



## Book Review

### **I'm Taking My Eggs and Going Home**

By Lisa Manterfield

#### **Don't judge a book by its cover**

Although I've been in a book group for around ten years I haven't put pen to paper about a book since doing A Level English at school, which is longer ago than I care to mention! I joined More To Life last year and am trying to be more open to new experiences in general, so when Hannah sent out a request for someone to review this book, I decided to give it a go.

I have to be honest and say that the book's title did not appeal to me and when I received it in the post a few days after volunteering to review it, its front cover appealed to me even less, but once I've made a commitment I don't like to back out. However, I'm pleased to say that once I started reading I was immediately hooked, as Manterfield's writing style is very readable with a strong sense of humour that made me laugh out loud at times.

Basically, the book is about the author's experience of trying to find the right man to settle down and have children with. It then describes their experience of struggling to have children by a variety of different methods. Finally, I don't think I'm spoiling anything by saying that she and her husband opt not to continue pursuing this goal, as the book's

sub-title is "*How One Woman Dared to Say No to Motherhood.*"

As someone who has been through two unsuccessful ICSI cycles and then decided against adoption or fostering, there was much in this book that I could identify with in terms of experience and emotions, e.g. how painful the HSG procedure was and the inevitable sense of alienation from female friends who are pregnant or have children. One particularly poignant episode for me was when a pregnant acquaintance announced that she liked the name which Manterfield and her husband had agreed upon should they have a baby girl, as I always feared how I would react if I found myself in this situation.

The book resonated with me in spite of the fact that it is set in America (Manterfield emigrated there - she was brought up in Sheffield) where the fertility industry seems to be much more advanced (not necessarily in a positive sense) than here in the UK. A good example of this is the fertility clinic open day with a raffle for which the star prize was a free treatment cycle. This seemed very pertinent to me as I read the book shortly after Sir Robert Winston's recent (December 2011) comments about the high cost of fertility treatment in the UK.

All in all I found this book affirming, as it shows that it can be a long, slow, arduous journey, where you aren't necessarily in the driving seat and don't have a map, before you are able to let go of the dream of having children and accept that there can be more to life.

**Emma Latham**

**MTL Member**