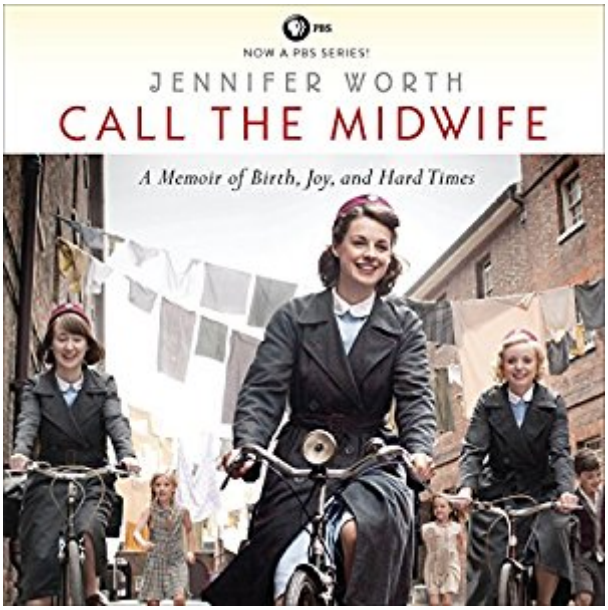
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Call The Midwife: A Memoir Of Birth, Joy, And Hard Times



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Synopsis

Audie Award Nominee, Solo Narration - Female, 2013At the age of 22, Jennifer Worth left her comfortable home to move into a convent and become a midwife in postwar London’s East End slums. The colorful characters she met while delivering babies all over London - from the plucky, warm-hearted nuns with whom she lived to the woman with 24 children who couldn’t speak English to the prostitutes and dockers of the city’s seedier side - illuminate a fascinating time in history. Beautifully written and utterly moving, Call the Midwife will touch the hearts of anyone who is, and everyone who has, a mother.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have come to believe that every person has a vitally interesting story-and this wonderful account confirms that. Ms Worth was a nurse/midwife in the post WW2 slums of London, aka "The East End." She lived in a convent of Sisters who dedicated their lives to providing midwife services to the women of the area. This book is an absorbing and enthralling anthology about these brave, dedicated women and the equally brave women they served. The reader meets a fascinating cast of characters: two gypsy women who share a downtrodden husband; a beautiful elderly nun who left a noble family to serve the poor; three generations of tavern keepers; a young Irish girl bearing triplet boys in a cold, nearly empty room; a nearly 500 pound woman whose job is servicing an entire crew of sailors-and who has no idea that her severe cramps are labor pains-and more. All of the accounts are told as if the author is literally with the reader telling a story-,and what makes this book so easy to get lost in. Bravo, Ms Worth.

If you read the trilogy in order, than this book, the last of the three, will provide an excellent sense of closure for you as Worth wraps it up by wrapping up the histories of the main characters, Worth, having now established the reader in the "world now gone" of the East End in the 1940's-1950's, inserts more commentary into this book, between the narrative episodes. Again, if you read the entire series in order, this commentary is welcome. Worth is a Christian writer in every sense of the word. She shows the reader both the good and the evil of the system that created the midwife role in British life, and the system that altered it into something else entirely. She frequently adds observations about the medical practices and social problems that effected her patients. Chummy's ugly duckling tale of romance and happiness and religious devotion make a fitting ending to the storyline of the young women. The wrap-up of the sisters and how their lives ended makes for a bittersweet ending to the book. But at the end, you feel the great sense of an era having been lost, of very good and faithful Christian people now gone forever,and the loss to us in their inevitable passing. You give out a great breath and wish the story could have gone on, and THAT is the mark of a truly great novel.

Jennifer Worth tells the story of her earlier career (in the late 70's she left nursing to teach music) as a midwife in terms that, at places, made me want to laugh and at others, to cry. It is a story taken right out of the late forties and early fifties and much of the homespun narrative is easy for me to relate to (after, that is, I learn Cockney). Because I was a city boy during that time, the neighborhood camaraderie as well as the childish pranks and the way we amused ourselves before smart phones and electronic tablets, the yelling and even the police presence and the poverty were all part of a memory I cherish.The PBS series has a lot in common with the book but the facts are in the T.V. series rearranged and actually toned down a bit. The book is very descriptive of the work but maintains a profound respect for motherhood, maternity and all decency. A glossary of terms is included in the back.The 50's of the last century saw medical advancementsÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •for which I personally am grateful. But it also reflects the pre-tech age whichÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •not a fewÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •nurses today in reading about might reflectively whisper to themselves 'OMG' as they compare the details of then and now.The reader should develop a deeper appreciation for the Sisters of Nonnatus House as well (and the calling of all the Sisters of the Catholic faith in general) whose commitment and love to God and those in need is unequaled. The church was replete with Sister TeresasÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •and I say that even though I am not Catholic. I fell in love (both in the T.V. series and the book) with Sister JulienneÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •played to perfection

by Jenny Agutter.And Sister Monica Joan is a hoot! More so in the reading than the T.V. series.The way it all ends and ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Ëœwhere-are-they-now?ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ is only in the books.If you've seen the series, read the trilogy.

This is really a review of all three "Midwife" books. All were five star reads and very enjoyable for the reader who's interested in the life and times of the people involved. England had a very different post WWII than the United States and these books illustrate this as well as telling true stories of the poverty stricken East Enders who despite their troubles kept their spirits and hearts high. I initially thought that the books might be just a "follow along" with the TV series but except for most of the characters of the midwives/nuns they are not, they are stand alone and tell different stores. Along the way a reader will learn quite a bit about the birthing process (whether or not one wants too!) and other maladies that may strike a pregnant woman. All three books are easy, interesting reads that will transport the reader backwards almost seven decades and immerse him or her in a different world.

I was looking forward to Jennifer Worth's final work on her time as a nurse midwife in London in the 1950's. I was not disappointed. Her stories of the effects of TB, illegal abortion, and the difficulties of daily life for women proves again that truth is stranger than fiction. The entire series is an important record and reflection on a time hopefully in the past. I know these books made me grateful that , as a woman, I live in the 21st century.

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