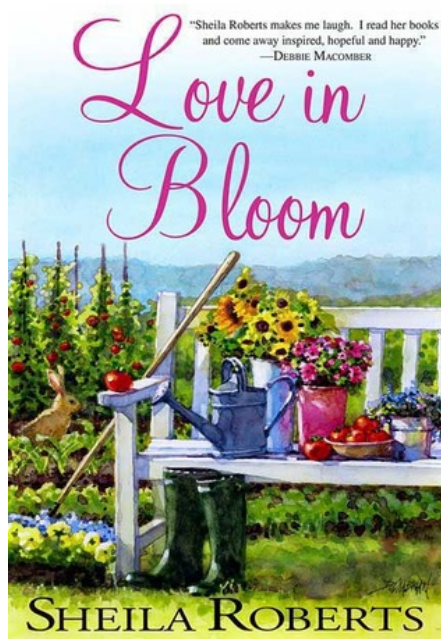




Love in Bloom

Sheila Roberts

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Hope Walker survived early breast cancer at just thirty-years-old, but a mastectomy left her with a lot of scarring--and some serious fears about dating. Hope owns Changing Seasons, Heart Lake's most popular flower shop. When it comes to love and relationships, she's able to work magic through her expert flower arranging...for everyone but herself. Then one day a handsome contractor starts coming into her shop, but Hope knows he'd rather have a whole woman than someone like her.

When Hope stakes a plot of ground at Heart Lake's community garden, she finds that a woman can grow all sorts of things there: flowers, herbs, vegetables and even friendship. As she gets to know the two women who share neighboring plots, they discover that they can learn a lot from each other--not just about gardening, but about life. And Hope realizes that in order to live life to the fullest, sometimes you have to take a chance on love.

Love in Bloom Details

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From Reader Review Love in Bloom for online ebook

Dorry Lou says

This is a book Tiff gave me to read and I can see why. I was taken with all the characters but did seem drawn to Millie the older woman. It was a good story much like real life with lonely people and real life problems. I recommend it to anyone that likes to garden and to any that do not live a fairy tale life,

Shelley Lawrence says

3.25 stars

This was a light, fun read mixed with some heavier topics and emotions. Some aspects of these types of books are rather silly, and often predictable, but still enjoyable and heart-warming.

Heather says

This was a fun, light read, a "feel good" story, which was exactly what I was looking for after the last book I read.

Hope, Bobbi, Millie and Amber all became my friends over the course of the book. It made me laugh and cry, sometimes all within one chapter.

What a great summer read!

Heather Murphy says

I loved the correlation throughout this book between growing a garden and growing relationships. I picked it up at a garage sale a few weeks ago. Lately the desire to read hasn't overpowered my sense of duty to my children and husband so I haven't read much. I have been wishing that I would have some material that would inspire me, entertain me, and get me to take a few minutes to myself, but even though I'm sure they're out there, not material has been speaking to me.

However, I had the flu on Sunday. I could hardly get off the couch all day. So I read this book. I was so glad I had a novel handy to read (most all my books are still in boxes since there are no bookshelves built in my new house yet—I've read nearly all of them anyway). It was entertaining enough to keep thoughts of my nausea at bay. That says something. I also gained more of a love of gardening, of wanting to be a good friend, of a desire for respectful human decency, and in the end an obvious sense of victory for the intelligent underdog.

I want to make friends like the ladies in this book and I used to be good at it. But I'm sick of having to follow all the social norms lately, it feels like playing silly games. I don't have time for social games. I want to just walk up to someone and say "Hey, I need a friend. I can see you have children around the same age as mine and that you parent in a similar fashion as me. From your fabulous tied died Grateful Dead shirt I can see that you have great taste in music and I think we should be the dearest of friends for life." But of course,

just like in courtship, friendship has to not be desperate or you send the other one running. I just don't have time for casual conversations that hopefully bud into something over the years. Not when I have 4 rambunctious kids hanging on me making it hard to focus on what is being said. My solution: game night almost every Friday night. After the kids are in bed (unless those invited can't get a babysitter), we invite a couple over for card games (something that has recently bored me as well). I need to face reality that I can't expect a great support system of friends to poof into existence around me without putting in the work first. That's just how it works. Even though Millie (in the book) was desperate for some positive relationships in her new town, she didn't go to the garden flagging down everyone she met and begging them to be her friend like some lunatic. She gracefully offered herself and her expertise. She gave. And what blossomed out of that was beautiful.

I also learned a great wife lesson from Millie as she compared husbands to knights in shining armor. When her friend Amber (wife and mother about my age) was having marital problems, Millie (who was very senior in age) gave her valuable advice. Amber's husband was depressed because he wasn't providing financially for his family and therefore wasn't providing anything else at the moment (or even trying very hard to find a job). Amber was tired of picking up all the pieces and being the only one strong and trying. Millie explained "...he's battle weary and he's lost his armor...I know it sounds corny, but every man wants to provide for his family and protect them. Your husband is no exception. He's failed at both. That has to have hit him pretty hard." Amber retorted "But that's no excuse for doing nothing." Millie explained that there were some things that us women don't understand about our men. That even though we live in an age where women work in the work force just as much, men still need to be able to provide for their family. If a man can't, he doesn't feel like a man. This is so true. We see it time and again when husbands want to provide and the wife feels oppressed by his desire, or a man isn't able to provide and therefore feels depressed. Are his feeling stemmed from culture? In this age, I don't think so. I believe it's an inherent characteristic of men. It is their role as part of their gender. It doesn't mean their wives can't be the one to provide, it just means that it's not their inherent role. This reminded me of The Proclamation on the Family where it prophetically states "By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families." And it also says that as husbands and wives, they help each other in their inherent roles.

Anyway, the best advice is yet to come in the conversation. Millie explains "...I suspect what your husband really needs before he can fight in the world again is his armor." So Amber wanted to know where the nearest armor shop was because she was more than willing to get him some. Millie continued "Well, it's quite simple really. The armor is your faith in him, your encouragement." Amber said "I don't see why I have to be the one to make all the effort. He needs to man up." I can totally relate. In fact, Curtis is going through something right now. I don't think it's related to trying to provide since he does that well, but it might be since we have no savings and his company is threatening closure. Wow. It might very well be. Also, my anxiety has recently crept into my life again. It just started a couple of weeks ago, but I can't seem to shake it. I think it bugs him that he can't either. I wish he would give me a priesthood blessing. I know the Lord has strength. {this book review seems to be more about my life than the characters. But if anyone wanted to read a synopsis of the book, they'd do so elsewhere. This is just what the book means to me}

Millie asked Amber what her husband was like before his armor was stripped. Amber thought of what a happy man he was that everyone liked to be around but then thought of how he was at that point and how she didn't even like him anymore let alone love him. So Millie taught "Well, it seems to me that love is ninety-nine percent doing. If you keep doing love, the feeling might grow back."

Amber thought about the advice and how instead of encouraging her husband, she had been nagging him. I can see how these both come from the same basic motive of wanting her husband to get a job and be happy again, but the result of nagging is tearing down—trying to force him to do what he already knows he should do, whereas the result of encouraging is the wife knowing she did all she could to help—and usually it does.

When Amber got home that night, she didn't judge her husband for still being on the couch watching TV, she just kissed him and thanked him for being a good man. What she really wanted to say was "So, have you been looking for work?" but she didn't.

Millie taught that difficult times always feel like they'll never end, but they do. She explained "Your life is like your garden. You plant your seeds, but it takes time for them to germinate. You don't see vegetables or even the promise of vegetables for a while, but they're still busy growing beneath the soil, getting ready to produce something wonderful for you. I think life is like that." Amber decided that all she could do is keep planting because she had too much invested to quit.

I am growing in determination to plant seeds in friends; to take the time to nourish others despite our differences (despite my desire to be nourished artistically). I should be asking what I can offer to the acquaintance (and hopefully someday friendship). Asking myself: "How can I encourage them? How can I help them fill fulfilled? How can I support their pursuits? How can I make their load a little less heavy?"

I am planting seeds in my children. Seeds of love, values, and guidance to help them on their way. I strive to find my way, humbly relying on the personal relationship I have with Christ, in order to provide an example for them.

I am planting armor seeds on my husband. Tiny sterling silver ones made up of confidence in him and appreciation for the man he is. The germination time of these seeds are uncertain and many of the seeds might be duds, but I am certain that with continual nurturing, they will grow.

Amanda Peterson says

This book is certainly entertaining and doesn't make our main character's history with cancer seem like something of pity. I was kind of thrown off by the fact we focused on four women instead of just the main character. But I liked the growth of the characters and their perspective stories. It didn't have a high impact which is why I have scored it thusly. However one thing I want to close out with is that the character of Jason's friend Duke is a colossal douche.

Donna says

I really enjoyed this book! Thank you Krista!

Leslie aka StoreyBook Reviews says

fast read that's for sure! the lives of several members of a smaller town intertwine and they draw from each other the strength, wisdom and guidance they need at different times in their life.

definitely a must read!

Nell says

This is a lovely book. The story is engaging and I stayed up until the wee hours of the morning to finish it. Has more substance and unexpected developments than a traditional romance. The focus is on the relationships between three women, who meet at a neighborhood garden. They befriend each other despite being different ages and at different stages of life. Each one's story is told through their relationships with family and love interests. The main character, Hope, has recovered physically from breast cancer, but has yet to recover emotionally. As the story unfolds, Hope and her new friends learn to love again.

Stephanie says

Even though I thought that this book stunk in the beginning, it turned out to be an okay book. I even cried toward the end. I still think that the couple that ended up together, didn't really seem to connect at all during the story. I might recommend this book if you need a light beach read with a 1 on the hotness scale.

Alissa says

I enjoyed this sweet tale, it was rather perfect to read over Easter weekend since that is when the story begins.

This had engaging characters, and a surprise at the end, which had me in tears.

Realistic and romantic all at the same time.

I also enjoyed the flower/gardening tips at the beginning of each section.

Janice says

Three very different ladies become friends as they garden their community plots and learn to support one another. I enjoyed the gardening tips. I could not wait for one guy to figure out that he was more suited for his girlfriend's sister.

Ronna says

I got this book free from the author. This is my honest review.

We've all heard the phrase "Bloom where you live.", but Sheila Roberts enriches this with her lovely book, LOVE IN BLOOM. Her characters have to learn to "Live where they bloom." Seemingly a subtle difference, but a very important lesson to learn about life. She beautifully builds this story with Hope's flower shop and the different meanings each flower conveys, as each character learns to experience life and love at it's best and fullest!

In this book, a number of woman find themselves learning this lesson while tending their plants in Heart Lake's Community Gardens. Hope owns Changing Seasons, the local flower shop, where she expertly helps people choose just the right bloom for everyone and every occasion. She is also a breast cancer survivor who struggles with her self image after reconstructive surgery. Amber is a young mother who's husband is having difficulty finding a job after loosing their restaurant. Millie is a 77 year old widow who's just moved into town to live with her divorced daughter and her two kids. As they grow plants together, they help each other through problems, and learning to bloom beautifully in their own lives.

There is romantic love explored in this book, but what I truly appreciated was the exploration of love in all it's other forms with family and friends. Each character was very real and reminded me of people I actually know. The use of flower meanings was fun and added to the beauty of this story. I so appreciate that Sheila Roberts can write a true love story without filling it with sex scenes. Roberts is becoming one of my favorite authors.

Carole says

Hope Walker is a flower shop owner, who has left the idea of happiness long behind her; and spends her time perfecting others lives' through her floral arrangements. Along the way she meets a few women whom deeply impact the way she looks at her life, and the love it is lacking.
A fun, easy read. Definitely a spring time pick-me-up!

Crystal says

This was recommended to me by a friend. I started reading it online, and finished in book form. It was enjoyable, even though it was predictable. A nice read for the beach, or a rainy day.

I will be recommending it.

Mary says

It all begins with an advertisement in the Heart Lake Herald. Hope Walker is definitely a fighter; a survivor who has always met the various adversities of life with a sunny disposition and a smile. She had survived breast cancer at just thirty years old, yet a mastectomy had left her with a lot of physical scarring, and a seriously battered self esteem. After all she has been through, Hope is perhaps understandably, fearful of dating.

She owns Heart Lake's most popular flower shop - 'Changing Seasons Floral' - and is renowned for her charming flower arrangements. Yes, when it comes to love and relationships, Hope is able to work a special type of magic through her expert flower arranging...for everyone else except herself. Then one day a handsome contractor starts coming into her shop - he's good-looking, charming, funny, even slightly flirty. In fact, he seems inordinately interested in flower arrangements, but Hope knows he'd rather have a whole woman than someone like her.

When Hope stakes a plot of ground in Heart Lake's community garden, she finds out that a woman can grow all sorts of things there: flowers, herbs, vegetables, and even friendship. As Hope gets to know the two

women - Millie Baldwin and Amber Howell - who share the neighboring plots, all three women discover that they can learn a lot from one another. Their friendship may have started out swapping gardening tips, but it quickly blossoms into a strong and lasting bond - not just about gardening but also about life. And Hope realizes that in order to truly live life to the fullest, sometimes you have to take a chance on love.

I must say that I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book. I don't usually read romance novels, but this book was a different case, in my opinion. Yes, there was light romance, but the story also had a well-developed and intriguing plot to go with the romance. I was caught up in the story right away, and found it to be fairly easy reading for me - not too complicated or intricate. I would give this book an A!
