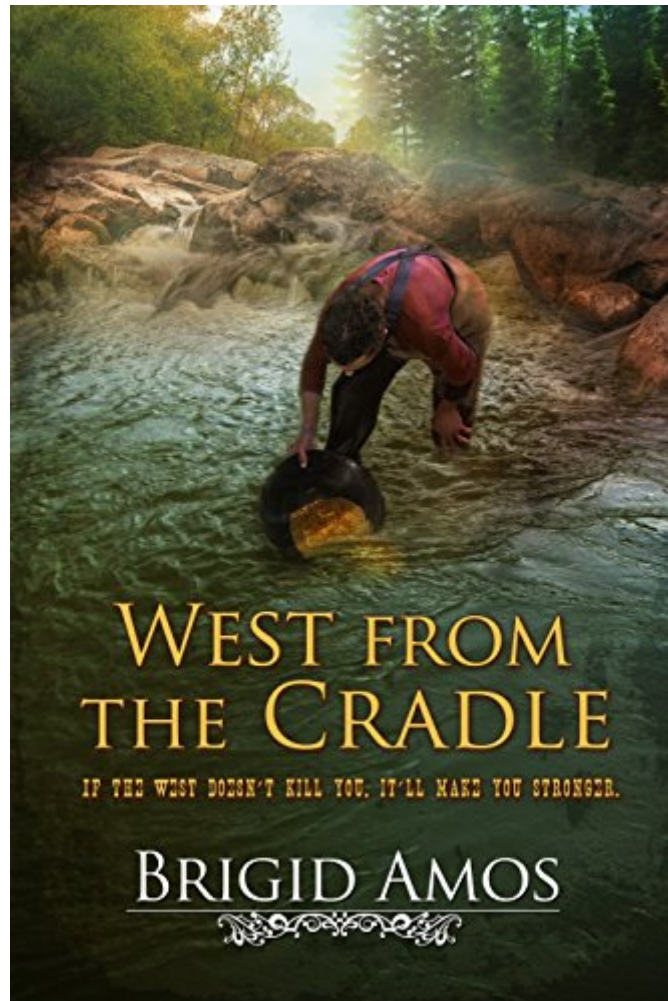




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West From The Cradle



Synopsis

Travis Cooper was never meant to be a prospector. But when shopkeeper Raymond Hillerman shows him a copy of the California Star in the fall of 1848, one shining word jumps off the page: GOLD! That one word changes everything. Undersized and bookish, Travis isn't the sort who would leave his home in Missouri to make the perilous journey west to California. Not much help on the farm, he's certainly not likely to take up the backbreaking work of a gold miner. Besides, it's his older brother Jonas that Mr. Hillerman has hired as his partner in the diggings. But when their father is injured, Jonas must stay behind to work the farm, and Travis sets out on the trail in his brother's place. Along with adventure comes danger, and Travis discovers that staying alive is more difficult than he ever imagined. Keeping his partner from getting himself killed may be downright impossible.

Book Information

File Size: 579 KB

Print Length: 240 pages

Simultaneous Device Usage: Unlimited

Publisher: Clean Reads (August 6, 2017)

Publication Date: August 6, 2017

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B074MJ5L9F

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Not Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #544,379 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #47

in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Exploration & Discovery #90 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Teen & Young Adult > Literature & Fiction > Westerns #114 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Westerns

Customer Reviews

Brigid Amos has captured life of the mid-1800's in her Young Adult novel, West from the Cradle. Through a quirk of fate, 16-year-old Travis Cooper has an opportunity to join the mid-1800's

California gold rush with shopkeeper Raymond Hillerman. Travis is an undersized young man and more academic than the outdoor type, but he wasn't going to let this opportunity get away from him. He bids his father, brother and little sister farewell and leaves the family farm, unsure when or if he'll ever return. Travis and Mr. Hillerman join a wagon train heading west from Missouri. The journey is fraught with danger, both from the rough passage and from unsavory fellow travelers. After a series of unfortunate circumstances, Travis is alone. He makes up for his small stature in determination and bravery as he throws his whole being into panning for gold. Joaquin de la Rosa, a young man of old California nobility, comes into Travis's life and the two of them work together. Although opposite in nature, Joaquin would prefer a gambling table to the discomforts of working a gold field, but they become loyal friends. Their friendship is tested when Joaquin is accused of a serious crime. It was my pleasure to receive a copy of *West of the Cradle* in exchange for an objective review. I highly recommend this book, not only for Young Adults but for anyone interested in America's early history. Along the way, Travis and Joaquin become friends with neighboring Nisenan Indians and the author spends some time describing various Nisenan customs and food preparation, adding authenticity to the novel's setting and story.

Young Travis Cooper becomes a man the instant he steps foot into Hillerman's General Store. It's 1848 and a whirl of gold dust is in the air. After seeing a copy of the *California Star*, the boy gets a dose of gold fever. Travis soon learns that staying alive is harder than Missouri farm work and potential prospecting. The wagon trail ride with storekeeper and now partner Raymond Hillerman goes from adventurous to dangerous from both the elements and sidwinding wagon train companions. When Hillerman dies from illness, Travis becomes alone, that is until Joaquin de la Rosa shows up, spoiled and upper class yet a hard worker. The two become partners. Until de la Rosa is arrested for a crime. Nisenan Indians come to their aid, adding flavor to the story. I received a copy of *West of the Cradle* in exchange for an objective review. I recommend this book to both teen and adult readers. The history is authentic and accurate with lively descriptions of gold fever, illness, danger and culture. Characters are believable and determined. It was a wonderful read.

I received a ARC copy of this book for review. From the first line of *West from the Cradle*, Brigid Amos had me hooked. "In the fall of 1848, Travis Cooper walked into Hillerman's General Store for a quarter keg of nails and walked out with a dream." See, here's the first thing. 1848. I love history

and 1848's a ways back there. Secondly, I've purchased nails, but by the keg, but by the pound, and I know what nails falling into the metal tray to be weighed sound like. And then there's Hillerman, a "hefty" guy with a "fleshy face, fringed by a scraggly red beard." Third, there's that dream. Poor under-sized Travis wants to get away from the farm where he feels like he can't even pull his own weight. When Hillerman shows Travis a copy of the California Star, he gets gold fever. When a series of unexpected events leads him to become Hillerman's partner on the '49er trail, disaster dogs their steps. His journey and the eventual end of it tests the strength of the values he carries west.

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