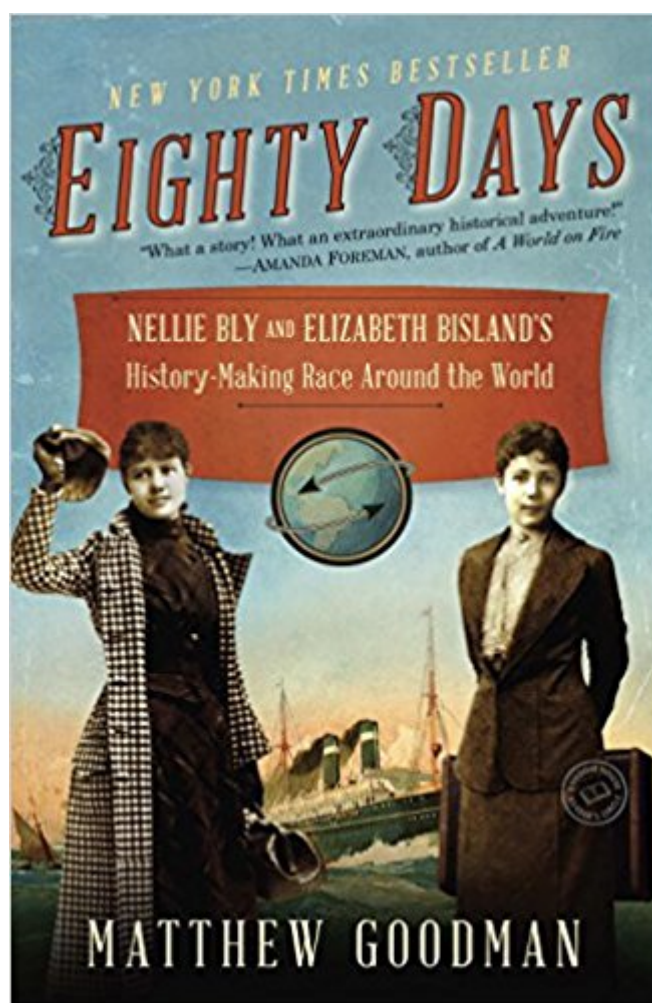


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# Eighty Days: Nellie Bly And Elizabeth Bisland's History-Making Race Around The World



## Synopsis

**NATIONAL BESTSELLER** On November 14, 1889, Nellie Bly, the crusading young female reporter for Joseph Pulitzer's *World* newspaper, left New York City by steamship on a quest to break the record for the fastest trip around the world. Also departing from New York that day and heading in the opposite direction by train was a young journalist from *The Cosmopolitan* magazine, Elizabeth Bisland. Each woman was determined to outdo Jules Verne's fictional hero Phileas Fogg and circle the globe in less than eighty days. The dramatic race that ensued would span twenty-eight thousand miles, captivate the nation, and change both competitors' lives forever. The two women were a study in contrasts. Nellie Bly was a scrappy, hard-driving, ambitious reporter from Pennsylvania coal country who sought out the most sensational news stories, often going undercover to expose social injustice. Genteel and elegant, Elizabeth Bisland had been born into an aristocratic Southern family, preferred novels and poetry to newspapers, and was widely referred to as the most beautiful woman in metropolitan journalism. Both women, though, were talented writers who had carved out successful careers in the hypercompetitive, male-dominated world of big-city newspapers. *Eighty Days* brings these trailblazing women to life as they race against time and each other, unaided and alone, ever aware that the slightest delay could mean the difference between victory and defeat. A vivid real-life re-creation of the race and its aftermath, from its frenzied start to the nail-biting dash at its finish, *Eighty Days* is history with the heart of a great adventure novel. Here's the journey that takes us behind the walls of Jules Verne's Amiens estate, into the back alleys of Hong Kong, onto the grounds of a Ceylon tea plantation, through storm-tossed ocean crossings and mountains blocked by snowdrifts twenty feet deep, and to many more unexpected and exotic locales from London to Yokohama. Along the way, we are treated to fascinating glimpses of everyday life in the late nineteenth century—an era of unprecedented technological advances, newly remade in the image of the steamship, the railroad, and the telegraph. For Nellie Bly and Elizabeth Bisland—two women ahead of their time in every sense of the word—were not only racing around the world. They were also racing through the very heart of the Victorian age. Look for special features inside. Join the Random House Reader Circle for author chats and more.

“What a story! What an extraordinary historical adventure!”—Amanda Foreman, author of *A World on Fire*

“A fun, fast, page-turning action-adventure . . . the exhilarating journey of two pioneering women, Nellie Bly and Elizabeth Bisland, as they race around the globe.”—Karen Abbott, author of *American Rose*

“[A] marvelous tale of adventure . . . The story of these two pioneering

women unfolds amid the excitement, setbacks, crises, missed opportunities and a global trek unlike any other in its time. . . . Why would you want to miss out on the incredible journey that takes you to the finish line page after nail-biting page? [Chicago Sun-Times](#) (Best Books of the Year) ["In a stunning feat of narrative nonfiction, Matthew Goodman brings the nineteenth century to life, tracing the history of two intrepid journalists as they tackled two male-dominated fields—world travel and journalism—in an era of incredible momentum."](#) [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#)

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Sample Pictures from *Eighty Days* A drawing of "the rival tourists" that appeared in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*. [Click here for a larger image](#) Nellie Bly in her distinctive traveling outfit. [Click here for a larger image](#) The *Augusta Victoria*, the steamship on which Nellie Bly crossed the Atlantic Ocean. [Click here for a larger image](#) --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Goodman deftly re-creates the frenzy surrounding Nellie Bly and Elizabeth Bisland's infamous race around the world in 1889. While the adventures of Bly, intrepid reporter for *Joseph Pulitzer's The World*, have survived and been embellished over the last century, genteel literary critic Bisland's story has sadly fallen by the wayside. Goodman corrects that historical omission by interweaving both their journeys as the two women set out in opposite

directions, equally committed to the idea of achieving the record for the fastest trip around the world. Inspired by Jules Verne's fantastical *Around the World in 80 Days*, Bly confidently expected to top the fictional feat of Phileas Fogg. Determined not to be outdone by Pulitzer, *Cosmopolitan* magazine commissioned Bisland, who set out one day later, to race against both Bly and time in an effort to cross the figurative finish line first. As a riveted world watched, these two women galloped around the globe via fortitude and an array of both modern and old-style transportation. Urge armchair travelers to hop on board as Nellie and Liz strike a blow for both feminism and the burgeoning Victorian travel industry. --Margaret Flanagan --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

After reading this book in the public library online edition, I had to buy it!!! It reads like a novel, and the historic details are thrilling. I was so interested in the story of the construction of, and boating through, the Suez Canal that I'm now going to read a book all about history of the Suez Canal. And of course the stories about the Nellie Bly and Elizabeth Bisland -- in the days when women reporters except on the "women's society" page were extremely rare -- are very exciting and fascinating. Another thing that really interests me is about Joseph Pulitzer's newspaper "The World." There reports way back in the 1880s of the wealthy not paying taxes; of police brutality running rampant. So much history that is exactly like what we are fighting against now, over 150 years later. Very discouraging, because a lot of people, including myself, believe that we can turn this around -- that it's a new phenomenon in the United States. NOT.

I grew up hearing the name Nellie Bly from time to time but had never known why she was famous. She rose from difficult economic circumstances to be an investigative journalist for Joseph Pulitzer's "World" newspaper. In November, 1899 she boarded a ship, heading for England, in an attempt to beat the time set by Phileas Fogg for traveling around the world in Jules Verne's classic novel. On the same day, Elizabeth Bisland, a writer for *Cosmopolitan Magazine* set off by train in the opposite direction with the same goal in mind. I enjoyed this story of these two women racing around the world as fast as trains and steamships could take them. Mr. Goodman has done an excellent job of making history a turn-the-page thrill. He also gives us a biography of both women before and after the amazing race. My one disappointment with the book was that the race was not put in context to what was happening in the United States and around the world. If Mr. Goodman was limited in the number of pages he could write, which many authors are, I am glad he used them as he did. I give many books to friends or the local library, but "Eighty Days" is a keeper.

Very well-written, this book takes the reader entirely into the worlds of East and West as they existed in 1889 and 1890. As a journalist myself, I had heard of Nelly Bly of the old New York World, and of her race to beat Jules Verne's 80-day fictional trip around the world. But I had never heard that it was a real race against another woman writer, Elizabeth Bisland. Author Goodman delivers complete, sympathetic biographies of both women, emphasizing what pioneers they were in an outrageously patriarchal and discriminatory profession back then. Though the imaginary Phileas Fogg had a tougher trip, with more crazy adventures than Nelly and Elizabeth -- who really had to little more than sit on trains and ships, riding out some stormy days at sea -- the women's voyages and their lives make for absorbing reading.

First off, I must say that I find the late 1800's and early 1900's fascinating. Nellie Bly and Ms. Bisland could not be two different kind of girls. This book covers both of their travels. Nellie did not know that Ms. Bisland was trying to beat her until late in her travel. (I don't want to say too much on this as you have to read the book to get the full benefit of Nellie's reply) I will tell of an amusing story she related to about the englishman she had met on her travels, including on especially caddish fellow who flirted with her unconscionably. (Bly revealed how she dropped him a brief note telling that if I even so much as caught him looking at me again I would report him to the crew of the first man-of-war we met floating the Stars and Stripes and induce the laddies in blue to resent an insult to the womanhood of their country by boarding our vessel and leading him off IN CHAINS) Hope this convinces some to invest in the time to enjoy this read.

This book compares the round-the-world journeys of two female journalists who sought to best the fictional character Phileas Fogg's travel time of 80 days. Jules Verne's story was still fresh in the minds of the public at a time when newspapers were doing great business and there were lots of them. The reactions of the two women to a punishing travel schedule through some of the most exotic places on earth is an interesting study in contrast as is the description of what they saw. The biggest single lesson is about the fleeting nature of fame and the considerable downside that comes with notoriety. The book contains some interesting historical nuggets and commentary on a woman's place in the society of the time. Some of the detail gets a bit tedious but then the journeys themselves were often tedious and uncomfortable. If you are looking for light reading be warned. You probably won't come away with a happy glow.

This book is rich with insight into the ways the world was changing towards the end of the nineteenth century. Goodman takes in large swaths of history, from New York journalism (yes, I also loved *The Sun and the Moon*), to pre-suffrage feminism, to the advances in the railroad and in steamship design, to the state of the British Empire. His eye swings across class divisions and the racial attitudes that accompanied western Imperialism, but he is never didactic. In fact, our attention is always kept on the race and its two fascinating protagonists, as somehow genuine suspense builds even with the outcome known in advance (hint-- we knew the name of one of these women but not the other). Finally, the section of the book on the aftermath of the race for Nye and Bisland brings the story to a whole different level. From a ripping good yarn we continue to journey into a thought-provoking, moving, and deeply satisfying ending. You will love this book.

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