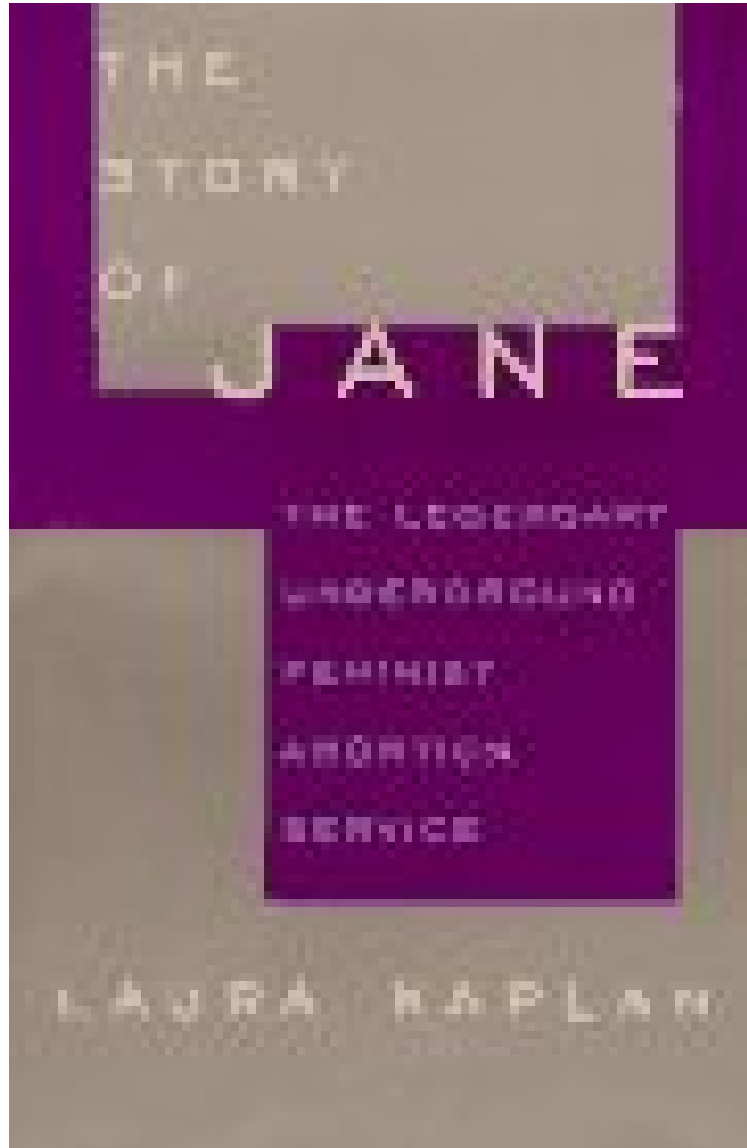


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# The Story of Jane: The Legendary Underground Feminist Abortion Service

Laura Kaplan

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**Laura Kaplan : The Story of Jane: The Legendary Underground Feminist Abortion Service** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Story of Jane: The Legendary Underground Feminist Abortion Service:

12 of 13 people found the following review helpful. We Did It Once, We'll Do It Again If Need BeBy Broken

Goddess What these women did when they saw a need is one of the most astounding stories of courage and brilliance I've come across. The care they took, the lengths they went to, how they evolved stunning. Jane, a core group of about 25 - 30 women, existed for just four years, and in that time it's estimated that Jane changed for the better the lives of over 11,000 women while at the same time literally saving their lives from the hands of butchers in a time with abortion was illegal and how they actually turned this terrifying decision women face into a positive experience. The Story of Jane is one of the most inspiring books I've read. It's women's history and cultural history. It shows what women went through at the hands of butchers who sometimes demanded sex along with payment from frightened, desperate women and what they experienced at the loving, safe, caring hands of Jane. And doctors withholding information, Godlike, righteous becoming demystified by the collective intelligence and fearlessness of Jane. And education, what the women learned as they came through the service, how they took responsibility for their own empowering decision, all thanks to Jane. And how the service affected members of Jane in their daily lives is something that every woman should experience. In today's cultural climate, frighteningly, when women's rights are being chipped away at in almost every state in this country, this book is more important than ever. If you want to see what it was like for women when they had no control over their own bodies, and what it may be like again, very soon, if we don't stand up for our rights and fight back, read this book. Let's do it for Jane. 6 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Amazing! By ganddw42 "The Story of Jane" by Laura Kaplan. An account of what it will be like if the pro life zealots ever manage to outlaw abortion again. No doubt, what is currently going on in states where the right wing has been almost legislated it out of existence by those determined to impose their religious beliefs upon the rest of us. That's all the belief 'Life begins at Conception' as well as the erroneous term 'baby's' comes from. You would have thought the Prohibition era where alcohol was banned by the same moralistic crowd would have taught these zealots something, but apparently it didn't. Where crime ran rampant in this country and was swimming in illegal alcohol. It did nothing to stop people from drinking. In most cases, it encouraged people to drink. Morality cannot be legislated into existence with useless laws. Laws that only aid crime to run rampant and wind up being paid for by the taxpayer who is left to foot the bill for moral ideologues ignorance. People will always take matters into their own hands and will do what is illegal if they want the service bad enough. Admittedly these ladies were a bit more sophisticated, audacious and ingenious than I always imagined the average abortionist being, but, I was raised in the 50's where sexual information was a dirty word. I got married not having a clue about sex. I always saw abortionist's in a different light, one that was propagated by moralist's bent on painting the worst picture imaginable. So reading this book was an eye opening experience. From all of my research into the subject, they were not the only ones indulging in illegal abortion. It was common for Doctor's at the time to do such things too. There was a whole network of doctor's across this country doing the exact same thing. Dr. Tiller discovered after his father died in an automobile accident that he had been doing the same thing since the early 40's. So no matter how many useless laws these people legislate, abortion will still be around. These ladies appeared to be more in the business on moral grounds than they did monetary reasons. Even though a lot of people see abortion as immoral. A lot of us see unwanted children who are abused as being a bigger immorality that is a result of no abortion. That doesn't include overpopulation, grinding poverty, starvation and homelessness only to name a few. So, I admire ladies like these, even though I don't think I could do it. I would definitely find myself tempted if it ever becomes illegal again. It's the best account I have read to date as what we know will happen if abortion becomes illegal. So if you are looking for a 'what if' books this is it. 10 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Important look at early feminist actions. By A Reader There was a lot I didn't know about the early years of the legalization of abortion, and this book really taught me a lot. I had no idea that there had been feminist collectives to do this kind of thing, or that much like with the current feminist movement, the women involved were from such diverse backgrounds. In this era of the erosion of the right to choice, this is an important book both to show us how it was and to help inspire a new wave of action.

An extraordinary history by one of its members, this is the first account of Jane's evolution, the conflicts within the group, and the impact its work had both on the women it helped and the members themselves. This book stands as a compelling testament to a woman's most essential freedom--control over her own body--and to the power of women helping women.

From Publishers Weekly From 1969 until January 1973, when the U.S. Supreme Court handed down its Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion, a pioneering group of Chicago feminists who called themselves "Jane" provided illegal access to abortions for thousands of women. Kaplan, who is now a lay midwife, joined Jane in 1971 as a counselor. Here she draws on her personal recollections and interviews with Jane members and clients and the doctors who performed the abortions to provide a well-written, detailed history of this radical group. Initially Jane was a referral agency only, but as demand grew, members became involved in counseling and attended clients' abortions, and some eventually trained to perform the abortions. Jane volunteers were convinced that women were entitled to control over their bodies, and they acted on their principles, despite the consequences. Several members were arrested in 1972, but the suit was dropped. Jane disbanded after abortion clinics became legal. A dramatic and important piece of women's

history. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal From 1969 until the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court ruling in 1973, a group of Chicago women formed a loose underground organization whose sole purpose was to aid women who needed abortions (then illegal, of course) in getting them as safely and inexpensively as possible. They called their referral service "Jane" and worked out a set of complicated procedures to keep both themselves and their clients out of jail. At first they handled referrals to willing doctors on a very limited basis--only three or four a week--but as word about Jane got around their business increased. Eventually the women were taught by an expert to do the abortions themselves, which enabled them to charge next to nothing to those in financial need. But the operations were not all they did; every one of the 11,000 women who came to Jane also received health education and counseling. As a study of this remarkable but little known phenomenon, this book will be of value to anyone interested in women's health, the women's movement, and women's reproductive health and rights, particularly now that those rights are coming under increasing attack. Audrey Eaglen, Cuyahoga Cty. P.L., Parma, Ohio Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Spot and Dick play no role in Kaplan's vivid, thoughtful "collective memoir" of the Chicago women who formed Jane (officially, the Abortion Counseling Service of Women's Liberation), which gave 11,000 women access to safe but illegal abortions between 1969 and the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision in January 1973. Herself a member of Jane, Kaplan describes stages in the service's brief life--from screening abortionists to referring clients to a particular practitioner to learning how to perform abortions themselves--and the issues of knowledge, power, responsibility, and respect, which had a key impact on interactions among participants as well as on Jane's relationships with clients, the medical establishment, and the criminal justice system. Because Jane kept limited records, Kaplan's reconstruction is based on interviews with some 40 percent of the 100 women who participated at one time or another; some Jane members are not prepared to be publicly identified, so Kaplan uses pseudonyms for all of them, including herself. This is lively, nuanced history that brings to life the hopes, terrors, and disappointments of a movement committed to giving women control over their own bodies. Mary Carroll