



Escape

By Carolyn Jessop, Laura Palmer

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The dramatic first-person account of life inside an ultra-fundamentalist American religious sect, and one woman's courageous flight to freedom with her eight children.

When she was eighteen years old, Carolyn Jessop was coerced into an arranged marriage with a total stranger: a man thirty-two years her senior. Merrill Jessop already had three wives. But arranged plural marriages were an integral part of Carolyn's heritage: She was born into and raised in the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (FLDS), the radical offshoot of the Mormon Church that had settled in small communities along the Arizona-Utah border. Over the next fifteen years, Carolyn had eight children and withstood her husband's psychological abuse and the watchful eyes of his other wives who were locked in a constant battle for supremacy.

Carolyn's every move was dictated by her husband's whims. He decided where she lived and how her children would be treated. He controlled the money she earned as a school teacher. He chose when they had sex; Carolyn could only refuse—at her peril. For in the FLDS, a wife's compliance with her husband determined how much status both she and her children held in the family. Carolyn was miserable for years and wanted out, but she knew that if she tried to leave and got caught, her children would be taken away from her. No woman in the country had ever escaped from the FLDS and managed to get her children out, too. But in 2003, Carolyn chose freedom over fear and fled her home with her eight children. She had \$20 to her name.

Escape exposes a world tantamount to a prison camp, created by religious fanatics who, in the name of God, deprive their followers the right to make choices, force women to be totally subservient to men, and brainwash children in church-run schools. Against this background, Carolyn Jessop's flight takes on an extraordinary, inspiring power. Not only did she manage a daring escape from a brutal environment, she became the first woman ever granted full custody of her children in a contested suit involving the FLDS. And in 2006, her reports to the Utah attorney general on church abuses formed a crucial part of the case that led to the arrest of their notorious leader, Warren Jeffs.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Seventeen years after being forced into a polygamous marriage, Jessop escaped from the cultlike Fundamentalist Church of Latter Day Saints with her eight children. She recounts the horrid events that led her to break free from the oppressive world she knew and how she has managed to survive since escaping, despite threats and legal battles with her husband and the Church. Though sometimes her retelling overflows with colorful foreshadowing and commentary on how exceptional she is, the everyday details she reveals about this polygamous society are devastating and tragic. Frasier delivers Jessop's words in a soft voice that develops intriguingly from an innocent and naïve tone into a more assertive and self-confident one that mirrors Jessop's journey. She maintains the same rhythm, but through the inspired words of the text, she really embraces Jessop's persona. The bonus telephone interview with Jessop on the final disc suffers from poor sound quality and, unfortunately, doesn't add any new information. Simultaneous release with the Doubleday hardcover.

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Review

"*Escape* provides an astonishing look behind the tightly drawn curtains of the FLDS Church, one of the most secretive religious groups in the United States. The story Carolyn Jessop tells is so weird and shocking that one hesitates to believe a sect like this, with 10,000 polygamous followers, could really exist in 21st-century America. But Jessop's courageous, heart-wrenching account is absolutely factual. This riveting book reminds us that truth can indeed be much, much stranger than fiction."

—Jon Krakauer, Author of *Under the Banner of Heaven*, *Into Thin Air*, and *Into the Wild*

About the Author

CAROLYN JESSOP was born into the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, a group splintered from and renounced by the Mormon Church, and spent most of her life in Colorado City, Arizona, the main base of the FLDS. Since leaving the group in 2003, she has lived in West Jordan, Utah, with her eight children. LAURA PALMER is the author of *Shrapnel in the Heart* and collaborated on five other books, the most recent being *To Catch a Predator* with NBC's Chris Hansen. She lives in New York City.

Users Review

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