

*The Baby Auction* is a novel that deals with issues at the heart of contemporary social policy: the role of government in meeting people's needs, the limits to the market, the extent to which individual rights and responsibilities should depend on contribution to society. It is an experiment in using a different, imaginative form to discuss the issues I've dealt with in my academic research.

## Summary

Auctioning babies makes sense; the babies go to new parents who've proved by paying more than anyone else that they will give them the best start in life; the parents who've brought them into the world get real compensation for their pain and trouble. At least that's what everyone in Market World thinks.

Ed, a tough, spirited and streetwise young woman, and Matt, innocent and loyal, an outsider, hate this world, where the market decides everything. Anna, a successful business woman and Dain one of the Enforcers who police the city, think it offers a brave new world.

*The Baby Auction* tells the story of Ed and Matt's love and of their struggle against Market World, of their pain and trials and ultimate escape. It also tells how Anna and Dain come to discover that there is more to life than success in the city, and that they must overcome the contempt of all those around them, mistrust and betrayal before they can prove their love for each other through self-sacrifice.

## Why I wrote *The Baby Auction*

I became an academic because I am passionate about social justice and want to understand how modern civilised societies permit injustice, inequality and oppression. How can people exploit their fellow citizens for profit? How can someone treat another person without respecting them, as a person? That's what people do in market societies.

My writing and research made me one of the leading academics in the field but it never really answered these questions. I wrote *The Baby Auction* to understand how real human characters, striving and struggling and loving in a world driven entirely by market forces might live a humane and generous life. Market forces may shape and twist our lives, but people can live as humans, not profit and loss accounting machines. People can care for others, they can sacrifice themselves when there is absolutely nothing in it for them, completely against the laws of the market. I wanted to understand how this is possible