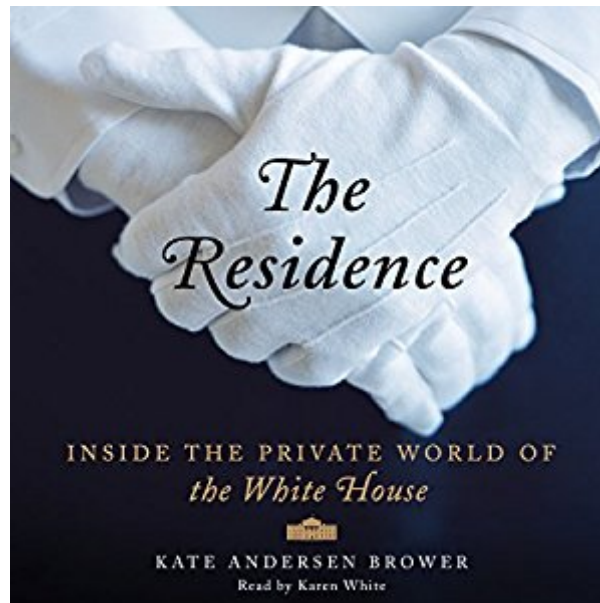




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# **The Residence: Inside The Private World Of The White House**



## Synopsis

A remarkable history with elements of both *In the President's Secret Service* and *The Butler*, *The Residence* offers an intimate account of the service staff of the White House, from the Kennedys to the Obamas. America's first families are unknowable in many ways. No one has insight into their true character like the people who serve their meals and make their beds every day. Full of stories and details by turns dramatic, humorous, and heartwarming, *The Residence* reveals daily life in the White House as it is really lived through the voices of the maids, butlers, cooks, florists, doormen, engineers, and others who tend to the needs of the president and first family. These dedicated professionals maintain the six-floor mansion's 132 rooms, 35 bathrooms, 28 fireplaces, three elevators, and eight staircases and prepare everything from hors d'oeuvres for intimate gatherings to meals served at elaborate state dinners. Over the course of the day, they gather in the lower level's basement kitchen to share stories, trade secrets, forge lifelong friendships, and sometimes even fall in love. Combining incredible first-person anecdotes from extensive interviews with scores of White House staff members - many speaking for the first time - with archival research, Kate Andersen Brower tells their story. She reveals the intimacy between the first family and the people who serve them as well as tension that has shaken the staff over the decades. From the housekeeper and engineer who fell in love while serving President Reagan to Jackie Kennedy's private moment of grief with a beloved staffer after her husband's assassination to the tumultuous days surrounding President Nixon's resignation and President Clinton's impeachment battle, *The Residence* is full of surprising and moving details that illuminate day-to-day life at the White House.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is such a readable book. I just bought three copies for my mom and sister and mother-in-law. The perfect Mother's Day gift. There are so many amazing stories. It's not all about gossip either. There's a story about 9/11 and how there was a barbecue planned at the White House and there were so many tables and chairs set out for the event. Since the White House was a target, they had to evacuate all of the staff. People were running out of the White House to safety. They were terrified, as I would be too! One of the staff members was so busy working downstairs at his job that he didn't hear the Secret Service evacuating everyone. He came upstairs and wondered where everyone had gone. Meanwhile the head chef and head usher decided to stay on the grounds of the WH and take down all of those chairs and tables because if they didn't do it no one else would. They spent all morning during 9/11 doing their duties. What's really incredible about this book is the dedication and service these men and women have made to serving not just the first families, but the institution of the White House. There are some families who have generations of family members who have served there. One family had like 5 or 6 family members working at the White House. They all loved and honored the traditions there and they all served no matter who got elected. One other thing I loved: You don't realize it until you read just how complicated it is for the first family to move into the White House. One family moves out with moving trucks, while the new family moves in -- all while the inauguration is taking place. It's so cool. I love this book and recommend it to anyone who has an interest in the presidency or the institution of the WH.

The Residence is an informative and well-written book. I did not expect it to be "literature", and it wasn't, but it was entertaining. I liked the physical descriptions of "the house" as well as the numbers and variety of persons needed to keep it up. Part of the services like having the first family's preferred toothpaste(s) out and ready each evening - that reminded me of my reading about England's Royal Family. We are told the queen sleeps each night on sheets that have been washed exactly four times! I am impressed with the fidelity and loyalty of the White House staff and at the same time perplexed at what feels like a bit much to an average person like myself. The author well-researched her information, but just due to passing years and availability of the staff, we are pretty much limited to the Carters, Regans, Bushes (2), Clintons, and Obamas. For the reason I just mentioned, Clintons and Obamas have more coverage. The Residence is exactly what I expected. It is not a tell-all book, but a collection of fond remembrances interspersed with architectural, floral,

photographic, and food events.

Several reviewers who didn't really care for this book have commented that if one has never before read a "White House book" then this would probably be a good one for them. Well, I am one of these first timers and I wasn't all that impressed either. The writing is rather repetitive. The theme of the staff's loyalty and selflessness runs very heavily throughout every single anecdote. I realize that the author and the staff are trying to balance a fine line of remaining respectful to the first families while also striving to provide enough detail to catch the readers' attention, but I found the writing to be dry and the saintliness of the staff to be a smidgeon tiresome. Really, the book suffers from a lack of true character development, whether with the members of the first families or the White House maids and butlers (yes, even biographies benefit from character development), with the possible exception of the LBJ coverage, which provided some of the most interesting material in the book. This book wasn't quite the page turner I had hoped it would be.

While Brower's book contains a lot of interesting information and a rare insight into the behind-the-scenes life at the White House, by attempting to organize the book topically instead of chronologically, it unfortunately comes across as rambling and a bit incoherent. Good stuff, just needs a proper editing job.

I found this book interesting but somewhat repetitive. The organization was a bit off and therefore the book did not have a smooth flow. The author bounced from one administration or person to another with no apparent plan. I did enjoy learning about the staff and their sacrifices. There were a few new revelations but nothing that was really unexpected. Still worth reading though if interested in the staff and the heavy responsibilities they have.

Throughout this book the author lavishes great praise on the staff, which I am certain that every word is true and well deserved, however, the praise takes up approximately 80% of the whole leaving precious little space for the actual stories. The stories themselves are not earth-shattering, but rather mundane and not at all unknown previously. In addition, the stories are scattered throughout rather than organized serially. I would have upped my rating to four stars had there been a chapter for each administration instead of mixed blessings. I gave this book two stars instead of one due to the great amount of research done by the author.

It was hard to stop reading, it was so interesting. At the end of the book, I told myself I wanted a sequel to this story! It is nice a personal side of history is told. Those behind the scenes work harder than we will ever know!

What a great book!!!! Very easy to read and certainly a page turner in spots. The Residence gives readers a lot of insight to what happens inside the White House. I loved how The Residence was able to interview so many of the staff and they were open and candid about so many of the Presidents and their families. Very well researched. I particularly enjoyed how the author was able to capture the vibe during the JFK assassination and 9/11 terrorist attacks. I hope a sequel is in the works -- especially now with the Trump's in toe.

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