

# THE INHERITANCE

*Author of The Home for Unwanted Girls*

# JOANNA GOODMAN

a novel



# Synopsis

Arden Moore enjoyed an affluent life thanks to her husband's financial success as a Bay Street stockbroker, but a year after his unexpected death, the 36-year-old is a grieving single mother deeply in debt and living paycheck to paycheck with her three kids. Then, an unexpected call from a well-known estate lawyer in New York offers a glimmer of hope, setting in motion a complex legal journey that could mean the difference between a life of poverty, or unimaginable wealth thanks to the father she never knew, deceased billionaire, Wallace Ashforth.

Thirty years before, Arden's mother, Virginia, a flirtatious love addict with a string of failed affairs, had an affair with Wallace that transformed her life. When he died in a plane crash without a will, Virginia fought for years in court to secure a comfortable future for her and the secret unborn daughter she shared with Wallace. Despite her best efforts, society and the legal system prevented her from receiving the money that should rightfully have been hers.

But now, with advances in DNA testing, Arden may finally succeed in claiming the inheritance she has been long denied.

# Discussion Questions

1. One of the key themes of this novel is motherhood. What do you think of the mothers presented to us in the novel? Do you believe Virginia to be a good mother? Is Arden a good mother? Do you believe Tate will be a good mother?

2. The role of the father is another important theme in the novel. We are presented with three very different men in this role: The deceased Scott, Arden's stepfather Hal, and her biological father, Wallace. What is your feeling towards these very different men and the role they play in the novel?

3. What do you think of Arden's quest for the inheritance? Is it justified? Would you have pursued this inheritance with the information that Arden has? Why or why not?

4. Virginia and Arden share many traits. What are parallels that you perceive between them?

5. Virginia suffers from elder abuse in this novel and attends a support group that she initially believes herself not to fit into. Do you believe Virginia belongs in this group?

6. How did you feel about Virginia's decision to confront the perpetrator in the restaurant? How do you think such situations should be handled?

7. "Money is the root of all evil" says the saying. Do you think this book condones or condemns this idea?

8. If you were making the decision, do you agree with the law giving non-marital children unknown to the parent access to their inheritance?

9. If you were in the position of the wealthy family, would you be interested in getting to know Arden and her family?

10. What do you think is the future for Arden's relationship with her lawyer? Will it work out? Why or why not?

11. How did you feel learning about Ivy's coping strategy for her grief? How do you think Arden should have handled the situation as a parent?

12. Do you believe that Wyatt purposely left the EpiPen behind? Why or why not?



## *About the Author*



JOANNA GOODMAN is the author of seven novels, including the new instant bestseller, *The Inheritance*, and the #1 national bestseller, *The Home for Unwanted Girls*, which was on the Canadian bestseller list for more than six months. Her other novels include *The Forgotten Daughter* and *The Finishing School*, both national bestsellers. Her stories have appeared in *The Fiddlehead*, *B & A Fiction*, *Event*, *The New Quarterly*, and *White Wall Review*, as well as excerpted in Elisabeth Harvor's fiction anthology *A Room at the Heart of Things*.

Originally from Montreal, Joanna now lives in Toronto with her husband and two kids.

# What People Are Saying

"Absorbing . . . Hand this one to readers who enjoy stories of relatable women finding strength and their places in the world."

—**BOOKLIST**

"An excellent, compulsively readable work [that] delves into the toxicity of inheritance and the way it can obsess and destroy one's sense of self and path in the world."

—**HEATHER O'NEILL,**  
author of *When We Lost Our Heads*

"Wise, immersive and full of the fierce vulnerability that links women together, *The Inheritance* reminded me of a Meg Wolitzer novel."

—**MARISSA STAPLEY,**  
New York Times bestselling author of *Lucky*