



341 Lexington Street • Newton, Massachusetts 02466  
Tel: 617-630-9286 • Fax: 617-630-1695  
E-mail: [victor@booktours.com](mailto:victor@booktours.com) • Website: <http://www.booktours.com>

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**PRESS RELEASE**

Contact: Victor Gulotta, 617-630-9286, [victor@booktours.com](mailto:victor@booktours.com)

## When Your Biological Clock Strikes Two Minutes to Midnight

A Psychologist Recounts Her Long Battle Against Infertility

Eight babies are born in the U.S. every single minute. Conception, gestation, and birth would seem the most natural things in the world, but be careful telling that to the 7.3 million individuals in the U.S. whose eggs and sperm aren't quite up to the task. Infertility is an existential slap in the face. The lengths people will go to get around it is the bittersweet story of *Grade A Baby Eggs: An Infertility Memoir* (Epigraph Books, paper, \$15.95), Victoria Hopewell's perceptive new memoir of the years she spent hoping technology would come to the rescue.

Hopewell, a clinical psychologist who held academic appointments at the medical schools of both Harvard and Cornell, paints a gimlet-eyed portrait of the in-vitro fertilization industry, a wild-west baby business where women's eggs are bought and sold over the Internet, and prices are based on everything from the donor's SAT scores to how much you're willing to pay to make sure your baby is technically Jewish.

"There are more than 100,000 IVF attempts each year," says Victoria Hopewell, who went from hoping to use her own eggs at the age of forty-

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four, to purchasing someone else's eggs. "Each in-vitro attempt costs, on average, more than \$12,000. That's a multibillion dollar-a-year infertility industry. And it's virtually unregulated." Which means, as Hopewell points out in her enjoyable style, that the fortune you're paying for eggs from a Cal Tech professor might really be coming from a woman who couldn't make it through high school. Or, as in Hopewell's case, that Jewish egg you need to carry on your childless second-husband's eighth-generation line may really be coming from an O'Shea or a Montebello. "Reading *Grade A Baby Eggs* not only taught me more than I ever knew about today's fascinating fertility subcultures," says author Paul De Angelis, "but brought me an entirely new insight into how commercialized even so sacred an activity as human reproduction can become. This memoir is funny, sad, touching, always human, never dull."

### **A second marriage, a blended family, emotions and ethics**

As much as it shines a needed spotlight on the fertility business, *Grade A Baby Eggs*, is at bottom, a human story, the ups and downs and all-arounds of a forty-four-year-old woman trying to make everybody happy. Hopewell does a wonderful job of inviting us into her second marriage to a once-confirmed bachelor, the last in a long line of descendants of an illustrious Jewish scholar. Can Hopewell navigate the emotional shoals of giving up on your own tired eggs, and implicitly, your youth? Can she manage her two daughter's expectations about their new step-dad? Does she even have the right to complain, given her two natural children, about

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the roller-coaster ride of treating infertility? Hopewell manages to address it all with insight and good humor—a testament to the keen observational skills demanded of her profession. That she also does it with style and grace—as graceful as one can be, anyway, with one’s feet up in stirrups—speaks more to her charm and her life-affirming optimism.

How did it go? Did she ever have that child? Hopewell writes so vividly that you’ll find yourself turning the pages of *Grade A Baby Eggs* just to see how it all pans out.

“An exceedingly honest examination of the reality of infertility and the emotionally traumatic experiences involved. . . . Well-written and thoughtful. . . . Readers will gain a new understanding of how infertility affects one’s family, social circle, career and self-perception. A candid, valuable look at infertility.”

**—Kirkus Reviews**

“The author, a clinical psychologist who has held academic appointments at the medical schools of both Harvard and Cornell, reveals the truth about the in-vitro fertilization industry. . . . For anyone encountering this problem, this book must be read.”

**—Bookviews**

**For more information, please visit [www.gradeababyeggs.com](http://www.gradeababyeggs.com)**

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## Biographical information

Victoria Hopewell is the pen name of a PhD clinical psychologist who interned in the psychiatry department of Harvard Medical School. An instructor in psychology at the medical schools of both Harvard and Cornell, she is now in private practice in New York, where she has counseled infertile couples.

## Suggested questions for interviewers

1. What, in your view, should be done to regulate the sale of donor eggs?
2. What accounts for the stigma attached to using donor eggs?
3. What type of counseling should IVF patients receive to prepare them for the emotional ups and downs of the treatment?
4. What role will stem-cell research play in the process?
5. You bucked the advice of your daughters, your parents, and your friends in order to have a child. Is that sort of independence a character trait that has served you elsewhere?
6. What's the single most important piece of advice you'd offer a woman considering IVF?