REETTA RANTA

ANTTI HUTTUNEN



EXPLORE NATURE, MYTHS, AND ANCIENT WISDOM

TRANSLATION TERO VAAJA EDITOR ERICA MENA

POWER ANIMALS UNITED



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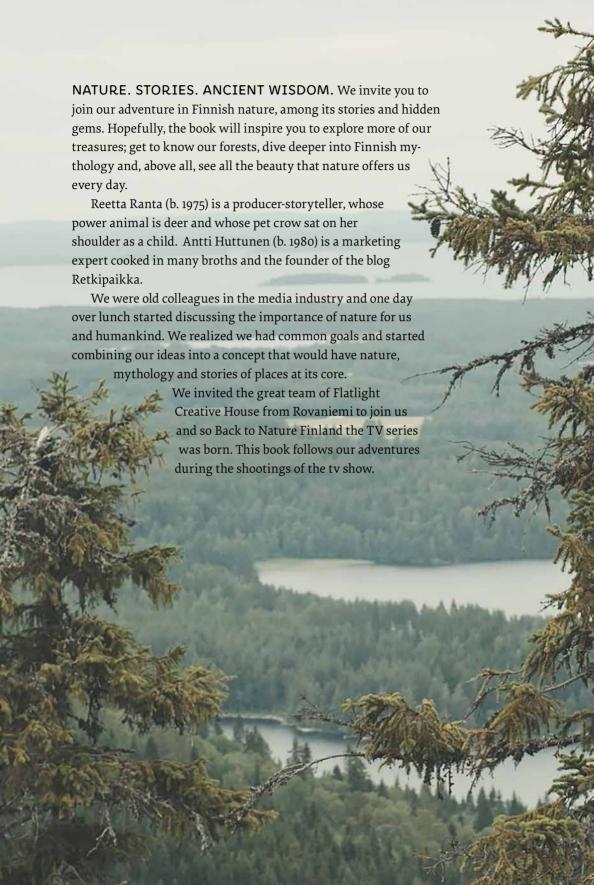
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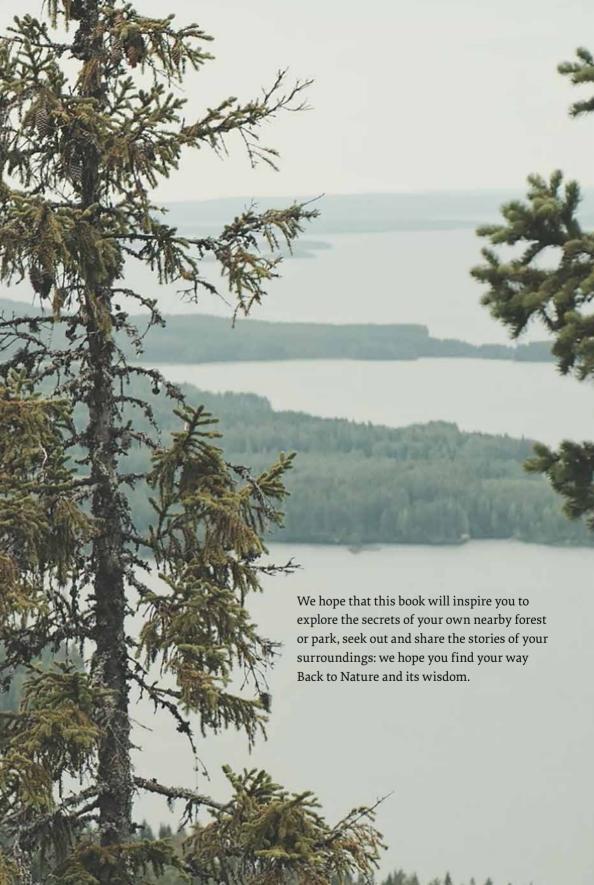
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Big thanks to all viewers and fans for joining our journey and sending touching feedback.

And finally, thank you to our spirit guides who led us deeper and deeper into the myths and forests, and thanks to Mother Earth for allowing us to experience all this beauty.









SECRETS OF THE ARCHIPELAGO SEA

We embark from Helsinki in the pink light of dawn for the Archipelago National Park and Kasnäs harbor. The idyllic early morning landscape cures our lingering drowsiness; with cups of hot coffee we feel on top of the world. After leaving Highway 1 at Halikko, each turn takes us to smaller and smaller roads. The landscape changes quickly. The trees are taller, and the buildings more Central European style. Although we can't yet see the sea, we sense we are near, and the map shows we're already well into the archipelago.



It's hard to pinpoint when we cross from the inner archipelago to the outer. But not long after leaving the harbor, the already-familiar form of Bengtskär Lighthouse appears on the horizon. Antti is a bit nervous. He plans to conquer his severe fear of heights by climbing to the top of the lighthouse today.





We're further charmed at Örö by the red buildings of the picturesque harbor, though the rain almost takes us by surprise. We hop on old army bicycles and start exploring the island. We speed down cobblestone road (nicknamed "Long and Dreadful" by servicemen on their apparently tedious marches), thinking about how somebody built these roads stone by stone, by hand, some time in the past. We also learn that Sauli Niinistö, the president of Finland, was among those who completed their mandatory military service on this island.

The rain is torrential now, so we retreat indoors for lunch. We arrive at an old military canteen turned into a restaurant wet, slightly cold, tired, and with an appetite. A warm meal in these cozy surroundings is wonderful.

The island is stunning in August: the smell of honey floats up from violet heather meadows. On our way to the southern tip we see thick stands of alder, sandy pine barrens, and remnants of the island's military past, from bunkers to foxholes. Every now and then, Luna scents an animal - maybe a resident pair of moose hiding among the trees somewhere.

We reach one of the island's sandy beaches and leave our bikes by the roadside. Some anonymous romantic made a heart out of pebbles on the sand. We search for sea kale, which thrives on the salty shores of the outer archipelago. The plant resembles kale, but slightly smoother and stronger tasting. We find it, but since we're in a national park we're not allowed to pick it. We still imagine how good the sea kale would taste baked with butter and salt in a pan.

Islands are visible far away to the west. That's our destination for tomorrow: the fascinating island Stora Buskär.

We rest on a cliff at the southern tip and check the marine weather forecast for the following day. We can see the impressive profile of Bengtskär in the distance. The rain is easing off, and the evening sun dries the cliff little by little as seagulls sing their twilight song. This has been a good day, and judging by the forecast, tomorrow is going to be even better.









BENGTSKÄR

Bengtskär is the tallest lighthouse in the Nordic countries. It stands on a small islet in an area formerly called the Ship Graveyard. In the granite walls of the lighthouse you can see traces of grenade fragments as a reminder of war's impact on the area.





ÖRÖ

Örö is a former military island that only opened to the public in 2016. The centuries-long presence of soldiers left its mark on the island, and at the same time the restricted access protected its unique nature. The island's sandy beaches, coves, and sun-drenched meadows make it an interesting destination for the nature tourist.



AN OLD MILITARY BIKE!



SCHEDULED TRAFFIC FROM THE PORT OF KASNÄS: VISITÖRÖ.FI

STORA BUSKÄR

The Archipelago Sea contains many secrets, including Stora Buskär. The island is small and remote, but visitors who reach it are rewarded for their efforts. Lined by imaginatively meandering black alders and birches, rock cliffs covered by map lichen, and an abandoned sea eagle's nest, the nature trail is worth seeing. The experience is crowned by a magnificent lagoon.



THE PLACE IS BEING PREPARED FOR PUBLIC USE. ACCESS BY OWN OR TAXI BOAT.

THE VIKING ROUTES

More information on local Viking excursions and runestones can be found in the Kemiö archipelago at Rosala Viking Center, located in an old Viking marketplace. The center also hosts Viking Days every year, where you can experience the atmosphere of the Viking era, complete with handicrafts, food, and drink.





STAY IN A VIKING VILLAGE! ROSALA ET







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