



Fourteen: A Daughter's Memoir of Adventure, Sailing, and Survival

Leslie Johansen Nack

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Winner of three independent book awards: NIEA, Readers' Favorites and Beverly Hills Book Awards

After her mother and father divorce at age seven, Leslie quickly learns the hard lessons of being Dad's favorite. The abuse begins at age nine and doesn't end until she begins to fight back, finally, at age fourteen.

Her father, a larger-than-life Norwegian, assumed full custody of Leslie and her two sisters and moved the family from their 63-acre rustic ranch in Northern California to a 45-foot sailboat in Southern California. The family spent two years living aboard their boat preparing for the trip of their father's dreams: a trip around the world. On February 5, 1975, the family set sail for French Polynesia.

Intense and inspiring, *Fourteen* is a coming-of-age adventure story about a young girl who comes into her own power, fights back against abuse, becomes an accomplished sailor, and falls in love with the ocean and the natural world. The outer voyage is a mirror of her inner journey, and her goal is to find the strength to endure in a dangerous world, and within a difficult family.

Fourteen: A Daughter's Memoir of Adventure, Sailing, and Survival Details

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From Reader Review Fourteen: A Daughter's Memoir of Adventure, Sailing, and Survival for online ebook

Pat Ellis says

This is a great 'coming of age', adventure and survival memoir and so well written. The author had me turning the pages even though I didn't want the book to finish. The 'sailing' alone would have had me captivated..... Leslie's father takes his 3 daughters on a 45' boat journey across the ocean to Tahiti - can you even imagine that!! - The descriptions of this voyage are brilliant. There's an undercurrent though of the non-water type which Leslie is frightened of and eventually tries to stand-up-to... Mrs Johansen - Leslie's mother isn't great at sea and so her daughters are to set-sail with their father alone. I am happy to recommend this memoir. Oh yes, there are photos too which I really enjoyed being included. I sincerely hope to read more by this author. Please don't feel you need to be interested in boats/sailing/the ocean to enjoy this book - there's more to this memoir than first meets the eye.

Terri Brewer says

I enjoyed this book because of its authenticity, honesty and attention to detail. The author took her time in laying the groundwork for the great journey she, her sisters and their father were embarking on, so that by the time they actually left for their trip, I was full of trepidation about how it would go. The book was so carefully written that I could feel in my middle-aged body, the roller coaster ride of churning emotions as the fourteen year-old protagonist used her wits and sheer strength of spirit to survive. Having sailed only a few times, I loved experiencing the ocean in all of its grandeur and terror through the pages. The book leaves the reader wondering if she would be so brave as these three young girls in the same situation. I've not read many memoirs but Fourteen was so compelling that I plan to delve into the memoir genre more now.

Judy says

Leslie Johansen Nack has written a book that is part sailing adventure, part coming-of-age story, and part memoir of surviving the kind of family we call "dysfunctional," a word which doesn't nearly capture the pain and confusion living in such a family causes. Her particular challenge: negotiating life with a father who is both hero and abuser, teacher and bully. But Leslie is more than a survivor: she is a brave and strong and spirited young girl you'll cheer for throughout this gripping memoir. Nack has rendered that life and those years in beautiful, sometimes heartbreak language and scenes so alive you'll feel as if you're living the experience right along with her.

Kayo says

While I enjoyed the book for the most part, a lot of it(obviously the fathers inappropriateness) was SO uncomfortable to read.

I was impressed with author's knowledge and skills on the boat at such a young age.

Michelle says

Fourteen is one of these books that leave you in need for more after the last page, a rare gift all readers crave but few writers deliver.

Fourteen is a fantastic coming of age adventure that engrosses the reader from page one right to the last one; a multiple layer tale that is as much about sailing the Pacific ocean as to how to survive dysfunctional parents & living at close quarters with an overbearing father and, it manages to ring authentic throughout!

Thank you Leslie (Johansen Nack) for a wonderful 2 weeks reading Fourteen (and, incidentally, thank you for the souvenirs you brought back of my own -European ;) father).

I am a difficult to please reader but I will definitely recommend Fourteen to anyone who'll listen.

What a great, great read!

Edit: 12 days since I turned the last page and I haven't been able to read anything else since, nothing seems as interesting - It was so easy to feel empathy for the young Leslie, that my mind keeps going back to her journey at the most unexpected moments.

Julie Haigh says

Loved it! Looking forward to reading more!

I loved this memoir about Leslie and her family and how they swapped the life living on a ranch to life aboard a 45ft sailboat. Starting the book it felt so relaxing and calming to read and it's a beautiful presentation. Mum couldn't adapt to life at sea-she suffered constant sea sickness. Leslie's parents divorced when she was seven years old. They had tried to get back together many times but finally she left for Canada. Leslie is thirteen near the start of the book. She's developing into a woman, growing up without mum. As I was reading it I was wondering what was the significance of the title, Fourteen? What would happen when she hit fourteen? I love intriguing titles like this. It certainly kept me reading. I love that there are photos in the book and it's fantastic that there are even more on her website. There are pics chapter by chapter so you can view these as you go along in the book or when you get to the end. I loved learning all those nautical terms, looking up more about them and Leslie explains what most of them are as she mentions them. I found it very interesting. So; they planned to take an around-the-world cruise, starting on 1st December. The year was 1974. What an unforgettable experience and so wonderful that Leslie Nack has written about it all to share it with us. I really enjoyed this, it's written in a nice, easy, conversational style. She just tells it like it was, there's no unnecessary flowery waffle. Idyllic scenes, a trip of a lifetime, yet there are undercurrents. I love that there are not just photos-lots of them-but there are also newspaper and magazine articles in the book which featured the family and their trip. Leslie's, in some ways, is a story you've heard in memoirs before: family dysfunction etc. but this is with a difference in that much of the events take place aboard their boat; a travel/sailing memoir combined. I loved all the amazing info and details about the places they were staying at and the people, the foods, their ways of doing things. I know nothing about sailing-but you certainly don't have to have any prior knowledge or experiences to enjoy this book. My only sailing trip ever and I was a bit queasy on it for a while so you can see I wouldn't have expected to be wowed so much by this book-but I LOVED it! So much to interest! I was trying to eke out the

end few chapters, I would be sorry to finish it! I was so pleased and pleasantly surprised to see there will be another book to follow-I will definitely be reading it!

Lene Fogelberg says

Riveting and heartfelt, *Fourteen* is a profoundly moving coming-of-age memoir that stays with the reader for a long time.

Laura Ender says

Let me start by saying this: The author's note says that Ms. Nack is currently working on the continuation of this story, and I can't wait to read it.

At the beginning of the book, I wouldn't have thought so. The book is written mostly in chronological order, and so we are not thrust immediately into any real action, but introduced slowly to our cast of characters and their situation. And it's an interesting situation, don't get me wrong--but it takes a while for the story to take off (not entirely surprising, since this is memoir and things rarely take off running in real life).

But keep reading.

Once you're immersed in Leslie Nack's teenage world, you will be absorbed. I devoured most of this book in a couple of days, eager to see what would happen next with our charming young heroine, her bombastic father, addict mother, and two sisters. The experience of these girls' youth, their ups and downs, the juxtaposition of an abusive household and truly invaluable life experiences--it absorbed me.

This is not one of those memoirs written by a writer who went on a personal quest, most likely outlining the book they'd write in their head along the way. It doesn't feel manipulated or navel-gazing, as so many memoirs do. It is straight-forward and, as far as I can tell, honest. It would have been quite a difficult story to write, and I admire the author for doing it.

Yodamom says

What a fabulous story of exploration, survival and coming of age.

The story attracted me from the first blurb I read on it. What I found between the pages was so much more. A 14 year old girl living on a boat for 2 years an ideal living in my opinion. I knew girls like this when I was young, I grew up just down the road from her. We are the same age, I sailed locally but wanted more. I wanted to be her, wanted to sail away with my dream family to a tropical island where everything was warm, beautiful and happy. I would have envied her for having it all. But, her exterior image was so far from her truth. Leslie, young, blond and pretty was living the nightmare of an overbearing abusive father and had fight for her life.

Leslie, the Californian golden child had a father a mother and two sisters. She was the middle child, of a Norwegian man who controlled and abused to the extreme. Her mother was unstable and distant. The marriage falling apart, the girls stuck in the middle. Her father sexually abusing her and forcing her to do

things that embarrassed her. When he sells everything and buys a boat to sail on she worries about who will buffer her father's attentions. Oh it is heart wrenching the torture he puts her through. She struggles with wanting her father's love and hating his "love". She trudges through her days trying to win her rights over her own body and her nights afraid.

Sailing can be a dangerous sport and when the sicknesses, storms and other dangers come they have to survive. Luckily for the girls their dad did teach them what they needed in sailing as they are forced to take control. The sailing traumas they overcame are amazing.

This memoir was so brutally honest and direct in her feelings. She never wavered from the horrible and beautiful events of her developing self. She built herself out of hard corals and strong currents. She never missed the beauty in her surroundings the moments of kindness. She is still somebody I would have liked to be like but for a different reason.

Carol Canterbury says

loved this book. Leslie writes wonderfully, even thru the horrible events in her life. The book is a great read, I read in a few days, you won't regret!!

Scott Hudson says

I read this 300+ page memoir in one sitting. The narrative is that compelling.

Rita Gardner says

Recipe: Mix three young girls and a mercurial and unpredictable father. Throw in a sailboat, a father's dream and the vast Pacific Ocean. Stir together and pray for the best. Leslie Johansen Nack's memoir is heart-rending as she and her sisters navigate through their father's storms in a journey to adulthood unlike any other. In addition to the perils at sea, Leslie must also be on constant guard against her father, a Svengali of a parent from whom she cannot escape. I found *Fourteen* difficult to put down. Nack's writing had me hanging on the rails of the sailboat with her as she plunges forward in this memorable coming-of-age saga.

Kathy Dobronyi says

Leslie Johansen Nack weaves the story of the ocean into her coming-of-age memoir where it is a mother to her.

"Fourteen" is a powerful story that places the reader square in her life. We feel the salty sea air and powerful waves aboard ship. We also feel the verbal and emotional manipulation of her domineering father. How difficult it must have been for Leslie, who never measured up to her father's expectations, to rise above his denigration in order to make solid life or death decisions. Thank you, Leslie, for sharing your well-crafted story.

J.P. Willson says

I do not recall what it was that prompted me to pick this book up yet I am glad I did. A very enjoyable story of the lives of three young girls and their rather formidable force of a father in his own Norwegian way....the words domineering and controlling come to mind. In many ways it reminded me of my own youth and father and his incessant need to always be in control and have the last word.

To virtually never show any emotion towards his daughters which he very apparently loved very much and wanted nothing but the best for them, yet when he did there seemed to be an ulterior motive? All in all a story of a wonderful way to grow up albeit not without it's difficulties. It would be of interest to hear of the outcomes of all their stories and how they live their lives today.

A very pleasant and uplifting read I would certainly recommend.

Eva Friedlander says

In Fourteen Leslie Nack shows she has a true talent, a nack, for making her reader want to keep turning the page. I stayed up all night reading her story. Such a harrowing tale of an unconventional family; life on a rickety boat with a father who is lovable one minute and abusive the next. I can't wait to read the prequel to learn what happened before she was fourteen and the sequel to find out what happened next. Looking forward to the movie too!
