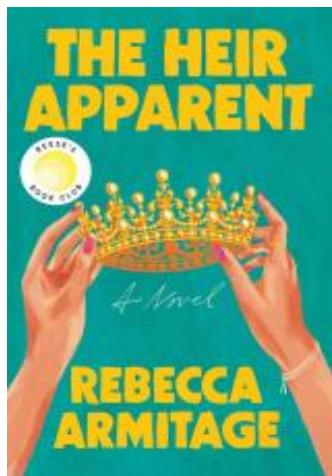


The Heir Apparent

by Rebecca Armitage



About the Book

An irresistible modern fairy tale about a British princess who must decide between her duty to her family --- or to her own heart.

It's New Year's Day in Australia, and the life Lexi Villiers has carefully built is working out nicely. She's in the second year of her medical residency, she lives on a beautiful farm with her two best friends, Finn and Jack, and she's about to finally become more than friendly with Jack --- when a helicopter abruptly lands.

Out steps her grandmother's right-hand man, with the tragic news that her father and older brother have been killed in a skiing accident. Lexi's grandmother happens to be the Queen of England, and Lexi must now accept the reality that she is suddenly next in line for the throne --- a role she has publicly disavowed.

Returning to London as the heir apparent Princess Alexandrina, Lexi is greeted by a skeptical public not ready to forgive her defection, a grieving sister-in-law harboring an explosive secret, and a scheming uncle determined to claim the throne himself.

Her recent life --- and Jack --- grow ever more distant as she feels the tug of tradition, of love for her grandmother, and of obligation. When her grandmother grants her one year to decide, Lexi must choose her own destiny: will it be determined by an accident of birth --- or by love?

Discussion Guide

Please note that the following questions may contain spoilers to the plot. We recommend you read only after you've finished the book.

- 1.** When Lexi flies to London following the deaths of her father and brother, we see her transformation from private citizen to public royal unfolding en route: wardrobe, hair and manicure all remade before landing. What is that meant to signify and foreshadow? What does it tell you about royal life and obligations, and do you feel those obligations are still relevant or necessary today?
- 2.** On the night Lexi arrives in London, what first impressions did you gather from her reunion with Amira? What does their conversation reveal about their friendship and Amira's role in the royal family?
- 3.** As the palace discusses the plans for the funeral, Lexi notes how even small details --- the procession order, the choice of flowers --- can have cascading effects. Considering the movements of the royal family members so far, what are some details that stood out to you, and did they yield large consequences?
- 4.** How does Queen Eleanor balance her familial and royal responsibilities, being Lexi's grandmother as well as the Queen of England? Do you feel she gives each role equal weight?
- 5.** Lexi feels betrayed when she learns that Louis was given their mother's engagement ring. In their argument --- unbeknownst to them, their last meaningful time together before Louis' death --- did you sympathize with one or both of them?
- 6.** How would you describe Lexi's resolve and conflicting emotions during the trip to the Highlands?
- 7.** Did Lexi change during the year of weighing her options and fending off Uncle Richard's attempts to seize power? How so?
- 8.** What was your reaction upon learning the truth about Lexi's mother's death? How do Lexi's recurring dreams set up this revelation?
- 9.** If Louis and Kris had survived, with Louis eventually crowned King, do you think they would have been able to have a public life together?
- 10.** Some of the characters aren't what they initially seem, or change over the course of the novel. Can you think of a character who might fit either description? Which character wound up surprising you the most?
- 11.** After this glimpse behind fictional palace gates, was there anything about royal life that might appeal to you or might make you understand if Lexi had made a different decision?
- 12.** Who were your favorite characters?

Author Bio

Rebecca Armitage is a journalist with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, who likes to write about royals. She has written stories about the death of Queen Elizabeth II, the coronation of King Charles III, the exile of Prince Harry and

Duchess Meghan, and the abdication of Denmark's Queen Margrethe. As digital editor for the ABC's International news team, she has covered several US elections and travelled to Israel to cover the war in Gaza. She lives in Hobart, Tasmania, with her husband and a poorly behaved German Shorthaired Pointer named Chino. **THE HEIR APPARENT** is her first novel.

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