

★ **The Moonday Letters****Emmi Itäranta**

Titan Books (Jul 5, 2022)

Softcover \$15.95 (368pp)

978-1-80336-044-7

The Moonday Letters wraps a lament for Earth's damaged ecosystems into the story of lovers at an interplanetary crossroads.

Lumi grew up in a resource-starved holiday village on Earth. She had few prospects before a healer, Vivian, arrived there. Vivian recognized Lumi as a kindred spirit, giving her a way off-planet. Lumi traveled to a Moon base, then to Mars; her skills later took her to Europa and beyond. They brought her to Sol, the brilliant, mysterious scientist who became her spouse.

But Lumi's fairy tale wavers: Sol makes a cryptic declaration on a televised interview that's followed by a possible terror attack on a Martian facility. Sol disappears. As Lumi tracks Sol, she's forced to take closer looks at facts once relegated to her periphery—beginning with the couple's escape from Fuxi, an off-Mars contained colony whose ecosystem was also compromised in the style of the recent attack. Such facts become clues, building to the question of whether Sol is a victim of someone else's nefarious plan—or a contributor to an ecoterrorist plot with implications that stretch across the stars.

Letters between the parted spouses undergird this melancholy, lovely, and alarming tale about humanity in crisis. Earth has become near uninhabitable by Lumi's time, but those with the resources to leave it are clumsy, repeating past mistakes. Notes from future-set scholarship look back on Lumi's days, discussing "radical" notions like the principle of inviolability—ideas that make increasing sense as human beings continue to stain and strain the new spaces that they occupy. Lumi's love for Sol is a beacon through these troubled, troubling considerations; hope for their reunion sustains her, and the question of whether their love can survive Sol's secrets carries through to the intriguing end.

MICHELLE ANNE SCHINGLER (July / August 2022)

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