

Ordinary Heroes by Scott Turow.
Picador 2006

Scott Turow writes a superb story that excites and challenges at the same time. His legal knowledge lends the legalistic dimensions of his books a credibility and readability that cannot, in my view, easily be bettered.

Ordinary Heroes veers away from Turow's favoured Kindle County and takes the reader on a journey set in the closing stages of the Second World War and deeds of great bravery and treachery within the American army.

The main protagonists are David Dubin, a military lawyer serving on the European front, who finds himself sent to arrest a special operations hero by the name of Robert Martin. Dubin finds himself caught up in both the danger and drama of Martin's small strike group and falls in love with Martin's comrade in arms and former mistress Gita.

The outer layer of the story, set in the present, surrounds Dubin's son Stewart, a journalist, whose interest in his father's military service is piqued by the discovery of papers revealing that he was court-martialled. As Stewart investigates further he finds a memoir of his father's activities which begs as many questions as it answers; as he proceeds to try and understand what happened to his father and why many more issues are thrown up, not least connected with his mother.

This is a complex but intensely satisfying story and shows Scott Turow at the very top of his form.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh