



## Rock with Wings

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## **Rock with Wings** Anne Hillerman

Navajo Tribal cops Jim Chee and Bernadette Manuelito, and their mentor, the legendary Lieutenant Joe Leaphorn, investigate two perplexing cases in this exciting Southwestern mystery from the New York Times bestselling author of *Spider Woman's Daughter*

Doing a good deed for a relative offers the perfect opportunity for Sergeant Jim Chee and his wife, Officer Bernie Manuelito, to get away from the daily grind of police work. But two cases will call them back from their short vacation and separate them—one near Shiprock, and the other at iconic Monument Valley.

Chee follows a series of seemingly random and cryptic clues that lead to a missing woman, a coldblooded thug, and a mysterious mound of dirt and rocks that could be a gravesite. Bernie has her hands full managing the fallout from a drug bust gone wrong, uncovering the origins of a fire in the middle of nowhere, and looking into an ambitious solar energy development with long-ranging consequences for Navajo land.

Under the guidance of their mentor, retired Lieutenant Joe Leaphorn, Bernie and Chee will navigate unexpected obstacles and confront the greatest challenge yet to their skills, commitment, and courage.

## **Rock with Wings Details**

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Author : Anne Hillerman

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# From Reader Review Rock with Wings for online ebook

## Terri says

I was excited to see another of the Hillerman mysteries come out, especially after reading the Anne Hillerman's first novel that followed her father's story line. However, this book did not live up to my expectations or the series. There are 2 separate stories going on, which isn't unusual. But the way the stories proceeded, or dragged around, made it difficult to follow either one. The conclusions, of course, came with a both stories having a connection. But that connection was awkward as was the conclusions for each of the two story lines, kind of like the convoluted solutions that Joe Leaphorn counseled against. I was pleased to know that Anne was keeping her father's legacy going, but not at this price.

Jan 2017 - Re-read of this book. My opinion didn't change. Anne Hillerman tries to carry on with her father's tales of the Navajo policemen, but they are more like paper dolls. I think Anne should write her own mystery series, create her own characters, and then she can breathe the life into them, not just try to keep these characters alive.

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## Barbara says

Anne Hillerman is following in her father - Tony Hillerman's - footsteps, carrying on with his Navaho Tribal Police series. This is the second book Anne Hillerman has written for the long series.

As the story opens Navaho Tribal Police Officers Jim Chee and Bernadette Manuelito, recently married, are taking a vacation in Monument Valley when fate steps in. Jim ends up helping a relative in Monument Valley while temporarily working security for a movie company. And Bernie returns to their home in Shiprock for an urgent situation involving her mom and sister.

While in Shiprock Bernie decides to resume her police duties. She had previously arrested a suspiciously nervous young man for attempted bribery during a traffic stop and she wants to find out what he was hiding. Bernie is dismayed to learn that there were no drugs in his car and that the FBI wants the tribal police to back off. Bernie can't let it go, however, and continues to investigate the fellow.

Meanwhile Jim finds a suspicious 'grave' in Monument Valley, which he suspects is a publicity stunt arranged by the movie company to advertise their zombie film. The movie company honchos deny knowing anything about the grave but Jim continues to inquire into the matter. Before long an employee of the movie company is murdered in a hotel suite and Jim investigates the crime.

As Bernie and Jim pursue their separate inquiries each meets up with various suspicious characters that need looking into. They both turn to their mentor - 'The Legendary Lieutenant' Joe Leaphorn - for assistance. This is difficult because Joe is recovering from a bullet to the head and can't speak - but he's able to use a computer to assist his mentees.

I liked the setting of the book, in the beautiful mountains of the American Southwest, and enjoyed the tidbits of Navaho culture sprinkled through the story. The dual plots, however, were confused and less than compelling. By the end of the book the crimes that Bernie and Jim were investigating didn't ring true and I didn't really care who did what. There was an interesting array of characters, though, from Bernie's loving

mom and alcoholic young sister to sleazy movie makers to Navaho elders who cherish the land.

For me this was just a so-so book but I might try another Anne Hillerman book in the future.

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### **Carl says**

This is a decent mystery story but it's stripped of the soul that set Tony Hillerman's mysteries apart from the rest of the pack. Two of the major characters in the Tony's series were the Southwest scenery and Navajo culture. Both are almost completely gone from this novel. It could be a generic mystery series set anywhere and that's what is so crushing about reading this theoretical continuation of the Chee/Leaphorn series. Early on, Jim Chee visits Monument Park and what would have been a marvelous and lyrical description of the countryside is a sparse description that befits a Denny's, not a natural wonder. Chee's reverence for nature and beauty don't exist at all in this book. Don't expect any of that here, because being Navajo is suddenly a sideline for Chee, not his main purpose. The Navajo culture and residents of Hillerman's world were all treated with respect and described lyrically. Anne has transformed her major characters into shallow buffoons and characters from a Lifetime movie and the Navajo culture barely makes an appearance.

I said in my review of Anne's first attempt at continuing the series that she had no idea of the character of Jim Chee and that continues here. She made a brilliant move to increase the presence of Bernie and make her the central figure in this novel, but Chee is still present and a bad sitcom husband. The incredibly lame plot device of having Leaphorn shot in the head, which occurred in the previous novel, once again allows her to easily escape having to accurately display the Legendary Lieutenant. Louisa, Leaphorn's girlfriend and now caretaker, is written like a spinster aunt, not a real person.

The one advantage to reading these novels is that you realize the genius of Tony Hillerman and how much the mystery world misses his writing. When Hillerman died, so did Jim Chee and Joe Leaphorn. It would have been a great move by his daughter, who is a competent writer, to write mysteries on her own, rather than write these pale imitations.

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### **Ivonne Rovira says**

Anne Hillerman, coming off the great success of *Spider Woman's Daughter*, a continuation of the series begun by her father, Edgar Award-winning author Tony Hillerman, returns with her sophomore effort, *Rock with Wings*, the 20th novel in the series that regaled readers with the adventures of Sergeant Jim Chee of the Navaho Tribal Police and his mentor, Lieutenant Joe Leaphorn.

As in *Spider Woman's Daughter*, the action concentrates mostly on Chee and his wife, fellow officer Bernadette Manuelito, rather than the now-retired and recovering Leaphorn, who, despite not having recovered his speech yet, nonetheless continues to advise Chee and Manuelito. The latter, especially, is still reeling from witnessing the attempted murder of Leaphorn in *Spider Woman's Daughter*, and from Leaphorn's slow recovery.

In *Spider Woman's Daughter*, Chee investigates a grave found at the site of a B-grade zombie flick while Manuelito investigates a late-night stop of an erratic driver that turns into something more. While the novel's serviceable, *Spider Woman's Daughter* suffers from the absence of Leaphorn, who is reduced to a very minor character. Neither investigations really prove all that exciting; in addition, Manuelito's investigation relies on a clichéd villain. However, at one point, Manuelito muses, "In the future, perhaps the lieutenant's

insights could provide even more help. Nice to be a team again — even though the dynamics had changed.” Here’s to hoping that Ms. Hillerman keeps that promise and produces another novel as good as *Spider Woman’s Daughter*.

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### **Bill Mackela says**

I just love what Ms. Hillerman has done with this series. She has kept it authentic, but at the same time, she has put her signature on it. She doesn’t just duplicate the style of her father, Tony Hillerman. She has enlarged the franchise by featuring Navajo Nation Police Officer Bernie Manuelito. Bernie is married to Jim Chee, who is also a Navajo Cop, and she is friends with Lieutenant Joe Leaphorn. In Ms. Hillerman’s first book, *Spider Woman’s Daughter*, Leaphorn is shot in the head, and nearly dies. In this book he is beginning to be able to communicate again. He is starting to rejoin the team. It looks like Ms. Hillerman has the ability to continue this fine series, on her own terms, and not lose any fans on the way.

I have always enjoyed reading this series, because when I am reading these books, I feel like I am living the slow life of a Navajo. I feel more connected to my surroundings, and to the people around me. I try not to rush, to take it all in, because I know that this book I’m reading will end soon, and then I am back to living in this white man’s world.

I give *Rock with Wings* 4 1/2 Stars out of 5, and A Big Thumbs Up! If you have liked the Leaphorn & Chee series in the past, you will love what Ms. Hillerman has done to keep it alive, even though her father is gone. If you have never read this series, but are intrigued by the idea of seeing life through different eyes, then take the plunge, you may really like it.

I received a Digital Review Copy of this book from the publisher.

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### **Paul says**

I’m a big Tony Hillerman fan so it pains me to say...Anne has already surpassed her father in just her second book.

She has Chee and Bernie working two different plotlines only to have them merge unexpectedly at the end. She keeps the level of "Who dunnit?" suspense high throughout the book while developing our favorite characters. What I liked best is that Anne has upped her game in including the native culture touches that made her dad's writing so enjoyable. She even includes a short Navajo glossary at the end.

Great book...can't wait for her next!

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### **Tina Cipolla says**

Passable mystery novel.

Cons: too many things going on, too many concurrent story lines, too easy to lose track of everything and stop caring. Also not too big of a fan of the main character, she seemed self-righteous which I found

annoying. The nefarious characters are too shallow. You have no idea what motivates them and that is because there are too many "bad guys" and so no attempt is made to explore how they became the bad guys they are. It would have been better if there had been only one bad actor and we needed to find out who the bad guy was and why he did the things he did.

Pros: good sense of place and I liked the way the location of the story was almost like a character in itself. All loose ends are tied up at the end. There is almost nothing that is left unresolved.

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### **Kathy says**

Tony Hillerman was one of my favorite authors. That his daughter Anne is carrying on his Leaphorn and Chee series is a fitting tribute to such a fine author. Hillerman could evoke such a sense of place that you could feel the wonders of the Navajo reservation as you were reading. His daughter Anne is able to do this as well.

Anne Hillerman has been able to keep up the continuity of the Leaphorn/Chee stories by focusing on Jim Chee's wife, Officer Bernadette Manuelito. She is able to tell the stories from a more feminine point of view as she deals with her aging mother and rebellious younger sister. Rock With Wings also spent quite a bit of time with Officer Jim Chee as he assisted his cousin in the Monument Valley region of the reservation as well as helping out with the substation there and problems with a movie set. Their mentor, Lieutenant Leaphorn, also was able to assist with their assignments.

Rock With Wings is the Navajo name for the amazing Ship Rock monument. We went and visited Ship Rock this past Spring. So spectacular! I'm always looking for Leaphorn and Chee in the 4 corners region.

I really enjoyed Rock With Wings. I found all of the story lines to be interesting, contemporary and culturally relevant. Anne Hillerman is a good storyteller and she knows the area well. I would recommend that readers do read the entire series however Rock With Wings could also be read as a stand alone.

Highly recommend! Rock with Wings is available in May.

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### **Jan C says**

Probably 3 1/2?. It was an enjoyable read. Still not quite up to her father's level. But I heard there was a new one coming out in the spring.

I liked it well enough. Read most of it in the last two days. And I think it picked up when I was focusing on it.

It is nice to visit with "old friends " even if it is with another author at the helm.

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## **Linda says**

Ms. Hillerman's descriptions of the Four Corners area are so beautiful. In fact, they made me cry a little bit because I miss living in the area. I recognized all the towns, highways, and scenery she described. But I did not buy into the several mysteries. The Navajo Reservation is huge, bigger than many states, so I did not buy into the main mystery having to do with needing one elderly Navajo's tiny piece of land. So, this is a fun book if you love the area. and the protagonists are likeable. But the mysteries...well, I thought they could use a little work.

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## **Diana says**

This review brings me no pleasure to write, but if I can save even one person from experiencing the hot mess that "Rock With Wings" is, I have performed a kindness. This is the 20th book in the great Leaphorn/Chee series that was created by Tony Hillerman. And what a wonderful series it was to experience the great Southwest with Leaphorn & Chee as our guide! Unfortunately, the 18th & final book by Mr. Hillerman was the last book that he wrote & Mr. Hillerman's daughter wrote the 19th & 20th in the series. The 19th book was not awful, but had some major problems. This book: "Rock With Wings" is a convoluted & amateurish attempt to continue the gravy train that the series has provided to the Hillerman family. Problems with the book include: way too many plotlines that are so "out there" that the author uses the lazy writing device of having a character explain the plot & recap it at the end. And then there are the characters: flat, boring & almost cartoonish in their ridiculousness. Do your self a favor & start with Book One in the series & read through Book 18. Whatever you do, stay away from book 20.

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## **Carol Jean says**

I don't know...nice atmosphere, someone died at some point, and there was a big black dog... Something went wrong here, as nothing in the books seems to have caught my attention or imagination. I think the focus was too spread out and the proliferation of coincidence a bit Dickensian.

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## **Karen Cox says**

This is the second book by Anne Hillerman, daughter of the great Tony Hillerman, continuing his stories of the Navajo Tribal Police, focusing on Jim Chee and his wife, the delightful Bernadette Manuelito. This one has the Manuelitos vacation to Monument Valley interrupted by a family issue, requiring Chee to continue to Utah and Manuelito to return to Shiprock, and from there proceeding with two separate stories. Hillerman has the same knack for setting that her father did, and the landscape is, as always in books set in the high desert, as much a character as the humans. The main characters are, as always, engaging. Anne likes Bernie a little better than her husband, so that Bernie is a more developed character. Bernie's mother and sister are important characters and the dynamics between them is entertaining. Chee's character is less developed in this novel, but his plot is actually more interesting.

There are some negatives. She relies a little too much on coincidences to resolve the mysteries, which is more realistic but less interesting to read, She also repeats one suspenseful motif from the previous book.

That said, it's a fun way to spend an evening and definitely a good summer mystery.

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## Carmen says

Actually, this was good. I was pleasantly surprised. I thought this was a stronger novel than Anne Hillerman's first attempt, *Spider Woman's Daughter*. She is improving as an author. And I think she is a good writer. She is not disgracing her father's name or anything. I wasn't invested so much in Hillerman's Navajo mysteries, but I know I won't touch "fake" Spenser novels with a ten-foot-pole, so I know how longtime fans of the series feel. However, if you wish Leaphorn, Chee, and Manuelito had more adventures together, Anne Hillerman is making that happen and I have to say I think she is doing a good job.

The opening chapter was very good. Bernie stops a man on suspicion of drunk driving and he is very nervous and sweaty. She can find no evidence of drugs or alcohol, but he has boxes of dirt in his trunk. He offers her money to let him go.

The mystery has begun!

I think Anne Hillerman crafted a good mystery here. Like her father's work, this book ties together many different plots and mysteries together. Bernie is working on a few cases, her husband Jim Chee is working on some cases, and everything dovetails nicely together in the end.

Anne Hillerman has changed the flavor of the Navajo Mysteries a bit. Fair warning. For one thing, it is a pretty much female-dominated book now, 90% of it coming from Bernie's point of view. It also focuses more on domestic issues.

TO BE FAIR, I want to say that Tony Hillerman was also relationship-focused. He dedicated a big part of his mysteries to both Leaphorn and Chee's romantic developments and entanglements. He really made the men's romantic relationships and important and gripping part of his books.

But Anne Hillerman takes this one step farther, saddling Bernie with an elderly ailing mother and a younger layabout sister. Between these domestic dramas and her marriage with Chee, the book has a more homelife-based feel than when Hillerman was penning them.

I don't think that's bad. I really enjoyed it. But other people might find this kind of focus on home-life to be mundane or unexciting.

Now let's get to the criticism. I don't know if I really like Bernie. And I liked her when Hillerman wrote her, so it must be Anne Hillerman's doing that we are butting heads now.

1.) I don't like how Bernie treats her younger sister. This is my main beef.

*Someday, she'd like to feel proud of her sibling, happy for her accomplishments instead of ashamed. Would that day ever come?*

Fuck you, Bernie. FUCK YOU. Yes, her sister Darleen has problems. She's a high school dropout who doesn't have her GED yet. She drinks and in this book is arrested for underage drinking. Her main



responsibility is taking care of her elderly mom and she shirks that duty.

But on the other hand, Darleen is a great artist. She has a passion for art and wants to go to art school. She loves her sister and her mother, and it's probably very hard for her to be burdened with her mother's 24/7 care at such a young age.

Bernie, instead of being a sympathetic older sister who listens to Darleen and encourages her to pursue art school, takes a different tack.

She yells at her sister, acts disappointed and angry with her all the time, cuts off Darleen's attempts at conversation and explanation, and pisses all over her sister's dreams of going to art school.

I know it's rough. It's rough on both of them dealing with an aging mother who needs help in daily life. It's frustrating for Bernie to have a sister who is going through some sort of rebellion stage that Bernie can't understand. But it's rough on Darleen, too, and I was constantly wishing that Bernie would have more compassion and understanding towards her little sister. Sometimes people go through rough patches before getting their lives together and I wish Bernie was more supportive and helpful rather than judgmental and harsh. I can understand *why* she is so judgmental and harsh (one notable plot point is her and Chee's rare vacation being cut short when her mom needs help and Darleen has bailed out), but it annoyed me nonetheless.

2.) Bernie - who fought so hard to get Chee - never tells Chee "I love you" when they are on the phone or when they are doing stuff. It's making him sad. I wish she was a little more generous in her affection. I understand it - I'm not very big on using "The L Word" myself - but her husband is a sad little puppy sometimes and I found myself wishing she was a little more affectionate with him.

3.) Perverts. Ever since Anne Hillerman has taken over writing this series, she has been including more sexual crimes and sexual harassment and I don't like it. Murder is fine, but reading about rapists, child molesters and other types of sexual predators makes me upset.

This book features a very icky man who preys on teenage girls and reading about him was making me cringe. I mean, sure (view spoiler) but that doesn't negate the fact that I had to read about what he was doing to girls and his disgustingness.

Is her writing realistic? Undoubtedly. The world is full of sick fucks. Her inclusion of stuff like workplace sexual harassment and sexual predators is, of course, probably very realistic. But it makes me upset and sickened to read about. I don't enjoy it. If she keeps this up I will stop reading her books. My soul just can't take it.

This isn't GRAPHIC sexual crimes here, not really sick stuff being super-described or anything, but it's enough to be unsettling (at least to this reader). It's a sore spot for me, what can I say.

4.) Last note - this is very minor. Bernie has TERRIBLE taste in food.

*Bernie looked at her salad, carefully pushing the strawberries to one side and the pecans to the other. She tried a bite of the lettuce and a little red tomato and found them acceptable. Chee would have appreciated this fancy dish, she thought, but give her iceberg lettuce and ranch dressing any time.*

Ugh. Really? And she won't even touch the pasta dish, which frankly sounded delicious to me. I just can't

deal with her food tastes in this novel. LOL Totally a small thing.

Tl;dr - Anne Hillerman is actually doing a decent job of continuing her father's series. Good for her. She's adding her own special flavor to the mix - of course - but it's a solid mystery and very Navajo. Some things she chooses to do I really like (for instance, adding in more of a home-life for the characters and being unafraid to take risks) but other things are turning me off (such as her tendency to include some disgusting sex crime or harassment of whatever nature to her books).

I would definitely pick up another book of hers.

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## **Jean says**

Officer Bernie Manuelito and Sergeant Jim Chee start a brief vacation when two cases cause them to forgo the vacation. Chee has a case of a missing women and a mysterious mound of dirt and rocks. Bernie is managing the fallout from a drug bust gone wrong. She uncovers the origins of a fire in the middle of nowhere. She is also looking into an ambitious solar energy development with consequences for the Navajos. All the while she is dealing with her sister's drinking problem.

The book is well written and researched as to Navajo culture. The descriptions of the four corners area are excellent. Anne has kept the book authentic, but she has put her own signature on it. She is not duplicating her father's style but applying her own style to the series. She features Bernie Manuelito more than Chee or Leaphorn. She has managed to keep the flavor of her father's stories while inserting her own. In this story the author had a bit of a problem with the plot. It appeared a bit formulated. Her prior book had a better developed plot. I am looking forward to seeing what she does with the next book.

I read this as an audiobook downloaded from Audible. The book is about ten and half hours long. Christina Delaine does a good job narrating the story. Delaine is a voice over artist and audiobook narrator.

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