



## A Wilder Rose: A Novel

By Susan Wittig Albert



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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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## A Wilder Rose: A Novel By Susan Wittig Albert Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #72235 in eBooks
- Published on: 2015-03-17
- Released on: 2015-03-17
- Format: Kindle eBook

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Rose Wilder Lane was the daughter of Laura Ingalls Wilder, and an accomplished professional author. Over the years, there has been literary conjecture that she was responsible in large part for the authorship of the Little House series. Albert's book is fictional, but based on Lane's unpublished diaries and letters, and makes a strong case for her active involvement with the Little House books. Albert presents the story of a strong-willed successful woman driven to help her parents develop their nest egg during the Great Depression. Lane labors tirelessly at her own work and editing that of her mother, never accepting credit or money, but growing frustrated at the difficulties and demands over time. Albert does an excellent job of bringing historical figures to life in a credible way; her novel is well paced, its characterizations are strong, and the plot is solidly constructed.. Readers begin to understand Lane's personality and mentality, as well as the things that drive her. Albert immerses readers in a historical period and gets them to understand the political and social conflicts of the time. Fans of Wilder will be intrigued by the book's thesis and its presentation.

From Kirkus Reviews

This pitch-perfect novel reimagines the life of Rose Wilder Lane, co-author of *Little House on the Prairie*. Albert (*Widow's Tears*, 2013, etc.) has discovered an endlessly fascinating protagonist. Rose Wilder Lane, the libertarian and rumored lesbian, was an established, award-winning writer in her own right, but she may be best remembered today as the uncredited co-author of the Little House books written by her mother, Laura Ingalls Wilder. Albert's well-researched novel draws from the letters and journal entries of both women to offer a fictionalized account of the years spanning 1928-1939. The Great Depression threatened not only Rose's livelihood as a writer, but also the freewheeling, itinerant lifestyle she so valued. When she and her companion, Helen Boylston, leave their home in Albania and return to the Wilder farmstead in Missouri, the move is meant to be temporary—Mansfield, Mo., has little to offer in the way of culture, after all, and Rose frequently clashes with her headstrong and old-fashioned mother. In the aftershock of the stock market crash, however, both women lose their savings, and Rose loses the financial stability she had enjoyed as a freelance writer before the crash. When a publisher shows interest in printing the stories of Laura's difficult frontier childhood (but Laura's untrained writing fails to impress), the mother and daughter enter into an unlikely, often contentious collaboration to produce the now-beloved Little House books. From this strange, very specific historical relationship, Albert has written a nuanced, moving and resonant novel about fraught mother-daughter relationships, family obligation and the ways we both inherit and reject the values of our parents. The book also offers insightful, timely commentary on what it means to be a career writer. With all of the charm of the Little House series—and the benefit of a sophisticated, adult worldview—Albert's novel is an absolute pleasure.

Review

“Albert has written a nuanced, moving, and resonant novel about fraught mother-daughter relationships, family obligation, and the ways we both inherit and reject the values of our parents...With all of the charm of the Little House series—and the benefit of a sophisticated, adult worldview—Albert's novel is an absolute pleasure.” —*Kirkus Reviews*, Starred Review

“Albert does an excellent job of bringing historical figures to life in a credible way; her novel is well paced, its characterizations are strong, and the plot is solidly constructed.” —*Publishers Weekly*, Starred Review

“A revealing behind-the-scenes look into a literary deception that has persisted for decades.” —William Holtz, author of *The Ghost in the Little House: A Life of Rose Wilder Lane*

“A *Wilder Rose* expertly fleshes out the bond between mother and daughter. The novel is a fine study in personalities, an accurate depiction of time and place, and a thorough understanding of the birth of the Little House books.” —William Anderson, author of *Laura Ingalls Wilder: A Biography*

“Albert has written a compelling novel that lays out a very plausible version of the events leading to each of the Little House books...An amazingly engrossing story.” —Janet Spaeth, author of *Laura Ingalls Wilder*

“A *Wilder Rose* fictionalizes history in a way that helps readers better understand the thoughts, emotions, and desires that motivated and energized them and the people surrounding them.” —John E. Miller, author of *Becoming Laura Ingalls Wilder* and *Laura Ingalls Wilder and Rose Wilder Lane*

“A *Wilder Rose* is a compelling depiction of one of the most significant literary collaborations of the twentieth century. That the two people involved were mother and daughter adds to its complexity and human interest.” —Anita Claire Fellman, author of *Little House, Long Shadow: Laura Ingalls Wilder's Impact on American Culture*

“A *Wilder Rose* smoothly blends fact and fiction...a splendid novel for everyone who has loved the Little House books.” —Carolyn Hart, award-winning author of *Ghost Gone Wild*

“The Little House books might be about brave pioneers surviving difficult trials, but between the lines hides the ghost of the books: the daughter who inherited the stories, built the storyline, supported her parents, but whose independence led her through an entirely different journey.” —Amy Khron, *Revision 3*

“The tense but loving relationship that arose from [the Wilder/Lane] collaboration is artfully depicted by Albert, whose elegant prose and evident fascination with the characters and time period make for an unexpected page-turner. If you are drawn to stories of mothers and daughters, the creative process, identity, or the first few decades of the twentieth century, this one's for you.” —David Bowles, “Top Shelf,” *The Monitor*

## Users Review

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