

Lewis Mumford & The Food Fighters

Review by Dennis Ray



A top-20 best non-fiction book of the past 30 years

As readers, there is nothing better than stumbling onto a new writer (new to the reader, that is) who adds to the reading experience and makes you realize you've just made a fantastic friend. More so than any other artist, writers can step into your life and change it.

Robert Turner is that writer. His book *Lewis Mumford & the Food Fighters* is entertaining and highly informative, with the kind of stuff one can get enjoyably lost. Did you know that the US imports as much beef as it exports?

No matter if you think it is a compliment, never ever say a writer's work is like so-and-sos. It's rude at best and more likely condescending if you think about it from the writer's point of view. However, you can compare one writer's book to another in a review. It cuts through a 1000 words describing a published work when all you have to say is, "If you enjoyed such-

and-such, this book is right up your avenue." I'm all for less work while giving the reader what they want to know: Is the book any good?



Lewis Mumford & the Food Fighters is like mixing Robert Pirsig's 'Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance' with a heavy dose of Michael Moss's 'Salt Sugar Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us,' with a twist of Jon Krakauer's investigative insight added for zest.

I know that if you haven't read those above books and writers, it would be the same as if I made up some books for comparison, for all the good it would do. But that's not my point. Turner isn't like those writers except for his ability to entertain and inform, yet his book reminded me of how I felt when reading the other writers I mentioned.

Turner's *Food Fighters* isn't a photocopy mishmash of other books done better. His book is a fast read, and Turner holds confidence in the prose of a seasoned writer who has found his

voice many years ago.

He talks about our food system with humor and insight. While also delving into the modern world and technology, which plays a role in getting our food and how it affects our future. There's a section on agriculture and how the farming industry handled the collapse of tobacco crops, to how China and Russia spent billions on cyber-security in the early part of this century. In contrast, the US only spent millions, and because of this lack of foresight, a Russian mob held the eastern half of the US hostage by shutting off one of our main pipelines in 2021. So it isn't without reasonability that our banks and infrastructure could be hacked, leading to drastic food shortages.

I can confidently say *Lewis Mumford & the Food Fighters* would make my top-20 list of best reporting non-fiction. Top 10? Probably not. There's Jared Diamond, Bob Woodward, Malcolm Gladwell, Jon Krakauer, and Sebastian Junger to contend with, but Turner is in good company, and he's young enough to where he might not just make my top-10 but the top-10 list of readers and critics across the US.

ENQ

LITERATURE & BOOK SIGNINGS

NEW AND NOTABLE

Article provided by Simon and Schuster Children's Publishing Division



Search for the Treasure, the sequel to New York Times bestselling author **Mary Alice Monroe's** *The Islanders*, is a beautiful story of friendship, loss, and the healing power of nature.

The followup to the instant #2 New York Times bestseller, *The Islanders*, comes *Search for the Treasure*.

Jake Potter is back on Dewees Island for another summer with his grandmother, Honey, and his friends Macon and Lovie. Jake is excited his dad will also be on the island as he continues to recover from his war injuries. Father and son must get used to a new normal, which isn't easy. His dad discovered treasure coins as a child and stored them in an old tree fort on the island. Jake knows if he can find the tree fort, maybe his dad will be happy again — and he knows Macon and Lovie are the perfect fellow treasure hunters. The search for treasure is on.

Meanwhile, Macon is adjusting to being a big brother, while Lovie is navigating a new relationship with the two visiting boys on the island. The treasure search leads them to battle some unwelcome guests on the island, both the two and four-legged kind.

On *The Islanders'* biggest quest yet, the three friends realize that the treasures they want in life were with them all along. ENQ

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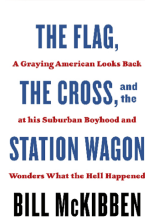
LIVE EVENT

Article provided by Malaprop's Bookstore/Café

Like so many of us, McKibben grew up believing the US was the greatest country on earth. He cheerfully led American Revolution tours in Lexington, Massachusetts as a teenager. He sang "Kumbaya" at church. And with the remarkable rise of suburbia, he assumed that all Americans would share in the wealth.

But 50 years later, he finds himself in an increasingly doubtful nation strained by bleak racial and economic inequality on a planet whose future is in peril.

Bill McKibben presents *The Flag, the Cross, and the Station Wagon*



And he is curious: What the hell happened?

In this revelatory cri de coeur, McKibben digs deep into our history (and his own well-meaning but not all-seeing past) and into the latest scholarship on race and inequality in America, the rise of the religious right, and our environmental crisis

to explain how we got to this point. He finds that he is not without hope. And he wonders if any of that trinity of his youth, *The Flag, the Cross, and the Station Wagon*, could, or should, be reclaimed in the fight for a fairer future.

Bill McKibben is a founder of the

environmental organization 350.org and was among the first to have warned of the dangers of global warming. He is the author of more than a dozen books, including the bestsellers *The End of Nature*, *Eaarth*, and *Deep Economy*. McKibben is the Schumann Distinguished Scholar in Environmental Studies at Middlebury College and the winner of the Gandhi Prize, the Thomas Merton Prize, and the Right Livelihood Prize. He lives in Vermont with his wife, the writer Sue Halpern.

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Event date: Wednesday, June 15, 6 pm
Virtual (Malaprops.com) or in-store attendance options.



JUNE 2022
PARTIAL LISTING

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READINGS & BOOK SIGNINGS

LIVE STREAM: Kris Spisak presents 'The Baba Yaga Mask' • 6/08, 6pm

LIVE STREAM: Editor Zane McNeill presents the anthology 'Y'all Means All: The Emerging Voices Queering Appalachia' • 6/09, 6pm

LIVE STREAM: John Vercher presents 'After the Lights Go Out' in conversation with David Joy • 6/14, 6PM

TICKETED: Bill McKibben presents 'The Flag, the Cross, and the Station Wagon' • 6/15, 6PM

IN-PERSON EVENT: Therese Anne Fowler presents 'It All Comes Down To This' • 06/16, 6pm

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LIVE EVENT

Article by Alli Marshall



'After Ever After — Book III: The Queen's Rain' brings exciting series to a satisfying conclusion

Local (Bat Cave) author Mindi Meltz is readying the release of her latest novel, *After Ever After — Book III: The Queen's Rain*. This book is the third in Mindi's *After Ever After* trilogy, an epic, lyrical fairy tale of genuine relationships beyond the "happily ever after" union where most love stories end.

Book III entwines the threads of animal and human, feminine and masculine, city and wild, future and past, to integrate that forbidden magic that the heroines first encountered in Book I, then faced more deeply in Book II. Now they must heal their children's traumas and return this magic to their kingdoms and queenoms in the hopes that their peoples will evolve and unite, rather than condemn them.

Readers will relate to the trilogy's third book and its themes of finding one's way back from exile. There's a strong parallel

here to our collective return from the pandemic. We've all been in exile for more than two years, and now we're returning to a world that's irreparably changed. We're having to find new ways of navigating and new skills and strengths within ourselves: Mythology is, as always, where we turn for tools to do just that.

In addition to the *After Ever After* trilogy, Meltz is the author of two more novels, *Beauty and Lonely in the Heart of the World*, and she creates Animal Wisdom knowledge decks. Originally from the coast of Maine, Meltz lives in an off-grid home in the mountains of Western North Carolina with her husband, cats, and goats.

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The book launch begins at City Lights Bookstore in Sylva on Saturday, June 18, at 3 pm. She will also read, discuss, and sign copies of *After Ever After — Book III: The Queen's Rain* at Of Wand & Earth in Marshall on Saturday, July 23, 3-5 pm.