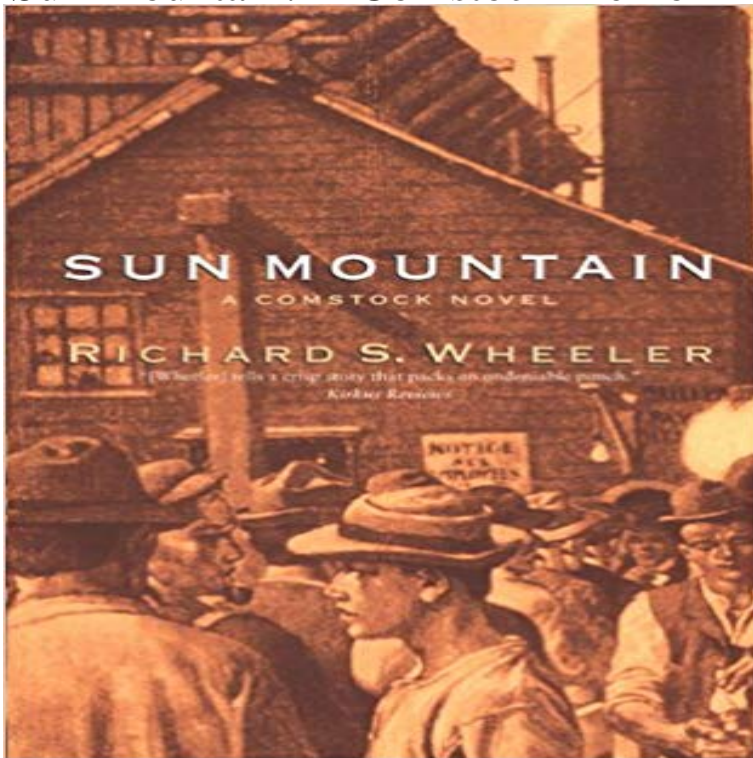


Sun Mountain: A Comstock Memoir



There had never been a place like the Comstock or a city like Virginia or a gathering of brilliant men such as those who assembled there. So writes Henry Stoddard in Richard Wheelers unforgettable novel-as-memoir of Virginia City, the fabled Golconda of Nevada, the most spectacular boomtown ever seen in the west. Drawn to the fabled town and its Comstock Lode as a youth in the early 1860s, Henry Stoddard witnessed its two-decade rise and fall as a writer for the towns daily newspaper, the Territorial Enterprise. As such, he came to know everyone who made the town--as well as those who were made by it. Among, Stoddards acquaintances, were a young Missourian named Sam Clemens, who prospered in Virginia City as a reporter for the Enterprise and transformed himself into Mark Twain; a Quaker named William Wright, who began writing comic sketches under the name Dan De Quille and became a legend; mining titans such as John Mackay and James Fair; speculators such as George Hearst and Lucky Baldwin; bankers such as Darius Ogden Mills, William Ralston, and William Sharon, who made fortunes from the amazing mines that deluged the world with silver and gold; and visionaries such as Adolph Sutro who dreamed of a tunnel through a mountain to the mines. In addition to all these glittering figures, Stoddard introduces us to the men who went down into the bowels of the earth to wrest the riches from it--the Irish, Welsh, Cornish, and Chinese miners working in the hellish heat for \$4 a week; the soiled doves and saloon habitues; the orators, politicians, actors, and other luminaries who came to the town and added an indelible dimension to it. Henry Stoddard knew them all--and recorded his observations for posterity. The amazing men and women he knew, his own search for Golconda and the woman of his dreams, and the transformation of his life

by a city that taught him to shrug off disaster, all mark the passage of a young man to maturity. Henry Stoddard is fictitious; the story, however, is true, perhaps the most astonishing true story of the American West.

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