



The Hunter

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Raised by loving adoptive parents, San Francisco private investigator Wyatt Hunt never had an interest in finding his birth family—until he gets a chilling text message:

“How did your mother die?”

The answer is murder, and Hunt takes on a case he never knew existed, unsolved for decades. His family’s dark past unfurls in dead ends. Child Protection Services, who suspected Hunt was being neglected, is uninformed; his birth father, twice-tried but never convicted of the murder, is in hiding; Evie, his mother’s drug-addicted religious fanatic of a friend, is untraceable. And who is the texter, and how is this person connected to Hunt? Time is running out. Insisting the murderer is out there, the texter refuses to be identified. But as the case escalates, so does the threat—for the killer has a secret that will go to the grave...

The Hunter Details

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Dan says

Wyatt Hunter, a San Francisco P.I., was adopted and never knew or cared about his birth parents; until one day he gets a test message that reads “How did your mother die?” From that he uses his skills to track down the sender and the meaning of this cryptic message. What he finds is more than he bargains for.

John Lescroart’s latest novel had me intrigues, but not from the beginning. It took a few chapters before it grabbed into the story and I began liking Wyatt and wanted to learn about his birth parents. Yet, I did need get past some areas of disbelief, but this was an enjoyable thriller and the mystery of searching for one’s past.

William says

After reading this book, I'm going to have to go back and start from the first book in the series. It kept me guessing all the way to the end. Interesting characters, good backstories.

Bob says

Wyatt Hunt is a PI in San Francisco who as a youngster was put up for adoption by his father after he had been tried and acquitted twice for the murder of his wife. Now years later Hunt gets a anonymous text asking him "how did your mother die"? This is the beginning of a tale of the search for history of his mother and father and the events of their death and trials. It turns up a connection with the infamous Johnstown mass suicides and Hunt's eventual reconnection with his father.

Scott H H. says

I liked the characters and how they interacted with one another. The story line from beginning to end was well thought out. As with any other well written mysteries, there were dead ends, new beginnings and the following of the primary thread through out. I enjoyed the read. I will definitely read more of his books.

Steve Holden says

I decided to tackle this one a whim, and I found myself entertained throughout. The story is apparently the third in a series featuring Wyatt Hunt, a private investigator in San Francisco. Despite it being a continuation in a series, this one read just fine by itself.

Hunt receives a text from an anonymous person about his past that forces his hand to check on his curiosities. It brings his childhood under investigation. He was apparently sent into foster care after his

mother was murdered, but the killer was left unknown, although his father was the prime suspect but acquitted. Now, this is was an entertaining read, and there's a lot of good going on with it, however, this brings up my first issue. Hunt is an established PI and was in foster care as a child. Investigating and being able to solve mysteries are skills he possesses, but we're supposed to believe that a man approaching 40 and investigating things for a living is finally given the urge to figure out his own past via some strange text? It seemed a bit out there as the start up to the investigation to me. I could've bought it more had he previously attempted but always came to dead ends, and it was the one case he wanted more than anything.

Regardless, things twist and turn as he investigates, and he soon discovers that there is still someone or people who don't want the real answer being found. This case to discover the answer includes some good breakthroughs, some twists and turns, and a good finish. I liked every part of the story once things became established. I might have to take a look at other novels by Lescroart.

Joanne says

Not Lescroart's best. Wyatt Hunt returns as a character - he's a private investigator. He receives an anonymous text message one day asking, "Who killed your mother?" Turns out he's adopted, and never asked about his birth parents, so ends up investigating both who they were and his mother's death. So far so good, except then the plot turns silly, including Jim Jones, and Hunt has a nervous breakdown because he's always been so strong and has repressed all these memories of his early childhood, and...yawn.

Caitlin says

A lot of people weren't pleased when John Lescroart started writing a series about Wyatt Hunt, a San Francisco private investigator. After all, his Dismas Hardy/Abe Glitzsky books are so imminently satisfying who else could we want to know about?

I like Wyatt Hunt. I like the interconnections between the characters in both series. I like the acknowledgement that Dismas and Abe are aging, their lives are changing and settling down, and it might be time to tell some new stories. Since this is one of my all-time favorite series, I was happy to see that rather than letting the series wander off into insignificance and no fun, Lescroart expanded his world a bit, reached out into other characters with other stories. This keeps all of the characters and their stories fresh and prevents Lescroart of going the way of so many series writers who run out of ideas and turn their characters into caricatures (once again, Patricia Cornwell, I'm looking at you).

The Hunter is the third book in the Wyatt Hunt series and Mr. Lescroart is hitting his stride with these characters. He's always been one of the most talented of the writers of crime fiction combined with courtroom drama and has always been one of my personal favorite writers so I tend to like everything he writes, but can also acknowledge ups and downs. *The Hunter* is one of the best books he's written lately. Great characters, complicated and interesting plot that weaves together the protagonist's attempt to understand what happened to his mother and some 35-40 years of other interconnected murders. Once he throws Jonestown into the mix he's off to the races with you right along with him.

I recently read *A Thousand Lives* by Julia Scheeres. Ms. Scheeres got access to all of the newly released documents on Jonestown and wrote a book that fundamentally changed my thinking about not just

Jonestown, but about other similar gatherings of people of different kinds of faith. She elevated her subjects from the dregs of gullible ignorance to real breathing people with fundamental values and beliefs and hopes to make a better world. It was pretty breathtaking. It also gave me a look into how much The People's Temple was woven into the world of San Francisco and its politics during the brief part of the seventies before the trips to Guyana became permanent and the end became a forgone conclusion. Lescroart's inclusion of this bit of San Francisco history interlaced with the more expected crime fiction makes this book. As always Lescroart's San Francisco is real, palpable, and set within its rich historic context.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book and recommended highly to fans of crime fiction. Read this. You won't be disappointed.

Monica says

Another audio book that I listened to on a long work trip.

This one really kept me awake. A mystery, who done it type of trip, although I thought I knew the answer before Wyatt, private investigator, did it was well worth the journey with him to find out.

Interesting story lines were included featuring Jim Jones, adoption, child molestation, hippy philosophies etc.

The only bit of weirdness was the development of the relationship between Wyatt and ?Cassandra? (I can't remember her name, listened to a awhile ago) the love interest. He rescued her when he was a CPS worker, they started working together and boom! their lust and feelings for each other are uncontrollable? I may have missed something in the listening but I felt that this relationship developed a bit quickly in the book.

Recommended! The voices are well done on the audio book as well.

Carolyn E says

This story was all right, but it just seemed rather contrived. I just couldn't buy the romance between Wyatt Hunt and Tamara. I found the whole thing a bit far-fetched with its relationship to Jim Jones and his cult. I don't think I can really recommend it unless one is a serious fan of John Lescroart.

Gloria Feit says

The Hunt Club, the private investigative agency in San Francisco headed by Wyatt Hunt, has been the focus of several novels prior to this one, exciting mystery-thrillers. While the present volume is both a mystery with some elements of thriller, the reader has to painstakingly plod through a lot to find them. It basically is more of an introspective look at Hunt, his birth and his development as a mature person.

Hunt's mother was murdered when he was three, his father twice tried for the deed but not convicted because of hung juries. While on trial, he let Hunt go through the system, passing through several adoptive families before hitting success with the Hunts. Then one day, now a middle-aged man, he receives a text message: "How did your mother die?," thus setting him on a journey to rediscover his routes, with almost no memories

or information to guide him.

Uncovering strange and unexpected information along the way, Hunt follows a trail, often led by additional text messages, not to mention additional murders. Too often, there is much repetition, and the physical reaction by Hunt to the pressures seemed superficial, leaving one wondering if there is some basic physical ailment or just plain old anxiety affecting him. Perhaps some judicious editing, or even a rewrite, could have improved the novel, which in its present form is quite interesting but to this reader lacks the spark of the predecessors in the series. Perhaps that's what the author strove to achieve - - who knows? With that caveat, the novel is recommended.

Ed says

This, the third book in the Hunt Club series, is the best of the three - a definite winner.

The story opens when Wyatt Hunt gets a text message: "How did your mother die?" Wyatt is hooked because as an adopted child, he knows little or nothing about his birth parents, Kevin & Margaret Carson. He was adopted at six and has repressed most of his early memories.

As the texts keep coming he enlists the help of his staff, old buddy and SF Police inspector Devin Juhle as well as his contacts at the phone company to try to pin down the identity of the sender.

Through the adoption agency, he contacts Father Bernard who counseled his parents. Wyatt discovers his dad was put on trial for the murder of Margaret but found not guilty twice. That's why Wyatt was put into the Child Protective Services system and eventually adopted. Father Bernard also has a letter in which Kevin expresses his love and swears he had nothing to do with Margaret's murder.

At some point, Wyatt figures out that the texter is scared because the person who killed his mom is most likely still alive. Wyatt then uses his P.I. skills to track down anyone and everyone who might know something. The process is very painful and forces Wyatt to confront his repressed memories and feelings while uncovering connections that hopefully will lead him to the killer. There is also a romantic sub-plot that contributes to the story rather than detracts from it.

The story reaches a semi-conclusion, drags for a short time, then picks up speed and interest as Wyatt is able to tie up all the loose ends. The epilogue is slightly syrupy but satisfying, too.

I had a hard time putting this book down, finishing it in a couple days. I highly recommend it even if you haven't read the previous two books in the series and especially if you haven't discovered Lescroart yet.

James Thane says

John Lescroart is perhaps best known for his long-running series featuring San Francisco attorney Dismas Hardy and homicide detective Abe Glitsky. This is the third installment in his series featuring Wyatt Hunt, a San Francisco PI. Glitsky makes a token appearance or two in the book but is not featured prominently.

Hunt was orphaned at an early age and was then ultimately adopted by the Hunt family. They proved to be loving parents and Wyatt grew up to be a confident, intelligent, successful and well-adjusted adult, largely thanks to their efforts. As the book opens, Hunt gets a mysterious text message asking how his mother died.

It turns out that she was murdered when Wyatt was three. His natural father was tried twice for the crime, but both juries failed to convict him. His father then disappeared and no one was ever convicted of the murder. A series of baffling texts insists that the killer is still alive, but the texter refuses to identify himself or herself. He or she will not meet Wyatt and will not provide any additional information.

Wyatt becomes obsessed with learning the truth, although the trail is cold and obstacles abound. As he pushes his investigation, another murder occurs that would appear to be related to his search. This strengthens his belief that the killer is indeed still out there and poses a threat.

Hunt's discovery that his mother was murdered and that his father was a suspect has an enormous impact on him psychologically and physically at a time when his life has already been put into emotional turmoil by other developments. And the further he pushes his investigation the more he puts his own stability and perhaps even his own life at risk.

I'm a big fan of the Hardy/Glitsky series and I confess that I've never been quite as enamored of the Hunt books. They are, this one included, good reads and stories well told. But for me, at least, they suffer by comparison to the other series.

For me, this book also suffers by comparison to Michael Connelly's *The Last Coyote*, in which Harry Bosch, who was also orphaned at an early age, searches for *his* mother's killer years after the fact. The Connelly book is a classic--one of the best in the series, and while I enjoyed *The Hunter*, it's principal effect on me was to make me want to go back and re-read the Connelly book.

Viviane Crystal says

Wyatt Hunt is a private investigator who suddenly receives an enigmatic text: "How did your mother die?" Up to now, Wyatt knows he was adopted but has no idea who his parents were, let alone that his mother died by some mysterious event. So begins a journey of discovery, anxiety and trauma beyond one's wildest imaginations, with connections to the infamous Jim Jones, the cultist leader responsible for the deaths of thousands back in the late 20th century.

Wyatt has a bunch of great people working for him, all of whom want to be part of figuring out how Wyatt's mother died, a hunt that will turn even more desperate after one of their own group is murdered while investigating what at first seems a very vague clue. In the process, Wyatt will be seeking who is the unrevealed texter and wanting to know why someone higher up in the Police Department has ordered him to stop fishing around in police business, even though this case has been cold for forty years.

What's Wyatt to do about a letter supposedly written by his real father, a message which declares his own innocence in the demise of his wife? Little by little, the people Wyatt and his staff are interviewing remember a little more and a little more, just enough each time to make the story even more complex and more traumatic for Wyatt. One of the hallmarks of this novel is the authenticity by which Wyatt, normally a very together, orderly guy, suffers increasing mental, emotional, and physical distress and illness. However, a relationship with a significant other improves, even through the test of dire stress to which Wyatt succumbs

at one point in the story. A lifetime of coping with the unknown surfaces with horrific effects that it seems may or may not be healed with a solution to the multiple questions reached at many near dead-end points.

The Hunter is a taut, thrilling, complex and fascinating mystery about origins, cold case crime, and relationships gone awry because of hidden motives and secrets! Well done, John Lescroart!

Marla Madison says

I liked this story. The plot was excellent and traveled through a spectacular labyrinth of clues and characters. However, even though I've read all of Lescroart's books, I found the immediate dumping of Wyatt's current ladylove and hooking up with Tamara to be too abrupt and shallow. This type of thing is the danger in a series and it is difficult for an author to get it exactly right. IMHO, this time Lescroart didn't and the romance feels sudden and very conveniently contrived to this reader.

The rest was excellent and kept me engaged to the end.

Dani says

Lescroart is branching out a bit - Glitsky is only a minor player in this novel, and Hardy doesn't appear at all. Our protagonist is Wyatt Hunt, an adopted PI, who begins receiving mysterious text messages concerning his biological parents. It begins an international journey that spans 50 years and takes more of an emotional and mental toll than Wyatt could have imagined. I admired how this male author allowed the main character to struggle realistically with this information about his origins without portraying him as weak.
