

Defending Jacob: A Novel

By William Landay

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NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY
Entertainment Weekly • The Boston Globe • Kansas City Star

“A legal thriller that’s comparable to classics such as Scott Turow’s *Presumed Innocent* . . . Tragic and shocking, *Defending Jacob* is sure to generate buzz.”—Associated Press

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

Andy Barber has been an assistant district attorney for two decades. He is respected. Admired in the courtroom. Happy at home with the loves of his life: his wife, Laurie, and their teenage son, Jacob.

Then Andy’s quiet suburb is stunned by a shocking crime: a young boy stabbed to death in a leafy park. And an even greater shock: The accused is Andy’s own son—shy, awkward, mysterious Jacob.

Andy believes in Jacob’s innocence. Any parent would. But the pressure mounts. Damning evidence. Doubt. A faltering marriage. The neighbors’ contempt. A murder trial that threatens to obliterate Andy’s family.

It is the ultimate test for any parent: How far would you go to protect your child? It is a test of devotion. A test of how well a parent can know a child. For Andy Barber, a man with an iron will and a dark secret, it is a test of guilt and innocence in the deepest sense.

How far would *you* go?

Praise for *Defending Jacob*

“Ingenious . . . Nothing is predictable. All bets are off.”—*The New York Times*

“Stunning . . . a novel that comes to you out of the blue and manages to keep you reading feverishly until the whole thing is completed.”—The Huffington Post

“Gripping, emotional murder saga . . . The shocking ending will have readers

pulling up their bedcovers to ward off the haunting chill.”—*People*

“The hype is justified. . . . Exceptionally serious, suspenseful, engrossing.”—*The Washington Post*

“Even with unexpected twists and turns, the two narratives interlock like the teeth of a zipper, building to a tough and unflinching finale. This novel has major motion picture written all over it.”—*The Boston Globe*

“Yes, this book came out in January. No, we are not done talking about it.”—*Entertainment Weekly*

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Amazon Best Books of the Month, February 2012: A fast, compelling, and compulsively readable courtroom drama, *Defending Jacob* tells the story of a district attorney's son who is accused of killing a classmate. As the father attempts to prove his son's innocence, Landay explores uncomfortable territory: can a tendency toward violence be inherited? Is the capacity for murder a genetic disposition? The author, a former district attorney, gets the taut nuances just right, capturing the subtleties of a trial in a packed courtroom, where a small rustle or murmur can signify a lot. In the end Landay pulls off a clever plot device that doesn't reveal itself until the final pages. --Neal Thompson

Featured Guest Review: Chevy Stevens on *Defending Jacob*



Chevy Stevens grew up on a ranch on Vancouver Island and still calls the island home. She is the New York Times bestselling author of the novels *Still Missing* and *Never Knowing*.

From the first few pages of *Defending Jacob*, I knew this book was special. More than an exciting courtroom drama that combines the best elements of a legal and psychological thriller, it also delves into the heart of a family, and will rip yours out in the process.

When a young boy is found brutally murdered in the woods in a peaceful New England town, his body hastily covered with leaves, the community is shaken to its core. No one more so than Andy Barber, a well-respected assistant district attorney whose fourteen-year-old son, Jacob, went to school with the boy. Sure, Jacob is a typical moody teenager, hiding in his room all day with his headphones and lap top, but Andy loves him more than anything in this world--and would do anything to protect him.

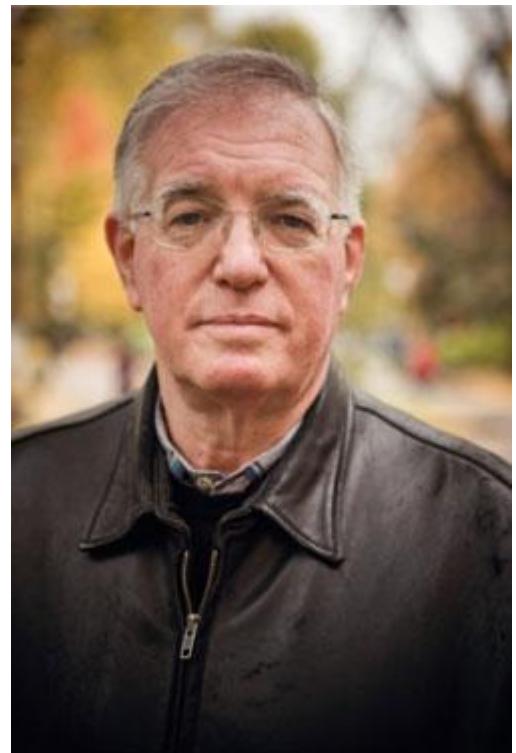
While Andy's wife, Laurie, struggles with the possibility that there's a killer on the loose and their own son could be next, Andy's determined to find the culprit and bring him to justice. He immerses himself in a maelstrom of angry parents demanding answers, police hell-bent on making an arrest, and the complicated lives of teenagers, with their own secrets, and reasons for keeping them.

When, in a stunning turn of events, Jacob is arrested for the crime, both Andy and Laurie are stalwart in their defense of their son: there's no way their child could've committed this terrible act. As more shocking facts are revealed and lies uncovered, Andy is pushed to the edge and his twenty-year marriage tested. Beautiful Laura, his college sweetheart and love of his life, begins to fade in front of his eyes, crumbling under the pressure of the trial, the public accusations, and the weight of her own doubts--in her son and her husband. When truths about Andy's past comes to surface, he must chose between the life he thought he'd left behind, and the father he wants to be.

Defending Jacob raises the question: how far would you go to protect your family? But it also leaves you wondering if anyone could answer that question, and whether we really know what we're capable of when push comes to shove.

Let's pray we never have to find out.

Featured Guest Review: Phillip Margolin on *Defending Jacob*



Phillip Margolin has been a Peace Corps Volunteer, a school teacher, and is the author of 15 *New York Times* bestsellers. He spent a quarter century as a criminal defense attorney during which he handled thirty homicide cases, including twelve death penalty cases, and argued at the United States Supreme Court. He is a co-founder of Chess for Success, a non-profit that uses chess to teach elementary school children study skills. His latest novel, *Capitol Murder* will be released in April, 2012.

One perk of being a bestselling author is that you are sent advance reading copies (ARCs) of books by first time authors, or published authors whose editors believe have written a breakout novel. The ARC is sent by

the writer's editor in hopes that you will write a "blurb," which is a sentence or two praising the book that can be used in advertisements. The books I blurb range from fun reads to very good reads. Then there is the rare book that knocks my socks off. William Landay's *Defending Jacob* is one of these gems. It is a legal thriller, but so are *To Kill a Mocking Bird*, *Snow Falling on Cedars* and *Anatomy of a Murder*. *Defending Jacob*, like these classics, separates itself from the pack because it is also a searing work of literary fiction.

At the heart of Landay's exceptional novel is a parent's worst nightmare. Assistant district attorney Andy Barber, his wife, Laurie, and their teenage son, Jacob, are living an idyllic existence in a middle class Massachusetts suburb until one of Jacob's classmates is stabbed to death in the picturesque park where the locals jog, walk their dogs and picnic. It soon becomes clear that Jacob is the prime suspect and the Barbers have to confront the possibility that the child they have doted from birth may be a sociopathic killer.

Andy takes a forced leave of absence from his job and helps defend the son he loves from a charge he cannot believe is true. Is he engaging in self-deception? How far will he go to protect his family? Laurie wonders if something she did as a parent has created a monster and her guilt destroys her. And then there is Jacob. Is he a typical angst filled teenager or a psychopathic monster? Landay skillfully keeps the reader guessing about Jacob's culpability and true nature up to the shocking final chapters.

What makes *Defending Jacob* special is the way Landay gives the reader the twists, turns and surprises found in the best legal thrillers while making its centerpiece the tragedy faced by a normal family who are thrust into a nightmare.

From Booklist

Starred Review A 14-year-old boy is stabbed to death in the park near his middle school in an upper-class Boston suburb, and Assistant District Attorney Andy Barber takes the case, despite the fact that his son, Jacob, was a classmate of the victim. But when the bloody fingerprint on the victim's clothes turns out to be Jacob's, Barber is off the case and out of his office, devoting himself solely to defending his son. Even Barber's never-before-disclosed heritage as the son and grandson of violent men who killed becomes potential courtroom fodder, raising the question of a "murder gene." Within the structure of a grand jury hearing a year after the murder, Landay gradually increases apprehension. As if peeling the layers of an onion, he raises personal and painful ethical issues pertaining to a parent's responsibilities to a child, to a family, and to society at large. Landay's two previous novels (*Mission Flats*, 2003; *The Strangler*, 2007) were award winners, but he reaches a new level of excellence in this riveting, knock-your-socks-off legal thriller. With its masterfully crafted characterizations and dialogue, emotional depth, and frightening implications, the novel rivals the best of Scott Turow and John Grisham. Don't miss it. --Michele Leber

Review

"Ingenious . . . Nothing is predictable. All bets are off."—Janet Maslin, *The New York Times*

"A legal thriller that's comparable to classics such as Scott Turow's *Presumed Innocent* . . . Tragic and shocking, *Defending Jacob* is sure to generate buzz."—Associated Press

"Stunning . . . a novel that comes to you out of the blue and manages to keep you reading feverishly until the whole thing is completed."—The Huffington Post

"Gripping . . . [Landay] keeps you turning the pages through the shocking gut-punch of an ending."—*Entertainment Weekly*

“Gripping, emotional murder saga . . . The shocking ending will have readers pulling up their bedcovers to ward off the haunting chill.”—*People*

“The hype is justified. . . . Exceptionally serious, suspenseful, engrossing.”—*The Washington Post*

“Not since Scott Turow has a crime thriller—any thriller, though this too happens to be a literary legal thriller—shaken me by the throat like this. It’s a stunning, shocking, emotionally harrowing ride in which the reader is plunged into a riveting but terrible murder trial and the equally heartbreaking implosion of a loving family.”—*Daily Mail*

“Even with unexpected twists and turns, the two narratives interlock like the teeth of a zipper, building to a tough and unflinching finale. This novel has major motion picture written all over it.”—*The Boston Globe*

“[William] Landay does the seemingly impossible by coming up with a new wrinkle in the crowded subgenre of courtroom thrillers. . . . It’s inevitable that he’ll be compared to Scott Turow, but this novel succeeds on its own merits.”—*Kirkus Reviews*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Erma Carver:

Have you spare time for any day? What do you do when you have a lot more or little spare time? Yes, you can choose the suitable activity to get spend your time. Any person spent their very own spare time to take a stroll, shopping, or went to the actual Mall. How about open or perhaps read a book called Defending Jacob: A Novel? Maybe it is to get best activity for you. You know beside you can spend your time with the favorite's book, you can better than before. Do you agree with the opinion or you have different opinion?

Phillip Permenter:

Now a day people who Living in the era wherever everything reachable by connect to the internet and the resources in it can be true or not need people to be aware of each facts they get. How many people to be smart in getting any information nowadays? Of course the answer is reading a book. Reading a book can help people out of this uncertainty Information particularly this Defending Jacob: A Novel book because book offers you rich data and knowledge. Of course the data in this book hundred % guarantees there is no doubt in it as you know.

Patrick Vanmeter:

The particular book Defending Jacob: A Novel has a lot of information on it. So when you check out this book you can get a lot of benefit. The book was published by the very famous author. Tom makes some research just before write this book. This specific book very easy to read you can get the point easily after perusing this book.

Jessica Duncan:

People live in this new morning of lifestyle always aim to and must have the free time or they will get great deal of stress from both way of life and work. So , once we ask do people have spare time, we will say absolutely yes. People is human not really a huge robot. Then we consult again, what kind of activity are you experiencing when the spare time coming to you of course your answer can unlimited right. Then do you try this one, reading ebooks. It can be your alternative within spending your spare time, often the book you have read will be *Defending Jacob: A Novel*.

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