



To Travel Hopelessly

English Teacher X

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In 1995, after a year of aimless wandering, a broke, parasite-infested backpacker answered an ad in a newspaper in Bangkok and inadvertently became English Teacher X, working, in the next five years, in seven different cities in five different countries.

From the neon-and-vomit-laden streets of Seoul to historic beer-soaked Prague, from a tropical island paradise in Thailand to an industrial hellhole of Post-Soviet Russia, English Teacher X describes, in raw and violent imagery, the life of an English teacher overseas, encountering dishonest and exploitative employers, degenerate colleagues, corrupt police, gold-hearted prostitutes and cold-hearted "English groupies", with drugs and alcohol for all, while questing in vain for the Authentic Cultural Experience.

English Teacher X's world serves as a cautionary tale for young people going overseas to teach, or a titillating taste of the many perks of the darker side of English teaching.

To Travel Hopelessly Details

Date : Published November 28th 2013 (first published May 19th 2011)

ISBN :

Author : English Teacher X

Format : Kindle Edition 184 pages

Genre : Travel, Nonfiction, Autobiography, Memoir, Business, Amazon

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Ian says

Entertaining and fairly well written account of the dark and seedy side of teaching English as a second language abroad. Apparently, at schools that do not require certification of teachers, all sorts of crazy hijinks ensue. After reading this, I have to conclude that it is quite miraculous that anyone learns English as a second language from schools such as the ones in which English Teacher X taught.

Marsha says

English Teacher X wrote about his first few years traveling in Asia, New York and Russian and working as an English teacher. He also wrote about his relationship with some women that he met. He wasn't seeking anything steady and didn't get particularly serious with any of the women. I like English Teacher X's writing. He sometimes is bit coarse in his story telling. However, I liked his honesty and bluntness.

Laurens says

'To Travel Hopelessly' covers the world of TEFL teaching in the mid to late 90's and the shady characters one would encounter (spoiler:). It is a detailed account of the peculiar events that 'X' encounters on his travels. If you are in need of an easy to read book that covers women, drugs and is not full of clichés, look no further.

'To Travel Hopelessly' is a great book, not only for those considering to travel abroad on their own, but also for those armchair travelers out there. Like others have said, this is not one to be judged by its cover.

Dave T. says

This is probably the best travelogue/memoir I've read. English Teacher X writes about what it's like being a newbie teacher, and then a disillusioned teacher in five different countries. He writes about the different cultures in places like Thailand, Korea and Prague when the TEFL industry was in its infancy. I'm a teacher right now in Russia, and a lot of what he writes rings true to what I've seen of the teaching abroad industry. A really good memoir.

Byron says

This book only has like five reviews and they're all five stars. But it wasn't a matter of him getting his mom and his little brothers to sign up for Goodreads. This guy really is an amazing writer. I've been reading a lot of travel-related writing lately, probably because I'm crazy. This guy has worked in the teaching English in a foreign language industry (TEFL), in a number of countries, going back to the mid '90s. This book covers his

career from about the mid '90s to the early 2000s. TEFL turns out to be somehow even worse than the public schools here in the US. They'll take anyone, though they've become increasingly insistent on fake credentials from diploma mills - probably because they receive some sort of kickback. Everyone there is on drugs. The conditions are such that you wonder how they couldn't be. "English Teacher X" has a remarkable command of the English language. Don't let the homemade-looking cover fool you.

Danie Cutter says

A straight forward readable account of teaching abroad and of travelling when the other side of the world was a lot further away than an email. I enjoyed it but it didn't quite hit the mark which may be partly due to the travel locations and work not being those close to my heart.

Adam Vine says

English Teacher X is a funny dude. Recommend.

Kerry says

I loved this book, as I work as a teacher in Istanbul it was good to hear other people's stories and struggles, it makes you realise the grass isn't always greener. English Teacher X tells you how it is and is a brilliant writer I loved this book.

Raya Fagg says

In the vein of Dishwasher and Waiter Rant, To Travel Hopelessly is a story about a young man who bucks convention and takes his BA in English to Thailand to teach English class.

What follows is a humorous story about a guy who is a TEFL (Teacher of English as a Foreign Language) around the world. Armed with some cash and a desire to have fun while he explores the world, "X" finds fun and adventure while he travels the globe.

It's part travelogue, part memoir, and full of drugs and women.

Not as fresh as reading Dishwasher, but an easy read nonetheless.

Connie Read says

If this bloke wasn't such a misogynist slime ball it would be 3 stars. Useful in some respects, but mostly I

fucked a lot and did acid'. He travels the world with contempt for everyone he sees, let alone speaks to. He clearly has some talent for writing, but I just found this incredibly bleak.

Clark Nielsen says

I disliked the book on the grounds that the author was a truly deplorable EFL teacher, and yet I couldn't stop reading, because his story is nothing short of fascinating.

Teacher JD says

Crazy memoir of an American guy who traveled around the world teaching English. Some of the drug scenes were shocking. I wondered how he could drink so much and do so many drugs and still be able to function somewhat normally as a teacher.

Alison says

Kept your attention the entire journey but oh my gosh what an abrupt ending. Was not expecting that! One way to get us to read the sequels I guess! Felt his pain in Russia. Would have cut my losses and moved on if it were me but that is the luck of the draw when traveling. Got to take the good with the bad. Good read if you are an experienced risk taking traveler.

Teflsecretagent says

This is the book for anyone considering a life abroad. Behind all the crazy antics it's very much a book about self discovery in the modern world.

So many people can travel the world as tourists nowadays but not many people can actually say that they have 'experienced' the world - English teacher X can and it's exactly why you should read this book.

Ashley says

should be renamed 'i had sex with my students and hookers while on acid every day and was a terrible teacher'
