

## The Song of the Lark (Oxford World's Classics)

Willa Cather



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The daughter of a Swedish minister growing up in Colorado, Thea Kronborg's adolescent ability on the piano is encouraged by her eccentric German music teacher, Professor Wuncsch, and by the kindly but unhappily married Dr. Howard Archie. Set apart from the townspeople by her talents, Thea's friends are far from conventional. At 17 she leaves them and her mother's influence to go to Chicago where she studies with the pianist Andor Harsanyi. Having overheard her singing in a church, he is the mentor who discovers the potential of Thea's singing voice and sends her to study with the chill and selfish Madison Bowers, whom she dislikes. Her story moves to Arizona when she and a wealthy young brewer, Fred Ottenburg fall in love. A tension between her relationship with him and the driving artistic impulse that has always ruled her develops and becomes the novel's compelling central theme.

Cather's lyrical, atmospheric and moving novel is a thinly veiled autobiography of a female artist in America at the turn of the century. A mature work filled with memorable characters all of whom influence Thea in different ways, *The Song of the Lark* deserves to be read alongside *O Pioneers!* and *My Antonia* and fully justifies Cather's status as one of America's greatest twentieth-century writers.



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