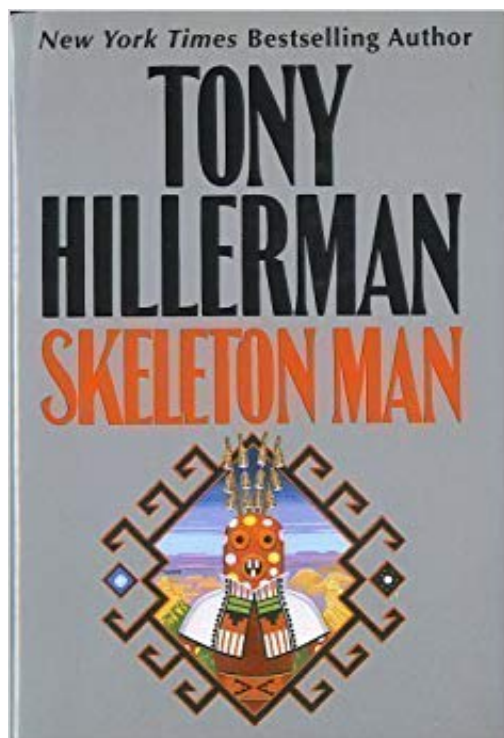


## **Skeleton Man** by Tony Hillerman



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**Author:** Tony Hillerman

**Book title:** Skeleton Man

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Leaphorn comes out of retirement



## Reviews of the **Skeleton Man** by Tony Hillerman

Modred

True to form, this is a great "who done it" and Hillerman kept us in suspense even while revealing details early on. It is anticlimactic, though, because of the time he spent after the climax fleshing out his characters' lives (a good bad idea...as the case may be because OUR lives have become intertwined with theirs!).

Thanks, Tony, for all the great reading! RIP!

Siatanni

I loved this book partly because Bernadette Mauuelito has a strong presence in it. Bernie is an admirable young woman - a good tracker, a shrewd investigator, a traditional Navajo, a lover of dessert plants, capable with firearms and quick thinking in a crisis. And Sergeant Chee is about to marry her, finally, putting an end to his long, difficult quest for love - as well as the reader's long

wait for these two to get together.

Retired police lieutenant Leaphorn figures in this tale mainly as a gatherer of information for Chee and his Hopi friend Cowboy Dashee.

The plot involves several lost diamond stories - and a white woman's quest to prove her parentage through DNA so she can claim a huge inheritance.

We hear about lots of religious myths, including that of the Skeleton Man, a bloody but well-intentioned spirit who taught the Hopi not to fear death.

Best of all, the story has great momentum, culminating with a wildly dramatic scene in the Grand Canyon.

This is one of my favorite books in a great series.

Pad

There are few places in the U.S. with as many legends as the tribal lands of the West. In Skeleton Man, Tony Hillerman weaves a fictional tale around a real occurrence-the collision of two commercial planes above the Grand Canyon in 1956.

John Clarke is a diamond merchant with a cache of diamonds chained to his wrist. One of these precious blue-white gems is intended for his fiancée, who is pregnant with their child. While flying home, his plane collides with another over the Grand Canyon, and bodies and debris rain down for miles. Clarke's father refuses to acknowledge his son's fiancée or child. Years later, Clarke's daughter, Joanna Craig, sets out to prove her paternity and to claim the inheritance she has been denied. The discovery of two diamonds brings her to the Grand Canyon in an effort to find her father's arm (which legend says was seen chained to the case of diamonds). Her search is not so much for the diamonds, but for DNA. But there are also those who have a lot to lose if Joanna is successful, and they set about trying to obstruct her investigation.

Jim Chee, Bernie Manuelito, Cowboy Dashee and Joe Leaphorn are all pulled into the case in varying degrees. They must wade through legends, traditions and 277 miles of Grand Canyon to solve this mystery. Some Hillerman books are better, and some efforts worse-but I enjoy any effort that educates the reader on Native American traditions (which Skeleton Man does provide). Also the information about the Grand Canyon is fascinating. However, it's hokey to think that an arm bone can be found in the canyon decades after a crash.

One of the subplots is the impending marriage between Officer Jim Chee and spunky Officer Bernie Manuelito. Jim Chee has been engaged twice before, and as Manuelito starts to get cold feet, we wonder if the third time will really be a charm for Chee.

Tony Hillerman continues to be one of my favorite mystery writers, and fans will enjoy Skeleton Man despite some flaws.

Sagda

Beautifully written, very knowledgeable about Navajo culture and history, a wonderful series of books. A series of detective stories, detective/ mystery stories set in the huge Navajo reservation, about two Navajo policemen. Read them in order.

Uleran

This is an engaging story that makes one wonder if the series might be better named "Leaphorn, Manuelito and Chee". Jim seems to continue to struggle with his emotional side while Bernie moves on to solve the mystery and save the day. Good on ya, Bernie!!

Heraly

Skeleton Man starts out about a young Hopi Indian man (Billy Tuve) who is arrested when he tries to pawn a \$20,000 flawless diamond at a pawn shop for \$20. He is accused of robbing and killing a jewelry store operator. Tuve says he received the diamond from an old man in the bottom of the Grand Canyon many years ago. Tuve's story about the diamond sparks an interest to a couple of different people for different, yet the same reasons.

One is Joanna Craig, whose father (John Clarke) was on an airplane that crashed over the Grand Canyon 50 years ago. He was a jewelry carrier and was bringing a caseload of diamonds attached to his wrist. One of the diamonds was supposedly for an engagement ring for Joanna's mother. Joanna needs to prove that John Clarke was indeed her father by way of DNA so that she can revenge her mother, who was denied by Clarke's own father. She travels to find the arm bone of her deceased father 50 years after the plane crash.

Another man Dan Plymale wants to stop Craig from finding the arm. Plymale's law firm represents a foundation that is the heir of the Clarke estate. It is stated in Clarke's father's will that any descendants of John Clarke will receive his great monetary inheritance. If there aren't any descendants then Plymale's foundation would receive the money.

So basically it's a race to the Grand Canyon to see who can find the missing bone first. Finding the diamonds attached to the bone would just be an added extra bonus.

This was my first Tony Hillerman book. For a mystery, I found it to be somewhat predictable. The first chapter threw me totally off because when you start to read it, it's as if you've started in the middle of the book. After reading the whole book, only then did I realize the first chapter is actually the end of the story. I also found there to be a lot of repetition in the story. Sure there are different characters that need to know the premise of what is going on, but we as readers didn't need to hear it over and over in detail.

Skeleton Man also left many things unresolved. For instance, one of the main characters attempted a murder by shooting a man and it is pretty much shrugged off. Another instance is when two main characters are introduced towards the end of the book but have already met in the beginning of the book. Did the author forget about this? There are just too many loose ends in this book to even get around to. Even though this book is put out as a mystery there really isn't much mystery to it. I would say it's more of a predictable adventure with not too many twists and turns.

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