The First Law: An Abe Glitsky/Dismas Hardy Mystery by John Lescroart

One of mystery fictions most enduring and affecting male buddy teams--San Francisco defense attorney Dismas Hardy and police lieutenant Abe Glitsky--are back in Lescroarts newest thriller. Glitskys been kicked upstairs (or sideways) to a desk job and warned off his usual homicide beat even though its his fathers best friend whos been murdered in a robbery-slaying, and its Hardys pal and client, John Holiday, whos been targeted as the killer. When two more killings follow, no one in the department believes that Hardys client was set up. They dont believe Abe, either--the harder he tries to get at the truth, the more his ex-colleagues are convinced that hes a rogue cop who wants his old job back and will stoop to anything to get it. They got that idea from the well-bribed police brass who are protecting the real killers from prosecution and putting Abe and Dismass nearest and dearest in their cross-hairs, too. But thats not quite enough to call our heroes off the case, even though the talented author manages to maintain the tension and ratchet up the suspense long enough to make the reader wonder. --Jane Adams

My Personal Review:
In John Lescroarts new thriller, The First Law, San Francisco resembles the Wild West. A corrupt and malicious individual named Wade Panos wields tremendous political power. Panos and his gang rob and murder whomever they please with impunity, and the police either cannot or will not stop them.
Abe Glitsky, a veteran detective, has been moved out of homicide and into the payroll department of the police force, much to his chagrin. However, when Sam Silverman, an elderly friend of Abes father, is robbed and murdered, Abe takes a look at the case. Much to his surprise, Abe is stymied in his inquiries at every turn; it soon becomes clear that his colleagues on the force do not want Abe interfering in their investigation. To make matters worse, Abes good friend, Dismas Hardy, represents a
man who is being framed for killing Sam. As Abe and Dismas continue to challenge Wade Panos, dead bodies begin piling up and it becomes clear that if Dismas and Abe do not back off, they may be risking their lives. I love the characters of Dismas Hardy and Abe Glitsky. They are macho and sensitive as well as intelligent and compassionate. I admit that the plot of The First Law is a bit far-fetched. It is difficult to believe that such lawlessness would prevail in a city as cosmopolitan as San Francisco. However, Lescroart makes the point that evil people with no conscience do exist. If normally law-abiding citizens are to fight such individuals, they sometimes have to act in unorthodox ways in order to survive. At four hundred pages, The First Law is a bit too long. However, the plot and the dialogue are lively and compelling and the characters are nicely drawn. Lescroart maintains a high level of suspense and excitement until The First Law reaches its dramatic and action-packed conclusion.

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