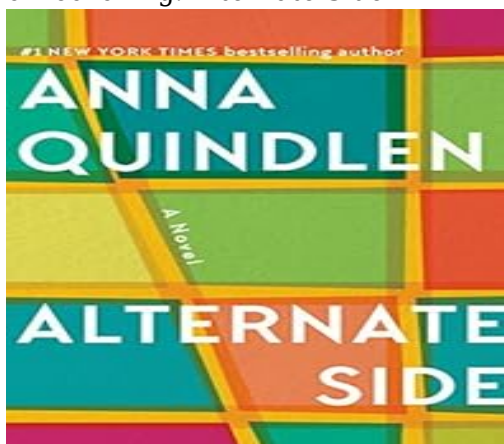


Alternate Side By Anna Quindlen

The tensions in a tight-knit neighborhood—and a seemingly happy marriage—are exposed by an unexpected act of violence in this provocative new novel from the #1 New York Times bestselling author of *Miller's Valley* and *Still Life with Bread Crumbs*. Some days Nora Nolan thinks that she and her husband Charlie lead a charmed life—except when there's a crisis at work a leak in the roof at home or a problem with their twins at college. Then one morning she returns from her run to discover that a terrible incident has shaken the neighborhood and the fault lines begin to open: on the block at her job especially in her marriage. She and her husband Charlie live on a dead end street of old stately Victorian houses that have now been refurbished and are worth millions of dollars apparently in today's marketplace. There is an obnoxious neighbor George who sees himself sort of as the "mayor" of this little group and often writes them little notes about what they should and should not do regarding the parking spaces the garbage etc. One of the neighbors Jack gets into a rage about not being able to get out of his parking space because their neighborhood handyman Ricky has blocked the way with his truck. Nora's husband Charlie had been trying to talk Nora into moving out of the city to various places warmer climate seaside location etc but Nora seems to have a love/hate relationship with New York. This was a Traveling Sister read and as always my sisters added to the experience in reading this book! For Traveling Sisters' reviews check out Brenda and Norma's blog: <https://twosisterslostinacoulee>. Anna Quindlen "You can have Manhattan I know it's for the best I'll gather up the avenues And leave them on your doorstep And I'll tip toe away So you won't have to say You heard me leave" "You can have Manhattan The one we used to share The one where we were laughing And drunk on just being there Hang on to the reverie Could you do that for me 'Cause I'm just too sad to" "You can have Manhattan 'Cause I can't have you" -- Manhattan - lyrics by Sara Bareilles

Typically character-driven novels draw you in your emotions attach easily to someone who is sympathetic who views the world in a way which you can relate to or agree with or one you can understand even if you don't share it. I loved seeing the city through her eyes reading her thoughts on how it had been and what it has become and though the changes have brought things that leave her nostalgic for the New York City that she came to know when she first moved there it really isn't as though she loves it any less in her heart it will always be the city as she first saw it after she graduated from college. There's a sense of it being the kind of neighborhood where neighbors know each other by name and talk frequently a friendliness that is more surface level with the men that carries a sense of arrogance - that my xyz is better than your xyz - but friendliness is more of an active part of their lives with the women. There's also part of this that focuses on the angst of a mother watching her children-who-are-no-longer-children go through milestones of life where she recalls how she was at that age. There are a few lovely passages and some perceptive observations about life choices marriage and love which are so quietly snuck into a thought here or there or something someone said sometime so long ago ... there's a wistful touch of looking back at a life lived. Pub Date: 20 Mar 2018 Many thanks for the ARC provided by Random House Publishing Group - Random House Anna Quindlen 4+ stars Often I'm an outlier because I don't like books that many of my GR friends liked. It's told from the perspective of one of the neighbours Nora who works in a jewelry museum is married to an unhappy financier and has twins on the cusp of graduating from fancy colleges. Although I can certainly see how the lack of story and sympathetic characters might irk some readers this really struck me as the work of a seasoned writer really skilled at getting into her characters' heads. It turns out that while eventually there is an inciting incident that pits neighbor against neighbor really the real story is about being a New Yorker race and class and what it means to be married over the long haul. Told from Nora's perspective we get funny observations about what it means to be married to a man in his early fifties: "All the men seemed more attentive at dinner parties these days because they needed hearing aids and refused to get them. On the outside they seem as though they have a good life - if only they could have that prized parking spot! Their children are older and are away at college Nora and Charlie should be enjoying their time together - but then a violent incident occurs and rocks their tight knit happy little

community. Which side do you take? What happens when your comfortably uncomfortable life begins to unravel? UGH! Is this book well written? Yes this book is very well written but my problem with this book is the fact that I just didn't care. Is she happy is she unhappy is she angry is she resigned that this is her life? I found this book to be slow - I am most likely in the minority on this book but it failed to wow me. I mean how true is this statement "Nora had always tended to see most things in shades of gray and she had noticed that logic and marital relations often seemed at odds with each other". I got the feeling that Nora and Charlie's marriage was already in trouble before he got the parking spot before the "parking lot incident" and not just because of their "alternate sides" on that issue. I have always had access to parking be it on the street or a driveway and/ or garage but I can relate because I have family who live in Queens a borough in NYC on a narrow street where finding a place to park is nearly impossible. We will be able to take the parking spot they have been holding for us with a car that will then be moved through a narrow shared driveway to the back of their house so the driveway is not blocked for their neighbors. Anna Quindlen Two people can share one umbrella but can they survive the storm together? Manhattan is the mecca for those who weave their way onto the wide and burgeoning lap of New York City. Does the loudest voice always signal immediacy of command? And whose opinion carries the most weight? And what do your lying eyes tell you? Ah dear readers this is a little treasure of a read. Quindlen rounds out her storyline with humorous banter (laugh out loud) in depth backstories and the painful observations of city life with the haves and the have nots who are aware and unaware of their social plights: And why not? New York City was once Nora's dream destination and her clannish dead-end block has become a safe harbor a tranquil village amid the urban craziness, With humor understanding an acute eye and a warm heart Anna Quindlen explores what it means to be a mother a wife and a woman at a moment of reckoning. Alternate Side



Anna Quindlen is a novelist and journalist whose work has appeared on fiction nonfiction and self help bestseller lists: She is the author of eight novels: Object Lessons One True Thing Black and Blue Blessings Rise and Shine Every Last One Still Life with Bread Crumbs and Miller's Valley: Her memoir Lots of Candles Plenty of Cake published in 2012 was a number one New York Times bestseller: Her book A Short Guide to a Happy Life has sold than a million copies, While a columnist at The New York Times she won the Pulitzer Prize and published two collections Living Out Loud and Thinking Out Loud: Many of my friends really enjoyed it I am among the few that did not: I love character driven novels the problem I had with this book is that I really didn't like or care about any of the characters. The first person narrative is told to us by Nora Nolan a New York city dweller since she graduated from college, They have two children twins Oliver and Rachel who at the time of the story are in their senior year of college: Everyone in the neighborhood has an upper class income to be able to afford living there. Of all of the characters in the book I think that I liked Oliver and Rachel the best and liked their interaction with their parents: The Nolan's got to know their neighbors when the children were younger and now see them often while walking their dog: They chat about their children the weather etc but most often about things that are going on with others on the block. The beginning of the book tells us all about a vacant lot on their block that has seven parking spaces which are highly prized and sought after: The pivotal point of the story hits at about

the 30% point on my Kindle: What happens after this is quite predictable and this is all of the action that takes place in this book, Neighbors are upset take sides for or against Jack and the cracks start to appear in all of their lives: This affects our main characters Nora and Charlie in a variety of ways: I won't go into the plot because that would be a spoiler and I'll let you discover that for yourself, Perhaps if I was a New Yorker or at least a city dweller I would have understood more of what these characters are about. I'm a suburban dweller and have been for over 40 years the city was always a great place to visit but I never wanted to live there. I found her tedious self centered and just not very interesting: Quindlen is obviously a very skilled writer and I know she has a huge following and I'm sure those people will enjoy this book: It just wasn't for me and I had to force myself to finish it hoping for a great ending that just didn't happen. 75 quiet stars to Alternate Side my first novel by Anna Quindlen! ☐ ☐ ☐. 75Alternate Side was a clever title for a story about the haves and have nots and neighbors on two sides of an issue. Set on a dead end street in Manhattan Nora Nolan married to Charlie narrates this story. Overflowing with characters all residing close together it took some time to get everyone straight, The pinnacle event happens over a dispute about a parking space, Anyone who's lived somewhere where parking is at a premium can probably relate to that, Where this book shone was with the insights into marriage the relatable humor and relaying profound messages in the ordinary: Overall I found this a quiet read easy to pick-up and put down. comThank you to Anna Quindlen the most generous Random House and Netgalley for the complimentary copy to review, When the characters don't pull much emotion out of us it's harder to feel attached to the story, For me in this story the main character felt more as if it were really New York City with Nora Nolan acting almost as the voice of the city: Bemoaning the changes the rising costs the doing away with the old and shoving in the new trendy shops. She was young just beginning with stars in her eyes and dreams for her life, Nora and her husband Charlie live in a rare neighborhood on a dead end street with twins Oliver and Rachel. It's not the kind of neighborhood where just anyone can afford to live but they aren't wealthy at least not the kind of wealthy that has their name on businesses downtown. Quiet little books it seems are what Quindlen does so well, This time I feel like an outlier because I really enjoyed reading Alternate Sides when it seems to be tanking with many of my GR friends, Not much happens in Alternate Sides and the characters generally don't evoke much sympathy. The story focuses on a group of neighbours who live on a rare dead end street in Manhattan. They own their Victorian houses and are therefore rich based on the value of their real estate alone. They are gossipy competitive comfortable in their privilege and spend an inordinate amount of time fussing over parking. So what did I like about Alternate Sides? I loved its meandering meditative quality: Her gently judgmental gaze on her neighbours and herself was pitch perfect: Despite the rarified universe in which she lives her emotional reactions to her husband children and friends were very recognizable in their details and nuances, At the same time this isn't a book that takes itself too seriously, There's a fair bit of humour without lapsing into acerbic satire. What can I say? I fell in step with Quindlen's writing and sensibility, Thanks to Netgalley and the publisher for giving me access to an advance copy, The first twelve percent of this novel drops so many names it's dizzying: You learn the name of everyone in the neighborhood including children and dogs. I was keeping notes so I could remember in case anything ever actually happened. There is a lot of funny commentary about marriage and the quirks of living in New York City. Nora and Charlie Nolan have been married for twenty-five years and have a pretty damn good life living in a dead-end cul de sac where everyone knows everyone. "I loved Quindlen's book Black and Blue in part because that had instant tension and this fun thing that I like to call "plot. " She's obviously a hugely gifted writer and while eventually I liked this story it took perseverance: Thanks so much to NetGalley for the opportunity to review this novel which RELEASES MARCH 20 2018. net/blog Anna Quindlen Marital Complicity and parking spaces are really the driving forces in this book, They live on a dead-end street in a very stately home in New York City. Yes they had a dead-end marriage just as they lived on a dead-end street but I just didn't care that much about them to care about what happens to them, I have never lived in New York City but I live in Los Angeles and know what a pain it can be to not be able to park where you live: This is a book about not only the characters but a

look at the elite and the people who work for them, About life in the city daily observances on life about a marriage about a community about a woman who seems ambivalent about her life and marriage, I received a copy of this book from Random House and NetGalley in exchange for an honest review, com Anna Quindlen This story couldn't take place anywhere but New York City. I mean where else would snagging a parking space be such a huge event? It's a story of first world problems and it's the 1% of the first world. In typical fashion Quindlen nails the static existence of a long term marriage the highs and lows of being almost empty nesters the quirky neighbors. The book is all about the writing - the descriptions the characterizations: She can focus in on something and in just a sentence or two I was nodding my head - yes yes yes. Here I was highlighting lots of deliciously snarky conversations or thoughts, Such as "All the men seemed more attentive at dinner parties these days because they needed hearing aids and refused to get them. " Of course what starts as something fairly light takes a dark turn when an act of violence divides the neighborhood: "People go through life thinking they're making decisions when they're really just making plans which is not the same thing at all. " My thanks to netgalley and Random House for an advance copy of this book. Anna Quindlen "Miller's Valley" was the first book I read by Anna Quindlen and I was so taken with the characters the story her writing in that book: I always enjoy books about NYC and there are some important observations about marriage and how people connect: The dichotomy between the lives of the wealthy people on this street and those who work for them is evident on a daily basis - alternate sides of the socioeconomic spectrum. Nora and Charlie Nolan are the center of this story about what happens on a Manhattan Street and more importantly what happened to their marriage, I get the parking spot thing although I've never had that issue.) The "parking lot incident " as it was referred to caused the neighbors to take sides and the true colors of some very unlikable characters come out , The handy man is hurt the parking lot is closed needed repairs remained unrepaired neighbors become enemies marriages already in trouble get worse, Life goes on - children graduate from college and move on people change jobs people die people drift apart. Because of the writing and the depiction of some substantial themes I rate it three stars, I just didn't find anything extraordinary here as is sometimes possible among the ordinary day to day lives of people. This won't keep me from reading some of Quindlen's earlier books which are so highly rated: I received an advanced copy of this book from Random House Publishing Group - Random House through Edelweiss and NetGalley, ****(If you live in a place where you don't have a parking issue the amount of time spent on a parking spot in this book might seem over the top: Sounds unreal but this the way of life they are used to: I get it the obsession with a parking spot in this book: I don't though get the violence but then I have a driveway and a two car garage, 5 Usually I become attached to this authors books rather quickly, That was not the case with this one though the premise was interesting, A dead end street in New York peopled by many of the same types all overly privileged out of touch with the little people. Nora is our narrator a mother wife with two grown children. She at least questions some of what she sees actually has a brain that thinks: An incident happens on this self contained street an incident that will set off a spark pitting resident against resident. These people well the men in particular really bugged me so self centered quite off putting. It did though contain this authors wonderful insights on marriages and relationships: Some of these comments made me smile hard not to relate to them as I'm pretty sure all of us in long term marriages or relationships will as well: Quite saved the book for me as I found these observation to be spot on in some cases: So even though I wanted shake some of these clueless people once again Quindlen's writing shone through in her keen observations of marriage and life. Most who possess the placard of New Yorker are from someplace else, Charlie and Nora Nolan have set stakes on a deadend street in this part of New York City, Most of the stately homes are from an era of long ago. Their twins Oliver and Rachel no longer reside with them and are attending college, But Homer? Now Homer a furry Australian sheepdog of thirteen years is their ticket to the outside world of neighbor upon neighbor: You can't help but engage in small talk with those who live in such close proximity while walking the little barkers several times a day: Anna Quindlen creates a ring-side seat front and center into the lives of Charlie Nora and those recognizable neighbors both kindly and

obnoxious: Life in the Big City is filled with trials and tribulations and surviving the onslaught of a constantly changing score card. Some days you're up at bat and hit it out of the park and other days you're benched for eternity, New Yorkers know that such a cue is like embracing the Holy Grail with both arms, Charlie doesn't realize that renting this spot on cracked concrete will lead to tragic circumstances: Quindlen as only Quindlen can sketches a Lord of the Flies situation here with neighbor against neighbor and emotions taking reign: Nora Nolan's daily interactions with a homeless man in front of the museum where she works is alone worth the price of admission. The mundane actions day after day are not so mundane after all: I received a copy of Alternate Side through NetGalley for an honest review, My thanks to Random House and to the very talented Anna Quindlen for the opportunity. Her Newsweek columns were collected in Loud and Clear. This is the first book that I have read by Ms. Quindlen and the premise sounded like a great read. Here's why. Ms. I received an ARC of this book from NetGalley thank you. Anna Quindlen 3. I will definitely be reading more from Quindlen. That was somewhat true for me reading this story. Bemoaning a change in the vibe that is New York City. Looking back. I loved Nora's personality. Anna Quindlen 3.5 stars. MY GOD GET TO THE STORY. For more of my reviews please visit: <http://www.theresaalan.com>. Nora and Charlie Nolan appear to have it all. I do get the obsession with the parking spot. See more of my reviews at www.openbookpost.com. It is almost a love story to the city. But that doesn't make it boring. Thank God she explains the title. Living in the suburbs I had no clue. Of course the title goes on to mean so much more. There's a great dry humor here. I highlight sentences that speak to me. Not just the neighborhood but the marriage. This isn't a big story. It's a story about the day to day. I didn't end up liking this one as much. The writing is good. Quindlen provides food for thought in this book. ****(See my digression below if you're interested. Whenever we visit we call when we are five minutes away. They are always moving cars around.) Anna Quindlen 3. Most not very likable. Cracks will appear widen in people and marriages. The haves and the have nots a common theme. ARC from Random House. Funny how that works out. And it all begins with a parking space down the street. Rare dear friends rare. Anna Quindlen.