Author: Tony Hillerman

Title: Dance Hall of the Dead

Genre: Mystery fiction

Publication Date: 1973

Number of Pages: 166

Geographical Setting: Navajo and Zuni Indian reservations in New Mexico

Time Period: present day (1973)

Series (If applicable): second book in the Joe Leaphorn and Jim Chee mysteries

Plot Summary:

Navajo Tribal policeman Lt. Joe Leaphorn finds himself trying to solve a case involving two missing boys, one a Zuni Indian and one a Navajo. The Zuni boy may be dead and the Navajo boy may be the murderer. But Leaphorn thinks there is more to it than that simple conclusion and he must investigate all the avenues of this puzzling case; avenues that lead to an archeological dig as well as the strange customs of the Zuni.

Native American cultures and myths add another layer of intrigue to this atmospheric mystery set on the reservations in New Mexico. Lt. Leaphorn must also deal with the politics and conflicts between the various areas of law enforcement involved (Navajo police, Zuni police, FBI), all while trying to track down the whereabouts of the missing Navajo boy, who just may be the key that unlocks the entire case.

Subject Headings:

Navajo Tribal Police; Navajo detectives; Murder investigation; Murder suspects; Navajo Indians; Criminal investigation; Leaphorn, Joe; Zuni Indians; New Mexico; Police -- Southwestern States; Indian reservation police; Mystery stories
Appeal:

spiritual, secretive, religious, enigmatic, perplexing, compelling, thoughtful, contemplative, reasoning, mannered, willful, rational, detailed, shrewd

3 terms that best describe this book:

Mystical; Deliberate; Rich with detail and description

Similar Authors and Works:

Fiction

1) **Death Walker** (*Ella Clah mysteries series, volume 2*) by Aimee & David Thurlo

   Ella Clah, a Special Investigator with the Navajo Tribal Police, must track down the killer of the Navajo tribe’s cultural and spiritual teachers.

   Similarities: Navajo Tribal Police, murder investigation, spiritual and cultural emphasis.

2) **Shadow Play** (*Laura Winslow mysteries series, volume 6*) by David Cole

   Private detective Laura Winslow investigates a possible murder-suicide of a Navajo. The mystery also draws in her lover, a police officer, and secrets are exposed as they further delve into the case.

   Similarities: Navajo characters, murder investigation, tribal customs and myths.

3) **Spirit Sickness** (*Emmett Quanah Parker mysteries series, volume 2*) by Kirk Mitchell

   Supernatural beings are tied to the killing of a Navajo cop and his wife as the murder is investigated by Bureau of Indian Affairs officer Emmet Parker and an FBI agent.

   Similarities: Navajo police, murder investigation, supernatural and spiritual angle.

Non-Fiction

**Diné: A History of the Navajos** by Peter Iverson; featuring photographs by Monty Roessel

A general narrative history of the Navajos from their origins to the present.

Similarities: Navajo culture and history

**The Unquiet Grave: the FBI and the Struggle for the Soul of Indian Country** by Steve Hendricks

Details the conflict between the FBI and Native Americans concerning a murder of a Native American activist in 1976.

Similarities: Native Americans, law enforcement, conflict of cultures

**The Zuni Enigma** by Nancy Yaw Davis

Examines the culture of the Zuni Indians of New Mexico

Similarities: Zuni culture and history

Name: Valerie Kyriakopoulos