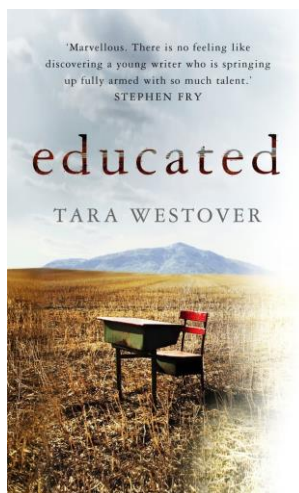


EDUCATED by Tara Westover

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This was a memoir written from personal journals and memories of a girl who grew up in a fundamentalist Mormon family in rural Idaho. She was not allowed to go to school, see a doctor and did not have a birth certificate until she was 9 years old. Her father is an uneducated bully and tyrant who uses the Mormon religion to justify his violence and control. It is a harrowing and often violent account of Tara's life, her family and the domination of a father whose extreme beliefs affect everyone. Tara had no formal education but spent time with her brother Tyler who left the family to pursue his education. Although self-taught, she came to realise that education was important to her and so began a long and difficult journey trying to find a way to manage her ambitions and remain in touch with her family. An impossible task!

She finally escapes into the world of proper education where her intelligence is recognised and she thrives, although the guilt she carries around from her strict upbringing and necessary estrangement from her family end up in her having a nervous breakdown. She never really throws off her early indoctrination and constantly wonders if she should return to her roots.

Some comments from the group:

"I was amazed at what Tara achieved by rising above a very unusual family"

"I found the book uplifting as it mirrored my own view on education but also very scary because it so clearly demonstrates a whole aspect of the States that can produce such fanaticism"

"I found this a compelling read about growing up in a fundamentalist and survivalist family in rural Idaho. I enjoyed it for its glimpse into a world far beyond my experience but also for its exploration of the universal themes of education, memory and the ties of home."

"This account of the authors early life is brilliantly told. Her struggle to find acceptance in such a dysfunctional family makes harrowing reading. Her determination to self-educate herself is mind blowing."

"I can only endorse all the positive reviews printed in the book covers - a book I will never forget."

"Educated" is a long saga involving a theme we have covered in other reads in the last two or three years: the impact of an extreme religious experience on a childhood. We have read other books in the last few years based around the Mormon religion (eg. Issy Bradley). But the interesting thing about "Educated" is the context of America in contrast to the UK, the

isolation of some communities, the passion and poverty and how cults survive.”

“Saved by her enlightened professor who persuaded her to write her PhD on the History of Mormonism in modern times.”

“To me, this book showed again the scary side of religion in this case, the Mormon faith. It was a difficult read, but worthwhile in the end”

“Despite the fact that I didn’t actually like this book, it cannot be denied that that Tara Westbrook should be admired for pulling herself away from her background of extreme religious beliefs, unrecognised mental health issues, violence and distorted love”

Christine Wright