



## Angel's Head

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ANGEL'S HEAD is John Smolens' second novel. Like his first, it is set in New England and combines a convincing sense of place with a story of murder and suspense.

Angel's Head is a fictional island off the elbow of Cape Cod. Its fragile economy depends on summer tourism. The island's main tourist attraction is an inn featuring a stunning ocean view and excellent fishing. The inn is run by three generations of the Flood family: Rachel, a young woman dealing with the trials of adolescence; her mother, Anne, the boss of the operation; and Anne's father, Emerson, one of the island's old timers. Other characters central to the story include Randall Flood, Anne's brother, whose mind was impaired when he was run down by a motorboat some twenty years before; Cyrus, Anne's husband in name only (and not Rachel's father); Mark Emmons, a reporter who has been away from the island for about twenty years; and Elliot Bedrosian, a highly controversial developer who tried unsuccessfully to build a bridge between Angel's Head and the mainland twenty years ago.

The action revolves around a grizzly murder in which the victim is gutted like a fish. The suspects are many. So are the motives, ranging from resentment over the bridge controversy and revenge for Randall's injury to jealousy and abandonment. There is a second murder and then a third attempt. The crimes are solved and relationships resolved. The island goes on, but not as before.

Throughout the novel, Smolens demonstrates an impressive command of language and the ability to make even minor characters come alive. He also draws readers into the collective life of the island, enabling them to share with its inhabitants the power of its isolated beauty and sadness.

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