



## Little House in the Big Woods

*Laura Ingalls Wilder , Garth Williams (Illustrator)*

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Immerse yourself in Laura Ingalls Wilder's beloved Little House series, now featuring Garth Williams' classic art in vibrant full-color!

Little House in the Big Woods, the first book in the Little House series, takes place in 1871 and introduces us to four-year-old Laura, who lives in a log cabin on the edge of the Big Woods of Wisconsin. She shares the cabin with her Pa, her Ma, her sisters Mary and Carrie, and their lovable dog, Jack.

Pioneer life isn't easy for the Ingalls family, since they must grow or catch all their own food as they get ready for the cold winter. But they make the best of every tough situation. They celebrate Christmas with homemade toys and treats, do their spring planting, bring in the harvest in the fall, and make their first trip into town. And every night, safe and warm in their little house, the sound of Pa's fiddle lulls Laura and her sisters into sleep.

The nine books in the timeless Little House series tell the story of Laura's real childhood as an American pioneer, and are cherished by readers of all generations. They offer a unique glimpse into life on the American frontier, and tell the heartwarming, unforgettable story of a loving family.

## Little House in the Big Woods Details

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Author : Laura Ingalls Wilder , Garth Williams (Illustrator)

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## From Reader Review Little House in the Big Woods for online ebook

### Brina says

My two younger daughters recently discovered the Little House series and are speeding through the books this summer. As I am in between books and wanted to avoid a reading rut, I decided to revisit the first book in the series for myself. As I am always on the lookout for quality children's books, I spent a few hours rereading the beginning of a series that I had enjoyed when I was my daughters' age.

Little House in the Big Woods begins the classic children's saga that follows Laura Ingalls Wilder on her journey from childhood to marriage. It features a wide eyed five year old girl who has her entire future ahead of her at a thrilling time in American history as the country has moved past the civil war and is starting to settle the west. Ingalls was born in 1867 in the big woods of Wisconsin. She lives with her parents and sisters Mary and Carrie in a log cabin in the middle of the woods and has rarely traveled anywhere other than to visit her grandparents and aunts, uncles, and cousins. The woods and all that was in it made up her entire life.

Even if the country was beginning to modernize, and we glimpse it with the horse powered threshing machine toward the end, the industrial revolution had yet to come to Wisconsin. The Ingalls family lived according to the seasons of the year, was a devout Christian family, and each member of the family worked from morning to night doing their share of chores. Pa hunted and farmed while Ma cooked, baked, and sewed the entire family's clothing from scratch. Mary and Laura were expected to do their share of chores as well, including helping with the dishes and basic needlepoint and cross stitch. Both girls were model citizens who children of today could learn many lessons from, especially in obeying their parents and knowing to be seen and not heard.

The edition I read is the collectors edition illustrated by Garth Williams. Williams had illustrated over one hundred books for children including the classic Charlotte's Web. His illustrations bring Laura's life to life as readers see her dancing at her grandpa's barn dance, going into town, and her daily life throughout the year. Williams met an adult Ingalls and traveled to all of her homes in order to view first hand how she lived. I felt the illustrations were vital as children are reading about a different era in history, and illustrations can assist them on their journey through time. Even an adult can benefit from viewing color illustrations as they can once again become captivated by a series they read as children.

As an elementary aged student, my favorite series was All of a Kind Family. I had much in common with the girls in the story and reread more times than I could count. Yet, Little House was easily a close second as I was and am a lover of history and enjoyed reading about a girl and her family in an earlier part of my nation's history. I am glad my daughters have discovered this series as we can share our memories of it as they continue Laura and her family's journey through life.

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### Miranda Reads says

It just goes to show, **you don't need magic to make a series magical.**

She was glad that the cozy house, and Pa and Ma and the firelight and the music, were now. They could not be forgotten, she thought, because now is now. It can never be a long time ago.

For a series written so long ago and geared towards young children, **this holds so well.** Every time I go back

to this story, I am just as **enraptured and enthralled** as I was when I was a little girl.

Laura Ingalls and her family (Ma, Pa, Mary and baby Carrie) live in a little house in the big woods of Wisconsin. We follow their every-day-life, from corn-husk dolls to pig roasts to sugaring-off parties. All the little details make this story come alive.

*The barrels of salted fish were in the pantry, and yellow cheeses were stacked on the pantry shelves.*

All activities seem so different from the commonplace childhood memories I have...and yet, I **identified so closely with Laura**.

I couldn't have been the only kid wishing our attic was **filled with preserves** or wanting to roast a pig tail. I'll even admit, I wanted to kick around the **ol' pig bladder** (only briefly) (I'm easily influenced when reading).

The love, and friendship, and happiness she experiences along with the harsh and hungry winters truly makes for a wonderful story.

The little tales from Pa brings this book to life and Ma's gentle nurturing firmly holds together the family. Every time I read this series, I think about my own family. **And give my Ma and Pa a call.**

*But Laura lay awake a little while, listening to Pa's fiddle softly playing and to the lonely sound of the wind in the Big Woods.*

### **Audiobook Comments**

Narrated by Cherry Jones and accompanied on the fiddle by Paul Woodielv. Paul gave life to Pa's songs and Cherry truly made this audiobook a masterpiece. Loved every word of it.

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### **Alex says**

*Little House in the Big Woods* is what *Walden* wishes it was, or could have been if Thoreau wasn't such a dick. Laura and her family aren't misanthropic creeps - and they have real skills, unlike vacationing Thoreau. But the book is about self-reliance, getting back to the basics, and living in harmony with nature. It shares a philosophy with *Walden* - along with two other sortof less-great things.

The first is a hopeless lack of plot, and that frustrated me when I first read it. And I do mean *first read*: this was the first chapter book I ever read all by myself. I battled through the entire series, because my mother told me I'd be a good reader when I was done, and I suppose it worked (I can read!) but honestly I should have just stuck to comic books; the meandering pace here wasn't a great match for little me. (Some of the *Little House* books have more plot than others.)

The second thing *Little House* shares with *Walden* is that it's bullshit. Thoreau went home to his mommy when he wanted cookies, and Laura's family were actually subsistence farmers always one bad season away from starving to death. Wilder leaves out her brother's death in infancy to focus on singing by the fire. Both books hide the hardships of the lives they promote.

Wilder's book was published in 1932, during the Depression, and it was a collaboration between Wilder and her daughter Rose Wilder Lane, who was a successful novelist and also a rabid libertarian who advocated the

assassination of New Dealing FDR and threatened to do it herself. This is the story Lane and Wilder want to sell you: hardy stock living by their own hard work without government interference. In reality, the Wilders lived harsh and desperate lives. Young, just-married Laura's first farm failed, and she lost it. It was only these books that finally pulled her out of a life of poverty - these books, which advocated exactly the grueling life they rescued her from.

That said, this is still a great source of information about such topics as:

- Making maple sugar
- Square dancing
- How much Laura's sister sucks
- Why children should be seen and not heard - remember when that was a thing? Ha!
- Old-timey songs, and there's a song about an old darkey who dies that you will need to watch out for if you're reading this to your child. It's in chapter 5. That's the only truly oh-shit content.
- Weaving straw hats
- Old-time candy - if there is a plot, it's that Laura Ingalls Wilder has a sweet tooth; this book is basically about candy
- Leaving babies in a pile on a bed while everyone does square dancing
- Extremely specific gender roles

It's pleasant enough to read, if a little boring. Just keep in mind, when Laura says,

"This is now."

She was glad that the cosy house, and Pa and Ma and the firelight and the music, were now. They could not be forgotten, she thought, because now is now. It can never be a long time ago.

It can never be now, either; it never existed at all.

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## **Theresa says**

I wish I had read this when I was younger, because I probably would have enjoyed it more. In third grade, we were all told to read these books, but Harry Potter had just come out. Obviously, dragons and magic were more interesting than life in the Midwest, much to my teacher and my parents dismay. But back to Laura Ingalls...

This book is perfect for teaching any child what life was like in the late 1800's, living in the woods trying to survive. Now, it seems utterly preposterous to live this way, but I think children would benefit from this. Rules and chores were all apart of the daily routine, and the most simplest of things were entertaining to young children. They didn't have TV or video games, they went outside and played with whatever they could find...even a pig's bladder.

My main problem with this story is there is no beginning, middle or end. There is no "plot" really, and you really could have read any chapter at any time in any order. I know it's a children's book, but I read plenty of children's books that had a plot. Even Amelia Bedelia had a plot. Life in the big woods is great, but I needed something a bit more to the story.

I truly expected to fly through this one, but it dragged on a bit too much for me. I think its charm didn't work on me like it did for every other little girl in my third grade class.

## Jennifer ~ TarHeelReader says

I was obsessed with the Litte House books and the TV show when I was a child. I think I began reading and re-reading the books in second grade. This time around I listened to it on audio, and it was my first time "reading" the book as an adult. I have to admit, I think this book may have played a big part in my choice to be a vegetarian at a young age! It's hard to imagine my 8-year-old self making sense out of the hunting, etc. The farm life in the woods is not for me! That said, the book will always hold a special place in my reading heart, and I hope to re-read and/or listen to all of the books in the series again.

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## Deanna says

The Little House on the Prairie books bring back so many good memories. I have been looking for my box of old books for awhile now but still haven't found it. I'm really hoping it didn't get lost when I moved last year. There are so many books that I would love to re-read.

I'm not sure why I didn't read these to my daughter. I think she had so many books that we just never got around to it.

Little House in the Big Woods is the first book of the series and will always be my favorite, but I did enjoy all of the books in the collection. I tried to find the edition on here that looked most like what I remember, and I think this is the same cover that was on my book.

I can clearly my mom reading it to me before I could read myself. Sitting on my bed next to her watching as she read. Once I was able to read it myself I picked it up again to read to her, watching as her fingers slid underneath the words and helping me with the hard ones. She mentioned the other day that it's one of her favorite memories too.

I loved all of the characters. Laura, Ma, Pa, Carrie and Mary as well as many others. I dreamt of living in that little cabin in the woods and desperately wanted Laura Ingalls as a best friend. The fun and adventures these children had along with their dog, Jack was entertaining every time it was read to me or by me.

When it was turned into a TV show, I was escastic! I remember it was on every Sunday at 6pm on Channel 2. I was allowed to watch it while sitting in my dads lazy-boy recliner and nothing could tear me away.

If I can't find my old books I will definitely buy another collection as I would love to re-read them at some point.

Even writing this review has brought back great memories of these wonderful stories <3

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## Erin says

A walk down memory lane. Although I have a whole bunch of new books to read, I felt like grabbing a

childhood favorite from my stacks tonight. The first book in the "Little House" series introduces readers to Laura Ingalls, her Ma & Pa, and sisters, Mary and Carrie living in their log home in the "big woods" of Wisconsin.

The thirteen chapters in this book serve as vignettes of what life was like for settler families, the roles and responsibilities of each family member, the customs and teachings that had such an impact on a little girl and shape her to be a grown woman. I always felt a connection to Laura Ingalls right down to her brown hair. Intertwined with these chapters are stories of several family members' misadventures that provide chuckles and lessons from beginning to end.

It would be terrible for me to overlook the wonderful illustrations from Garth Williams that accompany the author's text. I dare say that without them as a child of 9 (the age of my "discovery"), the story might not have had as much impact.

I would definitely recommend to the young and young at heart.

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### **Prayudi Setiadharna says**

I found this book among my aunts' collections in my grandpa's house when I was living there for three-months back in 1987. Once I read it, I never stop to read over and over again.

Well, the life of the Ingalls is wonderful indeed. But what attracts me more is the fact that this book always makes me hungry all the time. You don't believe me, do you? Well, don't take my words for it, just try yourself...especially when you're reading through the "pouring hot maple syrup in the snow", "roasting the pigtailed", and "smoking the sliced venison using hickory woods"...even the salted fishes for winter sound very tasty there...ouch!

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### **Tatiana says**

No plot, but still an addictive story of a life style both idyllic and boring as hell. And torturous Sundays!

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### **Brad says**

For a few years now, I've been interviewing my twins after they finish reading their books, posting those interviews on their own *goodreads* profile. My girl, Brontë, finished reading *Little House in the Big Woods* about a month ago, and I read it this week (I always read or reread the books they've read.) You can see that interview with me right here:

Brontë: So first ... did you like it? did you love it? or did you hate? did you think it was okay? or did you really like it?

Pa: I loved it. It was good. Much better than I expected.

Brontë: Who was your favourite character?

Pa: Hmm ... that's a tough one because I loved Pa and Laura a lot, but I also dug Ma. Mary's a bit of pain, but to be fair, the story is being told by Laura, and little sisters don't tend to be too kind to their older sisters. So maybe I can't judge Mary on that. But I guess I like Pa the best because he's really the focus of the story for Laura. He's the one she talks most about. And he seems like a pretty good guy.

Brontë: Interesting.

Pa: Did you expect something different? Did you think I'd like someone else?

Brontë: I thought you'd say Laura, but my second favourite was Pa.

Pa: So we're reversed.

Brontë: Yeah.

Pa: I figured you'd like Laura best.

Brontë: What was your favourite moment and your favourite chapter?

Pa: My favourite moment was when Ma slapped the bear in the night. That was awesome. And my favourite chapter was the Maple Syrup dance on the day of the sugar snow. That was pretty cool. I loved how everyone really just had fun even with all the hard work that still had to be done.

Brontë: Did you like the Harvest chapter?

Pa: That must have been your favourite.

Brontë: It was one of my favourites.

Pa: Yeah. I liked it. It was awesome. Charley deserved to get stung by the bees.

Brontë: Yeah he did. When that happened I almost said, "Get off your lazy butt and do some work!"

Pa: Yeah he was lazy all right, and a total pain the ass. Pa didn't approve of the way Charley ignored his Dad, did he?

Brontë: No, he didn't. I thought the same thing. I love how in the picture when he was wrapped in the bandages all the girls were staring at him with mean faces on.

Pa: That's something else I loved, the art.

Brontë: Oh yeah, the art was beautiful.

Pa: But Laura's writing was even more beautiful. I was impressed.

Brontë: I agree.

Pa: It was so clear and descriptive, and I felt like I was there sometimes.

Brontë: Me too. Every moment I felt like I watched it in my head.

Pa: It's cool when you read a book like that.

Brontë: And then I could look at the pictures and think, that's what the boys and girls look like and watch it in my head as I read.

Pa: I think I could see what they looked like even without the pictures.

Brontë: Yeah, me too.

Pa: The writing was just that good.

Brontë: Especially what she said, like in the dance part when the girls were getting ready, and she described what the dresses looked like and you could totally see the dresses in your head.

Pa: Darn good book. Thanks for reading it so I could.

Brontë: No problem. Don't forget to say thanks to Auntie Marci too.

Pa: And Ma. It's her book.

Brontë: Yeah, you're right.

Pa: So when are you going to read Little House on the Prairie?

Brontë: Umm ... after I finish The Templeton Twins.

Pa: I'm looking forward to it.

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## **Laurel Wicke says**

Reading this to my daughter has helped me rediscover the joy of the Little House series all over again. Probably the best gift this little book has to offer is that of perspective. How blessed but complicated our lives seem now. How very different and yet the same. I loved sharing a slice of history with my child who has no concept of life before dvr's, minivans, and microwaves. That a child could be happy with a corncob doll was a unique thought. This series should be on the reading list for every mother.

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## **Duane says**

This is the first book in the Little House Series, and somewhat overlooked due to the popularity of the second book, Little House on the Prairie. I've read both and liked both; this volume being a wonderful introduction to Laura and the Ingalls family. I didn't read this series as a child, but as an adult I've come to appreciate it's beauty, and it's importance in the canon of American Children's Literature. Some may say this is too simple for adults to appreciate, and starting out it seems that way, but the more you read the more you realize that Ingall's style is perfect for this type of story. I'm glad I started the series and I look forward to reading more.

Revised January 2018.

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