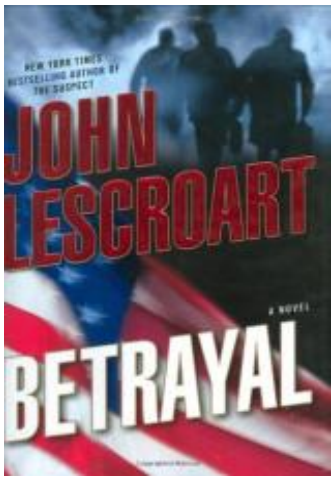
Betrayal

by John Lescroart



About the Book

When Dismas Hardy agrees to clean up the caseload of recently disappeared attorney Charlie Bowen, he thinks it will be easy. But one of the cases is far from small-time --- the sensational clash between National Guard reservist Evan Scholler and an ex-Navy SEAL and private contractor named Ron Nolan. Two rapid-fire events in Iraq conspired to bring the men into fatal conflict: Nolan?s relationship with Evan?s girlfriend, Tara, a beautiful school-teacher back home in the states, followed by a deadly incident in which Nolan?s apparent mistake results in the death of an innocent Iraqi family as well as seven men in Evan?s platoon. As the murky relationship between the US government and its private contractors plays out in the personal drama of these two men, and the consequences become a desperate matter of life and death, Dismas Hardy begins to uncover a terrible and perilous truth that takes him far beyond the case and into the realm of assassination and treason.

Discussion Guide

1. In the prologue, Dismas Hardy is depicted playing darts, and the author describes his game in this way: ?So Hardy was playing a no-win game. If he hit his mark, it didn?t make him happy; but if he missed, it really ticked him off.? How did this statement preview the events that take place in **Betrayal**?

2. ?When Evan shook Ron Nolan?s hand just outside the headquarters tent, he had an immediate impression of great strength held in check.? What was your initial opinion of Ron Nolan? Did it change as you read the book?

3. Do you know anyone who has served in Iraq, whether in a military position or with an outside contractor? Was their experience similar to that of Evan?s, or Ron?s?

4. Dismas Hardy explains his first name?s origin as ?Dismas. The good thief. On Calvary? Next to Jesus?? How does this explanation reflect his personality?

5. ?I?m just having a hard time accepting that our slightly different politics have really broken us up,? writes Evan to Tara. Talk about Evan. Was he truly committed to the war effort, or was he ambivalent in some way? How did he change after he was injured?

6. Was Ron?s motivation to meet Tara in person really to help Evan? What do you think Tara saw in Ron? How were Evan and Ron different, and similar?

7. ?Suddenly the country?s culture seemed to have shifted to where everybody was afraid to make a stink about anything --- it meant they weren?t patriotic.? What does it mean to be a patriot? Who are the patriots in **Betrayal**?

8. Consider Evan?s trial. If you were in the shoes of Everett Washburn, would you have allowed Evan to take the stand? What do you think the prosecutor?s motivation was for pressing Evan?s case so vigorously? What were some of the injustices Evan faced?

9. Have you ever served on a criminal trial jury? Would you have been swayed by Evan?s testimony?

10. At the end of Chapter 41, when Dismas receives the e-mail correspondence between Jack Allstrong and Ron Nolan and subsequently sends copies of it to the surviving Khalil family members, do you think he knew what could ultimately happen to Allstrong?

11. ?Everett. Listen. I can?t believe I beat him with a poker, then shot him in the head, and have no memory of it. I would remember that.? Did you believe Evan was innocent of Ron?s murder? Were you surprised by the book?s last passage?

12. What position do you think the author holds on the Iraq war?

13. Discuss the book?s title. What --- or to whom --- does *betrayal* refer?

Author Bio

John Lescroart is the *New York Times* bestselling author of such novels as THE RULE OF LAW, POISON and FATAL. His books have sold more than 10 million copies and have been translated into 22 languages. He lives in Northern California.

Critical Praise

"The thrill of **The Suspect** is watching the punch-counterpunch dynamic of the justice system. It?s a world that John Lescroart knows inside out and he navigates it like the pro he is."

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