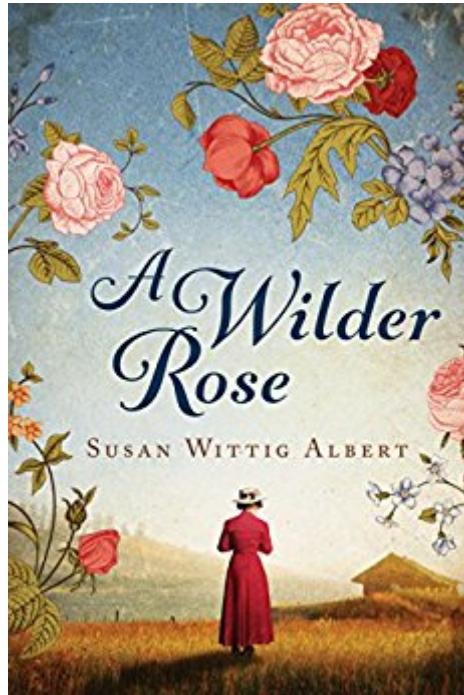




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A Wilder Rose: A Novel



Synopsis

The Little House books, which chronicled the pioneer adventures of Laura Ingalls Wilder, are among the most beloved books in the American literary canon. Lesser known is the secret, concealed for decades, of how they came to be. Now, bestselling author Susan Wittig Albert reimagines the fascinating story of Laura's daughter, Rose Wilder Lane, an intrepid world traveler and writer who returned to her parents' Ozark farm, Rocky Ridge, in 1928. There she began a collaboration with her mother on the pioneer stories that would captivate generations of readers around the world. Despite the books' success, Rose's involvement would remain a secret long after both women died. A vivid account of a great literary deception, *A Wilder Rose* is a spellbinding tale of a complicated mother-daughter relationship set against the brutal backdrop of the Great Depression. Revised edition: This edition of *A Wilder Rose: A Novel* includes editorial revisions.

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Customer Reviews

I have extremely complicated thoughts about this book. I am a huge fan of Laura Ingalls Wilder's books, which then led me to a lifetime of research into Laura the person. I knew the basics about Rose - more than the average LIW fan, but still not a lot - and so I was very curious to read this

book. However, knowing that she not only agreed with William Holz's biography of Rose, *The Ghost in the Little House: A Life of Rose Wilder Lane*, but used it in her research, made me more than a little wary. For those who don't know, Holz's book puts forward the theory that Rose was really the author of the Little House books, or at the very least a co-author. The book caused a huge uproar among LIW fans, for obvious reasons. I still don't know what I think, and someday I hope to have a chance to examine Laura's original manuscripts, or at least copies of them, to get a feel for what really went on. But back to *A Wilder Rose*: first off, as I started reading, I didn't want to stop. As much as it upset me to read a lot of it, it was also fascinating to learn more about Rose. But reading about her relationship with Laura - which was undoubtedly complicated, at best - was incredibly painful for me. Rose was the only child of Laura and Almanzo Wilder to live past infancy, and her parents - more so her mother - had a very hard time letting go of her. Yet in some ways, Rose and Laura were almost too much alike, only Rose got the freedom and unconventional life that Laura had imagined for herself. About 2/3 of the way through the book I sort of lost momentum. It seemed to be just repeating the same ideas over and over again: Rose was stuck living at Rocky Ridge, feeling the pressure to look after everyone, even as she took on responsibility for more and more people.

I can still remember when my mom and I brought home the Little House on the Prairie books and we would both gobble them up. I loved them and have revisited them many times as I grew into an adult. Of course in the later years I sat glued to the television as I watched Little House on the Prairie. To this day I still watch the reruns any chance I get. So of course when a chance to read a novel about the "behind the scenes" relationship of Rose Wilder Lane and her mother Laura Ingalls Wilder came up I jumped at the chance to learn more about them. *A Wilder Rose* by Susan Witting Albert is an account of the often tumultuous relationship between mother and daughter. Rose is, by all accounts, very successful. Before the stock market crash of 1929 she enjoyed a carefree lifestyle with her friends. After though, with the Great Depression, she goes back to her parents farm in the Ozarks. Her father is 71 and her mother 61 and she feels obligated to stay and help them out. It is during this time that Laura begins writing the Little House books and when Rose reads through the first one she realizes, being an accomplished writer herself, that the book as her mother has written it will never be accepted by a publisher. It is then that she starts the process of editing and rewriting much of her mother's work. However this caused a lot of strain on the relationship as Laura wanted her books to be true and not fiction as her daughter wanted to make them in her opinion. After one book is rejected though Laura realizes that she needs Rose's help. Rose

though is very resentful of the time she has to spend editing her mother's work.

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