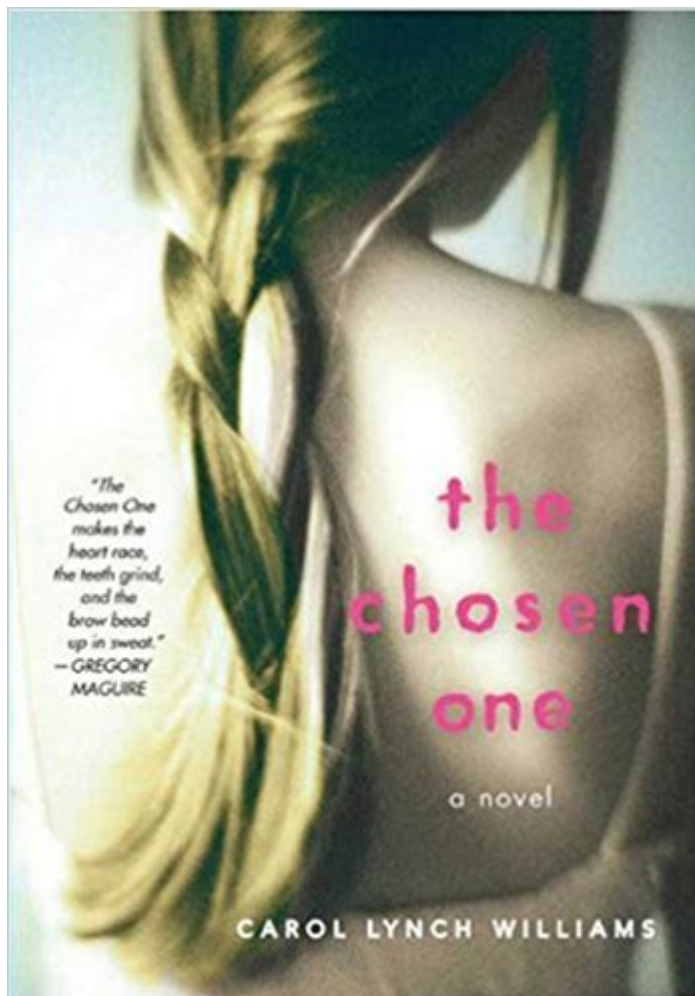


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The Chosen One



Synopsis

Thirteen-year-old Kyra has grown up in an isolated community without questioning the fact that her father has three wives and she has twenty brothers and sisters, with two more on the way. That is, without questioning them much---if you don't count her secret visits to the Mobile Library on Wheels to read forbidden books, or her meetings with Joshua, the boy she hopes to choose for herself instead of having a man chosen for her. But when the Prophet decrees that she must marry her sixty-year-old uncle---who already has six wives---Kyra must make a desperate choice in the face of violence and her own fears of losing her family forever. Carol Lynch Williams, a four-time winner of the Utah Original Writing Competition and the winner of Nebraska's Golden Sower Award and the PEN/Phyllis Naylor Working Writer Fellowship, grew up in Florida but now lives in Utah with her husband and seven children. She has an MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults, and helped develop the conference on Writing and Illustrating for Young Readers at Brigham Young University. An American Library Association Best Book for Young Adults A YALSA Quick Pick for Reluctant Young Adult Readers Recommended by The New England Children's Booksellers Association

Thirteen year-old Kyra has grown up in an isolated polygamous community without questioning her father's three wives and her twenty brothers and sisters. But she has started to wonder if her life could be different. Determined to follow her heart, Kyra secretly visits the Mobile Library on Wheels to read forbidden books. At night, she meets with a boy, one she hopes to choose for herself instead of having a man chosen for her. But the Prophet decrees that Kyra must marry her own uncle, a 60-year-old man who already has six wives. Though she faces danger and is afraid she will lose her family, Kyra must make a desperate choice before her future is decided by the sect.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Grade 7 Up
In this thriller, 13-year-old Kyra lives in an isolated polygamist cult. Life in the compound is as dry as the surrounding desert, more confining than the chain-link fence on its perimeter. But Kyra finds small freedoms despite the tightly controlled communal environment and is able to slip outside to wander the desert. There she chances upon a friendly book-mobile driver who opens the world of children's literature to her. Kyra even begins a flirtation with her classmate, Joshua, a dangerous sin for which they will both pay dearly. The brutal leader, Prophet Childs, has plans for Kyra and will brook no disobedience. He assigns her to be the seventh wife of her own 60-year-old uncle. Repelled, she resists. She and Joshua are badly beaten and she is told that other young people have been killed for taking a similarly defiant stand. Kyra's loving father is powerless to help her and counsels her to accept her fate, but she cannot. The story ends in a high-speed chase with the Prophet's goons gunning for her as she improbably races toward freedom in the blood-spattered book mobile. Has the friendly driver been killed on her account? Is anyone looking for him? What retribution will be taken on her family and what kind of a life lies ahead for her? These unsettling questions are not addressed, but these omissions do not diminish the relief of her successful escape. For a more layered examination of the internal as well as external struggles of a young teen coming of age in a polygamist community, see Shelley Hrdlitschka's *Sister Wife* (Orca, 2008).
Carolyn Lehman, Humboldt State University, Arcata, CA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Taking a story "ripped from the headlines," Williams looks inside a polygamist cult and the dangers it poses for one girl. Kyra and her father, three mothers, and 20 siblings live in an isolated community under the thumb of a prophet, who controls every aspect of his apostles' lives. The most shocking intrusion of all comes when the prophet decrees that Kyra is to become the wife of her 60-year-old uncle. A secret patron of a local mobile library, Kyra knows there's a world away from the compound she might escape to, but first she pins her hopes on her father's ability to change the prophet's mind. Instead, her family is threatened, and the stakes for her refusal to marry

are raised. The clandestine relationship Kyra is having with one of the compound's teenage boys is a romance more convenient than convincing (everyone is carefully watched except this duo, it seems). Contrivances notwithstanding, this is a heart pounder, and readers will be held, especially as the danger escalates. Williams' portrayals of the family are sharp, but what's most interesting about this book is how the yearnings and fears of a character so far from what most YAs know will still seem familiar and close. Grades 7-10. --Ilene Cooper

I attended a conference where Carol Lynch Williams was the speaker. Her manner of presentation intrigued me. Wish I could be one of her students. She repeatedly mentioned *The Chosen One*, so I came home and put it on my Kindle. I took it with me on a Disney Cruise and found myself planning time to read it. Finished it. Loved it. Williams's writing style pulled me in at page one and hooked me. The messages are still bouncing around in my head. At the conference, she mentioned that she'd just been notified that one of her books was going to be made into a movie, although she didn't say which one. I'm wondering if *The Chosen One* is the "chosen one."

If you're looking for a gripping, keeps-you-on-your-toes book, *The Chosen Ones* by Carol Williams won't disappoint. This is the story of Kyra, a 13-year-old girl living in a polygamist village with her dedicated father, three mothers, and twenty siblings. Life is different there: young girls are often married off to much older men (sometimes the apostles) who may share familial ties with their brides-to-be. When Kyra is chosen to marry her aged uncle and become his seventh bride, she is mortified. Not only does she find the idea repulsive, but she is in love with a boy her age, Joshua. Her struggles between her inner desires and her confining world are the main plot of the story, causing her to choose between her family and her overall happiness. Williams' style of short, choppy sentences are surprisingly poignant. Her descriptions are vivid. While the story itself may be unrealistically dramatic at times, it serves to pull the reader in and make them wonder what will happen next. Thankfully, Kyra is a believable character that the reader can relate with: her deep love for her family and her confusion about which path to take is realistically portrayed throughout the book. She does not want to leave her family, but she feels that it will be necessary and is willing to take the proverbial step into the dark despite the opposition that threatens to stop her progress. It is a great afternoon read.

Haunting. There is no other word I can think of to describe this book. Williams writes this world so well, that I had goosebumps throughout most of the novel. She wrote Kyra's story so well and with such beautiful prose, it was able to take this book to a much more interesting place than I thought it would go. Kyra's love for her father, her mothers, her sisters and brothers is so apparent, it hurt me to read about the world they lived in. I applaud Williams for writing this story the way she did. Even though the world Kyra lived in was horrible, I never questioned her desire to stay with her family. It was clear that she detested her world, but even through that, she loved her family and it was incredibly touching to see how much her need to leave hurt her when it came to her family. I also loved the dynamic Williams created between The Chosen One's culture and Kyra's family. Even though her father has 3 wives and many kids, I couldn't help but admire the love they had for one another. Kyra's father was a much better character than I thought he would be at the beginning of the book. Comparing that to the rest of the compound, where children are killed for being "defective," where young girls are forced into marriage with much older men, and where near torture is used as a simple form of discipline. The two worlds almost seem to oppose each other in ways, and yet they are so intertwined you can't forget it. Finding an emotion tie to this book was easy and getting sucked in will happen. But this book isn't for everyone. It's a very tough story to read and it will make you angry, sad and everything in between. But it will also show you the power of human spirit and what it can overcome. If you can look past the religious context and embrace the story as a show of human strength, you will be moved by this book, just like I was.

There are parts of this book that are absolutely riveting. But the story ends much too abruptly. It feels like the author resolved the conflict and felt that was enough to do to end the book. But we are left with way, way too many unanswered questions about Kyra, Joshua, her family, Prophet Childs, and the entire cult. I'm not convinced the author even is sure what happens to all of them beyond the pages of the book, the ending feels that abrupt. If this is supposed to be the start of a series, I couldn't find anything to indicate that, and even if it is, the ending feels too final to have a sequel, so in my opinion, the ending is too incomplete for the end of a stand-alone book and too complete for the start of a series. If the author was afraid to make the book longer for fear of scaring off readers, she is sadly mistaken. Just look at the time kids will invest in a book or a series: Harry Potter, Twilight, The Hunger Games. Carol Lynch Williams missed a golden opportunity to draw readers, especially teens, into a riveting story and allow them to look into the workings of a cult at the same time. A good 100 pages more is needed to make this book complete.

The Chosen One takes you into the life of 13 year old Kyra who's been raised in a religious cult. She longs to know more about the world beyond the compound's boundaries and dares to challenge her upcoming marriage to an uncle three times her age. It's a world of mind control and male dominance full of polygamy, child abuse, and cast levels. Kyra must decide between the family she loves and the future she dreads. Strong subject matter that may have to be interpreted for young teens.

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