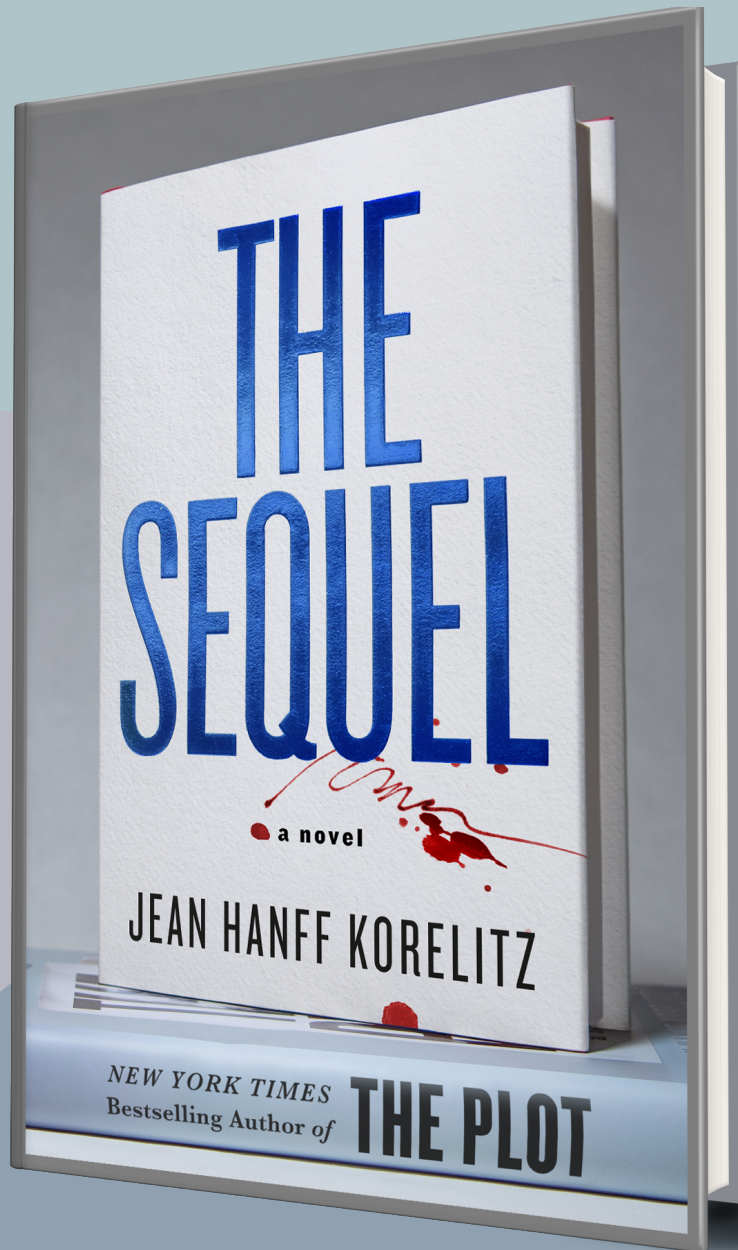


# BOOK CLUB KIT



““WICKED ENTERTAINMENT.””

—KIRKUS REVIEWS, STARRED REVIEW

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** Did you read *The Plot* before reading *The Sequel*? If your answer is different from that of your reading buddies, compare your reading experiences.
- 2** The chapter titles in *The Sequel* are themselves titles of other writers' sequels to their novels. Did you spot that, and if so, at what point?
- 3** Discuss Anna as the antihero. Did you enjoy reading the story told from her perspective? Would you want to be friends with her?
- 4** Anna's recollection of Evan contrasts sharply with his recollection of her. Where do you think the truth lies? Is Anna a reliable narrator?
- 5** Do you view Anna as the villain of the story, or is the villain her husband, her brother, or her blackmailer?
- 6** Would Anna's book have hit the bestseller list if she hadn't been married to a famous author? Or if Jake hadn't died at the height of his literary fame? Given what you learn about how Evan's manuscript was handled, do you think he had a chance of being published?
- 7** What moments surprised you the most? Any favorite scenes?
- 8** Discuss the ending. What do you think is next for Anna? Do you think she will ever suffer the consequences of her actions?

# AN INTERVIEW

WITH JEAN HANFF KORELITZ



**JEAN HANFF KORELITZ** is the *New York Times* bestselling author of the novels *The Plot* and *The Latecomer* (both of which are being adapted as limited series), *You Should Have Known* (which aired on HBO as *The Undoing*, starring Nicole Kidman, Hugh Grant, and Donald Sutherland), *Admission* (adapted as a film starring Tina Fey), *The Devil and Webster*, *The White Rose*, *The Sabbathday River* and *A Jury of Her Peers*, as well as *Interference Powder*, a novel for children. Her company BOOKTHEWRITER hosts Pop-Up Book Groups in which small groups of readers discuss new books with their authors. She lives in New York City with her husband, Irish poet Paul Muldoon.

**Did you ever think you would continue the story from your *New York Times* bestselling novel *The Plot* (2021)? When did the idea for *The Sequel* start to form?**

When I was writing *The Plot* during the first months of the pandemic in 2020, it never once occurred to me that I would one day write a sequel. That in itself would come back to haunt me, because there were decisions I made in the writing of the first novel that would box me in when it was time to revisit those characters or situations. I remember one seemingly inconsequential line in *The Plot* that would have me tearing my hair out with *The Sequel* and required the assistance of not one but two experts in pharmacology!

With so much emphasis on the final pages of *The Plot*, few of its readers were immediately concerned with what happens next, but over time I began to hear from fans of the novel who were curious. When I thought about the story's (surviving) characters, I began to understand that their journeys were unfinished and that there were still so many unanswered questions about them. I mentioned to my agent that I was thinking of revisiting the characters — Anna in particular — in a sequel, and she grinned and said: “Yes. And we’re going to call it: *The Sequel*.”

***The Sequel* follows Anna Williams-Bonner, wife of *The Plot*'s protagonist Jacob Finch-Bonner, as she discovers her own literary success. How did the experience of writing from the perspectives of those two characters compare? Did you find one character harder or easier to write?**

It was a pleasure to inhabit the mind of a person who has done such vigorously unsavory things. Why? Probably because I won't be experiencing those behaviors in my real life, thank you very much! It's an oddity I've always noticed as a reader, that we tend to root for the protagonist, no matter how awful they are, and that was a fascinating position to be in as a writer. In spite of what this protagonist does, what we actually witness them doing, we still kind of want them to succeed. It's the superpower of fiction, to make us see the world through the eyes of people so (one hopes) different from ourselves.

**As the author of eight previous novels, you have a unique inside view of the publishing industry. What was it like satirizing that world in your new novel?**

I will say this for publishing: We who dwell within it are admirably good-natured about seeing ourselves satirized. Perhaps it's because we understand what an anachronism the industry essentially is. In a modern world where people can publish their own written language, in multiple formats, with the push of a button, contemporary book publishing is still a 19th-century relic in which it may still take a year or more to get a manuscript to transform into a published book! We tolerate that, despite our natural human impatience, because we know there are still things worth waiting for, and we are fascinated by those who still work in book publishing, because we recognize our shared eccentricities. There's just something about a...you know, book.

**What has been the reaction so far when you've told people about this new book?**

Unbridled excitement, I'm happy to say, often accompanied by a demand along the lines of: I need it right now. Like I said: People are so impatient, aren't they?



#CeladonReads | #TheSequelBook