

Carnivorous Nights: On the Trail of the Tasmanian Tiger

Margaret Mittelbach, Michael Crewdson



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Carnivorous Nights: On the Trail of the Tasmanian Tiger Margaret Mittelbach, Michael Crewdson Packing an off-kilter sense of humor and keen scientific minds, authors Margaret Mittelbach and Michael Crewdson take off with renowned artist Alexis Rockman on a postmodern safari. Their mission? Tracking down the elusive Tasmanian tiger. This mysterious, striped predator was once the world's largest carnivorous marsupial. It had a pouch like a kangaroo and a jaw that opened impossibly wide to reveal terrifying choppers. Tragically, this rare and powerful animal was hunted into extinction in the early part of the twentieth century. Or was it?

Journeying first to the Australian mainland and then south to the wild island of Tasmania, these young naturalists brave a series of bizarre misadventures and uproarious wildlife encounters in their obsessive search for the long-lost beast.

From an ancient cave featuring an aboriginal painting of the tiger to a lab in Sydney where maverick scientists are trying to resurrect the animal through cloning, this intrepid trio comes face-to-face with blood-sucking land leeches and venomous bull ants, a misbehaving wallaby who invades their motel room, and a crew of flesh-eating, bone-crunching Tasmanian devils gorging on roadkill.

They bond with trappers, bushwackers, and wildlife experts who refuse to abandon the tiger hunt, despite the paucity of evidence. Sifting through local myths, bar-room banter, and historical accounts, these environmental detectives sweep readers into a world where platypus' swim, kangaroos roam, and a large predator with a pouch was–or perhaps still is–queen of the jungle.

Filled with Alexis Rockman's stunning drawings of flora and fauna—made from soil, wombat scat, and the artist's own blood–Carnivorous Nights is a hip and hilarious account of an unhinged safari, as well as a fascinating portrayal of a wildly unique part of the world.

From the Hardcover edition.

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