

## About Susan Wittig Albert: “A Brilliant, Entertaining Author”



“Susan Wittig Albert is a brilliant, entertaining author, one of the best writers around.”—*The Dallas Morning News*

You probably already know several things about Susan. Perhaps you’ve read her best-selling China Bayles herb and gardening mysteries—there are thirteen of them at last count, plus a collection of short stories. Or maybe you’re a fan of the Victorian/Edwardian mysteries she co-authors with her husband, Bill Albert.

But there is something that you might not know about her. She has also written a great many books for young adults. In fact, you might have read a few of the YA novels she wrote as Carolyn Keene or Franklin W. Dixon, the pseudonyms used by writers of the Nancy Drew and Hardy Boys mysteries.

“I began writing stories for young readers when I was still a teenager myself,” Susan says.

“I hoped to some day become a full-time writer.”

Then she got sidetracked. She went to college, took a Ph.D. at Berkley, and began a highly successful university teaching and administrative career that took her to the University of Texas, Tulane University, and Southwest Texas State.

In 1985, though, she decided that the time had come to explore that early desire to be a writer. She left the university and began to write, enjoying an immediate success. “I sold my first book project without an agent,” she says, shaking her head in disbelief. “And when the second and third proposals sold, as well, I knew I was onto something.”

Over the next seven years, working by herself or with Bill, she had written over sixty books for middle- and high-school readers, including books in the famous Nancy Drew and Hardy Boys series, and series such as Sweet Valley Twins, Roommates, Sweet Dreams, Seniors, and others.

But in the early 90s, she felt it was time to try her hand at adult fiction. She turned to mysteries, with the publication in 1992 of

*Thyme of Death*, the first book in the China Bayles series. She and Bill followed this success in 1994 with their first historical mystery, co-authored under the pen name of Robin Paige. It was through that series that she was re-introduced to Beatrix Potter, and began to think that perhaps it was time to write for young people again.

“I have felt for some time that there is a need for more ‘family fiction,’ “ she says. “We need stories that families can read and enjoy and discuss together. I think that the life and times of Beatrix Potter is that kind of story. And when Miss Potter’s animals—Tabitha Twitchit, Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle, Tom Thumb, and Jemima Puddleduck—volunteered to be in my stories, I knew I was writing for youngsters, as well as the young at heart.”

So, with the publication of *The Tale of Hill Top Farm* and *The Tale of Holly How*, the first two books in her new series, Susan has come full circle, back where she began. How does it feel? “It feels great,” she says. “I love what I’m doing. I wouldn’t trade my job for any other in the world!”

## The Tale of Holly How: “Enchantment”

It is July, 1906, and Miss Potter has returned to Hill Top Farm to see how her animals are faring. She plans to buy some sheep from a local shepherd, old Ben Hornby. But when she goes to fetch them, she finds Ben lying at the foot of a cliff, dead.

What’s happened? Did Ben fall off the cliff accidentally? Or did someone have a grudge against him?

This mystery isn’t the only crisis that faces the village. Lady Longford plans to hire an entirely unsuitable man as head

teacher at Sawrey School, displacing the much-loved Miss Nash. And Miss Martine, her ladyship’s companion, has dark designs on Caroline, her ladyship’s granddaughter.

And even worse, the Hill Top badger sett has been raided and its residents kidnapped for an illegal badger-baiting. This spurs Bosworth Badger into action, with the help of his friend, Professor Gabriel Newton Owl, D.Phil. Together, they organize a thrilling raid to rescue the victims from certain death.

And who could guess that old Ben’s death and the badger-baiting might be related? Why, Miss Potter, of course! And it is she who ultimately saves the day—and the life of Lady Longford.

The second in Susan Wittig Albert’s outstanding new series, *The Tale of Holly How* is woven of historical fact and fascinating fantasy. Creative and innovative, it is the kind of story that Miss Potter herself might have enjoyed, if she were invited to read it today.

---

“[*The Tale of Hill Top Farm*] is a book for all ages, but it seems to fit the bill perfectly for middle-schoolers who are looking for mysteries and like animal stories. . . . Beatrix is not only an artist and illustrator, she is a first-rate sleuth. We bet this series will appeal to you and your middle-school mystery fan.”

—*The Detroit Free Press*

---



---

“Enchantment for fans of Beatrix Potter . . .” —*Kirkus Reviews*

---

