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The Little House (9 Volumes Set)



Synopsis

The set includes: Little House in the Big Woods, Little House on the Prairie, Farmer Boy, On the Banks of Plum Creek, By the Shores of Silver Lake, The Long Winter, Little Town on the Prairie, These Happy Golden Years, and The First Four Years.

Little House in the Big Woods Wolves and panthers and bears roam the deep Wisconsin woods in the late 1870's. In those same woods, Laura lives with Pa and Ma, and her sisters, Mary and Baby Carrie, in a snug little house built of logs. Pa hunts and traps. Ma makes her own cheese and butter. All night long, the wind howls lonesomely, but Pa plays the fiddle and sings, keeping the family safe and cozy.

Little House on the Prairie Pa Ingalls decides to sell the little log house, and the family sets out for Indian country! They travel from Wisconsin to Kansas, and there, finally, Pa builds their little house on the prairie. Sometimes farm life is difficult, even dangerous, but Laura and her family are kept busy and are happy with the promise of their new life on the prairie.

Farmer Boy While Laura Ingalls grows up in a little house on the western prairie, Almanzo Wilder is living on a big farm in New York State. Almanzo and his brother and sisters work at their chores from dawn to supper most days -- no matter what the weather. There is still time for fun, though, especially with the horses, which Almanzo loves more than anything.

On the Banks of Plum Creek Laura's family's first home in Minnesota is made of sod, but Pa builds a clean new house made of sawed lumber beside Plum Creek. The money for materials will come from their first wheat crop. Then, just before the wheat is ready to harvest, a strange glittering cloud fills the sky, blocking out the sun. Soon millions of grasshoppers cover the field and everything on the farm. In a week's time, there is no wheat crop left at all.

By the Shores of Silver Lake Pa Ingalls heads west to the unsettled wilderness of the Dakota Territory. When Ma, Mary, Laura, Carrie, and baby Grace join him, they become the first settlers in the town of De Smet. And Pa begins work on the first building in what will soon be a brand-new town on the shores of Silver Lake.

The Long Winter The first terrible storm comes to the barren prairie in October. Then it snows almost without stopping until April. Snow has reached the rooftops, and no trains can get through with food or coal. The people of De Smet are starving, including Laura's family, who wonder how they're going to make it through this terrible winter. It is young Almanzo Wilder who finally understands what needs to be done. He must save the town, even if it means risking his own life.

Little Town on the Prairie The long winter is over. With spring come socials, parties, and "Literaries." There is also work to be done. Laura spends many hours each day sewing shirts to help send Mary to a college for the blind. But in the evenings, Laura makes time for a new caller, Almanzo Wilder.

These Happy Golden Years Laura is teaching school, and it's terrifying! Most of the students are taller than she is, and she must sleep away from home

for the first time. Laura is miserable, but the money is needed to keep Mary in a college for the blind. And every Friday -- no matter what the weather -- Almanzo Wilder arrives to take Laura home to her family for the weekend. Laura and Almanzo are courting, and even though she's not yet sixteen, she knows that this is a time for new beginnings. The First Four Years Laura and Almanzo Wilder have just been married! Their life on a small prairie homestead begins with high hopes. But each year seems to bring unexpected disasters -- storms, sickness, fire, and unpaid debts. These first four years call for courage, strength, and a great deal of determination. Always, though, there is love, especially for the newest member of the family -- baby Rose.

Book Information

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

I got "Little House in the Big Woods" when I was 7. I remember crying when I finished it because I wanted the story to go on and on. I pushed and prodded my Mom to get the rest of the books. As quickly as they appeared as birthday and Christmas presents, I devoured them. Almost 35 years later, I can say that I have read almost every book that has been written by or about Laura. Many other reviewers have pointed out the especially wonderful aspects of the books. The narrator ages as Laura grows up. (What a cool concept!) The story of 4 year old Laura's Christmas in Wisconsin is as real and moving as the description of 18 year old Laura falling in love with Almanzo in Dakota Territory. The images are always fresh, and the stories always epitomize wholesomeness. There is a consistency all the way through "These Happy Golden Years" that shows that great care and skill

were employed to make the series unwaveringly good. The real life of Laura was strenuous and uncertain. She was poor most of her young life. She and Almanzo faced great loss and always worked very hard to run their farm. The many moves made by the Ingalls and Wilder families were made to escape difficulties like failed crops or to improve bad situations like poor health. According to available accounts, Laura did not stay in close contact with her family after she left Dakota. Her relationship with Almanzo does not seem to have been remarkable, and her relationship with her only child, Rose, was strained. However, all of these mundane details coalesced to create some of the best books ever written. Many readers do not know that Rose was the impetus for the Little House phenomenon.

One of the biggest fallacies about the Little House books is that they are "girls' books." It was that perception of the books, as well as the sappy, smaltzy "Little House on the Prairie" TV show, that kept me from reading these books until I was in my early teens. One day just out of sheer boredom, I read my sister's worn copy of "Little House in the Big Woods." What a great book! A story of a family's survival in the wilderness with tales of bears, panthers, wolves, hunting, and all sorts of neat information on how pioneer people lived. "Little House in the Big Woods" erased my conception of the Little House books as "girlie stuff" and I promptly read the rest of the series. Yes, some elements will appeal more to girls especially Mrs. Wilder's very detailed descriptions of women's clothing. (I generally just read what color the dress was and then skip over the rest of the description.) However, her stories about Indians, wild animals, blizzards, grasshopper storms, bandits, bullies threatening to beat up teachers, unruly students, unhinged farmwives, bossy older sisters, and a whole host of other great stuff will make these books fascinating to anyone interested in pioneer life regardless of gender. Despite my age I still consider these among my favorite books. They are truly heartwarming classics with the magnificent illustrations of Garth Williams. Laura, the main character, will appeal to almost anyone- honest, principled, courageous, industrious, but with very human elements- including envy of her older sister and holding grudges, especially against snooty Nellie Oleson and her teacher (and future sister-in-law) Eliza Jane Wilder.

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