



Rose in bloom : a sequel to "Eight Cousins"; Illustrated Classics Vol.158

Written by Louisa May Alcott

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By Louisa May Alcott

Rose In Bloom Song

For many years (until I read Jane Eyre the second time), this was my absolute favorite book. It is perhaps the reason I love 'nerds.' While many women grew up loving Mr. Darcy, I grew up loving Mac. He was my ideal love interest. He suffered long and nobely for love of Rose and I admired that with all of my little heart. I dreamed of being Rose. Of course, I would have accepted him at once instead of stringing him along so. ;) Regardless, after over fifteen readings (wearing out my old copy so For many years (until I read Jane Eyre the second time), this was my absolute favorite book. It is perhaps the reason I love 'nerds.' While many women grew up loving Mr. Darcy, I grew up loving Mac. He was my ideal love interest. He suffered long and nobely for love of Rose and I admired that with all of my little heart. I dreamed of being Rose. Of course, I would have accepted him at once instead of stringing him along so. ;) Regardless, after over fifteen readings (wearing out my old copy so that I had to by a new one) I still find myself liking the lovable Mac, laughing uproariously at him learning to dance. This is a delightful book and well worth the read, even if you don't fall in love with Mac. ;) ...more

Rose In Bloom Meaning

I actually liked Alcott's Rose series much better than the Little Women series.

So, I kinda thought the preaching was done when I started this one. Rose is grown up, she and Phebe and Uncle Alec have just returned from a year abroad, where Phebe has trained to be a singer. Now Rose is ready to be launched on society, and most of the boy cousins are grown.

It starts out very promising, and though I never normally root for cousins to marry, here you're rooting for Rose to choose one of her brilliant cousins and live happily ever after. But of course it's not that easy. First So, I kinda thought the preaching was done when I started this one. Rose is grown up, she and Phebe and Uncle Alec have just returned from a year abroad, where Phebe has trained to be a singer. Now Rose is ready to be launched on society, and most of the boy cousins are grown.

It starts out very promising, and though I never normally root for cousins to marry, here you're rooting for Rose to choose one of her brilliant cousins and live happily ever after. But of course it's not that easy. First Rose has to make the very hard decision of whether or not she will enjoy a brief, restrained season of frivolity, complete with wearing nice gowns and dancing. Though it pains him to see her waste her time in this way (when she could be reading improving books or watering the houseplants), Uncle Alec allows twenty-year-old Rose to attend balls and parties, where she discovers to her horror that a) her cousin Charlie is really in love with her and b) he DRINKS ALCOHOL AND STAYS UP LATE.

Rose spends the rest of the book buying clothes and housing for orphans, preaching the evils of frivolity, and simultaneously demanding that her cousins prove they are morally and intellectually good enough to even hold her hand, and arguing that she isn't good enough for anyone to love. It becomes exhausting, and annoying. I shan't spoil anything, but I will say that she finally gets off her high horse and ends up with the person I knew she should have ended up with in EIGHT COUSINS. ...more

Rose In Bloom Pdf

Well, what can I say? Instead I'll quote Miranda's first diary entry from *The Secret Diaries of Miss Miranda Cheever*, "Today, I fell in love." since it was the first thing that crossed my mind after I finished reading this book.

FYI, I've never had a fictional crush before, no matter how perfect the heroes are I still didn't feel anything for them. I'm not crushing on the perfect Mr. Darcy, and I am definitely annoyed with a certain vampire-you know who-out there instead of squealing at the mention of his name. Well, what can I say? Instead I'll quote Miranda's first diary entry from *The Secret Diaries of Miss Miranda Cheever*, "Today, I fell in love." since it was the first thing that crossed my mind after I finished reading this book.

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The perfect ones only exist in books and movies (I'm talking about personality here, not just the outer look). Therefore while many women and girls are seeking for their "Mr.Darcy" I'm 100% certain that I will not find my "Mr. Darcy" anywhere. I just can't believe that such a man exists in this world, so what's the point of crushing on him?

But it's an entirely different story with Mac. In *Eight Cousins* I just like him, nothing more. As I watch him grow in *Rose in Bloom* I can't help it but fell for him.

He is a book worm, not good looking, awkward, and absent-minded sometimes, he is far from perfect. But those humanly flaws are what make him real, make me think that I can find someone like him out there. Simply put, I have found everything that I'm looking for in a man within Mac. Now I know for sure what my criteria of a perfect man is. Yea, pathetic and shocking as it is, but it seems that all this time I myself didn't know what I've been looking for..

And now about the rating. True, the story itself is not something so amazing or incredible, but since I've always loved this kind of stories (it's heartwarming, sweet and nostalgic) and of course because of Mac, I'll give this one 5 stars (without him it will be four like the prequel).

...more

I have several aunts who are readers. And they have always looked after me when it comes to sending books they think I'd like my way. Particularly during my formative reading years. To this day, many of the books nearest and dearest to my heart came to me in the mail from one of my aunts. When I was twelve or so, my Aunt Becky sent me a lesser known book (which I had never heard of) by a very well known author (which I had). The book was *ROSE IN BLOOM* and it was actually the first book I ever read. I have several aunts who are readers. And they have always looked after me when it comes to sending books they think I'd like my way. Particularly during my formative reading years. To this day, many of the books nearest and dearest to my heart came to me in the mail from one of my aunts. When I was

twelve or so, my Aunt Becky sent me a lesser known book (which I had never heard of) by a very well known author (which I had). The book was ROSE IN BLOOM and it was actually the first book I ever read by Louisa May Alcott. It is also actually a sequel to her earlier book Eight Cousins. I didn't know this at the time, though, and so I cracked it open completely unaware of what to expect in the way of the writing, the style, or the characters. I've since gone back and read Eight Cousins, but, perhaps simply because I read it first, or perhaps because it feels like a slightly more mature and focused character-driven story, ROSE IN BLOOM has always been my favorite. I've read it many times, though I realized it's been quite a few years since I picked it up last. But Rose's coming of age story, her love for her family, and the important dilemmas she faces never fail to make me feel nostalgic and want to return to spend more time with her.

Rose Campbell has been traveling abroad with her Uncle Alec and her maid, friend, and companion Phebe for the last several years. Now she has come of age, come into her inheritance, and come home to Aunt Hill--the family stronghold--to reacquaint herself with her seven male cousins as well as her family's expectations that she settle down and marry one of them at once. But Rose has grown up quite a bit in the intervening years and is not at all sure she's ready for matrimony. Surprising the whole clan by insisting upon establishing herself as an independent woman before choosing a husband, she holds their uneasiness and disapproval at bay and takes her own time evaluating her options and settling on a course of action. Meanwhile, the various aunts are in various states of uproar and decline. Her former maid and now friend Phebe is caught uncomfortably between two worlds as she is forced to determine what she will do with her life now that Rose has no official need of her and she has little money of her own. And then there are the boys. The seven boys who've unexpectedly grown into men and who are each so very different and each have their own unique relationship with their cousin Rose. Their wildly different personalities, habits, and desires at times clash with their parents' wishes and their choices, along with Rose's, dramatically affect every member of the Campbell family over the course of the novel.

I'm always amazed at how few people I know have actually read (or even heard of) this book. I realize it will always be overshadowed by Little Women, but ROSE IN BLOOM is a perfectly lovely, sweet read about a kind, thoughtful, and forward-thinking young woman and how she comes of age and learns several important things about herself and the world around her and is a force for good in binding the wayward members of her family together. The opening passage, to give you a feel for what's in store: Three young men stood together on a wharf one bright October day awaiting the arrival of an ocean steamer with an impatience which found a vent in lively skirmishes with a small lad, who pervaded the premises like a will-o'-the-wisp and afforded much amusement to the other groups assembled there.

"They are the Campbells, waiting for their cousin, who has been abroad several years with her uncle, the doctor," whispered one lady to another as the handsomest of the young men touched his hat to her as he passed, lugging the boy, whom he had just rescued from a little expedition down among the piles.

"Which is that?" asked the stranger.

"Prince Charlie, as he's called--a fine fellow, the most promising of the seven, but a little fast, people say," answered the first speaker with a shake of the head.

"Are the others his brothers?"

"No, cousins. The elder is Archie, a most exemplary young man. He has just gone into business with the merchant uncle and bids fair to be an honor to his family. The other, with the eyeglasses and no gloves, is Mac, the odd one, just out of college."

"And the boy?"

"Oh, he is Jamie, the youngest brother of Archibald, and the pet of the whole family. Mercy on us--he'll be in if they don't hold on to him!"

I do love those boys. Upstanding Archie, quiet Mac, princely Charlie, the beanpole brothers Will and Geordie, dandy Steve, and impish Jamie. When I first read it, this book reminded me quite a bit of Anne of Green Gables and, though overall a less complicated and somewhat rosier tale, it is not without its heart-wrenching moments and instances of tragedy. I appreciated the way Alcott addressed the many vices and challenges young men and women in their early twenties face and it never fails to surprise me how those hurdles have not changed so very much since this book was first published in 1876. It's interesting to me that it is so often billed as a children's book, as the themes it explores seem much older to me. Particularly as Rose does, in the end, come to an informed (if painful and complicated) decision as to where her heart lies. But then I read it first when I was twelve, and again every couple of years after that, and gained something new every time I did. How sad it must be to never re-read good books and never experience that unforgettable moment of realization that both you and the book have brought more to the table than was there the last time you met. Recommended, unsurprisingly, for fans of Alcott, Montgomery, and Eva Ibbotson. ...more

Rose In Bloom Movie

This is a comfort read, one I've always had warm feelings for.

Rose in Bloom picks up a few years after Eight Cousins. Rose is around 20 now, and returning from a trip abroad with Uncle and Phebe. Naturally, everyone assumes that she will marry soon, but she wants to look around a little first and do something worthwhile.

She settles on philanthropy as a career, but not before trying some of the pleasures of the high life, the parties and late nights of frivolous society. This does her no real harm. This is a comfort read, one I've always had warm feelings for.

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Her cousin Charlie is determined to marry her, and Rose's feelings are on the fence about this cousin. I personally think she was trying too hard to love him, when he had done so little worthy of respect. Nevertheless, Rose thinks that maybe someday Charlie will be her ideal.

This time through I wasn't really on board with Alcott's decision about Charlie's fate... I feel like it conveniently took Charlie out of the way so that Rose didn't really have to make up her mind about him.

BUT now we come to Mac. Her bookish, slightly antisocial cousin. Mac and Rose have always been decent friends; she knows how to take him and doesn't get worried by his uniqueness. In this book he shows his real potential. He has a good heart and faultless instincts; he is kind and sincere; he stands apart from society but doesn't judge it too harshly and is good-natured enough to participate in the social scene when he needs to (and with a little training from Rose and his brother!). The problem is, Rose rather takes him for granted. The final few chapters, where Mac comes to a realization about how he feels for Rose, and does something about it, always capture my heart.

I think she's a little too clueless about the whole thing, but Mac more than makes up for that by his purposeful, focused, steady regard.

Much as I enjoy the Darcys and Rochesters of the literary world, Mac is an altogether superior type... he's neither repressed nor tragic. He's a worker and an honest friend, a balanced thinker and feeler, somebody you'd want on your side, and somebody you'd be infinitely safe with. That is why this book is a comfort read. ...more

I was already a hardcore fan of Little Women when my mother pleased me very much one Christmas by

giving me a matching hardcover set of the two Eight Cousins books which I hadn't as yet read (why not? I'm sure they were in the local public library). I thought they were great, just as good as Little Women in their way, and I confess that at that young age (something like 11) I wanted to be Rose Campbell just a little bit more than I wanted to be Jo March. Rereading them for the first time as an adult (not the same copies -- though I remember them fondly for the sake of my mother's thoughtfulness, they were not particularly attractive modern reprints, and they fell by the wayside at some point in the last three decades), I discover that really, nothing Alcott wrote is ever going to match up anywhere close to her most famous book. The attractions of rich pretty Rose and her bevy of adoring cousins and the good times they have remain, but the moralizing preachiness of the books stood out and got in the way far more than it had in my memory. Perhaps I was better at tuning it out back then? Perhaps I simply whole-heartedly agreed that frivolity and any amount of alcohol, even a sip of wine, was unequivocally bad? (I was a rather prudish child).

I suspect that as a child I reread Eight Cousins rather more than Rose in Bloom. Although I remembered all of the outcomes for the older set of cousins (save for Steve's sweet little romance) there was much in the book that felt fresh. I found Rose's complicated feelings about Charlie surprisingly nuanced, and I appreciated things like Rose having a philosophical awakening after reading Emerson. The ending was satisfying, and makes me feel that preferring to be Rose rather than Jo is actually a pretty savvy choice.

So I enjoyed it, but wonder if I will ever reread these books again. This makes me wish that I had completed my collection of the very attractive Little Brown early 1900s illustrated editions of Alcott's works before reading this one. Rose in Bloom is the only one I lack, but I mistakenly thought I had it -- otherwise I wouldn't have embarked on the reread. Now I'm faced with this quandary: is it worth spending money on a pretty book you will most likely never crack open, except to look at the pictures? A final minor note on editions: I really like the cover of this paperback I've shelved that I checked out of the library. There is Rose looking pre-raphaelite (as described at one point in the text) and there are the little statues of Cupid and Psyche. The illustrator clearly read the book to the end and paid attention!
...more

Rose In Bloom Helen Hardt

Louisa May Alcott's novels are perfect reading for children. Her heroines are great role models for girls. And her stories are very real, and also very charming and innocent.

Rose in Bloom, the sequel to Eight Cousins, should serve as a guidebook for every young lady. It is a story of Rose, an orphan, who goes to live with her uncle and seven boy cousins. Her uncle "experiments" with raising her up and the result is a lovely young woman. Rose in Bloom is a "coming of age" novel. As Rose matures i

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The innocence of Alcott's writings is shown primarily in her portrayal of romance. Courtship and marriage are not portrayed in a gushy, sentimental way. Her love stories are very sweet and tender, and presented in quite a wholesome way. Alcott's stories are simple and wholesome reading for younger readers, and yet still rich enough to be enjoyed gleaned from by older readers.

Alcott is particularly admirable in her use of literary references and allusions. She incorporates so many hints of Shakespeare, Dickens, as well as lesser known authors such as Maria Edgeworth, Susan Warner, Dinah Maria Craik, Mary Sherwood, etc. Her literary knowledge is extensive and impressive! ...more

ickness of marrying your first cousin aside, I still enjoy Rose. Mostly because of this: "...no woman should give her happiness into the keeping of a man without fixed principles."

Rose In Bloom Tattoo

I don't know if Louisa May Alcott intentionally *tried* to spoil her wonderful characters from "Eight Cousins", but either way she succeeded.

I picked up "Eight Cousins" when I was quite young, because I had nothing to read, and I'd enjoyed "Little Women". Turns out, I ended up liking it much more than "Little Women"; mostly because it was significantly less preachy.

"Eight Cousins" isn't perfect. You can tell Alcott was an educator and, at a lack of a better word, wanted to blatantly brainwash her readers. I don't know if Louisa May Alcott intentionally *tried* to spoil her wonderful characters from "Eight Cousins", but either way she succeeded.

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"Eight Cousins" isn't perfect. You can tell Alcott was an educator and, at a lack of a better word, wanted to blatantly brainwash her readers with her values and views. Some are okay, like family closeness and respecting your elders. Others still stand as very sexist or like having fun is a sin (like when Rose's ear piercing is considering as bad or worse than when the boys smoke). Somethings simply don't translate into nowadays.

But "Eight Cousins" is a relatively harmless book. No kid nowadays will be brainwashed by that, because you can brush away the annoying preachy which are comparatively few, while the family dynamic, the main theme, is interesting and well written.

Fast forward to "Rose in Bloom" and yikes. I brought this as an e-book on an eight hours flight to and from India, and it was hell being left with it. I skimmed the last 50 pages, and that's something I never do.

Bible quotes are abundant, and the apparent purpose of the book is to show fun is immoral and that being good has to necessarily be boring or you aren't doing it right. The one 3 dimensional character is killed off - the only character with flaws as well as qualities. Because for Alcott you're either virtuous or a sinner, and there's nothing left in the middle. Of course, said character died being a sinner, failing at redeeming himself for the woman he loves, and she never really loved him much anyways and moves on within months, because one way or the other, he drank licor and enjoyed being with his friends, and so doesn't deserve good things.

Meanwhile, Rose and the rest of the characters prove that to be good you absolutely can't have any fun whatsoever. You can't, for instance, go to parties and still care about the poor. It's one or the other. If

you like parties you're a sinner. And if you ever have the instinct to go out and buy yourself a nice dress don't because that's a sin too, and you should give your money to an Irish girl you look condescendingly at. Also, if you are being good, you are allowed to look down on people and be patronizing and they will appreciate you for it because you are good. In sum: if you ever have the instinct of spending money on yourself you are a bad, bad person. You also aren't allowed to have friends outside your direct family.

Other things that are a sin include professions that don't directly help other people, so only be a doctor or a lawyer - or, if you have the money, a philanthropist. For some reason it is immoral to be an actor. Characters in the book agree that it is, to paraphrase, "Better and more honourable to be a lousy doctor than a successful actor". Yeah, because actors give nothing to society, like fun and distraction (which, again, are immoral) or even educational services, but being a bad doctor who might kill you is ok.

To sum things up: lots of annoying bible quotes, best character dies, nobody has any hobby or interest whatsoever because being good is all-consuming, the adults in the series basically stop existing, except to give worldly advice because age necessarily equals wisdom and Rose has a weird Oedipus Complex with Uncle Alec that is just disturbing. She ends up adopting, alone and unmarried, a small child at age circa 18, but don't worry. She does get a husband. Because that's what's important in life. ...more

This has a vague spoiler in it. Fair warning.

Much as I love Eight Cousins, I find my pleasure in Rose in Bloom lessens as I age. Not so much for the 'preachiness' of the virtues you find in all of her books- they are, after all, meant to be pleasant ways to learn to be a good person. But I felt her decision to remove the one love interest from the story was taking the easy way out in resolving both the love triangle and that character's personal faults. Most of Alcott's books deal with the loss This has a vague spoiler in it. Fair warning.

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If a sweet (and at times, bittersweet) romance of Victorian youth and idealism is what you're in the mood for, this is a lovely one to reach for. ...more

Rose In Bloom Sat

In my somewhat limited experience, all Alcott's main characters are exactly the same. I swear you couldn't tell them apart. I also swear that one of the matronly women in this book had the same line regarding her children as Jo did in that peasant festival Jo's Boys.

But regardless of the lack of originality, I gave up trying to like this book when the rich and nearly perfect and naturally gorgeous and abysmally dull Rose has multiple men literally throwing themselves at her.

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But regardless of the lack of originality, I gave up trying to like this book when the rich and nearly perfect and naturally gorgeous and abysmally dull Rose has multiple men literally throwing themselves at her.

Just as a note, I detest the idea that good and moral characters are automatically dull, but sometimes they actually are, and that would be the case here. ...more

Childhood classic. My grandmother had it tucked away when we came through on a cross Canada trip, and offered it to me. The book had a broken top cover, but I didn't care. Owning any book was like owning a jewel.

Rose In Bloom Afghan By Red Heart

A few years ago I read Eight Cousins and Rose in Bloom. I had them both on my e-ink, so I decided to re-read Rose in Bloom.

I liked it better than I did last time and greatly admired Rose. Perhaps it was because I understood more of it than I did when I was 8-10ish. At that age, Eight Cousins was much preferable, and Rose in Bloom was just a good sequel.

May I say that I love Mac, and I'm so happy with how everything turned out but because I knew what was going to happen the whole time I was kinda A few years ago I read Eight Cousins and Rose in Bloom. I had them both on my e-ink, so I decided to re-read Rose in Bloom.

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May I say that I love Mac, and I'm so happy with how everything turned out but because I knew what was going to happen the whole time I was kinda thinking 'hurry up.' I couldn't wait for Mac!

Charlie... it's so sad, especially if you have just read Eight Cousins and then to read how Prince's story played out.

I'm glad about (view spoiler)[Kitty and Steve ending up together, and the 'three weddings' thing is excellent (hide spoiler)]

As for Archie and Pheobe, that is a lovely story and perhaps the sweetest love story I've ever read.

Content: none, other than mention of being a bit drunk, but it is treated as wrong ...more

It wasn't the worst book, but to me was far less enjoyable than Little Women, which is probably what brings most readers to LMA's other books. Rose, the heroine, was less realistic and multidimensional than she was in Eight Cousins, the predecessor to this book. LMA must have realized how sickeningly perfect her portrayal of Rose is, since she goes out of her way in the preface to point out that Rose isn't supposed to be an example of a "model" woman, despite the fact that she very much comes off that way in the story. Rose in Eight Cousins was loving, kind, and eager to learn, but also shy, vain, and a little smug or snobby at times. She has a mixture of positive and negative traits like everyone does. Rose in Rose in Bloom is **allegedly** not perfect, but we only know that because LMA takes pains to point it out to us and creates tortured scenarios to display Rose overcoming her "vices" and "failings" (e.g., the scene in the dress shop, which is a far more contrived and moralistic version of the scene in Little Women where Beth encounters Mr. Laurence in the fish market). Otherwise, she seems basically perfect -- rich, beautiful, self-sacrificing and noble, benevolent, charitable...you name the Victorian virtue and Rose possesses it.

Over the course of the story, twenty-year-old Rose, under the influence of her puritanical uncle Alec, overcomes such horrible temptations as French novels, pretty dresses, glasses of Champagne, and society balls, and instead comes to guilt herself into thinking she prefers staying at home every night with her old aunt reading the "improving" books which her uncle has pre-screened for her and deemed suitable. I found this portrayal to be problematic in many ways. First of all, Rose clearly enjoys having fun with her girlfriends and buying a new outfit every now and then, and I find it hard to see the problem in that, as long as she doesn't overdo it. (I don't think this viewpoint necessarily arises from the fact that I'm a modern reader whereas the book was written in the Victorian era -- Rose's contemporaries also seem to find her a little strange for not allowing herself to have any fun.) It's depressing that her uncle seemingly has such a low opinion of her self-control that he instills a strong sense of guilt in her for wanting and enjoying the same things as most women of her age and social class. Second, I found the emphasis on feminine innocence disconcerting and in conflict with some of LMA's more feminist leanings. She wants her heroines to be independent and self-sufficient, but also so innocent and sheltered that they can't read a mildly racy French novel without being corrupted. I lost track of how many times she used the word "innocent" to describe Rose or likened her to some sort of flower (or "innocent bloom," as LMA would have put it). Further to this point, Uncle Alec's infantilization of Rose was a huge issue for me. He professes to be all for women's rights, especially in the first book, but he still wants to control every thought in Rose's head and make sure they are in sync with his own, and emotionally manipulates her to get the results he wants. (Her incredible level of guilt over things like wanting to have a social life beyond her cousins or wanting to dress up in fashionable outfits was painful to read.)

[Spoilers below....details on some of the relationships and Charlie's story arc.]

I found the strong point of the story to be the romantic relationships, as Rose's struggles in this regard are portrayed naturally and well. The pressure Rose feels from her loving but overbearing family to "fix" and then marry Charlie, the ambivalence she herself feels toward him, and the sadness mingled with freedom she feels when he dies are what made her character sympathetic and relatable in some way. She wants to do the best she can by someone she truly cares about, but is unsure how to reconcile his happiness and emotional needs with her own. As a result of what happened with Charlie, her relationship with Mac progressed a little more slowly than I, as a reader, would have liked (lots of skimming there), but it wasn't hard to understand why she would be wary of throwing herself into another relationship. I was also glad for Rose that her relationship with Mac, who embodies many of Uncle Alec's good traits without the controlling and manipulative aspects, replaced her relationship with Uncle Alec as the central one in her life. However, between the cousin-marriages, the excessive moralizing, the mostly one-dimensional characters, and the lip service to feminism while keeping the main character emotionally dependent on and dominated by a man, I just couldn't get behind this book.
...more

Rose In Bloom Audiobook

4/5 stars

The ridiculously slow pace at which I read this book might seem like evidence to the contrary, but I enjoyed this book so much more than the first! Eight Cousins was cute, it was very sweet and I think it gave a very necessary introduction to the personalities and relationships between the characters of this story, but in retrospect that entire book just feels like a setup for this story to be told.

I think much of what I said in my review for Eight Cousins holds true for this book as well 4/5 stars

The ridiculously slow pace at which I read this book might seem like evidence to the contrary, but I enjoyed this book so much more than the first! Eight Cousins was cute, it was very sweet and I think it gave a very necessary introduction to the personalities and relationships between the characters of this story, but in retrospect that entire book just feels like a setup for this story to be told.

I think much of what I said in my review for Eight Cousins holds true for this book as well. Rose continued to be a sweet and ambitious heroine as she aged- can I interject to mention that this book takes place MUCH later than I thought from the first, not just a few years but practically a decade!- and I loved her all the more for it. It's easy for some growing young women to be written off as shallow and unintelligent, and I have a great respect for Louisa May Alcott thanks to her handling of characters such as these (particularly considering the time period she was writing in). Just one of the many examples, this one only 10 pages into the book: "...I believe that it is as much a right and a duty for women to do something with their lives as for men, and we are not going to be satisfied with such frivolous parts as you give us." cried Rose, with kindling eyes. "I mean what I say, and you cannot laugh me down... We've got minds and souls as well as hearts; ambition and talents as well as beauty and accomplishments; and we want to live and learn as well as love and be loved. I'm sick of being told that is all a woman is fit for! I won't have anything to do with love till I prove that I am something besides a housekeeper and baby-tender!" Let 'em have it, Rose!

It was so delightful seeing all of her cousins grown up as well. I think Alcott did a beautiful job of staying true to the personalities she assigned them as children while appropriately maturing them (well, some boys more than others). Archie, Charlie, and Mac really pull on my heartstrings, and I love them even more as men than I did as boys. (view spoiler)[(Insert obligatory mention of how losing Charlie literally ripped my heart out because it was so shocking and damn Rose I know you didn't really want to marry the guy but could you still be a little more torn up about it?? Like let's just ruminate on this quote about the bracelet he gave her: "...she took out the blue bracelet, feeling that she owed Charlie a tender through in the midst of her new happiness, for of late she had forgotten him. She had worn the trinket hidden under her black sleeve for a long time after his death, with the regretful constancy one sometimes shows in doing some little kindness too late. But her arm had grown too round to hide the ornament, the forget-me-nots had fallen one by one, the clasp had broken, and that autumn she laid

the bracelet away, acknowledging that she had outgrown the souvenir as well as the sentiment that gave it." I mean I get it but that made me cry the first time I read it and I'm honestly about to cry again. None of this is meant to take away from Mac, who I still hold dear and think is much more suited for Rose (hide spoiler)] What was a delightful surprise, however, was how relevant Steve became in this sequel! I not only knew who he was this time around (see my Eight Cousins review) but found myself growing rather fond of him. All those Campbell boys are just so lovable in their own ways, honestly. That goes for Uncle Alec and Uncle Mac too!

Maybe I'm just a romantic, but I think a huge part of my enjoyment increasing is the matured ages of the characters, hence romance plotlines. I love courting and hidden feelings and disapproving elders and semi-love triangles... I just ate it all up! But the good news is that for people who are less interested in those bits, we still get a lot of the kinds of scenes from the first book. Lovely moments in Rose and Phebe's friendship, Rose doing her best to be good and charitable and make Uncle proud, the boys being foolish... it's all still there. I love the messages of self-improvement and selflessness that are always given by Rose and, in this book, often reflected in the boys.

Alright I suppose I'm starting to ramble at this point, so I'll just leave it at this. Rose in Bloom is equally charming as Eight Cousins, but with higher stakes- and for that reason I really loved it. ...more

Rose in Bloom is a beautiful gem of a book, penned by the same hand which authored the time-honored novel Little Women. This is the sequel to the charming volume entitled Eight Cousins. A more "grown-up" Rose Campbell returns to her family clan after travelling around the world with her friend Phebe as companion.

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I love this book because Rose is independent, yet desires to serve others. Suffice it to say, she is a good role model for girls. I found her to be very much selfless. Even though Rose possesses personal wealth, she wishes not to shower herself with glories but to disperse it to those less fortunate. Creating a lifestyle considered progressive for a woman (especially in the 1800s), Rose is blooming into a mature woman of society with tender confidence.

Since I cannot describe Miss Rose Campbell as well as the author once did, here's a direct picture of our blossoming heroine:

"Not a remarkably gifted girl in any way, and far from perfect; full of all manner of youthful whims and fancies; a little spoiled by much love; rather apt to think all lives as safe and sweet as her own; and,

when want or pain appealed to her, the tender heart overflowed with a remorseful charity which gave of its abundance recklessly. Yet, with all her human imperfections, the upright nature of the child kept her desires climbing toward the just and pure and true, as flowers struggle to the light; and the woman's soul was budding beautifully under the green leaves behind the little thorns." (Chapter 3, Rose in Bloom)

With her seven male cousins surrounding her, along with the odd assortment of various aunts and uncles, there are many who desire to see Rose grow. They cherish her presence among themselves and attempt to flatter her at every turn. Advances in love flourish as Rose once again settles among the people she knows best in the world.

Phebe Moore, Rose's befriended maid, too is experiencing her own way of making it into society -- only through a different course. Her life has always been destined to contrast Rose's, as her place on the social ladder started out on a much lower rung. Quickly she is learning how to climb higher though, and soon wins the heart of a familiar face, without intended design. However, the social implications simply couldn't converge for a winning marriage. So what can a girl do?

As usual, Louisa May Alcott has written another charming book. The story contains many good life lessons. As Rose tries life out on her own, sometimes becoming a bit too daring or risky with her choices, she soon makes her way back and settles into routine. In essence, the reader learns much of Victorian idealism and traditions of young adults during that time. I did so enjoy getting to catch glimpses of what all of those Eight Cousins became as they turn into adults.

In closing, enjoy some advice on life from dearest cousin, Mac Campbell ("the Worm" was always my favorite of Rose's cousins anyway):

"I have my dreams and aspirations, and some of them are pretty high ones. Aim at the best, you know, and keep climbing if you want to get on." (Chapter 2, Rose in Bloom) ...more