



Anne Bonny's Wake: 9781612549040

Dick Elam

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Anne Bonny's Wake channels all the danger, intrigue, and thrills of a pirate's life at sea for a twentieth-century criminal mystery.

When a mysterious woman rises from the Atlantic on a calm May morning, the course of one man's peaceful sojourn is forever altered. *Anne Bonny's Wake*, a historical thriller from Dick Elam, delves into the treacherous waters of trust, instinct, and passion at the center of a conspiracy.

While commemorating his late wife's passing with a reflective sail along the North Carolina Intracoastal Waterway, the last thing Professor Herschel Barstow expects is to get caught up in drug smuggling. But when Maggie Adelaide Moore climbs aboard, spinning a dubious tale of misadventure, he decides to lend a cautious hand. Trouble follows when it becomes clear that Maggie isn't who she claims to be—though, then again, neither is Hersh.

Set during the early 1980s amid the Reagan administration's heightened government involvement in drug prohibition and regulation, suspected "dope" trafficking immediately sets a tone reminiscent of cop dramas of the era. There is some discrepancy regarding the exact timeline, with Hersh's initial logbook entry dated "5/24/82" and his last "5/26/81," with several days passing between, but pop culture references and prevalent attitudes, particularly regarding "grass," ring true. The action begins immediately, retaining an even, suspenseful pace throughout.

Almost all of the action occurs either on the water or dockside. Sailing enthusiasts will appreciate the authentic attention to detail provided as Hersh and Maggie make their way along the coast. From mainsails, jibs, and spinnakers to bilge blowers, winches, and tiller skills, nautical jargon and knowledge play an integral role in *Anne Bonny's Wake*. No prior knowledge of seafaring is necessary thanks to the brief descriptions and casual definitions thrown in.

As a criminal justice professor at Henry Campbell Black College, Hersh's voice is distinctive in its concise observations. His mind is always processing information and offering probabilities in a unique combination of shortened phrases and extended analyzing. As narration is entirely from Hersh's point of view, Maggie's motives, agenda, and feelings remain largely unknown. She seems to be a free-spirited foil with her relaxed attitude and bohemian style, and Hersh's attraction is immediate.

However, given Maggie's repeated lying, scheming, and manipulating, it is difficult to understand Hersh's attraction, aside from their physical connection and shared love of sailing. Even as Maggie's secrets slowly come to light, her willingness to put Hersh at risk makes her unsympathetic.

Woven throughout the book is intriguing lore surrounding the notorious pirate Anne Bonny, who likely traveled the same waterways hundreds of years earlier. *Anne Bonny's Wake* channels all the danger, intrigue, and thrills of a pirate's life at sea for a twentieth-century criminal mystery.

PALLAS GATES MCCORQUODALE (November 22, 2017)

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