

Do You Solemnly Swear? A Nation of Law, The Dark Side

Lin Wilder

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The legal and personal aftermaths of abuse are hinted at in this thriller.

Lin Wilder's *Do You Solemnly Swear?* is a legal thriller that touches on the horrific subject of child rape. The story is set in Houston, where Gabe is accused—falsely, he claims—of raping his ex-girlfriend's five-year-old daughter, Annie. He is found guilty of the crime.

While serving multiple life sentences, Gabe is beaten up in prison and ends up in the emergency center under the care of a doctor named Lindsey. Simultaneously, one of the jurors from his trial writes a letter to the judge confessing to jury-tampering in the form of researching rape on the Internet. These multiple, shocking events start the novel off quickly. After the frenzy of detailing the trial, Gabe's relationship with Annie's mother, and Gabe's assault, the pace of the book slows a bit, though this feels realistic.

A reporter, Kate, begins researching her next story: jury tampering. She enlists the help of Lindsey and her husband, defense attorney Rich, to push forward and find out the truth of what happened between Gabe and Annie.

In the beginning of the novel, the story switches between points of view and time periods to establish its background and plot, until the time line is brought up to the novel's present day. Main characters are introduced within the first few chapters, including Annie, Gabe, and Kate. While these three are rarely seen interacting within the novel, they are the impetus for the plot.

Though it is a sequel to *The Fragrance Shed by a Violet*, the novel can comfortably stand alone, with plenty of background interjected to fill in gaps. At times the book gets bogged down with details about an overabundance of relationships and histories, but it all serves to set up the story to continue on, even while maintaining the integrity of the book's own plotline.

The dialogue throughout the book is crisp and succinct. Glimpses of deeper characterizations are seen through minute moments of discussion, whether between Kate and her boyfriend or Gabe crying to a dog about war.

Gabe's case may move the plot here, but the book's conclusion does not come with the court decision of his second trial; rather, it sets up the story for a following book. The ending reads as overly explanatory and goes on for a bit too long.

This thriller hits on important legal and personal notes in the aftermath of abuse through multiple points of view.

JENNIFER MILLER (June 19, 2017)

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