



# STOLEN INNOCENCE

My Story of Growing Up  
in a Polygamous Sect,  
Becoming a Teenage Bride,  
and Breaking Free of  
Warren Jeffs

**Elissa Wall** with Lisa Pulitzer

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Bride, and Breaking Free of Warren Jeffs

**Elissa Wall**

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 HarperCollins e-books

To Sherrie and Ally; you remind me every day of what I'm fighting for.

And to the memory of Daleen Bateman Barlow, my mother-in-law, who was one of the first to find the courage to stand up for herself and her children.

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This is my story. The events described are based upon my recollections and are true. I have changed the names of some individuals to protect their privacy.

## PROLOGUE:

### A TEENAGE BRIDE

I clutched the delicate silk nightgown and embroidered robe of my bridal gown as I hurried to the bathroom. Though it was just a few feet from my bedroom, the bathroom seemed like a sanctuary, the one place I could be alone. With a turn of the lock, I slid to my knees and leaned my back against the door—for the moment I was safe. Over the past several days, I'd cried myself out of tears, and now I felt strangely numb, unable to cope with what was going on.

When I'd awoken that morning, I was a fourteen-year-old girl hoping for the miracle of divine intervention; my prayers, however, had gone unanswered. With no other choice, I'd submitted to the will of our prophet and had married my nineteen-year-old first cousin. As a member of the Fundamentalist Church of Latter Day Saints (FLDS), I'd been raised to believe that marriages were arranged through a revelation from God, and that these revelations were delivered through our prophet, who was the Lord's mouthpiece on earth. As a faithful follower, I'd embraced this principle and believed in it wholeheartedly, never imagining that at fourteen, a revelation would be made about me.

Ever since that revelation, I'd spent every last ounce of energy begging the prophet and his counsels to grant me more time or select a different man for me to marry. Not only was my new husband my first cousin, we had never gotten along, and I was having trouble believing that God would want me to marry someone I loathed. But my repeated pleas and desperate attempts to stop the marriage had failed, and that morning, I'd been driven across the Utah border to