



The Prayers of Agnes Sparrow

Joyce Magnin

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The Prayers of Agnes Sparrow is the story of an unusual woman, Agnes Sparrow. No longer able or willing to leave her home, where she is cared for by her long-suffering sister Griselda, Agnes has committed her life to the one thing she can do—besides eat. Agnes Sparrow prays and when Agnes prays things happen, including major miracles of the cancer, ulcer-healing variety along with various minor miracles not the least of which is the recovery of lost objects and a prize-winning pumpkin. The rural residents of Bright's Pond are so enamored with Agnes they plan to have a sign erected on the interstate that reads, "Welcome to Bright's Pond, Home of Agnes Sparrow." This is something Agnes doesn't want and sends Griselda to fight city hall. Griselda's petitions are shot down and the sign plans press forward until a stranger comes to town looking for his miracle from Agnes. The truth of Agnes's odd motivation comes out when the town reels after the murder of a beloved community member. How could Agnes allow such evil in their midst? Didn't she know? Well, the prayers of Agnes Sparrow have more to do with Agnes than God. Agnes has been praying to atone for a sin committed when she was a child. After some tense days, the townsfolk, Griselda, and Agnes decide they all need to find their way back to the true source of the miracles—God.

The Prayers of Agnes Sparrow Details

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From Reader Review The Prayers of Agnes Sparrow for online ebook

Andrea says

This was a new author and series (Bright Pond) for me. We are introduced to Griselda and Agnes, two unmarried sisters living in their family home which once served as the local funeral home. Agnes, severely obese, has earned a reputation for powerful prayer results which leads to unwanted recognition. Add in a serial killer, a murder, and a budding romance and you've got a pretty good story. I plan to read the next installment.

Sue Lambert says

Hidden Treasures

In Bright's Pond, a town filled with curiously named and colorful characters, sisters Agnes and Griselda Sparrow live in what used to be their father's funeral home. Agnes is homebound and Griselda, the town's librarian is Agnes-bound. Griselda cares for Agnes. Agnes cares for her neighbors the only way she can. She prays for them. What unfolds are a few miracles and a lot of misunderstanding.

Agnes's story is bittersweet, but the telling is tender and insightful with some well-placed, laugh-out-loud comments and descriptions. I'm glad there are more stories from Bright's Pond.

Kara Prem says

2 sisters in a small town in Pennsylvania in the early 70's. Griselda spends most of her time caring for her older sister Agnes. Agnes is around 700 pounds, home bound, and spends her days praying for the town - maybe even a few miracles have occurred due to her prayers.

I was hoping to find a charming small town story- maybe like the Mitford (Father Tim) books. This was not to be. Agnes is manipulative and demanding with her sister, basically expecting her to sacrifice any chance at a normal life to care for her. She demands more and more junk food - seriously, this poor woman would have been better off if someone told her no and quit feeding her all the junk. Griselda enables her.

The town wants to put up a sign welcoming people to Agnes's home - Agnes and her sister don't want the attention, the townspeople are condescending twits "we know better than you". A stranger arrives in town asking for prayers, but won't say exactly what he needs, the town embraces him, he kills someone and now it's Agnes's fault - what? Stupid.

Oh, and Agnes accidentally killed a boy who was tormenting her years ago, but let's not worry about that.

I really wanted to like this book, but I just found myself irritated with everyone in it.

Robyn Spencer says

This book series frustrates me so much! The Prayers of Agnes Sparrow is fun and interesting. I always enjoy books with characters that have quirky names and personalities, and this book fits the bill. It's a light, easy read. The frustrating part is that by book 3 in the series, *Griselda Takes Flight*, the editing is distractingly poor. There are too many unnecessary descriptions and words, as if there was a minimum word count that wasn't being met so the author just threw a bunch of extra stuff in there. For example, when asked what her name is, a character replies, "Lizzie. Short for Elizabeth." She's not a main character in the book, just a waitress or something that is only in that paragraph, so the explanation is just a waste of words. I enjoy Joyce Magnin's characters, plots, names, humor, antics, etc., so it's disappointing that books 3 & 4 just aren't as good as *Agnes Sparrow* and *Charlotte Figg*. There are also many inconsistencies in books 3 & 4, as well as her follow up short story entitled *Over the River*. The timeline is wrong, the characters are inconsistent with their previous actions and words. This was my second time reading the Bright's Pond series. Joyce Magnin is able, in my opinion, to tell such a quaint, cozy little story, that I am able to enjoy them despite the many flaws. It is still unfortunate that there are so many.

Julia Bell says

The Prayers of Agnes Sparrow is one of the most unique books I have read in a very long time. It's the story of sisters Griselda and Agnes Sparrow. Older sister Agnes weighs 700 pounds and is the miracle worker of the town of Bright's Pond, whose every prayer for the town's residents is answered. Griselda is Agnes's caregiver. Their unique relationship and the zany residents of this small town in the Pennsylvania mountains make for a read that is humorous as well as touching. The writing was sprinkled with just the right amount of details -- not so much as to be overwhelming but enough to make me feel as though I had been to this town and I had met these wonderfully, zany characters over a piece of Full Moon pie at the Full Moon Cafe. The book does fall into the Christian fiction category, and while there is an obvious message in the story it is not at all "preachy. I would recommend this book to anyone who lives or has lived the small town life and wants to read a story about a town probably not much different from their own. A wonderful read and I look forward to reading the rest of the Bright's Pond series.

Barbara Brink says

The Prayers of Agnes Sparrow was filled with an odd assortment of characters. It read like the town of Mayberry on LSD – but I liked it! The idea that a whole town would go to a 700 lb housebound woman to ask her to pray for them as though she had a direct link to God was funny and sad at the same time. When things go well, Agnes is a hero, but when things don't go so well, she is suddenly cast as the villain. Much as we treat God when things don't go the way we think they should. There are a few lessons to be learned along the way, but they are so coated in pie, M&Ms and laughter that they go down real smooth.

Janna Ryan says

This is quite possibly one of the odder books I have reviewed this year. Right off the bat, in the first chapter I am caught off guard. The central character in the book is Agnes Sparrow (as the title indicates) and we meet her immediately through the eyes of her sister, Griselda, the narrator. We see how she is the primary caregiver for Agnes who is 700 lbs and can't get around on her own. In the opening pages Agnes declares to Griselda that she will no longer leave their house, its just too hard. It was touching to see the dedication Griselda has for her sister, she was young when she decided that she would make Agnes her priority in life because she was so tired of people making fun of her and she wanted to be there for her.

The whole town reveres Agnes because she spends all day everyday in front of her living room window with her notebook praying for the people of the town. Miracles have happened and people attribute it to Agnes. Of course she hates that attention and tries to relay that it is God answering the prayers, not anything she is doing. Much of the beginning of the book is commotion over the townspeople wanting to erect a sign on the interstate that proclaims, "Brights Pond - Home of Agnes Sparrow". They also want a statue in the middle of town. She wants none of it and it is up to Griselda to stop it from happening.

The town characters are so well done - what a kooky cast to support Griselda and Agnes! Cora, Zeb and Vidalia are their closest friends while Eugene is a royal pain in the butt and Stu and Boris are Agnes' biggest fans and are the ones trying to get the sign up and the statue erected. Hezekiah comes into the picture after he hears about Agnes' miracle working powers in another town and he comes to find Agnes and get his miracle.

Hezekiah stumbles onto one of Agnes' secrets all while hiding some secrets of his own. This is where the book got off track for me. It's like all of a sudden it goes from being a cozy little character book to trying to be all things to all people... mystery, murder, suspense... and it lost its charm.

The funny thing is that when the book ended I was crying for the characters because they really did click with me... it was just that the story itself never seemed to find its niche. I know from experience though that many people will probably love this book, it just wasn't up my alley.

Vannetta Chapman says

I very much enjoyed this book, which was my second to read by Joyce Magnin. She creates wonderful characters and they keep me reading because I WANT to know what happens next. :)

This book did take a rather surprising turn 2/3 way through.
I didn't see it coming!
Before even finishing it, I had ordered the rest in the series.

Kathy Piper says

This book was slow at first -- I almost quit reading it. It sounded too "folksy" and simple-minded for my taste. But I am glad I kept on with it. It has some surprises and some redeeming qualities. Found myself looking forward to reading more of it. The book is written from Griselda's POV as she dutifully cares for her sister, Agnes, who is a 700 lb. invalid. Agnes has a reputation in town for praying for folks -- and very often

her prayers seem to be answered. But when a mysterious drifter comes to town, things start changing. The story deals with how quickly peoples' attitudes can change -- the group dynamics of fear and prejudice -- and the destruction that is the result of idle gossip and superstition.

Melissa says

Agnes Sparrow is a morbidly obese woman (700 pounds) with a secret. A secret she keeps for years. A secret which causes her deep guilt and a desire to 'redeem' herself...so she prays. She prays everyday for everyone who asks and/or anyone living or passing through her town of Bright's Pond. The community of Bright's Pond loves Agnes for the miracles they have received through her prayers and are constantly working toward honoring her through billboards and statues. Griselda, the narrator and sister of Agnes, faithfully cares for her sister everyday while also running the towns library. Unfortunately, miracles start to come in less appealing 'packaging' and the community of Bright's Pond begin to claim Agnes has lost her powers and/or is an agent of the devil when great tragedy strikes the town.

Personally, I thought the story was simple but a bit longer than necessary. However, the author gives a lot to building the community as viewed by Griselda which helps place the reader in the community in an authentic way - knowing some characters intimately and some simply through gossip and rumor.

The most intriguing aspects of this story were the idolization of Agnes and the perception of miracles that the townsfolk had...which may be the reality of the way miracles are viewed.

"People were always thinking of miracles in terms of really, really good things happening. Why couldn't an ulcer or cancer or any other affliction be just as miraculous if it served God's purpose?" page 128/Location 2595

"A smile as wide as Wyoming burst across Mildred's otherwise poker face." page 235/Location 4855
(Wyoming PRIDE!!!)

"Tell me, Miss God-fearing Griselda, would you have been able to find any Christian charity, any mercy, any forgiveness in your heart and let me stay?" Page 283/Location 5921

"Get ready and the second you hear that horn, you start screaming and see if you can scream louder than the train and the whistle. I don't believe it can be done. I tried every night for a year after Bubba died and many a night after." Page 343/Location 7189

Anna Todd says

I found this to be quirky but interesting. It reminded me of a mix between "The Andy Griffith Show" and the movie, "What's eating Gilbert Grape."

I appreciated the fact that the author comes across so honest in the characters with both their flaws and attributes. The ending surprised me!

Christy Lockstein says

The Prayers of Agnes Sparrow by Joyce Magnin is a masterful novel about the power of unconfessed sin. Griselda has devoted her life to taking care of her obese sister, Agnes. Agnes has devoted her life to taking care of the town of Bright's Pond. Her prayers have become so famous for bringing miracles in the small town that its residents are preparing to erect a sign outside city limits advertising it as the "Home of Agnes Sparrow." But Agnes has never wanted publicity, and no matter how hard she tries, they refuse to see the answered prayers as the work of God, but instead of as the acts of Agnes. When a new man moves to town looking for a miracle from Agnes, the town will be forever changed. Magnin has created in Bright's Pond a vibrant and fascinating small town. She never reverts to stereotypes, although there is plenty of quirkiness. Griselda's character is really the heart of the novel, and the character feels frustration, betrayal, outrage, and hope right along with her due to Magnin's wonderful portrayal. The story takes a distinctly unexpected turn giving it added depth and heart. Magnin is definitely a writer I have put on my must read list.

Alice Teets says

I really enjoyed this story of two sisters, because that is what it is really about - sisters and what they will do for each other. The tales of Agnes' miracles are just a side story for me. I liked hearing of the going ons of small town Bright Pond, and I was surprised by some of the revelations made. I couldn't decide if I liked the way it ended or not, which is why it received a 4 star rating, but I did enjoy it and would recommend it.

Linda Conklin says

This is an odd little book with strange characters. I gave it 3 stars but I think I liked it 3 1/2 stars. I didn't expect much from this book but it surprised me.

Christa Allan says

If I met Agnes Sparrow in person, I probably would ignore her. And that's exactly what makes Joyce Magnin's novel so captivating. She brings Agnes to us, plops her in our living rooms, and weaves the magic of her story so delicately that the weight of Agnes' body disappears in the weight of her soul.

I plan to read everything Joyce writes...even if it's only a grocery list. Her quirky, charming, and truly refreshing style is a gift.
