



The 13th Juror

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He is obsessed with her innocence. He will be destroyed by her guilt.

The walls were champagne. The house was immaculate. A prosperous doctor lived there with his son and his beautiful wife. But the elegant walls hid a family's secret, a wife's shame. And one day shots rang out in the doctor's house. Suddenly Jennifer Witt was in jail, facing the death penalty.

Jennifer insisted that she had not killed her abusive husband -- and she could never have killed her own son. Dismas Hardy believed her. But Hardy was only part of the defense team, and the only lawyer who continued to believe her...even as her story was torn to pieces, even as her lies came out, even as she was found guilty of murder.

Now there's only one thing Jennifer can do to save her life...and she refuses to do it. So Hardy must do it for her. And in a shocking case of violence, betrayal, and lies, his only weapon is the truth...

*The 13th Juror...*When innocence is not enough.

The 13th Juror Details

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From Reader Review The 13th Juror for online ebook

Rebecca McNutt says

The 13th Juror is a very impressive, detailed and powerful legal thriller, with realistic characters and a lot of suspense.

Nan Williams says

It was definitely a page turner. Lots of twists and turns, good courtroom scenes.

A book originally published 20 years ago is enlightening in the changes in our society as well as in crime fiction. I appreciated the clean language and the clarity of thought in the narrative. Every time a character would do something like "look for a phone booth," I had to remind myself the book was written in 1994.

The plot could easily have been written today - it was timeless. It was well written, well paced and well edited.

My big criticism was that Jennifer Witt, the main character, was totally unbelievable. She didn't seem to be at all interested in finding out who committed the murders, nor about helping her own defense, she just proclaimed that she didn't do it and sat stoically and dry eyed during the trial. I got really tired of hearing how absolutely beautiful she was - in spite of repeated beatings, prison life, etc. There was nothing credible about Jennifer.

However, I enjoyed it and recommend it to all.

Cathy DuPont says

My fourth Dismas Hardy and I really like the character, like him a lot. I like attorneys anyway, so no surprise there. And about one-half the book was a courtroom setting; ditto there, too. No problem.

However, at the beginning in reading the acknowledgements, Lescroart says "My editor (and publisher) Don Fine has done a yeoman's job of nipping, tucking and tightening the sprawling manuscript into its final form..." The word that jumped out at me was "tightening" since previous books, I felt, needed some "tightening."

Fluff, words to me that do not add to the story, just should not be included in the book. For instance, Hardy had the flu when he had to fly from San Francisco (setting of series) to LA. That fact added nothing to the story that I could see. He slept some, coughed, ran a fever, all those things that go with the flu and he still worked on the case. But his flu added zero to the story. If someone disagrees, would love to hear from them.

It's my two cents that editor and publisher Mr. Fine should be doing a captain's job (not a yeoman's) of "nipping, tucking and tightening" since there is, for my liking, just too much fluff here, (and in other Lescroart books read.) And I like him, Lescroart and Hardy. I really, really do, but please cut the fluff. My time is too valuable for fluff.

Lack of fluff is just one reason I love Raymond Chandler and the like.

Snow says

"The 13th Juror is a stunning and suspenseful novel of moral ambiguity, of good intentions, bad judgements and the tortuous path to ultimate justice."

I absolutely agree with the sentence above, even if it's not mine, I second every word and couldn't have said it better myself.

Absolutely brilliant!!!

6 thriller stars

Sheila says

This was my first John Lescroart book. Jennifer Witt is charged with murder of her husband Larry and son Matt whereby she is facing death penalty. She has claimed she did not kill them, even though she is battered-woman just like her mother. Lawyer David Freeman and Hardy is trying to prove Jennifer is innocent and there is another killer. There is great narrative, with suspense, politics and court case but 560 pages is a bit too long. I will surely read other books by this author.

James Thane says

This is the fourth entry in John Lescroart's series featuring attorney Dismas Hardy, and the one in which the series really hits its stride. In the earlier books, Hardy had suffered a devastating family tragedy and had become somewhat unmoored. He'd abandoned his life as a policeman and a lawyer to become a bartender. He ultimately wound up working as a prosecutor in the district attorney's office and as this book opens, he has left that job and gone into private practice as a defense attorney, where he will remain through the rest of the books.

As this book opens, Hardy has rented office space in a firm headed by a flamboyant attorney named David Freeman. Forty-three days into this new arrangement, Freeman takes on a sensational murder case and asks Hardy to assist him with it. The defendant is a beautiful woman named Jennifer Witt. Jennifer is the daughter of a man who routinely beat her mother and she has married not one, but two men who have routinely beat her.

Jennifer's first husband was a drug addict who died of an apparent overdose. She then married a successful doctor who is a total control freak. He closely circumscribes Jennifer's life, and everything in his house, Jennifer included, must be perfect. If not, there will be hell to pay and Jennifer will be in for another beating. The two have a young son who is the one bright spot in Jennifer's life.

Jennifer must stay in good physical shape in order to please her husband and one morning when she returns from a run, she finds a policeman at her door. Someone has reported shots fired inside the house and when

Jennifer reluctantly allows to policeman to enter the house ahead of her, they discover that her husband and son have been shot to death with a gun that was kept in Jennifer's bedroom.

Jennifer, who stands to gain five million dollars out of her husband's death, quickly becomes the prime suspect and, as the evidence against her mounts, she is arrested and charged with the murders. David Freeman believes that she is probably guilty and wants to use a battered wife defense. But despite all the evidence to the contrary, Jennifer insists that she wasn't abused and that she is innocent. She will not allow Freeman to go in that direction. Hardy can't decide if Jennifer is guilty or not but he will do the best he can to help Freeman defend her. It will be an increasingly uphill battle, and the major stumbling block will be the defendant herself.

This is a gripping story with well-drawn characters and an interesting subplot is the effect that the case has on the relationship between Hardy and his wife, who increasingly resents all of the time that Hardy is spending on the case, leaving her to care for the house and their two small children, virtually by herself. The book really kicks into gear once the trial begins, and the courtroom scenes are very good. This is a book and a series that should appeal to anyone who enjoys a taut, exciting legal thriller.

Beverly says

Maybe 3 1/2 stars. This is a classic, straightforward legal mystery with a lot of court room action. Dismas Hardy is a good protag., but his friends and family are slightly cloying, or could become so. The story is about Jennifer Witt, a battered wife accused of killing her abusive husband and her child. But Jennifer insists that she is innocent and won't allow testimony about her battering because it will entail a guilty verdict, although not a stiff penalty. By sticking to her innocence, she risks the death penalty. Lescroart does a great job of keeping the reader in suspense about her guilt or innocence and about her character. He shows her complexity and the ambiguity of her personality. I did eventually guess the killer though, and I usually don't.

Deborah says

I can't figure out if she did it, or not! I'll let you know, or maybe not...when it's all finished.

Really enjoyable book that's well written and wonderfully narrated for audio. I like a courtroom-centered drama especially when it involves a young woman whose successful, young doctor husband, and her eight year old son have been murdered! She's the obvious murderer....

Well, it's finished and I could never have guessed "who done it." Lescroart had me all along the way. I do have to say that I once had a small nagging voice of a thought about the killer, but dropped it as the story progressed because I just couldn't imagine how it would have happened.

This was my first Lescroart book, and it won't be my last. I don't read many courtroom, mystery dramas, but this was a very good one. I'll be reading more of his books in the near future.

I recommend this heartily! Wonder if you'll be as surprised as I was?

Your Bookish Dame

Byron Washington says

John Lescroart at his finest. Wha a rollercoaster of emotions!!! And the big reveal at the end...WHAT?!?!?
Good stuff!!!

Jb17112 says

Two hundred pages too long. Did manage to finish it however. There is a 4 star book in here. 200 pages too long.

Gloria Bernal says

3.75 stars

"We would give her more consideration, when we judge a woman, if we knew how difficult it is to be a woman."

~P. Gerald

For those that don't know what the title means, the 13th Juror is The Judge presiding over a trial who can override the jury's decision if warranted. That was the point of the defense in this case, the trial of a woman accused of murdering her husband and child. She has been a battered woman all her life, a complicated and interesting character, at the very least. She claims she is innocent and Dismas Hardy, lawyer assisting the main defense attorney, Freeman, believes her.

This is my first Lescroart novel. It is quite long and detailed. I ended up enjoying it the second half more. I like Dismas Hardy and his family, their background, and his friend Abe Glitsky. Lescroart has other novels featuring these two buddies. BTW, the unusual name "Dismas" comes from the repentant thief who was crucified beside Jesus. It also means "sunset" in Greek.

I don't mind the inter-connected subplots as long as it is going somewhere. There were some sub-plots brought in to give the reader food for thought as to who could have had a reason to kill this man, the abusive husband, other than the beautiful wife. There were several alternatives possible, but a lot of detail was given that actually went nowhere.

If you like long, drawn out courtroom dramas, with all the detail and don't mind the tedium of it, you may enjoy this. I could see a movie made of this, a lot of the trivia would be cut down. It was written in 1994, so obviously that won't happen.

Ferne says

The best short synopsis I read online: "The pressure is on for Dismas Hardy when an abused woman is accused of killing her husband and child in cold blood. Only Dismas believes she's innocent. However, faith

alone won't be enough to save her unless Dismas takes one terrifying risk to keep her alive." - From Powell's City of Books.

The top line across the paperback said, "The Stunning Bestseller." As one reaches for the title on the shelf, one wonders if it will truly be a "stunning" read as per marketing claims. My opinion is a "resounding YES - ABSOLUTELY! WoW!"

"Unusual in his ability to combine courthouse scenes with action sequences, judicial puzzles and dimensional people, Mr. Lescroart produces a full house of well-drawn characters. The many subplots, social issues and legal maneuvers of The 13th Juror come together in a fast-paced text that sustains interest to the very end." - as written by a reviewer (unknown) from The Wall Street Journal. So true, so true, so true!!! This is not my first read of a title by John Lescroart nor my first read about character Dismas Hardy and definitely will not be my last. I thought Dead Irish and other titles were great. This title was an absolutely incredible read. I could hardly put the book down each evening waiting for another night's opportunity to read before bedtime...only sleep and "the day job" made me wait for another night. This author makes a defense attorney truly "come alive" to spellbound the time you spend together between the pages.

Margaret says

Love the Dismas Hardy series. The book takes you into the inner workings of a murder trial. Dismas partners with David Freeman to defend a young woman charged with killing 2 husbands and her young son. Their client doesn't make their job any easier when she refuses to allow them to use the battered wife syndrome. Their client from the beginning insists she is not guilty as charged. Building the defense is all about putting together the puzzle pieces and when and how to present the case. Very much like a chess game. Dismas refuses to give up until he has exhausted his leads. The surprise twist at the end will keep you reading until the last page.

Marty Fried says

I've now read several of his books recently, and it seems they have a pattern where things progress/regress to a seemingly hopeless situation, then some miracle comes along at the end to solve the problem, often in a pretty surprising way. But perhaps that's common with a lot of mysteries.

This was one of those stories where I began to think she should just be abandoned - she was so self-destructive and uncooperative, even dumb, that at times I thought she didn't deserve so much help. But that was the point, I think. She was driven to this state from her childhood, and acted the way she did because she felt the same way about herself. Everything was her fault, the men were always right, and she deserved to be punished. And the worst part was that these feelings frustrated people to the point where they felt like knocking some sense into her head, which a few seemed to succumb to doing. Fortunately, I was unable to do this, as she was protected by being inside a book.

William says

One of the finest works of popular fiction I've ever read. People often ask me, are there other writers of legal fiction you enjoy? Well, as a matter of fact, yes, and here it is. Lescroart is always good, but I will probably

always think of this as the unforgettable one. If I ever write a legal novel this good, I will be a happy man.
