



# Are You Experienced?

By William Sutcliffe

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The hilarious international bestseller about a young man's misadventures in India.

Liz travels to India because she wants to find herself. Dave travels to India because he wants to get Liz in bed.

Liz loves India, hugs the beggars, and is well on her way to finding her tantric center. Dave, however, realizes that he hates Liz, and has bad karma toward his fellow travelers: Jeremy, whose spiritual journey is aided by checks from Dad; Jonah, who hasn't worn shoes in a decade; and Fee and Caz, fresh from leper-washing in Udaipur. . . .

With refreshing honesty and a healthy dose of cynicism, William Sutcliffe offers a transatlantic, nineties version of *On the Road* that intrepid travelers and confirmed stay-at-homes will enjoy in equal measure.

"Very, very funny."—*The Times* (London)

"A laugh-out-loud novel."—*Marie Claire*

"Hilarious . . . Sure to be a favorite with young world-travelers on the road in search of their identity."—*Publishers Weekly*

"Raucous, irreverent, and dead-on funny."—*Kirkus Reviews*

## Are You Experienced? By William Sutcliffe Bibliography

- Rank: #360734 in Books
- Brand: William Sutcliffe
- Published on: 1999-07-01
- Released on: 1999-07-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.74" h x .67" w x 5.10" l, .30 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 233 pages

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## **Editorial Review**

From Publishers Weekly

David Greenford, the skeptical British narrator/hero of this breezy novel, just wants to sleep with Liz, his best friend's girlfriend, but winds up spending three harrowing and thrilling months backpacking in India the summer before starting university. The best friend, James, brags about his upcoming arduous trip to various Third World countries and once he departs, David and Liz become uneasy friends and quasi-lovers, planning their own journey to India. Once there, David's charming dorkiness clashes with Liz's hunger for the hip authenticity of tourist culture. Sutcliffe provides a little too much of their repetitive quarreling, but at moments these squabbles are hilarious. When Liz falls for Jeremy, a rich, self-righteous poseur, David is annoyed but takes "J's" advice to travel from Delhi to Manali, where pot is cheap and plentiful. Jeremy shows up there, too, directing everyone to the "real" India, complaining about the "two-week" tourists who ruin India for honest, caring travelers like himself. David finds decent company with an Anglo-Indian named Ranj, who's running away from his wealthy, prominent family. Meanwhile, Liz ditches David to join an ashram, and while David is disgusted by Liz's hypocrisy and fed up with her cultish karma-chasing attitude, he's soon confronted by his own folly. Traveling solo, David meets a journalist whose hostile diatribe pinpoints the theory at the heart of the novel: that David is merely on a "poverty-tourism adventure holiday," willfully ignorant of Indian culture and therefore offensive. The real soul-searching follows, along with David's first bout with dysentery, an extravagant week with Ranj and the grateful return to good green England. Sutcliffe's ruthless and scathing skewering of the cult of slumming teens on their life-defining holiday also rings with the genuine twang of excitable, adventurous, vulnerable youth, and is sure to be a favorite with young world-travelers on the road in search of their identity. (July) FYI: Sutcliffe's first novel, *New Boy*, not published in the States, was a bestseller in England.

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From [Booklist](#)

This novel, already a best-seller in England, is an intelligent, funny, and entertaining coming-of-age and road-trip tale. When David Greenford agrees to spend three months backpacking through India with Liz, it's mostly because he's hoping things will progress romantically between them. Once in India, and faced with the intense heat, poor accommodations, questionable food, and Liz's tyrannical personality, Dave begins to wish he had never agreed to go. To make matters worse, Liz meets up with a group of bizarre hippie backpackers and soon runs off with a tantric yoga teacher, abandoning Dave altogether. It turns out, though, that being dumped by Liz is the best thing that could have happened to him. Once free of her, he learns to get by alone, gains an appreciation and understanding of India, and discovers in himself a level of independence and confidence he didn't know he was capable of. A cynical, comical, and candid portrayal of late adolescence, independence, sex, drugs, and backpacking through a Third World country. *Kathleen Hughes*

From Kirkus Reviews

The US debut of British novelist Sutcliffe is a perfectly hip riff on either *The Razor's Edge* or *Innocents Abroad* take your pick in which a pilgrimage to India enables a callow English job to understand just how badly he wants to remain unenlightened. Dave Greenford, like any 18-year-old, wants more than anything to get away. Anywhere. Even Switzerland, where he learns French and makes some money but comes home soon enough, convinced that he needs an even greater escape. There was a general belief, James quickly infers from his friends, that a long and unpleasant holiday was of crucial importance to one's development as a human being. And India, for distance and discomfort, can't be beat. It helps that Dave's incipient girlfriend Liz has been hot to visit India for some time, and that both Dave and Liz have wrung permission and some cash from their parents for a year of travel before settling down to university life. So the two are soon

weaving their way through every hill station and hostel of the Lonely Planet guide, hanging out with all the other Brits, and trying not to be taken for tourists. Dave even manages to get into Liza's pants for a while, though she quickly goes native on him and they split up, leaving Dave, with three months left before his return, on his own. Can he face the Subcontinent by himself? India is usually too crowded to be very solitary, and Dave is the sort who makes friends easily: before long, he teams up with Ranj, an Indian from London who speaks Dave's language (i.e., beer and girls) and is on the lam from an arranged marriage his family is forcing him into. Poor Dave and Ranj know they will have to give in and grow up eventually, but they're determined not to go down without a fight. For three months, at least. Unless they get laid first.

Undergraduate humor at its best: raucous, irreverent, and dead-on funny. -- *Copyright ©1999, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

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