



Farley: The Life of Farley Mowat

James King

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The *Toronto Star* recently called Farley Mowat, the author of thirty-eight books that have sold more than fourteen million copies in twenty-four languages over five decades "Canada's answer to Gerald Durrell crossed with Mark Twain" and "a meaty subject for the biographer." And at age 82, he is still going strong with yet another new book, High Latitudes (Steerforth, March 2002). He is famous for throwing a spotlight on environmental and animal-rights concerns with such titles as *Never Cry Wolf* and *A Whale for the Killing*, for rankling the academy with such works of speculative history as *Westviking* and *The Farfarers*, and for attracting young fans with such heartwarming tales as *Owls in the Family*. He may be equally well known for his outrageous behavior — howling like a wolf at the dinner table and doing strange dances in a kilt while making oinking noises are among his exploits at formal events — and for headline-grabbing predicaments — he was barred for a time from entering the United States.

James King's *Farley* is the first biography of this singularly influential man of letters. Margaret Atwood calls Mowat's books "the spark that struck the tinder that ignited the fire from which many subsequent generations of writers and activists have lit their torches, often ignorant of where that spark came from in the first place." King gained full access to Mowat's papers, including all embargoed letters and diaries. But while the book was researched with Mowat's cooperation, King was free to write whatever he concluded to be the truth. The result is a colorful, energetic work in which biographer and subject are uncommonly well matched.

"King identifies the key relationship in Mowat's life as that with his difficult, charismatic father Angus. . . . Seldom has a book more carefully charted the manchild's simultaneous needs to distance himself from and bring himself closer to his begetter."

--Quill & Quire



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