



## The Lost Summer of Louisa May Alcott

By Kelly O'Connor McNeese

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**A richly imagined, remarkably written story of the woman who created *Little Women*- and how love changed her in ways she never expected.**

Deftly mixing fact and fiction, Kelly O'Connor McNeese returns to the summer of 1855, when vivacious Louisa May Alcott is twenty-two and bursting to free herself from family and societal constraints and do what she loves most. Stuck in small-town New Hampshire, she meets Joseph Singer, and as she opens her heart, Louisa finds herself torn between a love that takes her by surprise and her dream of independence as a writer in Boston. The choice she must make comes with a steep price that she will pay for the rest of her life.

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## The Lost Summer of Louisa May Alcott By Kelly O'Connor McNeese Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

McNeese lightly imagines the life of Louisa May Alcott, whose *Little Women* has enjoyed generations-long success. The story begins with a 20-year-old Louisa unhappily moving with her family from Boston to Walpole, N.H., where her Transcendentalist philosopher father pursues a life sans material pleasure. Louisa, meanwhile, plans on saving enough money to return to Boston and pursue a career as a writer. Then she meets the handsome and charming Joseph Singer, who stirs up strong emotions in Louisa. Not wanting to admit that she is attracted to him, Louisa responds to Joseph with defensiveness and anger until, of course, she can no longer deny her feelings and becomes torn between her desires and her dreams. While certainly charming, the simply told, straightforward narrative reads like YA fiction. It'll do the trick as a pleasant diversion for readers with fond memories of Alcott's work, but the lack of gravity prevents it from becoming anything greater. (Apr.)

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From [Booklist](#)

First-novelist McNeese creates a previously unknown romantic affair for the author of *Little Women*. It took place, she imagines, in 1855 during the scantily documented summer the Alcotts spent in Walpole, New Hampshire. A handsome young merchant named Joseph Singer falls wildly in love with our Louisa, who is torn between reciprocal feelings for him and her passionate desire for personal independence and a career as a writer. The drama of the situation is compromised by a too-simplistic treatment of the characters and, of course, by the historical record, which shows that Alcott remained a self-styled spinster. Too, the infusion of issue-driven material involving women's rights lends a somewhat didactic air to a work that is, after all, romantic fiction. To her credit, McNeese does a good job of re-creating the nineteenth-century milieu, and her readers will doubtless be inspired to read more—about and by—Alcott. *Little Women*, anyone? --Michael Cart

Review

"McNeese gets the period details just right: the crinolines and carriages; the spare, aesthetic plainness of 19th-century New England. And although the love affair with Joseph is invented, she remains faithful to the broad outlines of Alcott's biography. In fact, *The Lost Summer* is the kind of romantic tale to which Alcott herself was partial, one in which love is important but not a solution to life's difficulties. Devotees of *Little Women* will flock to this story with pleasure." -*The Washington Post*

"I have read *Little Women* at least a dozen times, but Kelly O'Connor McNeese has given me a gift I will not soon forget. Louisa May Alcott is no longer simply an icon to me but a real woman in all her complexity, one who lived life in spite of exploitation and the expectations of her day, never giving up on her dream. Her story is as relevant today as when Alcott bravely made her way. I can't wait to give copies of this novel to all of my friends."

-Cassandra King, author of *The Sunday Wife* and *The Same Sweet Girls*

"Mixing fact drawn from *Little Women* author Louisa May Alcott's letters and journals with a longing to understand how Alcott—who is thought never to have been in love—could have written so movingly about it, Kelly O'Connor McNeese delivers a wonderfully imagined, lively novel of first love herself. Louisa emerges as a spunky, honest heroine torn between her own personal love affair and the need to create more enduring stories that might console readers and lovers for generations to come."

-Meg Waite Clayton, author of *The Wednesday Sisters*

"A superb, thoughtful, and deliciously paced book that will hook lovers of history and Alcott alike. I enjoyed

it tremendously."

-Terry Gamble, author of *The Water Dancers* and *Good Family*

"Richly imagined and gracefully told, McNees' captivating story will delight anyone who loved Alcott's feisty heroine Jo March."

-Judith Ryan Hendricks, best-selling author of *Bread Alone*

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Freddie Patton:**

Have you spare time for just a day? What do you do when you have more or little spare time? Yeah, you can choose the suitable activity to get spend your time. Any person spent all their spare time to take a go walking, shopping, or went to the particular Mall. How about open or perhaps read a book eligible *The Lost Summer of Louisa May Alcott*? Maybe it is for being best activity for you. You realize beside you can spend your time together with your favorite's book, you can more intelligent than before. Do you agree with its opinion or you have various other opinion?

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#### **Jean Taylor:**

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