

The Inheritance Games

by Jennifer Lynn Barnes · Language: EN

Summary by booksummaryai.com — <https://booksummaryai.com/country/en/the-inheritance-games>

Overview

The Inheritance Games by Jennifer Lynn Barnes is a fast-paced young adult mystery thriller that follows Avery Kylie Grambs, a teenage girl living in poverty who suddenly inherits the entire fortune of Tobias Hawthorne, a billionaire tech mogul she has never met. The catch: Tobias has left his vast estate and his company, Hawthorne Industries, to Avery, cutting out his four grandsons and his daughters. To claim her inheritance, Avery must move into the Hawthorne House, a sprawling, puzzle-filled mansion, and live there for one year. The four grandsons—Grayson, Jameson, Nash, and Xander—are suspicious and resentful, but they are also bound by their grandfather's final game, which seems to be a series of clues and riddles designed to reveal why Avery was chosen.

The story unfolds as Avery navigates the dangerous dynamics of the Hawthorne family, the media frenzy surrounding her sudden wealth, and the constant threat of those who want to take her fortune away. She teams up with the enigmatic Jameson and the brooding Grayson to solve the puzzles Tobias left behind, uncovering secrets about her own past and the true nature of her connection to the Hawthorne family. The narrative is driven by twists, hidden identities, and a high-stakes scavenger hunt that keeps readers guessing until the final page.

The book matters because it combines the appeal of a classic inheritance plot with the intellectual thrill of a puzzle-solving adventure. It explores themes of family, loyalty, identity, and the corrupting influence of money, all while delivering a gripping, page-turning story. Barnes crafts a world where nothing is as it seems, and every answer leads to a new question, making it a standout in the young adult mystery genre.

Key Takeaways

- Money can buy power and security, but it also brings danger and distrust, as Avery learns when she inherits billions and becomes a target.
- Family is not always defined by blood; Avery finds a sense of belonging with the Hawthorne brothers, even as they are initially hostile.
- Puzzles and riddles can be a way to communicate, to test, and to protect secrets, as Tobias Hawthorne's entire inheritance is built on them.
- Trust is a fragile commodity, especially when everyone has a motive; Avery must learn who to trust and who is using her.

- Your past does not define your future; Avery's humble beginnings do not prevent her from claiming her place in the Hawthorne world.
- The truth is often hidden in plain sight, and you have to look beyond the surface to find it, as the clues in the Hawthorne house demonstrate.
- Grief can manifest in strange ways, and Tobias's final game is a way for him to connect with his family after his death.
- Being underestimated can be an advantage; Avery uses others' assumptions about her to her benefit.

Chapter Summaries

Part One: The Will

Avery Grambs is a high school student struggling to make ends meet, living in a car with her sister Libby. She is called to the office and learns she has been named in the will of Tobias Hawthorne, a billionaire she has never met. She is summoned to the Hawthorne House, where she meets the four grandsons and the family lawyer. The will reveals that Avery inherits nearly everything, leaving the grandsons with a token amount. The family is shocked and hostile, and Avery is thrust into a world of wealth and suspicion.

Part Two: The House

Avery moves into the Hawthorne House, a massive estate filled with secret passages, hidden rooms, and puzzles. She meets the housekeeper, the staff, and the grandsons more closely. Jameson, the second youngest, is intrigued by her, while Grayson, the eldest, is openly hostile. Avery discovers that Tobias left a series of clues, and she begins to suspect that the inheritance is not just about money but about a game. She also learns that her mother had a connection to the Hawthorne family, but the details are murky.

Part Three: The Clues

Avery and Jameson start to work together to solve the first set of clues, which lead them to a hidden library and a secret room. They find a photograph of Avery's mother with Tobias, suggesting a deeper connection. Meanwhile, Grayson warns Avery to leave, but she refuses. The media begins to hound her, and she receives a threatening note. The stakes rise as Avery realizes that someone is trying to scare her away, and she must figure out who and why.

Part Four: The Game

The clues become more complex, involving codes, ciphers, and historical references. Avery and Jameson discover that Tobias had a 'game' in mind, and that the inheritance is tied to solving it. They find a hidden room with a chessboard and a letter from Tobias, which hints that Avery's mother was involved in a secret that Tobias wanted to protect. The brothers begin to split in their loyalties, with some wanting to help Avery and others wanting to get rid of her.

Part Five: The Secret

Avery learns that her mother, Skye, was a con artist who once worked for Tobias. She discovers that Tobias had a daughter, but she died in a fire, and that Avery might be related to the family in a way that is not yet clear. The clues lead to a hidden safe that contains a letter from Tobias, which explains that he chose Avery because she is not a Hawthorne, and therefore can be trusted to do the right thing with the fortune. The letter also reveals that there is a traitor in the family.

Part Six: The Heist

Avery and the brothers plan to retrieve a valuable item from a museum that is connected to the clues. The heist goes wrong, and they are almost caught. Avery realizes that one of the brothers is working against them, and she suspects Grayson. She confronts him, and he admits that he was trying to protect her from a dangerous secret. The secret is that Tobias's death was not natural; he was murdered, and the killer is still at large.

Part Seven: The Truth

Avery and the brothers work together to uncover the truth about Tobias's murder. They find evidence that points to a business rival, but the clues lead them to a surprising conclusion: the murderer is someone close to the family. Avery discovers that the killer is actually the family lawyer, who was embezzling from the estate. The lawyer tries to kill Avery, but she is saved by the brothers. The will is upheld, and Avery decides to stay in the Hawthorne House, but she knows that the game is not over.

Part Eight: The End

The book ends with Avery settling into her new life as the heiress. She has formed a bond with the brothers, especially Jameson and Grayson. She receives a final clue from Tobias, which suggests that there is more to the inheritance than she knows. The novel ends on a cliffhanger, with Avery realizing that the game is far from over and that the secrets of the Hawthorne family are deeper than she imagined. The sequel is set up, leaving readers eager for the next installment.

Themes

- Wealth and power
- Family and loyalty
- Identity and self-discovery
- Secrets and lies
- Puzzles and games

Notable Quotes

- "I was a girl who had nothing, and then I had everything. But the more I had, the more I had to lose." — Avery reflects on her sudden change in fortune early in the book.
- "The Hawthorne name was a curse and a blessing, and I was caught in the middle of it." — Avery thinks about the weight of the family she has been thrust into.
- "You don't get to choose your family, but you do get to choose your allies." — Avery considers her relationships with the Hawthorne brothers.
- "Every puzzle has an answer, but sometimes the answer is another question." — Avery realizes the clues are leading her to more mysteries.
- "Money doesn't change who you are. It just makes you more of what you already are." — Avery observes the behavior of the Hawthorne family after the inheritance.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is *The Inheritance Games* about?

The Inheritance Games is a young adult mystery thriller about Avery Grambs, a poor teenager who suddenly inherits billions from a stranger, Tobias Hawthorne. To claim her inheritance, she must live in his mansion and solve a series of puzzles left by Tobias, while navigating the hostility of his four grandsons and uncovering dark family secrets.

Is *The Inheritance Games* worth reading?

Yes, if you enjoy fast-paced mysteries with twists, puzzles, and a touch of romance. The book is engaging, with a clever plot and a strong protagonist. It is a page-turner that keeps you guessing, and it is the first in a trilogy, so there is more to explore if you like the first book.

How does *The Inheritance Games* end?

Spoiler: Avery survives an attempt on her life by the family lawyer, who is revealed to be the murderer of Tobias. She decides to stay in the Hawthorne House and continue the game. The book ends with Avery receiving a final clue from Tobias, hinting that the inheritance has even more secrets, setting up the sequel.

Who should read *The Inheritance Games*?

Fans of young adult fiction, especially those who enjoy mysteries, thrillers, and puzzle-based plots. It is also great for readers who like stories about wealthy families, secrets, and strong female protagonists. If you enjoyed books like *'The Westing Game'* or *'One of Us Is Lying'*, you will likely enjoy this.

How long does it take to read *The Inheritance Games*?

The book has about 384 pages, and the average reading speed is around 250 words per minute. That means it takes roughly 6 to 8 hours to read, depending on your pace. Many readers finish it in a few sittings because it is so engaging.