie's victims are, he treats them with a cruelty that is disturbing. Jake's lawyer friends obtain for him forbidden information. Lucien Wilbanks, Jake's mentor and a longtime advocate of liberal causes, bribed a juror in an earlier case and wants to bribe one of Carl Lee's jurors. Almost no character is a knight-on-a-white-horse, a wholly good person. Grisham deftly keeps readers off-kilter. Readers may root for Jake and Carl Lee, but Grisham constantly remind readers how grubby, unpleasant, and morally dubious each man can be.

The contestants in the adversarial system seldom mention justice except as a means of grandstanding. Jake and Rufus, and the other lawyers as well, essentially want to win specific outcomes, which they call justice. They do operate under some basic principles.



Jake does believe that Carl Lee should not suffer for killing the rapists, and arguing insanity — regardless of the facts — is the best means to achieve that result. No character expresses faith in the system. Law and trial procedures seem inadequate to deal with the social problems raised by the case. The jury, none of whom accepts the insanity defense, finally admits what everyone has felt all along, that if the races in the case were reversed, the white killer would win acquittal. And so the jurors decide to treat Carl Lee as they would treat a white defendant. The irony here is that as the jury affirms equality of the races in court, it then disregards society's murder laws. Moral absolutes about justice do not apply in this environment. Grisham's ribald portrayal of Jake's friend Harry Rex Vonner displays what success means in the legal community: He "was a huge slob of a lawyer who specialized in nasty divorce cases and perpetually kept some jerk in jail for back child support. He was vile and vicious, and his services were in great demand by divorcing parties in Ford County. He could get the children, the house, the farm, the VCR, the microwave, everything. One wealthy farmer kept him on retainer just so the current wife couldn't hire him for the next divorce." Harry Rex gets results; in his practice, results matter much more than appeals to higher standards. Harry Rex is the sort of lawyer people hire because he effectively serves the interests of his clients.

He does not serve an idealized version of how lawyers should advance the cause of justice. Lucien Wilbanks admits the moral confusion that engulfs the Hailey case when he says to Jake, "Now, you can win the case, and if you do, justice will prevail. But if you lose it, justice will also prevail. Kind of a strange case, I guess. I just wish I had it." In a morally relative universe, Lucien's comments affirm, the contest is more important than the principle.

As the novel unsettles readers in its depiction of the "justice" system at work, it offers an equally challenging portrait of race relations in the supposedly enlightened South of the 1980s.

(Some readers express surprise that novel has a contemporary setting.

Grisham's *The Chamber* [1994] refers to the Hailey case and places it in 1985.)

In Ford County the races intermingle peacefully; the three-quarters white population even elects a black sheriff, Ozzie Walls. Yet awareness of racial difference permeates this society; race matters in every decision. Ozzie's elections placate the federal Justice Department and forestall investigations of local voting practices. The setting of bail in criminal cases differs depending on the race of the accused. The grand jury votes along racial lines. Selection of the foreperson of the grand jury becomes an exercise in affirmative action. Judges and prosecutors consider how their actions in the Hailey case will affect their efforts to keep the black vote. In such a tense, hyperaware environment, the Hailey case serves as a match to a powder keg and ignites violent racial confrontations. In 1963, Martin Luther King described Mississippi as "a desert state sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression." The sobering question suggested by the novel is how much has Mississippi really changed.



Grisham daringly writes a two-page exposition of the thoughts of Lester, Carl Lee's brother, about race relations in Clanton; that is, a white author gets into the mind of a black character about the very issues that separate black and white. Having fled Mississippi for a better paying job up North, Lester feels depressed at returning to see anew the unchanging, almost unescapable poverty in which Southern blacks live. He takes the racism as a given: He is impressed by the high bails given the rapists, because people who kill or assault blacks seldom get high bails. Grisham places the racial epithet "nigger" into the speech and thoughts of many characters, white and black. The word seems to occur constantly and in all combinations: black speaking to black, white to white, black to white, and white to black. Ozzie uses it when he interrogates a white suspect, and Jake uses it when speaking to Ozzie. The redolence of the word, although potentially very disturbing for some readers, illuminates the race relations of the setting and gives the novel a sharp edge.

As Grisham takes on the issue of race relations, he likewise addresses the status of women in the New South.

Women are not yet equal; they have a circumscribed, lesser place. None of the local officials or lawyers is a woman; women instead take the traditional jobs of clerk and secretary. Jake's wife is a teacher, a respectable profession for an intelligent female in this setting. He shuttles her and their daughter away for safety when the case turns ugly. When the jailed Carl Lee hears his wife complain about needing money, he tells her bluntly that he will find a way to provide and that she should mind her place. Jake's final speech to the jury asserts that daughters are different, special, a difference that explains Carl Lee's rage over the rape of his little girl — by extension Jake argues that women remain on the traditional Southern pedestal. Grisham is not being an unthinking sexist; he deliberately points to the chauvinism in contemporary Mississippi, just as he points to the racism by the use of the epithet. And into this setting, onto this pedestal, he places Ellen Roark, a half-Southern, half-Northern liberal law student who wants to assist Jake on the case. She has impressive legal talents — she does masterful research for Jake — and an alluring body, alluring more so for her refusal to wear a bra unless she is going to court. She disturbs the men because she can match them in law, and because her presence keeps reminding them of sex. Clearly Jake, who cannot fathom having a woman for a friend or a law partner, feels tempted by her. But for all her banter, she does nothing untoward (although the scene of Ellen and Jake outside the restaurant deserves discussion). She says with arch irony, "I'm a woman, and I'm in the South. I know my place." Readers have various responses to her. Some find her admirable, even judge her to be the best legal mind in the book; others will dismiss her as coarse and flirtatious. However readers take her, Grisham presents her as a specimen of modern womanhood, very unlike what the Mississippi locals expect, and thus a challenge and maybe even a role model.

Techniques

A Time to Kill is not a streamlined novel, as are Grisham's later efforts in the thriller genre. In addition to vivid characterization, Grisham lingers over many specifics of place. A fine scene in which Jake takes Ellen to a restaurant leads to a humorous and succulent discussion of Southern food. All the details offer the reader a total immersion into a highly particularized place populated by extremely well-drawn characters.

For a first novel, the book reveals highly accomplished techniques. Grisham deftly juggles his large cast. He demonstrates the suspense that will fuel his later career as he sends trouble after trouble to beset Jake. As he does in other novels, he grabs readers with a tense, violent start: He describes the rape of the girl without being pathetic yet still conveying the horror and while making odd fun of the attackers (one complains that the little girl dripped her blood in the beer cooler). He adopts a flat, understating style that makes the events disturbing: As the men throw their beer cans at the girl, Grisham writes, "Willard had trouble with the target, but Cobb was fairly accurate." Grisham also shows his flair for dialog, another skill that will become a trademark. Especially when he narrates a courtroom exchange, the dialog snaps and seems authentic. The blistering cross-examinations Jake and Rufus inflict upon each other's experts show both Grisham's achievement at dialog and his adeptness at narrating technical legal processes.

Grisham employs a wry humor, unexpected with such downbeat material as rape, vigilantism, and capital murder. *A Time to Kill* is a surprisingly funny book. He throws in asides such as this description of Norman Reinfeld as he and Jake are about to meet: "Reinfeld was no pushover when it came to arrogance . . . He was arrogant and insolent by nature. Jake had to work at it." Ozzie threatens the white rapists, who endure the menacing stares of the black inmates in the nearby jail cells: "stay quiet, or he would integrate his jail." In scenes that could be unrelievedly horrible, Grisham finds a source of mirth. Having left the tortured bomber alone to dismantle his device, Ozzie, Jake, and another officer debate who should go check on the bomber. The officer suggests Jake, as, after all, it is Jake's house that is being threatened. When a cross burns on Jake's yard, the officers wonder what to do, as they had never seen a burning cross before, and ask whether it will flame itself out. After being intimidated by Jake in court, one of the rapists' mothers howls theatrically as she is led from the courtroom. *A Time to Kill* encourages sober reflection on the state of law and race relations and also encourages smiles and guffaws from readers. Perhaps this mix of techniques accounts for Grisham's success: swiftlypaced stories, thoughtful and complex treatments of issues, and a dry, satiric tone.



Themes

Themes

Jake certainly is a committed lawyer, yet the book sketches how this commitment exacts costs in his ethics, his family life, and his mental stability. In the novel's morally relative world, commitment may be the only idealism available: There are no standards except to fight relentlessly for one's cause. Grisham describes how other committed lawyers suffer for their embrace of their cause. Norman Reinfeld, the white NAACP lawyer who specializes in desperate capital cases and who almost seizes the Hailey case from Jake, is both an idealist and a tenacious fighter: "with each execution [of a client — he has seen four] he renewed his vow to break any law, violate any ethic, contempt any court, disrespect any judge, ignore any mandate, or do whatever to prevent a human from legally killing another human . . . He seldom slept more than three hours a night. Sleep was difficult with thirty-one clients on death row...

He was thirty and looked forty-five."

Reinfeld is both energized and worn down by his thankless duty. This passage again refers to the novel's premise that the judicial processes need to be stretched and even abused, as Reinfeld does. Lucien Wilbanks, during the heyday of his practice, felt zest for adopting the cause of civil rights, but his efforts exacerbated his already eccentric, abrasive personality and his alcoholic tendencies. As she is perhaps the novel's best legal mind, Ellen Roark is also the most openly idealistic character; she announces that her ambition is to be a radical lawyer and fight against capital punishment in the South and that she is ready to endure public scorn for her cause. She is enthusiastic and unspoiled, perhaps what Reinfeld was like when he was younger. The unanswered question is whether her commitment can withstand the trauma she experiences in Clanton.

Bigotry

This novel is, first and foremost, a study of deep-seated racial hatred that has been papered over but remains ready to erupt at the slightest provocation. While Clanton, Mississippi, is at the outset a peaceful town in Ford County, which is twenty-six percent black and seventy-four percent white, it is not a town that has learned to tolerate differences. There are three major coffee shops where the locals gather for breakfast and lunch, and signs no longer identify them as "white only" or "colored." However, the lines have been silently drawn, and Claude's is the "black" coffee shop, not frequented by whites in general and visited for Friday barbecue by only the very liberal whites such as Jake Brigance. Whites people the "Coffee Shop" where Jake generally breakfasts.

After the rape of Tonya Hailey, virtually everyone in town agrees that the white perpetrators should be punished. A few days later, when Tonya's black father takes the



law into his own hands and murders the two white rapists in cold blood, citizens generally agree that, when a man's daughter is raped, that is pretty much "a time to kill." Everyone agrees that he or she would have done the same, so this novel is not about whether a father should kill his daughter's rapist. It is about whether a black man should ever be allowed to kill a white man, under any circumstances, even those circumstances in which everyone has agreed that it was, indeed, "a time to kill." The issue is not murder but bigotry, and it is compounded by the fact that this is primarily a white county.

Carl Lee Hailey is a good man, a good provider and a homeowner. He has a spotless work record, and he is a faithful husband and father, a respectful citizen and a decorated Vietnam veteran. However, he is black. Billy Ray Cobb and Pete Willard are "Clanton's offal," as Jake Brigance characterizes them. Cobb is a known drug dealer, and Willard is his lackey. They are trash, mourned only by their mothers. Even the Klan agrees that they got what they deserved when Carl Lee Hailey mowed them down. What is unacceptable is that the punishment came at the hands of a "nigger." Therein lies the problem. Can a white jury possibly acquit a black man who has killed two of their own? The most important matter in jury selection, then, is simply skin color.

The color issue is far more than skin-deep, however. The Ku Klux Klan and the NAACP represent similar, but opposing fury. The good Christian blacks travel for hours to hold candlelight vigils, chanting "Free Carl Lee." Both the white supremacists and the angry blacks are convinced of their own righteousness. They are all acting on their deepest convictions about right and wrong. This brings back to the surface the bigotry that raged in the fifties and sixties and was then squelched in the 70s by busing and Affirmative Action and other bandages that could stanch the bleeding but could not cure.

Hubris

Arrogant pride, the classic tragic flaw reminiscent of Oedipus and Hamlet, is the character weakness that infects many of the principal players in this novel and, most noticeably, the main character, Jake Brigance. Hubris is an unspoken certainty that the eyes of the world must certainly be on oneself, an assurance that the limits of human action in an orderly universe surely do not apply in one's own case. As a classic tragic flaw, hubris blinds the hero to his own shortcomings and exaggerates his importance, at least in his own mind.

Jake Brigance has been set up for a great fall by the fortuitous turns of events in his young life. He has married a beautiful, brilliant rich girl, fathered an equally beautiful daughter and become the beneficiary of the drunken, dissipated final heir to a family's fortune. At age thirty-two, Jake works from the finest office in town, surrounded by priceless antiques and a formidable law library. He drives the only red Saab in the county, living in a (mortgaged) Victorian heirloom and enjoying the adulation of the blue-collar population and black community. He has already won three acquittals in three murder trials.



Jake's wife Carla recognizes his hubris and tries to point it out to him. She warns him to report the planned murder and to let the Hailey case go, but she sees that Jake is incapable of stepping out of the spotlight. When he promises to drop the case if it becomes a threat to his family, she knows he will not do that. Her opinion is validated as Jake watches the Klan make one attempt on his life after another and destroy his property and his peace of mind. Still, he cannot let go of such an opportunity, especially when he has seen how good he looks on television. Sheriff Ozzie Walls, a Jake Brigrance admirer, also comments on how Jake loves the cameras. Carl Lee Hailey, the important and infamous client, knows that Jake will become famous, whether he wins an acquittal or suffers a conviction.

Hubris causes Jake to play with fire, sure he will not get burned. With his wife away, he quickly gives in to his insatiate thirst for beer, moving readily to whiskey and margaritas following the crowd. He allows himself to dally in dangerous sexual territory, subtly encouraging Ellen Roark while overtly reminding her that he is happily married. He dares to go into court unrated and hung over because he sees himself as beyond the laws of human nature. His arrogant pride also causes him to manipulate people and compromise his ethics. He loves toying with the press to gain an advantage. When he fears that he has lost the Hailey case for sure, he has no qualms about sowing seeds in the feeble mind of Leroy Glass in order to suggest that Leroy nudge Carl Lee in his direction. He will manipulate Lester Hailey, Jean Gillespie and anyone else who might be a steppingstone toward success.

Jake Brigrance is not the only character who suffers from hubris. Reverend Ollie Agee, Rufus Buckley and various members of the Sullivan law firm are driven by the same conviction that they are somehow elevated above the status of ordinary humans. Even Stump Sisson and his hideous Klansmen are fueled by hubris as they perpetrate horrific deeds out of an exaggerated sense of righteousness and importance. Lucien Wilbanks, brilliant and effective in spite of his pickled brain, has the gall to invite in thousands of black marchers from all over the state, arrange to pay off a juror and compose for Jake the best closing argument ever, based on all of the best closing arguments of his own career.

A Time to Kill is not, however, a true tragedy in the classical sense, since the hero overcomes the challenges and is, in the end, victorious, exonerated and happy. His hubris, then, is not truly a tragic flaw. However, a general sense of exaggerated pride, invincibility and self-importance is the cocktail from which many of the main characters drink heartily.

Deceit

Most of the energy expended by the principal characters in this novel is directed at deceiving someone else. The very premise on which the plot is built is, necessarily, deceptive. Jake Brigrance must convince a jury that Carl Lee Hailey, who murdered two men while absolutely in his right mind, who contemplated and planned and then executed that plan to the final detail, was actually insane at the time of the shooting.



Carl Lee begs for an opportunity to tell the judge and the press his side of the story, the true side, the position of a father who was so wronged that he had to take the law into his own hands and kill in cold blood. Of course, his lawyer cannot allow him to speak those truthful words because he must construct a compelling case that skirts around the truth and bends reality in order to convince the world of something that is not true but is generally wished to be true. Everyone really wants to believe that Carl Lee Hailey was suffering from temporary insanity because Carl Lee is, after all, Everyman. If all agree that, put in Carl Lee's position, they would have behaved in the very same way, then they need to call that behavior "insanity" rather than murder or injustice.

If our justice system demands some deceit in order to do its work, such a demand is, in this novel, carried far beyond the courthouse steps. Klan members act in full deceit, wearing robes and hoods and even masks, striking in the dark and keeping the citizenry on edge and disoriented. The black ministers who oppose the Klan are no better, though. Each pastor fills his congregation with the zeal to give as the collection plate is passed on behalf of the Haileys, and then each skims a bit of the take to line his own pockets. When the churches combine their collections and turn the funds over to Reverend Ollie Agee, he takes his share from the general collection and then withholds what is left until he can disburse it in a way that will impress the NAACP. All are deceptive.

In *A Time to Kill*, deception is not always malicious. It is sometimes the source of comic relief. Readers chuckle when Curtis Todd, standing in for Carl Lee, is allowed to "escape" into the woods as a decoy for the press, assuring Carl Lee's safe transport to the courthouse. We are entertained when a deputy, driving Carl Lee to Whitfield for his psychiatric exam, tells reporters that he, himself, is Carl Lee Hailey. We imagine the hilariously incorrect report that journalist will surely file. In fact, deceiving the press becomes the town pastime eventually, once the locals grow tired of their oppressive visitors. This type of deceit seems warranted and "creative" in a good-natured, justified way.

The deceit that is most troubling, surely, is Jake's deceit, which often manifests as manipulation of others. He is not completely truthful with his wife, suggesting, "What she doesn't know won't hurt her." He sneaks around behind Carl Lee's back, talking to Lester and visiting Tank's Tonk, inciting the judge against Bo Marsharfsky, sneaking a peek at files not meant for him and in general getting away with whatever he can. He willingly hires an "expert witness" who is close to incompetent, admitting that he needs a psychiatrist that will "say anything." Jake comes by his duplicity honestly, though, as his wife could attest. He is not completely honest with himself about himself. Thus, the main character of the novel is comfortable with deceit, as are many of the people who surround him. The philosophy seems to be that the ends justify the means.

Style

Point of View

The novel is told from the perspective of an omniscient narrator, in third person using past tense. This is a most comfortable point of view for the reader. This perspective is critical for two important reasons. First, only an omniscient narrator can give the reader access to all the warring elements, and there are many. Second, none of the main characters could provide a reliable, unbiased report of the novel's events. That said, it is worth noting that much of the story's action is filtered through the mind of Jack Brigrance. For example, when Jake's house burns to the ground, the reader views the event more from Jake's vantage point than from that of the Klan or law enforcement. Readers come to know Ellen Roark and Carla Brigrance more from the way Jake sees them than from a truly objective position. Rufus Buckley might very well be a respected and admired prosecutor in the eyes of other folks in other places, but we tend to view him rather as Jake views him: pompous, self-important, arrogant and rather silly.

Still, the point of view is definitely omniscient, allowing us to enter the cabin in the woods where the Klan meets and drinks whiskey, Cat Bruster's dramatic office and Ethel Twitty's home. These are all places where Jake would not have gone, but the reader must go there to understand characters and events. Some persons, places and events are portrayed much as Jake Brigrance might have viewed them, such as Harry Rex Vonner, Judge Noose, Carla Brigrance, jury selection and the National Guard activity on Clanton Square. Still, other people and events become more familiar to the reader than they do to the main character. The omniscient narrator takes us for a ride down a country road after dark where we witness the attempt to erect a kerosene soaked cross in the front lawn of a prospective juror. We are allowed in the jury room to "hear" the thoughts of Barry Acker after he has been assaulted and threatened by the Klan. We are able to view the foolish Judge Bullard hiding under his desk with a vodka bottle and observe the knowing glance between Jake and Ellen in his car, late at night, when both have been drinking and both are contemplating the possibility of spending the night together. These are all opportunities that would be denied us by a first-person narrator.

Setting

The story is set in the Deep South, specifically northern Mississippi, in the early '80s, probably about 1982. No setting could provide a more perfect arena for the battle between blacks and whites as it emerges far beyond the days of the civil rights movement. What Grisham achieves by placing the story in this time and place is the most natural unearthing of buried hatchets and the most subtle revelation of festering wounds and double standards.



Most of the story takes place in and around Clanton Square, the center of a sleepy, peaceful little southern town that has adopted a facade of equality and learned to live with suppressed anger. Clanton Square holds the Ford County Courthouse, scene of all the trials and hearings within the novel. It also offers a spacious green area on which demonstrators can assemble. The lawn is, logically, bisected by a sidewalk leading to the front entrance of the courthouse, and so it provides two distinct areas for the opposing groups during a demonstration. Along this sidewalk, the sheriff's deputies and the National Guard take up posts to separate the KKK from the black demonstrators.

Another venue for much of the action is Jake's office, an intriguing historic building housing a ten-room suite that once bustled with the legal activity of the esteemed Wilbanks lawyers. Now the ten-room suite is a white elephant, dusty and unused. Jake's own office is spacious and splendid, allowing him to "wear" the look of success and affluence while struggling to make a living. The conference room, with its impressive law library, makes a spectacular backdrop for press conferences and also allows for strategy sessions, meetings with the Hailey family and even breakfast or lunch with the team. The kitchen, not mentioned in any other way, is a handy place for Ellen to mix margaritas.

Jake spends as much time at Lucien Wilbanks' home as he does at his own, and most activity there is relegated to the massive front porch with its infamous swing. Jake enjoys a spacious room in Lucien's house and also finds a fantastic law library there.

Finally, the time of year is an important part of the setting. The initial rape takes place in May, and the trial of Carl Lee Hailey is held at the end of July. That season in Mississippi provides warm nights and sweltering days, especially in a packed courtroom.

Language and Meaning

Grisham's novel is told in a straightforward way, often with an eye to subtle humor. The events and expository material are related simply and clearly. However, dialogue serves to advance the plot and color the story at almost every turn, and that dialogue is the key to understanding the characters of the novel. For example, we listen to the Klansmen talk hate-talk as the whiskey bottle goes round in the cabin, and this helps us understand a position that might be shocking to readers but is absolutely logical and necessary for them. Harry Rex Vonner's witty speech gives us a clue to the intellect hidden behind the sloppy appearance. The narrator's description of Ellen Roark tells us of her attractiveness, but it is her speech that reveals a sharp intellect and a most analytical mind. The same is true for all the characters. They reveal their true inner selves through appropriate and fast-paced dialogue.

The author does not shy away from the lingo appropriate to northern Mississippi, and the N-word, "nigger," is rampant throughout the novel. While this might prove offensive for some readers, it is absolutely realistic coming from the mouths of those who say it. Other than that, the reader does not have to contend with any difficult jargon or



colloquialism. In fact, the "legalese" that is used is also explained in detail, mainly through interesting action or dialogue.

Structure

A Time to Kill, covering approximately ten weeks in the summer of 1982, has a taut structure that allows Grisham to keep several balls in the air without confusion or bumpiness. There are no significant flashbacks (just some short reminiscences for expository purposes), so the action is on a straight line, moving forward. The story opens in May with the rape of Tonya Hailey and moves steadily through to the first week of August when Carl Lee Hailey has been acquitted and Jake is heading to North Carolina to be reunited with his family in triumph. Occasionally the narrator skips a week or two, but for the most part, the reader simply follows events from day to day.

Within the daily/weekly, forward-moving structure, the author moves comfortably among the various developing scenarios. In this way, readers are simultaneously kept abreast of the unfolding plot of the KKK, the strategy of the NAACP and the local black preachers, Jake's personal and professional life and Carl Lee Hailey's situation. With little fanfare, Grisham brings us up to date on Jake's Monday morning activities and then slips comfortably over to the cabin in the woods for a look at the latest Klan activity. He moves just as smoothly out to Clanton Square to observe National Guard activity. There is no pretense that any one person is observing all of these things but simply the knowledge that an omniscient narrator is reporting. In this way, the author develops his three main themes, bigotry, hubris and deception, simultaneously, driving forward to a powerful climax and a quick resolution.



Quotes

"You pick the right jury and you walk. If the D.A. picks the right jury, you get the gas. It depends strictly on the jury, and in this county you can pick the right folks. People are tired of raping and robbing and killing." Chapter 6, pgs. 62-63

"The men talked about niggers in general, and chewed Red Man and sipped whiskey, and reminisced about the other days when niggers knew their place. Now they were just pampered and protected by the government and courts. And there was nothing white people could do." Chapter 9, pgs. 90-91

"... you must plead insanity. You must give the jury a way out. You must show them a way to find him not guilty, if they are so inclined. If they're sympathetic, if they want to acquit, you must provide them with a defense they can use to do it. It makes no difference if they believe the insanity crap. That's not important in the jury room." Chapter 10, pgs. 107-108

"I admire him for what he did. It took guts. I'd hope I'd have the courage to do what he did, 'cause Lord knows I'd want to. Sometimes a man's just gotta do what he's gotta do. That man deserves a trophy, not an indictment." Chapter 12, p. 137

"Carl Lee, I got the smartest, meanest, crookedest criminal lawyer in these parts. He cheats, he plays dirty, and the cops hate him. But I'm sittin' here instead of some prison. He'll do whatever it takes to win a case." Chapter 16, pgs. 168-169

"Your acquittal by a white jury for the killings of two white men will do more for the black folks of Mississippi than any event since we integrated the schools. And it's not just Mississippi; it's black folk everywhere. Yours is a most famous case, and it's being watched by people everywhere." Chapter 19, p. 208

"He's the best lawyer in Memphis."

'This isn't Memphis, is it?'

'He's an expert on criminal law.'

'That could be because he's a criminal.'

"Carl Lee stood abruptly and walked across the room, his back to the reverend.

'He's free. He's not costin' me a dime.'

'His fee won't seem important when you're on death row, my son.'" Chapter 19, pgs. 209-210

"Blacks had an excuse for being worthless, but for whites in a white world, there were no excuses." Chapter 19, p. 211



"She was just a little nigger, they probably thought. Somebody's little nigger kid. Illegitimate, of course, like all of them. Rape would be nothing new." Chapter 20, p. 223

"If I was the sheriff, I would not have arrested him. If I was on the grand jury, I would not have indicted him. If I was the judge, I would not try him. If I was the D.A., I would not prosecute him. If I was on the trial jury, I would vote to give him a key to the city, a plaque to hang on his wall, and I would send him home to his family. And, Mr. Buckley, if my daughter is ever raped, I hope I have the guts to do what he did." Chapter 22, p. 245

"Four of his former clients had either been gassed, electrocuted, or lethally injected, and that was four too many for Reinfeld. He had watched them all die, and with each execution he renewed his vow to break any law, violate any ethic, contempt any court, disrespect any judge, ignore any mandate, or do whatever it took to prevent a human from legally killing another human. He didn't worry much about the illegal killings of humans, such as those killings so artfully and cruelly achieved by his clients. It wasn't his business to think about those killings, so he didn't. Instead he vented his righteous and sanctimonious anger and zeal at the legal killings." Chapter 24, p. 261

"'I'm here to say that the law-abidin' white folks of Mississippi are sick and tired of niggers stealin', rapin', killin', and gettin' by with it. We demand justice and we demand that this Hailey nigger be convicted and his black ass sent to the gas chamber.'" Chapter 30, p. 338

"'I don't care where you move it. It's not fair to try him in Ford County. Things were bad enough before the war yesterday. Now the white folks are really in a lynching mood, and my man's got the nearest available neck. The situation was terrible before the Klan started decorating the county with Christmas trees. Who knows what else they'll try before Monday. There's no way to pick a fair and impartial jury in Ford County.'" Chapter 31, p. 346

"He was their hero, the most famous man most of them would ever see, and they knew him personally. To his people he was on trial for one reason only. Sure he killed those boys, but that wasn't the issue. If he was white, he would receive civic awards for what he did. They would half-heartedly prosecute him, but with a white jury the trial would be a joke. Carl Lee was on trial because he was black. And if they convicted him, it would be because he was black. No other reason. They believed that." Chapter 31, p. 360

"Jurors would not follow the lawyer with the quickest tongue or prettiest words. They would not follow the sharpest dresser. They would not follow a clown or court jester. They would not follow the lawyer who preached the loudest or fought the hardest. Lucien had convinced him that jurors followed the lawyer who told the truth, regardless of his looks, words, or superficial abilities. A lawyer had to be himself in the courtroom, and if he was afraid, so be it. The jurors were afraid too." Chapter 33, p. 377

"'Two weeks ago they planted dynamite outside my bedroom window. They beat to death my secretary's husband. Yesterday they shot at me and hit a guardsman. Now



they grab my law clerk, tie her to a pole, rip her clothes off, cut her hair, and she's in the hospital with a concussion. I wonder what's next.'

'I think you should surrender.'

'I would. I would march down to the courthouse right now and surrender my briefcase, lay down my arms, give up. But to whom? The enemy is invisible.'" Chapter 38, p. 453.

"'I don't understand how everything has gone so wrong. Surely to God we're entitled to a little good luck. The case should not even be tried in Clanton. We were dealt the worst possible jury - a jury that's been tampered with. But I can't prove it. Our star witness was completely destroyed. The defendant made a lousy witness. And the jury does not trust me. I don't know what else could go wrong.'" Chapter 39, p. 466

"'But I've still got ethics.'

'And I have none. No ethics, no morals, no conscience. But I won, bubba. I won more than anybody has ever won around here, and you know it.'" Chapter 41, p. 486

Adaptations

Grisham's open emotional attachment to his first novel rendered him shy about selling the film rights even as Hollywood's appetite for his books led in 1993 to the record-setting \$3.75 million sale of the rights to a book he had not yet completed (*The Chamber*).

Finally in August 1994, Grisham allowed purchase of the rights for *A Time to Kill* by the team that made a version of *The Client* which respected the text and which earned financial success.

Grisham received a staggeringly \$6 million, plus some approval over casting and the script, plus the role of coproducer (along with Arnon Milchan, whose New Regency Productions would make the film for Warner Bros.), Michael Nathan, and Hunt Lowry.

During summer 1995, director Joel Schumacher shot the film in a very cooperative Canton (obviously close in name to the fictional Clanton), Mississippi, using locals as extras. Canton happily boasted the Mississippi feature crucial to the plot: a distinctive-looking courthouse situated on a square that serves as a focal point of town life. The CBS news show *48 Hours* produced an hour-long program on the filming, highlighting the unsettling atmosphere of shooting scenes about contemporary Southern racial strife in a real Southern town.

The film premiered in July 1996 to great success, competing well for an audience amidst more special effects-driven summer fare. The film had been heralded by numerous articles about the production and many approving profiles of Matthew McConaughey, the 25-year old unknown who plays Jake.

(The movie alerts non-Southerners that Jake's surname should be pronounced as "brigan-CE," an example of the Southern tendency to accent second syllables.) Schumacher and Grisham reportedly clashed repeatedly over who should play the lead, finally agreeing on McConaughey, who had been cast in a supporting role and who looks a lot like Grisham. McConaughey seems to inhabit the role, and the strong acting by the entire cast is the film's greatest asset. The players include the versatile Samuel L. Jackson as Carl Lee; Sandra Bullock, who nicely underplays Ellen Roark even though she lacks the right hair color; and previous Academy Award winners Kevin Spacey (as Rufus Buckley) and Brenda Fricker (as Jake's secretary).

Yet Schumacher and screenwriter Akiva Goldsman vary significantly from the novel even as they respect the book's basic plot. A key change involves Jake: as occurred with the muting of Mitch McDeere's ethical lapses in the film of *The Firm*, this movie presents Jake as an earnest greenhorn instead of a wily, self-assured gladiator. The film's Jake takes the case out of guilt for not telling Ozzie about Carl Lee's implied threats; the Jake of the novel had told Ozzie and has lots of motives to take the case, including fellow-feeling for Carl Lee and not excluding lust for fame. The film's Jake seems over-matched in court. Carl Lee has to tell him what to ask Deputy Looney; in



the book Jake rehearses the testimony with the Deputy. The film's Jake desperately needs Ellen to deliver information on how to demolish the state's psychiatrist; the Jake of the book already knows how, just desires some specific research from Ellen. In the film, Jake needs pep talks from four different characters (Ellen, Lucien, his wife, and Carl Lee) before he can deliver his summation. And in that summation he delivers an apology for his rookie performance followed by the story of the rape with the races reversed. In the novel, a juror tells this story at a pivotal point in deliberations, but having already described the attack at the book's opening, Grisham resists giving her full speech. He resisted being sentimental; the movie does not resist.

The movie seeks for a wholly emotional impact whereas the novel deftly avoids becoming maudlin. The movie seeks more to satisfy than to unsettle.

Thus the film eschews the book's odd humor, the pounding and constant use of "nigger" by almost everybody, the shading of the "good" characters. Gone are Ozzie's legally dubious extortion of the rapist's confession, Harry Rex's procurement of the jury list, Lucien's serious consideration of bribing a juror, Carl Lee's dismissive treatment of his wife when she asks about money.

Instead the film offers good guys and bad guys, and the bad guys are very bad. The book's Klanners are self-important figures of dark comedy; Grisham describes the swearing-in: "Sweat dripped from their faces as they prayed fervently for the dragon to shut up with his nonsense and finish the ceremony." The film aggrandizes the Klan into a serious-minded, malevolent force. (In Delaware, local Klanners actually protested outside a theater that was showing the film.) As for the good guys, the film depicts them as hard-working and sincere. The film adds audience-pleasing scenes such as Jake's dog appearing safe amidst the ashes of Jake's house and the ending sequence of a racially-inclusive picnic. By rendering Jake and his friends as near paragons of virtue, the filmmakers lull the audience into forgetting that this story is about vigilantism. Indeed, the film places at the final picnic the black youth who dropped the fire bomb that killed the Klan leader; this youth is a deliberate killer, but the film seems to give him approbation by finessing the whole issue of what constitutes a murder.

More than the expected alterations and compressions inherent in any screen translation, these changes seem to reflect the film industry's notorious timidity in presenting hard-edged material for mass consumption. The good acting and strong sense of place rescue the movie; it is a superior translation than, say, the amazingly wrongheaded effort to film Tom Wolfe's scathing satire *The Bonfire of the Vanities* (1984-1985). Yet nor is *A Time to Kill* in league with the film versions of *Dead Man Walking* or the obvious touchstone *To Kill a Mockingbird*, movies which retain the disturbing and challenging spirits of their sources movies which people talk about.

Key Questions

This novel fits comfortably in discussion groups and classes devoted to law and literature, crime and literature, and Southern writing. The book challenges readers to re-examine their overall trust in the justice system: in trials as mechanisms for finding truth, in prosecutors, in expert witnesses, in juries. Asking for reactions to this portrait of the system can initiate a lively debate, as will asking readers to evaluate Jake. Grisham endows the characters with such colorful traits that many of them can spark a good discussion: is Ozzie just in tormenting the bomber, is Ellen an admirable woman, would you hire Harry Rex to handle your divorce?

Atticus Finch of *To Kill a Mockingbird* offers a strong contrast to Jake, and invoking Harper Lee's novel relates not only to legal matters but to the Southern setting. Readers could discuss how the South of this novel matches the progressive reputation of the contemporary South. Many books that highlight race and violence in the South, especially those by William Faulkner, can be compared to *A Time to Kill* as a means of asking how the South has or has not changed.

1. This novel describes in detail the judicial proceedings of a capital murder case. How do the proceedings relate to the issue of justice? Do the proceedings produce justice? How does skill at law figure the accomplishment of justice? How does the book impact your beliefs in the American system of criminal justice?
2. What does "justice" mean in this novel? How often and in what contexts do the characters use the term?
3. Who are the "good" lawyers in the book? What does "good" mean in this context — adept at legal tactics, or morally upstanding, or both?
4. If you were in legal trouble, would you hire Jake Brigance? (If you needed a lawyer for a divorce proceeding, would you retain Harry Rex Vonner?)
5. How comfortable are you with the resolution of Carl Lee's case?
6. Why do so many lawyers want to defend Carl Lee? Jake turns down the chance to defend Pete Willard, but fights off others to keep Carl Lee as a client. Why?
7. If Jake did lose the case to Norman Reinfeld of the NAACP, would the basic defense strategy have been different? If Carl Lee is to insist upon his right of trial, what possible strategic options does an attorney have in defending him? (Here you might consider the Nesler case from California in 1993-1994 as a real-life analogue.)
8. What aspects of the book do you think you will recall when you read about or discuss other court cases?
9. Is Ozzie a good sheriff? Is his interrogation of the bomber just?



10. Consider the book as a portrait of the contemporary South, and look at Grisham's attention to matters of social class, race, the status of women, small town life, even food. How does the region seem alike and different compared to your own home place? How is book like or unlike other literary portraits of the South?

11. How would you define race relations in Clanton?

12. How do you react to the characters' frequent, even constant use of the racial epithet? What does its use mean to these characters?

13. What is the status of women in Clanton? What does Grisham accomplish by inserting Ellen Roark into this environment?

14. This book is not in the thriller genre, yet matched the sales of Grisham's thrillers. How can you explain this book's best-selling appeal? What is your reaction to Grisham's assessment that this is his best book?



Topics for Discussion

Contemporary American literature rarely presents the reader with a classic tragic hero, but the argument could be made that Jake Brigance bears a striking resemblance to such a figure. Using a good definition of the classic tragic hero, explain to what extent you feel Jake fits the required profile.

Ford County, Mississippi, starts out in the novel as a tidy, amiable southern locale where generations have gradually established a protocol for peaceful coexistence between the races. With the Hailey case looming, though, the area dissolves into senseless violence and anxiety. Can you identify the unaddressed issues or unrecognized human traits that have simmered quietly over the years, allowing such a flare-up of old hatred?

Grisham peoples his novels with a host of unique characters, some of whom add little to the plot development but help round out an interesting story. What is the role of Harry Rex Vonner in this novel? Explain how he contributes (or not) to plot development, characterization, theme and/or setting.

Ozzie Walls finds himself in a most peculiar position as the story unfolds. He is a black man elected by a white majority, a witness for the state, and a friend and ally of the defendant. He is also an old chum of the defense attorney and a black man who must keep order between the Ku Klux Klan and black demonstrators. How well does he measure up as a private and public man, navigating this very complex route?

As the battle lines between the Ku Klux Klan and the black citizens of Ford County are clearly drawn, both sides feel untainted self-righteousness, but both are holding untenable positions. The blacks seek to defend a murderer, and the Klan seeks to "throw" the fair trial every accused murderer is guaranteed by law. How can you reconcile the purity of heart each side seems to feel with the facts of the case (fiction) and the history of Mississippi (fact)?

At the end of the trial, Grisham gives readers a play-by-play report of Jake's closing, but we are denied even a glimpse of Buckley's closing remarks. We know that Buckley is astute and experienced and that he enjoys oratory. Speculate as to what he would say and how he would carefully word his closing, and then write his closing speech as you would imagine it, whether or not you agree with what he is likely to have said.

Tim Nunley, "Mickey Mouse," dies for his dedication to infiltrating the Klan and saving Jake's life and the lives of as many innocents as possible. What do you think of his actions? In your estimation is he a hero or a fool? What do you suppose motivates him? Explain your answer.

Ellen Roark might be considered a literary foil to Carla Brigance. Using a good definition of foil, explain in what ways Ellen is a foil to Carla and what is accomplished by bringing Ellen into the story at this point.

Comic relief is essential in a story as heavy and filled with tension as this one. Can you identify three or four characters who provide comic relief? Give examples of the comic relief each offers.

Literary Precedents

The plot skeleton of *A Time to Kill* recalls that of the legal classic *Anatomy of a Murder* (1958) by Robert Traver.

Both novels concern cases of revenge killings that follow sexual assaults: In Traver's book, a military officer avenges an offense against his wife. In both cases the legal strategy is the same — argue not guilty by reason of insanity.

The lawyers in both novels take the cases as a means to further their careers. And each lawyer gets valuable help from an often besotted older attorney. The machinations of the trials comprise the heart of both books. Yet Grisham approaches his material with much more ambition; Grisham's book is a deeply-thought-out social tapestry.

For Grisham, the northern Mississippi setting is integral; for Traver the locale of the upper peninsula of Michigan is quaint.

Grisham's works are the most popular examples of the groundswell of fiction about the law that seemed to begin in 1987 with Scott Turow's *Presumed Innocent*. Both Grisham and Turow linger over the technicalities of trial procedures, and both portray how the network of relationships among those in the justice system — defense attorneys, prosecutors, and judges, all who know each other well previous to the cases at hand — impact on the trial.

Grisham and Turow also both challenge the reader by presenting protagonists who are often not heroic, indeed, who cross moral lines. And both authors use the trials to expose a network of corruption. Turow's setting is a northern city, and the corruption infests the city's legal and political institutions. Turow writes a mystery, and so appeals to the dark urban world of hard-boiled fiction, reminiscent of Raymond Chandler. In this aspect, Turow and Grisham diverge. Grisham takes a broader approach, disclosing the faults embedded in the entire society, taking on issues of race, sex, class, and the pitfalls of the entire judicial process.

As a social commentary on the South, *A Time to Kill* bears comparison with the two recognized masterpieces of Southern writing about the law: *Sanctuary* (1931) by William Faulkner and *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960) by Harper Lee. In addition to devoting considerable space to trial proceedings, these Southern novels address how the defense attorneys bond with their clients, and how the cases become for each lawyer a sacred duty. The three lawyers, however, contrast sharply.

Faulkner's Horace Benbow and Lee's Atticus Finch are idealistic patricians who take difficult cases because their principles demand that they do so. In court, each is dignified and respectful of the rules. Jake, a product of the middle class, is ruthlessly practical in the conduct of his case. The trio of lawyers provides significant contrasts in views of law, opinions about their towns, resilience when faced with courtroom setbacks, and appeals to the jury. In each novel, the decision of the jury reflects



profound, deeply-ingrained attitudes. Each book offers a probing and critical portrait of Southern society. Faulkner and Grisham both charge that their settings — both novels use northern Mississippi — suffer from vast corruption, from a network of evil that probably encompasses the district attorney. Pondering why the outcomes of the cases in the three novels differ opens up questions about how the South has changed over the fifty-eight years between the publications of *Sanctuary* and *A Time to Kill*.

Related Titles

Grisham's other novel set in Ford County is *The Chamber* (1994), an equally hard-edged look at racial and legal attitudes in contemporary Mississippi.

The Chamber follows the last month — a time punctuated by desperate, doomed appeals — leading up to the execution of an aged Klansman for murders committed in the 1960s bombing of a law office. Grisham lingers in his portrayals of the lawyers who devote their careers to death penalty appeals — they are idealists who use any means possible, including deceit, in seeking their seldom-achieved goals. Grisham continues to flesh out the observation that a legal proceeding is essentially a contest in which tactics matter and in which the truth is too often irrelevant.

Both Ford County novels present grim and challenging views of capital punishment, remarkable because these are popular novels yet the American public strongly supports the death penalty.

A real case that occurred subsequent to the publication of *A Time to Kill* provides a significant touchstone for discussion. In April 1993, Ellie Nesler of Sonora, California, shot to death her son's alleged molester during a court proceeding. Her defense was, predictably, not guilty by reason of insanity, despite ample evidence that she carefully planned her attack. In August 1993, a jury found her guilty only of manslaughter; then in September the same jury, in a separate sanity proceeding, declared her sane, meaning that she faced the full weight of the law in regard to sentencing. She received ten years for the shooting and the included weapons charge. During the summer of 1993, the *Los Angeles Times* ran several articles covering the case that would make interesting contrasts to events in Grisham's book.



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