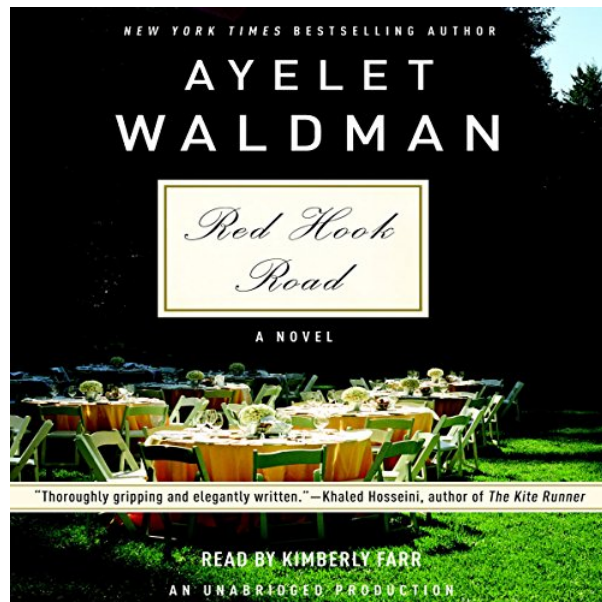
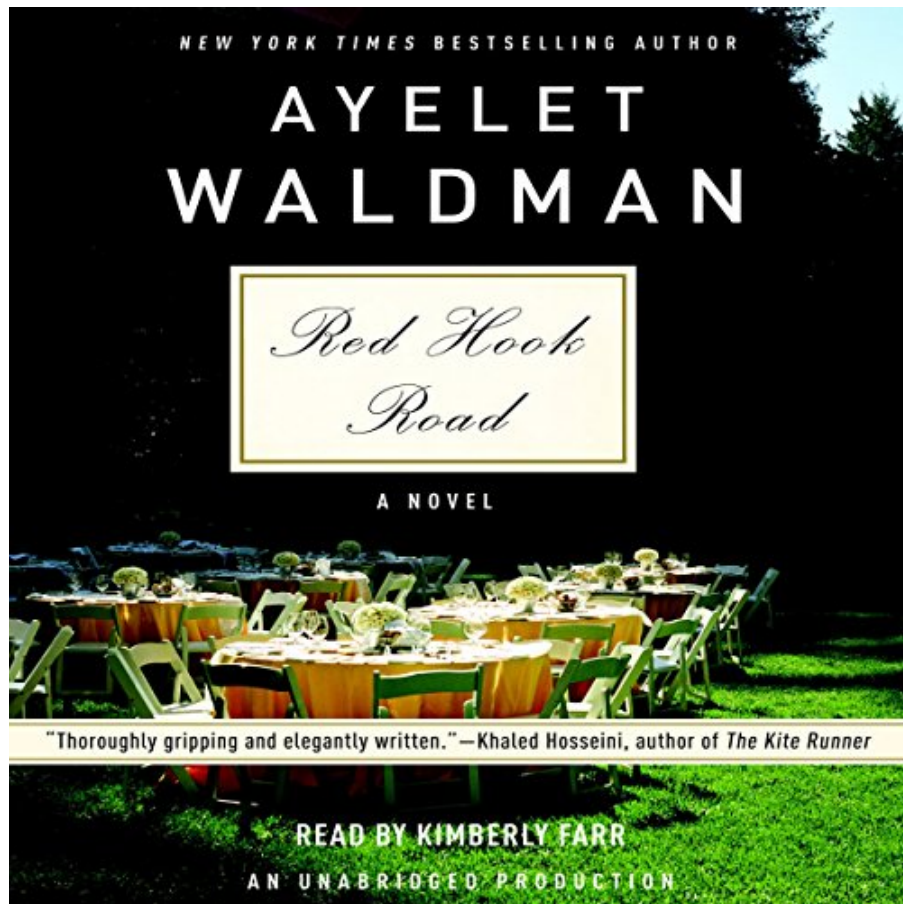


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RED HOOK ROAD BY AYELET WALDMAN PDF

As lyrical as a sonata, Ayelet Waldman's follow-up novel to *Love and Other Impossible Pursuits* explores the aftermath of a family tragedy.

Set on the coast of Maine over the course of four summers, *Red Hook Road* tells the story of two families, the Tetherlys and the Copakens, and of the ways in which their lives are unraveled and stitched together by misfortune, by good intentions and failure, and by love and calamity.

A marriage collapses under the strain of a daughter's death; two bereaved siblings find comfort in one another; and an adopted young girl breathes new life into her family with her prodigious talent for the violin. As she writes with obvious affection for these unforgettable characters, Ayelet Waldman skillfully interweaves life's finer pleasures—music and literature—with the more mundane joys of living. Within this resonant novel, a vase filled with wildflowers or a cold beer on a hot summer day serve as constant reminders that it's often the little things that make life so precious.

- Sales Rank: #98771 in Audible
- Published on: 2010-07-13
- Format: Unabridged
- Original language: English
- Running time: 860 minutes

Most helpful customer reviews

34 of 37 people found the following review helpful.

Don't Judge a Book...

By Rick Mitchell

Amazon's guide to reviews includes: "What would you have wanted to know before you purchased the product?" I would have wanted to know that, despite the cover and the description, this is more than just a chic book!

At the outset, a bride and groom die in an accident within an hour of their wedding. The remainder of the book is watching their two families deal, cope and try to adjust to the loss of the two young people who were the apples of their families' eyes.

About a quarter through, I thought "Is this all there is? Just mourning for a few hundred pages?" As difficult as that sounds, Ms Waldman really pulls it off. The account is captivating.

The family of the bride are New Yorkers, or as they are known in the tiny Maine village of Red Hook, "from aways". The mother's family has been summering so long there that she believes she and her family are an integral part of the fabric of the town. The groom's family are year-rounders. His mother cleans the homes of the "from aways" (including the bride's) and maintains them during the winter months.

The book follows the summer immediately following the tragedy and the next few thereafter.

Iris, the bride's mother is the focal character, although her husband, father and other daughter also get plenty of focus. On the other side, Jane, the groom's mother and Matt, his brother, are also tracked. Each deals with the loss in his or her different way. Because Red Hook is so small and the families both integral to its character as natives or from aways, the families constantly interact. Their interactions weave through the individuals' stories. The interactions are not only between the individuals, but also between the two very different cultures from which they start. Jim and Becca, the couple were a bridge between the two, but are now gone.

This is a fine account of loss, mourning, coping and trying to heal by several different people who come from distinct cultures.

The writing is extremely good. The characters all have depth and, as one would expect, are seen at both their strongest and weakest. The emotions in this book are raw and always seemingly on the surface, yet the reader is also given hints of undercurrents beneath the outside and the spoken word. Every character copes in a different way with varying degrees of success.

This is highly recommended for its combing the depths of loss and emotion. It is not recommended for a light summer reading on the coast of Maine.

51 of 62 people found the following review helpful.

Lobster rolls but no Moxie

By M. Feldman

Open up the lawn chair and get a cold drink from the cooler. Your summer reading (good for the beach, too!) is waiting for you. Ayelet Waldman's "Red Hook Road" is well written chick lit of the first order, and what's more, it's Maine chick lit. Lobsters and melted butter, blueberry pie, sailing on the bay, fearsome mosquitoes, battered pickups, Hannaford grocery stores---it's almost all there. (Inexplicably, there is no reference to Moxie, the beloved medicine-like soft drink.) The novel is set in Red Hook, Maine, thinly disguised as the actual Downeast town of Blue Hill, with its internationally known summer music festival, Kneisel Hall (Usherman Hall in the book).

Since "Red Hook Road" is meant to be a page-turner, I won't give away a bit of the plot, except to say that it is about two intertwined families and their responses to a tragedy that affects them both. The Copakens are long-time summer visitors from Manhattan or, as Mainers say, "from away." while the Tetherlys are local people. Most of the narration is from the point of view of the indomitable Iris Copaken, a Columbia professor whose specialty is Holocaust Studies, but the omniscient narrator occasionally steps away from Iris to provide insight into other characters. The novel takes place over the course of four summers, with only hints as to what happens in the intervening nine months. You can bet it's cold and bleak up in Red Hook, though, with only the Tetherlys to keep an eye on the closed up summer cottages.

There is a recurring thread of "from away" versus local tension in this novel, although Waldman does not mine this hoary theme with particular success. So dominant is Iris's persona that her opposite number, the house cleaner Jane Tetherly, is reduced to a sullen woman of few words whose only pleasant quality seems to be her ability to make a banana pudding from Nilla wafers that the "from aways" pretend to like. Waldman probably knows that the characterization of Mainers is not her forte; in the opening pages of the book, Iris's daughter Ruthie remarks on how her mother takes infinite pains to chat up the local women but can never shed her outsider status.

"Red Hook Road" ends with a microburst--the weather kind--but the denouement is a kind of prose microburst, too. Everything gets wrapped up VERY rapidly. (Wow, I wish my lawnmower started like the outboard on that unused dinghy in the unused shed!) I'm only giving the novel three stars, as it's not exactly enduring literature. However, as an accompaniment to a sweating glass of iced tea, it's better than a plateful of cookies.

M. Feldman

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

LIKED IT - DID NOT LOVE IT

By FourthDaughter

This book was good - but it is receiving a LOT of buzz that I simply don't think it is worthy of, I think it has been a little over-rated.

I certainly had no trouble finishing it, and the characters and the atmosphere (Maine) easy to get into - but I felt as it went on it rambled and at the end it never tied up any of the loose ends.

I have read much better books this summer - for example, Father of the Rain by Lilly King, which I would give five stars.

See all 121 customer reviews...

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