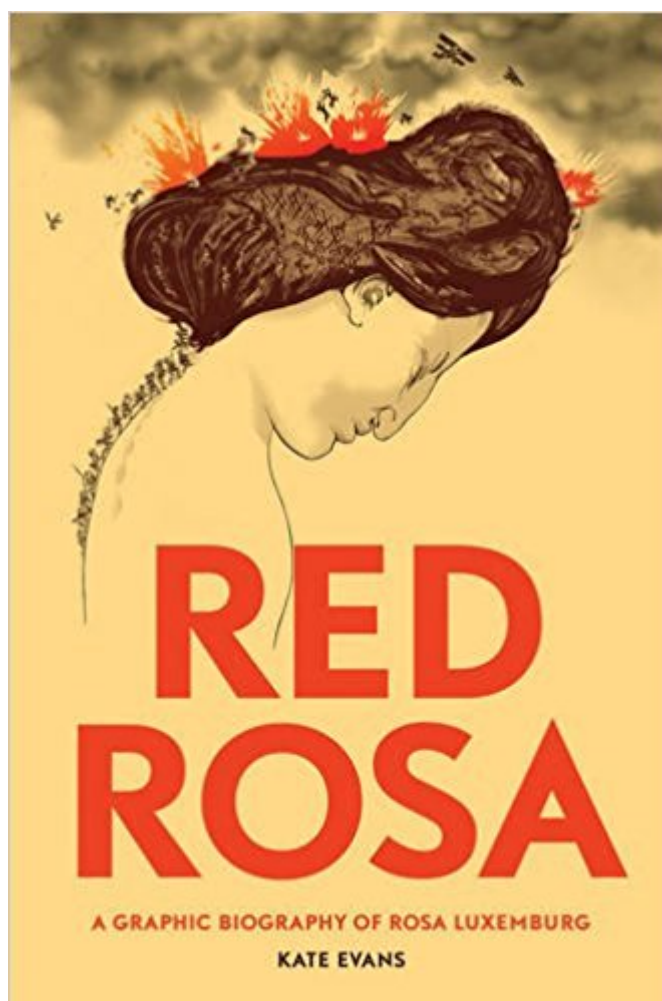


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Red Rosa: A Graphic Biography Of Rosa Luxemburg



Synopsis

A graphic novel of the dramatic life and death of German revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg. A giant of the political left, Rosa Luxemburg is one of the foremost minds in the canon of revolutionary socialist thought. But she was much more than just a thinker. She made herself heard in a world inimical to the voices of strong-willed women. She overcame physical infirmity and the prejudice she faced as a Jew to become an active revolutionary whose philosophy enriched every corner of an incredibly productive and creative life—her many friendships, her sexual intimacies, and her love of science, nature and art. Always opposed to the First World War, when others on the German left were swept up on a tide of nationalism, she was imprisoned and murdered in 1919 fighting for a revolution she knew to be doomed. In this beautifully drawn work of graphic biography, writer and artist Kate Evans has opened up her subject's intellectual world to a new audience, grounding Luxemburg's ideas in the realities of an inspirational and deeply affecting life.

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Customer Reviews

I found this book to be an exceptional read. The subject matter was extremely interesting and the presentation was outstanding. I will be looking for more of Kate Evans books in the future. If you're interested in this book I recommend you buy it, you will not be disappointed in the least. Also, on a side note, this is a very well printed and bound book. I am impressed.

Kate Evans has written a surprisingly deep and moving account of Rosa Luxemburg's life that

reveals both the depths of her poetic soul and humanity as well as the theoretical intricacies of Marxism. One learns the essence of use-value and market-value as well as their incompatibility; and a great deal about the history of the German revolution of 1918-1919. Luxemburg is also prophetic about the nature of capitalism's need to transform the entire world into its own image and she and Lenin were of the same mind in seeing Imperialism as the highest form of capitalism. Unlike many Marxists, Rosa saw that there was no inevitability to the revolution but that it depended entirely upon mobilizing contingent forces, the difficulty or impossibility of doing which history has demonstrated.

This is a beautifully researched and presented work, presented with humor and passion, giving a vibrant (and human) sense of the life and ideas of an inspiring and intellectually brilliant representative of revolutionary socialism. Luxemburg's commitment to a deep and thoroughgoing democracy and humanism shines through this graphic biography, which gives a good sense of the historical context of Luxemburg's thought as well as of her contemporary relevance.

I end up reading a fair number of graphic novels. The thing is that I normally just grab them from the library because I hate paying what is a higher price for a book that I will read much faster than a normal book. It makes my dollar per entertainment hour ratio increase and I'm sure that's how most normal humans judge if they should buy a book. I am, however, glad that I purchased this book, because I can support my favorite radical publisher (Sorry, Haymarket) and I have a book I can pass along to like-minded friends – a book that most likely would not have been in my library anyways. And it's a good book. Before reading Red Rosa, I was only vaguely aware of her as the writer of Reform or Revolution and the General Strike. I also knew that she was a martyr to the cause of worldwide socialism. What I didn't realize was that she had to fight her own party to not just go along with the bourgeois parties, like for example voting to a man (and they were all men) for entry into WWI, and instead work towards the last lines in the manifesto – “The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working Men of All Countries, Unite!” It is these lines that illuminated and drove her life from a precocious young woman in Poland to a death before her time. Well worth reading for both history and inspiration.

Even as an anarchist, I appreciate Luxemburg's impressive contributions to the Left cannon as a

voice who spoke out against all injustice and power, no matter who the perpetrator, and as a fearless woman scholar and organizer. This book captures this revolutionary fire and also explains and illustrates her theories in a way which keeps them relevant to modern political struggles. It also pays great attention to the struggles she faced as a woman organizer and the abuse of power and insincerity of SDP officials. Evans leaves the reader motivated to begin or keep engaging in social struggle, which is certainly what Rosa would have wanted.

Red Rosa by Kate Evans is a stunning work of both biography and visual art. In fact, because of the extensive appendix with citations for quotes and events in the book, this serves as an excellent research source (likely as an intro to Rosa and a springboard into other sources from the appendix). Rosa's ideas are expressed clearly and are at least as relevant today as they were then. Her struggles as a woman within the movement are also on display, from which we can still unfortunately learn about not discounting people because they may belong to some group. I highly recommend this book for those interested in Rosa's thought, for those who like good biographies (in graphic form) and for those who like quality graphic novels in both the drawings and the book materials. Reviewed from an ARC made available by the publisher via NetGalley.

I don't read a lot of books about feminist socialists, but when I was given a chance to read and review 'Red Rosa' by Kate Evans, I was intrigued and approached the work with an open mind. Rosa Luxemburg was a radical socialist at the beginning of the last century. At the age of 15 she was exiled from her homeland of Poland for her part in a general strike. She eventually made her way to Germany where she tried desperately to intervene, as best she could with no vote, in a society bent on war. She was a teacher and writer and eventual martyr to her cause. The art is at times a bit garish and uneven, but that only makes this feel like a more personal work. It takes a while for the story to get moving, and there are kind of unexplained gaps in the narrative. An odd thing happens when the author/illustrator jumps into the middle of a scene. It's jarring and I felt a bit unnecessary. Still, the story of Rosa turns out to be a moving one, and the book shows her passion for her ideals. The end of the book has an extensive collection of notes to go along with the story. I appreciated the chance to learn more about this outspoken passionate woman. I received a review copy of this graphic novel from Verso Books and NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. Thank you for allowing me to review this graphic novel.

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