

### ***Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson**

This book is a “heavy” read because of its serious subject, but one that many of us should read. It’s very easy to think critical thoughts about those who wind up in our jails, prisons, and penitentiaries. However, this book told me first-hand, in the words of a lawyer who has spent his career defending the “down and out,” how many of them end up unjustly accused, poorly defended if at all, and wrongfully imprisoned for decades. The advances in DNA testing have come about only recently, and even with those, justice gets applied in a very hit and miss fashion. Unfortunately, those least able to pay end up paying far more for the wrongs they have done – and even for those they did not do at all.

I enjoy reading courtroom dramas, but the accounts in this book were even more memorable and searing. These were true cases and trials – and there was no happy ending for far too many. Even when justice is finally done after a prisoner was wrongfully locked up for decades, the freed person returns to a world much changed, which has little use for someone who did time. I am glad for the advances we have made in evidence gathering and in defending minority rights. But it is still so sad that the America I love mistreated so many in the past, and in some ways continues to do so. We can do better.