



The Immortals

Tori Eversmann

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Say the words “Army wife,” and what often comes to mind is the image of a teary-eyed woman running to hug her returning combat soldier-husband or a caricature based on a slickly produced reality TV show. *The Immortals* is different. This stunning first novel full of emotion addresses the truth of the female predicament — the unsung heroes who are left behind on the homefront of war. We experience the love and challenges between husband and wife, we feel the closeness of mother and daughter, and we bond with the most unlikely of women. When we first meet Calli Coleman, a classically trained musician from a well-connected Baltimore family, it is the summer of 2005 and the United States has been at war in Iraq for two years. She has been uprooted from the hometown she adores and abruptly lands in the role of Army wife in provincial Sackets Harbor, New York outside of Fort Drum. Naïve to all things military, Calli has no idea what’s in store for her when Luke’s infantry unit deploys to the Iraq War to an area CNN dubs “The Triangle of Death”. Left back in New York with their three-year-old daughter Audrey, black Labrador Satchmo, and a fat cat named Charlemagne, Calli has a steep learning curve as she tumbles into a complicated social hierarchy where she finds her well-heeled childhood does her more harm than good. Desperately missing her friends and family and amid the impertinent Army wives, unlikely friendships evolve with Josie, Rachel, and Daphne. Seemingly as different from one another as can be, and certainly unlike her dynamic, jet-setting best friend Eula, these women will nonetheless come together for courage, support, and to embark upon the deeply emotional roller coaster ride of being an Army wife.

With only letters and email as their communication, Calli knows very little about Luke’s mission in Iraq. Through their letters we get a beautiful picture of their love for each other and what it means to serve our Nation but Luke cannot share much about the confidential assignment. The news on the radio and television is never good. Calli dreads the phone ringing to tell her of more soldiers being blown up by IEDs or killed by gunfire and she fears “The Trifecta” - the casualty assistance officer, rear-detachment office, and chaplain – will be sitting in her driveway waiting to tell her the worst news she can imagine. In Luke’s absence, Calli, alone with her daughter, learns that if anything is worth fighting for, it’s the unpredictable new friendships that will sustain her through loneliness and the ever-present specter of widowhood. At the end Calli will find herself on an unexpected course full of epiphanies about herself and her marriage.

The Immortals is an emotional examination of marriage, friendship, war, and death. Tori Eversmann, through her distinctive voice that comes from her own time as an Army wife, has given us an unforgettable story.

The Immortals Details

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From Reader Review *The Immortals* for online ebook

Anita says

I really wanted to love this book. I don't get a lot of exposure to military personnel or their families, and there aren't a lot of books out there from the perspective of a modern "Army wife." (I know there is/was a TV show called *Army Wives*, though I haven't seen it.)

It is obvious that this is a very personal story for the author, though I imagine her actual experience was less dramatic. The main character Calli is from a Baltimore socialite family and marries a career Army man. He returns to active duty during the war in Iraq and is deployed from Fort Drum in northern New York.

Sadly, the writing just didn't bring the story to life as much as I would have liked. I felt invested in Calli's well-being early in the story, but no other character was drawn with much dimension (not even her husband). The premise had so much potential, but the structure just didn't work for me. Calli spends so much time waiting for her husband to return from his deployment. This is understandable, and probably speaks to others who experience the same thing. However, it doesn't make for gripping storytelling. It might have been better if the book had consisted entirely of letters (since the letters were the best part), or if the pacing had been faster.

I can imagine feeling out of my element if I had been thrown into a situation similar to Calli's. It's a heck of a lot easier to understand the need for military service in the abstract than it is to make a personal sacrifice (by way of serving or supporting family members who serve). So, while I wasn't impressed by Calli's attitude going in, I understood it. I thought the real meat of the story would be how Calli finds comfort in friendship with other wives. She does, but I never felt as though any of her friends (except perhaps her old friends) became part of the story. It ended up being more about how she found strength within herself.

Beth Black says

A beautifully written story and a glimpse into the difficult life of a military wife. The perfect blend of humor, angst, love and perseverance. A truly enjoyable read!!

Kayo says

This book gives you a peek into life as a military wife. Sweet and brave. Enjoyed the book!

Lschwagr says

Beautifully written glimpse into the life of Military spouses.

The Immortals opens the readers to the world that Military families live -- great sacrifices, great fear (and loss), and a tremendous community. Tori Eversmann writes beautifully and weaves a historical perspective

in as well. Truly enjoyed this first novel.

Carol says

A love story and insightful look into what the families of soldiers go through when they are deployed. Callie's life is turned upside down when she has to leave her hometown and friends and family when she has to move to New York for her husband's deployment. She doesn't know how she is going to cope in a new town raising their daughter Audrey by herself while her husband is gone. Callie becomes friends with Josie, Rachel and Daphne whose husbands are also deployed. Together they band together to support each other through the ups and downs of army life. Having a nephew in the army, I hope we never have to go through what Callie and her friends faced. A fast read that is sure to touch your heart.

Anam Cara says

I really didn't know how to put this on a bookshelf. I guess historical fiction fits best.

I looked forward to reading this book. It had been on my list for about a year. As an Army wife of 30+ years, I thought it would be very interesting to see a part of my "story" in print.

I am sorry I ever picked it up. The first chapters were encouraging. As Calli viewed Ft. Drum for the first time my heart longed to be back living on a military installation. Calli comes across as a spoiled, narcissistic brat. Still, there are military wives like that. It just didn't endear me to her, although the blurb on the back of the book promised that I would love her by the end.

WRONG again! Well, maybe it isn't Calli's fault. Perhaps it is the way Tori Eversmann writes. I will never know as I didn't get past page 44 (which really means about 41 pages as the format leaves two pages blank and 1 page with only 3 lines on it). I was first assaulted on page 25. In the next 19 pages, Calli uses the "I" word numerous times. 2 pages are nothing more than recounting graphic sex scenes. The book needs to come with an R rating on it! (Okay, I admit that I am prudish) As for the language, while I know there are women who use such language, I never ever came across a military wife who spoke like that routinely.

Eversmann states that Luke served in Panama in 1988 and later deployed there during Just Cause. He was a hero in a battle there (Rio Hato) where 23 men died in the battle with over 300 wounded. At Rio Hato the US only lost 4 soldiers killed (the PDF lost 34, so it's not a total), 44 Americans were injured or wounded. We captured 362 of the PDF while the rest fled. 23 is the number lost in ALL of Just Cause. Okay, it's a novel. I shouldn't be so picky about facts, right? (She doesn't mention the civilians killed that night - a military wife trying to get home with her husband shot just outside Allbrook AFB or the high school student Ricky Paul on his way home from a party).

She states that one of the characters had a "starter marriage" that last 2 years to a NASCAR driver. She uses the name of a real driver! Did he have a "starter" marriage before his present wife? I don't know, but shouldn't an author be very careful about how she uses the names of real, living people? The line between fact and fiction here is too fine a line.

Luke has been in the Army for almost 20 years. He knows that Calli is ignorant of military life, acronyms,

etc. Yet he doesn't one suggest that she take a course like Army Family Teambuilding that will give her the tools she needs to exist as an Army wife. Why wouldn't someone who wants to tell about Army life mention that foundational program which had been in place 10 years at the beginning of this book (I know because I helped pilot the program!)

Her time line seems a bit off. Luke was in Panama in 1988 after graduating from UVA. When you take into account basic training and AIT, not to mention Ranger School, he had to have graduated at the latest in 1987. That puts him at about 40 years old at the start of the book. We have no idea just how old Calli is, how long she piddled around after college until her mother told her, "Calliope, you have one year. You are too old to not know what you want." But at the beginning of the book when Luke is about 40, their daughter is 3 years old. Okay, so Luke married a younger woman - or women are often having first children in their late 30's now. But the whole dialogue makes her seem much younger. Maybe Calli is just amazingly immature. That might have made a better title "The Immature." Especially given that Luke has got to be close to the 20-year retirement mark. Calli should be looking at this move to Ft. Drum as not a forever thing, but just a couple years until he retires.

From the perspective of an Army wife, I see a fail here. I can't recommend this book to anyone. After careful consideration of the repulsive sections I did read, I did something I am loath to do. I put this book in my recycling where hopefully, it will eventually do some good for society and the world, something I can't imagine it doing in its present state.
