



# The Unfortunates: A Novel

By Sophie McManus

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**The Unfortunates: A Novel** By Sophie McManus

**Shortlisted for the Center for Fiction First Novel Prize and Longlisted for the National Book Critics Circle's John Leonard Prize**

**A *Washington Post* Notable Book of the Year and a *New York Times Book Review* Paperback Row Pick**

**Named a Must-Read by *Entertainment Weekly*, *Time*, *New York Observer*, *Time Out* (New York), *Bloomberg BusinessWeek*, *Travel + Leisure*, and *Paste Magazine***

Cecilia Somner's fate hangs in the balance. A larger-than-life heiress to a rubber baron's fortune, once known for her cruel wit as much as for her tremendous generosity, CeCe is now in opulent decline. Afflicted with a rare disease and touched by mortality for the first time, her gilded, bygone values collide with an unforgiving present. Along with her troubled son, George, and his outsider wife, Iris, CeCe must face the Somners' dark legacy and the corrupting nature of wealth. As the Somner family struggles to find a solution to its troubles, the secrets and lies between CeCe, George, and Iris grow entangled. CeCe's world topples, culminating in a crime as unforgettable as it is unexpected.

While no riches can put things right for the unfortunate Somners, when all is lost, they learn what life beyond the long, shimmering shadow cast by the Somner dynasty may become. Sophie McManus' *The Unfortunates*, hilarious and heartbreaking by turns, is most of all a meditation on love: as delusional obsession, as transformation, and ultimately as a coming to grace.

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## **The Unfortunates: A Novel By Sophie McManus Bibliography**

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## Editorial Review

### Review

"A modern-day Edith Wharton...merges Old World elegance and modern irony in a brilliant social satire of life...into a jeweled strand of dry wit."?Ron Charles, *The Washington Post*

"Wonderfully precise and subtle?not to mention unexpectedly moving...Sophie McManus...is a truly dexterous writer, one who eyes the insular world she has chosen to crack open for us with as much wisdom as wit...One wonders where her formidable gift for social satire will take her next."?Daphne Merkin, *The New Yorker*

"Ms. McManus is a talented, intelligent writer, and the story is as well-paced as a good thriller."?Maira Hodgson, *The Wall Street Journal*

"This witty saga...is a strong, gripping debut."?Entertainment Weekly

"Aside from the beauty of *The Unfortunates*' line-by-line prose, the novel's great strength is its multifaceted approach. It is an ambitious piece that encapsulates generations and continent-spanning bank accounts while never feeling too callously panoramic."?B. David Zarley, *Paste* magazine

"McManus takes her readers through...with such narrative gusto (and a great many very pretty turns of phrase) that you'd think this were her twentieth novel instead of her first."?Steve Donoghue, *OpenLettersMonthly.com*

"In finely etched detail as sharp as shards of glass, McManus reveals in *The Unfortunates* the corrupting power of wealth and the myriad ways it infects individual lives and families. It is as relevant as it is compulsively readable."?Amanda Coplin, author of *The Orchardist*

"Sophie McManus has a shrewd eye for telling gestures and an ear for cruel speech and kindness. She is an incisive, surprising prose stylist, and her debut novel heralds an exciting new talent with an old soul."?Christine Schutt, author of *Prosperous Friends*

"Sophie McManus's stunning debut novel revisits American money and brilliantly reconfigures the tradition of fiction about the very rich. What is truly rich about this first novel is the language?lucid, quick, accessible, and yet almost cubist in its syntactical swerves and surprising word choices?with which McManus invests the inner lives of the Somners, mother, son, and daughter-in-law, three unforgettable and finally poignant protagonists."?Jaimy Gordon, author of *Lord of Misrule*

"Is there anything Sophie McManus can't do? Whether it's New York high society or the Amazonian rubber industry or the stubborn indignities of old age, McManus writes with brio and with humor and with immense sympathy. The virtuosity in these pages is astonishing, but just as astonishing is this novel's abiding heart."?Joshua Henkin, author of *The World Without You* and *Matrimony*

"A big, chewy novel written with comic panache and an infectious tenderness toward the blunders of its heroes. *The Unfortunates* is both a mirror on the income inequality of the current moment and a social novel in the old, plotty mode: voracious for detail and punctuated by gasp-inducing turns of fate. Its subjects are money and the people unfortunate enough to have it. Who knew the rich deserved so much to be

pited?"?Salvatore Scibona, author of *The End*

"To her great credit, McManus uncovers the humanity of a group that rarely receives our empathy even as she exposes the dark side of privilege and entitlement in a timely novel enriched with touches of Edith Wharton."?Booklist

"Both funny and heartwarming."?Shelf Awareness

"McManus is a talented prose stylist."?Kirkus Reviews

"[McManus's] achievement in this novel is creating characters who develop over time, who have goals and desires, who try as hard as they can but still mess up other people's lives. We care about them."?Stephanie Shapiro, *The Buffalo News*

About the Author

**SOPHIE McMANUS** was born in New York City, and she received her BA from Vassar College and her MFA in creative writing from Sarah Lawrence College. She is a recipient of fellowships from the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, the Saltonstall Foundation, and the Jentel Foundation. Her work has appeared in *American Short Fiction*, *Memorious*, and *Tin House*, among other publications. She teaches writing in Brooklyn, New York. *The Unfortunates* is her first book.

## Users Review

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**Charles Alexander:**

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that straight away because this guide has good vocabulary that could increase your knowledge in vocab, easy to understand, bit entertaining but delivering the information. The copy writer giving his/her effort to place every word into delight arrangement in writing *The Unfortunates: A Novel* however doesn't forget the main stage, giving the reader the hottest as well as based confirm resource facts that maybe you can be one of it. This great information can certainly drawn you into brand-new stage of crucial pondering.

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