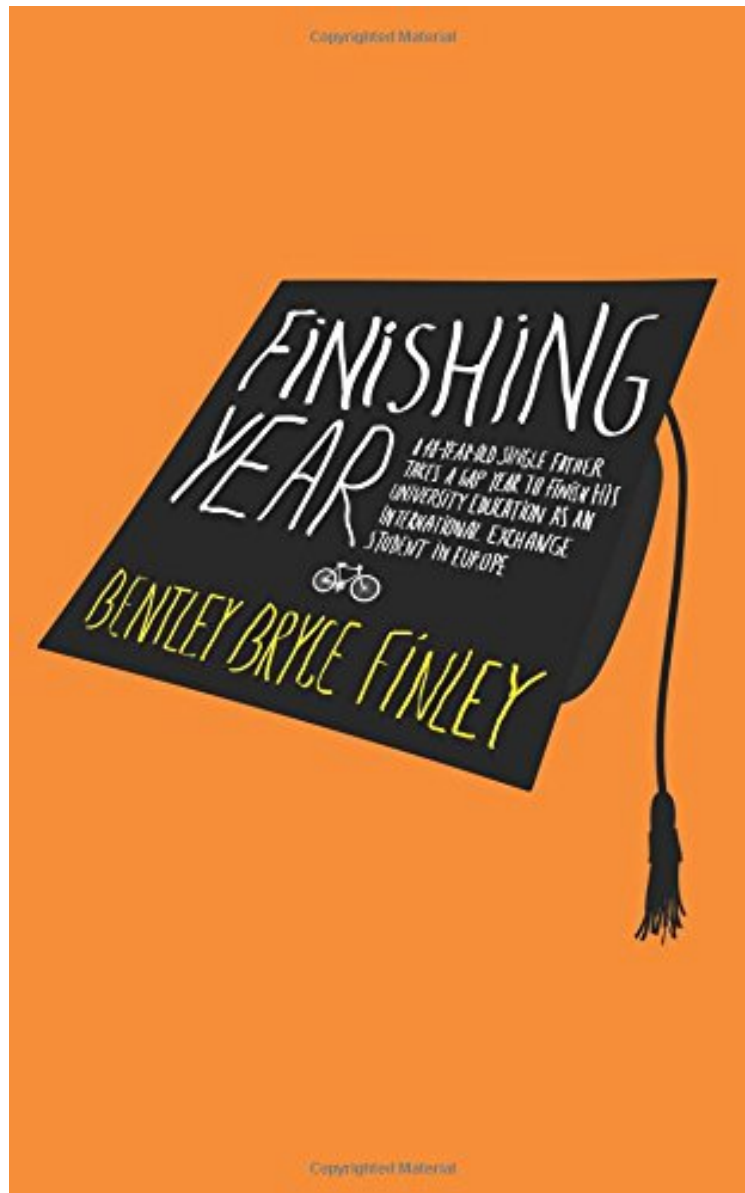


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Bentley Bryce Finley

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Bentley Bryce Finley : Finishing Year: A 48-year-old single father takes a gap year to finish his university education as an international exchange student in Europe.

before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Finishing Year: A 48-year-old single father takes a gap year to finish his university education as an international exchange student in Europe.*

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Terrific Tale by a Talented Traveler By Tony Sax I have never written a review before, but that does not stop me from starting now. I haven't read any travel books before, but if they are anything like this book I believe I really should start reading more of them. Where to begin? *Finishing Year* by Bryce Finley was such a joy to read, from start to finish. His mastery of prose and his way to make a book read like a spoken story are astounding skills you may not find in many other books. He peppers in such witty remarks throughout his story, such as complaints about the Hausmeister who does anything but his job and the Myth of German Efficiency. But these specific examples are not the only ways he makes the story worth reading; his spoken-word like approach to story telling makes it feel like you are sitting right next to the author as he is telling the story to you personally. His descriptions of the places he visited while in Europe are excellent. As a person who has been to many of the same places he visited, I must admit that he expertly relays the feelings of those places. Perhaps to a reader without such experience it won't have as much of an impact, but his descriptions of people and places in the book made me smile on more than one occasion as so many very distinct memories were brought back to the forefront of my mind. All of this could not have been possible if not for the wonderful way in which Finley brought these places to life through his words. I have to admit, art and art history never really interested me very much. Yes of course I can appreciate a good painting and its history, but I never really wanted to make special trips to museums just to see obscure paintings only students of art would be able to recognize. The astounding way Finley described the paintings he saw while in Europe was a huge surprise to me. It was not a surprise to me that he was able to accomplish such levels of description, but it was astonishing to me how an author could in fact describe them at all. I have never thought much about how to relay a picture through words, but Finley obviously has found a beautiful way in this book. He has an ability to bring both places and things to life through words and that is something I have not personally found in many books. I have only one complaint about this book: I wish it were longer. If it were 200 pages longer I would have no complaints at all. *Finishing Year* is a book you simply do not want to put down. That is a testament to Finley's ability to write such gripping descriptions of places and things. I know there was so much more for him to write about during his stay in Europe, and perhaps he only wanted to write the amount that was published, but I know I would not argue if he decided to add more to his already wonderful tale. I do not normally get very sad at the end of books, but I found myself in this exact state of being when I finished this book only a short while ago. I felt like I really got to know the author while reading his work, and even though he is alive and well in Germany or Canada, I feel like my connection with him has been severed, at least in the intimate capacity a personal travel memoir can provide. I will end this review by saying that I am very glad that I got the chance to read this book. It opened my eyes to things I had never thought of, and it provided me with a new set of eyes through which to see places in Europe that my own eyes have already seen. If you only read one travel book in your life, it should be this one. Without a doubt in my mind, this is one of the finest pieces of literature that I have read. (You may argue my experience in literature all you want, but to me and my own experience this holds true, which is what ultimately matters here since it is my review after all!) I hope that this book receives the recognition it deserves and I hope that if you are reading this review that you give this book a chance. I assure you, you will be better off for reading it. Tony (4/19/2015)

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A fun, entertaining read! By Jon* I received the book for free through Goodreads First Reads* This was a fun, entertaining read from start to finish. Finley was able to paint overseas travel (here being an international exchange student) in a way that can be both confusingly foreign and easily accessible. As someone who has rarely traveled outside my state, I have always viewed international traveling as an unrealistic option. After finishing *Finishing Year*, not only is international travel a more comfortable idea, but the idea of going after what you want now is also presented as the best option when living life. The one knock I have against *Finishing Year* is the level of description with some of Finley's recollections. When Finley returns to finish his degree at the age of 48, there is very little, if any, mentions of regret or pessimistic reflection. Instead, Finley briefly states he wouldn't have guessed this is where he would end up, but spends the majority of his storytelling looking at the present and to the future. It's a piece of advice I hope to incorporate more in my daily life.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Interesting and fun By Roberto I devoured this book as it was so interesting, from the bold, honest decision that starts it all to the following chapters on German life and different European cities. You also learn a lot about art and history in an entertaining, yet rigorous and insightful way. As an expatriate myself, the book provided me with countless ideas and topics of conversation to discuss and to reflect on, through its experienced and at the same time fresh view on cultural and social differences among countries. The chapter on the myth of German efficiency is absolutely masterful.

Can a man change his stars? Can he ever really rise above? These are the questions that plague our mortal souls. Bryce Finley, a 48-year-old Canadian single father with an unfinished university degree, two nearly grown children, and no

visible (future) means of support, is about to find out. After three years working at his local university, he decides to hit the books and go back to finish his degree and show his kids he never meant to be a dropout. His eldest has already quit high school, but is there still time to show the youngest one? When his university contract ends, completing his long-delayed education in art history proves to be financially difficult, so he jumps at the chance to study with the aid of a small scholarship as an international exchange student in Europe. What follows is a life in a cramped student dorm in an industrial town in Germany that is luckily an ideal jumping off point for visiting the great art capitals of Europe. Life-changing experiences follow, along with chances to reflect and improve upon a life some have called a financial train wreck, in which only one of his two kids might ever graduate from high school, and in which our hero finally realizes he never, ever, decided what to be when he grew up. But that was then, this is now, and class is in session. With style, humour, and cunning linguistics, Finley makes his way through his last year of university, the great museums of Europe, and the social fabrics of a handful of European countries, to emerge a wiser, more-educated, and potentially more-employable person.

About the Author Born in 1964 in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada. Father of two kids. Remarried. Holds an honours degree (with distinction) in History in Art from the University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. Teaches at the Co-operative State University of Baden-Wuerttemberg at Mannheim, Germany. A former journalist and author of four previous books on health, business, and travel. Writes personal experience adventure tales about living this life. Has a passion for Weimaraner dogs and possibly antique European sports cars and wooden sailboats.