

## Volunteer Book Review

*Educated* by Tara Westover, as reviewed by Emma Calnan

The compelling memoir, *Educated*, by Tara Westover, provides valuable insight into the ideas of healthcare, modern education, and the federal government amongst a survivalist community in Idaho who have rejected technology and western society. Tara reflects on her life growing up in a sheltered community from the outside world, from using local herbs to treat illness, to her mother's practice of midwifery to avoid nearby hospitals and her father's extreme fear of the federal government.

Westover's childhood revolved around hiding from the outside world and preparing for Doomsday. After beginning to reject the lifestyle she had been living for years, Tara became curious about the idea of education and began teaching herself using books from a store in town. With dreams of finding something bigger in life, Tara journeyed into what is consider modern society by moving from Idaho to pursue a degree at Brigham Young University in Utah.

Though this book is about the transition into modern society, it does involve a plethora of familial issues such as physical and emotional abuse as well as gaslighting, a psychological tool of manipulation, which may be graphic to sensitive readers. I was mainly interested in the family's idea of medicine and how doctors and nurses are considered evil while herbalism and spiritual healing are the go-to amongst the survivalists. I would recommend this memoir to anyone interested in learning about extreme societies in the United States and the differences in views of medicine and education.

### About the Reviewer

Emma Calnan is an undergraduate student at UMass Amherst studying Public Health and Business. She has been drawn to public health since she was young, and is interested in the many critical components that create the overall idea of health and wellness. A topic that she has been particularly interested in is the lifestyle and health discrepancies of members of radical groups in the United States. The book *Educated* by Tara Westover was recommended to her by a family member for involving the idea of the rejection of modern healthcare and education.

*\* The opinions expressed in volunteer book reviews are that of the reviewer. The appearance of this review in the Public Health Museum newsletter in no way reflects an endorsement of the book nor the opinion.*

