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Nothing average about 'Winging It'



WINGING IT
Joanne Jowell
Loot.co.za (R209)
Pan MacMillan

REVIEWER: JULIAN RICHFIELD

READERS may recall renowned international rugby referee Jonathan Kaplan's (JK) earlier book, *Call It Like It Is*, an excellent account of his stellar career.

Having retired from refereeing, JK finds himself back in print with *Winging It*, authored by Joanne Jowell. It is the story of his decision, as a single man, to have a baby by surrogate and to be a single parent.

Upfront, the subject matter of *Winging It* does not sound like the sort of book that would be top of the must-read list of your average rugby fan. But there is little average about JK's refereeing career and nothing at all average about this book. Jowell has done an excellent job in taking a very personal story and fashioning it into a book with a diverse appeal.

Some clever decisions have been made, the first being to have the various stakeholders contribute to the narrative. Of course JK himself leads here, but some of the key people in the surrogacy process have their own insightful perspectives.

Perhaps the most astute decision was Jowell's inclusion of some of her observations and remarks gathered during her many visits to JK. He deserves much kudos for both his surrogacy decision and for the openness with which he has shared his fathering story. He may call his parenting style "winging it", but it is very obvious from reading this fine book, that slapdash is not part of the JK make-up. *Winging It* is always honest and poignant.

It makes for an appealing, entertaining and unusual read.