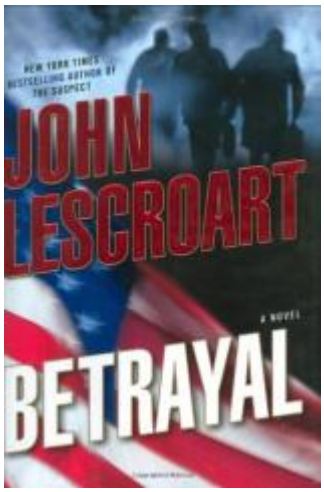
Betrayal

by John Lescroart



About the Book

At thirty-nine, Tallie Jones is a Hollywood legend. Her work as a film director is her passion and the center of her life; one after another, her award-winning productions achieve the rare combination of critical and commercial success. With no interest in the perks of her profession or the glitz and glamour of Los Angeles, Tallie maintains close and loving relationships with her college-age daughter and her aging father, and has a happy collaboration with Hunter Lloyd, her respected producing partner, confidant, and live-in lover. Rounding out the circle and making it all work is Brigitte Parker, Tallie's devoted personal assistant. Friends since film school, they are a study in contrasts, with Brigitte's polished glamour balancing Tallie's artless natural beauty, and her hard-driving, highly organized style a protective shield for Tallie's casual, down-to-earth approach.

As Tallie is in the midst of directing the most ambitious film she has yet undertaken, small disturbances begin to ripple through her well-ordered world. An outside audit reveals troubling discrepancies in the financial records maintained by Victor Carson, Tallie's longtime, trusted accountant. Mysterious receipts hint at activities of which she has no knowledge. Soon it becomes clear that someone close to Tallie has been steadily funneling away enormous amounts of her money. In the wake of an escalating series of shattering revelations, Tallie will find herself playing the most dangerous game of all—to trap a predator stalking her in plain sight.

In this riveting novel, Danielle Steel reveals the dark side of fame and fortune. At the same time, she brilliantly captures a woman's will to navigate a minefield of hurt and loss—toward a new beginning.

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 author of more than 20 novels, including THE 13th JUROR, DAMAGE, THE HUNTER and THE OPHELIA CUT. His books have sold more than 10 million copies and have been translated into 22 languages in 75 countries. 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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