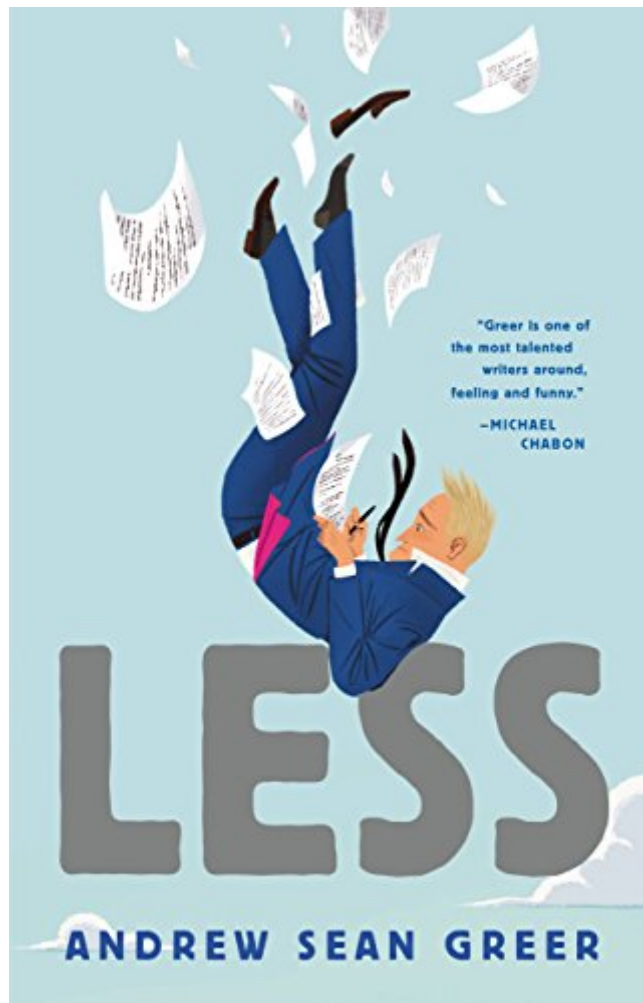


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Less: A Novel



Synopsis

"I could not love LESS more."--Ron Charles, Washington Post"Andrew Sean Greer's Less is excellent company. It's no less than bedazzling, bewitching and be-wonderful."--Christopher Buckley, New York Times Book ReviewNATIONAL BESTSELLER!Who says you can't run away from your problems? You are a failed novelist about to turn fifty. A wedding invitation arrives in the mail: your boyfriend of the past nine years is engaged to someone else. You can't say yes--it would be too awkward--and you can't say no--it would look like defeat. On your desk are a series of invitations to half-baked literary events around the world.QUESTION: How do you arrange to skip town?ANSWER: You accept them all.What would possibly go wrong? Arthur Less will almost fall in love in Paris, almost fall to his death in Berlin, barely escape to a Moroccan ski chalet from a Saharan sandstorm, accidentally book himself as the (only) writer-in-residence at a Christian Retreat Center in Southern India, and encounter, on a desert island in the Arabian Sea, the last person on Earth he wants to face. Somewhere in there: he will turn fifty. Through it all, there is his first love. And there is his last.Because, despite all these mishaps, missteps, misunderstandings and mistakes, Less is, above all, a love story.A scintillating satire of the American abroad, a rumination on time and the human heart, a bittersweet romance of chances lost, by an author The New York Times has hailed as "inspired, lyrical," "elegiac," "ingenious," as well as "too sappy by half," Less shows a writer at the peak of his talents raising the curtain on our shared human comedy.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Several of the novel's characters as well as Arthur himself and the reader ask themselves this very question. Arthur Less is originally from Camden, Delaware. He is a white, gay man approaching his fiftieth birthday with much trepidation. Arthur has written novels: some good some not so good. He has had many trysts, but only two great loves: an older Pulitzer Prize winning poet and a younger adopted son of Arthur's nemesis. When Arthur's young lover leaves him to marry another man, Arthur goes into a tail-spin. To avoid the wedding, to which he has been invited, Arthur agrees to a half-dozen events that literally take him on a trip around the world at the same time as the wedding is taking place AND when his milestone birthday will occur. He flies from San Francisco to New York to Italy to Berlin to Paris to Morocco to India to Japan and finally, home. Arthur is both a schlimazel and a schlemiel (he is the one who spills the soup and who has the soup spilled upon him). Along the way he has many mishaps and bonanzas. He is a master of charades and pantomime since he is linguistically and culturally challenged. Yet he is resilient, young at heart and endearing. The reader will laugh out loud at his mishaps and empathize with the pain of Arthur's many Proustian moments. Though this reader guessed both the author of Arthur's adventures and the book's ending, it was a witty and highly enjoyable read.

Milestone birthdays are hard, but turning fifty for Arthur Less is especially difficult. So what does he do? He plans a multi-nation journey, not to celebrate, but to escape. His former lover is getting married, and he's trying to run away from the heartbreak of it all. Less is a good-looking, charming fellow, but he's a real mess. This is a beautifully rendered, gorgeous love story. The author, Andrew Sean Greer, is a very talented writer. His prose is smart and elegant. I was most impressed with his metaphors. They really are splendid. For most of the book, the narrator's identity is unknown. I had my suspicions, and they were confirmed on the last few pages. An excellent read, I even thought it was ingenious the way he used the main character's name in a clever play-on-words

A delight! You'll laugh out loud, read sentences out loud just to feel them on your tongue, and

ultimately be moved by this loopy story of emotional truths. A fine and thoroughly enjoyable achievement in modern literary technique!

This quirky story, and particularly the ending, is a bit confusing and hard to follow, but I really enjoyed it. The writer had a wonderful way of putting words together and I will be reading more of his work.

Lovely book; beautifully written. Some of the passages are poetic and the characters are sweet. Arthur Less has some of the qualities of Candide and one wishes him well as he travels the world.

A well spun romp, packed with keen observation, a humorous command of prose, and linguistic hi-jinx. Taking a trip around the world with Arthur Less is worth every mounting moment, pang, pitfall, and promise for... we won't spoil the ending! LESS raises the bar for exuberant storytelling, with barely a lull to catch your breath.

Early on as the characters developed I began to really genuinely like them all. I could picture everywhere Less traveled even though I had not done so myself. I could identify with his character, his mood and feel his sadness at the loss of his true love by his own doing. I loved the ending!!

Elegantly written, wry, and humane. The protagonist, so to speak, is a gay man, but he could be Everyman, wrestling with disappointed ambitions and the loneliness of aging.

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