



## *The Chosen One* by Carol Lynch Williams

**Subjects:** Cults—Fiction; Polygamy—Fiction; Family life—Fiction; Coming of age—Fiction

**Awards:** Best Books for Young Adults

**Book Lists:** North America

**Props:** Shawl



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*(Put on shawl)* The night that changed everything started with just me and little Mariah out in the sand and rock and brush that surrounded the Compound. Little Mariah, just eight months old and sweet as new butter. I remember looking at her and saying, “If I was going to kill the prophet, I’d do it in Africa. I’d drag his body right next to a termite nest. Not a thing would be left of him in three hours. All of him would be gone. No evidence left.” Mariah’s light green eyes twinkled as she smiled, like she knew what I meant and agreed. I sighed and wondered again why I was the only Chosen One who didn’t honor the Prophet, who wished him dead and his body picked away by termites.

But then my thoughts were interrupted by Mother Claire calling me. Mother Claire is Mariah’s mother, my father’s first wife. My true mother, Mother Sarah, was sick in bed with pregnancy. Mother Claire wanted me to come help get ready for our special guest, the Prophet. I hugged Mariah and hurried to the trailer. Inside were my brothers and sisters, father’s children. Father had three wives and 20 children with two more on the way. Once inside, we waited. We sat in our Sunday best, boys in ties, some of them crooked. Girls in our below-the-knee dresses and our hair in tight braids. We waited for God’s Anointed.

I looked at my family, they were so pure, so deserving of the Prophets praise. But me? Me! I’ve planned to kill someone. And not just someone, but the Prophet—God’s chosen. That’s when I was struck to the center with worry. I squeezed my eyes shut certain that I had doomed my family. That my sins had somehow been discovered and the Prophet was coming to punish us. It felt like someone had dumped ice all over me. Without thinking, I stood. I had to get out of the trailer. But Mother Victoria, all full of gasps, said, “He notices

everything. He sees everything. He’d know if you weren’t with us.” I sat. But the worry did not leave me. Squished between my sisters I tried not to think of my sins but I knew they were there: the plan to kill the Prophet, books and the boy, Joshua.

Prophet Childs would never let one of us check out books from a public library. He said, “We have our beliefs and no one is going to take that away by brain-washing us with Satan’s teachings.” I didn’t mean to disobey. Finding the County Library on Wheels was an accident. But I soon began checking out books and hiding them high in my special tree in the back. And then there was Joshua, blue-eyed Joshua Johnson. I’m almost fourteen and he’s sixteen, we weren’t supposed to see each other alone, but we did.

On that night that changed everything the Prophet did come for a visit. He came to give us the joyous news. Prophet Childs had received a bright revelation. While in prayer, he had seen me and Brother Hyrum, my sixty year old uncle, wearing ceremonial dress. Just like that the decision had been made. I would marry my father’s brother; in four Sundays I would be his seventh wife in the Lord.

I remember standing, suddenly sick to my stomach and moving towards the door. “I can’t do this.” I said. Brother Hyrum reached for me as I tried to leave, he grabbed the sleeve of my dress, but I slapped his hand away and ran out into the darkness. Four Sundays, that’s all the time I had.

Will Kyra marry her uncle? Live as a Chosen One, blessed and anointed? *(Hold up book)* Read *The Chosen One* by Carol Lynch Williams.