



Better than Fiction 2: True adventures from 30 great fiction writers

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From Lonely Planet, the world's leading travel guide publisher, *Better Than Fiction 2*, the follow-up to 2012's *Better Than Fiction*, is a second serving of true travel stories told by some of the world's best fiction writers including **Dave Eggers**, **Jane Smiley** and **Karen Joy Fowler**.

Varied in place, plot and voice, these are stirring and evocative pieces that all share one common characteristic—they manifest a passion for the precious gift of travel, from its unexpected but inevitably enriching lessons about other peoples and places, to the truths, sometimes uncomfortable but always enlarging, it reveals about ourselves.

By turns comic, dramatic, and moving - from Francine Prose's confrontation of the mysteries of India to DBC Pierre's search for Hemingway's muse in Italy - these 30 short tales reveal the joys, perils, and surprises of travel, and that truth can often be stranger (and better) than fiction.

Whether on a plane en route to your own travel adventure, or at home settling in for a vicarious experience of world adventures, embark on this literary journey around the world and explore your passion for travel now!

Authors: Lonely Planet, Don George, Dave Eggers, Jane Smiley, Karen Joy Fowler, Stefan Merrill Block, Francine Prose, DBC Pierre, Fiona Kidman, Alexander McCall Smith, Keija Parssinen, MJ Hyland, Catherine Lacey, Rebecca Dinerstein, Lloyd Jones, Porochista Khakpour, Jack Livings, Marina Lewycka, Lydia Millet, Suzanne Joinson, Sophie Cunningham, Christina Nichol, Mandy Sayer, Steven Amsterdam, Marie-Helene Bortino, Shirley Streshinsky, Steven Hall, David Shafer, Avi Duckor-Jones, Lily King, Aliya Whitely, and Natalie Baszile

About Lonely Planet: Started in 1973, Lonely Planet has become the world's leading travel guide publisher with guidebooks to every destination on the planet, as well as an award-winning website, a suite of mobile and digital travel products, and a dedicated traveller community. Lonely Planet's mission is to enable curious travellers to experience the world and to truly get to the heart of the places they find themselves in.

Lonely Planet's award-winning list travel literature anthologies include An Innocent Abroad (Independent Publishers Award, Silver for Essays, 2015) and A Fork in the Road (Lowell Thomas Award, Bronze for Travel Book, 2014; James Bear Award, Nominated for Travel Fiction, 2014).

'Lonely Planet. It's on everyone's bookshelves; it's in every traveller's hands. It's on mobile phones. It's on the Internet. It's everywhere, and it's telling entire generations of people how to travel the world.' -- Fairfax Media

'Lonely Planet guides are, quite simply, like no other.' - New York Times

Lonely Planet guides have won the TripAdvisor Traveler's Choice Award in 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016

Better than Fiction 2: True adventures from 30 great fiction writers Details

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From Reader Review Better than Fiction 2: True adventures from 30 great fiction writers for online ebook

Krisdee says

I found this collection to be very mediocre, NOT including these three: Porochista Khakpour's, Marie-Helene Bertino's, and Shirley Streshinski's. The first two had such strong voices - not surprised about Khakpour, but I didn't know Bertino or many others for that matter. Shirley Streshinski's "Travels With Suna" really did make me cry, but I think this is possibly only because I too have many dear international friends. Overall, the collection was a chore to read, with too many boring essays in between the good ones. It took me months to slog through; I slept around with other books. You can't rely on the beauty of a place to bring life to your writing. You also have to show up with something of your own.

Pam ?Because Someone Must Be a Thorn? Tee says

~ARC review copy

Perhaps you have read the first selection of BETTER THAN FICTION stories. I had not. I came to this collection clean, absolutely not knowing what to expect. But I like travel and I like travel stories so it seemed like a good match.

Having now read what's inside, I'm still sort of hard pressed to explain it to you. There are short stories with a travel theme. Some of them aren't about much. Some of them are about more. Sometimes you know the time and era that they take place in, and sometimes you don't. A good many of these short stories could live in an English teacher's list. Stories that students can think about. Events that they can contrast with their own experience. Some transport you.

The first story took place in 1966 in Italy where the author visited, for the first traveling anywhere from home alone, when she was 16. I didn't particularly like the story but it had merit. It shows the differences in culture as well as what it's like to be 16. Pretty good for a story that is only about 7 pages long.

The next story touched me and soothed me. Amongst other things it brought a little secret garden part of Norway alive. I could go on like this listing which stories I like best, but that doesn't necessarily help you to know whether to buy this book.

I would buy this book myself for a number of reasons. Embarrassingly enough, one of them is that the stories are short. They give me meat and drink and do it in a way that I can fit in my sometimes crazy schedule. They are certainly perfect to read if you are trying to get reading for bed and want something relaxing.

A lovely collection.

Iris says

Not all the stories in the book were great, at least to my taste, but I guess that's bound to happen with such

compilations. Some were really lovely though and stirred my travel bug.

Also, I've read this in a Russian translation, and now I really need to know what the heck was so wrong with the stories by Dave Eggers and Lily King that they've decided to leave them out? Seriously, in Russian it's "28 great fiction writers."

Michelle says

Very enjoyable. The second to the last one "The Leaping Prow" was my favorite. I feel like I'm in the same spot as the author - a quiet place in life that doesn't lend itself well to adventurous travel. It's hard to not allow past adventures to discolor the current quiet pleasures of where life has you right now, but there is great value in the appreciation of the current moment. Our past has made us who we are, but shouldn't dictate limitations on our future pursuits or dreams.

Jean Matthews says

Excellent short travel stories

Michael says

What a surprise.

Sometimes I find something on the "new" shelf at the local public library, take it home, and am amused when I enjoy a found-by-accident book more than something I sought out and waited for.

This book is a collection of "true [travel] adventures from 30 great fiction writers." For whatever reason, the fact that this was published by Lonely Planet made me a little suspicious (not in a good way) but I saw Alexander McCall Smith's name in the list of contributors and decided I would surely read that one and enjoy it, so why not.

The writers range from ones whose work I have read and know well, such as McCall Smith, to others that I have heard of but not read, such as Dave Eggers and Jane Smiley, to the majority, whose names were unfamiliar. Well, there are a lot of writers in the world.

The book is slightly more than 300 pages long, so with 30 authors, the average contribution is about ten pages. There was not one that I started that I did not finish, which is unusual for me with this sort of compilation. Having jumped around reading authors whose names I knew at the beginning, I then ended up going to the trouble to work my way through and be sure I had read all of them.

I only read the introduction from the editor at the end. Uh, in fact just now. (!) It is made clear that this was not a compilation of items published already elsewhere but rather items solicited from the chosen authors for inclusion in this particular travel book. So this is not a "best of" travel writing sort of book, but rather a

collection of travel stories with a purpose, to tell compelling stories about travel and to show how travel can provide the grist for such stories. Some of the authors seem to have felt some need to give their contributions some deeper meaning while others - apparently not.

Nice. Worth the time.

Lorilin says

I think just about everyone is familiar with *Lonely Planet* travel guides. They're everywhere, and I'd wager we've all at least looked at one at some point. *Lonely Planet* publishes non-guide books, too--including *Better Than Fiction* and its sequel. This particular series focuses on "true travel tales written by acclaimed fiction writers," (hence the name). The first book was such a hit in 2012, they decided to make a follow-up. So here we are.

Truthfully, I've never really loved travel writing. It irritates me. There's something about the surface-level and relentlessly linear reporting of places traveled and monuments seen that bores me to tears. I just don't care that you and your boyfriend bought an open plane ticket and went here, then there, and, last, way over there. I don't care that you barely had any money. I don't care that the buildings were awe-inspiring or that the poor people showed you such generous hospitality. I've heard all this before. Give me something else, for Pete's sake. Something more.

Thankfully, some of the authors in this collection do--not most, but some. I would encourage future readers to not lose heart while slogging through the first few essays. Keep the faith, keep going. At least until you get to Catherine Lacey's *Awkward Situations*:

In the end it wasn't the hitchhiking or the semi-indentured servitude, but my own loneliness and lack of context that were the most paralyzingly awkward. I was embarrassed by this at the time, the inevitable realization that I still needed more than just myself to survive. And not just the occasional stranger to drive me or house me somewhere; I needed people who knew me as more than a stranger.

And maybe until Porochista Khakpour's *My Mississippi*:

Had I come all this way to not belong all over again?

And if you are very strong, until Dave Eggers's *The Road to Riyadh* and Fiona Kidman's *The Road to Lost Places* and MJ Hyland's *How I Evaded Arrest on a Train Platform (Somewhere in the North of England)*. If you push through to the end, you will be generously rewarded with one of the best stories of the bunch, in my opinion, Aliya Whiteley's *The Places Where We Wait*:

Sometimes the strictures of society part, and a gap is left in which two people, strangers, can see each other. I saw him then, and he saw me. We shared, in that look, the knowledge that every journey must end.

Without a doubt, the most enjoyable stories in this collection are the ones that focus on only a moment or two, maybe just a few key hours taken from weeks upon weeks of travel. Those expanded little vignettes...that's where the good stuff is. There are a few gems in this collection, but you're going to have to dig for them--patiently. I read the essays, finished the book, felt a few twinges of connection. But, in the end, I'm still not sure if the effort was worth it.

ARC received through the Amazon Vine program.

See more of my book reviews at www.BugBugBooks.com.

Jess says

I was surprised to see a book written by Lonely Planet that wasn't a guide to some location. Instead, this is a collection of short stories that writers have experienced on their travels.

I don't typically read short stories, but I figured this book would be interesting. However, I ended up only liking a couple.

I would try the first book since it may have more interesting stories, but this book was sort of dull for what should be an interesting topic.

Siewjye Chow says

Feel like I have been traveling to those interesting places, destinations, been to the memorable and mesmerising adventures as well as the experiences with the authors. Totally lost myself within the stories and adventures. I have definitely enjoyed reading the book.

brightredglow says

As with any collection, some stories hit with a reader better than others. That is how it was for me with "Better than Fiction 2." My favorite story is by Fiona Kidman called "The Road to Lost Places" because any story that can namecheck Graham Greene's "The Quiet American" (which I love but then I love Graham Greene books) is okay by me. I also enjoyed Dave Eggers's "The Road to Riyadh". All that said, I didn't dislike any story and I believe on a mellow rainy day when I need a story to read, I would be able to pull this book from the shelf and find something to read. To me, that's a sign of a book to keep.

Barb says

A whole slew of fiction writers are asked by Lonely Planet to write a chapter telling of a travel experience they would like to share: Scary, funny, embarrassing, eye-opening, puzzling, etc. The locations are a wide variety around the world.

As you can imagine, people who write fiction for a living can write a pretty well-defined and fascinating travel tale. The descriptions of the people, locations, foods, etc. are amazing. The authors are simply travelers like ourselves, experiencing new locations or beloved locations. However, they have the advantage over us as they have the advanced language to truly bring the travel experience to life.

I have not read the first version of Better than Fiction, but I certainly will now. This is a wonderful book -

highly recommended for those who love to travel and/or love to read about out of the way places and travel experiences. I loved it.

Recommended for purchase by my library system.

advance copy received from Edelweiss/Above the Treeline

Ms. Reader says

I received this book for free from Goodreads First Reads in exchange for an honest review...

This was a delightful, entertaining collection of fictional stories from numerous different author, all which were very talented and helped create this amusing little book. It was an easy read and highly enjoyable. I wish I had book #1, just because I enjoyed this secondary book so well (and no, you don't need to read them in order). I recommend this to anyone who enjoys a good, solid, well-rounded story.

Alice says

I LOVED this book! It reminds me of "The Accidental Tourist" by Anne Tyler in that I'm sitting at home reading about others' adventures. I'm not much of a traveler, but I love reading about others who travel. These essays vary widely in tone and scope. Some are wistful, some sad, some hilarious. The book can be read in a few hours (I read it over two days), but I would recommend a slow read to savor the far-flung experiences of these intrepid travelers.

Archana says

Enjoyed many of the stories written by fiction authors. Some of them are very well written and just as good or better than fiction stories. Some are travelogues, some are crazy incidents that we never forget. Some are just small incidents, nothing too great. I enjoyed the book.

I was inspired by Alexander McCall Smith's story, that I wrote a little piece:

https://medium.com/@archana_june/that...

Anna says

Ah, the travel memoirs. Love these short stories from all over the world!
