



BOOK REVIEW

Out of the West

"Educated" is a bestselling memoir about how a young woman raised by survivalists in the Rocky Mountains educated herself sufficiently to make it all the way to Harvard.

By **Wolf Schneider**

Who knows what transpires even today in some wide open spaces of the West? Where Tara Westover grew up on an isolated homestead in the Rocky Mountains, she took solace in reading between chores like salvaging iron. She tried not to feel left out when, on the highway below, the school bus rolled by without stopping. She was the daughter of Idaho survivalists who ran a junkyard and demanded she avoid schools and hospitals, with most of the household's rules established by her fiercely authoritative Mormon-preaching father. Nobody would have predicted she would escape to graduate from Brigham Young University, win a scholarship to Cambridge, and become a visiting fellow at Harvard.



Tara Westover, Photo by Paul Stuart

In her acclaimed literary memoir "Educated" (Random House Hardcover & eBook, 2018), which has been sold in over 20 countries and was the subject of a heated auction when its author was only 28 years old, Westover recounts her true story, though changing some names. Like the Jeanette Walls memoir "The Glass Castle," which was made into a feature film starring Naomi Watts, Woody Harrelson and Brie Larson, "Educated" is a tale of growing up in a hardscrabble, often abusive household. Also like "The Glass Castle," it's become a New York Times bestseller.

A shocking story of physical trauma, oppressive ideological mania, and patriarchal domination during Westover's childhood, "Educated" is a sparsely written and insightful view of her life in the modern West. It gains uplifting momentum halfway through when, as a teenager, the determined Westover gains acceptance into Brigham Young University against the odds. Her higher education becomes her way out of her father's dominance into a wider mainstream world of possibility. ■