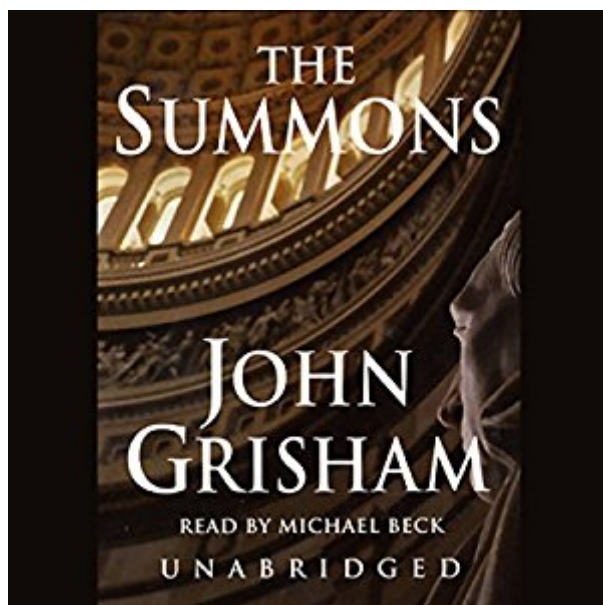


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The Summons



Synopsis

Ray Atlee is a professor of law at the University of Virginia. He's forty-three, newly single, and still enduring the aftershocks of a surprise divorce. He has a younger brother, Forrest, who redefines the notion of a family's black sheep. And he has a father, a very sick old man who lives alone in the ancestral home in Clanton, Mississippi. He is known to all as Judge Atlee, a beloved and powerful official who has towered over local law and politics for forty years. No longer on the bench, the Judge has withdrawn to the Atlee mansion and become a recluse. With the end in sight, Judge Atlee issues a summons for both sons to return home to Clanton, to discuss the details of his estate. It is typed by the Judge himself, on his handsome old stationery, and gives the date and time for Ray and Forrest to appear in his study. Ray reluctantly heads south, to his hometown, to the place where he grew up, which he prefers now to avoid. But the family meeting does not take place. The Judge dies too soon, and in doing so leaves behind a shocking secret known only to Ray. And perhaps someone else. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I am an avid Grisham fan and have been waiting anxiously for him to return to the legal thriller genre. However, I just finished the book (two days to read) and am more than a little disappointed with this effort. The protagonist, Ray Atlee is a law professor who is summoned, along with his brother, to their estranged, dying father's house in Mississippi to discuss his estate prior to his impending death. What is discovered only by Ray (you think) is that the old man had more than \$3

million hidden in his house. Where did the money come from? Who else knew about the money? This is the set-up and Ray's quest to hide the money while trying to find out its origin really did hold my attention throughout the book. But, it was the last 30 pages that hacked me off. Mr. Grisham cut things way short here. The relationship between the brothers was in serious lack of development given the ridiculous ending that he throws at you. Beware, this book will leave you asking, "What was Mr. Grisham thinking when he hit the 'print' button on his latest work?"

I have read almost all of Grisham's books and really enjoyed them. The Summons was so slow and never really got started. I stayed with it thinking it had to get better. It didn't. The characters were weak and the plot didn't have much to offer. I ended up skipping parts because they were so boring. As I turned the last page, all I could think was what a waste of time.

What would you do if you suddenly found three million dollars? And what if that money came from a deceased parent's home? This is the dilemma at the heart of this book. If you're expecting another Grisham legal thriller, don't buy this one. This one is far less about legal battles than moral ones. Unfortunately, the plot just doesn't hold together all that well and even the moral struggles, as described here, aren't all that engaging. Grisham isn't in top form here. For one thing, Ray Atlee, the dead judge's son who finds the money, isn't even that riveting or likeable a guy. Secondly, there are plenty of plot holes and illogical moves. Ray, for instance, discloses the whereabouts of the money to people who are almost complete strangers. Why would he do this? Made no sense to me. Still, this book did make me wonder what I would do with a sudden windfall of three million plus change. But I've read a much better book about this, *A Simple Plan*, a book about three men who find a fortune in a crashed plane. *A Simple Plan* is wonderfully written, suspenseful and darkly realistic. But save your bucks and avoid *The Summons*.

Ray Atlee is a professor of law at the University of Virginia. He's newly single, and about to find out a shocking family secret. Judge Atlee is a beloved and powerful judge, but he is sick, very sick, and it's a matter of time before he dies. Knowing his time is coming closer to an end, the judge summons his two sons, Ray, and Forrest, the black sheep who is trying desperately to stay sober. Wanting to settle the matter of his estate, Judge Atlee awaits the arrival of his sons, but unfortunately he dies before he sees them, leaving behind a deadly legacy. Ray, being the first to arrive, is shocked by the news of his father's death, but even more shocking is the discovery of a bag containing an obscene amount of money hidden in the house. Keeping the money a secret from

Forrest is the first of Ray's obstacles, for as he begins tracing the origin of the money he finds he is not the only person aware of it...Desperate, and on the run, Ray must find his answers, or he will die trying. `The Summons' is not a good book at all; not only is it boring, but it's confusing, and where the plot could have been suspenseful it's dry. The story opens quickly, but takes major turns with the introduction of various characters and sub plots. If the story stayed focused on the main plot it would have been interesting, instead it takes detours and becomes tiresome. John Grisham is a good storyteller, but where he was the king of the legal thriller he is now opting to spread his wings and lead his stories into straight fiction, and it's not working. After a series of major bestsellers, Grisham is losing steam, and the punch of his earlier novels is lacking in his newer titles. Fans of the novels `The Firm', `The Client', and `The Partner' will highly disappointed with `The Summons'. Nick Gonnella

Having read all of John Grisham's books I had become spoiled. In The Summons he did fairly well at developing some of the characters. Most of the detail was good. However, [here it comes] it was as if he had written so much and decided he had to wrap this story up. This he did in the last 15 pages of the book. All of a sudden the book was over and I went whaaaaat? That's it? Come on John, you can do better than that. Maybe it was too much to expect after such a run of really good books with strong characters, clever plot lines and dramatic endings. Oh well, there's always next February when his next thriller hits the street. Let's hope it's better than this year's.

I was so excited for another legal thriller - but found that this had nothing to offer....no hooks, no suspense, nothing that I felt kept me reading. I could have easily put it down and not picked it up again. I recently finished "A Painted House" and felt more for Luke than I did for Ray Atlee. Sorry John, seems that since you have started with a new genre, you have forgotten what made your earlier works so great....suspense along with a cat and mouse game thrown in.

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