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Goldwalker: Tales Of The Osa Peninsula Of Costa Rica From The Life Of Patrick Jay O'Connell



Synopsis

Patrick Jay Oâ™Connell is the Goldwalker of the Osa Peninsula of Costa Rica. Goldâ™ pure gold, in grains smaller than mosquito eyes and nuggets larger than a fighting manâ™s fistâ™ is what distinguishes the backwater wilderness of the Osa. Thousands of men and women work these rivers and hills, toiling for tiny treasures, hoping, always, for the magic big strike. The American expatriot, âœPatricio,â• is the one man who knows the Osa better than any other today. Like a red-haired, green-eyed leprechaun, Patricio stalks the rivers, cliffs, and jungle-covered hills of the peninsula, braving the dangers of lions and jaguars, herds of wild boar, alligators and the deadliest of snakes, to buy gold from the desperadoes who have taken refuge there. Everywhere he goes he carries his sack of money and gold like a target on his back, yet despite many attempts on his life and treasure he has survived to become one of the most successful and indispensable individuals on the peninsula. Patricio, it seems, is the only person everyone can trust with money or goldâ™the only person to whom anyone may turn for medicines, dry goods, anti-snake venom injections, or help with the law. He has also become the repository of the oral history of the Osa and the little-known gold rush of the 1930s. Goldwalker tells true tales of Patricio and his family, his enemies and friends. It shares the lives of some of the wildest, most unruly characters anywhere: the Vagabond, Mosquito, Crazy Bird, Big Leg, Bologna, Screw-Up, Hatchet Face, Bronson, Papillon, Chino Ajoy, and the White Monkeyâ™ Mico Blancoâ™ Patricioâ™s favorite old-timer. Recently, to conserve the dwindling rainforest, the Costa Rican government established the Corcovado National Park with boundaries that encompass the best gold rivers of the Osa. The miners are being dispossessed, and the result has been armed conflict and increased communist agitation throughout the peninsula. These changes provide the primary drama for Goldwalker and the source of the discontent that Patricio feels. In his way, Patricio fights to defend the simpler, more courageous life he has known, that each day slips further from his grasp. He reveals these true stories with a candor that may endanger his life. Within these pages the reader explores the challenges and rewards of a life that may never be lived again in this world.

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