



Dirty Work

Gabriel Weston

Download now

Read Online ➔

Dirty Work

Gabriel Weston

Dirty Work Gabriel Weston

Nancy Mullion, an obstetrician-gynecologist whose botched surgery has put a patient in a life-threatening coma, must face a medical tribunal to determine if she can continue to practice medicine. Nancy's fears about both her patient's chances for survival and whether she will be "undoctored" are made palpable to the reader. Throughout four weeks of intense questioning and accusations, this physician directly confronts for the first time her work as an abortion provider--how it helps the lives of others but takes a heavy toll on her own. Interweaving memories of Nancy's English and American childhood and adolescence, *Dirty Work* creates an emotionally charged portrait of one woman's life; the telling of seemingly untellable stories sets her free, as it can all women. Gabriel Weston has given us a truly original, courageous, and meaningful novel.

Dirty Work Details

Date : Published August 12th 2014 by Little, Brown and Company (first published June 6th 2013)

ISBN : 9780316235624

Author : Gabriel Weston

Format : Hardcover 192 pages

Genre : Fiction, Medical, Contemporary, Health, Medicine, Literary Fiction

 [Download Dirty Work ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Dirty Work ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Dirty Work Gabriel Weston

From Reader Review Dirty Work for online ebook

Michael says

Gabriel Weston's thought-provoking "Dirty Work: A Novel" examines the ethical issues facing a doctor after a botched surgery. Dr. Nancy Mullion faces a medical tribunal over a four-week period, and during that time, she reflects on her life as an ob-gyn specialist who performs abortions. Weston presents the dilemma of doctors providing procedures while dealing with personal issues, including those they may not be aware of in their practice. Weston, who is also an ear, nose and throat surgeon in England, manages to keep the first-person narrative flowing, including the use of medical terms, as the protagonist agonizes about her fate--as a doctor and person. Louise Aronson, a professor of medicine at the University of California, San Francisco, notes that Weston "captures...the complexities of medicine in those areas where doing the right thing is imaginably hard." I concur. This is an insightful and informative novel that presents both sides of a controversial issue in society.

Sarah says

Nancy Mullion is facing a medical tribunal at her hospital, after she freezes during a surgery and is unable to get her patient to stop bleeding. Another doctor is called in to save the patient, and the patient is in serious but stable condition. Dr. Mullion is a gynecologist, who performs abortions as part of her surgical rotation. Her medical background is impressive, and she's skilled in what she does. This novel takes a challenging look at the issue of abortion, and how it can affect those who perform the procedure, as well as the women who undergo them. Dr. Mullion has to face her responsibility to her patients, while maintaining enough empathy without it affecting her work.

Well written, quick read. Interesting moral conundrum.

Fiona says

A nuanced and powerful novel about abortion told from the perspective of a doctor who performs them. It looks at the realities of the procedure and the difference between early and later terminations, suggesting that if we are to accept the right to choose we should not shy away from what this really means - and also suggesting that those who are pro-choice are wrong to leave the images and the "truth" solely in the hands of the anti lobby. The author also suggests that to be theoretically in favour but to shy away from the reality is a form of cowardice.

It is a fascinating look at how we use narrative to try and make sense of the world. Also really interesting on the subject of medical negligence, how it feels to be judged, and what the impact of abortion is on those who provide it. I came away with a real sense of the main character as a brave and principled woman, and the author the same, for being prepared to write about a complex subject in a thoughtful way, showing all its shades of grey, in a field where arguments are so often polarised, simplistic and reductive. Compelling reading

Jill Elizabeth says

Wow. There is so much to say and yet, like this amazing book's protagonist Nancy, I find myself unsure of where to start and where to stop and how to manage it all without resorting to italics (that last bit will make sense after you read this incredible story). There are so many things I could say and so many things I want to say and so many things I feel need to be said - but there are also so many things that I need to think about, so I'm going to leave it at this: this is a radically necessary (yet all too often missing) piece of the long-running "conversation" (and yes, ironic quotes, because I rarely think there's anything even remotely resembling actual civilized conversation in this emotionally-charged topic) about abortion. What a read - not for the squeamish (in both descriptive and emotional contexts), this is a powerfully charged yet deftly maneuvered tap dance amongst personal and politico-moral (my own word, but you know what I mean) land mines. An extraordinarily well-managed handling - well done Gabriel Weston...

Claire Blomeley says

I hated this book. I found the meek and passive protagonist to be completely unlike every doctor I've ever known and worked with, so much so that I disrespected her. The story itself was so poorly explained, all we read are one woman's endless self doubt and lack of assertiveness. At one scene in the "trial", they talk about her good grades, multiple publications, good reviews from supervising surgeons - I had a hard time believing that, and had a hard time believing that this person who passively allowed herself to be steered and directed-by boyfriends or by senior colleagues- would ever be a doctor worthy of a fellowship. She is never shown to be taking any responsibility for anything and never shown to be taking ownership of either her feelings or her actions. This is the antithesis of professionalism, imo.

Bonnie Brody says

Nancy Mullion is a trained surgical obstetrician/gynecologist. She has chosen to terminate pregnancies for a career. That's right, she is an abortion doctor. As the novel opens up, she is in surgery, having done four out of five procedures for the day and is on her fifth. Something goes dreadfully wrong and the patient starts bleeding out. Nancy is helpless to do anything. Everything she has learned leaves her and she watches helplessly as her patient lays there dying. Luckily, another surgeon on duty is called into the room to take over and the patient ends up in the Intensive Care Unit, hanging on to her life by a thread.

Nancy is up for review by the hospital board because of what happened. As she worries about her four meetings with the board, including one with a psychiatrist, Nancy goes back in her life to share with the reader what has transpired up to this time to make her the person that she is.

Despite her being suspended from practice and not allowed in the hospital, she goes to the ICU "where all my thoughts lie with my ailing patient". She sits in the waiting room keeping vigil, hoping that her patient does not die.

She often asks herself how she could have ended up performing abortions for a living. She states that she "considers it to be a life-saving procedure". "It's saving the life of a woman, it's something that saves a woman's freedom." She looks into herself to find that part of her that is compassionate and caring. She tries to put her patients' welfare first and is proud of the work she does. So what happened in that surgical room? Why was she unable to act when she saw her patient bleeding out?

Nancy also wonders, as she waits for the verdict, what her identity will be if she loses her ability to be a practicing physician. "How on earth will I manage if I am erased, removed, struck off the medical register? I

will lose my entire farm of reference. And what would I have to replace it? What is a doctor, if not a doctor? Take that title away and there may be very little left over.

The reader gets to know Nancy as a child and as a woman. Aspects of her life that are relevant to the current situation are reflected on and considered. I wished for more of a background rather than the small amount that was offered. What was her relationship with Julia, her sister, like as a child? Why did she really enter the field of medicine?

The book is a psychological mirror into the life of a woman who is reflecting on what has brought her to face a hospital board for negligence in her field. It is also an in-depth look into the kind of work she does and how it impacts her emotionally.

Sharon says

I had high hopes in the beginning of this book. Some of the writing was sooooo lovely -- in the first few chapters, there were many lines that I reread just to admire Weston's voice. I also thought the topic would be really interesting. I've worked in a perinatal unit and thought there was so much potential in the topic. But I just couldn't connect with the main character, Nancy. I felt like her reflections on her past were supposed to give me perspective into her but somehow it all felt very disjointed and disconnected to me. I tired of Nancy realizing that she's tuned out and missed half of what another character said to her or rehearsing what she was going to say and then saying none of it -- I get that this was supposed to show how bewildered she felt by her own failure, how devastated she was by the fallout, but it just didn't work for me. At the end I just felt like I had wanted something more from Nancy.

Catherine says

I won this book free on Goodreads and wasn't sure how I'd feel about this one in particular, but it turned out I thought it was a great book. It put a whole new outlook on my thoughts and ideas about some certain medical procedures. The Book was well written, easy to understand and follow, even with some of the medical terms. I read this book in one day that I was camping, so it would be a great book to head to the beach with.

Courtney says

Promotion of anti-choice ideas couched as an exploration of the ethics of abortion told from the perspective of an ob-gyn. I thought this book would be intelligent, balanced and scientific because I read about it on NPR. Instead, I found it disappointing and dishonest.

The premise didn't sit well with me, because boiled down to its essentials, it assumes that there is something "dirty" and shameful about abortions, and that, abortions terminate life. Physicians routinely perform (and have some clinical distance from) gut-wrenching procedures that seem repugnant to the layperson. Yet, here, our anti-hero purports that each abortion carries some degree of sadness. Moreover, in her view, with each termination, she, as a provider, crosses a theoretically immoral line of no-return. Simultaneously, she fails to recognize how critical her care was to her patients and the value of her profession to the world at large. I simply do not believe that the modern, ob-gyn community shares that view.

Where are the patients who are relieved, who thank her for helping them carry out an important, life-changing decision to not be forced to carry an unwanted pregnancy, or the women who, in fact, aren't sad about their choice? Where are the doctors who don't face inner conflict and guilt about performing abortions? In Weston's world, these people don't exist. This story does not do justice to the women who undergo the procedure nor the doctors who provide abortions.

Michelle says

I bought this book ages ago--probably based on a review--and finally picked it up. I didn't re-read the cover copy, and I'm glad because it made the unfolding of what would be a beautifully-written but straightforward narrative more compelling. We know from the start this is about a doctor who has been involved in a medical procedure that went drastically wrong and the board is deciding whether to revoke her license. It's a slim tome, but gorgeously rendered. There are a lot of tough topics to analyze here and it's definitely not for anyone squeamish. It would make for a fantastic book club read but in many groups would prove extremely controversial. I wish there was a little more meat to the story...it's really more about the protagonist's career versus the protagonist herself. For me the strongest aspect to the story was the analysis of her career and how she ended up in this place. Well done.

Damaskcat says

Nancy is a surgeon. She is facing a disciplinary hearing at the hospital where she works because a patient suffered serious bleeding during an abortion which she carried out. The book covers the four weeks of the hearing which we see from Nancy's point of view. During that time she reminisces about what led up to her mistake and how she feels and thinks about her work.

I found this a harrowing read and even though it is fiction it has the ring of truth because its author is herself a surgeon. As a study of how carrying out abortions affects the professionals involved it is devastating and searingly honest. Some of the images are likely to reappear in my nightmares. But this is not an anti-abortion rant dressed up as fiction – it is an absorbing novel which will almost certainly cause you to examine your own views of this always controversial subject.

Whether or not you like the narrator herself, and I didn't always like her, I wanted things to work out somehow for her and for her patient to live. Human beings make mistakes – they are not perfect – it is in how we deal with those mistakes that our level of maturity is revealed.

Dasha says

I read this novel in two days. That is to say, it is a gripping and fast read, but not an easy one. In fact, in parts, it is deeply terrifying. It is a powerful and brave narrative, with a protagonist so seemingly absent and daydreamy at times, yet actually very thoughtful and complex. I liked Nancy (the protagonist), then I really disliked her, and then I liked and sympathized with her again. I applaud Weston for taking on such a difficult and political topic (abortions and women's right to have a choice), and making it so deeply felt and personal.

Carol says

My initial interest in Gabriel Weston's debut fiction was prompted by an article I read about her memoir I liked that she pushed the envelope and will admit that surgeons are not infallible. They are human, they make mistakes. I know that Direct Red: A Surgeon's Story, a collection of twelve stories about her work in surgery, this still predominant male world and the patients she treats, will be read by me one day. In the meantime I picked up her debut novel Dirty Work to see what she's got.

Dirty Work is the story of Dr. Nancy Mullion, an obstetrician gynecology surgeon.

Nancy's specialty is abortion. She practically does these in her sleep until one day when something horrible goes wrong. The patient on her table is bleeding out and rather than being able to stop it, Nancy freezes, necessitating an emergency call to Nancy's supervisor who must take over in an effort to save the patient. Nancy is brought up before a review board. This method is used to give us the past, the present and possibly the future of who Nancy is.

Early on Nancy explains to us that surgeons pick an organ to look after.

"We gynecologists have the womb to look after. ... And whichever specialty we choose, each of us has to do something ruthless to keep our patient safe: We have to forget about the human significance of the organ we're operating on."

In a flashback she describes when she became herself:

There is a point in each of our lives when it seems that the real story begins, when we become the self that all our ensuing life somehow trails out from. This may just be the time, around three or four, when memory begins. But my birth, in this sense, occurred during one flowing American fall. This is when I became myself. The girl before this time is a shadow like a soul who is practicing how not to become. She is the background, the hole in the fabric from which the real shape is cut"

This is not an easy read as Weston explores the emotionally charged subject of abortion. Imagine what it would be like to be the outcast, the one who does the dirty job of terminating pregnancies? Her protagonist is low on the totem pole in the rank of surgeons. She lives without support from her peers, a solitary, sad, lonely role.

Fair warning, Dirty Work has scenes describing abortion that may be offensive to some. It certainly made me think, took me back to my own pregnancies, miscarriages and time training as an LPN. It has the makings of a good book discussion if participants can respect the view point of others.

Robert Blumenthal says

I would like to preface my review with the information that I am a strong supporter of a woman's right to choose to have an abortion or not. And I find much of the tactics and rhetoric of the pro-life movement to be very distasteful and ignorant of basic medical and biological facts. And yet, there still is something about abortions that are troubling to me, and I feel that it is important to understand all of the parameters of this procedure, both medically and emotionally. I found this short novel to be very provocative and emotionally rich. Although the author is clearly pro-choice (the main character as much as states that as clear as a bell), she also realizes that there can be much trauma around having the procedure and it can have a significant emotional impact on various people. I had a friend who had had an abortion and was strongly pro-choice. We

went to a science museum where there was a display showing a developing fetus, and she had to leave the room because of how negatively affected she was by it. She never fully regretted having the abortion, yet she still had an emotional reaction to being visually reminded of it. This is how I look at this book. The narrator realizes how important the procedure of abortion is to the well-being of many women. And she also realizes that there is a "human" element to the fetus that is removed and subsequently destroyed. No, it is not taking a life and it is not a sentient being that is being removed. But it sure looks more like a human being than a kidney does. And the narrator was one who was emotionally affected by this fact and was temporarily unable to perform her duties as an abortion doctor because she had never really dealt with it. The novel is very well-written, with a back story of the narrator being presented as she waits to hear the verdict of what will happen to her after a patient of hers almost dies due to her inaction. There was a point in the book where I was afraid that the author was going to wade into pro-life territory, but, IMHO, I don't think she did. Lionel Shriver, one of my favorite authors, described this novel as "brave." I couldn't agree more.

Naresh says

This is an excellent book providing insights on daily life and challenges of an abortion provider. They work so hard to become a doctor and have a harder job to do but still they are not given the same respect as given to their colleagues from other departments. Society and even doctors don't see them eye to eye. They are doing a noble job just like any other surgeon. Yes, they are also saving lives and Gabriel Weston ends the book by saying it aloud in a very precise and concise manner. Nice job on a debut novel.
