



Reality Bites

C.L. Foster

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Death. Domestic abuse. Ritual exploitation. The passing of a loved one. Child battery. Horrifying food addiction. Brutal bullying. Friendship gone bad. Drugs. Family collapse. Loss. Despair. These are the bricks in the walls of Hell. That would be real hell. Not the imaginary hell of the biblical scribe, the epic fantasist, the horrorphile, the metaphorist, the allegory peddler or the unreliable narrator. This is the real Hell. But no matter how bleak things become in that impenetrable abyss, no matter how bleak, no matter how pitch black, there is always the bottom rung of a rotten, threadbare rope ladder dangling from the precipice – and the message is: the rung is in reach. This is Reality Bites. Twelve fictional stories by twelve superb independent authors, each of whom is a card-carrying survivor of the abyss. And these are their tales.

Reality Bites Details

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From Reader Review Reality Bites for online ebook

Rae Gee says

A brilliant book of tales of darkness and how the authors pulled themselves back from the brink. Reality Bites is an inspirational read and a must for anyone who feels like there isn't any hope in the world.

Stephan says

wow! so much pain and triumph in one book. i will be happy when this is available in paperback so I can have one for my shelf. you guys were phenomenal and I feel like a better person after reading this. thanks so much!

Georgia Rose says

This anthology is made up of twelve stories on the subject 'Hope from Despair.' It is not a light read, although there is some humour in it, but it is an extremely moving and thought-provoking one where you're often left with the thought, there but for the grace of God go I.

Some of these stories are fiction but others are presented as 'faction' or the representation of real life events in a fictional format, there are some, but not many laughs but that doesn't mean all are full of darkness and bearing in mind the subject these were all written on, there is always hope.

The overwhelming feeling I got from this extraordinary bunch of writers was of heart-rending truthfulness. So powerful were these stories you felt the authors baring their souls as they wrote, the words pouring onto the pages like blood from a freshly cut vein.

I'm not going to specifically mention any one story, it wouldn't be fair without mentioning them all they are all that good. Suffice to say I thought this was a terrific read that I would heartily recommend to all and I will certainly be checking out other works by these authors.

Brenda Perlin says

Reality Bites

Dark, twisted, dreary, dismal, gloomy, glum, melancholy, morose, soul-searching, disparaging, moody, sulky, emotional, Reality Bites is all these things and more. I loved it!!!

Ophelia by Claire Appleseed

This haunting story touched me deep within my soul. I could feel the pain but also the will to live. No one

should ever take that away from us.

"Blinded by love, I believed him and put his indiscretions into that box that only gets visited under extreme conditions. I should have listened to them, the gossipmongers, they knew and now I know; they were right. In retrospect, his infidelities must have been his way of dealing with his failings, made him feel good that he could still 'pull a bird'. He boasted about them."

Doubting Cheryl by Cheryl Casey

Short but sweet. An innocent tale about a young girl coming to terms with the thereafter.

"Not once did I pray that 'now I lay me down to sleep' business when I was a kid. No way was I going to utter the words, 'if I should die before I wake.' I fully intended to wake up and live the next day and wasn't about to entertain the possibility of dying in my sleep."

Without Hope by Emma Edwards

Without hope... There is nothing. This story pulls on your heart strings. Gut wrenching and takes you to the darkest depths of despair. Will that glimmer of hope be enough to save Nadine?

"The first thing she does is glance upwards. It is indeed a clear night, full of twinkling stars. People have always looked to the stars as a source of inspiration. Now Nadine looks at them in a different way. Just the sight of them makes her feel uplifted. Makes her feel less like reaching for a handful of the pills in her bag."

Resiliency from Within by Christy L. Foster

This is a story of sheer perseverance. Why do some people simply shine more than others? Zest for life goes way past the exterior. It has to do with your inner core. Some people have it and some people don't. For some people giving up is not even a consideration. This story really makes you step back and look at your own life and reminds you of everything you have taken for granted up until this point.

"A light snowfall covered the tiny Massachusetts city as dawn broke over the horizon. The brisk chill in the air added to the life and heartbeat of the beautiful February day. Rosy cheeks, shallow breaths, and quick movements proved the daily business stopped for no obstacle, man, or weather. People were bustling about clearing the snow from their cars, shoveling their sidewalks, and making breakfast in preparation for what would be a normal day for most. As the rest of the town went about their daily grind, one family's happy routine was destined to be shattered, and their faith tested.

Regeneration by Rae Gee

This is a story in the eyes of an addict. 23 years old, young and invincible or so she thought. The common thread to all these stories seems to be the topic of bullying. Each tale is different but so much the same. We all want to be accepted and yet acceptance is something we all seem to fight for.

"Sometimes, she'd step away from her seat, ordering someone to remain with her belongings while she twirled on the dance floor. The lyrics of songs speaking of autumn, of forbidden loves, of full moons and vampires, touched her feet and made her dance. She'd wave her arms in the air, reaching for the moon, wanting to pull it close, while the scent of cloves and graveyards spiraled around her."

Little Girl by Lexi Kravey

A story about abuse. This lost girl becomes an addict, a person without hope who looks for a way out of this tragedy that is her life.

"Like a tortured soul, I was led down a path that few whoever tread survived it, turned to drugs or alcohol to relieve the acidic pain that rotted out their insides and turned the world from a place of good to a place of evil being constantly held a prisoner in the darkness of memories."

The Hotter the Forge, The Stronger the Steel by Eric Rada

This story is told with such raw emotion. The suffering you can feel through your veins. How do you look for forgiveness when you don't even forgive yourself? When is it time to let go of the suffering? This story is a reminder to never give up. Yes, there can light at the end of the tunnel.

"How do you comfort your siblings when you are the one who took your mother's life? How do you embrace your grandma when you killed her daughter? How do you stay strong for your father when you murdered his soul mate? How does one stay strong and be a pillar for a family when it is your fault they are suffering? My world was a struggle between being there for my family and knowing I am the reason they are suffering?"

Ghosts in Me by Suzanne van Rooyen

Life is not always fair but how you chose to deal with it is what matters most. If tragedy strikes, are we just supposed to give up? How do you find the strength to rise above? Can you?

"The syringa was in full bloom, lilac flowers and orange berries, with a chorus of grey lorries amongst the leafy boughs. My bare feet burned on the tar driveway as the large black gates offering a false sense of security to my upper-middle-class abode swung slowly open."

Suleman's Kebab by Stefan Xerxes

I have heard of dependencies, mostly over drugs, alcohol, sex, and food but never over kabobs. Can a person experience withdrawal symptoms from giving up their favorite food choice? Can one food choice change your entire life?

"Let me describe it to you, this kebab. Suleman's kebab. The kebab from the keeper of all circles. I know, I know. You've all eaten kabobs. You've all experienced a gyros. Why am I making such a fuss? Who can write a short story about a kebab? I mean, fuck off. Stop wasting my time. You're reading an anthology about loss and heartache, and relationships, and death and grief, and all that, and here you are talking about a kebab?"

Out of the Depths by Mary Ann Bernal

This is a story of addiction, betrayal and self-pity. A person who has hit rock bottom and then from there realizes he wants to live. Don't we all deserve a second chance?

"I see you judging me once again, shaking your head in disgust, I venture. But before I am condemned, hear me out. Once you know the facts, once you know I have conquered my demons, then, and only then, will you

accept your help. Yes, I admit it, I need your help, but I will not beg."

Best years of Our Lives by Mark Barry

You are a thirteen year old boy and repeatedly bullied by your classmates. You are paralyzed with fear even though there were warning signs. Boys and girls gang up against you. You want to cry but you don't. You know it will only make things worse. You take your beatings and wait for them to be over. It is through this experience that you learn something about life. Somehow this experience changes you forever.

"You have never experienced anything like this anticipation before, and you're scared. Your stomach is turning over as if you're staring down the side of a skyscraper. You are tense and dizzy and you wish you hadn't had seconds at dinner."
