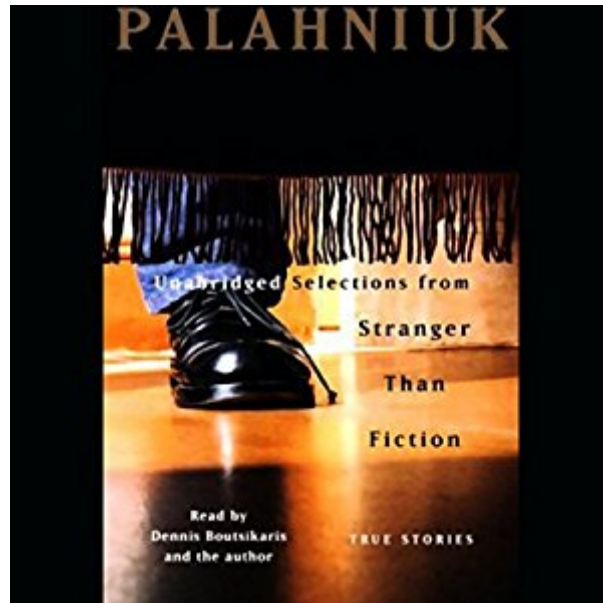


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Stranger Than Fiction: True Stories (Unabridged Selections)



Synopsis

Chuck Palahniuk's world has always been, well, different from yours and mine. The pieces that comprise *Stranger than Fiction*, his first nonfiction collection, prove just how different, in ways both highly entertaining and deeply unsettling. Included are encounters with alternative culture heroes Marilyn Manson and Juliette Lewis; the peculiar wages of fame attendant on the big-budget film production of the movie *Fight Club*; life as an assembly-line drivetrain installer by day, hospice volunteer driver by night; the really peculiar lives of submariners; the really violent world (and mangled ears) of college wrestlers; the underground world of iron-pumping anabolic-steroid gobblers; the immensely upsetting circumstances of his father's murder and the trial of his killer each essay or vignette offers a unique facet of existence as lived in and/or observed by one of our most flagrantly daring and original literary talents. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I was fascinated by the level of thinking that went into the movie *FIGHT CLUB*. It motivated me to read Palahniuk's novel which was the film's basis. The thinking, the cleverness, was there too. And though the novel was extreme, on the verge of being sci-fi or a futurist fable, there was something quite plausible about it as well. The emotional jadedness, the fear of emasculation, the fakery by which the nameless main character lived out his life all seemed quite authentic. I was genuinely intrigued by what Palahniuk had created and made a mental note to read more by this author. *STRANGER THAN FICTION* is a collection of articles written by Palahniuk for a variety of

magazines. If you're fascinated by the "fight club" phenomenon, you'll find some satisfying glimpses into that story's little sojourn into Hollywoodland and the popular consciousness scattered among these articles. But even more so, *STRANGER THAN FICTION* offers glimpses into the absurdities, shallowness, and violence that constitute the end-of-the-millennium, life-in-America backdrop for that novel: the world of amateur wrestling ("Where Meat Comes From"), conferences where writers have seven minutes to pitch their stories to agents, publishers, or movie producers ("You Are Here"), a demolition derby in Washington State for combine drivers ("Demolition"), people obsessed with building medieval castles in the late 20th century U.S.A. ("Confessions in Stone"), users of steroids ("Frontiers"), the homoerotic nature of life on a submarine ("The People Can"), and an amateur rocket-maker seeking to win a ten million dollar prize being offered to the first private group to put a rocket into the atmosphere ("Human Error").

Though he refers to himself as an Amy Hempel knockoff, Chuck Palahniuk resides among the best phrase-turners in American pop fiction - if he does nothing else - teasing readers with jabs for rabbit punches and haymakers to come even when the narrative runs from the rails. Palahniuk's distinct talent for clipped, blunt prose still punctuates "Stranger Than Fiction," an anthology of essays and rants collected from recent magazine assignments, but every other aspect of the book is uneven: It is shabbily assembled, and few pieces are in depth or well-considered enough to be stand-alone gems. A moneymaker for both author and publisher Doubleday but not much more, "Stranger Than Fiction" hardly lives up to its title: Steroids, Marilyn Manson and castles are interesting enough, but not in the realm of Palahniuk's novels. Revealing himself more than ever before, Palahniuk comes off as a guy's guy with a taste for adventure and socializing and multitasking, more content, at least in the non-fiction arena, to hit and run than turn a subject inside-out. For each segment that creates a full-bodied portrait - Palahniuk's committed, admiring feature on amateur wrestlers - there is the rootless, immature opener, "Testy Festy," a piece on a Montana sex carnival so pornographic it'll run off more potential buyers than it will attract, or the Tim O'Brien wannabe, "The People Can," as Palahniuk catalogs the life of a submarine well enough to frustrate the reader for its brevity. Palahniuk has planned an "on writing" book soon enough; in that case, best to leave out a short paeon to Hempel and her minimalist style ("Not Chasing Amy") and expand it to the treatise Palahniuk intends, as evidenced by his Internet workshop.

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