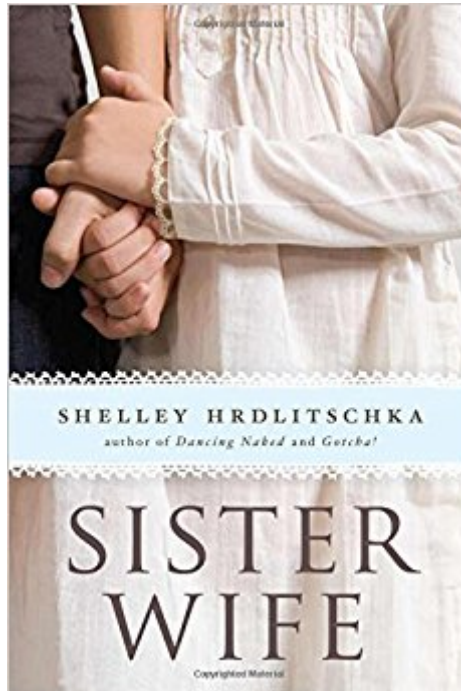




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# Sister Wife



## Synopsis

In the isolated rural community of Unity, the people of The Movement live a simple life guided by a set of religious principles and laws that are unique to them. Polygamy is the norm, strict obedience is expected and it is customary for young girls to be assigned to much older husbands. Celeste was born and raised in Unity, yet she struggles to fit in. Perhaps it's because of Tavana, the girl who has come to live with them and entertains Celeste with forbidden stories, or Jon, the young man she has clandestine meetings with, or maybe it's the influence of Craig, the outsider she meets on the beach. Whatever it is, she struggles to accept her ordained life. At fifteen she is repulsed at the thought of being assigned to an older man and becoming a sister wife, and she knows for certain she is not cut out to raise children. She wants something more for herself, yet feels powerless to change her destiny because rebelling would bring shame upon her family. Celeste watches as Tavana leaves Unity, followed by Jon, and finally Craig, the boy who has taught her to think "outside the box." Although she is assigned to a caring man, his sixth wife, she is desperately unhappy. How will Celeste find her way out of Unity? Torn from the headlines and inspired by current events, *Sister Wife* is a compelling portrait of a community where the laws of the outside world are ignored and where individuality is punished.

## Book Information

Paperback: 280 pages

Publisher: Orca Book Publishers (November 1, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1551439271

ISBN-13: 978-1551439273

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.5 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 26 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #424,469 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #20 in [Books > Teens >](#)

[Literature & Fiction > Religious > Christian > Social Issues](#) #220 in [Books > Teens > Literature](#)

[& Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Values & Virtues](#) #277 in [Books > Teens > Literature &](#)

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## Customer Reviews

Celeste lives in Unity, a community centered around the strict religious ways of the Movement, and one of their chief tenets is polygamy. Celeste's impending fifteenth birthday means she

will soon be assigned a husband, though secretly she harbors doubts. Her "impure thoughts" – simple and recognizable – teen lust – are further stoked by her true-believer sister, Nanette, and Tavana, a former teen prostitute taken in by the Movement. The story shuttles between the first-person accounts of the three protagonists, and although their voices are sometimes too similar, their accounts of subservient life are fascinating. When Tavana is kicked out of Unity, the difficulties of adjusting to civilian life are clearly illustrated. Although Hrdlitschka is careful not to condemn, her details are damning – Celeste's mother, one of her father's five wives, is dying because her womb can't handle her seventh straight baby, yet community doctrine prevents a doctor's interference. Such specifics make this an infuriating book about faith – which is entirely appropriate. Grades 9-12. --Daniel Kraus

"Very well-written and filled with realistic and honest characters, *Sister Wife* is not to be missed...definitely in my top 5 books read this year." (Amanda Snow A Patchwork of Books Blog 2008-10-08)"[Shelley Hrdlitschka] has done a fabulous job of creating this other world for us...Compelling storytelling about characters you really come to care about." (CBC Radio One - All Points West 2008-10-16)"Hrdlitschka handles the sensitive areas of sex and abuse skillfully, keeping the emphasis on a young woman's attempts at understanding herself and coping with difficulties rather than the actual acts. Highly recommended." (CM Magazine 2008-11-21)"This compelling story combines authentic characters to pique the interest of a wide array of teens and get them talking about faith and free will." (VOYA 2008-12-01)"I really enjoyed this book and the more I thought about it, the more I liked it...This is one that will appeal to teens and adults alike." (Abby Johnson Barrington Area Library, IL 2008-11-25)"Although Hrdlitschka is careful not to condemn, her details are damning...Such specifics make this an infuriating book about faith - which is entirely appropriate." (Booklist 2008-11-01)"I appreciate the author's portrayal of this alternative religious life. She carefully considers the positive as well as the negative aspects of such a rigid community structure, and...avoids sentimental endings." (KLIATT 2008-11-01)"Hrdlitschka weaves this tale with her usual skill - with warmth and humour, and allows humanity to bloom in the most unexpected corners of the world she has built. It's an amazing read from an author who continues to surprise and entertain with every book she writes." (K.C. Dyer 2008-12-01)"*Sister Wife* is a great look at what keeps us loyal to our families, our faith, and our traditions and leads me to ask myself which character would I be if I was raised in such a community. Recommended." (Natasha Maw, Maw Books Blog 2009-01-06)"An excellent book, a fascinating book...packed with ethical implications." (Becky Laney, Becky's Book Reviews blog 2008-11-29)"Readers drawn by a topic

that's been newsworthy of late may come away with a broader understanding of the human possibilities within such communities." (The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books 2009-01-01)"[Hrdlitschka] challenges readers to examine their own ideas and beliefs about relationships, family and religion...Teen readers will thoroughly enjoy reading this novel!" (Resource Links 2008-12-01)"Having three different points of view was an excellent idea... Sister Wife is an interesting look at a polygamous community and how it affects the children within those religious sects." (TeensReadToo.com 2009-01-01)"A fascinating portrayal of life in a polygamist community. I couldn't put it down." (Fresno County Public Library 2009-01-10)"An out of the ordinary interpretation of cult life in a polygamist community. Recommended." (Tucson Unified School District 2009-01-01)"Hrdlitschka delivers a compelling teen novel, ripped from the headlines, yet thoughtful and peopled with strong characters." (Tri State Young Adult Book Review Committee 2009-01-01)"The characters, from the multilayered Celeste to the elders of the cult and the confused boys whom Celeste encounters, are all believable individuals engaged in their own struggles" –Â|This novel gives depth and nuance to an experience that is portrayed without subtlety in the popular press." (School Library Journal 2009-04-01)"Beautifully written. The characters of Celest, Tavana and Nanette are sensitively handled...A compelling read." (The Bookmark (BCTLA) 2009-02-01)"This book will lead to much discussion about the power of faith and how less conventional faiths are viewed in the larger community. Recommended." (Library Media Connection 2009-05-01)

I have gone through this phase of reading about polygamists, and I must say that this is mild compared to others I've read. Other reviews have said its sickening to hear about girls fantasizing about older men, but that's the life they live, and I applaud authors who aren't afraid to write about what is considered taboo.

good description of a polygamist cult and a young woman caught in the laws and rules, so that she is unable to marry the boy she loves but instead has to marry a man twice her age. Very enlightening Diane Noble has a series of two books on a similar subject which is very good if you are interested in this genre.

Shelley Hrdlitschka's Sister Wife is actually one story told from three points of view, and what a riveting read it is! Fifteen year old Celeste, raised in the fundamental polygamist society of Unity, knows her time to be married to a man chosen by the group's Prophet is rapidly approaching. It's

how she's been raised and all she's ever known, and her only way to achieve the highest celestial glory in heaven. So what's the problem? Her heart skips a beat whenever she sees Jon, another teen, though she knows she'll be forbidden to be with him. Added to that is her pregnant mother's scary health condition and the removal of a friend from the community by the Prophet, and Celeste finds herself questioning the teachings of her way of life. Moving deftly between the points of view of Celeste, Tavana (a runaway adopted into Unity and subsequently forced to leave), and Nanette, Celeste's younger sister, Sister Wife showcases the angst and frustration of feeling an outcast in what should be a safe haven. Celeste is sure that she doesn't want to become a plural wife to a much older man, but her headstrong disobedience can only result in that happening all the sooner. Nanette cannot understand Celeste's reluctance to accept the lifestyle; Tavana finds herself needing to start over in a safe house after she is dismissed. All three young women face crises of faith, perseverance, and conscience as they determine what's really important in life. I was riveted from the first pages of Sister Wife, and I loved how the author moved among the personalities, weaving a tale that was heart wrenching. This book doesn't make it easy to know what is right and wrong because as the young women come to understand, those concepts can vary from person to person. If the ending did seem a bit rushed, I can forgive it because I was totally engrossed by the emotions invoked and the ideas created in this fascinating tale. Highly recommended to readers of all ages.

The ending seem a bit rushed but overall was good

When i saw this book i knew i had to read it, had to know. And now i know. This book depicts the struggle of a girl and her faith, as she desperately wants to know what the world has to offer her outside her religious community. A struggle that drives her to break all the rules and push all the boundaries she's ever known. Absolutely stunning is all i can say.

Blah.

a good read

good book

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