



Sycamore Row (Jake Brigance)

By John Grisham

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John Grisham takes you back to where it all began . . .

John Grisham's *A Time to Kill* is one of the most popular novels of our time. Now we return to that famous courthouse in Clanton as Jake Brigance once again finds himself embroiled in a fiercely controversial trial—a trial that will expose old racial tensions and force Ford County to confront its tortured history.

Seth Hubbard is a wealthy man dying of lung cancer. He trusts no one. Before he hangs himself from a sycamore tree, Hubbard leaves a new, handwritten, will. It is an act that drags his adult children, his black maid, and Jake into a conflict as riveting and dramatic as the murder trial that made Brigance one of Ford County's most notorious citizens, just three years earlier.

The second will raises far more questions than it answers. Why would Hubbard leave nearly all of his fortune to his maid? Had chemotherapy and painkillers affected his ability to think clearly? And what does it all have to do with a piece of land once known as Sycamore Row?

In *Sycamore Row*, John Grisham returns to the setting and the compelling characters that first established him as America's favorite storyteller. Here, in his most assured and thrilling novel yet, is a powerful testament to the fact that Grisham remains the master of the legal thriller, nearly twenty-five years after the publication of *A Time to Kill*.

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Sycamore Row (Jake Brigance) By John Grisham Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review

Praise for the novels of John Grisham

"John Grisham is about as good a storyteller as we've got in the United States these days." —*The New York Times Book Review*

"John Grisham is exceptionally good at what he does—indeed, right now in this country, nobody does it better." —Jonathan Yardley, *The Washington Post*

"Grisham is a marvelous storyteller who works readers the way a good trial lawyer works a jury." —*Philadelphia Inquirer*

"John Grisham owns the legal thriller." —*The Denver Post*

"John Grisham is not just popular, he is one of the most popular novelists of our time. He is a craftsman and he writes good stories, engaging characters, and clever plots." —*Seattle Times*

"A legal literary legend." —*USA Today*

About the Author

JOHN GRISHAM is the author of twenty-six novels, one work of nonfiction, a collection of stories, and four novels for young readers.

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They found Seth Hubbard in the general area where he had promised to be, though not exactly in the condition expected. He was at the end of a rope, six feet off the ground and twisting slightly in the wind. A front was moving through and Seth was soaked when they found him, not that it mattered. Someone would point out that there was no mud on his shoes and no tracks below him, so therefore he was probably hanging and dead when the rain began. Why was that important? Ultimately, it was not.

The logistics of hanging oneself from a tree are not that simple. Evidently, Seth thought of everything. The rope was three-quarter-inch braided natural Manila, of some age and easily strong enough to handle Seth, who weighed 160 pounds a month earlier at the doctor's office. Later, an employee in one of Seth's factories would report that he had seen his boss cut the fifty-foot length from a spool a week before using it in such dramatic fashion. One end was tied firmly to a lower branch of the same tree and secured with a slapdash mix of knots and lashings. But, they held. The other end was looped over a higher branch, two feet in girth and exactly twenty-one feet from the ground. From there it fell about nine feet, culminating in a perfect

hangman's knot, one that Seth had undoubtedly worked on for some time. The noose was straight from the textbook with thirteen coils designed to collapse the loop under pressure. A true hangman's knot snaps the neck, making death quicker and less painful, and apparently Seth had done his homework. Other than what was obvious, there was no sign of a struggle or suffering.

A six-foot stepladder had been kicked aside and was lying benignly nearby. Seth had picked his tree, flung his rope, tied it off, climbed the ladder, adjusted the noose, and, when everything was just right, kicked the ladder and fell. His hands were free and dangling near his pockets.

Had there been an instant of doubt, of second-guessing? When his feet left the safety of the ladder, but with his hands still free, had Seth instinctively grabbed the rope above his head and fought desperately until he surrendered? No one would ever know, but it looked doubtful. Later evidence would reveal that Seth had been a man on a mission.

For the occasion, he had selected his finest suit, a thick wool blend, dark gray and usually reserved for funerals in cooler weather. He owned only three. A proper hanging has the effect of stretching the body, so Seth's trouser cuffs stopped at his ankles and his jacket stopped at his waist. His black wing tips were polished and spotless. His blue necktie was perfectly knotted. His white shirt, though, was stained with blood that had oozed from under the rope. Within hours, it would be known that Seth Hubbard had attended the 11:00 a.m. worship service at a nearby church. He had spoken to acquaintances, joked with a deacon, placed an offering in the plate, and seemed in reasonably good spirits. Most folks knew Seth was battling lung cancer, though virtually no one knew the doctors had given him a short time to live. Seth was on several prayer lists at the church. However, he carried the stigma of two divorces and would always be tainted as a true Christian.

His suicide would not help matters.

The tree was an ancient sycamore Seth and his family had owned for many years. The land around it was thick with hardwoods, valuable timber Seth had mortgaged repeatedly and parlayed into wealth. His father had acquired the land by dubious means back in the 1930s. Both of Seth's ex-wives had tried valiantly to take the land in the divorce wars, but he held on. They got virtually everything else.

First on the scene was Calvin Boggs, a handyman and farm laborer Seth had employed for several years. Early Sunday morning, Calvin had received a call from his boss. "Meet me at the bridge at 2:00 p.m.," Seth said. He didn't explain anything and Calvin was not one to ask questions. If Mr. Hubbard said to meet him somewhere at a certain time, then he would be there. At the last minute, Calvin's ten-year-old boy begged to tag along, and, against his instincts, Calvin said yes. They followed a gravel road that zigzagged for miles through the Hubbard property. As Calvin drove, he was certainly curious about the meeting. He could not remember another occasion when he met his boss anywhere on a Sunday afternoon. He knew his boss was ill and there were rumors he was dying, but, like everything else, Mr. Hubbard kept it quiet.

The bridge was nothing more than a wooden platform spanning a nameless, narrow creek choked with kudzu and crawling with cottonmouths. For months, Mr. Hubbard had been planning to replace it with a large concrete culvert, but his bad health had sidetracked him. It was near a clearing where two dilapidated shacks rotted in the brush and overgrowth and offered the only hint that there was once a small settlement there.

Parked near the bridge was Mr. Hubbard's late-model Cadillac, its driver's door open, along with the trunk. Calvin rolled to a stop behind the car and stared at the open trunk and door and felt the first hint that something might be out of place. The rain was steady now and the wind had picked up, and there was no

good reason for Mr. Hubbard to leave his door and trunk open. Calvin told his boy to stay in the truck, then slowly walked around the car without touching it. There was no sign of his boss. Calvin took a deep breath, wiped moisture from his face, and looked at the landscape. Beyond the clearing, maybe a hundred yards away, he saw a body hanging from a tree. He returned to his truck, again told the boy to stay inside and keep the doors locked, but it was too late. The boy was staring at the sycamore in the distance.

"Stay here now," Calvin said sternly. "And don't get out of the truck."

"Yes sir."

Calvin began walking. He took his time as his boots slipped in the mud and his mind tried to stay calm. What was the hurry? The closer he got the clearer things became. The man in the dark suit at the end of the rope was quite dead. Calvin finally recognized him, and he saw the stepladder, and he quickly put the scene and the events in order. Touching nothing, he backed away and returned to his truck.

It was October of 1988, and car phones had finally arrived in rural Mississippi. At Mr. Hubbard's insistence, Calvin had one installed in his truck. He called the Ford County sheriff's office, gave a brief report, and began waiting. Warmed by the heater and soothed by Merle Haggard on the radio, Calvin gazed through the windshield, ignored the boy, tapped his fingers along with the wipers, and realized he was crying. The boy was afraid to speak.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Lydia Sanders:

Spent a free the perfect time to be fun activity to do! A lot of people spent their sparetime with their family, or their own friends. Usually they performing activity like watching television, gonna beach, or picnic in the park. They actually doing ditto every week. Do you feel it? Will you something different to fill your free time/ holiday? Could be reading a book might be option to fill your free time/ holiday. The first thing that you'll ask may be what kinds of publication that you should read. If you want to consider look for book, may be the reserve untitled Sycamore Row (Jake Brigance) can be fine book to read. May be it can be best activity to you.

Christopher Burnham:

Playing with family in a park, coming to see the water world or hanging out with good friends is thing that usually you will have done when you have spare time, after that why you don't try thing that really opposite from that. Just one activity that make you not experiencing tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you already been ride on and with addition associated with. Even you love Sycamore Row (Jake Brigance), you are able to enjoy both. It is excellent combination right, you still would like to miss it? What kind of hang type is it? Oh can happen its mind hangout people. What? Still don't have it, oh come on its called reading friends.

Camille Wolfe:

Sycamore Row (Jake Brigance) can be one of your starter books that are good idea. Most of us recommend that straight away because this book has good vocabulary that will increase your knowledge in vocabulary, easy to understand, bit entertaining but nevertheless delivering the information. The article writer giving his/her effort to place every word into joy arrangement in writing Sycamore Row (Jake Brigance) but doesn't forget the main level, giving the reader the hottest in addition to based confirm resource facts that maybe you can be certainly one of it. This great information can easily drawn you into brand new stage of crucial imagining.

Steven Strong:

Your reading 6th sense will not betray anyone, why because this Sycamore Row (Jake Brigance) book written by well-known writer we are excited for well how to make book which might be understand by anyone who also read the book. Written throughout good manner for you, still dripping wet every ideas and creating skill only for eliminate your current hunger then you still uncertainty Sycamore Row (Jake Brigance) as good book not just by the cover but also by content. This is one book that can break don't evaluate book by its handle, so do you still needing a different sixth sense to pick this kind of!? Oh come on your reading sixth sense already alerted you so why you have to listening to a different sixth sense.

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