

The English American



When Pippa Dunn, adopted as an infant and raised terribly British, discovers that her birth parents are from the American South, she finds that culture clash has layers of meaning she never imagined. Meet *The English American*, a fabulously funny, deeply poignant debut novel that sprang from Alison Larkins' autobiographical one-woman show of the same name. The very English Pippa knows how to make a proper cup of tea, has attended a posh English boarding school, and discusses the crossword rather than exchange any cross words with her proper English family. Yet Pippa - creative, disheveled, and impulsive to the core - has always felt different from her perfectly poised, smartly coiffed sister and steady, practical parents, whose pastimes include Scottish dancing, gardening, and watching cricket. When Pippa learns, at age 28, that her birth parents are from the American South, she feels that lifelong questions have been answered. She meets her birth mother, an untidy, artistic, free-spirited redhead, and her birth father, a charismatic (and politically involved) businessman, and she moves to America to be near them. At the same time, she relies on the guidance of a young man with whom she feels a mysterious connection - a man who discovered his own estranged father and who, like her birth parents, seems to understand her in a way that no one ever has before. Pippa feels she has found herself and everything she thought she wanted. But has she? Caught between two opposing cultures, two sets of parents, and two completely different men, Pippa is plunged into hilarious, heart-wrenching chaos. Her birth father turns out to be involved in neoconservative activities she hates, and the mesmerizing mother who once abandoned her now refuses to let her go. And the man of her fantasies may be just that. Larkins' compulsively readable first novel unearths universal truths about

love, identity, and family with wit, warmth, and heart.

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