

## Gathering Roses: Ellen Weisberg

"Gathering Roses" is a new novel by fellow New Englander Ellen Weisberg, and is the story of co-ed Lori who still carries the scars of adolescence and continually makes the bad decision concerning men- well one man in particular, **Nick Warren**. The two meet while Lori starts up at intern at a local radio station. He's completely not her type, but she finds herself drawn to him anyway.

Lori's self-esteem, or lack thereof, make her the perfect candidate for the success of Nick's advances. He's crass and clearly interested in only a physical relationship. Despite instinctively knowing that, she thinks she can change him. Even though Lori knows Nick will not change, she finds herself seeking him out and encouraging their physical relationship. As a reader, you find yourself not only identifying with Lori (what woman hasn't been attracted to that "bad boy" at least once), but wanting to smack her upside the head at the same time. Her moods spiral around depression as she continually doesn't get what she needs from Nick, and in truth, she's not even really sure what it is that she wants, as she's broken up with a perfectly nice guy to be with Nick.

But when Lori discovers a secret about Nick, she realizes why he acts the way that he does and that he's giving her all that he's capable of giving. Lori continues their on and off again relationship, but slowly discovers more about herself and realizes that she's worth more. Their relationship continues mostly on her terms until it can't continue any longer.

Some of Lori's growth comes through her interactions with her friends- Rutherford, whom she primarily e-mails with, and Angela, who is even more messed up than Lori, and a hard character to read- because of her own emotional issues, she frequently reads into Lori's statements the wrong way and overreacts often. She borders on being a toxic friend, but the two eventually are able to work through their problems. Rutherford, one of Lori's male life-long friends, helps her to realize how Nick will never change and often explains the inner workings of the male mind.

"Gathering Roses" has been described as a young adult novel, but as I feel that term applies more to books for ages 11-16, I don't think it's appropriate for those ages. There isn't much more than some swearing and innuendos, but the **subject matter** would hold more for adults than teens. It's a pretty good book with relatable, if not frustrating characters. The back and forth of "I know I should dump him, but I can't bring myself to" at times made me crazy- it was like reliving certain moments from my own life with friends. I wanted to shout "AHHHH- just do it!" I think most female readers will identify with Lori and Angela as they could really be any one of us and Weisberg has done a great job with that.

Proceeds from the book are to go to the **American Heart Association** in honor of the friend Weisberg lost.

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