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The Ophelia Cut: Dismas Hardy, Book 14



Synopsis

When a brutal rapist is murdered, a loving father stands accused of the crime. Defense attorney Dismas Hardy must defend his brother-in-law and old friend Moses McGuire in a thrilling case that hits far too close to home. Moses McGuire has good reason to be concerned about his beautiful 23-year-old daughter, Brittany. She moves quickly from one boyfriend to the next, and always seems to prefer a new and mysterious stranger to a man she knows something about. But her most recent ex, Rick Jessup, isn't willing to let her go, culminating in a terrible night when Brittany is raped. Within 24 hours, Rick Jessup is dead, Moses McGuire is the prime suspect in the investigation, and Dismas Hardy has been hired to defend his brother-in-law. Making things even more complicated, McGuire has fallen off the wagon, and his stay in prison could bring to light old secrets that would destroy Hardy and his closest colleagues' careers. As the overwhelming evidence against McGuire piles up, Dismas Hardy focuses on planting doubt in the minds of the jurors - until, in a feat of legal ingenuity that is staggering in both its implications and its simplicity, Hardy sees a new way forward that might just save them all. But at what price? For the first time since 2009, Dismas Hardy, the author's most beloved protagonist, returns in a masterful novel that showcases Lescroart's extraordinary storytelling gifts: a cast of flesh-and-blood characters, morally complex situations, and relentless, nail-biting suspense.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I am a big fan of Lescroart's work, and the Dismas Hardy series in particular. I'm okay with the

books that focused more on Wes Farrell, Abe Glitsky, Wyatt Hunt and Gina Roake, but the Hardy character is the center of Lescroart's fictional version of San Francisco. Always good to see him back in action. In the *Ophelia Cut*, Lescroart takes a huge risk (you won't realize it until you get to the end, but trust me on that assessment). This time out, the suspect is Hardy's own brother-in-law, Moses McGuire, and the case threatens to open a huge can of worms for those characters who participated in (and survived) the climax of Lescroart's earlier book, *The First Law*. Lescroart does an adequate job of summing up the events of *The First Law* for readers who are unfamiliar with it, but do yourself a favor: DO NOT make this your first Lescroart novel. At the very least, read *The First Law*. Understand what happened there, and why it could not have gone down any other way. Only then will half of *The Ophelia Cut* make any sense to you, because certain moves by the characters can only be understood in light of what happened in the earlier book. In addition to being top-notch legal thrillers, Lescroart's books are often *WhoDunnIt*s, with a big reveal at the end. It's a bit different this time out. There's a shocking ending, but not the kind you expect. It is sure to have a lasting impact on Hardy's world. I like this book, a lot. It impressed me. It disturbed me. It broke my heart. But as always with Lescroart, it engaged me from the first page to the last.

I have read 23 books by this author and have yet to be disappointed. As for the Dismas Hardy series I am rather sure I would recognize one of the characters were I to see him or her in San Francisco. A Mr. Lescroart novel reads as if you are watching it play out rather than scanning the words. In *The Ophelia Cut* there is still the crime, solving the crime by San Francisco's finest and then of course the stage moves to the court room. There is plenty of planning and plotting by the lawyers, evidence searching by law enforcement and the maneuvering and efforts at one-upmanship by the political players. The bar scene, the familiarity of the family members and the camaraderie amongst members of the cast. This time the assault on a family member makes it all very personal the action of some family members plays into the hands of the prosecutor. A dedicated reader knows Dismas is not going to lose the case, but no reader can anticipate the tragic ending.

Mr. Lescroart does it again, but this time he sorta sweats to get the rabbit out of the hat. Dismas' old, old friend, Moses McGuire, is accused of bludgeoning to death a young attorney, Rick Jessup, with whom his daughter Brittany had had a brief fling. She subsequently dumped him, and he retaliated by drugging and raping her after a final let's-be-friends meeting. He is found later with his head bashed in. Unfortunately, Moses, with a towering motive for the deed, has no alibi for the time

the murder took place, and an old shillelagh, a well-known fixture in his bar, is missing. Despite Dismas' efforts to prevent it, Moses is arrested and jailed. The rest of the action of course follows Dismas' courtroom efforts to get him off, and includes a sub-plot which involves a killer-for-hire hidden in a federal witness protection program. The ending was a bit contrived, I thought, but the suspense was well-sustained.

I only give one-star reviews to books I cannot bear to continue. I hope I got it for free! I was about 15% into this book and decided to give up waiting for it to be interesting. I found it very discombobulated. There are a lot of characters, some plot lines that appear to be gratuitous (like the sex-crazed daughter of one of the main characters, and the alcoholic who may "spill the beans" about the deep dark secret at any time). It jumps around to the point that I decided my time would be better spent on a novel by Martin Cruz Smith - one of the Arkady Renko novels, which I am enjoying just fine.

Attorney Dismas Hardy must defend his close friend and brother-in-law Moses McGuire, who has been accused of murdering the man who drugged and raped his daughter. Lescroart masterfully weaves a complex plot that keeps the reader guessing throughout the book. He addresses ethical and social issues, and he skillfully develops his characters, providing with flaws as well as strengths.

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