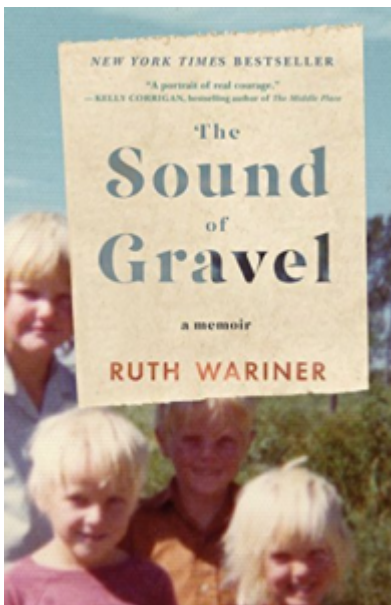


'Sound of Gravel' painful to read

By Kathryn Reed

My book club rates what we read based on if we liked it, would we recommend it and literary merit. The scale is 0-10, with 10 being the highest. "The Sound of Gravel" received several zeros, a few eights and a lot in between.

My scores for this memoir by Ruth Wariner (2015, Flatiron Books) – all zeros. I would have stopped reading it if I didn't "have to" read it.



The story is written from Wariner's point-of-view when she was a child. She grew up mostly in Mexico in a Mormon polygamist compound. Most of us agreed it was like a cult. The poverty, the abuse, the way women are second class citizens at best are etched throughout the book.

This is Wariner's life. She had to grow up fast because she was like a second mother to her siblings. Her education was cut short because it was presumed her future was to wed early and be a baby producer; and she would not have been expected to contribute to society in any other way.

There is so much repetition in the book I was wondering where the editor was.

She did a good job with foreshadowing, and the descriptions

made it easy to visualize the horrendous conditions.

While some of my friends said they learned things from this book, not many would actually recommend it.

Spoiler alert: The book that would have been more interesting to read would have been how Wariner got her life together, the turmoil of those years, how it was to literally raise her siblings, the guilt she must have had over her mother's death – because if she had not died, Wariner may have never left the compound. It could have been told as a flashback so her voice as a child stayed intact.