



American Pastoral: American Trilogy (1) (Vintage International)

By Philip Roth

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American Pastoral: American Trilogy (1) (Vintage International) By Philip Roth

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Here is Philip Roth's masterpiece—an elegy for the American century's promises of prosperity, civic order, and domestic bliss. Roth's protagonist is Swede Levov, a legendary athlete at his Newark high school, who grows up in the booming postwar years to marry a former Miss New Jersey, inherit his father's glove factory, and move into a stone house in the idyllic hamlet of Old Rimrock. And then one day in 1968, Swede's beautiful American luck deserts him.

For Swede's adored daughter, Merry, has grown from a loving, quick-witted girl into a sullen, fanatical teenager—a teenager capable of an outlandishly savage act of political terrorism. And overnight Swede is wrenched out of the longed-for American pastoral and into the indigenous American berserk. Compulsively readable, propelled by sorrow, rage, and a deep compassion for its characters, *American Pastoral* gives us Philip Roth at the height of his powers.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Philip Roth's 22nd book takes a life-long view of the American experience in this thoughtful investigation of the century's most divisive and explosive of decades, the '60s. Returning again to the voice of his literary alter ego Nathan Zuckerman, Roth is at the top of his form. His prose is carefully controlled yet always fresh and intellectually subtle as he reconstructs the halcyon days, circa World War II, of Seymour "the Swede" Levov, a high school sports hero and all-around Great Guy who wants nothing more than to live in tranquillity. But as the Swede grows older and America crazier, history sweeps his family inexorably into its grip: His own daughter, Merry, commits an unpardonable act of "protest" against the Vietnam war that ultimately severs the Swede from any hope of happiness, family, or spiritual coherence.

From Library Journal

In his latest novel, Roth shows his age. Not that his writing is any less vigorous and supple. But in this autumnal tome, he is definitely in a reflective mood, looking backward. As the book opens, Roth's alter ego, Nathan Zuckerman, recalls an innocent time when golden boy Seymour "the Swede" Levov was the pride of his Jewish neighborhood. Then, in precise, painful, perfectly rendered detail, he shows how the Swede's life did not turn out as gloriously as expected?how it was, in fact, devastated by a child's violent act. When Merry Levov blew up her quaint little town's post office to protest the Viet Nam war, she didn't just kill passing physician Fred Conlon, she shattered the ties that bound her to her worshipful father. Merry disappears, then eventually reappears as a stick-thin Jain living in sacred poverty in Newark, having killed three more people for the cause. Roth doesn't tell the whole story blow by blow but gives us the essentials in luminous, overlapping bits. In the end, the book positively resonates with the anguish of a father who has utterly lost his daughter. Highly recommended.

-?Barbara Hoffert, "Library Journal"

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From [Booklist](#)

There is no sex in the new Philip Roth novel, but that is only one shortcoming. *Pastoral*, like Roth's 21 previous works, is well crafted with vivid, crisp prose, but unlike the others, it's empty. There's no there there. Roth resurrects alter ego Nathan Zuckerman to introduce Seymour "Swede" Levov, a Phineas-like character from Roth's childhood at Newark's Wequahic High School. Swede and Nathan meet by chance at a Mets' game years later. Swede, a towheaded, square-jawed, six-foot superathlete, had a knack for transcending the turbulence of wartime America. A marine at the end of World War II, he is spared the South Pacific slaughterhouse and is kept stateside to play baseball for the Parris Island squad. After the war, he marries Dawn, the blond Miss New Jersey, buys a house in the country, and takes over his father's multimillion-dollar glove factory in Newark. And after that, Roth delights in the destruction of his all-American hero, filling page after page with frustration, humiliation, and anxiety: Vietnam radicalizes Swede's daughter, Merry, destroying the family; Dawn's depression and infidelity ruin their marriage; and a jealous, vindictive brother and controlling father each take a toll. *Pastoral* is both sentimental and savage. Roth vents his bitterness with America and himself. Once again, no one escapes the misery that personifies modern America. *Ted Leventhal*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Judith Joiner:

This American Pastoral: American Trilogy (1) (Vintage International) book is just not ordinary book, you have it then the world is in your hands. The benefit you receive by reading this book is definitely information inside this e-book incredible fresh, you will get facts which is getting deeper an individual read a lot of information you will get. That American Pastoral: American Trilogy (1) (Vintage International) without we realize teach the one who examining it become critical in pondering and analyzing. Don't possibly be worry American Pastoral: American Trilogy (1) (Vintage International) can bring when you are and not make your handbag space or bookshelves' turn into full because you can have it within your lovely laptop even mobile phone. This American Pastoral: American Trilogy (1) (Vintage International) having good arrangement in word along with layout, so you will not experience uninterested in reading.

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