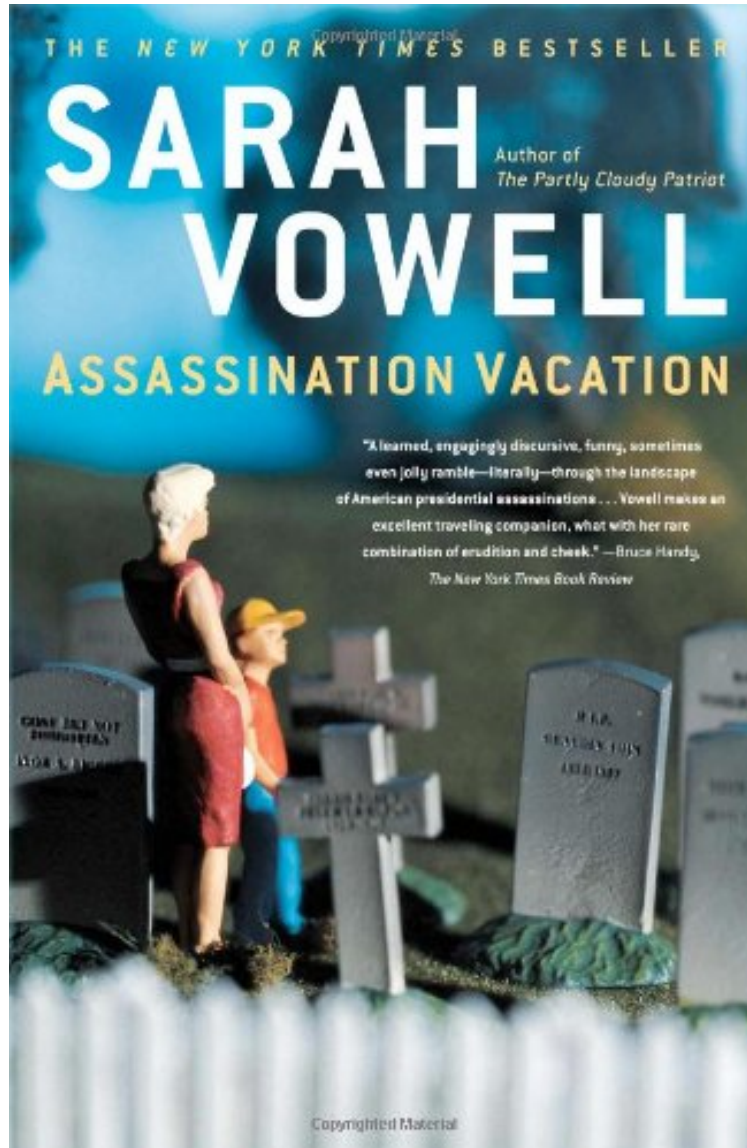


## Assassination Vacation

Sarah Vowell

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#73323 in Books Sarah Vowell 2006-02-06 2006-02-06 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.44 x .70 x 5.50l, .55 #File Name: 074326004X258 pages Assassination Vacation | File size: 16.Mb

**Sarah Vowell : Assassination Vacation** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Assassination Vacation:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Expected more and it felt dated By Nola assassination vacation has been on my reading list since I saw sarah vowell talk about it on the daily show. I was expecting a humorous novel about the assassinated presidents and kinda got that but it was mostly about her journey, which was also entertaining. did I like it? it had its moments. would I read it again? probably not. do I recommend? depends on what

kind of books you like. this book isn't definitely not for everyone. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The way history SHOULD be taught. By Vincent I am a relative latecomer to Vowell's work. I was really impressed with her recent book *Unfamiliar Fishes*, and decided to read more of her work. This book is also fabulous. If only this were a required text in high school history classes, there would be a lot more history majors in college. Besides her subtle wit and humorous self-references, she makes three presidents come alive (well, actually, she observes them all dying) so that you have a feel for historical periods and incidents that are far more interesting than the dry history that high schools usually pass off as the real story of what happened. You also see why history trended in certain directions and not others. It is fascinating to know that James Garfield was a voracious reader and that Robert Todd Lincoln (whom she calls Jinxy McDeath) was present or nearby for the assassinations of his father, James Garfield, and William McKinley. He was also supposed to sit behind Abraham Lincoln at Ford's Theater, but didn't make it. He could have sacrificed himself for his father and the country, or disarmed John Wilkes Booth and altered American history, but no-o-o-o-o-o. Vowell humanizes the men and events during these periods of history and corrects popular (and nonfactual) accounts of what one typically hears, especially about the Lincoln assassination. Booth wasn't treated for his broken leg by a doctor who didn't recognize him. He was treated by a Confederate sympathizer, Dr. Samuel Mudd, whose lame EXCUSE was that he didn't recognize him. Vowell traces Mudd to Fort Jefferson prison in the Dry Tortugas. She also relates how he shot one of his slaves as a lesson to the rest. And of course, no account of Mudd would be complete without *The Doctor Samuel A. Mudd Family Home Cooking* cookbook, which Vowell dredges up from history. This book is a delight, and everyone who is otherwise bored by history would do well to read it. Heck, anyone at all ought to read it. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Excellent! Fascinating! By Charles Hall This is a fascinating book. I've read a couple of other books by Sarah Vowell but this was by far the best. I don't have any special interest in assassinations, but these are all famous ones and yet she has found a wealth of fascinating facts to tell you. By visiting many of the sites themselves she also has new insight. (I had the same experience myself when visiting the Dealey Plaza in Dallas. Despite years of seeing diagrams of the place and documentaries on the Kennedy assassination, one visit to the actual location fills in a lot of blanks.) If you want to give Sarah Vowell a try, and you like non-fiction, this is the place to start

New York Times bestselling author of *The Wordy Shipmates* and contributor to NPRs "This American Life" Sarah Vowell embarks on a road trip to sites of political violence, from Washington DC to Alaska, to better understand our nation's ever-evolving political system and history. Sarah Vowell exposes the glorious conundrums of American history and culture with wit, probity, and an irreverent sense of humor. With *Assassination Vacation*, she takes us on a road trip like no other -- a journey to the pit stops of American political murder and through the myriad ways they have been used for fun and profit, for political and cultural advantage. From Buffalo to Alaska, Washington to the Dry Tortugas, Vowell visits locations immortalized and influenced by the spilling of politically important blood, reporting as she goes with her trademark blend of wisecracking humor, remarkable honesty, and thought-provoking criticism. We learn about the jinx that was Robert Todd Lincoln (present at the assassinations of Presidents Lincoln, Garfield, and McKinley) and witness the politicking that went into the making of the Lincoln Memorial. The resulting narrative is much more than an entertaining and informative travelogue -- it is the disturbing and fascinating story of how American death has been manipulated by popular culture, including literature, architecture, sculpture, and -- the author's favorite -- historical tourism. Though the themes of loss and violence are explored and we make detours to see how the Republican Party became the Republican Party, there are all kinds of lighter diversions along the way into the lives of the three presidents and their assassins, including mummies, show tunes, mean-spirited totem poles, and a nineteenth-century biblical sex cult.

From Publishers Weekly Offbeat and entertaining, this audio tour of the memorials, monuments and relics linked to the first three U.S. presidential assassinations features an impressive lineup of readers, including Conan O'Brien, Dave Eggers, Stephen King, Jon Stewart and, of course, Vowell herself, whose distinct voice and deadpan delivery will be familiar to fans of NPR's *This American Life*. Elements of that show are evident here, particularly in the way the music that accompanies the readings (scored by Michael Giacchino of *The Incredibles*) helps establish mood and heighten effect. Vowell handles most of the narration herself, with the guest narrators taking on specific roles. King, for example, voices the part of Abraham Lincoln. This approach works well most of the time, though it does make for some awkward shifts in tempo and voice. While Vowell's interplay with Eggers in the role of a tour guide sounds natural, her reenacted conversation with Catherine Keener as a museum curator seems stilted. Minor imperfections aside, however, this is a funny and expertly produced audiobook from a sharp social critic who wears her liberal heart on her sleeve. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From School Library Journal Adult/High School Vowell has a perspective on American history that is definitely funny. She visits museums, historic sites, statues, libraries, anything remotely relevant to successful presidential assassins, and a few of those not so successful. This is an amusing way to learn history, but it is also an unusual look at the interconnectedness of things. Robert Todd Lincoln, a.k.a. Jinxy McDeath, was present, or nearly so, at three assassinations his father's,

Garfield's, and McKinley's. To understand Garfield's assassin, the author spends time at the Oneida Colony in upstate New York, a religious commune that preached a combination of free love and the second coming, and connects it with Jonathan Edwards. She tracks the Lincoln conspirators through the process of plot and escape to hanging and imprisonment, even describing Dr. Mudd's enormous contribution when the plague hit the prison island of Dry Tortuga. Garfield's assassin was deeply involved in the redirection of the Republican Party after the Civil War, and McKinley's was an anarchist following, he thought, the tenets of Emma Goldman. There are family anecdotes and real scholarship in this quirky road trip. Teens will get an interesting view of one aspect of American history while picking up odd bits of information about a whole lot more. There is much to enjoy in this discursive yet somehow cohesive book. Susan H. Woodcock, Fairfax County Public Library, VA Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Bookmarks Magazine Vowell, a contributor to NPR's *This American Life* and the voice of Violet in *The Incredibles*, has written a funny and engaging history that revels in irony and morbid minutiae. Even when the humor occasionally feels strained or borders on offensive, the authors' delight in her subject wins the readers' forbearance. If Garfield and McKinley do not quite come into sharp focus, their stories never cease to entertain. Despite her unrelenting keen sense of the ridiculous and absurd, Vowell ultimately finds no real insights into the profound questions of obsession and madness that always lie just beneath her amiable storytelling. Copyright 2004 Phillips Nelson Media, Inc.