

the possibility of donor insemination.

The disadvantage of basing the book so completely on their own experiences is felt, however, in the authors' discussion of the "known versus unknown donor" question. Although at one point in their journey the authors attempted insemination using a known donor, they decided to use unknown donors for both of their children. As a result, they are strongly biased in favour of unknown donors and emphasize the potential complications—to the exclusion of potential benefits—associated with known donors. Important topics related to the use of known donors are not covered in the book, such as how to find, choose, and negotiate with potential known donors. There is also little discussion of the potential for creating alternative families beyond the two-parent model. The four interviews included in chapter seven, for example, are with committed couples who opt for insemination with an unknown donor via a sperm bank. The racial identity of neither the authors nor the interview subjects is mentioned, and important race-related issues (for example, the difficulties in accessing sperm from a donor who shares your heritage) are not addressed here.

Despite these limitations, this is a useful book that I recommend to other lesbians who are considering donor insemination, and especially those who intend to use an unknown donor. In particular, the introductory chapters on sperm, cycle monitoring, and insemination contain practical and accessible information that will help queer women successfully navigate the fertility system.

The Ultimate Guide to Pregnancy for Lesbians

Rachel Pepper.

San Francisco: Cleis Press, 2005.

Reviewed by Chloë Brushwood Rose

As a recently pregnant and new lesbian mother, I was interested to read the revised edition of Rachel Pepper's *The Ultimate Guide to Pregnancy for Lesbians* to see what kind of advice and insight I might have missed along my own strange journey toward parenthood. In many ways, this book is geared toward women like me—I am a lesbian who was economically privileged enough to secure good legal advice, buy sperm, and save \$5,000 to cover the cost of conception and childbirth that Pepper recommends. While Pepper addresses women in a variety of personal situations—single, coupled, members of alternative families—the first few chapters of the "ultimate guide" are not especially useful to poor or working-class lesbians or for queer women and lesbians who find themselves pregnant unexpectedly (more than one might think).

Having said that, Pepper does offer a thoughtful and practical guide to the experience of conception and pregnancy. Her writing is clear, concise, and honest. In this way, Pepper's guide stands in contrast to the kind of hyperbole usually reserved for soon-to-be or new mothers—including both the unerringly rose-coloured accounts of pregnancy and motherhood that make us feel like we must be doing something wrong and the dire warnings that make us wonder why we would want to have children at all—and the overwhelming focus on the fetus's health and development which can obscure the mother's need for insight into her own rich and challenging experience.

Of particular note is chapter five, which offers “ten tips to keep you sane” while trying to conceive, and chapter six, which tries to address the question “why am I not pregnant yet?” While there are the stories we cling to (and later resent) about the friend who got pregnant on her first try, for most women pregnancy rarely comes that easily. A book that openly discusses this issue and offers some wonderfully simple coping strategies is rarer still. As Pepper herself writes, “I lived in gay mecca, San Francisco, when I was trying to conceive, and I'm a pretty well-connected person. But I still felt as though I was reinventing the wheel every menstrual cycle.” Pepper is honest without being confessional and her company would have made my own journey toward parenthood much less strange and lonely.

The last half of Pepper's book addresses the experiences of pregnancy and birth. In these chapters, Pepper speaks directly to the mother's experience of her changing body and needs. This is what makes Pepper's the ultimate guide to pregnancy for lesbians: her ability to speak frankly to other lesbian moms, not as an expert or medical professional concerned primarily with “the baby,” but as a peer. This is a book that reduces the stress of pregnancy, keeps you company on the journey toward parenthood, and reminds you that your biggest challenges are shared by others.

Like Our Very Own: Adoption and the Changing Culture of Motherhood, 1851-1950

Julie Berebitsky.

Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2000.

Reviewed by Amy Cuomo

The history of adoption in the United States is an expansive topic that might have daunted a less able historian; however, Julie Berebitsky tightly focuses