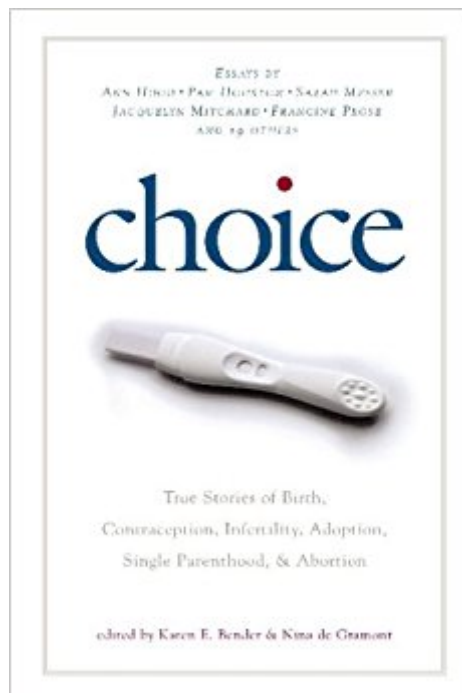




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# Choice: True Stories Of Birth, Contraception, Infertility, Adoption, Single Parenthood, & Abortion



## Synopsis

CHOICE explores the one of the most polarizing political issues of our time reproductive choice. CHOICE attempts to raise the discourse on reproductive choice, which often devolves to cliché and name-calling, by posing the question--what is it like to make any sort of reproductive choice? What is it truly like to use birth control, the morning after pill, use a sperm bank, have an abortion, adopt a child, give a child up for adoption, bring a pregnancy to term? In these 22 stunningly honest essays, writers describe their experiences making some of these decisions, as well as many others. Established writers such as Francine Prose, Jaquelyn Mitchard, Pam Houston, Carolyn Ferrell, Ann Hood, Deborah Macdowell, and Sarah Messer contribute essays, along with emerging writers such as Kimi Faxon Hemingway, Stephanie Anderson, and Ashley Talley. The essays in CHOICE explore the complexities inherent in every reproductive decision, whether it is to choose to have a child or terminate a pregnancy; the guiding philosophy of the book is that this issue is too complex and individual to be legislated, and the writers honesty about their experiences will humanize this issue, no matter what the reader's stand on it.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This collection, compiled by two savvy fiction writers fed up with the bumper-sticker mentality of most pro-life and pro-choice arguments, illuminates the volume of options, obstacles and ambivalence that reproduction brings through personal, often painful stories of real women. Examining almost every angle of the pregnancy experience are two dozen writers, editors and

educators, including novelist Jacquelyn Mitchard (*The Deep End of the Ocean*), writer's writer Francine Prose (*Reading like a Writer*) and editor Elizabeth Larsen (one of the creators of *Sassy* magazine). Collectively celebrating the courage of the choice-whatever that choice may be-Bender and de Gramont offer these stories as a bulwark against the criminalization of women's reproductive options (the book was conceived amidst South Dakota's proposed abortion ban); among these tales of women choosing to terminate pregnancies, to have children with men unfit to raise them, to fight against their own bodies to become pregnant, to keep an at risk-pregnancy both doctors and ministers advise against, that purpose is powerfully realized. Each tale is unique, and politically charged buzz terms (RU-486, *Roe V. Wade*, etc.) gain new impact nestling alongside these writers' honest quests for basic human needs: love, nurturing, and above all, possibility. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Karen E. Bender is the author of the novel *Like Normal People*. Her fiction has appeared in magazines including *The New Yorker*, *Granta*, *Zoetrope*, *Ploughshares*, *Story*, *The Harvard Review*, and has been anthologized in *Best American Short Stories*, *Best American Mystery Stories* and twice in the *Pushcart Prize* series. Her stories have been read on the *Selected Shorts* program on NPR and she has received grants from the Rona Jaffe Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. She has taught creative writing at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and at the Antioch LA MFA program. She is finishing a new novel and collection of stories. Nina de Gramont is the author of a collection of short stories, *Of Cats and Men*. Her first novel, *Gossip of the Starlings*, is forthcoming. Her fiction has appeared in a variety of publications including *Isotope*, *Nerve*, *Exquisite Corpse*, *Post Road*, and *Seventeen*.

Really gives you a great perspective about what choice really means. From abortions to adoption and everything in between, it's a great compilation of stories for women.

My daughter needed this book for a school report. Book arrived as expected.

Good research and interesting

I was eager to read this book after reading a favorable review in my local paper. As a woman who had experienced most of the topics covered in the book, I was looking for some insight from other

women regarding these major events. However, I found the book rather flat and unengaging. A few of the essays really drew me in (Janet Mason Ellerby, Sarah Messer, and Kimi Faxon Hemingway all wrote powerful essays), but for the most part, I remained unmoved by their stories. I would recommend this book, but I would say, take it out of the library (sorry, !).

There is also a paperback edition of this book which ships immediately: *Choice: True Stories of Birth, Contraception, Infertility, Adoption, Single Parenthood, and Abortion*

This is absolutely one of the most emotionally powerful, though-provoking, conviction-challenging books I have read in a number of years. I only wish I could give it six stars. It is NOT, as some might think, all about the choice to have an abortion. It is about all the emotional, mental, and moral complexities of ANY pregnancy, and the desires, decisions, fears, and longings that go along with a pregnancy. There are stories of women who gave their children up for adoption, and have suffered the pain of wishing they could have kept their children for the rest of their lives. There are women who recount the histories of women in their family who did not have the choices that they themselves now have when faced with an abusive relationship, a pregnancy where the resulting child would be unlikely to survive, having absolutely no money to be able to take care of a child conceived despite carefully using birth control. There are women who had to choose between dying themselves and attempting to carry a much-wanted pregnancy to term. There are women who chose to become single mothers despite pressure to have an abortion or give up the baby for adoption. There are women who knew their fetus might be abnormal, but chose to have the baby, come what may. There are stories of women who had abortions, both legal and illegal, who had severe medical consequences as a result. There are women who had an abortion for an early pregnancy when they could not carry it to term, and are thankful for that choice because it gave them a chance at a better, happier life - and more children that they could care for and support - later in life. Women who miscarried, and have dealt with the pain of this loss. Women who adopted from another country, acutely aware of the terrible circumstances that must have led to the bio mother of their child having to give up her baby. Women who miscarried much-wanted children. Women who knew deep down that they were not meant to be mothers, and decided to not have children. It is about choices - ALL the choices - associated with so many different pregnancy situations. None of these situations are without feelings, without an awareness of other options or possibilities. Many of the women in these essays made decisions that they knew they had to make, but were gut-wrenching in the extreme. Many women in these essays support having ALL options

available for pregnancies, even if they themselves strongly disagree with some of the options. In thinking forward to having my own family in the future and having never been pregnant (yet) myself, I have the utmost respect for most of the women in these essays in making these difficult choices (regardless of what choice they made) and strongly facing up to the consequences. Do not look for this book to be an unabashed endorsement of abortion - it is NOT that at all. That would be too simplistic to represent the reality of most women's situations when faced with pregnancy. I believe that this book should not only be required reading for teen and young adult girls/women, but also for the boys/men too. I would also strongly suggest it for women's studies classes looking at reproduction. I have already recommended it to several friends - one who appears to be infertile and is working on adopting from another country; another who is living with her boyfriend and will probably marry him, but may or may not be ready to be a mother now should she get accidentally pregnant; to a woman who got easily pregnant with her first two children, and conceived through a fairly foolproof form of birth control for her third. Choices. Even if you assume you will disagree with many of the decisions made here, pick up the book anyway. You may be surprised at the empathy you have for the women in these essays - and that you may even have something in common with them.

I've been reading books on abortions, pregnancies, miscarriages, etc. and most of them sound overly zealous for either pro-choice or pro-life. I read this expecting more of the same, but was pleasantly surprised. While the stories are, of course, emotionally charged, it does not drag out melodrama or contemplate too long the existential and depressing questions that often come with making a decision regarding something of such gravity. Not to say that such a choice isn't a cause to consider some of life's "weightier" questions, but I don't personally like books that drag too long one way or the other. I liked that the stories were each fairly short and had women who made multiple decisions, not just one or the other. I would caution people who don't like reading page after page of some fairly heartbreaking stories; take them one at a time instead of all at once. It's definitely not light reading, but it is thoughtful, well-written, and poignant.

I feel this book should be required reading for teen girls as part of a comprehensive sex education curriculum. The stories are individuals' accounts of reproductive choices made. I like that it is not judgmental or weighted heavily to one side or the other. The topic of abortion is so loaded, with both sides apparently so entrenched, that it is humbling to read about the actual effects from people's experience, and to realize that the women involved are people who have struggled with their

choices. The book is not limited to abortion but touches on various areas of reproductive choice. While I feel men could learn a lot from the narratives, ultimately it is us as women who face the choices---birth control, unexpected pregnancy, infertility.

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