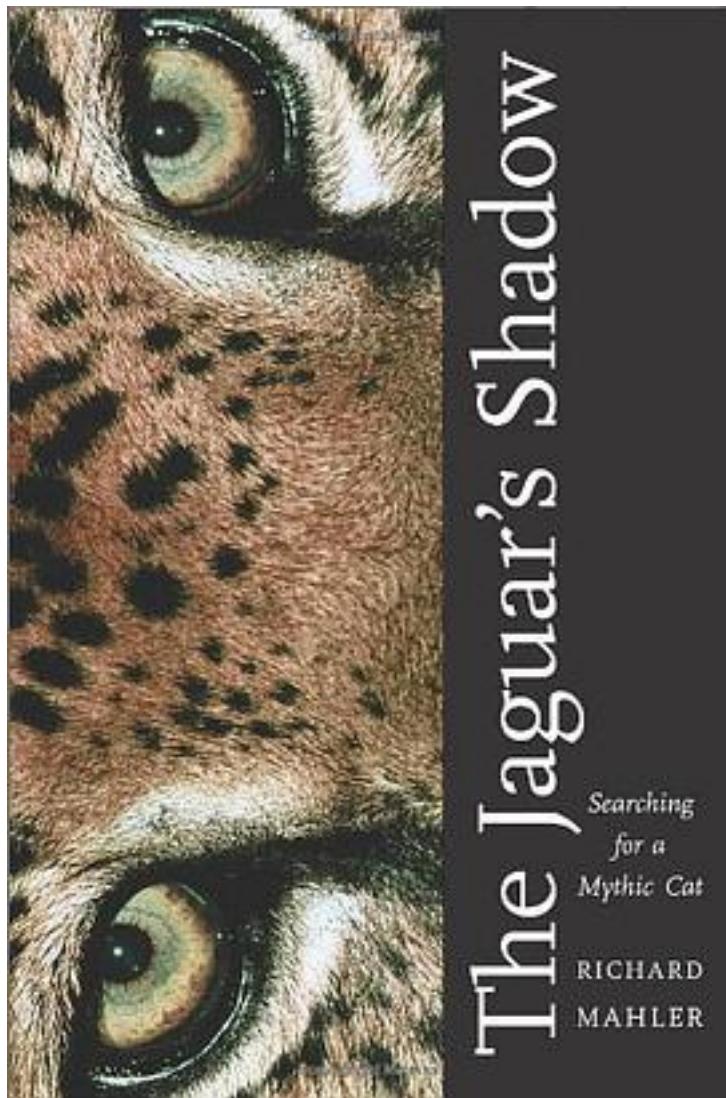


# The Jaguar's Shadow



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著者:Mahler, Richard

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When the nature writer Richard Mahler discovers that wild jaguars are prowling a remote corner of his home state of New Mexico, he embarks on a determined quest to see in the flesh a big, beautiful cat that is the stuff of legend - yet verifiably real. Mahler's passion sets in motion a years-long adventure through trackless deserts, steamy jungles, and malarial swamps, as well as a confounding immersion in centuries-old debates over how we should properly regard these powerful predators: as vermin or as icons, trophies or gods? He is drawn from border badlands south to Panama's rain forest along a route where the fate of nearly all wildlife now rests in human hands. Mahler's odyssey introduces him to unrepentant poachers, pragmatic ranchers, midnight drug-runners, ardent conservationists, trance-induced shamans, hopeful biologists, stodgy bureaucrats, academic philosophers, macho hunters, and gentle Maya Indians. Along the way, he is forced to reconsider the true meaning of his search - and the enduring symbolism of the jaguar.

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