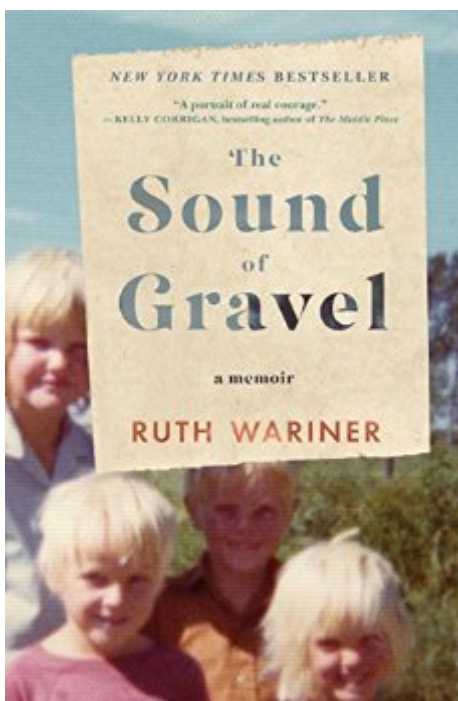


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# The Sound Of Gravel: A Memoir



## Synopsis

A riveting, deeply affecting true story of one girl's coming-of-age in a polygamist family. RUTH WARINER was the thirty-ninth of her father's forty-two children. Growing up on a farm in rural Mexico, where authorities turn a blind eye to the practices of her community, Ruth lives in a ramshackle house without indoor plumbing or electricity. At church, preachers teach that God will punish the wicked by destroying the world and that women can only ascend to Heaven by entering into polygamous marriages and giving birth to as many children as possible. After Ruth's father—the man who had been the founding prophet of the colony—is brutally murdered by his brother in a bid for church power, her mother remarries, becoming the second wife of another faithful congregant. In need of government assistance and supplemental income, Ruth and her siblings are carted back and forth between Mexico and the United States, where Ruth's mother collects welfare and her stepfather works a variety of odd jobs. Ruth comes to love the time she spends in the States, realizing that perhaps the community into which she was born is not the right one for her. As she begins to doubt her family's beliefs and question her mother's choices, she struggles to balance her fierce love for her siblings with her determination to forge a better life for herself. Recounted from the innocent and hopeful perspective of a child, *The Sound of Gravel* is the remarkable memoir of one girl's fight for peace and love. This is an intimate, gripping tale of triumph, courage, and resilience.

## Book Information

File Size: 1571 KB

Print Length: 352 pages

Publisher: Flatiron Books (January 5, 2016)

Publication Date: January 5, 2016

Sold by: Macmillan

Language: English

ASIN: B00ZOO3SMY

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #5,198 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #1 in Kindle

Store > Kindle eBooks > Religion & Spirituality > Christian Books & Bibles > Christian Denominations & Sects > Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints #1 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Christian Denominations & Sects > Mormonism #3 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Religion & Spirituality > Spirituality > Inspirational > Biography

## Customer Reviews

I hope that everyone that has experienced a troubled childhood will read this gripping and inspiring memoir. I heard about *The Sound of Gravel* first on Twitter, when I Tweeted the author, and then later that day found out she is my cousin. Seriously. I was given an Advance Reader Copy and was riveted until I read the last page. Reading Ruth's story was so much like reading about my own life growing up in a violent, polygamist cult. My review is so personal because, even though our lives were separated by the heinous crime my father, Ervil LeBaron had committed against her father, Joel, in 1972, we survived the same type of neglect and deprivation, among other horrors. Ruth makes the shows, documentaries, news reports and other media you see on television about the fundamentalist Mormons come to life, even as you are wishing nobody ever had to experience such realities. Thank you, Ruth, for your vulnerability, bravery and courage. I applaud you! This is a photo of Ruth and I when we met for the very first time on December 3, 2015.

Ruth's story had me spellbound from the first page as I followed her every move, totally captivated by this awe inspiring memoir. When I finished the book my heart yearned to know what happened next? It just ended too soon. My heart has been touched in a way a book or story seldom has. Her courage, strength and determination saved lives and it is my humble belief that her story will continue to impact and inspire others to do the right thing.

*The Sound of Gravel* is Ruth Wariner's story of growing up in a polygamous cult. Her father was killed when she was young, and her mother married another polygamous man (as the book says, she was his second second wife). Ruth tells a tale of hardship - they were impoverished, living in squalid conditions, and the children were frequently left to fend for themselves. But there were moments of beauty and joy as well, and it's a remarkable story of perseverance in the most difficult of circumstances. If I hadn't had kids who required my attention and a job that actually wanted me to work, I could have easily read this book in less than 24 hours. It's well told, engaging, and it pulled me right in. I was provided an advance reader copy for review, but all opinions are my own, and I can't wait to have my very own copy on my shelf.

(NOTE: Review based on Advance Reader's Copy) Ruth's memoir of growing up in a polygamist community and her eventual escape from it is one of those books you will not be able to put down until you finish. The truth is, as part of team who read ARC's I saw other readers talk about how they stayed up late to finish or read it all in one day and I thought it must be hyperbole. Then I got the book myself, started it, and promptly text my boss that I was going to need the next day off so I could finish it (she didn't agree). Ruth is a baby when her father is murdered and her mom remarries Lane, a man who neglects and abuses his families. Ruth's family lives in an unfinished home that she describes as smelling like mouse droppings, having no indoor bathroom, or electricity. In this home, her mother raises her children - there are eventually 10 children, three with special needs - with minimal support from her husband, welfare that she crosses the border from Mexico to the US to get, and her own willpower. Her mom is a true believer in the polygamist life and the rules/theology of their particular community. In this, she is both sympathetic and infuriating. I found myself wanting to shake her and "make" her protect her children and stand up for herself. Ruth's story is rough - there is neglect and abuse, loss and fear. She writes with great love and compassion about her siblings, mom, and grandparents. Even when her mother fails her repeatedly, Ruth acknowledges the failure without bitterness or trying to reason away her mom's action or inaction. She had done a wonderful job with her family's story; this book is well worth your time.

It will jolt you from any temptation to blame victims for their plight. *The Sound of Gravel* will send a chill down your spine and set a fire in your belly. Most of us have a tendency to wonder what victims do to evoke the injustice they experience. We do this because of a psychological desire to believe that life is fair. If bad things happen to good people, it must mean that we are all vulnerable. Bad things could happen to us, too. We'd rather believe that evil is preventable, so we search for reasons why victims are victims. Reading this memoir brought me out of my own temptation to blame the victims in this story by helping me see how difficult it was for this family to break from the beliefs and traditions of their church: physically, spiritually and psychologically. The story made me want to fight for justice rather than search for excuses. Full review here at <http://herviewfromhome.com/read-a-story-that-will-change-you-the-sound-of-gravel/>

I can't believe this is Ruth Wariner's first book. I just can't believe she's a first-time author. Her use of language to convey this gut-wrenchingly stark story is absolutely masterful. As a non-fiction lover I've read quite a few memoirs and I can think of none so captivating and utterly gripping as this one.

was given an advance reading copy. I tried not to have expectations one way or the other when I started the book. When I finished the book later that same day, what little expectations I had were far, far exceeded. I look forward to the release date in January so I can re-read. I hope she writes a sequel that picks up where she left off!

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