

Defender of the Dunes

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Back cover:

One woman's response to the urgent question of our times -

A “wind-sculpted wilderness?” - or the harsh grey outlines of a nuclear power plant? Acres of untouched white coastline - or the smoky residue from a coke processing conveyor? Picturesque ridges of storm-carved sand - or noisy dune buggies shattering fragile roots and pristine silence?

That was the choice confronting Kathleen Goddard Jones when she first set foot on California's Nipomo Dunes, stretching 18 unexploited miles from Pismo Beach to Point Sal. She opted for an all-out campaign to save the dunes, defying powerful commercial interests such as the mighty Pacific Gas and Electric Company that fought every step of the way to squelch her dream. Sometimes the danger lurked within the private ambitions of her fellow Sierra Club members.

Kathleen was nearing sixty, not an average age for launching an underdog crusade. But she was not an average woman. Survivor of three husbands, countless tumultuous love affairs which nearly got her murdered in Persia, she brought immense reserves of charm, diplomacy and modern public relations skills along with her raw courage to a struggle that would consume thirty years of her life.