



Broken Ground: A Novel

Karen Halvorsen Schreck

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When a young oil rig widow escapes her grief and the Texas Dust Bowl, she discovers a surprising future—and new passion—awaiting her in California in this lyrically written romance by the author of *Sing for Me*.

Newly married to her childhood sweetheart, twenty-one-year-old Ruth Warren is settling into life in a Depression-era, East Texas oil town. She's making a home when she learns that her young husband, Charlie, has been killed in an oil rig accident. Ruth is devastated, but then gets a chance for a fresh start: a scholarship from a college in Pasadena, CA. Ruth decides to take a risk and travel west, to pursue her one remaining dream to become a teacher.

At college Ruth tries to fit into campus life, but her grief holds her back. When she spends Christmas with some old family friends, she meets the striking and compelling Thomas Everly, whose own losses and struggles have instilled in him a commitment to social justice, and led him to work with Mexican migrant farmworkers in a camp just east of Los Angeles. With Thomas, Ruth sees another side of town, and another side of current events: the numerous forced deportations without due process of Mexicans, along with United States citizens of Mexican descent.

After Ruth is forced to leave school, she goes to visit Thomas and sees that he has cobbled together a night school for the farmworkers' children. Ruth begins to work with the children, and establishes deep friendships with people in the camp. When the camp is raided and the workers and their families are rounded up and shipped back to Mexico, Ruth and Thomas decide to take a stand for the workers' rights—all while promising to love and cherish one another.

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