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Book Catalog This is a true story. However, to protect the privacy of some people I have known, I have changed their names, likenesses, and other identifying references. Only historical figures, family members, and a few on-the-record sources are still identifiable: myself, my relatives, Ernest Wilkinson, Ross Peterson, Joe Walker, and Karen Case. The names of those mentioned in the Introduction of the book and General Authorities of the Mormon Church who are quoted or referred to throughout the book are also real, but I have disguised the local bishops and others with whom I counseled directly. Everyone named in the new material written for the paperback version, the "Afterword," is identified by his or her real name.

Acknowledgments

A remarkable thing about this book is the way my mother and father have behaved about it. Although the Mormon Church is the center of their lives, although they have always known that my story about their church wouldn't please them, they have supported my telling it from the beginning. I am grateful to them for putting our relationship ahead of their beliefs.

I am also grateful to Michael Lacey, my friend and the executive editor of New Times, for never asking whether I was pulled in different directions by my job and the need to finish the manuscript. (I was.) He has championed this project in a way that editors used to, when writing in America still had status.

My agents, Gail Hochman and Marianne Merola, and their assistant, Heather Cristol, have loved this book and worked for it as though they'd written it. They have bucked me up and put me up.

The editing of Secret Ceremonies has been painful for nearly everyone involved; just as attachments were formed, the editors have moved on. Despite the unpredictable nature of New York publishing houses, however, I've been blessed with precisely the right overseer during crucial stages. Jim Landis believed in this project and bought it; Jane Meara provided insights for the first half of the manuscript, and her insights truly transformed the second; Bob Shuman took over during a difficult period and saw the manuscript through production with loving care. It is Elisa Petrini, however, whose presence is on every page. She understood where I was going even when I didn't, and she led me there with clearheaded comments and editing that have left me a better writer. She was my partner in this.

Very luckily, I belong to a community of writers who have provided unstinting help and encouragement whenever I've needed it. In particular, Ron Carlson critiqued much of the manuscript at a point where I'd bogged down, and he got me rolling again. Dewey Webb, the world's best headline writer, came up with the title. And Terry Greene and Kathleen Stanton, my partners in crime at the office, have endlessly sympathized with my discouragements and celebrated my breakthroughs.

I have also received inestimable help from a group of forthcoming Mormons who, although I was usually a stranger, agreed to tell me their private stories. Without their generosity and honesty, their willingness to poke around in often painful old memories, I'd have possessed no context for my own story as I unraveled it. Only a handful of them weren't hesitant for their names to appear in this book. My thanks to Phyllis Barber, Karen Case, Ellen Fagg, Carl Hunsaker, Gayle Kapaloski, Marian Merrill, Ross Peterson, Linda Sillitoe, and Paul Swenson. If we talked at length and your name

isn't here, and you wouldn't have minded, it's only because I erred on the side of caution on your behalf.

Also in this group was Clare Goldeberry, to whom I owe special thanks. Not only were her memories of the temple ceremony more detailed than my own, but she was actually willing to share them. (As a rule, even the questioning and lapsed Mormons went mum when asked to describe the intricate ritual that's considered top secret.) The account contained here is as accurate as she and I, and the limited writings available, could make it.

I am also very grateful to Lavina Fielding Anderson for sharing with me her excellent paper on the history of dissidents and the church.

This brings me to my friends, who haven't let me quit when I've faltered and who do, in general, make my life worth living. Jane Aiken read early versions; Elaine Carlson couldn't hear enough; John Clark shared his memories; Heidi Ewart took up the slack so I could write; Thomas Hagerty sat through the entire last chapter as I read aloud; Scott Jacobson critiqued my proposal; Nancy Kitchell was always calling with ideas for the next book; Helen Sandalls and John Leshy loaned me the cabin when I needed to write in peace; Michael Schroeder was interested every day, and kept the dog; Lisa Smith has listened to me stutter and complain; Kevin Sullivan has tended the house when I'm away; and John Tandy painstakingly packed the car on a day when I was headed for the woods but neither of us believed I was well enough to write once I'd arrived. The other Elaine, who has known me during both my lives, has done research and provided housing. None of these services is the thing for which I thank them most, however: I thank them for everything they've taught me about commitment, and for loving me, so that my life is more solid than during the years this book describes.

[[Parent](#)]

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