



An Ordinary Woman

Cecelia Holland

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The remarkable story of the courageous young pioneer who endures the hardships of the wilderness to become the first American woman to enter California

A hard life in the Missouri wilderness has made young Nancy Roberts Kelsey strong, fearless, and ready for anything. In the year 1841, the seventeen-year-old wife and mother joins her husband, Ben, and with an infant in her arms, sets off in pursuit of the dream called California. Halfway across the continent, with the worst of the journey still to come, most of their party opts for the safer passage to Oregon, but the Kelseys and their friends choose a more direct route to the western coast—a fateful decision that will lead them across the Great Basin and over the Sierra Nevadas, through confrontations with native tribes and merciless weather. But a different sort of peril awaits them at farthest edge of the frontier from the powerful Mexican dons who view all new arrivals as threats to their sovereignty—setting a seemingly ordinary woman on an extraordinary path that will ultimately change the course of American history.

Based in part on the actual letters and writings of Nancy Kelsey, *An Ordinary Woman* is a stunning tale of courage, determination, and grand adventure that celebrates the remarkable life and achievements of a little-known but essential character from the pages of history—yet another masterful blending of fiction and fact from Cecelia Holland, one of America’s premier historical novelists.

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