

The Edge of Time: A South Seas Sailing Adventure

Dan Feltham

Anybody who likes fiction must continually make a trade-off: suspend disbelief, in exchange for being entertained

The Edge Of Time gets off to a leisurely start, introducing characters who are easy to believe except that they have amazingly California style lives. Handsome, affluent, successful, trouble-free. The novel does not even hint of conflicts.

Next comes the leap into the unknown. A sudden plot twist that makes the reader lurch as violently as a being buffeted by a wild storm in a small boat. The plot has picked up an added dimension - quite literally - and the reader finds himself on a trip to an unknown destination and with a crew that's not on the manifest.

There is a temptation to jump ship. One might conclude, this is too weird, and simply get off. But at this point you have bought into the characters, and you go along a chapter at a time to see what happens. Now the intricacies of the plot start to wind together, and the reader finds himself more and more drawn in, attempting to anticipate how the intertwined storylines will resolve themselves.

All along the way you benefit quite a bit from the author's expertise. A great deal about modern sailing ships, the sailing ships of a couple of centuries ago, and the islands of French Polynesia, then and now. He's not James Michener - modern readers want it to be faster paced - but he certainly provides enough background to make the action plausible.

Feltham feels obliged to make some commentary on the modern day. Common sense to people of our generation, though perhaps right-wing rants in the eyes of a more statist younger generation. It could just be the author's statement of tribal identity, a nostalgia for the California that used to be, as he brings the reader to a place and time that resonates better with his younger self and his own character.

The book offers a few hours diversion, some interesting history and a perspective on the modern scene. Time well spent.