



Red, White, and Blue: A Novel

By Susan Isaacs

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Compromising Positions to *Lily White*--seven critically acclaimed novels, seven *New York Times* bestsellers. Now, with her eighth novel, Susan Isaacs has written her finest work yet. *Red, White and Blue* tells the story of two ordinary Americans who find it within themselves to become extraordinary heroes.

Charlie Blair of Wyoming and Lauren Miller of New York start out as strangers. They are drawn together by an appalling hate crime and by their mutual passion for justice. Yet they share more than a sense of fair play. They are not simply kindred spirits but actual kin, descendants of immigrants who met on a boat on their way to America, in the shadow of the Statue of Liberty.

Special Agent Blair of the FBI has the numbing job of a bureaucrat and the soul of a cowboy. A wry Westerner from his Stetson to his boots, he also happens to be the great-great-grandson of . . . Dora Blaustein? Dora *what*? True, although he is unaware of that particular ancestor. A nearly burned-out case at thirty-four, he is about to walk away from the safe world of paper-pushing to risk his life in Wyoming, infiltrating an armed, white supremacist, viciously anti-Semitic group called Wrath. Wyoming born and bred, Charlie seems the perfect choice for this undercover operation, because who in Wrath could question this whiter-than-white man, so clearly one of their own?

Also in Jackson Hole is Charlie's apparent opposite. Gen-X Lauren Miller is articulate, ironic--and unwaveringly liberal. A journalist from Long Island, she has been hired by the *Jewish News* to investigate a bombing that Wrath is suspected to be behind. Lauren's job is to know who, what, where and when, of course. But most of all, she is compelled to discover *why*. Why are all these people who've never met a Jew in their lives obsessed with Jews--and why do they want them dead? Just who is it who gets to define who is an American?

With narrative grace, insight and her trademark exuberant wit, Isaacs not only chronicles Lauren's and Charlie's investigations, but explores their American heritage as well: How did their forebears--how did all of our forebears--get from there to here? And what can this mountain man and this suburban woman possibly share--except a few random genes?

Intelligent, exhilarating and intensely moving, *Red, White and Blue* is a novel

about what makes Americans American.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The story of Jewish immigrants in America is a staple of commercial fiction. Still, it is a surprise to find Isaacs, usually the provider of zippy dialogue and suspenseful plots, writing a lackluster novel in this genre. In the first part of this multigenerational saga, she follows the offspring of Dora Schottland and Herschel Blaustein, loutish products of European shtetls whose unhappy union produces descendants who will exemplify dramatically different American experiences. Jake Blaustein, larcenous grifter and general no-goodnik, stays one step ahead of the law by decamping a train in Wyoming, where he changes his name to Blair, marries a half-Indian woman and forgets his Jewish heritage. His sister, Ruthie, stays in New York and marries a successful Jewish lawyer who is killed in WWII. Her children and grandchildren remain identifiably Jewish but not religiously observant. In the second half of the book, the great-great-grandchildren of Dora and Herschel meet (unaware of the fact that they are related, however). Lauren Miller, reporter for the Long Island Jewish News, encounters her distant cousin, FBI agent Charlie Blair, in Jackson Hole. Instant passionate attraction flares between them?though, of course, many obstacles stand in the way of their happiness. Both are on the trail of members of a violent militia that spews racial and anti-Semitic rhetoric. Here the book finally develops some suspense. Isaacs has done her homework well; her depiction of white-supremacist groups is informative and convincing. But the sappy love story overwhelms even this aspect of the narrative, and by the time Isaacs winds up waving the flag in celebration of the values that unite Americans, this sincerely patriotic novel is as heavy as a stale bagel. Editor, Larry Ashmead. Literary Guild main selection; Doubleday Book Club alternate. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal

Isaacs (Lily White, HarperCollins, 1996) gets really serious here with the story of Westerner Charlie Blair, a special agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation who is about to infiltrate a white supremacist group, and Lauren Miller, hired by the Jewish News to document the group's anti-Semitism. Their link? Unknown to them, they are both descendants of Jewish immigrants who met on the way to America. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From [Booklist](#)

The lives of Charlie Blair and Lauren Miller could not possibly be more different. He grew up on a ranch in Wyoming and is at one with the mountains; she was raised by urbane intellectuals in New York. But their pasts are intertwined, both being ancestors of a family that immigrated to the U.S. at the turn of the century. Isaacs smoothly combines what could have been two different novels into one. The first tells the history of an ancestral Jewish family trying to make it as Americans. Their immigrant story is refreshingly unromantic, accurately relating their dismal first years in a new country: no work, no money, poor living conditions, and oppression. Soon enough, the tale becomes a frolicking romp through the decades, a chronicle of love and loss, happiness and despair. In the second part, which is more of an investigative mystery, Charlie, now an FBI agent, and Lauren, a reporter for *Jewish News*, both find themselves in a small town outside of Cheyenne, Wyoming, trying to find out more about a white supremacist group. Isaacs' writing is quick and witty, and her storytelling is creative and exciting. It's easy to get to know Charlie and Lauren because their pasts are so well explained, and, as long as readers can avoid getting lost in Isaacs' cast of hundreds, they are certain to enjoy this superbly entertaining novel. *Mary Frances Wilkens*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

William Mayer:

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Charlene Martinez:

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Joyce Hynes:

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