



The Epic of Life: The Balinese Journey of the Soul

Idanna Pucci

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The extraordinary paintings contained in The Epic of Life grace the ceiling of the Palace of Justice, Kertha Gosa, in the center of Bali's former royal capitol of Klungkung. They represent the ancient Balinese folktale, Bhima Swarga, the epic journey of the hero into the afterlife. Here he encounters the sins of the world, the demons of hell with their gruesome punishments, and the rewards and joys of heaven. Florentine-born Idanna Pucci was overwhelmed by the ceilings. She spent several years uncovering the history, iconography and the story behind these unusual works of art. She gives for the first time, literary form to an ancient and still living tradition. Pucci discovered and recounts an amazingly fresh and vibrant folktale that acquired its very own Balinese character. Her vivid descriptions make a fascinating story, one in which the reader comes to understand something of the essence of Balinese culture.

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