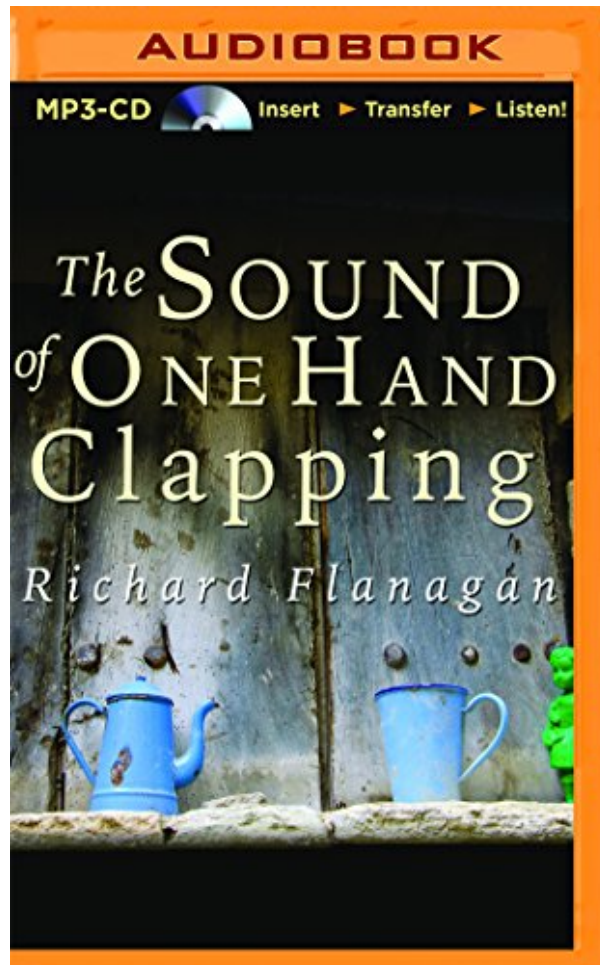


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It was 1954, in a construction camp for a hydroelectric dam in the remote Tasmanian highlands, where Bojan Buloh had brought his family to start a new life away from Slovenia, the privations of war, and refugee settlements. One night, Bojan's wife walked off into a blizzard, never to return, leaving Bojan to drink too much to quiet his ghosts, and to care for his three-year-old daughter Sonja alone. Thirty-five years later, Sonja returns to Tasmania and a father haunted by memories of the European war and other, more recent horrors. As the shadows of the past begin to intrude ever more forcefully into the present, Sonja's empty life and her father's living death are to change forever. *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* is about the barbarism of an old world left behind, about the harshness of a new country, and the destiny of those in a land beyond hope who seek to redeem themselves through love.

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Most helpful customer reviews

30 of 30 people found the following review helpful.

Heartbreaking story beautifully written.

By cindyramone

The story begins with Maria, who is leaving her daughter, Sonja, and husband, Bojan. Forever. The images and sounds of the snow falling as she leaves her daughter are absolutely one of the finest passages I have read in a long time. I went back to it after I finished the book and it meant so much more. I could feel the snow and the despair of this family acutely the second time. Richard Flanagan takes us through present and past to tell this story, using prose that speaks like poetry. There were sentences I just read repeatedly because they were written so well. It is a sad book, beyond heartbreaking at times when we see how much hurt each member of this family has borne. There were times when I hated Bojan as much as his daughter did, but when his full story is revealed, he must be understood and forgiven.

The book ends with hope and redemption, and it is believable and welcome. This book, its characters,

images, and symbolism in the writing, are unforgettable.

This is another example of a superior novel that begs to be read by a larger audience.

33 of 34 people found the following review helpful.

gorgeous story that comes full circle

By sallyann

Absolutely beautiful story of people who lose each other and the heartbreaking, vulnerable steps taken to find each other again.

I found that real emotion pored out of this book of real people, people with flaws, people who can't say the words that they know others need to hear. So much of the style reminded me of Alice Hoffman's books. An absolute beautiful story that I won't tire of reading.

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful.

Deserves more than one handed applause

By Roger J. Carter

This is an impressive novel. The story of a post-war Slovenian immigrant family whose lives gradually fall apart. The journey of the main character (Sonja) and her father (Bojan) towards some kind of redemption, and a regaining of some meaning in their lives. (See other reviews for fuller plot descriptions). The quality of the writing occasionally reaches a quality I can only call stunning. Having said this, Flanagan's literary aspirations almost fail to come off in some passages as he seeks to wring every nuance of emotion out of a scene. This is far outweighed by the positives however, and I would rate one chapter in particular (I won't tell you which!) as one of the finest pieces of prose I have read anywhere!. As another reviewer has noted, this is a 'literary' read and not for the faint hearted. Those of us who actually live where the novel is set have the added bonus imagining the action in the precise geographical context that Flanagan himself had in mind. An appreciation of the harsh contradictions in Tasmanian history, climate and geography goes a long way to enhancing the appreciation of this fine novel. Regardless of this Tasmanian setting (which is extremely important in all Flanagan's work) any serious reader will be well rewarded by a careful reading of his fine literary craftsmanship.

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