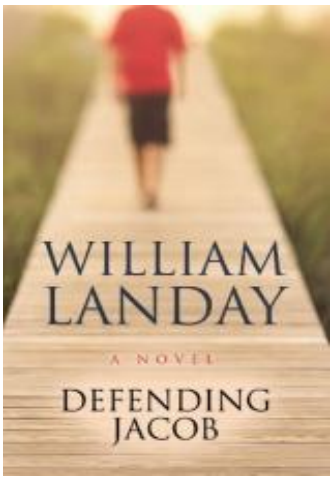
Defending Jacob

by William Landay



About the Book

Andy Barber has been an assistant district attorney in his suburban Massachusetts county for more than 20 years. He is respected in his community, tenacious in the courtroom, and happy at home with his wife, Laurie, and son, Jacob. But when a shocking crime shatters their New England town, Andy is blindsided by what happens next: His 14-year-old son is charged with the murder of a fellow student.

Every parental instinct Andy has rallies to protect his boy. Jacob insists that he is innocent, and Andy believes him. Andy must. He?s his father. But as damning facts and shocking revelations surface, as a marriage threatens to crumble and the trial intensifies, as the crisis reveals how little a father knows about his son, Andy will face a trial of his own --- between loyalty and justice, between truth and allegation, between a past he?s tried to bury and a future he cannot conceive.

Award-winning author William Landay has written the consummate novel of an embattled family in crisis --- a suspenseful, character-driven mystery that is also a spellbinding tale of guilt, betrayal, and the terrifying speed at which our lives can spin out of control.

Discussion Guide

1. How would you have handled this situation if you were Andy? Would you make the same choices he made? Where would you differ the most?

2. Before and during the trial, how would you have handled the situation if you were Laurie? Do you feel she made strong choices as a mother and a wife?

3. Is Andy a good father? Why or why not?

4. Do you believe Jacob is guilty?

5. Is Jacob a product of his upbringing? Do you think he is a violent person because his environment made him violent, or do you think he has had violent inclinations since birth?

6. How do you think people could or should stop adolescent bullying?

7. How much of a factor did Jacob?s age play into your sympathies for him or lack thereof? If Jacob were 17, would you view him differently? What about if he were nine?

8. Do you think Neal Logiudice acts ethically in this novel? What about Andy?

9. What is the most damning piece of evidence against Jacob? Is there anything that you felt exonerated him?

10. If Jacob hadn?t been accused, how do you think his life would have turned out? What kind of a man do you think he would grow up to be?

Author Bio

William Landay is the author of ALL THAT IS MINE I CARRY WITH ME and three previous novels: DEFENDING JACOB, which won the Strand Critics Award for best mystery novel; THE STRANGLER, listed as a best crime novel of the year by the *L.A. Times*, *Daily Telegraph* and others; and MISSION FLATS, winner of the Dagger Award for best first crime novel. A former assistant district attorney, he lives in Boston.

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