



# The Heirs

*Susan Rieger*

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## **The Heirs** Susan Rieger

The new novel from the critically-acclaimed author of *The Divorce Papers*, about a wealthy, pedigreed Manhattan family that comes undone after the death of their patriarch.

*The Heirs*, the follow-up to Susan Rieger's critically-acclaimed debut, wrestles with the nature of inheritance and legacy as it affects an unforgettable, upper-crust Manhattan clan. With great command, wit and charm, we are introduced to the inimitable Falkeses: five clever, charismatic brothers, their partners, and their parents, Rupert and Eleanor. The brothers find themselves floundering after Rupert dies of cancer, suddenly shaken without their beloved father's immense influence on their lives. When, in the wake of Rupert's death, a long-held secret comes to light, the brothers are forced to reexamine their place in the wider world and in the smaller one they've always called home.

An elegant, incisive and witty commentary on elite Manhattan society and the dynamics of family, *The Heirs* will entertain from the first to last page.

## **The Heirs Details**

Date : Published May 23rd 2017 by Crown

ISBN :

Author : Susan Rieger

Format : Kindle Edition 272 pages

Genre : Fiction, Contemporary, Adult Fiction, Adult

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## From Reader Review *The Heirs* for online ebook

### Tucker says

I just put “*The Heirs*” on my list of Top 10 novels for 2017. I’m sure I will read many other great books this year (at least I hope so!), but “*The Heirs*” was exceptional. The death of Rupert Falkes, the patriarch of a wealthy New York family, is a blow (in varying degrees) to his wife Eleanor and their adult sons Harry, Will, Jack, Sam, and Tom. The Falkes family has always seen themselves as a particularly tight-knit unit - “Team Falkes, Always Team Falkes.” The brothers label themselves “The Five Famous, Fierce, Forceful, Faithful, Fabled, Fortunate, Fearless Falkeses.” But their closeness is thrown into turmoil when Eleanor receives notification of a lawsuit against Rupert’s estate, filed by Vera Wolinski, claiming that Rupert is the father of her two sons. Eleanor and her sons all have different reactions to the possibility that Rupert fathered other children, but they are baffled by Eleanor’s seeming acceptance of that possibility and her desire to set up a trust for the Wolinski boys. The brothers question whether they really knew their parents at all. The Falkes family is not the only one questioning paternity, as other families in their orbit are confronted with the effects of unknown or uncertain paternity. The introduction of these other families provides additional depth and complexity to the rich portrait Rieger paints of family relationships. Written with nuance, wit, insight, and an intricate and captivating plot, the “*The Heirs*” is a masterful work of literary fiction. It now has a permanent place on my bookshelf and I know I’ll be reading it again.

Thank you to Crown Publishing and NetGalley for an advance copy of this book.

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### jendlo says

If you like Edith Wharton books, then you'll like *The Heirs*.

For all of the contemporary novels I've read about affluent New Yorkers (quite a lot!), this is the first to truly reflect their mindset and lifestyle. A standout for being right on the money.

The vivid characters, engaging plot, and cultured tone make it a great literary read.

Very special thanks to NetGalley and Crown for the advance reader copy.

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### Carol (Bookaria) says

This is the **wonderful story** of Rupert Falkes, his family, and related friends and acquaintances. It starts with Rupert, a self-made and wealthy man in his sixties dying of cancer. Soon after his death a woman named Vera claims that Rupert had two children with her and therefore her sons are entitled to a portion of his inheritance. **This is where the novel starts and what follows are their life stories which are interesting, engaging and sometimes funny.**

The story is told from multiple points of view and alternates between the present and the past. The pace with which the story is narrated is neither fast nor slow, it's in the middle and kept me engaged throughout. The novel takes place mostly in Manhattan and is **beautifully written**.

I am drawn to these types of novels: the stories of wealthy family members living in or close to New York, some of these stories include highly-dysfunctional relationships. It is similar to other books I have read and loved such as *The Nest* and *The Children*.

Overall, **I enjoyed this book** and recommend it to those who love reading interesting fictional stories about family and relationships.

Review posted on blog.

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### **TheSkepticalReader says**

Somewhere between 2.5 to 3 stars.

*The Heirs* opens with the death of Rupert Faulkes and the hidden secrets of his life smearing what his family had falsely considered a tranquil home. Each of the chapters follows either a member of or a person connected to the Faulkes' family, beginning with his wife—Eleanor. Although the chapters are dedicated to individual characters, the novel retained an omniscient, third-person narration throughout.

While I went into this fairly blindly (given that it's not yet out in print), I had higher expectations than this novel met. I expected turmoil and grief but what followed was a somewhat predictable soap opera about an upper-class family who thought there were as perfect as families can be. Even after only having read the first chapter—Eleanor's perspective—the structure and history of the family was rather unimaginative. Each of the five sons is sculpted to fit the mold—the artist, the lawyer, the scientist, etc. When the end of the chapter came, and when we are told the dark secret of Rupert's life, I, unfortunately, guessed what events would follow fairly easily.

I didn't connect to any of the characters as much as I was hoping to even when a specific chapter was dedicated to understanding one individual amongst the group. I would even argue that when a chapter is meant to give the titled character a space to establish their identity, we are still told their story through a tarnished lens. The multitude of characters we get do add to the complexity of the family secrets but once again, some of the events unfolded remained predictable as the Faulkes dominated the stage.

It seems my major concern with this novel lies in that I repeatedly grasped for reality within it and, finding none, felt frustrated.

I did, however, like Eleanor's character quite a bit. She started off a very simplistic figure but developed into something larger and more mystifying than even her family had suspected. I was mostly enthralled by her marriage to Rupert but admired her courage and loyalty to her loved ones as well. She seemed to manifest an aura of feminism that was unexpected given her outwardly indifference to the world. In the end, I'm not quite sure I fully understood Eleanor Faulkes but I kind of liked that about this novel.

As a whole, *The Heirs* is entertaining and engaging in its dramatics. This isn't usually my cup of tea but I completed it in one sitting so that counts for something I think. If you need a comfortable read for the evening, with enough drama to keep you turning pages, pick up this book and get reading.

*Disclaimer: I received this e-book from NetGalley in exchange for a review. All opinions stated are my own and not influenced by the exchange.*

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## **Oreoandlucy says**

A more complete review is available on my blog:  
<http://reviewsofbooksonmynightstand.b...>

When I put this book on my to-be-read list, I believed that it would be more about the claims of additional heirs. Instead, it was really more of a saga of a family and their friends. The stories of the lives of the various members of the family were interesting but I think I would have been more interested if the book centered more on the drama of the woman's claims of being the mother to Rupert's children. Rieger did a wonderful job building unique and developed characters. The ending really bothered me as I felt that the story really started to get interesting at the very end of the book but questions were asked that failed to be answered. While I was a bit disappointed by some of the parts of the book, I did enjoy reading it. The writing is very fluid and easy to read and I found myself finishing the book quickly. While it wasn't one of my favorite books of the year, I would recommend it to a reader who enjoys books about characters more than stories.

I received this book from Blogging for Books for this review. This is my honest opinion of this book.

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## **Stephanie Anze says**

After Rupert Falkes dies due to cancer, a woman comes forward claiming that he fathered two sons with her. His widow, Eleanor and his five grown sons are taken aback by the claim. Wavering between feeling confused and betrayed by their father, all five Falkes sons are surprised when their mother is willing to validate the claim and give them part of the inheritance left by Rupert. Having to deal with their father's supposed betrayal, their mother's nonchalant attitude and their own personal demons, the Falkes clan has to learn how to navigate their dysfunctional family.

I had higher expectation of this book. The premise was intriguing. Dealing with betrayal, legacy, money and a dysfunctional family, this combination seemed like it would amount to a more appealing narrative. It did not, at least not for me. Rupert Falkes is a successful lawyer originally from Britain. He moves to the States, meets and marries Eleanor, and together they have five sons. Harry, the oldest, is a law professor. Will is a Hollywood agent. Sam is a doctor and researcher. Jack is a talented trumpet player. Tom, the youngest, is a federal prosecutor with a noble heart. Most characters acted entitled and came off mostly as annoying, bordering on nonsympathetic. I also disliked that more often than not, it was difficult keeping track of who was who, their spouses, children and other acquaintances. My biggest issue with the book though, is that the initial premise, the two sons born to this other woman, is not really a focal point. Where this should have been the "meat" of the story, it was a secondary storyline. When Rieger does give the reader the reveal to the truth, its underwhelming. I did not much like the melodramatic feel either. This novel reminded me of 'The Nest' and while that had a dramatic aspect to it too, it was done in a better way. The only reason I did not DNF this is because at 250 page mark, it was a fairly short book. All and all, a disappointing read.

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## **Angela M says**

I'm abandoning this after 50 pages . Feels like a soap opera and I have too many other good books waiting.

In fairness, no rating or review. Also in fairness to the author, there are several high ratings. Just wasn't for me .

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### **Meredith Duran says**

Okay, this was just a ton of fun. An elegantly written family potboiler that kept me entirely entertained on a very long plane ride.

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### **Bonnie Brody says**

The Heirs is a novel I did not like or warm up to. The writing seemed removed and strained, the characters formulaic and postured.

Shortly after Rupert Falkes dies, his wife and five sons find out that he had another family. Despite the second family losing their legal battle for a claim to Rupert's enormous wealth, his widow Eleanor decides that she wants to leave part of Rupert's estate to them. This causes dissension among Eleanor's sons.

The story is told from different perspectives and vantage points. Each of the voices seems to ring flat and have no depth. There is a lot of description but it all falls short and feels hollow. There are the WASPS of Manhattan who are well-bred and repressed. Then there are the nouveau riche, the gays, the Jews and the Italians. Each 'type' might as well have a Walmart picture frame around their characterizations, as flat and one-dimensional as they are.

I had wanted to read the author's previous novel, 'The Divorce Papers', but after having suffered through 'The Heirs', I will pass on that.

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### **Cindy says**

A LibraryThing win! Thank you! Well this certainly was an interesting and very unusual read for me. I had a love/ hate relationship with the premise and the characters. Rupert, the father of 5 grown children all male, dies of cancer leaving his wife and heirs with questions and secrets. Told from the perspective of family members and acquaintances the story, past and present, unfolds and the family finds themselves questioning their father's life and their own. The story is paced very slowly and at first this bothered me as there is little action. However the writing is so beautiful that I eventually accepted the pace and settled down into the story. And quite the story it is! Dysfunctional best describes just about everyone with a very few exceptions! 3.5 stars.

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### **Victoria says**

#### **Witty, intelligent and sharply-drawn family drama...**

I really enjoyed The Nest and thought I'd give another WASP-y dysfunctional family a try and it did not

disappoint though this takes it up a notch. The writing is superb, make that SUPERB, and the tone has a sort of upper crust, clipped quality which works really well for these characters and this story.

If you're still with me, I'm also going to tell you that the construct may not appeal to all. Each chapter is dedicated to a character, but it's not fully dedicated, more like orbits around that character. And it moves back and forth in time in a non-linear way within that chapter, it's something of a puzzle to put all the pieces together as you're provided only snippets. Remember the Rubik's cube of yesteryear? This is a literary equivalent.

And yet I simply loved this novel. As I've said before, my friends will now utter a collective groan, great writing makes my socks go up and down. And great characters set those socks to dancing.

I enjoyed *The Divorce Papers* (though unpopular here on Goodreads) and for me, Reiger has delivered another incisive and clever story. The uppity Falkes may not be to everyone's taste, but they kept me steeped in their drama and satisfied to the very end.

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### **Robin says**

The lifestyles of the rich and dysfunctional where everyone is well educated and smart and live far above everyone else in their own stratosphere yet can't handle the events of everyday life. Despite its eruditeness (I found myself using the Kindle dictionary for the meanings of many words) and unlikable characters, I loved it.

Perfect for readers who loved Sweeney's *The Nest*, Wolitzer's *The Interestings*, and Straub's *Modern Lovers*.

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### **Kristy says**

Rupert Falkes is a wealthy, (somewhat) self-made man. A British orphan, he came to America, charmed his way into Yale Law, and made a career as a successful lawyer. He also married well: the beautiful (and rich) Eleanor Phipps. Together, the pair had five sons (Harry, Will, Sam, Jack, and Tom) and a happy life. When Rupert dies of cancer, a woman comes forward, claiming to have had two sons with him as well. The revelation causes different reactions among Eleanor and all the Falkes boys (now men), setting off a chain of reactions throughout the privileged family.

I'll be honest; I requested this ARC solely because I enjoyed Reiger's previous novel, *The Divorce Papers*, so much. I did not realize *THE HEIRS* was set in New York City and focused purely on a wealthy family--it seems like so many of these novels lately are tedious, and I can't find any connection to the characters.

And, truly, at first seemed it seemed like a boring look at a bunch of rich people. However, the novel becomes more interesting and nuanced as it progresses, with the viewpoints varying by chapter (and really within each chapter). The story is told by the people who were within Rupert Falkes' orbit. We hear from his wife, some of his sons, and past love interests of both Rupert and Eleanor. It turns out to be an effective way to tell the story, with bits and pieces of various stories coming out from the characters throughout the book, including about the possible illegitimate sons. (The focus is less on these two potential heirs than you would think, albeit their potential existence sort of kicks off the story.)

About halfway through, I found many of the characters to be petulant and annoying again--probably because we were in whiny middle son Sam's chapter. Truly, a lot of the people in this book are jerks. Sadly, Eleanor and Rupert's sons aren't always of the best character. Still, Eleanor is a fascinating person. She's strong, witty, and deep. She was definitely my favorite character in the novel, and any stories related to her were my favorite as well.

There is a lot of talk about money, class, and heritage in the novel. It's set in an earlier time period; it sometimes seems a bit much, but I suppose it's a realistic portrayal of wealthy New York in that era. Still, it is a lot of Jews versus Gentiles, rich versus poor, Yale versus Princeton.

I was a bit torn on this one for a bit, but I can't deny that I really enjoyed it, even if I didn't always like the characters. Besides, I was quite taken with Eleanor and even Anne (the wife of Eleanor's past love, Jim). Rieger is simply a good writer: her books are crisp and sharp. While on the surface the novel seems to be about a bunch of rich people, it also depicts the ties that bind us; there's meaning behind the sniping. There are touching moments in this novel, heartbreaking ones, and even funny ones. I didn't love it quite as much as *THE DIVORCE PAPERS*, and would probably rate as it 3.75 stars, but I'll round up to 4 stars here.

I received a copy of this novel from the publisher and Librarything (thank you!) in return for an unbiased review; it is available everywhere as of 05/23/2017.

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### **Stephanie (That's What She Read) says**

I received this as an ARC from Netgalley in exchange for a review:

3.5

I love a good family drama, especially one with full of money and family secrets! This was a very enjoyable read tackling identity, paternity and the meaning of family. I would say my only issue with it was the soap-opera level twists and the fact that most of the POVs mirrored each other too closely. Definitely recommend!

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### **Cindy Burnett says**

4.5 stars

I loved this book. *The Heirs* is beautifully written, and the story unfolds bit by bit through alternating perspectives from a number of the main characters. Rupert Falkes is the patriarch of a wealthy Manhattan family. He dies leaving his wife, Eleanor, and five grown sons. Following his death, an unknown woman makes a claim on the estate claiming she had two sons with Rupert. This new information throws the family into turmoil. As *The Heirs* progresses, the reader learns more about each of the characters, and numerous secrets emerge.

This is not usually my favorite type of read – I am not a fan of too much dysfunction and like all of the details to be wrapped up when the book ends. *The Heir* has some dysfunction (not over-the-top which was



nice), and there are numerous issues that are not resolved. However, I truly loved reading it and had a hard time putting it down to take care of everyday life. Rieger's prose is lyrical, and I did not want the book to end.

I highly recommend this novel. Thanks to Crown and LibraryThing for the chance to read this ARC in exchange for an honest review.

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