

LAURA INGALLS WILDER

# Farmer Boy



ILLUSTRATED BY GARTH WILLIAMS



## SCHOOL DAYS

**I**t was January in northern New York State, sixty-seven years ago. Snow lay deep everywhere. It loaded the bare limbs of oaks and maples and beeches, it bent the green boughs of cedars and spruces down into the drifts. Billows of snow covered the fields and the stone fences.

Down a long road through the woods a little boy trudged to school, with his big brother Royal

## FARMER BOY

and his two sisters, Eliza Jane and Alice. Royal was thirteen years old, Eliza Jane was twelve, and Alice was ten. Almanzo was the youngest of all, and this was his first going-to-school, because he was not quite nine years old.

He had to walk fast to keep up with the others, and he had to carry the dinner-pail.

"Royal ought to carry it," he said. "He's bigger than I be."

Royal strode ahead, big and manly in boots, and Eliza Jane said:

"No, 'Manzo. It's your turn to carry it now, because you're the littlest."

Eliza Jane was bossy. She always knew what was best to do, and she made Almanzo and Alice do it.

Almanzo hurried behind Royal, and Alice hurried behind Eliza Jane, in the deep paths made by bobsled runners. On each side the soft snow was piled high. The road went down a long slope, then it crossed a little bridge and went on for a mile through the frozen woods to the schoolhouse.

The cold nipped Almanzo's eyelids and

numbed his nose, but inside his good woolen clothes he was warm. They were all made from the wool of his father's sheep. His underwear was creamy white, but Mother had dyed the wool for his outside clothes.

Butternut hulls had dyed the thread for his coat and his long trousers. Then Mother had woven it, and she had soaked and shrunk the cloth into heavy, thick fullcloth. Not wind nor cold nor even a drenching rain could go through the good fullcloth that Mother made.

For Almanzo's waist she had dyed fine wool as red as a cherry, and she had woven a soft, thin cloth. It was light and warm and beautifully red.

Almanzo's long brown pants buttoned to his red waist with a row of bright brass buttons, all around his middle. The waist's collar buttoned snugly up to his chin, and so did his long coat of brown fullcloth. Mother had made his cap of the same brown fullcloth, with cozy ear-flaps that tied under his chin. And his red mittens were on a string that went up the sleeves of his coat and across the back of his neck. That was so he couldn't lose them.

# LITTLE HOUSE • BIG ADVENTURE



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 no matter what the weather. There is still time for fun, though, and Almanzo wishes for his very own horse. But Father doesn't yet trust him with that responsibility, and Almanzo must find a way to prove himself.

## **READ ALL OF THE LITTLE HOUSE BOOKS**

*Little House in the Big Woods*

*Farmer Boy*

*Little House on the Prairie*

*On the Banks of Plum Creek*

*By the Shores of Silver Lake*

*The Long Winter*

*Little Town on the Prairie*

*These Happy Golden Years*

*The First Four Years*

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