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Early Praise for *THE BIG LIE*

“The ability to choose to become a mother, or not, is playing itself out in real time everyday and there is no question in my mind that the right to plan one’s family on one’s own timetable continues to have more pros than cons for this generation. However, it is also important that we examine the impact of a societal shift of this enormity. There is great potential in Tanya Selvaratnam’s journey to bring similar stories of disappointment, frustration, and hope to light. In sharing there can also be healing.”

—**Christy Turlington Burns**, founder, Every Mother Counts; director/producer, *No Woman, No Cry*; author of *Living Yoga: Creating A Life Practice*; global maternal health advocate, model, mom

“*The Big Lie* is a brave, rigorous, and deeply honest work. Tanya Selvaratnam’s personal journey speaks to a whole generation of women raised to believe we could have it all, only to realize—too late—that with every choice comes something not chosen. If you care more about truth than ideology, read this book.”

—**Danzy Senna**, author of *Caucasia* and *You Are Free*

“A courageous, deeply personal, and unapologetically feminist exploration of delayed motherhood and infertility. This enlightening and empowering book should be required reading for *every* woman.”

—**Hillary Jordan**, author of *Mudbound* and *When She Woke*

The Big Lie

Motherhood, Feminism, and the Reality of the Biological Clock

by Tanya Selvaratnam

Biology does not bend to feminist ideals and science does not work miracles. That is the message of this eye-opening and profoundly revealing discussion of the consequences of delayed motherhood. Part memoir, part manifesto, Tanya Selvaratnam recounts her emotional journey through multiple miscarriages after the age of 37. Her doctor told her she still “had time,” but Selvaratnam found little reliable and often conflicting information about a mature woman’s biological ability (or inability) to conceive.

THE BIG LIE dispels myths about our biological clocks and leaves readers with many big truths. Selvaratnam can speak about those truths including:

- How did we get here?
- The reality of the biological clock and the future frontiers in reproductive science, i.e., “can we control evolution?”
- The difference between being *childfree* vs. *childless* and the complexity of choices available to women wishing to pursue motherhood
- The benefits and complications of freezing eggs
- The dark underside of fertility treatments worldwide (with “rent-a-wombs” in India, women in their 60s and 70s having kids through donor eggs and sperm donors in countries with less restrictions, gender selection services, etc.) and how this underside has been supported by the desperation of women (especially older women) trying to have children
- What past and current generations know about the impact of delaying motherhood
- The economics of IVF, egg freezing, and adoption as a way to discuss how an industry has been built up around women delaying motherhood
- The impact of infertility on relationships. What leads to the turning point when couples diverge in their goals for parenthood? Can it be prevented? How do women and men cope when their relationships fall apart because they disagree about when and how to become parents?

Beyond her personal story, the author speaks to dozens of women in similar situations around the country, as well as fertility doctors, adoption counselors, reproductive health professionals, celebrities, feminists, journalists, and sociologists. Through in-depth reporting and her own experience, Selvaratnam urges more widespread education and open discussion about delayed motherhood in the hope that long-lasting solutions can take effect. The result is a book full of valuable information that will enable women to make smarter choices about their reproductive futures and to strike a more realistic balance between science, society, and personal goals.



Born in Sri Lanka and raised in Long Beach, CA, **Tanya Selvaratnam** is a writer, producer, theater artist, and activist. As a producer, recent projects include Mickalene Thomas's *Happy Birthday to a Beautiful Woman* (forthcoming on HBO); the Rockefeller Foundation-funded *MADE HERE*; Catherine Gund's *What's On Your Plate?* (Discovery's Planet Green), and Chiara Clemente's *Beginnings* (Sundance Channel, Webby Award). Since 2008, she has been the Communications and Special Projects Officer for the Rubell Family Collection. As an activist, she has worked with the Ms. Foundation for Women, the Third Wave Foundation, the NGO Forum on Women, and the World Health Organization. She received her graduate and undergraduate degrees in Chinese language and history from Harvard University. For more information visit <http://tanyaturnsup.com/>.

More Praise for THE BIG LIE

“With vulnerability, insight, and honesty, Tanya Selvaratnam uses her personal journey with health, fertility, and career to illuminate one of the biggest issues of our era.”

—**Farai Chideya**, television and radio journalist, author of *The Color of Our Future*

“Forty may be the new thirty, and women are looking and feeling younger than their years—but try telling that to your ovaries! There is a disconnect between what women see in the mirror and what’s happening to their reproductive organs. Selvaratnam’s book will help women better understand their biological age and fertility health. It will also educate on the incredible advances being made in fertility treatment so that women are informed about their fertility options and choices. So pleased that Selvaratnam is furthering this dialogue.”

—**Carole Kowalczyk, MD**, board-certified reproductive endocrinologist; director, Michigan Center for Fertility and Women’s Health; founder, in Harmony Healing Center; founder, Seasons of Life Fertility Foundation

“We all have to take responsibility for our choices, but what happens when we don’t know we are making a choice? Tanya Selvaratnam bravely shares her heartbreaking, exhausting, and ultimately enlightening experience of being blindsided by fertility problems. Tanya engages us without sentimentality or self-pity, and in the process, she helps us all understand that there are ways to achieve our personal hopes and dreams when given honest information, guidance, and support.”

—**Catherine Gund**, documentary filmmaker and co-founder, Third Wave Foundation

“The worldwide trend toward delayed motherhood is supposed to empower women. But does having children later in life really give more life choices and freedoms for women worldwide? Using her creative insights and keen intellect, Selvaratnam tells her personal story. Read this book and reflect on her unique Asian American journey.”

—**Soon-Young Yoon**, United Nations representative for the International Alliance of Women; chair of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women, New York; coeditor of *Gender, Women and the Tobacco Epidemic*

“*The Big Lie* will leave readers with many big truths—truths about women’s wants and desires—and revelations about our limitations. The book is part memoir, part maternal-health manifesto; taken together, it is an important read for anyone contemplating and assuming future motherhood.”

—**Amy Richards**, author of *Opting In: Having a Child without Losing Yourself*

“As a fertility specialist, I am confident that this book will be a wake-up call for the many women who are (voluntarily or involuntarily) postponing reproduction. I applaud the desire of Selvaratnam to dispel myths and tell the truth about the ‘biological clock.’ We cannot ‘rewind’ it, but today we can stop it with egg freezing. This technology is powerful, revolutionary, and will change the lives of women in the twenty-first century.”

—**Pasquale Patrizio, MD, MBE**, professor, reproductive bioethicist, and director, Yale Fertility Center; coeditor of *A Color Atlas for Human Assisted Reproduction*

THE BIG LIE: MOTHERHOOD, FEMINISM, AND THE REALITY OF THE BIOLOGICAL CLOCK

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