



Off Telegraph: A Novel of Berkeley in the Sixties

Joseph V. Rodricks

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After a long career in science, which has involved a great deal of science writing for general audiences, Joseph V. Rodricks has turned out a powerful work of fiction. OFF TELEGRAPH takes the reader into a working laboratory and into the minds of working scientists. It also offers the reader a suspenseful story of deception and psychological disintegration, and of a brilliant young scientist's struggle to hold on to his ideals. PFAFFIDINE — a complex molecule from an exotic plant, with good potential as an anti-cancer drug. Will Getz's research project involves finding a way to synthesize pfaffidine in the lab. After many failed attempts to complete the synthesis, Will, in a moment of weakness, devises a way to fake it. He is sure his fraudulent act cannot be uncovered, but its consequences soon began to emerge in unexpected ways. Will's attempts to recover his integrity follow a twisted and tension filled path to a heart-wrenching climax. Will's painful story plays out in the 1960s in Berkeley, California, center stage for the social and political turmoil of that era. His life intersects with those of many other extraordinary characters who in different ways, some truly insane, hope to remake the world. Among these are the two highly intelligent women in Will's life— the ambitious and sensuous Elaine and the passionate but sensitive Gina —who try to help Will defeat his demons, and by doing so uncover new truths about their own lives. This is a passionate and suspenseful novel that masterfully and intelligently explores the unclear boundaries between science and competing world views, and does so at a very human level. "As tight and daring a plot as one could imagine -- it should not be missed." Robert Harris, Princeton University

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