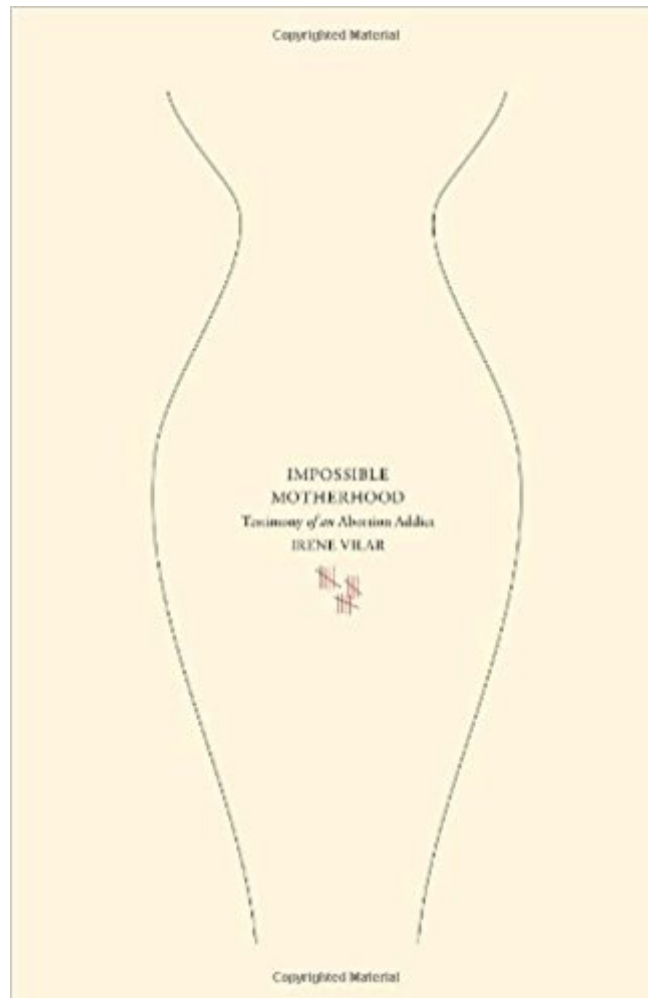


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Impossible Motherhood: Testimony Of An Abortion Addict



Synopsis

Irene Vilar was just a pliant young college undergraduate in thrall to her professor when they embarked on a relationship that led to marriage—a union of impossible odds—and fifteen abortions in fifteen years. Vilar knows that she is destined to be misunderstood, that many will see her nightmare as an instance of abusing a right, of using abortion as a means of birth control. But it isn't that. The real story is part of an awful secret, shrouded in shame, colonialism, self-mutilation, and a family legacy that features a heroic grandmother, a suicidal mother, and two heroin-addicted brothers. It is a story that looks back on her traumatic childhood growing up in the shadow of her mother's death and the footsteps of her famed grandmother, the political activist Lolita Lebrón, and a history that touches on American exploitation and reproductive repression in Puerto Rico. Vilar seamlessly weaves together past, present, and future, channeling a narrative that is at once dramatic and subtle. *Impossible Motherhood* is a heartrending and ultimately triumphant testimonial told by a writer looking back on her history of addiction. Abortion has never offered any honest person easy answers. Vilar's dark journey through self-inflicted wounds, compulsive patterns, and historical hauntings is a powerful story of loss and mourning that bravely delves into selfhood, national identity, reproductive freedom, family responsibility, and finally motherhood itself—today, Vilar is the mother of two beautiful children.

Book Information

Paperback: 222 pages

Publisher: Other Press; 1 edition (October 6, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1590513207

ISBN-13: 978-1590513200

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.4 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 8 ounces

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars 17 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #471,311 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #96 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Women's Studies > Abortion & Birth Control #767 in Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Women's Health > Pregnancy & Childbirth #920 in Books > Parenting & Relationships > Family Relationships > Motherhood

Customer Reviews

“Nuanced, intellectually ambitious and unnervingly frank.”—The

Washington Post "The strength of [Impossible Motherhood] lies in exposing the need to talk about abortion as a public health issue. It's impossible to take abortion out of the realm of morality, religion and politics and place it solely in the medical realm, along with diabetes and cancer and high cholesterol. But it is crucial to see it, first and foremost, as an issue of the human body: a woman's body."

The Miami Herald "Extraordinary and incendiary a potential launching pad for a discussion about abortion that is more personal than political Vilar turns her experiences into a reminder that the complexity of abortion extends beyond the scientific and political arenas Impossible Motherhood doesn't shy away from the wounds that are part of Vilar's journey toward independence; it embraces them, making her remarkable story full of assurance but free of bitterness."

Bitch Magazine "Impossible Motherhood tells why [Irene Vilar] had 15 abortions in 16 years How is that humanly possible in either sense of the word the moral or the physical? In the telling, however, it seems as inevitable as sunrise...Vilar, who eventually escaped this horrid cycle to have two children, writes not to excuse, but to explain herself."

Elle Magazine "In Impossible Motherhood Vilar does exactly what the best memoirists do: She tells us the truth about everything, even when the truth utterly confounds [Vilar] tells [her story] to us with courage and grace and a true writer's skill."

The Oregonian "Vilar does not mean to advocate on either side of the abortion debate; ranging far beyond the politics of abortion, her book is a controversial and intense tale of generational and national trauma [Vilar is] a writer of brutal honesty and profound intelligence."

ForeWord Magazine "Impossible Motherhood is like a journey into a harrowing underworld but guided by Vilar's gifts and her light we emerge in the end transformed, enlightened, and oh so alive."

JUNOT DIAZ , AUTHOR OF THE BRIEF WONDERFUL LIFE OF OSCAR WAO "I have never read a book like Impossible Motherhood, Irene Vilar's disturbing, heart-wrenching, and ultimately triumphant memoir, for the simple and understandable reason that no one of her gender has ever summoned the brutally raw, transcendent courage to write such a book and yes, confess to such a troubling story."

BOB SHACOLIS , AUTHOR OF EASY IN THE ISLANDS "Irene Vilar's dramatic and beautifully drawn story forces the reader to confront the power of sexuality and procreation that often is the only power a young woman perceives she owns in this world. IMPOSSIBLE MOTHERHOOD is profound, raw, wrenching, and honest to the bone. Yet despite the title, its message is that no matter how intense the pain one has experienced, healing and redemption are in fact possible."

Gloria Feldt

Irene Vilar Irene Vilar was born in Arecibo, Puerto Rico. Her memoir *The Ladies' Gallery* (Other Press, 2009) was a Philadelphia Inquirer and Detroit Free Press notable book of the year and was short-listed for the 1999 Mind Book of the Year Award. She is a literary agent and editor of The Americas series at Texas Tech University Press.

For such a dark and controversial subject, Ms. Vilar writes with dignity and beauty. I believe the author is a courageous woman for writing about her experiences and to let us in on feeling her pain. It is impossible to not feel something as you read Ms. Vilar's words, whether it's sadness, anger, sympathy, love, hate, etc. And isn't that the point of reading others' stories? To feel and to learn, as long as you open your mind and open your heart. The book is beautifully written and I appreciate the author's honesty.

I really liked this book. The content and stories were interesting, and the protagonist is incredibly easy to relate to, even if you've never had an abortion, lived in Puerto Rico, etc. This book isn't really about abortion. It is about a woman's struggle with herself and the people in her life. 9/10 would read again.

brave lady for sharing this story. it had me hooked

Kept my attention. This is a good read.

A haunting yet brilliant book! I could not put it down. Vilar offers a beautifully written work of her life's enormous challenges.

Ok so explain this to me as if I am a two year old. The grandmother tries to shoot people in the congress under the misguided belief that this will somehow free Puerto Rico of the colonial control of the United States. Killing people always gets you what you want. Ask Macbeth how well that plan worked for him. Shakespeare has a whole gallery of characters that are demented. Then later her own mother, who apparently was a wonderful person and very loving, commits suicide. She leaves behind the author and her brothers who both become drug addicts and definitely aren't coping well with life. So while this memoir or testimony as the author refers to it is honest, it is also scary and at times so illogical to read that one is left to wonder. Beckett says that writing is a sin against silence (or words to that effect). Anyone who feels the need to write and is talented should do it. While this

memoir was honest it also wasn't helpful in explaining the behavior. Other than he said one thing and she did another and there was control going on here. She was under a spell. Intoxicated with man who was already in love with someone: Himself. The relationship was crowded from the beginning. And I wonder how these stories actually help women move away from men who treat them like slaves. Do these stories make other women feel like it is hopeless or worse inevitable. There is a book titled Love and Limerance. Love as a form of madness and obsession that produces illogical and destructive behavior. She kept destroying the children and when she spoke about waiting until the second trimester it made me wonder why she had never succeeded in killing herself. This story is obscene and sad and also at times boring. When she is quoting what other people said to her or what she was taught by her lover those are some of the best lines. The rest was just pathetic noise that made me understand that abusing choice is utterly wrong. Not even the doctor asking her to consider his position and the risks he was taking to perform the abortions, not even that plea got her to stop. She could've had something implanted that wouldn't require her to remember to take a pill. Too complicated when you are consumed with what exactly. Distracted by the lover, she takes another lover. What was going on!!! I wish her well and the irony is that she has two daughters now. Oh how strange life can be. This story while true and well written didn't really instruct so much as serve as a what a cautionary tale. I hope it does something positive rather than reinforce the belief that women somehow are at the mercy of the unworthy men they love.

I was not let down by this book - I am pro-life, but this book offered a new perspective that gave me more understanding on what a woman can go through when dealing with the hard decision of abortion.

A frightening story of a woman with abandonment issues. Her mother committed suicide when Irene was very young. The very bright but very bereaved young daughter achieved beautifully academically, but grew up stunted emotionally. Her father remarried quickly, leaving his children to their own devices. As a sixteen year old attending an American university, Irene fell under the spell of a fifty year old professor, who espoused freedom while evading any kind of responsibility. Her first pregnancy at sixteen ended in abortion, followed one month later by a second pregnancy and abortion. The abortions became a pattern of behavior, a type of self mutilation or cutting. Isabelle did not feel worthy of being a mother. Self serving?? Yes. Pitiful?? Yes. One waivers between wanting to shake some sense into this young woman or sitting beside her and drying her tears.

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