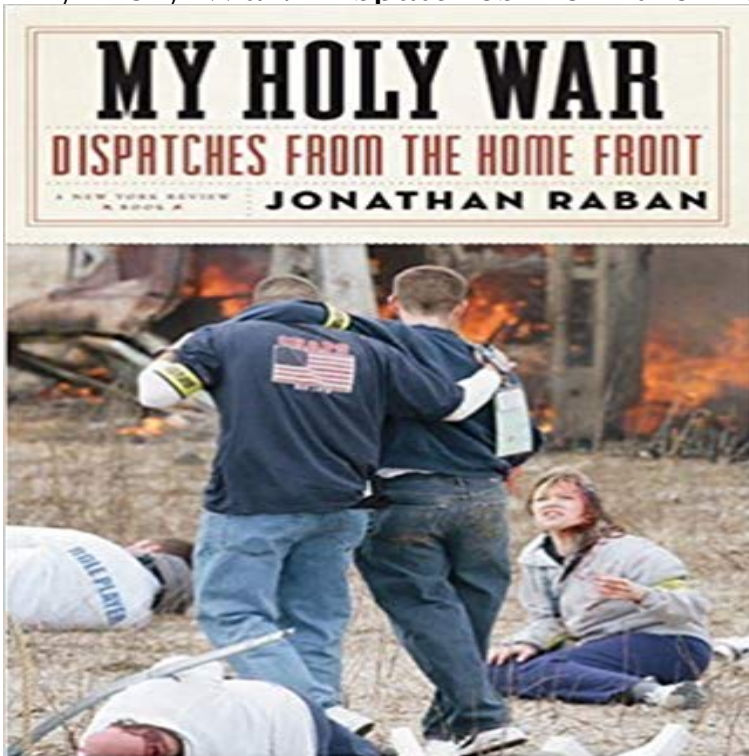


My Holy War: Dispatches from the Home Front



Ranging from Seattle to Cairo, from the high seas to the US presidential campaign, Raban brings a distinctive and often unexpected perspective to the issues facing post-September 11 America. What does the war on terror and a new era of religious ferocity look like to an Englishman living in the Pacific Northwest? Jonathan Raban finds, as he reads the source texts that have inspired modern-day jihad, memories of his own adolescent atheism help him understand why young people suffering from cultural alienation and moral uncertainty turn to a backward-looking version of Islam to help them resist the upheavals of modernity. Raban reflects on the Bush administrations manipulation of the threat of terrorism to undermine civil rights. In diagnosing what has gone wrong in the Iraq war, he emphasizes the US failure to understand the history of the Middle East, and explains the regions shifting and complex loyalties of religion and ethnicity. He traces the continuing support for a disastrous war to the legacy of American Puritanism: the tendency of Americans to be inspired by a religious fervor oblivious to history and reason. And he explores the increasing polarization of American politics, as exemplified by the issues that he has seen divide his urban from his non urban neighbors in the Northwest.

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