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Losing Six Kids: My Failed Adoption Story

Christine Bonneur
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Losing Six Kids *is a bittersweet memoir without a happily ever after.*

Christine Bonneur puts her whole heart on the line in her memoir *Losing Six Kids: My Failed Adoption Story*. In doing so, she offers an honest and painful look at the corruption that people don't see when they think about adoption.

Bonneur had a dream: to come home from Uganda with two beautiful children. Her children. But in a span of eighteen months, she loved and lost six children who were never really hers. Through each chapter, Bonneur explains her grief, hopelessness, and anger after each failed attempt. She also shares stories about friends who helped her along the way.

The memoir serves as a cautionary tale. Through straightforward details, Bonneur conveys the corruption and exploitation she encountered during the adoption process. The first attempt failed because a mother of two children was only giving them up because she felt that she was cursed. Trying to adopt the second and third times, Bonneur ran into people who were exploiting children, even taking them from their mothers to sell them.

The text shows how Bonneur found herself unable to connect to the children. She did not speak their language, and she often found herself unable to figure out how to be a mother to children who had experienced so much: "It's frustration and complete heartache."

Bonneur's story isn't meant to discourage other couples from adopting; she includes stories about couples who succeeded as well. The text balances her emotions nicely, looking back on events with the help of diary entries.

Rather than pity or judgment, the narrative evokes plenty of sympathy—not that the text seems to want it. Instead, it highlights the beauty Bonneur found in Uganda, especially through the people who came to her aid and through the children who were almost hers. While there are a lot of players mentioned in the book, very little time is spent with any one person.

Describing herself as naive at the start, Bonneur shows how she went into international adoption blindly. She's honest about her mistakes, and calls herself a "living contradiction" who will always feel "weak and selfish." These details relate her lowest moments with an honesty that is refreshing and that creates real connections.

Losing Six Kids is a bittersweet memoir without a happily ever after that will spark sympathetic anger and encourage prospective adoptive parents to look deeper.

ELIZABETH KONKEL (May 24, 2017)

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