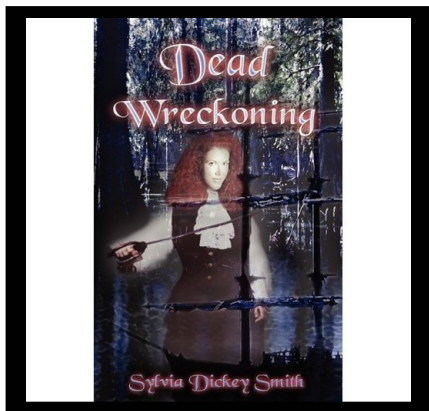


Dead Wreckoning
Sylvia Dickey Smith
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252 pages



Dead Wreckoning is the third book in the Sidra Smart series. Author Sylvia Dickey Smith describes and develops her protagonist so well, that those who have not read the prequels will quickly feel as though the private investigator is an old friend. It is a time for fresh starts. Sidra has just received her P.I. license and is ready to take on cases without the assistance of her friend and mentor, George Léger. After 30 years in a stifling marriage to a pastor, Sidra is newly divorced and recently engaged to her adoring boyfriend. She has inherited her late brother's detective agency and is rebuilding her office after a firebombing.

A former client, Durwood, visits Sidra and presents a potential case. Durwood's friend, Boo Murphy, has been accused of murdering her cousin's husband, a man named Zeke. Boo has a history with Zeke, as she once fired her gun in his direction. With the climbing costs of rebuilding her office, Sidra has no plans to take on a pro-bono case. Nevertheless, the plight of Boo, the cantankerous senior, catches Sidra's interest. Especially when Boo recounts a fantastic story about seeing an old, lost pirate ship in a Texas swamp and climbing aboard the once sunken vessel. The sheriff doesn't care about pirate treasure or lost ships...he is out to catch a murderer and is certain Boo is the killer.

In her quest to clear Boo of homicide, Sidra must find the lost schooner. Along the way, she uncovers evidence that her mentor George Léger is involved in illegal activities, as well as centuries-old family clan wars, smugglers and the spirit image of eighteenth century pirate queen, Mary Anne Radcliff, aboard a ghost ship. Throw in narrow escapes after several attempts on her life and you have an exciting, page-turning thriller.

Many modern mystery writers use brutal violence, sex, and coarse language to hold readers' interest. Sylvia Dickey Smith has no need for such. She keeps us captivated from beginning to end with her unique humor, knowledge of South East Texas and its history, well-drawn characters, ample conflict, and dialogue realistically suited to her setting. She has penned an entertaining and satisfying read that is sure to keep her fans happy, while undoubtedly gaining her many new admirers. I highly recommend Dead Wreckoning and I look forward to reading more from this author.

Reviewed by William Potter for Reader's Choice Book Reviews

Sylvia Dickey Smith Joined Books In Sync In October 2009

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