



The Midwife's Advice

Gay Courter

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Hannah Sokolow, the spirited Jewish-American heroine of the international bestseller, *The Midwife*, returns to tackle new medical challenges in turn-of-the-century New York. As head midwife at Bellevue Hospital, Hannah sees her proud profession taken over by the male-dominated practice of obstetrics. So when a young immigrant woman seeks a solution to a troubling but delicate personal problem, Hannah takes a bold step toward the new medical frontier of sex therapy. Soon she is giving intimate advice not only to her immigrant patients, but also to the intellectuals of Greenwich Village, who inspire her with radical new ideas on such issues as birth control, sex education, and health care. And there are other momentous changes in store for Hannah. For when her husband follows his heart to the turmoil of the Russian Revolution, Hannah follows hers--into a searing affair with a prominent doctor who is separated from her by faith, class, and marriage, but who is drawn to her by a fierce desire that matches her own. This wonderfully vivid novel is alive with the passion of one woman's remarkable strength and with the spirit and striving of early twentieth-century New York.

The Midwife's Advice Details

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Author : Gay Courter

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From Reader Review The Midwife's Advice for online ebook

Cece Fontaine says

Bravo....loved it!

Magda says

There were some good parts to this book, but it left me with a bad taste in my mouth. I really don't like extra-marital affairs, and I especially don't like the cavalier way the protagonist conducted hers, pretending that it bothered her but rationalizing everything.

Emily Murphy says

I have become such a Gay Courter fan! The amount of historical reseach and detail in her books is amazing to me. I am so glad I discovered this author, thanks to my book club that read Flowers in the Blood. I would probably never have picked up any of this author's books had it not been for the book club, but I haven't stopped reading her since I finished that first book. Then, having read The Midwife, I had to continue with The Midwife's Advice. Gay Courter is an excellent storyteller and I heartily recommend her books! I'm just deciding which one to read next.

Beth says

I liked this book a lot. The writing was stilted and uncomfortable as the author was trying very hard to make her points about women's liberation and the story of a smart woman who should have been a doctor. She also covered the effects of the Russian Revolution on this woman's family and her ideological husband. But despite the wording, the story was captivating.

Mimi says

I just read the first one, and this is a re-read of a much read sequel. I found that the main character's character struck me as more flawed upon this read, however, I really enjoyed more than I have in the past the story about her husband and his moral journey.

Elizabeth says

The story of a Russian educated midwife, Hannah, who practices at Bellevue Hospital. Her husband is a

disciple of Leon Trotsky who puts his political and social activities ahead of earning a living so his wife Hannah is the wage earner for the family.

Lana Del Slay says

NUTSHELL: Sweeping historical fiction + progressive ideas about sexuality = a solid **8**. There's a reason I put this one on my Amazon wishlist.

Who's the Midwife? The Midwife in question is one Hannah Sokolow, aged thirty, married to Lazar. Her children are Benny and Emma. Her mother lives with her; they rent from her sister Eva and brother-in-law Napthali. Also renting from Eva and Napthali are Hannah's brother Chaim and sister-in-law Minna. All are Russian-Jewish immigrants, with the exception of the children, who were born in America. Hannah works at Bellevue.

What kind of advice does Hannah give? (view spoiler)

How did they know what half that stuff was back then? Margaret Sanger is one of the characters in this book, for one thing. Some of it, Hannah pretty much pioneers in lieu of traditional, barbaric treatments. (Muscles spasm shut when you go to have sex? Here, we'll cut the nerve and you'll just gape open.) Hannah is shown reading the experts of her day and learning as she sees these patients; it's not as if she's magically some kind of genius about sex. She learns as she goes and applies what she learns. It's pretty neat to watch.

And that's it? Well... no. (view spoiler)

1913-1922? That's right. Ten turbulent, beautiful years. Let Hannah Sokolow be your guide through them.

Connie says

Excellent story that weaves together several story lines. I read this several years ago and it still sticks in my mind. That is my definition of a great book.

Denise says

this is so cool- historical fiction about a russian immigrant working as a midwife at bellevue in the 20s. lots of our favorite radical legends grace its pages- emma goldman, margaret sanger- and the midwife is at the forefront of giving advice about sex and birth control. totally engaging story.

Bree (AnotherLookBook) says

A solid follow-up to the first book. I think *The Midwife's Advice* would stand well on its own, too. Just as those who are faint of heart about physical stuff might not be able to fully enjoy *The Midwife*, I'd say those who can't handle frank discussions of sexual matters wouldn't enjoy this book. However, I think Courter

infused the topic with professionalism and tact, so once I realized this book was going to talk more about making babies than delivering babies, I quite enjoyed it. Also, I learned quite a bit about the Russian revolution from this book, which as a historical fiction fan is useful to have under my belt.

Also like the first book, I totally devoured it. The second book is longer, but somehow took me the same amount of time to read as the first book did. Hmm, that's some compelling book math...

Full review to come!

Tzippy says

As a saga, this book is fascinating. Set during and right after WWI in New York City. Revolves around an atheist socialist Jewish family and focuses a lot on reproductive rights, sex education, birthing moving from midwife-based to doctor-based, the Russian Revolution, and the atheist/socialist Jewish New York culture at the time. Lots of lots of stuff packed in here, presented in an interesting way.

The problem with the book is the main character (and her husband). As much as I liked the characters around them, especially Minna, Chaim, Rachael, and Herzog, I didn't really like Hannah or Lazar. It wasn't clear how they felt about each other or why exactly they made the choices they did. When it came to Hannah's work, she knew what she believed and she took principled stands based on that, but as far as her personal life went, it seemed like she was just bounced around from situation to situation based on whatever everyone else wanted, and she never really decided once and for all what she wanted for herself.

Also, none of the characters in the book seemed to have a problem with adultery, even those who didn't commit it. I don't know if that's one of those kibbutzesque rebellions against the Old World mentality or if that's just how everyone was in the 1910s or if it was just an authorial decision, but it was strange.

Julia says

Sequel to The Midwife

This is more oriented to the main character's work and family, and less about her Jewish identity. In this book, Hannah becomes a consultant on sexual issues as well as continuing as a midwife.

Many historical figures are included alongside the fictional characters. (Hannah's sister-in-law works with Margaret Sanger; Hannah's husband went to school with Trotsky, which I don't remember coming up in the first book even though that one started in Russia.)

Pauline says

Lots of information in this book. Very interesting book. A good read.

Beckey says

Hmm, this one book that I can say that is both interesting & unusual... Overall an ok read, one that I would normally pick up & read but was recommend to me to read.

Jennifer says

It deals with the early years in the 20th century with a Russian - Jewish immigrant family. We go through the perils of socialism and birth control and extreme poverty. There is so much unrest, uncertainty and doubt as the characters learn to live in the United States and still maintain their Russian roots. As our heroine, Hannah reflects at the end of the book on the printing of her and her husband's book "How to Have A Happy Marriage" she says this - "this glue was far more powerful than of his (her husband's) "isms". It was the adhesive that would prevent the world from disintegrating." (The Midwife's Advice, by Gay Courter).
