

The Silence of Motherhood: A Dr. Victoria Jones Single Mother by Choice Novel

Victoria Jones

FriesenPress (Jul 8, 2018)

Softcover (288pp)

978-1-5255-2399-1

The Silence of Motherhood is a capable portrait of motherhood in the twenty-first century.

In *The Silence of Motherhood*, Victoria Jones novelizes her experiences to explore the importance of silence in her adult life.

Victoria Jones is a successful surgeon with two children, Logan and Lucas, whom she has chosen to raise on her own. As her teenage boys become caught up in their own lives, Victoria reminisces about the path that led her to balancing a career and motherhood, and how some form of silence, with its many shades and nuances, has been a constant companion.

The book reads not so much as a novel as it does a personal essay on motherhood. Names may be changed to protect the innocent, but it's clear that this is an intensely personal story.

Victoria's narrative is engaging, but sometimes uneven. Good dialogue and descriptions enliven dramatic moments, as when Victoria speaks with a former patient who is hiding the return of her illness from her mother, or when she protects a surgical resident from an abusive relationship. The book even has some comedic scenes, such as Victoria's breakout from her obstetrician's office when she is locked in after hours.

The narrative relies too heavily on exposition. When Victoria attends a single mothers' group meeting, she expresses joy at meeting other parents who have made the choice to raise children alone. This defining moment, wherein Victoria decides to make a leap of faith to be a parent, is not explored through character interactions, dialogue, or description; rather, the event is summarized in a sentence. Details are also sometimes inconsistently rendered.

The parts of the narrative with the flavor of a memoir are stronger. Silence is used as a metaphor for self-reflection, strategy alignment, and personal growth, becoming critical throughout parenthood as children grow older and become more independent.

As Victoria flashes back to points in her past during which she has most acutely felt the silence in her life, the pacing is even and consistent. Her tale covers a range of issues which many single mothers will identify with, from the complexities of trying to date to insensitive coworkers trying to plan for maternity leave. Most of these are explored in short, to-the-point episodes. While the conflicts in such sections vary—and some, such as a self-referential description of the writing process, seem more like filler—the underlying struggle is something that many parents will understand.

The Silence of Motherhood is a capable portrait of motherhood in the twenty-first century. While it celebrates what it means to be both a successful parent and a career person, it also recommends leaning into the moments of silence, and seeking self-reflection without fear when silence comes on.

KATERIE PRIOR (June 19, 2018)

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