



These is my Words: The Diary of Sarah Agnes Prine, 1881-1901 (P.S.)

By Nancy Turner

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A moving, exciting, and heartfelt American saga inspired by the author's own family memoirs, these words belong to Sarah Prine, a woman of spirit and fire who forges a full and remarkable existence in a harsh, unfamiliar frontier. Scrupulously recording her steps down the path Providence has set her upon—from child to determined young adult to loving mother—she shares the turbulent events, both joyous and tragic, that molded her, and recalls the enduring love with cavalry officer Captain Jack Elliot that gave her strength and purpose.

Rich in authentic everyday details and alive with truly unforgettable characters, *These Is My Words* brilliantly brings a vanished world to breathtaking life again.

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These is my Words: The Diary of Sarah Agnes Prine, 1881-1901 (P.S.) By Nancy Turner **Bibliography**

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Based on the real-life exploits of the author's great-grandmother, this fictionalized diary vividly details one woman's struggles with life and love in frontier Arizona at the end of the last century. When she begins recording her life, Sarah Prine is an intelligent, headstrong 18-year-old capable of holding her own on her family's settlement near Tucson. Her skill with a rifle fends off a constant barrage of Indian attacks and outlaw assaults. It also attracts a handsome Army captain named Jack Elliot. By the time she's 21, Sarah has recorded her loveless marriage to a family friend, the establishment of a profitable ranch, the birth of her first child—and the death of her husband. The love between Jack and Sarah, which dominates the rest of the tale, has begun to blossom. Fragmented and disjointed in its early chapters, with poor spelling and grammar, Sarah's journal gradually gains in clarity and eloquence as she matures. While this device may frustrate some readers at first, Taylor's deft progression produces the intended reward: she not only tells of her heroine's growth, but she shows it through Sarah's writing and insights. The result is a compelling portrait of an enduring love, the rough old West and a memorable pioneer. First serial to Good Housekeeping; author tour; Literary Guild and Doubleday Book Club selections. (Feb.) FYI: Selected as the March 1998 Good Housekeeping "Novel of the Month."

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From School Library Journal

YA—This novel in diary format parallels the early history of the Arizona Territories as Sarah and her family travel from the New Mexico Territory and settle down to carve out a new life on a ranch near Tucson in the 1880s. Sarah's diary, based on the author's family memoirs, is a heartwarming and heartbreaking fictional account of a vibrant and gifted young woman. Sarah starts out as an illiterate, fiery 17 year old. Eventually, her writing becomes as smooth and polished as Sarah herself as she becomes a tenacious, literate, and loving wife and mother. A treasure trove of discovered books becomes the source of her self-education. Turner describes the trip in such detail that one has a sense of having traveled with Sarah, experiencing all of its heartache and sadness, its backbreaking exertion and struggles, its danger and adventure, its gentle and lighter moments. Life in the new country brings the constant fear of Indian raids and the threat and reality of floods, fire, and rattlesnakes; bandits; rough men, and pretentious women all have an effect on the protagonist but her strong marriage makes the effort worthwhile. Sarah centers her world around her home and family but maintains an independent spirit that keeps her whole and alive throughout her many trials and heartaches. This is a beautifully written book that quickly captures readers' attention and holds it tightly and emotionally until the end.

Dottie Kraft, formerly at Fairfax County Public Schools, VA

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From Library Journal

The first pages of Turner's work read like soap opera. Death by snakebite, Indian attacks, death in childbirth, rape, amputation without anesthetic are only some of the horrors of the first two chapters, in which action overwhelms character. Fortunately, these early entries of the diary of Sarah Agnes Prine are followed by others that introduce us to a remarkable woman and her family. The 30 years she chronicles begin in 1881, when she is 17 and en route from New Mexico Territory to Texas and back. Sarah's courage, resourcefulness, and skill with a rifle help her family survive after the death of her father and the loss of most of their property. However, the most lasting consequence of the ill-fated journey is her acquaintance with Captain Jack Elliott, commander of the troops assigned to protect the settlers from Texas to the Arizona

Territory. Sarah resists her attraction to him, but after a brief, loveless marriage leaves her a widow with a child, she acknowledges her love. Their marriage is strong but unconventional, with her managing a growing ranch while he is away on extended military assignments. Readers come to admire Sarah, to share her many losses and rare triumphs. Turner based her novel on the life of her great grandmother. If even half these events are true, she was an amazing woman. For fans of historical fiction. Kathy Piehl, Mankato State Univ., Minn.

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Users Review

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