

WEEK 28, 2019

THE EPOCH TIMES
**ARTS &
TRADITION**

LORRAINE FERRIER/THE EPOCH TIMES



Gannets feature in this watercolor by Lyn Kriegl. The illustration was part of a series of New Zealand travel guides that Kriegl completed when she first came to New Zealand. The guides were part of an advertising campaign for Mobil.

The Colorful Life of an Illustrator
From America to New Zealand...4

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THE EPOCH TIMES

TRUTH AND TRADITION

ARCHITECTURE

OUR NEED FOR BEAUTY

A Look at Architecture

JEFF MINICK

There is a deep human need for beauty, and if you ignore that need in architecture, your buildings will not last, since people will never feel at home in them. — Roger Scruton

Let’s begin with a visit to the Basilica of Saint Lawrence in downtown Asheville, North Carolina.

When we enter this Spanish Renaissance church, designed by architect Rafael Guastavino, we know immediately that we are in a sacred place. Often, tourists who just moments before were laughing loudly and debating restaurants for lunch fall silent when they step from the bustling sidewalk into the basilica. Here in the quiet shadows, candles glimmer. From the walls, statues of saints look into eternity, while at the front of the church are the figures of Mary and Saint John mourning the Crucifixion. Covering the walls of the apse are polychrome, terra cotta portraits of the Four Evangelists and the angels Raphael and Michael. Above the sanctuary is the largest, freestanding, elliptical dome in North America. This space announces its purpose: worship and prayer.

Let’s leave the basilica and wander down the hill, cross the bridge over the expressway, and stroll along Flint Street. Here we find houses a century old or more: eccentric structures with wrap-around porches, cupolas, gazebos, and broad lawns shadowed by tall oaks and maples. Those who designed these homes clearly wished to enhance the lives of the families occupying them.

Now we’ll reverse course and head to the downtown area. In 1929, Asheville was a boomtown, mecca to the rich and famous, and a gathering place for builders, craftsmen, and architects. The Great Depression ended the boom. The city spent the next 50 years paying off its debts and lacked the ability to help finance skyscrapers or other modern structures. As a result, nearly 200 art deco buildings escaped the wrecking ball.

Here we find such treasures as the Flatiron Building, a knockoff of its New York sister; the S&W Cafeteria with its lavish mix of blue, gold, and silver ornamentation; and the Grove Arcade with its gargoyles and carved lions, its ground floor of shops and restaurants topped by apartments and condominiums replete with hanging flowers and iron grillwork. The driving architectural forces behind

these and other nearby buildings were beauty and utility.

A short distance away, we find the Biltmore House, America’s largest privately owned home, with its many valuable paintings, sculptures, and tapestries. Close at hand is the Grove Park Inn, built in the early part of the 20th century in less than a year by 400 men working 10-hour shifts six days a week. As William Jennings Bryan said in his dedication speech at the Inn, no doubt taking in the massive rock walls, “It was built for the ages.” Yes, and for beauty’s sake.

Not all public buildings must be imposing to please the aesthetic senses. Near my daughter’s home in Front Royal, Virginia, for example, is a white clapboard Methodist church topped by a high steeple. Framed by mountains and fields, this church would strike most passersby as an object worthy of praise. The Happy Creek Coffee Shop in Front Royal, where I am writing these words, was built as a livery stable in 1885, and the craftsmanship of its antique brickwork and milled beams and joists still fetches the admiration of tourists.

The Modern Blight

So what happened? Why do so many of our buildings, from high-rise apartments to fast food restaurants, from megachurches to schools, fail to elicit our esteem? Why, in short, are so many of our buildings so ugly?

Perhaps our propensity for glass and plastic stems from the misapplication of Louis Sullivan’s “Form follows function.” Perhaps the philosophies of utilitarianism and relativity account for the absence of beauty and charm in so many of our buildings.

Whatever the case, this ugliness horrifies even some of the builders. In “From Bauhaus to Our House,” Tom Wolfe’s famous attack on modern architecture, Wolfe writes that many architects “profess to be appalled themselves. Without a blush they will tell you that modern architecture is exhausted, finished. They themselves joke about the glass boxes.” Over the last few decades, other prominent critics, including Prince Charles of Great Britain, have also assailed modern architecture. One such detractor is philosopher Roger Scruton. In her essay for The Epoch Times on April 10, 2017, “Celebrating the Philosopher of Beauty,” Milene Fernandez reports that Scruton “called architecture ‘a most important realm of artistic practice’ and criticized

the modern architect Le Corbusier for destroying the artistry of architecture. The functional concrete and glass architecture that has overtaken cities around the world is a style that is familiar to everyone. ‘It’s horizontal layers of kitchen trays stacked until you’ve got to the limit of your budget,’ he said, as the audience laughed.”

And yet... There is reason for hope. Organizations like the Institute of Traditional Architecture and the Catholic Art Guild, both of which promote forms of more humane building, are springing up. The website New Traditional Architecture offers a fine array of pictures that reveal more than words can say about blending older forms of architecture with modern ideas.

Within a few miles of the Happy Creek Coffee Shop lies Christendom College, a small Catholic school where teachers and

The driving architectural forces behind these and other nearby buildings were beauty and utility.

students treat seriously the three transcendental—truth, beauty, and goodness. That the college has a high regard for beauty may be seen in its buildings, most of which are constructed in a “traditional Virginia style.” The library is particularly beautiful, with “the basic form inspired by the college’s guiding principles: The octagonal, domed entry hall stands as a metaphor for Faith, while the two-story atrium at the core of the library embodies Reason,” according to the college’s website.

This year the college has begun building a chapel in the shape of a cross, with a seating capacity of 750 and a Gothic tower 130 feet high. Like Roger Scruton and others, those erecting this chapel recognize the importance of a building’s beauty. They understand that if they are to teach beauty, they must offer examples of that beauty to their students.



It is dismaying to believers in tradition and the saving powers of truth, beauty, and goodness to be confronted daily by a culture imbued with the crass and the vulgar—not only in architecture, but also in all the arts and in the public square. At times, that culture seems vacant of any possibility of redemption; it’s like a vast, empty parking lot with a few scraps of paper blowing across the asphalt.

If we look closely, however, we may observe cracks in that bleak pavement. Pushing up through those cracks are the flowers of beauty.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooled students in Asheville, North Carolina. Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Virginia. See JeffMinick.com to follow his blog.

(Top) The Flat Iron Sculpture in front of the Flatiron Building, on Wall Street in downtown Asheville, N.C.

(Left) The Biltmore Estate in Asheville, N.C.



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TRUTH AND TRADITION



The beautiful interior of the Basilica of Saint Lawrence in Asheville, N.C., gives an immediate sense of a sacred place.

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CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

The Colorful Life of an Illustrator From America to New Zealand

Children's book illustrator Lyn Krieger tells her story

LORRAINE FERRIER

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—For nearly 40 years, children's book illustrator and oral storyteller Lyn Krieger has worked with some of New Zealand's most celebrated children's authors, illustrating 155 children's books to date. As a keen writer, Krieger has also been published in books and magazines.

Born in upstate New York, Krieger comes from a creative family. Her mother is a gifted embroiderer and seamstress, and her father is a retired watchmaker, a jewelry designer, a diamond in-layer, and a highly skilled engraver of precious metals. He was gifted at drawing, but it was always on pewter, gold, or silver, she said.

A lot of children give up too easily now when it comes to developing anything that takes craftsmanship.

Krieger graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University with a bachelor's degree in fine arts and fashion illustration. She has been an illustrator for Mademoiselle and The Washington Post. A stint working on "The Dick Cavett Show" sparked her interest in puppets, which she now uses in her oral storytelling.

Here, she shares poignant moments in her life: how she began drawing, how she had her big break in London, and how children's literature has changed. Her story is peppered with characters who are just as animated as those she illustrates.

THE EPOCH TIMES: What are your earliest memories of art in your life?
LYN KRIEGER: I began drawing with my crayons on chairs, floors, and walls when I was quite small. When I was reprimanded for that, I was really incensed because I felt the house I lived in was very dull, and it needed decorating.

It was a typical bungalow in a very small town called Hopewell, Virginia, which stank to high heaven because it was a chemical town where they made rocket fuel, Dupont paints, and aluminum, so all those companies seemed to dump just about everything into the river.

I remember going over those rivers or streams in the car, and I could see all the colors on top of the water making rainbow colors, but it was actually all the chemicals. I was fascinated by these colors. Of course the smell precluded going near this rainbow slick that was probably highly toxic. But that's probably one of my first memories of seeing colors.

By the time I got into first grade, I could draw most things.

THE EPOCH TIMES: Please tell us about when you first arrived in New Zealand.

MRS. KRIEGER: It was absolutely surreal because I lived in a converted boat bunker at the end of Cheltenham Beach in Auckland, and I woke up and looked out of the window, and there was the water. There were big piles of seashells that the tide would pull in and out, and they made the most beautiful tinkling sound like wind chimes. It was enchanting. And I thought, I'm staying. This is paradise.

I thought the best thing for me to acclimatize was to draw all the new flowers, trees, plants, and birds; and that's what I did. Those drawings became my first book,

"The Legend of the Kiwi," which was presented to Prince Charles and Princess Diana for Prince William by the Royal New Zealand Air Force, which is funny because it's about a kiwi who can't fly. So my first book ended up in Buckingham Palace, which was lovely.

For a time, I worked for an advertising agency. I was penned in with a lot of artists who became notable New Zealand artists, and some rogues! I didn't thrive in that environment.

I was doing children's illustrations on my lunch hour. I didn't know how I was going to break into it. It's a closed world unless you get a toe in. Then I met, by chance, a representative of Collins

books. An Englishman, in a tweed suit with a briefcase, called John Hall, and he wanted to represent me as a children's book illustrator.

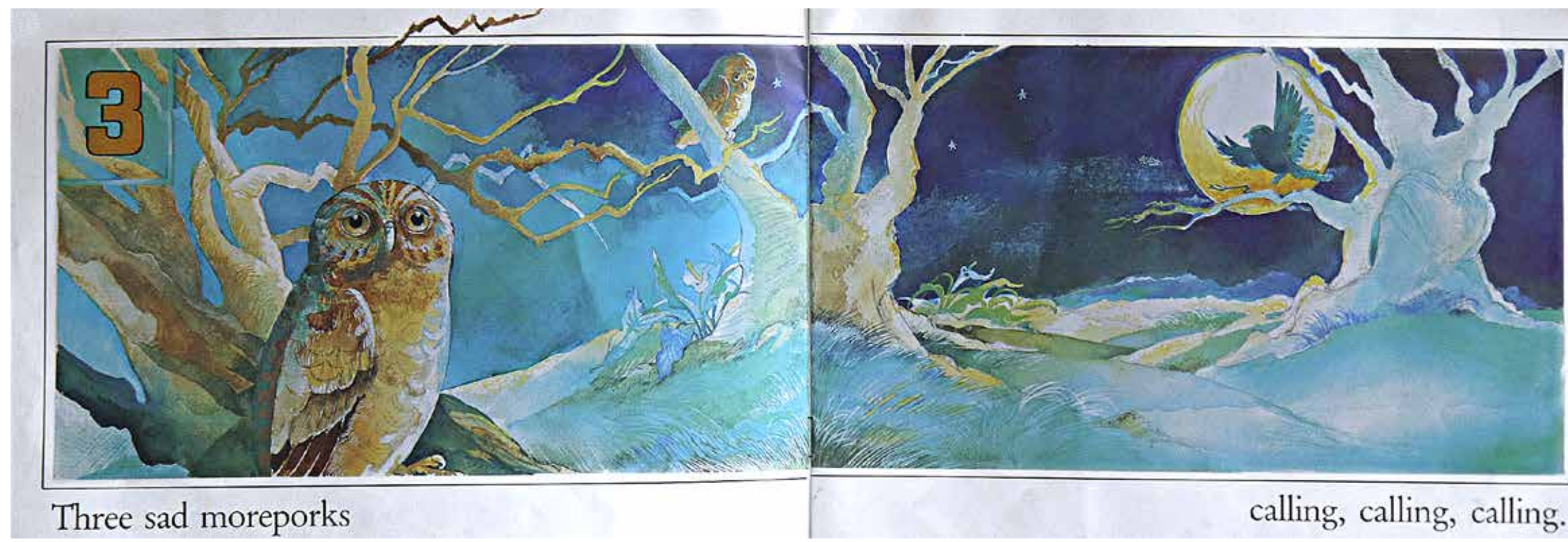
He said I should be doing children's books and that I should go and see the children's writer Dorothy Butler.

It took me two years to get up the courage to go and see Dorothy, who reigned like a queen in her huge children's bookstore in Glenfield, on Auckland's North Shore. The store had classical music playing all the time.

At the time, everyone who was anyone was trying to write and coming through Dorothy's bookstore. And writers and illustrators were all passing through from England because Dorothy's



Children's book illustrator and oral storyteller Lyn Krieger, on April 25, 2019.



Dorothy Butler's series of books "A Tale of Old New Zealand" features true New Zealand stories, a subject close to Lyn Krieger's heart. This painting is part of that book series and in the book "Seadog: A Tale of New Zealand."

Lyn Krieger's front cover illustration for the first children's book she wrote and illustrated: "The Legend of the Kiwi."

If you can understand beautiful language, you can express yourself well, you can communicate, and you can solve problems.

There will always be a place for a printed book with good, strong, powerful, rich language and illustrations that support it.



(Top L) An English teapot, cup, and saucer that Krieger inherited from her mother are featured in this illustration for Joan de Hamel's "Hemi & the Shortie Pjamas."

(Middle) Lyn Krieger's illustration in "Chen Li and the River Spirit" by Anthony Holcroft captures the moment when Chen Li is rewarded for his selflessness.

(Bottom) New Zealand's native owl, the morepork, is one of the birds Lyn Krieger illustrated in "A Bundle of Birds" by Dorothy Butler.

bookstore was one of the must-calls if you were Down Under. Dorothy had a huge office, with books and boxes everywhere. One of the boxes had her little dog Gretel in it; another one was full of bananas, because she ate bananas to give her strength. She had a big executive desk with stacks of books on it. The first time I saw her was just these two little eyes looking through these piles of books.

She was no-nonsense and straight to the point. She hit one of the boxes and she said, "Pick up that manuscript and read that. I think this girl is going to be rather good."

It was Margaret Mahy's "A Lion in the Meadow." New Zealand publishers had passed it over for publication. Dorothy said, "I'm sending this to England. This woman is brilliant." Because in those days, Margaret was a solo mother slaving away as a librarian and she only had time to write at midnight, tapping out all these wonderful stories on her typewriter.

After going through my artwork, she banged her fist on the desk and said, "Lyn, you must leave advertising. You must do children's books." I asked her how. She said firmly, "I am working on a book for Kestrel in London. You can illustrate it." That was "The Magpies Said: Stories and Poems from New Zealand." I had to produce all the illustrations beforehand with no advance.

Then Dorothy said to me one day, "I was asked to open the Puffin Book Fair in London. Why don't you come with me and we'll have some fun. We'll try and sell them some books."

The opening for the Puffin Book Fair in London is quite an event. This was 1980. Roald Dahl was there wearing a sweater with fuzz balls all over it. He was signing autographs for queues and queues of little boys with Harry Potter glasses, pudding-bowl haircuts, and little round faces. It was the most extraordinary event.

And Dorothy said, "Now we're going to see Patrick Hardy," who was a legendary editor in England. I sat in the waiting room to see him with Dorothy's book "The Magpies Said: Stories and Poems from New Zealand" that I illustrated. Patrick had sort of insinuated they might publish it, but they had to meet me.

They had us on tenterhooks over this book, because if you were in New Zealand and you got your

work published in England, you'd made it. Because England in those days was home.

I think writing in New Zealand has now come of age. You don't have to be published in England first.

Patrick took us out to lunch. Not a word was said about the book. I was nearly in tears, thinking this is it: I'm not good enough. I'd prepared some drawings, which were in a folder by his foot, his beautiful patent-leather-encased foot. It was just the most beautiful shoe.

We had this gorgeous meal, and then he and Dorothy had these wonderful chats about all these famous people they knew. I just felt so small; I didn't know anybody.

At the very end of the meal, I saw a Daimler convertible outside with beautiful men with elegant Emperors Crown flowers on stalks. They were waiting for Patrick. I thought what a life! If only I could go with them.

As he was leaving, Patrick touched my portfolio with this foot and took my arm and said, "Oh, by the way, we've decided to go ahead with this."

From then on, I didn't look back. When I came home to New Zealand, Dorothy introduced me to other writers.

We did 18 picture books, Dorothy and I.

THE EPOCH TIMES: J.R.R. Tolkien believed that children's stories shouldn't be sugary and insipid. They should address the same issues as adults literature, but the language should be adapted. What are your thoughts on this?

MRS. KRIEGER: A child's childhood should be full of joy. There's time enough to face up to difficult situations when they are older. Children's literature should reflect a world that is a bridge between them and life: The book becomes a bridge between the child and the world. That then gives them life skills, gives them coping skills, and gives them the self-confidence to apply their own solutions to a problem rather than having to run to mommy or daddy. That is not present in a lot of today's children's literature. I shouldn't make such a blanket statement, but I can because I've looked at so many books.

Dorothy always said that there's a big difference between literature and sensational stories. The over-

all progression of children's books today—it's a step backward, in my opinion—is that publishers have gone for the more sensational stories. That's not literature. The language is not supportive. It's almost like slang or street talk.

In her last days, I said to Dorothy, what are you reading to your grandchildren? Because she was an emphatical fan of reading to children aloud at night.

When I stayed with her, I could hear her reading to the grandchildren in the next room. She would read to them for hours and hours. Her grandchildren would go around parroting Shakespeare, and it was marvelous. I said, what are you reading to them now? And she said Dickens: "That's the only language worth hearing these days."

She was a great fan of beautiful language. If you can understand beautiful language, you can express yourself well, you can communicate, and you can solve problems.

I'm always hearing stories from employers who'd hired kids with no communication skills. They can tap out an email, they can whip out a message in code, and on WhatsApp, but in terms of having an actual conversation where they express their innermost feelings, desires, and goals, the language has been compromised. A wise teacher I know said that the speed of communication equals a decline in human values.

Technology is great, don't get me wrong. But there will always be a place for a printed book with good, strong, powerful, rich language and illustrations that support it.

A book artist or illustrator has to support and extend the words; that's our job. We don't work like painters, painting something that comes from the heart. We are constantly supporting and extending someone else's words, unless we have written the story ourselves. Then we are free to do what we want.

I was asked several times: Why don't you take some courses in computer artwork? I said, "I've spent a lifetime developing hand skills. I like the look of hand-done work. If you want me to do that kind of work, then go find someone else."

My dad taught me that, because of his hand skills: everything was done by hand. He taught me engraving, and he taught me the difference between digging into pewter and gold and what kind of pressure you've got to use. He was very good at calligraphy lettering, and he taught me that too—how to draw beautiful letters, illuminated manuscripts, Old English writing—and how to set type on a slug, too. Or he'd say, just for fun, let's copy Chinese, Japanese, or Cyrillic script, and we'd spend hours with him coaching me, and me practicing all this calligraphy. All of those things have stayed with me lifelong.

A lot of children give up too easily now when it comes to developing anything that takes craftsmanship. It takes time, it takes patience, and you can't be disheartened by a letter of rejection or someone walking past and laughing at what you're doing. You've got to have the dedication.

To find out more about children's book illustrator Lyn Krieger, visit BookCouncil.org.nz

ALL PHOTOS BY GREENWICH ENTERTAINMENT

A Gloomy AND Befuddling Drama

IAN KANE

The opening scene in director Jan Zabeil's new would-be family drama "Three Peaks" is telling, despite being bereft of words. New father-figure Aaron (Alexander Fehling), sporting a pretty epic beard, is playing in a pool with his girlfriend's son, Tristan (Arian Montgomery). As they frolic underwater, we witness close-ups of the two trying to comprehend what they're saying to each other. It's emblematic of the alienation between the man and boy and sets the pace for the melancholic film.

From there, we are treated to sumptuous shots of Italy's Dolomites, as Lea (Bérénice Bejo) is revealed as Aaron's love interest. Their vacation is a sort of beta test to see how viable a match between the three could be. The scenes seem ripped from any idyllic family portrayal from the 1950s, but an underlying tension soon becomes apparent and threatens to divide them.



Alexander Fehling (L) and Arian Montgomery in "Three Peaks."

Cinematographer Axel Schnepat captures some beautiful natural scenery.

'Three Peaks'

Director

Jan Zabeil

Starring

Alexander Fehling, Bérénice Bejo, Arian Montgomery

Running Time

1 hour, 34 minutes

Not Rated

Release Date

June 28

★★★★☆



Can these three form a family? Tristan (Arian Montgomery, L), his mother (Bérénice Bejo), and his mother's boyfriend (Alexander Fehling), in "Three Peaks."

The Big Divide

Aaron and Lea are contemplating a big move to France, and that would take Tristan far out of the orbit of his biological father. A quick-witted child with decidedly malevolent leanings, Tristan plays the passive-aggressive approach with regard to Aaron.

Aaron, in turn, becomes increasingly desperate to ingratiate himself with single mom Lea and her dastardly, conniving pup.

The unstable trio travel to a mountainside cabin, where Zabeil paints a gorgeous natural backdrop that is undercut by an ever-mounting tension. The sense of isolation, too, is almost palpable, punctuated by long shots of stillness.

Tristan switches seamlessly between expressing his supposed affection and disdain for his stand-in father. One moment, we see the boy embracing Aaron and looking up at him with doey eyes, and the next, scowling at him with abject derision.

We begin to wonder: Where does the boy's contempt for Aaron stem from? Is he merely opposed to having a replacement father, or is he still reeling from his biological father and mother's divorce?

Whatever the case may be, Tristan's hatred for Aaron escalates over time. This is exemplified in scenes such as when Tristan contemplates pushing Aaron off of a steep grade in the Three Peaks mountains. In another, the boy subtly threatens him with a razor-sharp saw.

At a certain point, Tristan even gets

all metaphysical and likens the trio of mountain peaks to a father, mother, and child. But there's a twist: His metaphorical story references a giant, which functions as what he considers the opposite of Aaron, further emasculating his would-be father.

Things come to a dramatic head during the third act. Just when it seems that there might be a chance at forming a real family, one of them disappears.

What's the Point?

Although cinematographer Axel Schnepat captures some beautiful natural scenery, there is an overall sense of dread and despair that permeates the film. More than a "vacation gone wrong" piece, we are left with more questions than answers.

Why would Aaron, an attractive and intelligent single man, put up with Tristan's increasing disdain for him? Similarly, why does Aaron, an outdoorsy and manly man, seem so emasculated? Why is he filled with such self-loathing?

Is this film about the pitfalls of dating single mothers? The disintegration of Western families?

These are just some of the questions that arise in this bleak portrayal of a family that never was. It is emblematic of our times, though, with regard to the lack of stable families and the erosion of family traditions, at least as the film industry portrays them.

Jan Kane is a filmmaker and author based out of Los Angeles. To see more, visit DreamFlightEnt.com

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