
Curtis Sittenfeld

The Man of My Dreams

curtis sittenfeld

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING
AUTHOR OF PREP

the
man
of my
dreams



A NOVEL

Title: The Man of My Dreams

Author: Curtis Sittenfeld

Format: Hardcover

Language: English

Pages: 288

Publisher: , 0

ISBN: 1400064767

Format: PDF / Kindle / ePub

Size: 8.4 MB

Download: allowed

Description

“Being raised in an unstable household makes you understand that the world doesn’t exist to accommodate you, which, in Hannah’s observation, is something a lot of people struggle to understand well into adulthood.”—from *The Man of My Dreams*

In her acclaimed debut novel, *Prep*, Curtis Sittenfeld created a touchstone with her pitch-perfect portrayal of adolescence. Her prose is as intensely realistic and compelling as ever in *The Man of My Dreams*, a disarmingly candid and sympathetic novel about the collision of a young woman’s fantasies of family and love with the challenges and realities of adult life.

Hannah Gavener is fourteen in the summer of 1991. In the magazines she reads, celebrities plan elaborate weddings; in Hannah’s own life, her parents’ marriage is crumbling. And somewhere in between these two extremes—just maybe—lie the answers to love’s most bewildering questions. But over the next decade and a half, as she moves from Philadelphia to Boston to Albuquerque, Hannah finds that the questions become more rather than less complicated: At what point can you no longer blame your adult failures on your messed-up childhood? Is settling for someone who’s not your soul mate an act of maturity or an admission of defeat? And if you move to another state for a guy who might not love you back, are you being plucky—or just pathetic?

None of the relationships in Hannah’s life are without complications. There’s her father, whose stubbornness Hannah realizes she’s unfortunately inherited; her gorgeous cousin, Fig, whose misbehavior alternately intrigues and irritates Hannah; Henry, whom Hannah first falls for in college, while he’s dating Fig; and the boyfriends who love her more or less than she deserves, who adore her or break her heart. By the time she’s in her late twenties, Hannah has finally figured out what she wants most—but she doesn’t yet know whether she’ll find the courage to go after it.

Full of honesty and humor, *The Man of My Dreams* is an unnervingly insightful and beautifully written examination of the outside forces and personal choices that make us who we are.

From the Hardcover edition.

Insightful reviews

PopShocker: Once again Curtis Sittenfeld has reached down into my pool of former insecurities and returned them right back to the surface. The strangest thing about reading Sittenfeld for me so far (I've only read *Prep* and now *Man of My Dreams*) is that it's fleetingly awful and wickedly wonderful all at the same time. For those of us who can identify with her neurotic main characters, in this case the main character of Hannah, there are moments where you want to shut the book because the author is hitting so close to home. You almost begin to feel you're reading one the high school diary you hid under the bed.

Hannah, from day one, is traveling along in life and occasionally having an awkward encounter with a boy or a decidedly average relationship. All the while she is dealing with her family and friends and her own personal self defeatist attitude. She believes she only deserves up to a certain level and nothing more, be it with men, friends, interactions with strangers, self promotion. She does not set high standards for herself or anyone around her and it is because of this that she struggles through her world trying to find out where she belongs.

I think that those who have always been innately confident in who they are will not appreciate this book as I have however for those of us who lacked confidence for many years of our young lives – we are the ones who should be reading and appreciating *The Man of My Dreams*.

Lila: I listened to the audiobook at the gym. Initially I grabbed it off the free table at Word Bookstore in Greenpoint, BK when I saw that Anne Heche narrated it, and I'm sort of sickly drawn to her. Plus, people love *Prep*, which I still haven't read. Turns out, Anne Heche's not so good at New Zealand accents. Also, at making protagonists or any other characters even remotely sympathetic - her voice is so scratchy and sharp, and she makes all the women either sound pathetic, mean, or Valley. Heche signifies that a man is speaking dialogue by lowering her voice to sound caveman-ish. I made it thru the whole thing by listening because, what the hell, it's okay for the gym, but I definitely would've quit if I were **READING** it. This book was infuriating in its mediocrity, unoriginality, and depressing-ness. The protagonist is a low-self esteem loser who's **ALSO** selfish and childish. It's impossible to root for her. **AND** she doesn't find happiness.

This book sucked! Don't read it!

A poverty-stricken woman's *Girl's Guide to To Hunting and Fishing*.

Brittany: *How I Came To Read This Book*: I believe Robyn keyed me into the release of this book, but I was the one to go out and buy it, having **LOVED** *Prep*.

The Plot: The book spans about 10-15 years in the main character, Hannah's life, touching on key moments in her development that shaped her attitudes toward society, more specifically - romance and men. Things start to crumble in Hannah's somewhat idealized world at a young age when her parents split up (and also, the engagement and subsequent split between Kiefer Sutherland & Julia Roberts has an impact on young Hannah). From there you're given glimpses into her life from high school, college, and beyond as she grows up and onwards.

The Good & The Bad: I will actually post my 'retro' review for this one because it was surprisingly well-written and encompasses just about everything good & bad I can say about this book. While not on the same level as the fabulous *Prep* (or Megan McCafferty's similarly-themed *Jessica Darling* series), *TMOMD* is easily recommendable over most of the dribble out there. I think of it as intelligent, coming-of-age chick lit.

The Bottom Line: A solid follow-up to *Prep*, but not a stellar one.

50-Book Challenge?: No

Retro Review 'All Groan Up!': First off, yes I know I spelt "Grown" as "Groan". That's because

essentially this book is almost like watching Lee Fiora - the main character in Sittenfeld's debut novel *Prep*, grow up into a college-aged, then twentysomething, cynical yet often insightful outsider.

Hannah Gavener has suffered from low self-esteem plagued by insecurity and mistrust for men since the age of 14, when her parents marriage falls apart. Over the next decade or so you watch as she grows up, explores the different types of relationships out there - casual, unrequited, platonic, open, and meaningful - and how she functions within them. Along the way you learn about Hannah's distaste for society's false social cues, and her secret idealism for others. The book is supported by several interwoven storylines from sub-characters including her gorgeous yet wild cousin Fig, her kind-hearted yet irritating sister Allison, and other various family members including her parents as they rebuild their lives without one another.

Ultimately I can't review this book without touching on *Prep* - since that is where most people will have heard of Sittenfeld and its how most people will come across this book.

The two are quite similar in that they are divided into 9-10 'chapters' which are really interweaving short stories set at different points in the main character's life. They both feature a narrator (although Lee is in first person, Hannah is almost entirely written in third person) who suffers from insecurity and self-doubt, particularly when it comes to the realms of socialability and relationships. They both feature daughters straining to find autonomy from their slightly estranged parents.

They're different though, based solely on the age gap. Lee is in high school, and as such all of the events in *Prep* take place at one school, over four years, with many of the same characters reoccurring and building on the story. Hannah's story takes place in four different locations over a much larger span of time - representing the varied experiences of adulthood quite fully...but also disparingly. Much like in TV shows that fail to ignite fans during the high school to college transition, the *Man of my Dreams* suffers slightly since the storyline is not so tightly knit with an established cast of characters.

The other main difference is apparent between the attitudes of Lee and Hannah. While both are somewhat 'outsiders', Lee is relatable again and again to virtually every teenager's feelings of insecurity - past or present. Hannah on the other hand, is often so far gone off the unsociable deep end that you want to give her a firm shake and tell her to just suck it up and be friendly!

That being said - *Man of My Dreams* is still a great book as it straddles quite eloquently the realms of fiction, 'biography', literature, and to a small degree, chick lit. Curtis Sittenfeld is not your average writer and perhaps my favourite thing about her books is not the characterization or the plots but the acute attention to detail. The observations her characters are so mundane and ordinary, or at other times extremely insightful, you can't help but appreciate their cleverness. I look forward to reading more from this author!

Melissa: Wow. I simply complete this booklet and am dumbfounded by means of how emotional of a learn this was. It really made me uncomfortable at times. i do not believe this is often the e-

book i might hugely suggest to any of my buddies to read. it is going to need to be their very own locate and that i imagine that says anything approximately me (for these of you who've learn this book). I gave this booklet 4 stars since it is a superb tale and good written and the finishing used to be perfection. i haven't learn any of Sittenfeld's books ahead of and am watching for studying American spouse and Prep simply because they appear to have larger stories than this book. i feel the various undesirable experiences I see right here on Goodreads might be undesirable as the topic touches on matters which are uncooked and the characters are slightly unforgivable for who they are.

liz: i actually sought after (and, I admit, nonetheless do) to learn Sittenfeld's most recent novel in accordance with the lifetime of Laura Bush. Unsurprisingly, it was once looked at of the library, so while I observed this there instead, I figured, stable enough. it is Sittenfeld doing Jennifer Warner - will be tremendous via me. I picked the unconventional up, learn the 1st few sentences. I loved them. Figured the first-person narrator was once telling us approximately her friend. Well, you recognize what they are saying approximately assumptions...Fifty pages in, I had given up on hoping that our fun, bubbly first-person narrator will be interjecting any time soon. Instead, i used to be stuck in yet one more absurdly dry and impassive ebook a couple of lady who does not particularly like herself all that much. it is good sufficient written. I mean, it has to be well-written, simply because i've got a good variety of pages dog-eared. however it does not have a why. I had a professor in collage who could constantly ask us to maintain WHY? at the back of our heads. Why am I penning this paper?? Ever since, i am getting quite agitated by way of books, articles, something that does not have a justification for its life (truly, this is not very many works). This publication has no why. The final bankruptcy is a letter from the most personality to her therapist - the ebook would've been nice if the whole thing were written like that. Because, hey, emotion! no longer that it has to be the center-piece of everything, but when you are writing a booklet for ladies a few woman, and the whole e-book is ready the woman's improvement as a person...Is Hannah changing into ugly? If so, it kind of feels just like the worst factor which can happen; she is letting down her kinfolk and, possibly, boys and males everywhere. Hannah understands this either from television and from boys' and men's eyes. you can find how what they need such a lot is beauty. now not in a chauvinistic way, no longer at the same time anything they could act on. simply instinctively, to examine and enjoy. it is what they expect, and who they count on it from so much of all is teenage girls. She forgets what Allison ordered and has to return back, and Hannah feels a wierd although no longer strange wish to be this waitress, to be 40 and lightly unattractive, to stay in an odd and tiny city in Alaska with a short-order cook dinner who loves you.

Lynne Adams: i did not love, yet did not hate the 1st a part of the book. Hannah, the most character, used to be frustrating, yet I still stumbled on such a lot of her musings a bit interesting. However, the wheels quite fell off whilst Curtis Sittenfeld used the "letter to my former therapist" machine (and it used to be a writing device, within the worst feel of the term) to accomplish the book. It used to be a downright lazy, and never really successful, approach to finishing the narrative. And as undesirable because the letter sounds within the abstract, it was once even worse in its real employment. The letter was once packed with information and techniques written in a manner that nobody could EVER write, making it much more transparent that it was once a great way to wrap every thing up. I enjoyed Prep, yet this e-book fell some distance wanting that book's greatness.

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