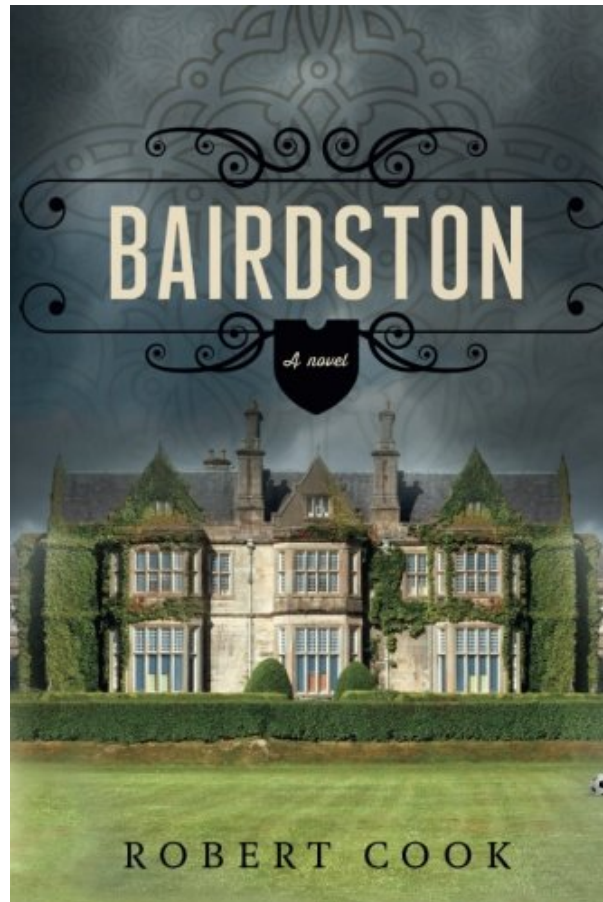
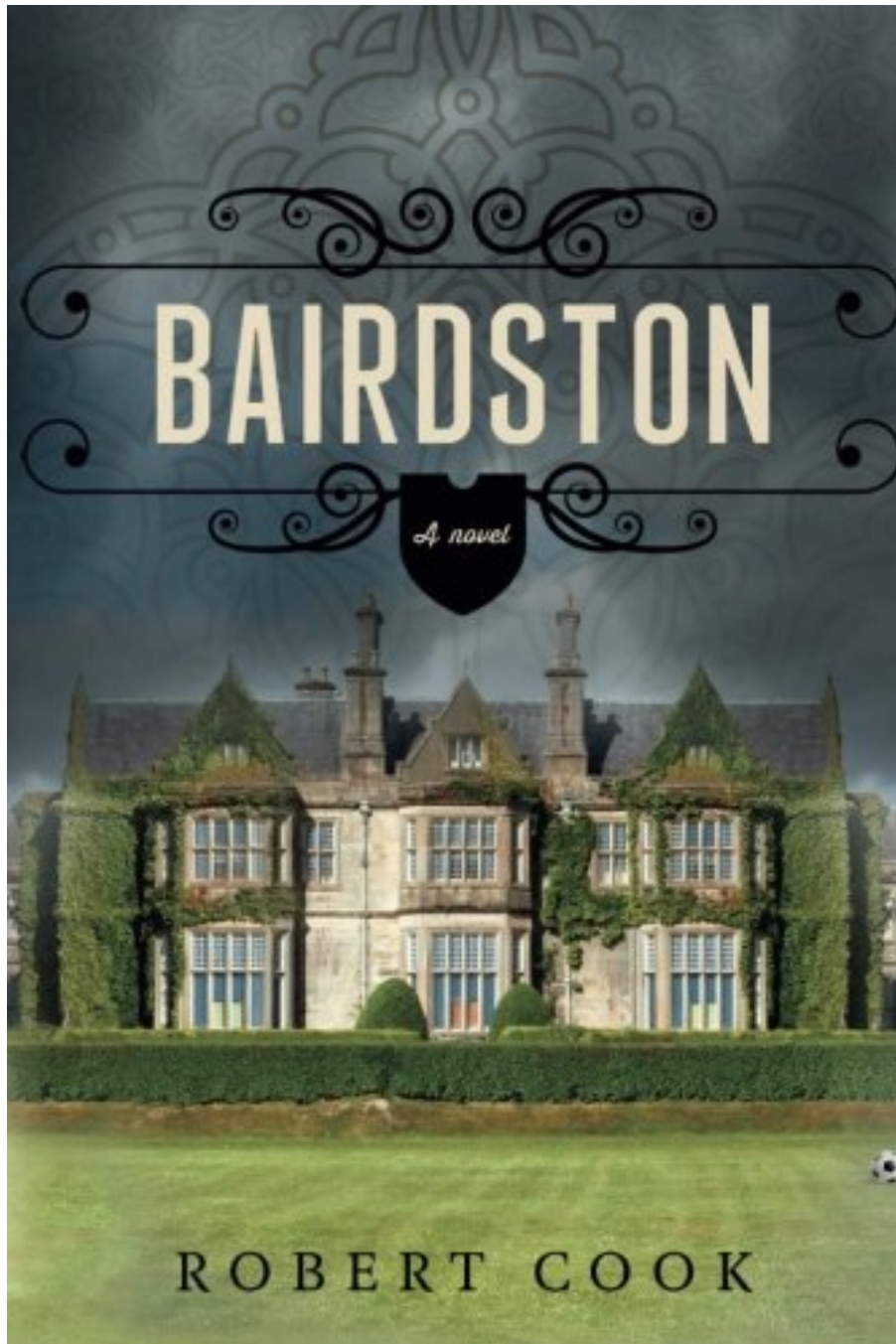


# BAIRDSTON: A NOVEL BY ROBERT COOK



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### About the Author

Robert Cook Author of the only fiction on Bill Gates' Summer 2013 reading list. Shooter, soldier, entrepreneur, venture capitalist, vintner and now author. Robert Cook is a United States Army Vietnam veteran, who attained the rank of Major and holds the parachutists badge, Bronze Star Medal and the Army Commendation Medal. Cook was named the Ernst and Young Entrepreneur of the Year for the Metropolitan Washington, DC Region in 1987. Mr. Cook is an active philanthropist. He endowed the Robert E. Cook Honors College of Indiana University of Pennsylvania that was recently covered in Donald Asher's book, "Cool Colleges for the Hyper Intelligent, Late Blooming and Just Plain Different". [www.iup.edu/honors](http://www.iup.edu/honors) Mr. Cook, originally of Altoona, Pennsylvania, holds a BS in Mathematics from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and an MBA from the George Washington University. Find out more at: <http://www.robertcooknovels.com>

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Karim and Salima Kufdani have survived the streets of Tangier. Orphaned and alone they've found their own way, until a fateful night and a cafe brawl see them shipped away from everything they've ever known. Now in the cold, barren expanse of Scotland, Karim and Salima must learn to navigate the waters of the exclusive Bairdston School and cross a cultural divide neither ever expected to face. Can Karim overcome the vendetta of a coach who doesn't want him on the team? Will anyone ever accept uneducated Salima for the prodigy she really is? A story of love, acceptance and perseverance, Bairdston asks if the principles of peace and the virtues of intelligence can ever truly light the darkest of all places. Award-winning novelist, Robert Cook paints an irresistible portrait of teen life in a Muslim meets Western world. Bairdston is a triumphant tale that will capture readers and leave them breathless with every exhilarating page.

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### Most helpful customer reviews

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Young Adult Book from a Favorite Thriller Author

By Bruce T. Coleman

Title: Young Adult Book from a Favorite Thriller Author.

Bairdston is a Young Adult book. I wouldn't have read it if I weren't a fan of Cook's thrillers. I was curious what ideas and action Robert Cook would bring to that audience. To my delight, Bairdston is an exciting tale of school, soccer and intrigue, colored by racism, bigotry and talk of religion in the context of the chaotic Middle East. (Try to put all of that in a sentence much less a book.) Readers find the difference between Sunni and Shiite Muslims; hear one view of Muslim feminism, and much more. A great case is made for a

particular secret weapon to master before studying the natural sciences. A crooked soccer coach is the action icing.

In a world where young adults have little ethical guidance and have seemingly no consequences for bad actions, Cook wove lessons in life into daily life. I have sent copies to the smartest three of my siblings' grandchildren in hopes they enjoy a good tale and maybe even learn some life lessons.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Not a good book and falls short

By yomama

I received an advance copy for Netgalley for an honest review. Thank you Netgalley.

I'm not sure if I read the same book as those who gave this 4 or 5 stars. This book was lacking on so many levels. It was lacking not just in plot and characterization but also in world development.

In general, I liked the premise of this book- the Muslim meets Western world and can their philosophy of peace and their intelligence overcome how the Western world views Muslims. However, I think this book falls short.

When we first meet Karim and Salima, they are in a cafe courtyard in Tangier performing to earn money. They get into some trouble, are saved by a man named Cooch who then educates them. Eventually he sends them to Scotland to the Bairdston school for formal education and to get accustomed to the Western world. In order for this to work you really need a sense of Karim and Salima's life on the streets of Tangier, a sense of their life with Cooch, and a sense of Bairdston and it's Western world. You don't truly get any sense of all these things. I understand they are orphans and struggling to survive on the streets. I get that this is dangerous, more so for Salima being a girl than it would be for Karim. It will only get more dangerous for Salima as she gets older. There is a slight sense of this. We do get an idea. However, we really don't truly get how their life is with Cooch and we definitely don't get a sense of who Cooch is. Why would he do this? Why these two particular kids instead of any of the other orphans on the streets of Tangier? Did Salima and Karim happen to be in the right place at the right time for Cooch? We have no true idea.

We get that Cooch educates them and it's done in a different way. But how truly different is this? Math is taught in pictures instead of the formal way taught in school. Supposedly the pictures are easier for one to understand math. You don't understand this until almost the end of the book when Salima finally gives an example. You just have to take it at face value before then. Then they are taught movement which is basically fighting skills. Other than that they exercise (running and swimming) and are taught religion and philosophy. During this whole time, again, you do not get a sense of who Cooch is nor do you get a sense of who Doctor is. You also truly don't see how educating kids this way is truly different or beneficial.

At the end of the book it says Cooch is a dour guy that doesn't show emotion yet how exactly do you know this throughout the rest of the book? You don't. You do get that he probably likes fighting- he kinda set up Hobbes for a fight and was completely ready to incapacitate Beake, but you don't see how he doesn't show emotion. Then, why would he hire Beake at the end? Because he takes pity on him or for some other reason? You don't know.

Once at Bairdston, you don't see how the culture is and how Karim and Salima do not fit. All you get is the kids calling them derogatory and racist names. You also truly do not get the sense of how very different these kids are in this Western culture. If you did get this sense, then the book would have been more powerful. Since you don't, it falls flat and you wonder- how exactly are they having trouble fitting in, am I

missing something???

Then there is a switch in points of view throughout the book. A lot of these were very awkward and clunky. This could be because this was a copy that was not formatted. If this is the reason why, I hope the formatting was corrected before publication. Anyway, the beginning of the story is really just Karim's point of view. Once at Bairdston, we suddenly start getting Salima's point of view. Then we suddenly get a third person point of view when it involves Cooch and Doctor. Then we also get the Dean's point of view- 1st person at that. I don't get why we needed this. I think instead of doing this, it should have stuck to one person's point of view or just a third person one. It should not switch back and forth. The message was not as succinct in doing it this way as it could have been just sticking to one. Since most of the book was from Karim's point of view, maybe the whole thing should have been written this way. Everyone else's view of things could have been deciphered through Karim's interaction with them. There was no need to switch points of view.

Also, when reading, the character will be referred to by different names within the same paragraph. For example Cooch will be known as Cooch but within the same paragraph be referred to as Alex. The same with Doctor and Caitlin. If that part of the story is being told from one person's point of view, then the other characters should be referred to as that person knows them. For example, if we are reading from Karim's point of view, then Cooch should just be Cooch not Alex. He didn't interact with Cooch as Alex and so would not think of him this with that name.

Also, when there is a chapter and it says Salima, then that chapter should really only be her point of view. This is what we as readers expect when we see this. It shouldn't just switch mid chapter to someone else's point of view.

I also do not see the need for a couple of characters- for example Sayed. What did he bring to the story? Whatever happened to him? He disappeared after playing the game with Karim and Namadi and never appeared again. He stomped off because he was getting frustrated with the game but we never found out if or how it affected his friendship with Karim. Apparently Sayed just fell off the face of the Earth and that's it. Character gone.

I did like how we learn a little, but very little, about the Muslim culture. That being said, it happened to late in the story. It happened once Karim was on the football, or soccer, team and it was on the bus to and from games. This was only at the end of the book. We are looking at about 3/4 of the way through and we finally get around to hearing something about the Muslim religion/culture. What??!! If the book is to show the differences in culture between the Western world and Muslim one, why wait so long to get into it??? Actually, we could have been shown this from the beginning had the worlds been developed better and the sense of each world developed so we can see the differences this way.

In the end I wanted to know who Cooch, Doctor, Karim, Salima, and even Beake were. When reading the Author's Note at the end of the book, he refers you to his previous books to get Cooch's and Doctor's backgrounds. He does make a point to say they are adult books whereas Bairdston is a book for kids. What?! Really?! In order to get background info I should let my kid read an adult book. How does this make sense? The background on these characters should have been in THIS book and written in a way for kids since this is a KIDS book. This book is not part of series and even if it was the characters should be developed in the first book! As it is, this is a stand alone book and we don't know who these people are and we should. We should not have go to completely different books to get this information!! Then lets look at this in another realistic way- how many kids are actually going to read an author's note to even get this information? Ummm..... none to very little. Kids don't actually read that stuff.

This book had a lot of promise but fell short on many levels. This being a stand alone book and one written for kids/young adults and NOT adults, it should have been a complete story. It in NO way was. This is a shame because it could have been a powerful book otherwise.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

I thought it may be a good book. I was thoroughly let down by this ...

By Amber Carroll

I just finished Bairdston by Robert Cook. I have got to say I absolutely didn't care for this book. The cover of the book had me so enticed that I had to know what it was about then when I read about it, I thought it may be a good book. I was thoroughly let down by this book. Mid way through it I started researching the author and found out this book was pretty much a spin off to one of Robert's other books Pulse, and I haven't read that so I'm not sure if it helps with the story or anything but lets hope it explains more than this book. I was more confused and wondering if I missed something while reading this book than I was enjoying it. I do not feel like this story is over, it should be rewriting and give more clear explanations and a better plot to it. seriously what was going on in this story. One and a half stars!!!

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### About the Author

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