2018

The Summer Invitation

Emilee Bell

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Available at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol39/iss2/99

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the All Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Children's Book and Media Review by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.
Fourteen-year-old Frances and seventeen-year-old Valentine, half sisters, are swept away to New York by their not-aunt Theo, former European model, author, and lover of Italian men. Valentine falls for the love she’s determined to find, breaks her heart, and finds her birth father. Flat-chested Frances learns that romance is in the memory, the anticipation, not the wild, desperate acts of passion. Both sisters explore the nooks of the City; satiate their curiosity with the help of their chaperone, Clover; and learn what it means to be a modern lady. The anticipated arrival of the mysterious Aunt Theo never comes to fruition, however, as Theo dies in Paris. While all the changes Franny and Val undergo during the summer aren’t permanent on the outside, they’re set in motion for adventures that change their life courses.

Don’t be deceived by the bland title - The Summer Invitation smacks of magic weaving between sisterhood, coming-of-age, lost love, reality, and imagination. Silver captures the glint of light that flickers through our lives at unsuspecting moments, when we believe with all our heart in the exquisite color of Life (with a capital L). By describing with reality the effort it takes to “grow up” alongside the treats and newness of long-dreamed-about places, she invokes the spirit of Anne Shirley of Avonlea. Always anticipating adventure, and, more often than not, reveling in the unbelievable beauty of the present. The theme of the story mourns the classic beauty of the past while blending the fast-paced tempo of modern life.