The Pursuit of Motherhood
By Jessica Hepburn

This book presents a very personal account of Jessica’s IVF journey. It charts her early concerns with the unfamiliar IVF process, her heartbreak at continued failed attempts, her frustration and the heavy impact the journey has on her relationship with her partner and on her career. Jessica allows us a glimpse into her most personal moments; the most heartbreaking involving a trip to the theatre, which will forever play across my mind when I am sat in the theatre seats waiting for the curtain to rise.

I think this book captures three facets of Jessica, from which readers may recognise part of themselves. The core of the book is reflected by its very apt title, her pursuit of motherhood involving the clinics, the doctors, the tests, and the two-week waits. In addition to this, Jessica weaves in a very truthful account of her relationship with her partner and how the IVF strains the bond between them. And finally, we view Jessica in her professional guise, juggling IVF and a successful career; a balance which we may all, along with Jessica, question can actually be achieved.

I have to say I very much enjoyed this book; Jessica writes with pace; she doesn’t wallow in her disappointment and you’ll be inspired by her tenacity and fortitude. The bumps in the road are described with a delicate honesty and Jessica leaves no stone unturned in her pursuit, embarking on what some readers may consider to be absurd lengths to address her lack of success.

Her observations also really resonated with me, for example, she notes how when you’re trying for a baby the whole world seems to be full of pregnant women with perfect bumps; and how distrustful you can become of your own body during the IVF process. What should be noted about this book, however, is that it has not been written to significantly inform those embarking on their IVF journey about the medical processes or treatment they can expect to encounter. It is an account of the emotional journey one can expect; the highs and lows, excitement and disappointments and it also goes against the grain of the IVF literature, as Jessica is yet to write her happy ending. She does, however, end her book with some sage advice based on her experiences, for those women beginning to experience the symptoms of infertility. She is not passing the baton, her journey is not yet over, but as we all have to start at the beginning, a few sound words of advice are more than welcome.

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