

## The Assassin's Honor

**Robert N. Macomber**

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*The fun and adventure abound in this historical thriller set on the high seas.*

Robert N. Macomber sets sail on Commander Peter Wake's twelfth sea adventure, this time cruising his venerable US Navy hero into Caribbean intrigue between the United States, Spain, and Imperial Germany.

It's 1892. After a frustrating Office of Naval Intelligence assignment, Wake is enjoying smooth sailing in command of the USS *Bennington*. Then he's ordered to report to Admiral John Grimes Walker, commander of the North Atlantic Squadron, at Key West Naval Station. Wake is told an American citizen may have been murdered while aboard an American ship. More intrigue: the victim had connections to expansionist Germans in Venezuela, and he carried a coded message.

Wake is soon immersed in a conspiracy involving a rebel leader in Mexico's Caste War, but there's more danger, which turns personal. *Bennington* must make a high-speed run to prevent the assassination of Wake's friend, José Martí, legendary leader of Cuba's independence movement. And Wake learns that his daughter, Useppa, was recently engaged to Mario Cano, who also has connections to the Cuban freedom fighters, all of whom are targets for the Spanish.

There's enough backstory to give new readers familiarity with this multibook saga. For example, Wake is an outsider among the "blue water aristocracy," which gives veracity to the sparks he strikes with *Bennington*'s supercilious executive officer, a Naval Academy graduate. His trusty Irish bosun, Rork, is cliché—the Irish brogue's a hoot—but a great foil. Martí is drawn empathetically, and Wake's new love, Spanish widow Doña Maria Ana Maura y Abad, doubtless foreshadows excitement circa 1898. In that vein, Teddy Roosevelt makes a well-sketched cameo.

The novel moves along at flank speed, albeit with minimal sea action. Macomber's précis on Victorian-era Tampa as he delves into Cuban influence in early Florida will intrigue. And Macomber is always good for esoterica, handily filling in background details.

When Macomber's likable old salt is in action, there's always fun stuff from an era when "canvas aboard men-o-war was going the way of the dinosaurs."

GARY PRESLEY (Winter 2016)

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