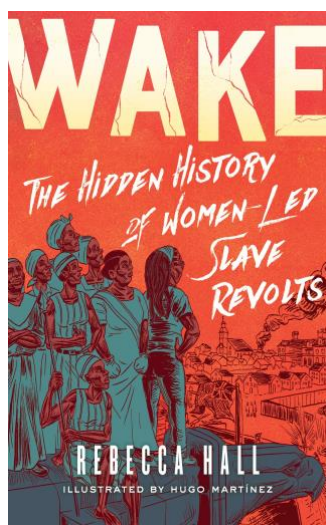


Review: *Wake: The Hidden History of Women-Led Slave Revolts*

by Rebecca Hall and Hugo Martínez. Simon & Schuster, June 2021. 208 p. ill. ISBN 978-1982115180 (h/c), \$20.99.

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Few subjects are more significant to American History than the institution of slavery---and yet many would like to pretend the whole thing never happened. Rebecca Hall's *Wake: The Hidden History of Women-Led Slave Revolts* grabs those who try to look away and says, "too dang bad."

Hall, a Black Historian, says she is haunted by slavery. As she walks through New York City, illustrator Hugo Martínez deftly weaves ghostly images of the brutal practice around her. With their heavy dark lines and textured complexions, Martínez's black-and-white panels call to mind Elizabeth Catlett's prints. His drawings shine light into the gaps in this history by showing--- not just telling readers Hall's theories. They also provide humanity to unnamed women discussed in court records and remove subtext from euphemistic historical letters. (Trigger warnings for historical sexual assault,

historical and contemporary racism)

Throughout the book Hall reveals both the unsung history of slave revolts with women in the forefront, and the institutional roadblocks she encountered: like a defensive corporate archivist in London. Refreshingly, she doesn't shy away from the personal toll of investigating this subject as a Black woman, sharing her tears at an account of the treatment of enslaved women during the middle passage, and her self-care with a long nature walk afterwards.

Wake is an engrossing and necessary book which accomplishes a great deal in just over 200 pages. Hall and Martínez keep the focus on the enslaved people, their humanity, and their defiance. The sophistication of *Wake's* language and approach means that it would be best for adult readers. However, there is no cursing or graphic sexuality, so it could be appropriate for mature high-schoolers.

Wake would be a great fit for any public or academic library's collection, or as a complimentary text for relevant museum exhibitions.