



The Man of My Dreams: A Novel

By Curtis Sittenfeld

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“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.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Sittenfeld's poignant if generic follow-up to her bestselling debut, *Prep*, similarly tracks a young woman's coming-of-age, but rather than navigating an elite school's nasty and brutish social system, this time the narrator contends with a dysfunctional family and her own yearnings for love. Fourteen-year-old Hannah Gavener is abruptly shipped off from Philadelphia to live with her aunt in Pittsburgh when her mercurial, vindictive father breaks up his marriage and family, which includes Hannah's older sister, Allison, and their browbeaten mother. Sweet but insecure and passive, Hannah had "been raised... not to be accommodated but to accommodate," an upbringing that hobbles all her subsequent relationships. The novel follows Hannah through her teens and late 20s (from 1991 to 2005), as she searches for romantic fulfillment, navigates friendships (e.g., with her larger-than-life cousin Fig) and alternately tries to reconcile with her father and distance herself from him. But the most influential connection Hannah makes is with her psychiatrist, Dr. Lewin, whom she begins seeing her freshman year at Tufts. Although the novel aspires to be taken seriously and Hannah is a sympathetic protagonist, she remains a textbook case of a young woman who wants "a man who will deny her. A man of her own who isn't hers."

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From [The New Yorker](#)

Sittenfeld's second novel features a heroine, Hannah, much like the one in her widely praised debut, "Prep": an outsider who casts a critical eye on her peers. Here, though, the class cues that pervaded the boarding-school milieu of "Prep" are largely absent, as Hannah's turbulent relationships with men mark her navigation into adult life and she wittily dissects the ways in which those around her entice and discourage the opposite sex. Sittenfeld has a brisk narrative style and a rare ability to turn nearly alienating flaws into vulnerability, but her central characters, despite their acute observations of others, have no introspective faculty at all. The final chapter, written as a letter from Hannah to her former psychiatrist—and perhaps intended to temper the conventional happy ending that would place this novel squarely in the "chick lit" category—is disastrously clunky.

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Prep (**** Mar/Apr 2005), Curtis Sittenfeld's debut novel, explored a girl's coming-of-age at an elite high school. *The Man of My Dreams* contains the same intelligence and insight into teenage (and 20-something) life, but critics generally agree that, despite its superb writing, it's a less powerful novel. Supporters praise Sittenfeld's ability to delve deep inside the "outsider" mind and reveal the pain of intimacy and desire. Detractors cite stock characters, a hackneyed plot about personal growth, and a hokey ending. "The legions of readers who loved *Prep* will most likely not flock to this quiet novel," writes the *New York Times Book Review*. "But Sittenfeld's determined exploration of her character's interior life feels like bravery."

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Luis Garcia:

This *The Man of My Dreams: A Novel* book is simply not ordinary book, you have after that it the world is

in your hands. The benefit you get by reading this book is definitely information inside this e-book incredible fresh, you will get info which is getting deeper a person read a lot of information you will get. This The Man of My Dreams: A Novel without we realize teach the one who examining it become critical in thinking and analyzing. Don't always be worry The Man of My Dreams: A Novel can bring any time you are and not make your case space or bookshelves' turn into full because you can have it with your lovely laptop even telephone. This The Man of My Dreams: A Novel having very good arrangement in word and also layout, so you will not sense uninterested in reading.

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