



Three Wishes: Our True Story of Good Friends, Bad Odds, Crushing Heartbreak, and One Little Thing That Inspired a Lot of Happiness

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Carey, Beth, and Pam had succeeded at work but failed at romance, and each resolved to have a baby before time ran out. Just one problem: no men. Carey took the first bold step towards single motherhood, searching anonymous donor banks until she found the perfect match.

What she found was not a father in a vial, but a sort of magic potion. She met a man, fell in love, and got pregnant the old-fashioned way. She passed the vials to Beth, and it happened again. Beth met man, Beth got pregnant. Beth passed the vials to Pam, and the magic struck again. There were setbacks and disappointments, but three women became three families, reveling in the shared joy of love, friendship, and never losing hope.

Three Wishes: Our True Story of Good Friends, Bad Odds, Crushing Heartbreak, and One Little Thing That Inspired a Lot of Happiness Details

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From Reader Review Three Wishes: Our True Story of Good Friends, Bad Odds, Crushing Heartbreak, and One Little Thing That Inspired a Lot of Happiness for online ebook

Tara says

Well...I'm not 100% sure that as a 33 year old, single, and childless woman, with no chance of the above happening any time soon, this was the best choice of book for me to read. Although maybe it was. It was full of hope. It showed how these three women's lives intertwined and how each ultimately did get what they dreamed they wanted.

Meenakshi says

Almost unbelievable unless you personally know the authors, which I do ?

Faith says

I finished Three Wishes. It is exactly the style of book I enjoy reading, an autobiography of a short period of a woman's life. However as I come to the end of it I'm really dissatisfied. The woman's stories have only slight variations and they all write in practically the same style. They all set out to become single mothers at around age 40.

However this is not a story about single motherhood. Through the ups and downs of making a baby with, at times, almost complete strangers. Through divorce, abortions, getting involved with a married man and "surprise" pregnancies this is not a story with a moral high-ground.

It is a very real life story of heart-break and hope through loneliness, miscarriages and late-in life finding happiness. However I don't recommend it. For anyone who has been through a similar set of circumstances I am sure that it is a comforting and enjoyable read but for me I am just thankful that I got married young and had my four children before I turned 30.

Amy says

I received an advance copy of this book from the publisher.

THREE WISHES appealed to me right off the bat because it is the story of three women and their search for love and motherhood in their forties. You often hear people say pithy things like "40 is the new 30" but it is nice to read a book about real women in their quest to "have it all" and the sometime bumpy path that it took to get there.

THREE WISHES follows the lives of three journalists who have achieved their career goals and are now hearing the ticking of their biological clocks. Carey Goldberg makes the first move. Unwilling to wait any longer for Mr. Right to come along, she begins the process of in vitro with some donor sperm. In an

unexpected twist of fate, she becomes pregnant the old-fashioned way. Carey passes the sperm on to her friend Beth who has also decided to delve into single motherhood in her early 40's. Soon after, Beth meets someone and becomes pregnant without even trying. Beth passes the donor sperm on to Pam who also finds love and motherhood without using it.

Although the idea of this seemingly magical sperm is amusing, the best part of the book is the struggles that these women go through to achieve their dreams. Motherhood does not come easily. There are tragic losses involved in several cases. And love doesn't arrive looking like the fairy-tale Prince Charming. The women have to kiss a lot of frogs. They struggle out what they want and to avoid compromise in the face of a biological ticking clock. The book is also about women supporting one another as each individual boldly marches towards single motherhood.

Even though I am married and have a child before age 35, I found this book to be really moving and engaging. More and more women are waiting to have children and then are faced with daunting infertility issues. Sometimes, a pregnancy can go horribly wrong and difficult decisions must be made. Add to this the difficulty of finding a partner as one gets older and you can truly see the difficult odds these women faced. The book remains hopeful and funny to the very end.

BOTTOM LINE: Recommended. Especially for women in their late 30s and early 40s who despair of ever achieving love and motherhood. The greatest part of this book is that none of three women ever compromised in order to achieve their dreams. It's nice to see that.

Helen says

A nice story but somewhat unrealistic. Even though it's true, I can't imagine that a lot of other women can relate. These people seemed to have unlimited resources and luck. I also felt they were a bit spoiled. I want, I want, I want.... And they did EVERYTHING they knew to get it. Having sex with strangers, second trimester abortions. I also felt that they were a bit egotistical. One woman breaks up with a boyfriend because she finds that he has written that she is "kind of pretty". However, the same woman writes of her current mate that he is not handsome in the "conventional way". Isn't that the same thing? I'm anxious to discuss this one with my book group and see what everyone else thought of it. I'm feeling a bit jilted.

Carly Thompson says

My main problem with this book is that all 3 women wrote in the same style and it was hard to distinguish one author's voice from another (perhaps this was due to them all working as journalists). I also think if I was ten years older and really wanted to have a baby, I would have related more to the characters and cared more about their journeys. The way the publisher presented the book was slightly deceiving; having the donor sperm was only a small part of the story and didn't directly lead to a great relationship for any of the women. Some of the personal details came across as Too Much Information (buying sex toys for Valentine's Day to use with her boyfriend, who was married at the time) and the women seemed too self-involved to be sympathetic. While the focus was on the happy endings (all of the women had late in life pregnancies and established happy loving partnerships with their children's fathers), the early terminations of two of the

pregnancies and the turmoil of having children before a committed relationship had been established were included. Not a bad book, but not one to recommend either.

Maya says

This is a true story about three friends, Carey, Beth and Pam who are nearing the age of 40 and want to become mothers. Each chapter is written by one of the women and the chapters go back and forth between the stories they share, together and separately.

The main connecting piece with these three friends is their desire to become mothers even though they are single. They all make decisions at different times that they will go the sperm donor route. Each one ends up getting pregnant by a different means and then decides to pass on the sperm donation to another one of the friends who is desiring to become a mom. Each woman finds love and a child.

Some of the stories that were shared were very raw. Everything from being blind-sided from a divorce to miscarriages hitting these women as they pursue their motherhood dreams. Each woman finds support in wonderful ways through their friendships.

It was an interesting true story but one that I had a hard time connecting with on some levels. First being, they are East coast women who are able to jet set off to all kinds of vacations and take off on outdoor adventures. I can't connect with that as I don't have the means to just get away as they did, a lot. I also wanted to feel more of the emotions they went through in the process of becoming mothers and the heartache they had as they hit so many stumbling blocks but the way it was written left out some of that emotion for me.

Favorite Quotes from the Book:

But the moral I take from this story is: So what? Your institution owes you nothing. It is not your family. It does not care if you help create humanity's next generation; in fact, it might well prefer you didn't. Beyond a brief maternity leave, it has no obligation to support you. In fact, you become less valuable if your new responsibilities limit your ability to go anywhere at any time. As a new mother, I asked for an accommodation. Let me be more honest: I hoped for kindness. But institutions, of course, are not about kindness, though individual managers may try.

We learn from loving our children that none of them is perfect, but that they are the wellsprings of the deepest, truest love-and it is such a short jump to the fact that we all are children, and all worthy of love even in the depths of our imperfection.

Maintaining friendship requires work, but the very best kind. There are so many things we give each other: laughter, companionship, unyielding support, emergency childcare, prescription drugs, advice, our hearts, in ways we never give to men.

Carey described how her family is like a closed electrical circuit. I know the feeling. My own power dims when something is wrong with Emma or Mark - a runny nose, a disappointment at work - and shines brighter in their moments of joy - a new word or a beautiful photograph.

Ciara says

this book is really weird. it follows the stories of three friends, all of whom have been unlucky in love, shall we say, & are desperate to have babies while they still can. carey goes first. she just hasn't found a guy that she wants to settle down with, so she decides to pursue single motherhood with the help of a carefully selected anonymous sperm donor. the same day her eight vials of sperm arrive, she meets an intriguing man on an internet dating sight. she postpones the insemination while she gets to know him. she starts daydreaming about him volunteering the father her baby. she's upfront about her plans to have a child, with his sperm or with the donor sperm, & opens the door for him to be as involved as he wishes to be.

long story short: the first insemination doesn't take. carey ends up pregnant via her new boyfriend, but the romantic relationship between the two doesn't last. she gives birth to a healthy daughter, & her ex is really involved in her life. but they know they're not right for each other, so they are having fun dating other people (well, he's doing more dating than she is, but whatever). but eventually carey starts thinking about giving her child a sibling, & asks if her baby daddy would be interested in helping her out with that. he is indeed interested, a romance blossoms again, a healthy baby boy is born, & the two are married.

carey passes her sperm along to beth. beth married before she was thirty, but seven years in, her husband suddenly left her for his personal trainer (a woman). it's a contentious & acrimonious divorce complicated by the ex-husband's impending multi-millionaire-hood. once the dust settles, carey has \$10 million in stock options.

she dates around for a while, takes classes, has fun, tries to put the divorce behind her. but she is approaching 40 & starts to hear the siren song of motherhood. one hobby she's really enjoying is mountaineering & ice climbing. on a mountaineering trip, she meets phil. they are interested in each other & start dating. one thing leads to another & beth turns up pregnant after their contraceptives fail. she decides to keep it. phil is pissed at first...but he comes around & throws himself into the idea of becoming a father & building a family with beth.

but beth's amnio reveals that the fetus has down syndrome. beth decides to terminate the pregnancy. quite a few goodreads readers who have rated this book poorly had serious problems with this. i do not. this is a very difficult & personal choice. having been pregnant myself, it's not something i would wish on my worst enemy if it wasn't something she wanted, & i can't even begin to imagine the anxiety & stress of knowingly bringing a special needs child into the world, not knowing how long you will live to care for the child (remember, these are late in life mothers), not knowing how serious the child's needs will be. i know the issue is complicated, & that healthy, "normal"-seeming babies do not always stay that way. but it's a fact that later in life mothers are at a somewhat elevated risk of chromosomal abnormalities, miscarriages, et al, & the fact that beth was faced with this choice...well, it's not something to judge her over, in my opinion.

beth goes through with an abortion. both she & phil are pretty devastated. but after a few months, they decide to try for another baby (after a rocky patch where phil decided he didn't want a baby after all), & their son gareth is born, happy & healthy.

beth passes her vials of sperm on to pam, a hopeless(ly naive) romantic. pam is accepted into a scientific journalism fellowship at MIT, & while there, meets some welsh dude whose name escapes me even though i just finished the book like ten minutes ago. he's married, but he & his wife have "an understanding," ie, an open marriage. the wife suffers from bipolar disorder, & welsh dude sticks around to basically take care of her. pam is way into him, & he's way into pam, but she insists that he end his marriage & start therapy before she'll consider a relationship with him.

in case i haven't mentioned already, all of these people live in boston. of course they do! where else, besides

maybe california, would someone insist on therapy as a pre-condition to a first date?

some negative reviewers have also been upset that welsh dude is married. shit happens, okay? it doesn't sound like it was a great marriage. if dude was smart, he would have ended it a long time ago & stopped letting his wife use her mental illness to control him, but hey. he ended up with one of these ladies (this book is chock-a-block with crazy relationship dealbreakers, as far as i'm concerned; these ladies all have full-blown cases of baby rabies), so obviously he's not so smart. anyway, he agrees to pam's rules & things go on.

also, i have been divorced in massachusetts & it's kind of a crazy process. you have to fill out paperwork, wait for a court date, attend a court date, & then you have to wait for six months after that before you are considered legally divorced. so technically, i was still married for six months after my husband & i stopped communicating with one another. & you better believe i went on dates too. anyway.

pam tells welsh dude that she wants a baby & he kind of freaks. he says he just got done taking care of his ex-wife, he's not ready for a baby. but somehow she ends up pregnant. she takes six pregnancy tests in one morning to conform. which...are you kidding me? those things are like \$10 a pop. way to literally piss money down the toilet.

when pam goes in for her chromosomal screening, she learns that the placenta is positive for trisomy 22, a really serious chromosomal abnormality. she is counseled to abort, & she does. the odds of her having a live birth, let alone a healthy child, were almost nil. she is destroyed, as is welsh dude. it really takes a toll on them personally, & their relationship. yet another reason why all the pro-life crazies condemning this book need to shut the fuck up. there are plenty of things to dislike about this book besides this, okay?

after a while, they pull themselves together. they get married. they travel. after a miscarriage & a bout of dengue fever, they conceive again & end up with a healthy daughter.

they pass the sperm on to their friend liz, but it doesn't work for her & she also fails to meet a man. sad trombone.

& that's pretty much the whole book! there's definitely a lot of crazy here, of the sort i see in my own friends suffering from baby rabies. you know, shit like taking pregnancy tests five days after having sex, just to see if you're pregnant. shit like buying an advanced at home ovulation predictor machine & learning for the first time that your cycle is actually NOT 28 days. there are other, cheaper, FREE ways to find that out. shit like having babies with random dudes you barely know just because you want a baby. this whole book is like an insane testimonial for how babies really do cement shaky relationships (please note: they don't; these ladies either lucked the fuck out or will be divorced within five years). i can't imagine that this book would really fill me with hope & positivity if it was poised on the cusp of 40 & suffering from baby fever. it seems like every bad thing that can happen to a later-in-life mama happens to one of these ladies. & i applaud their honesty & frankness, but damn. screw my big plan of having a baby by the time i'm 35. i'm having one by the time i'm 32! (okay, not really, because that's only ten months away.)

but probably the #1 thing i disliked about this book is that it was portrayed as being about three women who decided they wanted children come hell, high water, shady men, or single parenthood, & they took the initiative to make it happen. but in the end, all of them had babies with men they fell in love with & eventually married. i think they were going for a "sisterhood of the traveling donor sperm" type thing here, but it just ended up reinforcing the idea that, like, if you just "let go & let god," your dream man will find you & rescue you from spinsterhood & give you a dream baby. i just don't find this idea very affirming or aspirational. & i feel bad for liz, the one that was rejected by the magical sperm, who got nothing but a passing footnote for an episode in her life that was probably incredibly difficult & emotional. "sorry, liz. no man & no baby? you don't rate. this book is for women that MADE IT HAPPEN," the authors seem to say. it smacks me as more than a little smug.

Isabelle says

Another fascinating book. At times I found it hard to believe it is a true story: too many really good men available - yet this is America - the fact that the three women stories are so similar... - people being so wealthy... yet, it is an interesting book that reflects on relationship with their complexities, and how times have changed... For me too the incredible life of America with all its testings and science even behind having babies...

I wish I could read the same story but written from the men's perspective too....

Christine says

*** 3.5 out of 5 stars***

The title and subtitle of this book explains largely what this book is about, but to elaborate just a bit, it is a memoir co written by three friends who have found themselves at the same cross road of life and how they proceed to make at least one of their wishes come true---to be a mother and everything else that happens to them during their journey to motherhood. Carey, Beth and Pam are all successful journalists, each with a string of failed relationships behind them and now in their late thirties, feel very strongly about pursuing motherhood as a single parent. Carey is the first to start on the road to motherhood by purchasing eight vials of sperm from an anonymous sperm donor. But just as Carey prepares for insemination, she meets someone and is soon pregnant. The vials then get passed to Beth who has finally put a difficult divorce behind her, but she, too, meets a man who might just be the one and also gets pregnant. Finally the vials get passed to Pam, the romantic of the three women who is always on the lookout for true love, but is not willing to let the chance at motherhood pass her by before she's too old to conceive. Happily, she, too, finds love in the nick of time. This is a very simplistic overview of what these three women go through in their unconventional pursuit of motherhood. They experience uncertainties in their relationships, challenges with balancing their jobs with their pursuit of motherhood, as well as heart wrenching losses and deep felt sorrow that will be a part of them forever, but in the end this memoir tells the story of how three women found true love and motherhood perhaps later than most women, and maybe in a different order, but not at all too late to live "happily ever after."

The chapters rotate between narrations from Carey, Beth and Pam pretty much in chronological order as they each pursue their ultimate goal of becoming a mother. They share pertinent anecdotes about their careers, living arrangements, their extended families and of course their mutual friendships. They also share their past relationship failures, the experiences and challenges of their current relationships, terrible losses and tremendous joys that make the journey to love and parenthood worth every emotional scar we ever bear.

The writing in this memoir flows very easily, and Carey, Beth and Pam include a lot of conversations they've had with friends, family, lovers and other significant people in their lives, and that dialogue helps the book read like a story and not just a string of events, the latter of which could easily lead to boredom with a memoir. While reading the first few chapters, I admit that I felt quite removed from the women's situations, largely because my life path was so different and I couldn't quite relate to being 40-ish years old, a wealthy career woman, single with no love interests on the horizon and no child of my own in my heart. However, the more chapters I read in this memoir, the more absorbed I became in these woman's lives, the more I empathized with their situations and the more I grasped onto the hope that they would not only become mothers, but also find permanent love in a healthy marriage.

One of "issues" that I have with this book --and it's not even really an issue, but more of an observation-- is that Carey, Beth and Pam were all financially well off and could easily afford to pursue the medical avenues of getting pregnant on their own as well as the child care expenses after the baby's arrival. It just doesn't seem realistic that there is a large demographic of 40-ish women out there who can afford such lifestyles and the freedom to pursue single motherhood like these women did.

Also, Carey, Beth and Pam's stories were so similar and their narration voices so similar that at times I had a difficult time keeping track of whose story I was reading and I found myself flipping around a few pages to jog my memory.

Ultimately, I found *Three Wishes* to be a thought provoking and very personal look into the lives of these three modern women who were so determined to have children of their own. They survived many difficult situations, made life altering decisions and learned to live with those decisions, and above all they were very lucky to have had their three wishes come true.

In closing, I'd like to end my review with my favorite quote from the memoir. It is a quote from Pam, the final recipient of the donor vials around the time she decides with certainty to pursue having a child on her own. I think this passage captures the essence of what each of these three women feel and why they were so incredibly determined to become mothers. I think I would have felt the same if I were in their place.

"Finally, at thirty-seven years old, I confronted myself. I considered what I could not live without and immediately knew it was a child. That for me, life would have a far lesser purpose if I could not be a mother. I once read that the ancient Egyptians described childless women as "*mothers of the missing ones*," and that imagery wrenched me to the core. I could almost feel an ache in my bones for the child who would be missing to me." --Pam [p. 108]

Rebecca says

As a single 30-something woman I have been thinking about marriage and children. Not having much luck in the dating world I have also thought of having a sperm donor. This book was a good read and well written, however I found it extremely unrealistic. If I knew purchasing sperm would guarantee me finding a partner I would have bought sperm years ago. Putting this aside the story of friendship, ups and downs of life, love, and loss was touching. I would be interested in reading this book again in ten years to see how my view might change.

Cate says

hated. wish I did not read.

spoiler: 2/3 of the women in this book terminate a pregnancy because of trisomy. (One down syndrome, one trisomy 22.) Not at all what I expected going into it -- the cover seems like a "three single women decide to have babies! how sweet!" The terminations are just part of the story, not the main focus, but it was unexpected. I don't like being blindsided like that. Obviously my own personal issue, but there you go.

Gaby says

Our generation of women have had more opportunities than our mothers. Women have spent more time in school and establishing our careers and waited longer to be married or start families. By the time many of us felt ready for that next stage, we faced a quickly shrinking window of time. In *Three Wishes: A True Story of Good Friends, Crushing Heartbreak, and Astonishing Luck on Our Way to Love and Motherhood*, three successful women journalists Carey Goldberg, Beth Jones, and Pamela Ferdinand tell their stories. They'd each had terrible luck with men. Each of them wanted to have children and, in their late thirties, they were no longer willing to wait for the right man.

Former Boston bureau chief of the New York Times, Carey was ready to try a nontraditional path to motherhood. After much consideration, she decides to do it on her own and finds an anonymous sperm donor. The same day that vials arrive, she meets a man, falls in love, and gets pregnant the regular way. Carey offered the vials to her friend Beth who was recovering from a difficult divorce. Before Beth can use the vials, she meets someone during an ice-climbing trip -- and falls in love and also gets pregnant. Beth passes on the vials to their friend Pam, the eternal romantic. Suddenly, Pam's luck changes too -- and she finds herself in love and a mother. *Three Wishes* is a true story of best friends who find that when they stop waiting for fairy-tale endings, their "happily ever afters" begins.

Three Wishes spoke to me. I loved that these women became friends in their late thirties, when it seems like we have our own set of friends and are unlikely to branch out. While the book tells their stories of love and motherhood, it's the friendships that engaged me, drew me in. I saw *Three Wishes* as a book that celebrates the varied and difficult journeys that we each go through.

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Review copy provided by the publisher.

Kara says

Three female writers become friends in their late 30's, early 40's. They each decide to be a single mother because time is running out on them. Each is self-centered in her own special way.

Also, at times, this book starts to seem like a paid advertisement for Clearblue Fertility Monitor. Lots of very specific name dropping for this fertility monitor.

Carla says

Had I heard about it any other way, I would've been skeptical of this book's premise. Three women decide, individually, that they're prepared to become mothers on their own. The first orders eight vials of sperm from a sperm bank, and quickly falls in love and gets pregnant the old-fashioned way. As they pass the vials between them, the other two women do the same. Unlikely? Perhaps. True story? Yep.

I heard an interview with the authors on their publisher's podcast, and quickly went home and requested the book from the library. Carey Goldberg, Beth Jones and Pamela Ferdinand are all journalists, and their award-winning skills show in this beautifully written memoir. They brought me close to tears several times. Though

I don't expect to ever take such monumental steps toward becoming a mother, myself, the search for love and family is universal. As these friends share their heartaches and successes, their stories encouraged me.
