



The Oath

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When HMO executive Tim Markham is hit by a car during a morning jog through his exclusive San Francisco neighborhood, he has the bad luck to be transported to one of his own hospitals . . . and winds up dead in his ICU bed. But in spite of the rumors about his company's substandard care, this death appears to be a case of malice, not of malpractice—especially after Markham's entire family is gunned down in their home.

Lt. Abe Glitsky has strong suspicions about a doctor with opportunity, means, and motives to spare. But working up a case against Eric Kensing might not be easy, especially when Glitsky has to rely on two bumbling rookies to gather the evidence. When defense attorney Dismas Hardy takes Kensing on as a client, both Glitsky and Hardy have to worry not only about losing the case, but about losing a best friend as well. And as the investigation leads to something bigger than they expected, they may both be in danger of losing their lives as well. . .

The Oath Details

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From Reader Review The Oath for online ebook

Nancy Cook Lauer says

I've yet to find a Lescroart book I didn't like. Solid mystery, engaging writing style and familiar characters. This book was written 12 years ago, but it still rings true, as health-care firms try to balance costs and treatment efficacy.

Thomas says

This is a well written mystery that starts out as a hit and run but turns into a murder mystery. There is also a medical malpractice investigation tied into the case. This is book 8 in the series but it read ok as a stand alone. Dismas Hardy is a lawyer hired by Dr. Eric Kensing, a prime suspect in the murder. Abe Glitsky is Hardy's friend and head of the San Francisco homicide squad. There are other characters who evidently have recurring roles in the series, but Hardy and Glitsky are the main characters and on opposite sides of this case. This book started off slow but held my interest throughout. I was not sure who the murderer was until almost the end. This book was lent to me by a relative who enjoys Lescroart's books. I like his ability to describe body language: "She smiled with all the warmth of a cobra."

Eric_W says

I hesitate to mark this as a legal mystery as, unlike many of Lescroart's other books, there is very little that takes place in a courtroom except for a couple of grand jury scenes.

No need to summarize the plot as the book's description does that just fine without any spoilers and this book would be ripe for spoilers. Not a great book, just a lot of fun. I especially enjoyed the repartee between Glitsky and Hardy, two best friends, who manage to focus on their own conflicting jobs and irritate each other no end, yet manage to forgive and forget.

You'll learn some interesting economics of running a hospital and HMO and trying to keep the HMO going provides the motivation for several of the "mercy" killings that lead to the penultimate murder. I did find the murderer's motivations to be rather unconvincing, but then again, I don't value money and power the way her/she/it (no spoilers there) did.

Amber says

LOST - 320

Ralph Strong says

great book tho longer than should be

Norma Jean says

Eighth in a series of Dismas Hardy novels, this edition finds defense attorney Dismas pitted against his long-time friend, homicide lieutenant Abe Glitsky as they work towards finding who is killing terminal patients earlier than their expected demise--which wasn't even suspected until the head of a struggling San Francisco hospital becomes a victim, though admitted after being injured by a hit-and-run driver. Many plots and twists in this work as the two--sometimes collegially and sometimes not--try to uncover who the real murderer is, though one is highly suspected...

Very believably written in such a way you don't want to stop reading.

Patsy says

In "The Oath," John Lescroart pits defense attorney Dismas Hardy and homicide lieutenant Abe Glitsky against each other in the most dangerous case either has ever faced. When the head of San Francisco's largest HMO dies in his own hospital, no one doubts it is anything but the result of massive injuries inflicted by a random hit-and-run car accident. But the autopsy soon tells a different story--an overdose of potassium killed him, and the attending physician Eric Kensing becomes the prime suspect in a high-profile homicide.

Abe Glitsky, though hindered by the inept bunglings of two politically appointed cops assigned to the investigation, quickly sets his sights on Kensing. Desperate and in need of an attorney, Kensing turns to Dismas Hardy for his defense. But as the pressure mounts to indict Kensing, Hardy goes on the offensive, believing that the murder had little to do with his client, and everything to do with business. Hardy knows that all is not well with the HMO, and makes a terrifying discovery: too many patients have been dying, many of them victims of murder--and it looks like it is the hospital that is killing them.

His own marriage tested and his family strained as he struggles to save his client, Hardy must uncover a twisting conspiracy of avarice and violence that takes the lives it is sworn to save. A timely and gripping novel that puts lives--and a long-standing friendship--at grave risk, "The Oath" is John Lescroart at his galvanizing best.

Johnny says

In *The Oath* by John Lescroart, multiple mysteries coalesce into a fascinating conundrum. When a "hit and run" driver hits the head of an HMO (probably one of the few occupations that would be despised more than a lawyer in our popular culture), it's difficult to know whether the act was attempted murder or led to an opportunity for attempted murder. When negligence leads to death in the marquee hospital of the same HMO, it's difficult to know whether that death is connected to other "convenient" deaths in that same hospital. More than any other Dismas Hardy mystery that I've read so far, this novel offers a virtual kaleidoscope of motives and opportunities for murder with plenty of refracting color from Dismas' ongoing struggle to keep his marriage/family intact if not entirely happy and his combination competitive/collaborative friendship with Abe Glitzky, head of homicide for SFPD. Everywhere one looks,

there is a fascinating complexity to this story.

I was disappointed to reach the point in the book where I read an obituary on one of the important supporting characters in the series. My respect for the author went up yet another notch when I read how he handled the events surrounding that obituary (I wouldn't want to spoil it for you). Lescroart prepared a spicy recipe of guilt, reality, and grief (mixed with hope—wouldn't want anyone to think the whole book is a downer) that was just right.

Now, I don't mean to imply that Lescroart's craft completely fooled me. I was fairly certain about the "villain" responsible for the pivotal event(s), but this master storyteller managed to make me doubt my own suspect at various points in the book. Maybe the suspect I "liked" as the pivotal "villain" didn't do all of the dirty work himself/herself. Maybe Dismas was wrong in his assumptions this time. Maybe this potential alibi for one of the suspects did it. Maybe the events in the book have no bearing to each other, just like standard police procedure would assume until there was sufficient evidence to establish the case. At one point, Lescroart gave a color and a clue related to a foreign language to take the reader's suspicions in a certain direction. This proves to be important evidence, but not with the suspicion with which it is introduced. I love it when this happens in a mystery. The author is clever enough to shake my faith in my own deductions and then, shows me how wrong I was to doubt my conclusions.

Finally, I truly appreciated the fact that the protagonist wasn't overconfident in this one. In some of the earlier Dismas Hardy stories, I felt like he was certain that his "courtroom tricks" as one opponent (and even a judge) called them would win the day. This time, I felt like Hardy weighed law, justice, his client, and the case very carefully at many different junctures. He seemed more mature, if you will. Needless to say, this episode in the series is nowhere near a disappointment.

Jen says

This was definitely the best John Lescroart book I've read so far, although I've enjoyed them all, this one really had me torn between reading like crazy to get to the end and trying to restrain myself to make it last longer. Although it was becoming more obvious who the killer had been as I got closer to the end, the twist in the tale was the final reveal which was the icing the cake for me.

Terri Floccare says

I read this book while on vacation in San Francisco, the setting of the book. It was a treat. I am a fan of the pairing of Dismas Hardy and Abe Glitzkey. I love their work and personal relationships.

Gary says

It's exciting and emotional watching the pieces come together. Usually a brisk read.

Judith says

Dismas Hardy, San Francisco attorney, takes on a client who becomes a suspect in a murder case. Eric Kensing was the attending physician when the head of an HMO died in his hospital. The victim had been hit by a car but an autopsy showed that excessive levels of potassium had been administered to him just before he died, bringing on a heart attack.

Hardy believes his client is innocent but Kensing has difficulty comprehending that he is the prime suspect. He manages to lie to his attorney about critical times and persons, thinking it doesn't matter; he's innocent. His obfuscations cause Hardy a great deal of pain, but he continues to work for his client. And part of that work involves looking for the real killer.

Hardy's relationship with Abe Glitsky, homicide detective, is threatened along the way. The two have been friends for years but they are working different sides of the fence this time, and acting in the best interest of different interests.

Much of the book is, in fact, about these two men. The plot is a vehicle for exploring their feelings and actions. Which appealed to me, given that I prefer plots that are character-driven.

It turns out that there are several possible murderers, but only one other stands out. Again and again Kensing emerges as a real possible. Are we to find out that Hardy has it wrong? It's happened before. I won't tell.

It's a good legal thriller, more on the outskirts of the law than on the courtroom.

Jerry B says

Tenth Dismas Hardy storyline somewhat trite, hence quite mixed reviews

Our only prior exposure to our author was his "Dead Irish" Dismas Hardy story that all but his most ardent fans found rather mediocre, as did we. In that book, half the tome was little but rumination before the action finally commenced. The Oath was thankfully somewhat more entertaining, but, though we failed to guess the villain as soon as many others, it ended with a whimper instead of a flourish. The plot per se was somewhat interesting - a prominent HMO executive is critically injured while jogging by a hit and run driver, but survives surgery only to die mysteriously in the ICU. Indeed, an autopsy reveals he was murdered while in recovery! So a kind of dual-pronged investigation is launched - was it really an accidental hit and run, and is the most obvious suspect, our hero Dismas Hardy's eventual client, attending physician Dr. Kensing, really the hospital perp? Lescroart uses this storyline to attack the now hardly creative idea that HMO's, especially those on financial skids, will invariably sacrifice patient well-being to cut costs. This tactic gets a little tiresome as it seems to have little bearing on the ongoing murder investigation. Finally, a series of killings in the hospital seems to have been uncovered, and a minority male nurse becomes a critical lynchpin in the discovery of the true villain.

Although numerous sub-plots populate the novel - including extra-marital affairs, Hardy's tendency to neglect family for work, two cops just learning their trade, and the unusual friendship between what would otherwise be arch enemies DA Abe Glitsky and Defense Attorney Hardy - Lescroart handles a pretty high character count with enough clarity we can keep track of everybody. While the resultant meandering

storyline managed to create enough suspense to capture our interest, we were destined for disappointment at the end. We didn't think the somewhat unspectacular outcome was a fitting conclusion, and many readers reported figuring it out long before the denouement. Also an attempt to fool us into thinking a major character had suffered a fatal wound in the late chapters was unappreciated and inept. Lastly, some attempt at poetic justice in the final chapter, an almost irrelevant epilogue that pointed back to a heretofore irrelevant prologue, seemed irony out of place in an otherwise rather prosaic story.

Lescroart is a successful writer and demonstrates a decent imagination; he seems to enjoy a loyal following and a lengthening bibliography. But the overall craft of this effort leaves us with little incentive to spend our money, let alone our time, taking a chance on his many other books.

Hal says

This is a compelling entry in Lescroart's series about Dismas Hardy, a fictional defense attorney in San Francisco that is marbled with a lot of true-to-life color about the City by the Bay.

The novel centers on a series of deaths at a local hospital and addresses the conflict in modern medicine between providing good health while also containing costs.

One thing I like about Lescroart's novels is that he creates meaningful relationships between the characters, they are not just stick figures. They coach youth sports, they play darts, they argue with their spouses, they have longstanding friendships. Traits like these humanize the characters and make them more universal.

The weakness of the book comes in the last few pages when Lescroart resorts to some hackneyed tricks to add melodrama to the ending. I have read five or six of his other books and they all concluded more realistically.

Val says

I didn't like this book as much as I did the last one. I had a hard time getting into it until I had read somewhere between 1/4 to 1/3 of it. The technology of the book felt rather out of date. Also, almost from the beginning I knew who the "bad guy" was.
