

[Educated](#) by Tara Westover

Reviewed by C.L., Class of 2026

Book - Memoir, Nonfiction

5 Star ★★★★★

What made you interested in reading/watching/playing this media?

How did you hear about it or come across it?

My mom recommended this book to me.

Setting:

*Educated* takes place mostly in rural Idaho, on a mountain called Bucks Peak, where Tara grows up in a strict Mormon family. It spans from the late 1980s to the early 2010s. As Tara grows up, the setting gets larger to include places such as BYU in Utah and Cambridge University in England.

Protagonists:

The main character is Tara. Something that stands out about her is her lack of formal education in childhood, but she taught herself enough to pass the ACT and go to college. Throughout the book she struggles with balancing loyalty to her family as well as her desire for independence and knowledge.

Plotline:

*Educated* is about Tara's journey, from being raised in an isolated, and oftentimes abusive household, to becoming an educated and independent individual.

Reflection on the novel's strong points and weak points:

One of the strongest aspects of the book is Tara's storytelling. Her narration is honest and emotionally powerful. The contrast between her early life and then her later experiences is striking and keeps the reader engaged. Additionally, the characters, especially her father and brother, are vividly portrayed and very complex.

One weak point of the book is that since it's a memoir, it is only told from Tara's perspective, which can limit how fully other characters are understood.

What are some themes that come across?

power of education, identity, impact of abuse

Do you feel that the cover art is true to what the media is about?

Yes, the cover art is symbolic of the memoir's message. The pencil shaped like a mountain shows Tara's journey from growing up on a mountain to then using education as her way to get out of that isolated world.

Did you enjoy it? Would you recommend it?

Yes, it was a very powerful read. What makes it stand out is Tara's growth from having no formal education to studying at places such as Cambridge which is very inspiring. I would recommend this to anyone who likes true stories about personal growth.

Readalikes/Watchalikes are:

[The Glass Castle](#) by Jeannette Walls

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