


Viva, Rose!

Susan Krawitz

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When fourteen-year-old Rose Solomon's brother, Abe, left El Paso, he told the family he was heading to Brooklyn. But Rose discovers the truth the day she picks up the newspaper at Pickens General Store and spies a group photograph captioned The Southwestern Scourge of 1915! There stands Abe alongside none other than Pancho Villa and his army!

Rose is furious about Abe's lie; fearful for his safety; and worried about her traditional parents who, despite their strict and observant ways, do not deserve to have an outlaw for a son. Rose knows the only way to set things right is to get Abe home, but her clandestine plan to contact him goes awry when she is kidnapped by Villa's revolutionaries and taken to his hideaway.

Deep in the desert, amidst a richly rendered assortment of freedom-seekers that includes an impassioned young reporter, two sharp-shooting sisters with a secret past, and Dorotea, Villa's tyrannical young charge, Rose sees no sign of Abe and has no hope of release. But as she learns to lie, hide, and ride like a bandit, Rose discovers the real meaning of freedom and what she's willing to risk to get hers back.

Viva, Rose! Details

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From Reader Review Viva, Rose! for online ebook

Yapha says

I love reading stories about Jewish kids in the Old West and this one was really fun!

Rose is living with her parents in El Paso, TX in the early 1900s. She believes that her brother Abe has run off to be a cowboy and her parents believe that he has gone to live their oldest son in Brooklyn. However, Rose discovers that Abe has run off and is fighting against the Mexican government with Pancho Villa's army. She is trying to get a letter to him to come home for Passover when she is discovered and taken by force to Villa's encampment in the desert. Can she manage to save her brother and herself before the army returns to Mexico? How many lies will she have to tell? Rose is a fabulous, resourceful young heroine who learns to believe in herself to get the job done. Includes a fascinating look at the reasons behind Villa's revolt as well. Highly recommended for grades 4 & up.

Steve Patschke says

I have been an elementary School Librarian for over thirty years and I have found very few western books for children written as well as this one. First of all, it is set in the south west and is a historical book with a main character who is a young Jewish girl. That is special in itself, but when you consider it deals with a historical figure like Pancho Villa and was inspired by family stories from the author's childhood, the story moves up to the level of something extraordinary.

I especially like the plucky courage of the main Character, Rose. I am happy to recommend her to my female students who are anxious to find a positive role model around their own age. So many other titles at this age deal primarily with emotional entanglements for girls. Viva Rose has plenty of that and more, when it comes to Rose's attachment to her missing brother, and her affection for her father and mother, but most of my students find the action and historical wild west backdrop a refreshing change from the rest of the run-of-the-mill plot-lines found on the shelf. I have had more than one young reader return the book and ask me, "Do you have any more books like this?" and unfortunately, I'm forced to say, not yet.

Natasha says

Unique slice of Jewish life in the Wild West

Totally one of a kind historical fiction. If your students can handle sophisticated MG authors (Linda Sue Park, Pam Muñoz Ryan, Ann Rinaldi, Karen Cushman) I'd definitely give this one a shot. The parallels between the Passover liberation story and the Mexican Revolution were especially interesting to me as a Jew, but I wonder how many kids will connect those dots. I also found myself skimming some parts, but that was true for the Newbery Honor book, ECHO....which soooo many of my students loved.

If one overlooks a few pacing issues, there's a lot of fun plot points in VIVA, ROSE. An overbearing Jewish mother, repressed singing talent, missing brother, a crazy spoiled brat (presumably Pancho Villa's

daughter)and.... rattlesnakes. Also gotta love a MG story where the main character acquires the ability to horseback ride (à laThe War ThatSaved My Life!)

Some neat gender bending stuff for good measure as well (à la Riding Freedom!)

I say check it out.

Karen Maurer says

Rose has a secret about where her brother, Abraham, has gone. (Hint: he lied.) When she tries to deliver a letter to someone who can reach Abraham, she is abducted by guerillas working with Pancho Villa. For the next several days, Rose becomes a reluctant member of the Villistas. She also learns to ride a horse! From Rose's testy relationship with her mother, to the crippled and spoiled "niece" of the General, to a Pesach meal that includes tortillas, this book is a fun way to learn about the revolution led by Pancho Villa.

The book starts slowly. Rose's character is officious and judgmental in the early chapters. It deserves more than 3 stars. 3.5? Yeah. Not quite a 4.

Cindy Mitchell *Kiss the Book* says

Krawitz, Susan Viva, *Rose!*, Pgs. 218. Holiday House, 2017. \$16.95. Language: G, Mature Content: G; Violence: G.

Rose's family is celebrating Passover this year without her brother Abraham. Her family thinks he has left Texas to stay with family in New York, but Rose knows the truth. He has joined a group of outlaws fighting in the Mexican Revolution. When Rose tries to pass a letter to a man who knows her brother, she is inadvertently kidnapped and taken blindfolded into the desert. While there, she meets the famous outlaw renegade Pancho Villa and his spoiled "daughter" Dorotea. Rose interacts with many interesting people and learns the truth about the revolution. If she can put up with Dorotea's childish demands, she might last long enough to escape, but not until she finds her brother.

This is a multifaceted story that details how a Jewish family inserted itself into the Mexican Revolution. It is based on real people from the author's extended family. The historical facts are interesting, but will be foreign to students not familiar with Texas or the Southwest. It's a renegade cowboy story with religious undertones. There's many great morals presented in the story such as don't judge people, don't blame others for your problems, and don't try to change people. Highly recommended for libraries in the Southwest. Hard sell for students in the Midwest or East Coast.

EL, MS – OPTIONAL. Reviewer: Valerie McEnroe, Media Specialist
<https://kissthebook.blogspot.com/2017...>

Mary Sanchez says

It's 1915 and thirteen-year-old Rose Solomon is shocked to see her brother Abraham's picture in the El Paso, Texas newspaper surrounded by the outlaw, Pancho Villa, and his Mexican bandits. Abraham wrote the family that he was in Brooklyn, New York--he lied!

Rose writes to her brother and demands that he return home by Passover, but in the process of getting the letter to her brother, Rose gets kidnapped and taken to Villa's desert hideout where she becomes the playmate to Dorotea, Pancho Villa's spoiled daughter.

Rose plans her escape after learning to ride a horse but wants to also stay to rescue her brother. When they are reunited, she learns about Abraham's dedication to Pancho Villa's mission to save Mexico.

The delightful language takes the reader back to the days of the old west, but to times when there were also cars and even airplanes. The author based the premise of the story on her own distant Jewish relatives who lived in San Antonio and family lore.

I enjoyed reading how the Solomon family compared their own lives, living in the days of the pogroms in Russia, to the Mexican people living in corrupt times under President Porfirio Diaz. A truly interesting setting in Mexican history that needs to be shared.

Stepmac12477 says

How daring and tough are you? Walk in thirteen-year-old Rose's shoes and saddle as she seeks out her missing brother, who she believes is involved with Pancho Villa's nasty revolutionaries. While held captive at Pancho's hideaway, Rose learns many truths, endures great hardship, comes to know the unique individuals of the notorious band and suffers the friendship of Dorotea, Pancho's headstrong daughter. Susan Krawitz's draws us into a fascinating adventure based on her ancestor's experiences. This is the book to put in the hands of readers eager for fast paced, Old West historical fiction in top form. The ending notes and newspaper copy are remarkable.

Barbara says

Inspired by family stories, this novel features one of my favorite types of protagonists--a feisty girl who pushes against the boundaries her parents and society set for her and yet one who comes to realize her own character defects. The story is set in and near El Paso, Texas, in 1915. Thirteen-year-old Rose Solomon has a beautiful singing voice, which she is rarely allowed to use in public, and a deep fondness for her brother, Abraham. When she happens to see his photograph in the local newspaper along with Pancho Villa, she realizes that he is not where his parents think he is. Even while flinching under her mother's constant reminder that she is approaching marriageable age, Rose figures she's going to let Abe know that she knows his secret. But her plans to send a letter to him via the messenger Miss Polly, his secret sweetheart, knows don't work out, and Rose is kidnapped and taken to the revolutionary leader's camp. There she comes to the attention of his spoiled daughter, Dorotea, who is determined to have Rose as her playmate to ease her burden. Judging by how she has treated past pets and her current dog, Pico, when they displease her, readers will be worried about how long rose can hold her tongue. Although Rose is reunited with her brother, she

learns that he has a very large secret about his involvement with Villa, a secret that will get him killed if it revealed. A lot of things happen over the course of this novel, and readers will be surprised when they realize just how short a time Rose was in the desert. There are so many interesting characters that are briefly introduced and then never returned to, but each of them makes some sort of contribution to the story and to Rose's self-realization. When she returns to her home, she has somehow managed to pull off her own rescue and is a stronger, wiser person than when the novel first started. I'm not sure how young readers will react to this story, but I found it compelling although there were some points that made me blood boil in frustration and other sections that were somewhat confusing and prompted a reread to understand. Because there is so much action and this is a unique story in children's literature, this one makes a great read aloud since it can be delivered over several days. After all, how much do most adults know about Pancho Villa?

Erica says

When Rose sees the picture of Pancho Villa at Pickens General Store, it changes her life. Because there, next to the famous outlaw, is her brother! He claims an obligation to help another group of oppressed people after everything his own Jewish people have been through in the old country. But when Rose finds herself in Pancho Villa's camp, she sees that when it comes to revolution, the truth is always complicated.

A story about a Jewish boy running off to fight in Pancho Villa's army and his younger sister following him to camp is the kind of story so unbelievable it has to be true. Sure enough, this novel is based on the author's own family history. I loved this twist on a Wild West adventure and I appreciated the nuanced outlook it provides on the historical personages and their era.

I'd give this to students looking for a historical adventure 4th and up.

Andrea says

Plot

It's 1915, and Rose has just found out her older brother, Abe, has deceived her family. Instead of heading off to be a cowboy, he has joined a group of outlaws. She's become rather frustrated lately because her parents won't let her sing and do the things she wants, but instead they try to force her into feminine roles and marry her off to new Jewish immigrants. Rose has had enough and sets out to get a letter to her brother, Abe. Instead, she's kidnapped by the very group of banditos that Abe has joined. Pancho Villa, the leader, has a beautiful, willful young girl with him [who Rose suspects is his daughter], and Dorotea immediately takes a liking to the older Rose. Rose becomes Dorotea's forced friend, playmate, and nanny throughout the week with the outlaws. Though she tries hard to be kind to the spoiled Dorotea, and at times Dorotea's mercurial nature softens, it is more often prickly. Fortunately, Rose has people looking out for her and while she isn't quite sure how she will escape, she's pretty sure her horse riding lessons can be put to good use!

Review

"Viva Rose!" is based off of real events that occurred during the Mexican Revolution, and was inspired by relatives of the author who lived during that time, this made it far more interesting for me. The Mexican Revolution is not a time I know much about, and I think the author did a nice job of including historical figures and events, then explaining them in further detail later.

Valerie McEnroe says

It took me a while to get into this book, and that's why I don't think kids will be interested. It's historical fiction and takes place in El Paso, TX during the Mexican Revolution, roughly 1915-1920. It's multifaceted, bringing Jewish culture and Spanish culture together into one book. I found that odd. The author explains in her notes at the end that there was a period of time when immigrants were being shifted to Port Galveston, TX to alleviate crowding in New York. I didn't know this detail, and that's why I love historical fiction.

Here's a quick synopsis. Rose's family is Jewish, living in El Paso. Rose learns that her older brother, Abraham, has secretly left to join the Mexican Revolution. When attempting to send him a letter via an intermediary, she is inadvertently kidnapped and taken into the desert to the encampment of famous revolutionary leader Pancho Villa. They end up keeping her to be the playmate of Pancho's "daughter," Dorotea. Throughout the rest of the story, Rose learns about the revolution, meets interesting characters, discovers what her brother has been up to, and plans her escape. Definitely an adventure story.

The writing is average and the storyline is not interesting enough to attract most 4th-7th graders. I liked the the story for the historical perspective more than anything. I think school's in the southwest should have this book in their libraries and it would be a good choice for a Social Studies or English teacher to assign for a class reading, but other than that it won't get much audience. I will say that there are a lot of moral themes, such as don't judge people, don't blame others for your problems, and don't try to change people. There's also a lot of analysis of lying vs. telling the truth. These themes are another reason that this would be a good book for teachers to assign for class reading.

Carol Shank says

Viva, Rose! by Susan Krawitz, takes place in El Paso, Texas. It's 1915 and thirteen-year-old Rose Solomon discovers her lying brother Abraham isn't in Brooklyn, he's become a member of Pancho Villa's gang, a group of notorious outlaws and freedom fighters. Rose writes Abraham a letter, demanding he return home in time for Passover, but when she tries to deliver it she's kidnapped and taken to the gang's desert hideaway. So begins Rose's adventure in this fast-moving coming-of-age story.

Krawitz creates a page-turning tale in the spirit of the old west and cowboy novels. It borders a bit on tall tale, with its wild horse rides and colorful characters she skillfully brings to life. Who would have thought to put a young Jewish girl in a camp of banditos? Krawitz of course, in a flight of fancy inspired by her own family history we read about in the Author's Notes. Some have called the book a "wild ride," but I see it as part Square Dance, part hora, and part Mexican Hat Dance. My feet are constantly changing steps and rhythm as I dance with Rose in a whirl of encounters with characters that all have something to teach the impressionable Rose about life.

Perhaps the most fascinating character of all is Dorotea, a spoiled young girl who is both annoying and worthy of sympathy. Rose's relationship with her is sure to engage young readers who most likely know someone a little like Dorotea.

Besides being an enjoyable read, Viva, Rose! can be used with social studies and writing curriculums. Authentic documents such as newspaper articles, family albums and letters, are valuable teaching tools. Krawitz includes the news article about Abraham, the relative who inspired her story, and also provides

some historical information about the Mexican Revolution and Jewish Immigration. Students could research more documents from this time period, or write fictional or real stories based on their own family histories. I recommend this book for ages nine and up, for fans of cowboy stories, and for those who've felt out of place in social situations or fearful of certain groups of people. How we label people isn't necessarily how they are. Understanding and acceptance of oneself and others can come if one takes the time to look deeper as Rose does. This is a timely message for today.

Crystal says

When Rose sees a newspaper image of her brother Abe posing with Pancho Villa's gang, she discovers that he's still in Texas—not in Brooklyn, where he promised his family he was headed. Rattled by his dishonesty, Rose composes a message: if Abe doesn't return to their El Paso home by Passover, she will tell their parents the truth regarding his whereabouts. Before she can place the letter into a messenger's hands, however, Villistas take her captive. Soon after arriving at their desert camp, Villa appoints her playmate to his 9-year-old daughter Dorotea.

Krawitz has crafted an all-around winner with *Viva, Rose!* Using the Mexican Revolution as the backdrop (from which she draws parallels to the Jews' plight in Russia), Krawitz touches on such themes as truth versus falsehood, cultural differences, and tolerance. Spanish and Yiddish words peppered throughout add authenticity to the setting. Also, the author's playful writing style—which often incorporates quirky turns of phrase—should entertain young readers. Rose is a likeable protagonist whose plucky spirit perseveres regardless of circumstance. As she grapples with her brother's lies, the 13-year-old also comes to learn that some things in life cannot be neatly categorized as “right” or “wrong.” A captivating adventure that starts at full gallop and never loses speed, Rose's story encourages compassion and understanding without sounding preachy. An Author's Note provides background information on Rose and Abe's real life counterparts, as well as other relevant historical/cultural facts.

I received a complimentary copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Zach Koenig says

The premise of “*Viva, Rose!*” is pretty simple: One day in early 1900s El Paso, young Rose Solomon picks up a newspaper and sees a photo of her brother Abraham in the posse of revolutionary Pancho Villa. This is truly news to Rose, as she thought Abe was out west “being a cowboy”. When Rose starts naively poking around Villa sources to find out Abe's whereabouts, she inadvertently gets kidnapped and dropped practically at the feet of the legend himself.

First off, here is the reason why I was a bit disappointed in “*Viva, Rose!*” in terms of plot/story (some spoilers included): Ultimately, this is a story about Rose trying to find her brother Abraham. That is the arc that fuels all the other action of the story. However, that process is drawn out over and over again, to the point where Abe isn't uncovered until much later in the book than one would expect. When the reveal does

happen, it seems to have lost a bit of its luster, and as such the ending kind of fizzles in contrast to the big build-up.

That being said, there are enough interesting things happening in the book to make it an interesting read. As I mentioned, the reunion with Abe is very drawn-out, so the middle portion of the book is spent examining different facets of life within the Villa camp. This includes Rose meeting a new friend her age (a spoiled rotten girl), learning about what Villa's revolution is all about, and more light-hearted topics like learning to ride a horse. The themes inherent in those "side-quests", for lack of a better phrase, are interesting and I can see their usefulness to the overall narrative.

So, while I found there to be some interesting and heartfelt material in "Viva, Rose!", I also felt like the main goal of the novel ("finding Abe") was perhaps not managed properly over the context of the novel. It's almost as if author Krawitz sets up the core of the novel, but then realizes that Rose's explorations around the Villa encampment are more fun/important to explore. This creates a bit of a story schism. Perhaps the young readers this book is most likely aimed at won't notice this at all, but as a more adult reader it didn't quite "cross over" to me.

Heidi says

Rose is an appealing, spunky character, who is frustrated with her mother's nagging (and efforts to push her toward preparation for marriage even though she's only thirteen), and upset when she learns her adored older brother lied to her. Her parents think Abraham is back east working with his brother, Eli. Rose believes Abraham is out west working as a cowboy. When she sees his picture with Pancho Villa, the outlaw, she's horrified and tries to hide the information from her parents. When she decides to write to Abraham and let him know of her displeasure she has no idea the trouble it will get her into.

What Rose doesn't expect is to end up being snatched and taken to Pancho Villa's camp out in the desert. Becoming the 'playmate' (basically defined as servant) to Villa's niece further confuses things. Rose's views of her brother's actions start to shift as do her views on her own place in the world and the value of her own freedom. Having been babied her whole life, Rose spends a lot of time in the beginning blaming others for her difficult situation. But finally she realizes that not even her brother can save her from this mess and she may just have to do something herself.

I've enjoyed the imagery that Krawitz has used in her writing as well as her depictions of the formerly Russian Jewish family as they live their life in El Paso, Texas. It's even more impressive that the story is based on the author's own family history. I've read a lot of historical fiction over the years, most of it focused on U.S. mainstream history. It's refreshing to read about people and events that aren't as familiar to me. The story is well-told and fun to read, although Dorotea, Villa's so-called niece, really made me angry with her antics, a sign of a well-written character.
