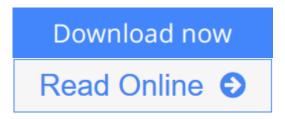


# **American Wife: A Novel**

By Curtis Sittenfeld



American Wife: A Novel By Curtis Sittenfeld

On what might become one of the most significant days in her husband's presidency, Alice Blackwell considers the strange and unlikely path that has led her to the White House—and the repercussions of a life lived, as she puts it, "almost in opposition to itself."

A kind, bookish only child born in the 1940s, Alice learned the virtues of politeness early on from her stolid parents and small Wisconsin hometown. But a tragic accident when she was seventeen shattered her identity and made her understand the fragility of life and the tenuousness of luck. So more than a decade later, when she met boisterous, charismatic Charlie Blackwell, she hardly gave him a second look: She was serious and thoughtful, and he would rather crack a joke than offer a real insight; he was the wealthy son of a bastion family of the Republican party, and she was a school librarian and registered Democrat. Comfortable in her quiet and unassuming life, she felt inured to his charms. And then, much to her surprise, Alice fell for Charlie.

As Alice learns to make her way amid the clannish energy and smug confidence of the Blackwell family, navigating the strange rituals of their country club and summer estate, she remains uneasy with her newfound good fortune. And when Charlie eventually becomes President, Alice is thrust into a position she did not seek—one of power and influence, privilege and responsibility. As Charlie's tumultuous and controversial second term in the White House wears on, Alice must face contradictions years in the making: How can she both love and fundamentally disagree with her husband? How complicit has she been in the trajectory of her own life? What should she do when her private beliefs run against her public persona?

In Alice Blackwell, *New York Times* bestselling author Curtis Sittenfeld has created her most dynamic and complex heroine yet. American Wife is a gorgeously written novel that weaves class, wealth, race, and the exigencies of fate into a brilliant tapestry—a novel in which the unexpected becomes inevitable, and the pleasures and pain of intimacy and love are laid bare.

BONUS: This edition includes an excerpt from Curtis Sittenfeld's Sisterland.

## Praise for American Wife

"Curtis Sittenfeld is an amazing writer, and *American Wife* is a brave and moving novel about the intersection of private and public life in America. Ambitious and humble at the same time, Sittenfeld refuses to trivialize or simplify people, whether real or imagined."

-Richard Russo

"What a remarkable (and brave) thing: a compassionate, illuminating, and beautifully rendered portrait of a fictional Republican first lady with a life and husband very much like our actual Republican first lady's. Curtis Sittenfeld has written a novel as impressive as it is improbable."

-Kurt Andersen

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• Rank: #62636 in eBooks • Published on: 2008-08-18 • Released on: 2008-09-02 • Format: Kindle eBook



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#### **Editorial Review**

## From Publishers Weekly

Sittenfeld tracks, in her uneven third novel, the life of bookish, naïve Alice Lindgren and the trajectory that lands her in the White House as first lady. Charlie Blackwell, her boyishly charming rake of a husband, whose background of Ivy League privilege, penchant for booze and partying, contempt for the news and habit of making flubs when speaking off the cuff, bears more than a passing resemblance to the current president (though the Blackwells hail from Wisconsin, not Texas). Sittenfeld shines early in her portrayal of Alice's coming-of-age in Riley, Wis., living with her parents and her mildly eccentric grandmother. A car accident in her teens results in the death of her first crush, which haunts Alice even as she later falls for Charlie and becomes overwhelmed by his family's private summer compound and exclusive country club membership. Once the author leaves the realm of pure fiction, however, and has the first couple deal with his being ostracized as a president who favors an increasingly unpopular war, the book quickly loses its panache and sputters to a weak conclusion that doesn't live up to the fine storytelling that precedes it. (*Sept.*) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

#### From The New Yorker

In her third novel, Sittenfeld offers a thinly veiled account (Wisconsin, not Texas) of the life of Laura Bush, in the story of Alice Lindgren, who marries Charlie Blackwell, the ne'er-do-well son of a political dynasty who becomes President. The early chapters, in which Sittenfeld depicts an innocent childhood and adolescence disrupted by tragedy, are the most compelling. As the book progresses to more recent and familiar events, she has difficulty enlivening the ins and outs of electioneering and policymaking. The object of Sittenfeld's fascination is the seeming incongruity between Alice's liberal sympathies and her bookish intellect and Charlie's conservative nature and general insouciance. Neither character is very likable—Alice weak-willed and martyrlike, Charlie unbearably self-centered—but the novel, Sittenfeld's most fully realized yet, artfully evokes the painful reverberations of the past.

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#### From Bookmarks Magazine

While critics couldn't say for sure whether or not Sittenfeld captures the exact thoughts of Laura Bush, they did agree that she creates a realistic and highly sympathetic portrayal of the (soon-to-be former) First Lady. (The author supposedly based the novel on Ann Gerhart's 2004 biography, *The Perfect Wife: The Life and Choices of Laura Bush.*) Sittenfeld asks provoking questions about marriage, loyalty, and responsibility. But many reviewers couldn't fundamentally understand why the very decent Alice had supported her husband despite her doubts about his capabilities; Sittenfeld's pat, unsatisfactory answer is that Alice leads a life "in opposition." That, combined with the author's obvious contempt for Charlie, brought the reviews down a notch. Still, there's nothing as titillating as a look, albeit fictional, inside the White House—especially during an election year.

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#### **Users Review**

From reader reviews:

#### **James Crow:**

Hey guys, do you wants to finds a new book to read? May be the book with the name American Wife: A

Novel suitable to you? Often the book was written by famous writer in this era. The particular book untitled American Wife: A Novelis the one of several books in which everyone read now. This book was inspired a lot of people in the world. When you read this e-book you will enter the new way of measuring that you ever know previous to. The author explained their concept in the simple way, thus all of people can easily to recognise the core of this guide. This book will give you a lots of information about this world now. In order to see the represented of the world on this book.

## **Gregory Howard:**

Are you kind of occupied person, only have 10 or maybe 15 minute in your time to upgrading your mind expertise or thinking skill even analytical thinking? Then you are having problem with the book than can satisfy your short time to read it because all this time you only find publication that need more time to be learn. American Wife: A Novel can be your answer since it can be read by an individual who have those short time problems.

#### **Anthony Brown:**

This American Wife: A Novel is new way for you who has curiosity to look for some information mainly because it relief your hunger info. Getting deeper you on it getting knowledge more you know otherwise you who still having small amount of digest in reading this American Wife: A Novel can be the light food to suit your needs because the information inside this particular book is easy to get by anyone. These books create itself in the form which can be reachable by anyone, that's why I mean in the e-book contact form. People who think that in reserve form make them feel sleepy even dizzy this publication is the answer. So there is not any in reading a reserve especially this one. You can find what you are looking for. It should be here for an individual. So, don't miss the idea! Just read this e-book sort for your better life as well as knowledge.

#### **Hubert Wooten:**

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