

# KIRKUS REVIEWS

## TITLE INFORMATION

### AMICUS CURIAE

Brian Clary

iUniverse (330 pp.)

\$29.95 hardcover, \$19.95 paperback, \$3.99 e-book

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## BOOK REVIEW

A rousing legal thriller about abduction, murder, and a dedicated lawyer struggling to come to terms with her complex personal and professional lives.

Houston trial attorney Clary's debut novel opens with the kidnapping of a naïve, rural Texas teenage girl, the seventh victim of a serial killer. Diligent, successful veteran attorney Michelle "Mickey" Grant is tense about the news. Her career is on the fast track, but her personal life has seen better days. As a consequence of her aggressive career ambitions, Mickey's marriage disintegrated more than a year ago, and her ex-husband, Tyler Grant, was granted primary custody of their now-teenage daughter, Reagan. Her daughter fits the kidnapping victims' type, so Mickey has become increasingly vigilant about Reagan's whereabouts as the Christmas holiday draws close. Mickey excitedly anticipates spending a week with her, but then Reagan goes missing. Convicted felon and drug abuser Willie Lee Flynn is charged with the kidnappings right before the bloodied body of one of his alleged victims is found. Increasingly desperate for answers, Mickey attends the court trial; the cunning, tight-lipped Flynn is convicted on circumstantial evidence. Mickey remains unsatisfied, though, and visits Flynn in prison to question him further. Meanwhile, her relationship with Tyler gets messier due to an ill-conceived indiscretion. Mickey files a highly controversial amicus curiae brief in an attempt to retry Flynn and find out Reagan's whereabouts—a move that puts Mickey's life in jeopardy. Clary maintains a mood of dread and suspense throughout the novel and particularly excels during the vivid, tense trial scenes and his descriptions of his characters' attributes, including Mickey's attractiveness and the shifty police chief's sartorial uniqueness—he wears a black suit, bolo tie, "and a vest that bulged under the strain from his sizable belly." Overall, the author creates an imaginative, convincing cast of strong, memorable personalities who carry the mystery along at an impressive clip, although some details at the book's conclusion seem a bit perfunctory.

Fans of crime dramas will find Clary's suspenseful yarn a welcome addition to the genre and hope for more to come.