



## Theodore Boone: Kid Lawyer

*John Grisham*

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## **Theodore Boone: Kid Lawyer** John Grisham

In the small city of Strattenburg, there are many lawyers, and though he's only thirteen years old, Theo Boone thinks he's one of them. Theo knows every judge, policeman, court clerk—and a lot about the law. He dreams of being a great trial lawyer, of a life in the courtroom.

But Theo finds himself in court much sooner than expected. Because he knows so much—maybe too much—he is suddenly dragged into the middle of a sensational murder trial. A cold-blooded killer is about to go free, and only Theo knows the truth.

The stakes are high, but Theo won't stop until justice is served.

## **Theodore Boone: Kid Lawyer Details**

Date : Published (first published 2010)

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Author : John Grisham

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# From Reader Review Theodore Boone: Kid Lawyer for online ebook

## Monica Edinger says

While there may be kids who will enjoy reading this trial story I expected more from the reviews I'd read. I debated giving this a three because I do think Grisham did a reasonably good job helping kids better understand how trials work. But in the end I felt there wasn't enough action for this sort of book and an awful lot of telling versus showing. Teddy is a likable hero and maybe Grisham will do better by him in future books.

So, on to my problems.

First of all, Grisham needs to do a bit more research about kids today. I mean, hardly any cell phones? And then be consistent. Early on he writes that Teddy doesn't know a "single thirteen-year-old boy who admitted to having a girlfriend. Just the opposite. They wanted nothing to do with them. And the girls felt the same way. Theo had been warned that things would change, and dramatically, but that seemed unlikely." (7). What the ...? This wasn't true in my day and I'm OLDER than Grisham. Jeez. And then later in the book we learn about the most popular girl in the eighth grade and how cute she was and how she loved to flirt. Teddy goes on to help her and so forth and so on. Oh, and asthma doesn't keep my students from doing sports so Teddy not being able to do them so for that reason doesn't fly either.

I was annoyed, I must admit, by the April storyline. Seemed to disappear for long periods and felt very forced --- just a way to throw a female into the book. The whole thing seemed stiff and awkward.

A few other things I noted with distaste:

The family watching Perry Mason reruns (reruns? reruns?) at 7PM nightly. Huh?

The scary-possibly-bad-guy named Omar Cheepe -- must you use the foreign-sounding-name card in 2010? That the kid from El Salvador who supposedly is still getting comfortable with English would say things like, "He ventured over in one of the utility carts..."

Whatever. It is getting good reviews elsewhere so who cares what I think?

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## Tea Jovanovi? says

Zabavno stivo, moze da zabavi i odrasle...

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## **Kim says**

(Copied from my blog)

Hey, when you were a kid, did you ever feel compelled to seek legal advice? Or play golf?

Yeah, I didn't think so.

So you can imagine my confusion over why international bestselling author of legal thrillers John Grisham's new foray into kid lit has so far scored 3.35 out of 5 stars on Goodreads. Half his book, aimed at eight- to twelve-year-olds, is about things like how to avoid foreclosure, which lawyer in town to phone when your brother-in-law is picked up on a DUI, and what a mistrial is. Oh, and golf.

I'm a grown-up who has sought legal advice, and I was bored to tears. And not just because I'm inclined to prefer kid-lit books like, say, *Coraline*.

Theodore Boone: Kid Lawyer is about Theo, a thirteen-year-old only child whose parents are a tax lawyer (father) and a divorce lawyer (mother). Theo is so obsessed with the law that his major concern, more than the tough time his female best friend who appears on only a handful of pages is going through, is whether he wants to be a brilliant trial lawyer when he grows up, or a sage judge.

Know what would have made this book great? A good caper. Theo getting caught up with his friends in some mystery or another, that would be solved only when he's able to put his out-of-the-ordinary legal knowledge to good use.

Unfortunately, the caper in this novel was... not a good one. Theo's mid-size town is experiencing its first murder trial in recent memory, and though everyone thinks the accused is guilty of murdering his wife, the prosecution has a thin case based only on circumstantial evidence (oh yes, no worries, Theo defines that for us). Mid-story, Theo becomes privy to evidence that's sure to sway the verdict, and he has to figure out what to do.

That's it.

No investigations with his motley crew of friends (he doesn't have one). No snooping around dark offices. No surprises. At all.

I don't think I've ever read a kids' book that so completely failed to engage my imagination. And as you know, I have a very vivid imagination. My imagination will engage at the merest hint of inspiration. And I just don't think I'd be alone amongst ten-year-olds in not being remotely interested in court reporting or golf.

So, okay. That's the plot. I haven't left much out in my short description. Now the rest of it.

Go read what Charlotte Abbott wrote over on her Book Maven blog about how important it is for an author to show, not tell\*. Oh my gods, kids, Theodore Boone: Kid Lawyer is about 250 out of 263 pages of telling. I felt like I was slogging through half this book. I was so bored.

The characters were barely caricatures, so thin and so poorly developed I didn't care much about them at all. Including Theo. I kinda wanted to punch Theo in the face, but then I realized it's Grisham I wanted to punch

in the face. He's created the duller kid character I've ever encountered. Rather than creating a likable precocious protagonist, he created a shallow know-it-all. He could have done so much better. He could have made Theo, oh I don't know, laugh. And interact with his peers in important ways. You know, experience believable conflicts. But he didn't.

In fact, I got the impression Grisham doesn't really understand kids. His strategy for writing a kids book seemed to be to dilute, simplify, and sometimes outright dumb down a story he might otherwise write very well for adults. Throughout the book, I had the distinct impression the author was smirking at the ten-year-old me, implying, "Oh, you wouldn't understand this, so we'll just cut it out or gloss over it." Too bad he didn't solve that problem by writing about things the ten-year-old me would understand. If he'd done that, this book might have seemed thick and creamy instead of runny and bland.

It seemed to me Grisham's goal wasn't so much to write a good story as it was to write a legal primer for the pre-teen set. Why on earth he thinks this is needed is beyond me. But I couldn't shake the impression that's what his goal was. So no surprise that I felt at times like I was reading a text book – a text book that was talking down to me.

Here's a note I jotted down in a fit of pique: "A better lesson would be to not call women 'ladies'." Grisham totally calls all the women in the book ladies. He also casts them in antediluvian roles – court reporter, secretary, receptionist, file clerk, housekeeper, and the one female lawyer (Theo's mother) is a divorce lawyer who frequently has crying women in her office.

For a master of legal thrillers, Grisham seems to have decided kids can't handle suspense. He sets the pace in this book like a bad television show tries desperately to create a sense of drama through orchestration when its writers and actors can't quite pull it off. The one bit of foreshadowing I noticed came out of the blue at the end of a section describing a part of the murder trial. Apropos of nothing, he narrates, "There was something missing in the case, and based on what had already been said in court, Theo suspected that the mystery might never be solved." People, there was no mention of mystery before this.

Grisham also seems uncomfortable handling race and poverty issues in this book, which is surprising considering his adeptness at treating both those topics in his books for grown-ups. He actually refers to the poorer part of town as "the lesser part." Sigh.

I read *A Time to Kill*, Grisham's first novel and the one some argue to be his best, when I was in high school. My recommendation for anyone thinking of buying Theodore Boone: Kid Lawyer for the tween in their life is to wait till they're fifteen and give them some of Grisham's better work instead.

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\* I've enjoyed the first two books in the Millennium trilogy – if I'm tolerant of Stieg Larsson doing so much telling and not so much showing, you can imagine how little showing there is in Theodore Boone: Kid Lawyer.

Penguin Canada sent me a review copy of this book, gratis.

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**Natalie Vellacott says**

**Grisham for teens!**

Theodore Boone is thirteen. His parents are both lawyers so he spends a lot of time hanging around the court rooms and is known by all the legal staff. His school friends begin asking him for legal advice and having access to supposedly secure legal files, he carefully dispenses it. Fascinated by big trials, he can't wait for the latest one to begin. What will happen, though, when one of his clients seeks his advice about a matter that could derail the entire proceedings? Will he keep the matter to himself as he has promised or tell the Judge?

Grisham has done a good job here in catering for a younger audience. The gore/sexual content and swearing have been cut out completely. I just picked up one use of God's name as a curse word. He does deal with divorce and difficult childhood backgrounds as a side issue but without too much detail. This would be suitable for teens.

As a fan of Grisham's books for adults, this wasn't that exciting or dramatic. However, I was expecting that. It reminded me of a detective or sleuth novel as Boone pieces the puzzle together to solve the crime. There are also some good moral lessons about doing the right thing and having courage.

Teens will enjoy this.

Check out my John Grisham Shelf!

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## **Monique says**

This is John Grisham's first foray into the Young Adult (YA) genre, and, true to form, he was able to deliver another engaging legal thriller - this time with a 13-year-old boy as protagonist.

*Theodore Boone, Kid Lawyer* is the story of Theo, only child of lawyer-parents, who himself dreams of becoming one day a trial lawyer, just like his parents. He may only be in middle school, but he knows practically more law than any other seasoned lawyer, and this is demonstrated by several of his peers coming to him for "legal advice" for their (or their family's) various problems. In the novel, Theo becomes inadvertently involved in a sensational murder trial - the biggest yet in their small town of Strattenberg - and his participation becomes key in the conviction or acquittal of the accused.

Having read most of John Grisham's previous legal thriller books, I was easily able to recognize his handiwork - parts of the novel that are trademark Grisham, if you will. Although the book was tailored to suit the juvenile market, Grisham's wit, sarcasm, dry humor, and yes, even weird character names, are all present in this work. There was still the suspicious goon that always shadows and works for the bad guy/s, discreet evidence-gathering, less hardcore surveillance, and a trustworthy ally. Maybe, over the years, a certain formula has been adopted for all of Grisham's books, but for me, they work every time. This novel is no exception.

What I appreciated about this book was the fact that it could easily serve as an idiot's guide to the law - or at least, the basics. Through Theo and the other characters, certain legal procedures and doctrines were explained, in the very simplest of terms: the how and why of mortgages and foreclosures, the order of trial (at least in the United States, which utilize the jury system in criminal cases), even a little of immigration laws and drug possession cases. If you are not familiar with anything legal, and you read this book, I think you'll be able to pick up a thing or two about the law.

Thank you to ACE for my hardbound copy (from the April 10, 2011 Anniversary Meet-up)! ;)

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## **Rebecca McNutt says**

Theo Boone hasn't been to law school, in fact, he hasn't even graduated *high school* yet, but he's a genius when it comes to courtroom cases. He finally has the chance to prove himself soon enough, but how can he keep from getting caught up as a victim? This book was really different, and despite it being for middle-grade to young adult readers, it still has a compelling mystery in its pages that anyone can read.

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## **Kathryn says**

You know, sometimes I write reviews explaining why things haven't worked for me in particular books. Often I find myself citing implausibility as a major reason, sometimes lack of resolution and not enough strings being pulled together at the end. (Sometimes it's too many strings being tied up and leaving a feeling of the ending being contrived.)

In this book, it really was fairly unbelievable that a 13 year old would be looking into other students' legal troubles, jumping onto city websites to check the status of peoples' impounded dogs and whether the bank is going to foreclose on their parents' mortgage, hacking into the local courtroom's court reporting software to see what is happening with a current trial etc. Sure, a lot of 13 year olds probably could do this, but how many would want to do it?! And to do it for altruistic purposes!! But I didn't really care about how realistic this was - I thought Theo Boone was such a nice kid, I'd forgive his author (almost) anything - including the lack of resolution at the end, which *was* a little dissatisfying - although I wondered whether it was done like that in order to leave the way open for the story to continue in the second book...

It's been a while since I've read any John Grisham, and I think that's because I felt like I was reading a formula when I read his books. So I stopped. This one was certainly different - while still based on the legal system, using the perspective of a child gave it a unique twist. I'm looking forward to the second in this series.

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## **Brian Regan says**

Grisham has jumped on the "Best-selling adult author writes YA book" bandwagon, and the result is pretty lame. It is clunky, slow-paced, and at no point did I forget the fact that this was Grisham pretending to be a YA author. Don't waste your time. As a middle school librarian, and fan of (most of) Grisham's other books, I was seriously disappointed.

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## **Matt says**

A cute book that puts all James Patterson teen series (es?) to shame. Grisham deals with the intricacies of the law in such a way that a 12-15 year old not yet ready for *THE FIRM* or *THE CHAMBER* can understand. The story was quite good and the language did not leave me wishing I had bubble gum to chew like cud.

Theo Boone loves the law and goes with his class to watch the opening day of the town's most recent (and rare) murder trial. He gets hooked and becomes involved in the trial, indirectly, when a secret witness comes to him with undeniable proof. Boone uses his connections, solving some little legal matters, and has a true debate with his conscience and heart.

Will a killer go free or will Boone and his legal family come forward with what they know? A great little read if you are between books!

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### **Michelle says**

I know it's horrible to not love this book written by an adult author I occasionally enjoy. I expected this book, written by John Grisham, to be a young adult book that had an interesting story, but no sex and violence. Instead I got a book better suited to those written in the fifties and sixties, only with updated technology. It was so much like the Three Investigators, Nancy Drew, and Hardy Boys that I really kept looking to make sure it was written by John Grisham. I'd more fully believe his third cousin, twice removed who needed the name. If it wasn't ghost written, then maybe it was written when Grisham was a teen, reading the Hardy Boys or Three Investigators, or drunk on a Saturday afternoon with nothing to do. It is better suited to elementary school children, but even they may get bored. There are so many other good YA books with mysteries and detectives, save your time and money and read those. Plus, nothing ended, nothing was resolved. It's like the author (seriously, Grisham?) got bored and just quit instead of wrapping things up. Plus, some kid is worried about his parents losing their house and Theo suggests bankruptcy. Seriously, an adult with money issues has never heard of bankruptcy? And they take advice from a 14 year-old? It just strained credibility! The style is old. The writing tired. Honestly, it could not have been written by THE John Grisham, unless he was a teen or drunk. Boring book poorly written. Grisham should stick to adult books.

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### **\*eKa\* says**

I always like John Grisham's books and this one's not an exception. Theo's knowledge about law really amazed me. Well, no wonder, because his parents are both lawyer. But still, for a thirteen years old boy, that's kinda awesome. He knows what he wants to be, which is not my prerogative when I was his age, lol. It was still so dark in my world.

This is my second time reading this book, by the way, but I still enjoyed it. And even though the case is pretty light to me, it's still a great read. I gained some knowledge about law from this book. Not enough to make me as smart as Theo, though. It's kinda disappointing to know that the trial I watch in a tv show/movie was not so much like the one in real life. That's what this book told me. I mostly believed what I see on TV. Too bad, isn't it?

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### **Kirsty says**

Video review: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7MYz0...>



This book seems to have such extreme reactions in people, with some loving it and some absolutely hating it. I'd say that it's important to not let either opinion put you off reading this novel and to just try it for yourself as you never know.

This is the first time I have ever read anything by John Grisham and it definitely won't be the last. I certainly plan to pick up the next book in this series, which is a YA crime and mystery series. Some people have issues with this book because it doesn't seem realistic to the age of the character, and I can definitely see where people are coming from with this complaint, but I don't feel like this problem detracted too much from the overall experience for me.

So this series is about a boy named Theodore, or Teddy as he becomes known, and he has a very strong interest in law and the criminal justice system. His parents work in this industry and his uncle used to, so it makes sense that he would be so interested in this area from a young age. The extent to which he is interested does become a little unbelievable at times, for example he seems to enjoy spending a lot of spare time at the court, which I didn't find to be realistic. Other unrealistic aspects of this novel include how everyone seems to go to Teddy for advice at school. You could understand a little advice needing to be gained from him occasionally, but for the most part, how much do young boys need lawyer type advice?

I found this series so easy to get into, I was hooked from the first few pages. The mystery and pace of the story felt fine for the age it is aimed towards and I don't feel like the writing had too many information dumps in it. I would have read and enjoyed this story as a teenager, but I also enjoyed it as an adult, so don't feel like you can't read this if you are an adult. I found it easy to get swept away into the story and I'm sure this would have been the case if I had been reading it from a physical copy. I personally listened to the audio version of this novel and I thought the narrator did a fantastic job and helped make the experience even more gripping for me.

All in all, I thought this was a great introduction to a YA series, that I will definitely be continuing on with. I also found it a great entrance to Grisham's work and I can't wait to try out some of his adult fiction too.

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## **Steph Bowe says**

I'm not sure what to say about this book except that it reads like a prologue. Nothing huge or earth-shattering really happened. We didn't really get much of a conclusion. We got a whole lot of info about all of the characters, and a lot of plotlines were established that were not developed. It really is just an introduction to a series.

Something that's surprising about this is that Theodore is thirteen, which is an odd age for what I believe is meant to be a YA novel (it seems more like the age of a protagonist in an MG novel). And Theodore didn't really seem like a teenaged boy, or a teenager, or a child at all. He seemed like a miniature adult. I'm not sure whether that was the intention of the author or not, but to me, in spite of having a young protagonist, this didn't seem like a YA novel at all. I'm not even sure what kind of novel it was. It confused me.

That said, I found the characters interesting, and the book was well-constructed – I kept reading because I needed to find out what happened. It was a disappointment that not a whole lot actually did happen. I'm interested to see what happens with some of the plotlines in the next book.

If you like John Grisham's novels, and you're interested in reading the rest of this series (I haven't even

checked whether there will be a series, but I'm assuming it is as it certainly doesn't read like a standalone novel) then it's worth checking out. I was an underwhelmed by it, but I'll be interested in reading the next book in the series and seeing if things get a little livelier.

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### **Pang says**

**4.7 stars.** Omg, Theodore is rock! at first, I haven't think I gonna enjoy this since the writing style kinda too much '*tell, not show*' for my taste. But when it reach to the Court scene and OMG I cannot stop! all the legal cases that came to our main lead '**Theo**' are interesting and exciting. and oh this *Theo* boy is so smart, his parents are lawyers so Theo know the Laws very well, even the court, the judge, and blah blah blah... He help his friends for being law adviser and... he has to face a big popular case in the town. Who is the muderur? and how this boy will handle as 'a kid lawyer? **Just read!**

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### **Lana Krumwiede says**

I was interested to see what John Grisham would do with a kids' book. I like the "legal world" setting--that's something new for kids. I like the dilemma that Grisham creates for his character.

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