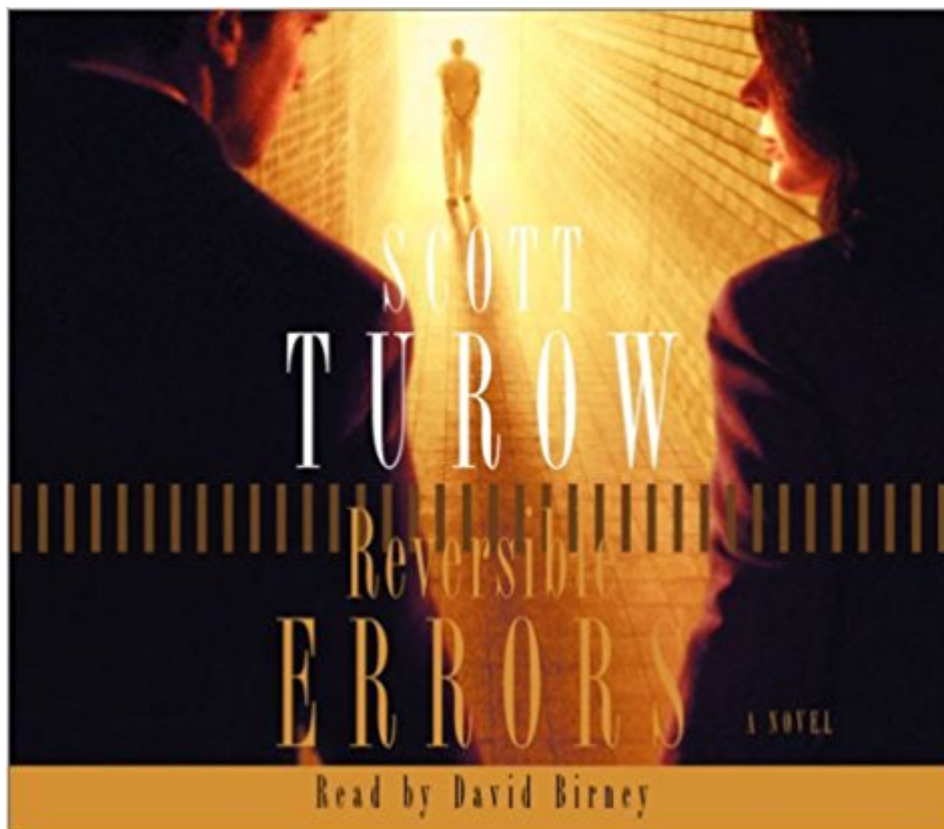


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Reversible Errors



Synopsis

Rommy "Squirrel" Gandolph is a Yellow Man, an inmate on death row for a 1991 triple murder in Kindle County. His slow progress toward certain execution is nearing completion when Arthur Raven, a corporate lawyer who is Rommy's reluctant court-appointed representative, receives word that another inmate may have new evidence that will exonerate Gandolph. Arthur's opponent in the case is Muriel Wynn, Kindle County's formidable chief deputy prosecuting attorney, who is considering a run for her boss's job. Muriel and Larry Starczek, the original detective on the case, don't want to see Rommy escape a fate they long ago determined he deserved, for a host of reasons. Further complicating the situation is the fact that Gillian Sullivan, the judge who originally found Rommy guilty, is only recently out of prison herself, having served time for taking bribes. Scott Turow's compelling, multi-dimensional characters take the reader into Kindle County's parallel yet intersecting worlds of police and small-time crooks, airline executives and sophisticated scammers--and lawyers of all stripes. No other writer offers such a convincing true-to-life picture of how the law and life interact, or such a profound understanding of what is at stake--personally, professionally, and morally--when the state holds the power to end a man's life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Arthur Raven, more versed in corporate law than criminal defense, is not eager to accept the court-appointed task of handling death-row inmate "Squirrel" Gandolph's last-minute appeal of his murder conviction. Fast approaching middle age, Arthur has come to terms with the burdens and disappointments of his life, among which are a schizophrenic sister for whom he is responsible and

the realization that he will probably never make an enduring connection with a woman. But when evidence surfaces that might exonerate his client, he rises to the occasion with a quiet determination to see justice done. Facing a formidable prosecuting attorney and her former lover, the policeman whose testimony convinced Judge Gillian Sullivan to find Squirrel guilty, Arthur's persistence not only wins his client a temporary reprieve from execution but also endears him to Sullivan, who has fallen on hard times since Squirrel's trial--fresh out of prison herself for taking bribes, she is a most unlikely candidate for Arthur's affections. Scott Turow's masterful characterization of complex and multidimensional people catalyzed by events into searching reexamination of their own motives and ambitions is matched by the intricacies of his plot, which itself is well served by his insider's knowledge of the criminal justice system and his extraordinary understanding of the vagaries of the human heart. The prose is luminescent, the narrative compelling, and the moral implications of Arthur's personal and professional choices beautifully articulated. This is a tour de force for a novelist writing at the top of his game. --Jane Adams --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The sixth novel from bestseller Turow is a big book about little people in big trouble, involving the death penalty (one of the author's real-life legal specialties), procedural foul-ups and a cast of characters who exemplify the adage about good intentions paving the road to hell. Arthur Raven (a middle-aged, undistinguished lawyer taking care of a schizophrenic sister in a suburb of Chicago) lands a career-making case: the 11th-hour appeal of a quasi-retarded death row inmate, Rommy "Squirrel" Gandolph (accused of triple homicide a decade earlier), on new testimony by a terminally ill convict. Muriel Wynn, an ambitious prosecutor, and Larry Starczek, the detective who originally worked the case, are Raven's adversaries. Plot thickener: Wynn and Starczek are engaged in a longstanding, tortuous, off-again, on-again affair (both being unhappily married) that predates the crime, and which may have indirectly influenced the course of the original investigation. Arthur pulls in the original presiding judge from the case, Gillian Sullivan, just emerging from her own prison stretch for bribery (which masks an even darker secret) to assist him on the case, which leads to another tortuous affair on the defense's side. On top of this (Turow is well known for his many-layered narratives) is the dynamic among the criminals themselves: the dying con may be covering up for his wayward nephew, further muddying the legal waters. The first part of the book, which flips back and forth between the original investigation (1991) and the new trial (2001), is structurally the most demanding, but it is vital to the way in which Turow makes Rommy's case (as well as Arthur's and Muriel's). No character in this novel is entirely likable; all seek to undo some

past wrong, with results that get progressively worse. Turow fans should not be disappointed; nor should his publisher. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The word going through my mind as I was reading this book was "symphonic"--Turow sets up an ensemble of characters whose relationships to each other are intricate, interesting, and very human. That is one of his great strengths as an author. Unfortunately, the storyline was much less sharp in the final sections--after the great set-up, with very good development and exposition of the characters and the plot, Turow doesn't wrap things up very well. One relationship is supposed to be sort of unclear at the end of the book, but there are ways to be clear and effective in narrating unclear relationships, and Turow doesn't use them. Even the more resolved relationship could have been worked through more carefully and clearly--it provides a nice finish, but it isn't nearly as dramatic or nuanced as it could have been. Interestingly, one character who really seems to get lost here is that of Rommy Gandolph, the inmate on death row whom Arthur Raven is trying to prove innocent. The book isn't really about Rommy, as it turns out--he's more of a plot device than a sustained character. By coincidence, I had just finished reading John Grisham's book "The Chamber," which also features a death-row inmate and a lawyer trying to help him avoid the gas chamber. While Grisham's book isn't perfect (Turow is a much better writer), "The Chamber" meditates thoughtfully on what the death penalty does, what it means, whom it affects and how, and so on. Grisham tells the story in a way that leaves several conclusions open--not plot-wise, but in terms of the moral issues it raises. Here, in "Reversible Errors," the death-row case is more or less a side-show, and while Turow does contemplate questions of culpability, morality, and forgiveness, those questions actually don't really involve Rommy Gandolph at all. In that regard, the contrast with Grisham's book didn't help my estimate of Turow's novel. The first 4/5 of the book are great--again, "Reversible Errors" is symphonic in how well Turow brings everything together and develops the various relationships and events. But the conclusion doesn't do justice to all of the excellent qualities of the novel.

Several years in the past, "Squirrel" Gandolph was convicted of a nasty triple murder. Now, he is on death row awaiting execution. His conviction, it appears, was based on circumstantial evidence and a signed confession. Squirrel, however, is mentally challenged. Is his confession legitimate or was he coerced? He now says he is innocent, and Arthur Raven, a lawyer more adept and experienced at corporate law than criminal defense, is handed the pro bono case. A number of other readers

have panned REVERSIBLE ERRORS on the basis of not caring about any of the characters. I can sympathize. All of the major characters are flawed. All have major issues in their lives. For starters, Gandolph is a petty thief who probably belongs in jail. For me, though, it is the flaws in all the characters here that makes them human and gives them their appeal. I didn't want Gandolph excuted if he wasn't the killer. I rooted for the others to get past their personal issues. "Reversible errors" is the underlying theme for all of the main people in this book. Some I hoped would find what they're looking for, others I hoped would get what they deserved, but I wasn't indifferent to any of them. REVERSIBLE ERRORS isn't Turow's best book. That honor still resides with PRESUMED INNOCENT, but REVERSIBLE ERRORS isn't bad. Turow has a strong writing style, and his knowledge of the legal system and portrayal of his characters is good. These strengths are all present in REVERSIBLE ERRORS. The plot is perhaps not as gripping as it could be, and the story is a little slow at times, but I enjoyed the book and recommend it to those who like books in the "legal thriller" genre.

No thanks

Scott Turow delivers another powerful tale of legal - and human -suspense in REVERSIBLE ERRORS, which traces the 1991 conviction and 2001 appeals of a triple-homicide convict on death row. As with all of his fiction, Turow weaves a compelling tale not only of legal twists, but also personal relationships. There are several potentially "reversible errors" at play in this novel: the prosecuting attorney and the detective on the case revisit an old affair years later; the court-appointed defense attorney and an older judge who resigned in disgrace from the bench start an unlikely romance that reward both of them greatly, and the death row inmate gets his pleas of innocence heard in federal court through the sometimes-questionable testimony of another inmate now dying of cancer. There are a whole host of characters trying to "solve" not only this ghastly triple homicide from years earlier - but also the reasons for the own personal failures in love and life. And Turow, unlike some of his rapid-publishing contemporaries, never fails to dig deep. He paints in grays and reminds the reader of real life, and its limitations - how you can strive for something but fear being hurt; how you can believe in the truth but be ground down by cynicism; how there really are no Hollywood endings for most of us. A fascinating and memorable cast of characters once again. This was just as good as THE LAWS OF OUR FATHERS (and echoed that book's dual time line) and PERSONAL INJURIES. The ending - to both the murder investigation and the personal relationships - will leave you satisfied, without at all seeming contrived. I eagerly look forward to

Turow's next novel!

Lots of detail and lots of names to remember but a good story. A good read.

I am a Scott Turow fan, having enjoyed most of his previous books. "Reversible Errors" proved a bit disjointed in comparison and a slow read, especially through the first half of the book. Although it gets interesting at the end, there is a certain lack of focus as to whether this is a police/judicial thriller or a love story between challenged individuals. Overall not a bad read but less than what I would expect from Mr. Turow.

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