



The Mistress's Daughter

A.M. Homes

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

The Mistress's Daughter

A.M. Homes

The Mistress's Daughter A.M. Homes

The acclaimed writer A. M. Homes was given up for adoption before she was born. Her biological mother was a twenty-two-year-old single woman who was having an affair with a much older married man with a family of his own. *The Mistress's Daughter* is the ruthlessly honest account of what happened when, thirty years later, her birth parents came looking for her. Homes relates how they initially made contact and what happened afterwards, and digs through the family history of both sets of her parents in a twenty-first-century electronic search for self. Daring, heartbreaking, and startlingly funny, Homes's memoir is a brave and profoundly moving consideration of identity and family.

The Mistress's Daughter Details

Date : Published April 5th 2007 by Viking (first published 2007)

ISBN : 9780670038381

Author : A.M. Homes

Format : Hardcover 256 pages

Genre : Autobiography, Memoir, Nonfiction, Parenting, Adoption, Biography, Biography Memoir

 [Download The Mistress's Daughter ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Mistress's Daughter ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Mistress's Daughter A.M. Homes

From Reader Review The Mistress's Daughter for online ebook

Sandy says

I thought this book was very whiny. Here is a young talented woman who has a very loving adopted family and all we see is that she wants to be loved by her birth parents. When she is rejected by her father, instead of getting over it, she tries to make herself loved. Someone needs to tell her that it isn't always about her. There are factors outside of herself that makes him act as he does. The man does not change. Also , she is overwhelmed by her birth mother to the point that she tries to back off. Sounds like her father to me.

I can understand her desire to know her roots. She does pursue this and the fact that she was adopted seems to have little effect or consequence here. She finally comes to the realization that her adoptive family has had a permanent effect on her as well.

I am not sure there is a story here. I did read the book through, but after that I did not feel as though I came away with any great insight. It was disappointing.

Kelly says

Interesting. I wanted to like this more than I did. A writer finds her birth parents -- she was the daughter of a married man and his mistress. Unfortunately, all the characters are just SO unlikeable, including the narrator herself. (Her birth parents are odious.) Some interesting observations on self and memory, but ultimately, "meh."

Hillari says

This was a fast read for me and I highly recommend it to anyone who wants to read about the complexities of adoption. I still struggle with my definition of what a family is and how I fit in. A.M. Homes experience's gave me great comfort and I hope she writes more on adoption issues in the future.

Review by: Nancy J. Mumford

I read this book in about 3 hours in one sitting and was absolutely fascinated. Rather than being a typical story of an adopted child who rediscovers her wonderful birth parents, A.M. Homes is truthful about her fears and the emotional roller coaster this information sends her on. Her relationships with her newly discovered biological parents are unsatisfying for various reasons and she struggles with her feelings and definition of what a family is. I thought the book offered a very interesting perspective and was well done. Recommended!

Kevin says

Sometimes I read books by authors I like with a generous mindset. When I first started Homes's memoir I was enjoying it pretty well. Then I talked with a friend who teaches memoir writing and she told me that she really hated this book. She listed a few reasons (victimy narration, dull details, the funny way that Homes never really talks about her own mistakes) and told me I should read Another Bullshit Night and Stop Time

instead. Thanks, Debra!

When I returned to The Mistress's Daughter after this discussion, I could see all the weird obnoxious things that were pointed out. There were a few fun moments here and there but yeah, my opinion of the book kind of plummeted. I don't really like giving bad reviews of books but I had to give this what it deserved. I like her fiction though.

Melissa says

I have never read anything else written by Homles but was interested in this book because I gave up a baby for adoption 18 years ago. I thought this book might help me understand what my biological daughter is going through and it did help in that way. I like the way she writes and the story was good but I could not stand the middle part of the book where she goes on & on & on & on about the genealogy of her family. It is completely boring and doesn't really add to the story, she could have summed that up in a paragraph. Overall if you have been involved in adoption I would say it is a good, interesting read. I do like that it was a quick read too.

Petra CigareX says

Memoir of when her adoptive mother traced her and then how she traced her father. Both parents were extremely eccentric and therefore it made for an interesting perspective on the more usual adoption story of child tracing birth mother.

Lori says

I wanted to like this book but I actually hated it, and only finished it because I read it for book club. It's an odd amalgam of three kinds of books, actually: a very whiny memoir, a bit about the author's extended family and modern day genealogy, and a piece about the author's grandmother. I'm surprised I made it through the first part, the very whiny memoir, because I read it with my jaw dropped and in a state of often-infuriated shock. Poor her, she was adopted into a lovely family and when she was an adult, her birth mother got in touch with her. This could've been a fascinating exploration of identity issues, and what it means to be related, and what it means to fit. Instead, the author goes on and on, poor me, poor me, poor poor me...to the point of feeling uplifted and validated by the movie Schindler's List because what those people went through is equal to what she's feeling. REALLY?? At that point my dislike for the author and her whining shifted to outrage, and I never really recovered. She has a pathological need to compare her experience to huge tragedies.

The rest of the book was definitely filtered through my keen dislike of the author, but I found it hard to believe that the book was allowed to be published in this form. It's a Frankenbook, cobbled together and lacking much cohesion other than the author's whining voice.

Ugh. I'm primarily just thrilled to be finished with it, and thrilled that I did spend any more time or money on it than I had to. I won't be keeping this book, and I hope I don't remember it for long.

Julz says

I found this book interesting, because unlike most adoption reunion tomes, it focused on an adoptee being found by a biological parent. While the author's story is far more dramatic and negative than mine, it came closer than most of what I've read to reflecting the complex reality I've experienced.

Tara says

A.M. Homes is one of my longtime absolute favorites - she writes such great, strange stuff involving disturbingly unique characters like I've never seen. This is a departure... of sorts... for her. It's her memoir, apparently sprung at least in part from a 2004 New Yorker essay about her first encounters with her biological parents. Not so surprisingly, in her life she has history with some bizarre characters and circumstances, but certainly retains hope and beauty as well... perhaps more so than her novels? Dunno... that's arguable. I very much enjoyed this read, but in the middle the minutia of details about adoption got a bit heavy, and she provided her lineage and family tree in great, great detail. Not enough to take away from the story, but just enough that some folks might want to skip around this, or worse, give up. That said, is certainly does give perspective to the process and effects for everyone involved. I recommend this, but maybe for passionate Homes fans, memoir fans, or certainly anyone with a history of or strong interest in adoption.

Kimberly Steele says

The Mistress's Daughter was an important book for me. I am grateful for its publication and that's not something I would say easily. I am an adoptee and I can empathize (unfortunately) with A.M. Homes journey on a variety of levels. Mistress may have its detractors but if you're not an adoptee, or if you ARE an adoptee but maybe everything about adoption is just hunky-dorey for you, you're just not going to get it.

Homes perfectly describes the surreal feeling of going through your life having "another mother" out there, lurking in the shadows. She is one of the few adoptee writers who hasn't shrunk back in cowardice from the vitriolic emotions that being adopted inevitably tows along in its wake. Believe me, she's not the only adoptee who has found out her birthmother is distant/crazy/emotionally retarded. It took serious guts to share her honest, no-holds-barred story of how it all went down.

There's a kind of anger that only adoptees can understand and Homes taps right into the vein. The uplifting part of it all (and the healing part for me) is that she didn't let her anger turn her into a monster or an idiot. Call this book whiny if you will, but if you haven't experienced being asked the Question: "Have you ever found your 'real' parents?" then you can't possibly guess how important Home's voice is compared to other adoption memoirs out there.

Kim says

Have you ever had one moment, *one* fleeting moment when you thought 'I wonder if I'm adopted?' Maybe some of you have had *more* than one of these ruminations, or maybe some of *you* have been adopted and wonder what your biological parents could do for you that your adopted ones have failed to or.... Maybe some of you come from a blue collar, somewhat dysfunctional, totally unhealthy suburban family with a pool and stray dogs and overly wrought holidays with extended family that sure make you wish for that adoption story to be true.

Maybe.

What A.M. Holmes does for the reader here is bring to light those thoughts and questions that you may think that you think but you would never, ever say out loud. And bless her for using her own experiences to do so.

At the age of 31, she is told that her birth mother wants to contact her. Now, she's known all along that she was adopted and has been fine with that. She was raised by a somewhat normal, Jewish family in D.C and was able to attend college and grow up and be a writer and live in New York City... basically a dream for a lot of people on this site.

Now imagine being put in the position of knowing your biological roots. As she says 'How could I not know?' I think when we play the adoption story out in our heads, we tend to create this perfect family, the ones that get all your quirky literary references, the ones that you can debate current events with and that won't embarrass you in restaurants by asking for ketchup to pour on their noodles. You know, the Keatons from *Family Ties* or Atticus Finch from *To Kill a Mockingbird* (yeah, I'm still working out Daddy issues on that one)

What you don't really think is that you're going to get a psychotic mom with fatherly figure issues and a washed up jock of a father who's twice your mom's age and enjoys fondling the cone cupped bra of a 15 yr old in the late '50s. But, what did you really think would happen? You were put up for adoption after all.

This memoir relives the 12 or so years after she contacts her birth parents. She has to run interference with her birth mom and her adopted mom at one of her readings, she has to meet her Dad in 3 star hotel lobbies and wonder if he's just reliving the glory days of having a mistress and figuring out ways to fuck her. She endures numerous phone calls from her mother telling her that she has been a shadow of a person since she let her go and then deal with her Dad not acknowledging her to his 'real' family. All this and more. Yikes. At least it's good writing material, suffer for your art, beyotch. (okay, I didn't really mean that Ms. Holmes, I greatly admire your writing...)

The memoir isn't a difficult read, mostly because Homes *is* a good writer. Her insights and her ability to conjure up images that make you say 'A-ha' is why I'll continue to read her stuff. And for lines like these:

To be adopted is to be adapted, to be amputated and sewn back together again. Whether or not you regain full function, there will always be scar tissue.

And

I am a thirty-two-year old woman sitting across from my mother and she is blind. Invisibility is the thing I live in fear of. I implode, folding like origami. I try to speak but I have no words. My response is primitive, before language, before cognition—the memory of the body.

I think that there are parts of the book that we could live without; what I assume are her musings/rantings/log of questions in deposition form to her father: *“How would you describe yourself, Mr. Hecht? Is there more to you than that—than just a retired businessman? What is your identity, Mr. Hecht? Did you always know who you were? Do you think you’re an average man? Has anyone ever called you a big shot? Ever try Viagra? Why did your paternal grandmother carry a gun?”* This goes on for 16 pages. I see how she needed to get this out, but I felt that I could skim over this and be okay with it.

Another part that I felt dragged was her quest for her ancestry. We sit and watch as she pours through onion skinned paper court documents and miles of microfiche. I think she wanted us to experience her pain and the torture that is researching, googling, signing up for DNA tests online, figuring out where you belong in the world. Consider this accomplished.

So, this whole nature vs. nurture thing? What do you think? I think that there are credible examples that work on both sides. Are we nothing but a product of our bloodlines and we are doomed to our genetic history or are we what we are made up through personal experiences, life lessons, our environment. Or is it all just a bunch of hullabaloo?

Klaudia says

In my opinion, this is a poorly written memoir. Book two contains a few poetic fantasies, that are imagined truths. What I really disliked about this memoir is the lack of action, empathy, and understanding. Homes starts off her memoir with this crazed fantasy of her birth parents, especially her birth mother. When her birth mother doesn't live up to her expectations, AM seems to shun her. She asks herself a few times if her father would have bothered to contact her if she wasn't this important figure, but guess what Ms. Homes, you shunned your mother for not being important also. I guess it's genetic. I also find it grossly detestable that she'd actually meet with her father but not with her mother. Her father blatantly tells her that he used her biological mother for sex, but somehow Homes still wants a relationship with him. Why? Because he's established? Ms. Homes, would you want to meet his family if he had been supporting them by flipping burgers at a McDonald's? Another issue is that Ms. Homes never bothers to confront her needy biological mother, but waits till she dies alone to start browsing the web on her biological lineage. This memoir is based on so many assumptions and so many unanswered questions. It has some useless details about people she'd done research on. Basically, she waits too long to find things out, and in the end she writes about how she assumes everything happened. The tone that I got was, "I was the baby, and you abandoned me, so I will punish you." Which, yea. Your biological parents did abandon you. But, it seems like your adoptive parents gave you a way better life. Also, the author sounds vindictive, the writing is choppy. If you find a used copy for like a dollar, sure spend the money. Other than that, go to the library.

Orsodimondo says

NON È UN PAESE PER MADRI

Romanzo memoir, romanzo diario, romanzo verità, romanzo inchiesta, autobiografia...: romanzo.
In originale il titolo è “La figlia dell’amante”.

A.M.Homes da piccola

Una giovane scrittrice, adottata alla nascita, riceve una telefonata dall’avvocato della madre biologica e viene

informata che la donna la sta cercando, vuole incontrarla e conoscerla. Per la prima volta.

E quindi la figlia è la scrittrice protagonista, l'Io narrante, la stessa Amy Michael Homes: l'altra è la madre biologica, quella che l'ha partorita, non quella che l'ha cresciuta, quella che lei ha chiamato mamma per tutta la vita.

La storia che precede è tra quelle più classiche: relazione extraconiugale tra uomo maturo, sposato, con figli, e ragazza molto giovane, sua impiegata – la storia dura fino al punto in cui lei rimane incinta – a quel punto lui chiude, e sparisce – la giovane mamma partorisce, ma lascia la neonata in adozione perché non può reggere l'onere di tenerla con sé e farla crescere. La coppia che adotta la bimba ha perso un figlio naturale sei mesi prima.

Homes ha una ferita ancora aperta che si sente in tutte le sue opere: ha rabbia dentro (a chip on her shoulder) e poca empatia per i suoi personaggi. E adesso, probabilmente, sappiamo perché.

Ma forse perché in materia d'adozione sono personalmente coinvolto, mi sarei aspettato molto di più su un aspetto della vita così poco esplorato, così particolare e delicato.

Non solo: visto che è dichiaratamente la storia personale della scrittrice, avrei gradito un approccio più documentaristico, meno da letteratura di genere: la vicenda è 'forte' senza bisogno di addensare ombre e calcare i toni.

È comunque, tra quelli che ho letto, il suo libro migliore, secondo me.

Una giovanissima Kristen Stewart (10 anni) nel film *La sicurezza degli oggetti* regia di Rose Troche, adattamento dell'omonima raccolta di racconti di A.M.Homes. Nel cast Glenn Close, Patricia Clarke, Dermot Mulroney, Joshua Jackson, Timothy Olyphant, Mary Kay Place

PS

Il titolo del mio commento è un riferimento al romanzo della stessa Homes *In a Country of Mothers* pubblicato nel 1993 e non ancora tradotto in italiano.

Rebecca says

This grew out of a *New Yorker* article Homes published about meeting her biological parents in her early 30s. Her mother carried on an affair with her married boss, starting when she was just a teenager – Homes learned that she was the mistress's daughter. This is the story of how her birth mother tried to get involved in her life, in a really rather stalker-ish way, and the occasional contact she had from her birth father. The blow-by-blow gets a little boring, especially when it's Homes and her father only communicating via lawyers. I thought the final two chapters felt particularly tacked on, and I didn't know whether the question-only version of a deposition was authentic or imagined. Homes doesn't really make much of a contribution to the literature of adoption, though this is a pleasant enough read. "I am an amalgam. I will always be something glued together, something slightly broken. ... I see now that I am a product of each of my family narratives—some more than others. But in the end it is all four threads that twist and rub against one another, the fusion and friction combining to make me who and what I am."

Guillermo Jiménez says

Recuerdo estar en la cocina con mi abuela materna, cuando una mañana le pregunté de dónde venía ella. Seguía siendo aún adolescente y eran rarísimas las ocasiones que recordaba me interesaba por la historia familiar.

De papá tenía una idea general, un poco de su infancia, algo de su juventud, muy poco de su vida adulta. De mamá había más de donde cortar, pero, aún así no me quedaba claro de dónde diablos venía yo.

Fue la primera vez que me interesé por la vida de los demás.

Después, fueron muchas más las charlas en una mesa, escuchando con toda la atención de que fuera capaz, lo que alguien más pudiera contarme.

Por algún motivo casi todas las que me platicaron sus historias fueron mujeres. Han sido mujeres.

Desde doctoras nacidas en México, D. F., hasta grandes madres provenientes de Tampico. Mi madre misma que nació en Torreón, Coahuila, o mi abuela paterna que creció en Matamoros, Coahuila.

Homes, una de mis autoras predilectas, hace lo suyo indagando todo lo posible sobre su origen. Se remonta hasta archivos, genealogías vía web; cartea a medio mundo y pregunta todo lo que puede a toda persona que sienta que le puede aportar algo en su búsqueda.

Su búsqueda por un yo que a más información y datos se obtiene, se va emborronando más en la realidad.

Somos personas que nos construimos en el día a día, y que desaparecemos cuando morimos.

Dos, tres generaciones no significamos nada más para nadie más. Salvo en registros, documentos, papeles que pierden todo sentido, hasta que alguien decide que no es así.

La búsqueda de Homes termina siendo eso: una búsqueda de que tantos relatos no se pierdan, ¿por qué nos olvidamos de los nuestros? ¿de nuestras historias? ¿de lo que ayudó a que existiéramos?

La parte en que imagina un interrogatorio su padre biológico es desgarradora. Todas las preguntas que ya no formuló. Todas las preguntas que me imaginó algún día me hará Emilia, o algún otro de los hijos que tendré.

La paternidad. La maternidad.

Homes decide finalmente tener un hijo, una hija. De ella. Opta por no adoptar. Fuerte.

Un texto tremendo, bien contado, una estructura suprema, que te lleva

a buen puerto después de un gran paseo por aguas a ratos en calma, a ratos braveadas.
