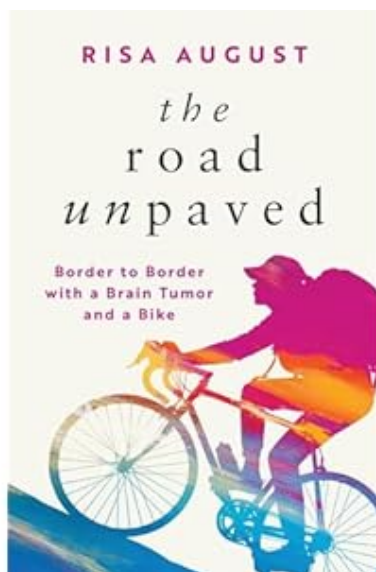




# Readers' Favorite® Book Reviews and Award Contest

## Book Review Mini-Critique



Below you will find ratings (scale of 1-5) with general descriptions for the major parts of your book followed by your Readers' Favorite review. Although this is just a Mini-Critique, we hope it will give you an insight into how readers may view the different components of your book.

These are the opinions of your reviewer, and although they are not a literary professional, they are an avid reader of books just like yours.

**Title:** The Road Unpaved  
**Subtitle:** Border to Border with a Brain Tumor and a Bike  
**Author:** Risa August  
**Genre:** Non-Fiction - Memoir



**Appearance:** The appearance of a book can make a significant impact on the experience of a reader, whose enjoyment is often enhanced by an enticing cover, an intriguing table of contents, interesting chapter headings, and when possible, eye-catching illustrations.

**5**

**Plot:** The characters of a book should be well defined with strengths and flaws, and while they do not have to be likable, the reader does have to be able to form a connection with them. The tone should be consistent, the theme should be clear, and the plot should be original or told from a unique perspective. For informative books -- those without plot and characters--this rating refers primarily to your concept and how well you presented it.

**5**

**Development:** Development refers to how effectively you told your story or discussed your topic. The dialogue should be realistic, the descriptions should be vivid, and the material should be concise and coherent. Organization is also a key factor, especially for informative books -- those without plot and characters. The order in which you tell your story or explain your topic and how smoothly it flows can have a huge impact on the reader's understanding and enjoyment of the material.

**5**

**Formatting:** Formatting is the single most overlooked area by authors. The way in which you describe scenes, display dialogue, and shift point of view can make or break your story. In addition, excessive grammatical errors and typos can give your book an amateurish feel and even put off readers completely.

**5**

**Marketability:** Marketability refers to how effectively you wrote your book for your target audience. Authors may include content that is above or below the understanding of their target reader, or include concepts, opinions or language that can accidentally confuse or alienate some readers. Although by its nature this rating is very subjective, a very low rating here and poor reviews may indicate an issue with your book in this area.

**5**

**Overall Opinion:** The overall starred rating takes into account all these elements and describes the overall reading experience of your reviewer. This is the official Readers' Favorite review rating for your book.

**5**

**Review:**

Reviewed by Asher Syed for Readers' Favorite

In Risa August's memoir *The Road Unpaved*, Risa receives a diagnosis of a pituitary macroadenoma and acromegaly, then embarks on a cycling journey with a mixed bag of fellow riders, including guides Jimmy Buffett and Mama Bear, emotionally working through the end of her marriage and her brain tumor, humorously named "Bubba." The narrative shifts between past and present detail Risa's life, leading to the ride being juxtaposed against the ride itself. Through pain and personal issues, she finds solace in things, like a blueberry muffin, while reflecting on her past and things like her perfectionism as a wedding coordinator. Risa's ride is marked by mishaps, self-doubt, and bursts of camaraderie. In the end, she will be faced with decisions that will alter the course of her life off the road, but she must first arrive there.

There are so many elements of *The Road Unpaved* by Risa August that all collectively contribute to the excellence of her memoir, offering a multi-dimensional portrayal of her experiences, emotions, interactions, and personal growth throughout the journey. There are two journeys we are given here. The first is the cycling feat she commits herself to, and the second is her journey through a life-altering diagnosis and the impact it has on every facet of her life. Most of us are unable to imagine riding through the Western coastal states, but with August, it is authentic and relatable. There is a scene where a huge neon sign beckons her to donuts, and she breaks free from her typical dietary restrictions during the biking journey to indulge, encouraging others to join in. Her relationship woes with Addison and the frustration of a horrible connection at the wrong moment—well, we know what that's like. The writing is engaging, and August's evolving perspective on companionship and support, and the road to self-awareness and personal development make this book a ride that a reader definitely wants to be on. Very highly recommended.