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Alison Jolly

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Madagascar is home to one of the world's greatest concentration of biodiversity, but that biodiversity is also among the most threatened on the planet. For decades, conservationists from the developed world have been working to protect those riches, for the earth and for the people of Madagascar. This diary from the late Alison Jolly, who was one of the leading figures in that movement, captures the successes and failures of those efforts, as well as the complicated, fundamental questions that they raise.

Offering a rich account of the lives of people who live on Madagascar, and the daily work of conservation science, Jolly reveals the beauty and tragedy of the island's biological richness. To whom, she asks, does that richness belong? Is it a heritage for the entire world? A legacy of the forest dwellers' ancestors, bequeathed to today's people to serve their needs? Or is it an economic resource, to be pillaged for short-term gain, preserved only to the extent that it offers some sort of financial return for those who wield political and economic power? Negotiating the pitfalls of conservation efforts driven by these questions, Jolly presents an unflinching portrait of contemporary conservation in action, of its possibilities and problems alike.