

Books by the Stack



Ruined by Ruth Everhart

One brisk November evening during her senior year at Calvin College, two armed intruders broke into the house Ruth Everhart shared with her roommates, held all five girls hostage, and took turns raping them at gunpoint. Reeling with fear, insecurity, and guilt, Ruth believed she was ruined, both physically and in the eyes of God.

Why you'll like it: *Memoir, candid, Christian, compelling.*

About the Author: Ruth Everhart is a Presbyterian pastor and the award-winning author of two spiritual memoirs. She lives in the Washington DC area with her husband.

Questions for discussion

1. The author begins her memoir with the line, "It happened on a Sunday night, even though I'd been a good girl and gone to church that morning." In your opinion, what behaviors constitute being a "good girl," and what do you think of that label? To what extent do you consider yourself to be a "good girl"? What phrase might be the male equivalent of "good girl"? Do you think God treats people differently according to how "good" they are?
2. The author references Psalm 23 throughout the book (pages 9, 16, 28, 52, 76, 96, 120, 139 and 246). How have these references affected your understanding of "the valley of the shadow of death"? What valleys of the shadow have you walked through, and how did you experience God's absence or presence during those times?
3. The author had a sheltered upbringing. During college she endured a traumatic experience that was followed by a long period of distress. She ultimately rebuilt her life and found new faith. Which elements of this story did you identify with, and which did you not?
4. Following the author's experience of sexual violence, how did the Christian subculture respond or fail to respond? How did this response differ from how you imagine Jesus would have responded or from how Jesus might expect His followers to respond? Think of someone you know who has experienced sexual violence. How has your reading of this book caused you to rethink how you might respond to that person?
5. The title of the book, *Ruined*, is an important word to the author. What caused Ruth to feel ruined (e.g., the reactions of others, the faith tradition, or her own feelings of guilt)? Have you experienced similar feelings? What causes those feelings for you?
6. One of the biggest issues of faith that people wrestle with is the tension between human free will and God's sovereign will. Did this book change your understanding of this tension? If so, how?

7. One of the author's rapists went to trial and was convicted. Testifying in a court of law was validating for her personally. If you have been (or if you eventually found yourself) the victim of a crime, would it be important to you to pursue justice in court? If a criminal justice proceeding was not possible, are there other ways of being seen and heard that could validate your experience?

(Questions provided by publisher)



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