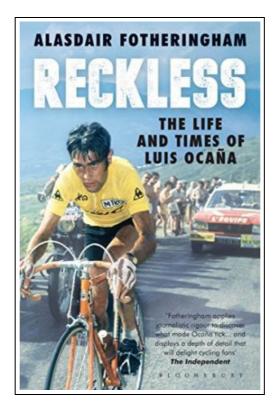
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Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, United Kingdom, 2015. Paperback. Condition: New. Language: English. Brand New Book. Luis Ocana seemed doomed to live in the shadow of cycling s greatest ever rider, Eddy Merckx - `The Cannibal. Their rivalry defined Ocana s entire career, yet he was the one rider capable of beating the all-conquering Merckx in his prime. After an impoverished upbringing he flourished at the sport he loved and in 1970 secured his biggest victory on home soil, winning the Vuelta a Espana, and confirming his status as a Grand Tour challenger. But it was in the 1971 Tour de France that the battle between Merckx and Ocana reached its peak when, at the Orcieres-Merlette stage, he inflicted on Merckx the worst defeat he would suffer in a major Tour, with an astonishing 120 kilometre solo breakaway through the Alps. But then came one of most gutwrenching crashes in Tour de France history when Ocana fell heavily on a Pyrenean descent, losing his leader s jersey, and with it his best chance of destroying Merckx s reputation of invincibility. In the midst of a torrential downpour, with minimal visibility, rider after rider crashed into the injured rider as he lay prone. The following day Merckx refused to wear the leader s jersey out of respect. It was only when Merckx was missing from the start-line in 1973 that Ocana became Spain s second ever Tour de France winner. If Merckx had been present, Ocana s chances of success would have been far slimmer. Further triumphs amassed before his swansong in 1976, but Ocana s decline in later life reflects the immense struggle he embraced during the height of his career. An enigmatic outsider to both the Spanish and French throughout his career - never truly accepted in either country...



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