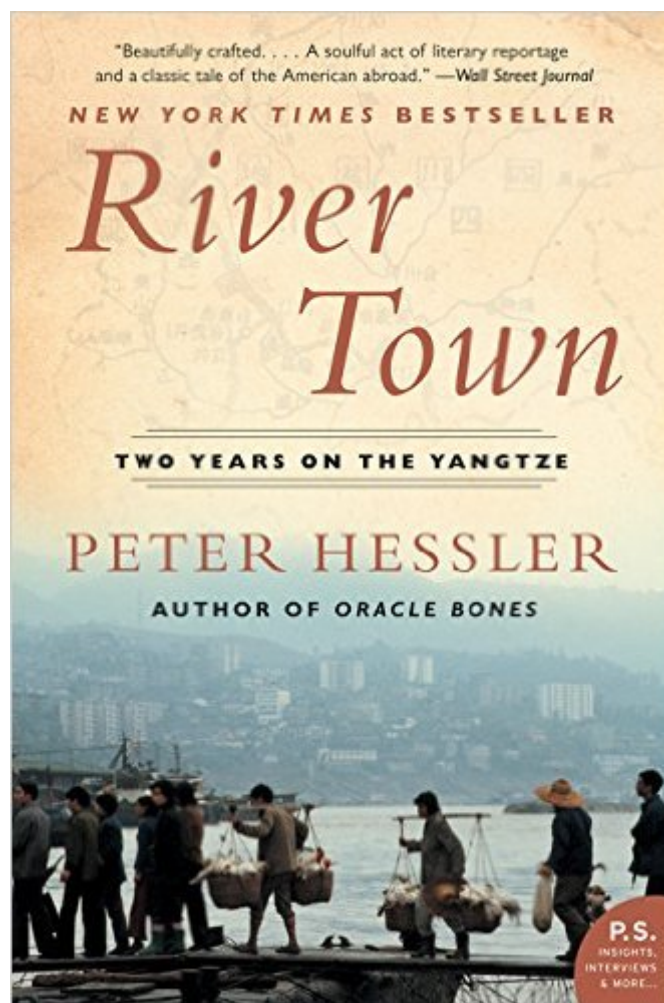


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# River Town: Two Years On The Yangtze (P.S.)



## Synopsis

A New York Times Notable Book Winner of the Kiriya Book Prize In the heart of China's Sichuan province, amid the terraced hills of the Yangtze River valley, lies the remote town of Fuling. Like many other small cities in this ever-evolving country, Fuling is heading down a new path of change and growth, which came into remarkably sharp focus when Peter Hessler arrived as a Peace Corps volunteer, marking the first time in more than half a century that the city had an American resident. Hessler taught English and American literature at the local college, but it was his students who taught him about the complex processes of understanding that take place when one is immersed in a radically different society. Poignant, thoughtful, funny, and enormously compelling, *River Town* is an unforgettable portrait of a city that is seeking to understand both what it was and what it someday will be.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (396 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

In his concluding remarks of *River Town: Two Years on the Yangtze*, Peter Hessler points us to the nub of his experience in China: "I had never had any idealistic illusions about my Peace Corps 'service' in China; I wasn't there to save anybody or leave an indelible mark on the town. If anything, I was glad that during my two years in Fuling I hadn't built anything, or organized anything, or made any great changes to the place. I had been a teacher, and in my spare time I had tried to learn as much as possible about the city and its people. That was the extent of my work, and I was comfortable with those roles and I recognized their limitations." In fall 1996, Peter Hessler, at the age

of 26, took a Peace Corps assignment that relocated him to a small town in the Sichuan province of China. Many natives let alone a young American who made his inaugural entrance into the country did not know and hear of Fuling. It's a former coal-mining town that is bounded by the Yangtze and the Wu. Chongqing and the Three Gorges are just hours away by boats. The book chronicles, in a rather casual but detailed way, Peter's teaching experience at the Fuling Education College and his life and anecdotes in town. Interwoven into Peter's diary are descriptions of local landmarks and customs. This book is by far the most passionate and yet accurate and objective account written by any foreigners. Peter really does possess a keen sense of his surroundings. Throughout his crisp, interesting prose and attention to details, the Chinese 'laobaixing' (common people) become alive as if we are actually interacting with them. I am in awe of how far Peter has gone in making meticulous observations of the Chinese culture and its people. A lot of what he mentions in this book is often overlooked by foreigners.

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