

Editor
[Quepolandia Magazine](#)
Quepos, Costa Rica

For Submission:

Book Review
[Sofie's Solitaires](#)
By Richard Benson

On my weekly meander through the Quepos Feria I spot something new amidst the unique jewelry offerings at Parroquia's display. It turns out to be the colorful cover of a children's picture book, [Sofie's Solitaires](#), written by local author Helen M. Woodhouse.

Parroquia hands me a poster, which includes a glowing Amazon review and a brief description of the story:

"Sofie brings home a cage full of Costa Rican songbirds that are too sad to sing. What will she do to restore their magic song?"

Idly I flip through the pages. The illustrations of wildlife and scenery catch my eye. They're colorful, vibrant, very Costa Rican ... I immediately think of Birthdays and Christmas and my nieces and nephews in the States who have no idea where their uncle lives. Paying closer attention, I notice rhyming couplets interspersed with the text.

At the back of the book I discover an Information Page where I learn that the songbirds featured in the story are Black Faced Solitaires, native to Costa Rica and Panama. I like the fact that the book is based on something real. There's a wonderful photo of a solitaire singing it's little heart out on the page, and I'm kind of sad to read that these tiny birds are being trapped and caged for their amazing song.

Parroquia is now busy talking to a woman and a little girl who are interested in [Sofie's Solitaires](#). I can't help but overhear what they're saying. The little girl is also named Sofie and she lives in Manuel Antonio. Her aunt buys the book for her and they wander off, looking for papayas.

Unable to resist, I reach for my wallet ...

[Sofie's Solitaires](#) is available from Parroquia (better know as "the Columbian Jeweler") at the Quepos Farmers' Market or online at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). You can also inquire at Jaime Peligro bookstore in Quepos.