



A Painted House

John Grisham

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Until that September of 1952, Luke Chandler had never kept a secret or told a single lie. But in the long, hot summer of his seventh year, two groups of migrant workers — and two very dangerous men — came through the Arkansas Delta to work the Chandler cotton farm. And suddenly mysteries are flooding Luke's world.

A brutal murder leaves the town seething in gossip and suspicion. A beautiful young woman ignites forbidden passions. A fatherless baby is born ... and someone has begun furtively painting the bare clapboards of the Chandler farmhouse, slowly, painstakingly, bathing the run-down structure in gleaming white. And as young Luke watches the world around him, he unravels secrets that could shatter lives — and change his family and his town forever....

From the Paperback edition.

A Painted House Details

Date : Published February 3rd 2004 by Bantam (first published 2001)

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Author : John Grisham

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Genre : Fiction, Mystery

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From Reader Review A Painted House for online ebook

Mary says

This book came to me very highly recommended. I had two friends who really really liked it and just knew I would love the story too. I suppose if it had been cleaned up a bit, I probably would have liked it more. The characters were engaging enough although the plot did seem to drag a little bit and left you feeling like the author was searching for a plot in a rambling sort of way. I had a hard time with the language and violence; I'm a wouss I guess. I also couldn't get past the feeling that I was reading the thoughts of a teenage boy, not a seven-year-old. But I did finish it, because Grisham did a good job of making me really really want to see how it all turned out. So I will give that credit where it is due.

Amy says

This was such a horrible book! It had potential - I kept thinking the story would come around but once I got 2/3 way through the book, I knew there was no room left for a story. I finished it anyway and was really disappointed. There is absolutely NO story. Nothing. We are introduced to this family and the other characters for no reason. It's almost like the author had great ideas for characters but couldn't come up with a story line.

If you've never read Grisham and this is your first book - PLEASE don't judge him by it. This is, by far, his worst book in my opinion.

Johnny says

Such a well-written, engaging book. As the back cover suggests, A Painted House reminded me of books like To Kill a Mockingbird and Huck Finn. A boy from Arkansas (who loves the Cardinals and baseball and dreams of moving to St. Louis, all pluses in my book) grows up living the hard life on a cotton farm in the 50s. The book paints a vivid picture of what that common life might be like, with coming of age stories, family drama, and interpersonal conflicts, all while throwing in the less common intrigues of murders and a natural disaster. The relationships between ethnic groups, the role of the church, the pace of a 50s farm life, the ties of family, the importance of the paint on your house and its contrast to disasters, and finally the ambiguity of realized dreams... all highlights from a worthy one day read of 480 pages.

I'd never read a Grisham book before, but when I realized he wrote books that didn't involve lawyers, I decided to check this one out. Not disappointed. One of my favorite reads of the year.

N.N. Light says

Amazingly I had never ever heard of this Grisham work until I read the book. I have seen many a book made into a movie and never really liked any of those. I have read other Grisham works and never liked those. I loved this book.

The most amazing part of this book is that it is written from the perspective of a 7 year old. This so reminds me of the fantastic 'A Christmas Story' which is told from the point of view of little Ralphie. Here Luke tells the story and it is one that grips the reader. His perspective on both the Mexicans, the Hill People, his family, his neighbors and the townsfolk is enlightening.

The story is simple yet expansive and really takes a person back to rural Arkansas in the 50s. From the troubles that come from Cotton farming to racial issues and poverty issues along with dreams of a better life this book is amazing. I can't recommend this high enough. The best work of Grisham in my view and this book stays on my bookshelf.

Gina says

I learned that John Grisham should write more books in this genre because this is his best work....forget all those clients, partners, pelicans. One night, with a bunch of old friends in an apartment above Times Square, we tuned in to tv before turning in and The Bill Moyers Report was being aired; his guest was John Grisham. From his first responses, it was obvious that he possessed "gravitas" beyond his public persona. Grisham grew up in Arkansas, the son of a cotton farmer, and went on to Law School but swiftly left that field of endeavor. He was a born story teller and has used the law background to great advantage. The next week I read "The Partner" which was clever and classy and all those best-seller adjectives. However, as I started reading "The Painted House" it was a most touching, true and arresting book that deserves the most serious consideration. Not just a "coming of age" story, this book deals with so many universal themes that no one could read it without making contact. It is a beautiful book. Put it on your bedside table pile.

Maciek says

"The hill people and the Mexicans arrived on the same day. It was a Wednesday, early in September 1952. The Cardinals were five games behind the Dodgers with three weeks to go, and the season looked hopeless. The cotton, however, was waist-high to my father, over my head, and he and my grandfather could be heard before supper whispering words that were seldom heard. It could be a `good crop.'"

This was a really pleasant surprise. When asked about John Grisham, most of us immediately think of his wide catalogue of legal thrillers and their film adaptations. *A Painted House* is nothing like his other work (I admit to having read only one title - *The Firm* - a fact that I intend to change in due time) because it in no way relates to his traditional formula of legal thrillers. There is not a single lawyer in *A Painted House*; the best we get is a single policeman, because this story is set in rural Arkansas in 1952.

The novel is narrated in first person by a certain Luke Chandler, who also happens to be seven year old. The Chandler family are cotton farmers, and the book chronicles their struggles from late summer to early fall, when they harvest their crop with the help of Mexicans And Hill People. Luke will spend many hours picking cotton and living a boy's life; he'll hear things he shouldn't hear and see things he shouldn't see. These experiences will change him, as he'll have to grow up and face the dangers of adult life. But there will be many pleasant moments, too; the carniva;, first crush and many sweets from the stores in town. The people on farms have to be tough, or they won't survive. We experience their simple joys like listening to a baseball broadcast, but we also experience their despair with difficult harvest, their variness of people from other regions, the town gossip and the ever present preachers.

This book is the testament to Grisham's ability to tell a meaningful, sweet story that has nothing to do with the law. As he himself grew up in Arkansas, the novel has a certain autobiographical feel to it, and many events might have occurred to the 7 year old John as well (I think many of them dealt with snakes). Grisham's narrator's voice is precocious but not offensive; easy to read and very descriptive.

This is not a courtroom drama, but the book is just as suspenseful, if not even more; the events and the characters are well drawn and memorable, and we only wish we could spend more time with them. This is a very sweet coming of age story, dealing with universal themes, which is also a real delight to get immersed in. Forget the chambers, appeals and clients; check in at the Painted House.

Carol says

I seldom give five stars; they must be earned by the author's offerings. This book supplied all the necessary plot ingredients to satisfy the curiosities of this avid, mature reader. (No desire to see the movie, it could not possibly do this story justice.) It's not for the squeamish or sheltered reading audience. A realistic slice of life, poor/destitute Arkansas folks during the early Fifties, well-described and believable.

Bailey Jane says

For being from John Grisham, this was such a great book! For a long time I've enjoyed his legal thrillers, but after a while I suspected each book would be exactly the same as the last with the only difference being the plot. Granted that's one of the reasons I liked his novels, because I could trust they would be consistently good. When this book first came out I couldn't wait to read it and I fell in love with his ability to tell a heartfelt, meaningful story having nothing to do with law. I liked this book so much that I even recorded the Hallmark channel original that was made of it!

Wayne Barrett says

A surprisingly good book. For me anyway because usually I'm not into the legal courtroom thrillers (which this book is not) so I have avoided Grisham. And I have to also humbly admit that I have only read one of his novels, *The Firm*, and I liked it. So, I think I will give the guy a chance and add another of his books.

I only read this because my mom recommended it and I felt like I needed to reciprocate because she usually reads my recommendations. Well, thanks mom. This was a pretty darn good read. There were some thrilling moments in the story but mostly it was just a down to earth story about a family's struggle and eventual overcoming of life's hardships.

Even though there were a couple of pretty harsh moments in the book I think I would have to call this a 'feel good' story. It's easy to read, entertaining, and I would recommend it to any of my friends.

Ahmad Sharabiani says

A Painted House, John Grisham

A Painted House is a 2001 novel by American author John Grisham. Story is told through the eyes of seven-year-old Luke Chandler, the youngest in a family of cotton farmers struggling to harvest their crop and earn enough to settle their debts.

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Virginia Messina says

This is not the usual John Grisham fare, but instead is a beautiful story told with great warmth and compassion. I have always enjoyed Grisham's books as good airplane reads--but never expected that he would write a book that I would list as one of my all-time favorites.

Janelle says

I liked this book. There isn't any wild climatic events that you may find in other Grisham books. This is a simple novel of a simple life as told by a seven year old boy. Still, Grisham manages to capture the feelings of the times; a poor family in the south who hire workers to harvest their cotton and the drama that ensues with these "lower class" folk. I can see why a lot of Grisham fans wouldn't like this, it's a departure from his normal genre.

Florence (Lefty) MacIntosh says

I was wary when this book came out - doubting Grisham could pull off historical fiction. Well he absolutely nailed it. It's obvious Grisham drew from his personal experiences growing up in rural Arkansas. This is a heart-wrenching story of an impoverished farming community. It's got it all, destitute share-croppers, migrant farm workers, a sweet young boy who lives for baseball, a devastating flood and a mentally unhinged murderer thrown in for good measure.

I wonder if Grisham had written this under a pseudonym if it would have been taken more seriously. Who knows, even ranked as one of the great American novels - it was that good.

Plus it inspired me to getting around to giving my house a fresh coat of paint.

Diane says

Great read! therapeutic,compelling,enjoyable and a moving storyline...determination,twist and turns to hold your interest to the end..well written (paperback)

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