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The Fall: A Novel: Dismas Hardy, Book 16



Synopsis

From New York Times bestselling author John Lescroart, a riveting new novel of legal suspense featuring Dismas Hardy and his daughter, Rebecca, now grown up and an associate in Hardy's law firm. Late one night, a teenage African American foster child named Tanya Morgan plummets to her death from the overpass above San Francisco's Stockton tunnel. But did she fall...or was she pushed? Rushing to produce a convictable suspect in the glare of the media spotlight, homicide inspectors focus their attention on a naïf young man named Greg Treadway. Greg is a middle school teacher and he volunteers as a Special Advocate for foster children. At first, the only thing connecting him to Tanya's death is the fact that they shared a meal earlier that night. But soon enough, elements of that story seem to fall apart...and Hardy's daughter, Rebecca, finds herself drawn into the young man's defense. By the time Greg's murder trial gets underway, Dismas and Rebecca have unearthed several other theories about the crime: a missing stepfather who'd sexually assaulted her; a roommate who ran a call girl service; a psychologically unstable birth mother; and a mysterious homeless man who may have had dealings with Tanya. Or Greg Treadway himself, who is perhaps not all that he first appeared. But how will they get these theories in front of a jury? And if they can, what price will they have to pay? With signature suspense and intricate plotting, *The Fall* puts Dismas Hardy and his only daughter in the middle of one of John Lescroart's most complex and thrilling cases yet.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Fall isn't my favorite Dismas Hardy novel, in part because it lacks the emotional heft of John Lescroart's best work, but it nevertheless tells a good story. While courtroom scenes are strong, they are not as dramatic as those in some earlier novels, perhaps because they focus on Dismas' daughter while Dismas paces around like a worried old dog. It is, however, interesting to see Dismas play the role of father-mentor-coach as he dissects the trial and gives his daughter pointers. A 17-year-old girl falls to her death from a bridge. Did she jump or was she pushed? A murder investigation ensues and the police, under fire for their failure to solve homicides with African American victims, feel pressured to make an arrest. The District Attorney, criticized for failing to get convictions in homicides against black victims, is under the gun to convict someone. Too often, when the need to secure a conviction has political consequences, the government doesn't care much about whether the right person is being arrested or prosecuted. In this case, the suspect is a volunteer advocate for troubled kids who may or may not have been having an affair with the dead girl. Having recently met Dismas Hardy's daughter, Rebecca ("the Beck"), the suspect knows where to go for legal help. The Beck is a bit unseasoned to be handling a murder case, but since Dismas is backing her up I didn't view that as a huge stretch. The trial begins only about a third of the way into the novel. Inexplicably, the Beck waits until the trial begins before she sends an investigator out to look for evidence of her client's innocence. Granted, that always worked for Perry Mason, but one might have expected the Beck to give the case more thought before the trial started.

John Lescroart has extended his fictional San Francisco family for another generation. His central character, Dismas Hardy, is, like all of us, aging. His children are grown. The oldest, Rebecca (aka The Beck to readers of the series) is now an associate in Hardy's Law Firm. "The Fall" is the story of her first murder case. All of the usual suspects are here. Wes Farrell, Hardy's ex law partner and now the San Francisco D.A. has come under fire for not prosecuting the deaths of African Americans as vigorously as he does the death of whites. When an African American girl is murdered under very public circumstances. Farrell wants justice done publicly and swiftly. Inspector Devon Juhle (a series regular) is assigned to the case. He focuses on one particular suspect very quickly, and sets out to prove the case against him. By a series of nicely interwoven happenings, Rebecca ends up defending the man accused of the murder. Dismas Hardy's best friend, retired homicide detective Abe Glitsky is used by Farrell as an investigator on the case. He has known Rebecca her whole life. Glitsky works the case, in parallel with the Inspector Juhle and his team. Abe, as we all know, is a very independent investigator and is looking for the truth- not just a conviction. The crossing of the generations is at the heart of the story. Lescroart has done well in passing the torch

from Dismas Hardy to Rebecca Hardy. Dismas will certainly be around- as he has a prominent role in the book. But Rebecca is the star of the show, as she struggles to put together a defense, and then learns the ropes of presenting that defense in Court. There is a somewhat contrived post-trial ending, which slightly detracts from the book.

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