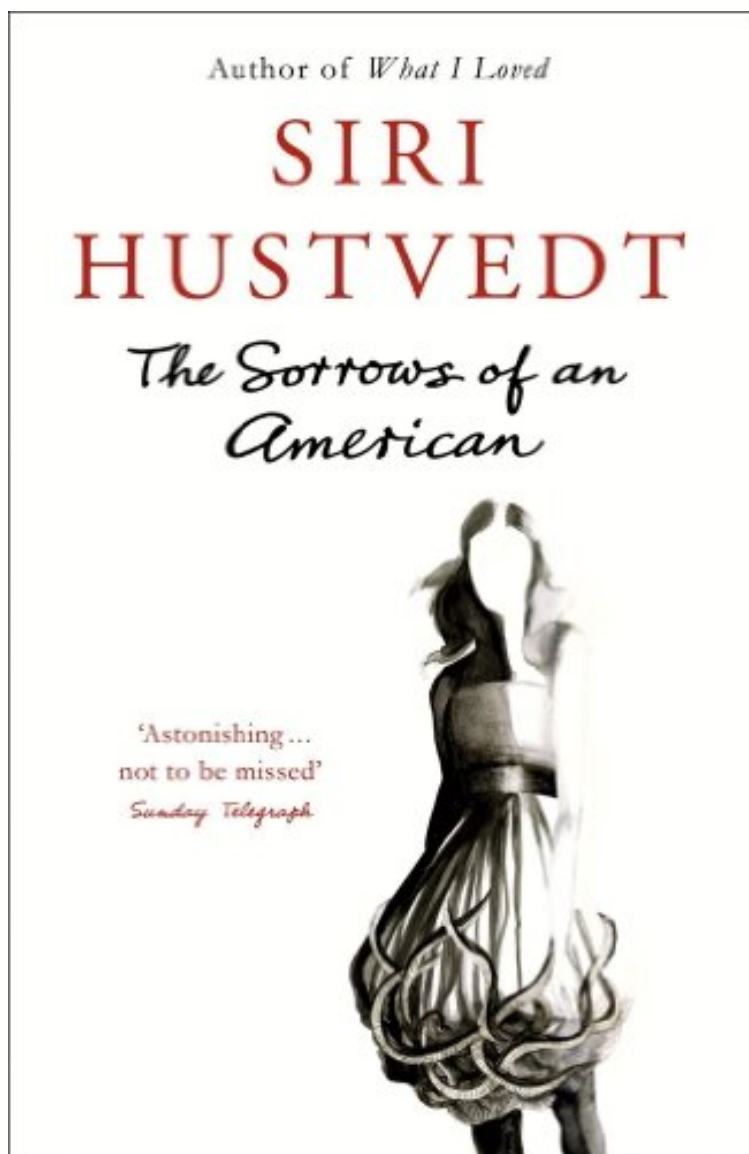


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# The Sorrows of an American (English Edition)



Par Siri Hustvedt

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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurAfter their father's funeral, Erik and Inga Davidsen find a cryptic letter from an unknown woman among his papers, dating from his adolescence in rural Minnesota during the Depression.

Returning to his psychiatric practice in New York, Erik sets about reading his father's memoir, hoping to discover the man he never fully understood. At the same time, another woman enters Erik's lonely, divorced life - a beautiful Jamaican who moves into his garden flat with her small daughter. As Erik gets drawn into the cat-and-mouse tactics of someone who appears to be stalking her, he finds out that his sister Inga is also being threatened, by a journalist in possession of a wounding secret from her past. A multi-layered novel that probes the mysteries of the heart and mind, **THE SORROWS OF AN AMERICAN** is compulsive,

thought-provoking and profoundly affecting. From Publishers Weekly Starred . In her fourth novel (following the acclaimed *What I Loved*), Hustvedt continues, with grace and aplomb, her exploration of family connectedness, loss, grief and art. Narrator and New York psychoanalyst Erik Davidsen returns to his Minnesota hometown to sort through his recently deceased father Lars's papers. Erik's writer sister, Inga, soon discovers a letter from someone named Lisa that hints at a death that their father was involved in. Over the course of the book, the siblings track down people who might be able to provide information on the letter writer's identity. The two also contend with other looming ghosts. Erik immerses himself in the text of his father's diary as he develops an infatuation with Miranda, a Jamaican artist who lives downstairs with her daughter. Meanwhile, Inga, herself recently widowed, is reeling from potentially damaging secrets being revealed about the personal life of her dead husband, a well-known novelist and screenplay writer. Hustvedt gives great breaths of authenticity to Erik's counseling practice, life in Minnesota and Miranda's Jamaican heritage, and the anticlimax she creates is calming and justified; there's a terrific real-world twist revealed in the acknowledgments. (Apr.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From *The New Yorker* "Im lost," a patient tells her psychiatrist in Hustvedt's fourth novel. "Im cold. Im all alone." She might be speaking for all the characters in this sombre meditation on the isolation of urban professionals, in which daily routines are nothing but "pillars in an architecture of need," erotic love is ephemeral, and friendship is the only source of consolation in a post-9/11 New York where everyone is always having nightmares. Hustvedt's interest in the ways in which language can form both a bridge and a barrier between individuals leads her into digressions on Plato, Kierkegaard, and theories of psychoanalysis. This didactic turn has the unfortunate effect of making her plotstories of loss and disappointment connected only tenuously through the character of the psychiatrist start to seem almost beside the point. Copyright 2008 [Click here to subscribe to The New Yorker](#)