

SYNOPSIS

At Christmas in New England during the Civil War, three of the four March girls—sixteen-year-old Meg; Jo, who is a year younger; and Amy, the youngest at twelve—dislike being poor. Thirteen-year-old Beth, the least self-centered, reminds her sisters that they should be grateful for loving parents and each other. An ambitious quartet, the four March girls set their goals high: Jo on writing, Amy on art, Beth on music, and Meg on freeing herself from drudgery. To brighten the lackluster holiday, the girls plot to buy treats for Marmee, their mother, who pines for her husband since he volunteered as a chaplain for the Union Army. On Christmas morning, Hannah, the housekeeper, reports that their mother is tending Mrs. Hummel and her six children. The March girls opt to give their breakfast to the poor family. On Christmas night, Marmee summons them to a feast of ice cream, cake, fruit and bonbons sent by Old Mr. Laurence next door.

At a New Year's Eve party, Meg meets the neighbor's orphaned grandson, Theodore Laurence, called Laurie, who has lived abroad. He seems sophisticated with his knowledge of French and Italian, music, and European manners. Jo envies him because he is going to college. He escorts the two girls home by carriage after Meg sprains her ankle. The girls return to their duties: Meg as governess and Jo as companion and reader to her rich Great-Aunt March. Beth's prospects soar after Mr. Laurence sends her a little cabinet piano.

Amy, the family scamp, gets into trouble after spending the rag money for pickled limes. Her teacher, Mr. Davis, forces her to toss her contraband fruit out the window, hold out her hand for a smack, and stand on the classroom platform to be humiliated in front of her peers. Marmee, who disapproves of corporal punishment, removes Amy from school. After she quarrels with Jo, Amy destroys her sister's manuscript in the fireplace. Jo rages at the intrusion on her work and the destruction of several years' worth of writing. Their relationship changes after Jo rescues Amy from a fall through thin ice and realizes that sisterly love is more important than a squabble.

A party at the fashionable home of Annie Moffat makes Meg uncomfortable with her dowdy tarlatan dress. Belle Moffat and the maid dress Meg in a low-cut frock, jewelry, fan, and makeup. Laurie, who attends the weekend dance, disapproves of gaudy finery on so sweet a girl. Meg discusses the party with Marmee, who insists that her girls choose happy lives with poor men rather than dress ostentatiously to snag rich husbands.

The March girls enjoy the Pickwick Club, a home-based literary society, and accept Laurie to their dramas. In June, the girls frolic after school lets out. Marmee lets them indulge themselves to learn the hard way about duties. In a carefree mode, Jo forgets to feed Pip, the canary, who dies from neglect. The foursome repent of wasted days and return to

domestic chores. In July, they attend an afternoon's entertainment with the Vaughns, an English family visiting Laurie, and Laurie's tutor, John Brooke. Kate Vaughn sneers at Meg's work as governess. Brooke prepares to enter the military as Laurie readies himself for college. In October, Laurie spies Jo taking the omnibus to town to sell her manuscript to the newspaper. She takes offense at Brooke after learning that he admires Meg and cherishes one of her gloves as a keepsake.

In November, a telegram summons Marmee to a Washington hospital to attend her husband, who is seriously ill. Aunt March disapproves of her nephew's role in the Civil War, but sends money for Marmee to take the train to Washington. Brooke offers to escort her. Jo appears with shorn head and offers Marmee the \$25 she received after selling her hair.

The March sisters take over Marmee's household work. Beth emulates her charity by visiting the Hummels, whose baby dies of scarlet fever. Beth contracts the disease. Dr. Bangs attends her. The older girls help, but Amy, who has never had the disease, must stay in quarantine with Aunt March. By December 1, Beth's condition has worsened; Jo sends for Marmee. Beth recovers, but never regains her strength. When Brooke woos Meg more ardently, Jo wishes that they were all boys so they would never have to be separated. Life becomes brighter and more secure at Christmas, when Father returns home to recuperate.

At the beginning of Part 2, three years later, the family prepares for Meg's wedding after Brooke's return from the war. Jo devotes herself to writing for *The Spread Eagle*, Amy studies art, and Beth remains delicate. Jo enters a contest and wins \$100 to send Beth and Marmee to the seaside for a month or two. Jo's first novel is published, but only after heavy revision. Meg gives birth to twins, a boy and girl nicknamed Demi and Daisy. To Jo's consternation, Aunt March takes Amy to Europe to study art. Freddie Vaughn takes an interest in Amy.

Meanwhile, Jo goes to New York to serve Mrs. Kirke's children as governess. Professor Friedrich Bhaer, a forty-year-old German roomer in the Kirke boardinghouse, develops a warm friendship with Jo, who spends her spare time writing thrillers. Bhaer advises her to give up sensational characters and to write of the people she knows. In June, Jo returns home and anticipates Laurie's graduation. He proposes, but Jo prefers him as friend rather than mate. Perturbed by Jo's refusal, Laurie accompanies his grandfather to a London business office. He deserts work and journeys to Nice, France, to be near Amy. She considers marrying Fred and rejects Laurie for being frivolous and lazy.

Beth continues to dwindle and begs Jo to care for their parents after she is gone. Jo despairs at the loss of her sister. At the height of their grief, Marmee urges Jo to "write something for us." Meanwhile, Amy agrees to marry Laurie

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and Jo turns her thoughts to the Professor. Laurie and Amy return from their wedding at the consulate in Paris. Friedrich visits for several weeks. On his last day, he helps Jo with her shopping. While sheltering under his umbrella, she agrees to marry "Fritz," who must go out West to work. Aunt March's sudden death leaves Jo the owner of Plumfield. She and Fritz turn the mansion into a school, where they rear their two boys, Rob and Teddy.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The famous daughter of a famous father, Louisa May Alcott was born in Germantown outside Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on November 29, 1832, to Abigail "Abba" May and Amos Bronson Alcott. Her father was a noted transcendentalist and founder of Brook Farm, a commune, and of Temple School, a child-centered education center. The second of four girls, she attended the private school conducted by her father, whom the Alcott sisters idolized. In 1837, when a mob threatened to torch his school and hang him for writing *Conversations with Children on the Gospels* (1837), a transcription of classroom discussions, Louisa dispersed the crowd with a shake of her fists. Growing up in the Concord-Boston area, she came under the influence of the Massachusetts literary elite, especially poets James Russell Lowell and Julia Ward, reformer and religious leader Margaret Fuller, essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson, whose library she used, and philosopher Henry David Thoreau, who tutored her in botany. In 1843, the girls worked in the garden and food preservation kitchen of Fruitlands, an experimental vegetarian community in Harvard, Massachusetts.

Life at their quarters in the Wayside Inn with a harum-scarum idealist father made Alcott more sensitive to household expenditures and the toll that hard labor was taking on her mother. In 1849, the family moved to Boston, where Alcott began assuming more responsibility for earning the family's living. She lived frugally and worked as reader to invalids, housemaid, laundress, seamstress, and tutor. Her writings—beginning with the poem "Sunlight" published in *Peterson's Magazine* under the pseudonym Flora Fairfield—were aimed at the mass market. The family moved to Walpole, New Hampshire, but Louisa remained in Boston to be near publishing houses. For local newspapers and magazines and dime novels, she wrote potboilers and melodramas, such as *The Moorish Maiden's Vow* and *The Bandit's Bride*, with the intent to increase her family's income by the few dollars they earned. Her verse and short fiction appeared in *The Liberator*, *Commonwealth*, and *Atlantic Monthly*; she wrote suffragist polemics for *The Woman's Journal*. In addition, she succeeded at a broad field of other genres, including travelogue, satire, reminiscence, fairy tale, mystery, supernatural, adventure tale, intrigue, essay, drama, horror, sensational fiction, and gothic romance. In 1862, she earned \$100 in prize money after publishing "Pauline's Passion and Punishment" in *The Illustrated Newspaper*.

A plain woman, Alcott considered herself a hopeless spinster. Following her sister Lizzie's illness and death from scarlet fever and her sister Anna's marriage in 1857, Alcott reunited with her family at Orchard House in Concord, their first permanent home after twenty temporary dwellings. She devoted her passions to writing and to the causes of women's suffrage, temperance, and the abolition of slavery. At the outbreak of the Civil War, she journeyed to Washington, D. C., to work at the Union Hospital in Georgetown. Of her new

duties overseeing forty beds she commented, "Five hundred miles from home, alone among strangers, doing painful duties all day long, and leading a life of constant excitement. . . . I never began a year in a stranger place than this." She worked for two months until her health was impaired by a near-fatal case of typhoid pneumonia and by medication with calomel, a tincture of mercury. The letters she wrote to her parents about the sufferings of the wounded served as the basis for *Hospital Sketches*, which brought in \$200. A second novel, *Moods*, earned enough to pay for a journey to Europe in 1870 as companion to a wealthy invalid.

The success in America and Europe of Alcott's more factual writing preceded a full career as a novelist, beginning with *Little Women*, which she wrote in ten weeks. The book sold 38,000 copies in its first year. The sequel, *Little Men*, tells the exploits of her nephews. She kept a batch of rejected manuscripts in the kitchen flour barrel and resubmitted them after *Little Women* became a bestseller and fans began demanding more of Alcott's stories. Adult works such as *Transcendental Wild Oats*, a satire on experimental communes, she published anonymously or under the names Abba May Alcott, Cousin Tribulation, and A. M. Barnard to guard the prim reputation of her children's literature.

Much of Alcott's toil for her family drained her of time and energy. She was further saddened by the death of her mother, the stabilizer of the Alcott family, in 1877 and, two years later, of her youngest sister, artist and writer May Alcott Nieriker, in childbirth in Paris. A bright spot in her final years was the love of her namesake, Louisa May "Lulu" Nieriker, who lived with Alcott in Boston. A high moment in her altruistic life was her registration in Concord Township as the first female voter on the books. Two days after the death of her father, Louisa May Alcott died from mercury poisoning in Boston on March 6, 1888, and was buried in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery near the Hawthornes, Thoreau, and Emerson. The year after her death, Ednah D. Cheney edited her letters and journals, which reveal the melancholy she concealed behind a merry face and cheerful outlook.

CRITIC'S CORNER

Fan clubs sprouted up throughout the United States as girls turned to Alcott's wisdom about the traumas of growing up, making do, and bonding with a houseful of sisters. An international celebrity, she succeeded in two ways: she satisfied her yearning for a career and she supplemented her family's income so well that they lived well off the royalties of *Little Women*. In a letter to her parents, she exulted:

"With \$10,000 invested and more coming in all the time, I think we may venture to enjoy ourselves after the hard times we've all had. The cream of the joke is that we made our own money ourselves, and no one gave us a blessed penny."

During a period dominated by New Englanders Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, and Melville, the only two women to succeed in the literary world were Alcott and Harriet Beecher Stowe. Fans of Alcott still visit her grave and Orchard House, which is now a museum.

Alcott's most beloved semi-autobiographical memoir, *Little Women*, draws on her family and community for most of the description, events, and emotion of the fictional March family. She speaks through the rowdy Jo, who develops into a published author. Laurie, the boy next door, Alcott modeled on several young men, primarily a traveler she met on a jour-

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ney to Poland. The most poignant segment, the demise of Beth, derived from Alcott's loss of a sister named Beth. An obvious weakness of Alcott's memoir is the love relationship between Jo and her German suitor. Inexperienced with schoolgirl crushes, dances, dates, and engagements, Alcott had to rely on secondhand information about the mature phases of womanhood that she had missed. However, current criticism turns to Alcott's graceful realism for glimpses of customs, educational philosophy, adolescent psychology, and morality and emerging feminism in the mid-1800s.

The vigor and warmth of *Little Women* suffuses audio cassette and stage versions as well as films. In 1919, Lasky filmed the novel in black-and-white. David O. Selznick made the classic, Oscar-winning black-and-white version for RKO in 1933, starring Katharine Hepburn, Paul Lukas, Joan Bennett, Spring Byington, and Edna May Oliver. Sarah Mason and Victor Heerman won an academy award for the script; George Cukor received an Oscar for direction. MGM filmed a color version of *Little Women* in 1949. Stars June Allyson, Elizabeth Taylor, Peter Lawford, Margaret O'Brien, Janet Leigh, and Mary Astor won no Oscars, but Mervyn Le Roy received an Academy Award for art direction and Robert Planck and Charles Schoenbaum won Oscars for cinematography. Columbia TriStar's 1994 remake brought together a felicitous cast, featuring Susan Sarandon as Marmee. The film merited nominations for costume design, for Thomas Newman's music, and for Winona Ryder in the part of Jo March.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To comprehend the importance of family
2. To isolate individual aims, needs, wants, and disappointments
3. To discuss the value of exercise, group activity, holidays, and work
4. To compare manners and public behavior during the Civil War with current standards
5. To contrast foreign and domestic settings
6. To characterize worthy role models
7. To account for acts of charity to help the poor and hungry and the sick
8. To locate examples of dialect, slang, euphemism, aphorism, and foreign terms
9. To supply background information about the Civil War
10. To account for the popularity of books about families

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To contrast Jo as a teenager and as an adult
2. To describe disagreements and jealousies among the March girls
3. To characterize the sisters as change weakens their unity
4. To account for Jo's rudeness to John Brooke
5. To contrast anecdotes about family with details about outsiders, particularly the Moffats and the Vaughns
6. To discuss the family's adjustment to Father's illness and Beth's invalidism
7. To describe life in a boardinghouse
8. To analyze the tensions that threaten Meg's relationship with her children and husband
9. To summarize Amy's coming-of-age

10. To describe family activities in the attic, kitchen, bedrooms, and yard of the March house

MEANING STUDY

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have a particular meaning in this novel. Explain the meaning of each. Pages pinpoint the context in which the item appears.

1. Give them all my dear love and a kiss. Tell them I think of them by day, pray for them by night, and find my best comfort in their affection at all times. A year seems very long to wait before I see them, but remind them that while we wait we may all work, so that these hard days need not be wasted. I know they will remember all I said to them, that they will be loving children to you, will do their duty faithfully, fight their bosom enemies bravely, and conquer themselves so beautifully that when I come back to them I may be fonder and prouder than ever of my little women. (Chapter 1, p. 10)

(Father's letter to his "little women" sets the moral tone of the household, even though he is largely absent from their lives throughout the novel. The choice of his parting words as the novel's title suggests the importance of the father figure to the four March girls, just as Louisa May Alcott and her sisters loved and respected their father.)

2. Do you remember how you used to play Pilgrim's Progress when you were little things? (Chapter 1, p. 10)
(A favorite allegory among the pious of Europe, John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress [1678] follows the fictional Christian through pitfalls and dangers on the way to heaven. The work remained popular among American immigrants, who often displayed only two works on their shelves: the Bible and Pilgrim's Progress. The two volumes accompanied families across the continent and became standard works in the libraries of cabins and sod huts and the humble schools that sprang up on the prairie.)
3. She's proud, but I don't believe she'd mind, for that dowdy tarlatan is all she has got. She may tear it tonight, and that will be a good excuse for offering a decent one. (Chapter 9, p. 83)

(While journeying, like Christian, in Vanity Fair, Meg comes upon shallow companions who criticize her simple woven muslin dress. The conversation dismays Meg, who "kept repeating to herself, 'Mrs. M. has made her plans,' 'that fib about her mamma,' and 'dowdy tarlatan' till she was ready to cry and rush home to tell her troubles and ask for advice.")

4. WEEKLY REPORT

Meg—Good.

Jo—Bad.

Beth—Very good.

Amy—Middling. (Chapter 10, p. 99)

(The concluding lines of the Pickwick Club's newspaper demonstrates that the girls assess their own behavior on a par with the author's judgment. Beth is the saintly one, Meg good but not too good, Amy only average, and the irrepressible Jo the worst behaved of the lot.)

5. How many did you have out? (Chapter 14, p. 140)
(Laurie follows Jo, who takes the omnibus to town. He assumes that, because she enters a building under a dentist's sign, she must be seeking dental treatment.

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The misunderstanding continues with her reply, "There are two which I want to have come out, but I must wait a week." At last she confesses a secret—that she has submitted two stories for publication by the newspaper.)

6. I jes drop a line to say we git on fust rate. (Chapter 16, p. 162)
(Marmee receives letters from her children, Hannah, and the neighbors, Mr. Laurence and Laurie. Hannah Mullet's poor grammar and dialect spelling indicate that under-educated immigrants reside in a lowly status, as with Hannah's position as the March family housekeeper, which is surely a low-paying post. Alcott makes a humorous gesture at Hannah's good-hearted letter, which concludes, "I send my duty to Mr. March and hope he's seen the last of his pewmonia.")
7. "It's well enough for me to go out with Laurie, but not well enough to go to the Hummels'," said Jo, laughing, but looking a little ashamed of her inconsistency. (Chapter 17, p. 165)
(Jo's manipulation of symptoms proves her less attentive to Marmee's altruism than Beth, who is already ill with scarlet fever, but determined to do what Marmee expects of the girls. The half-humorous remark triggers a sequence of guilt and regret in Jo that Beth aided the Hummels and brought on a debilitating illness that eventually took her life.)
8. Now we shall try a new way. You and I will read these pleasant little Märchen together, and dig no more in that dry book, that goes in the corner for making us trouble. (Chapter 33, p. 321)
(Alcott puts into the Professor's words a glimpse of Bronson Alcott's liberal educational philosophy. Professor Bhaer believes that readings from Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales will invite Jo to work harder at German. Bhaer is quick to applaud her efforts and to cry "Das ist gut! Now we go well! My turn. I do him in German, gif me your ear.")
9. Like most young scribblers, she went abroad for her characters and scenery; and banditti, counts, gypsies, nuns, and duchesses appeared upon her stage, and played their parts with as much accuracy and spirit as could be expected. (Chapter 34, p. 327)
(At the direction of Mr. Dashwood, Jo follows the model of Mrs. Northbury and emphasizes exciting, romantic touches, but pays little attention to "grammar, punctuation, and probability," which lesser readers will not notice. She hasn't yet realized that the strength of her writing lies in describing the people and events that she knows so well.)
10. "I don't think I ever ought to call myself 'Unlucky Jo' again, when my greatest wish has been so beautifully gratified," said Mrs. Bhaer, taking Teddy's little fist out of the milk pitcher, in which he was rapturously churning. (Chapter 27, p. 457)
(Alcott illustrates the type of happiness Jo has been seeking by placing her in an active, informal family setting with Fritz Bhaer singing along with his nephews, Franz and Emil, and Marmee weeping with joy at the happiness she receives from Rob, Demi, Daisy, and little Beth.)

COMPREHENSION STUDY

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the memoir.

Questions 1-5 Literal Level

1. What is the March family's situation at the beginning of the story?
(Living in a modest, but comfortable home in New England, Marmee March rears four girls—three teenagers, sixteen-year-old Meg, fifteen-year-old Jo, and thirteen-year-old Beth; and one preteen, Amy, who is twelve. Marmee depends on the domestic help of Hannah, their devoted German housekeeper and cook who also loves the girls like granddaughters. Often, Marmee is absent from the family while performing charitable acts for the Hummels, a poor immigrant family living near them.)
During the Civil War, Marmee misses her husband, who parallels her example of virtue and charity to their daughters. Father March, although too old for the military, makes his own sacrifice by serving the army as a chaplain. He keeps in touch with his family through letters that challenge the girls to be and do their best. His wealthy aunt disapproves of his service, but offers occasional financial assistance and gives Jo employment as her companion and reader. On his return to health, Father, "the quiet scholar" is "still the head of the family, the household conscience, anchor, and comforter, for to him the busy, anxious women always turned in troubled times, finding him, in the truest sense of those sacred words, husband and father.")
2. How is life next door different from the March home?
(Next door to the March home, old Mr. James Laurence, a restrained, cultivated gentleman of means, rears his grandson Theodore "Laurie" Laurence, whose parents are dead. Mr. Laurence never saw his son's wife, an Italian musician of whom he disapproved. The change of residence and parentage causes Laurie to miss his spirited mother and father and their artsy life in Europe. He has grown lazy about practicing music and, in the remaining year before entering college at Harvard, lackadaisically studies with a tutor, John Brooke. Like Marmee, Mr. Laurence is charitable toward the Marches and encourages visits and friendship. Of their four girls, he prefers Beth, to whom he gives a small cabinet piano. After her death, he expects Jo to take her place in his heart.)
3. How does John Brooke enter the family?
(Typically, Jo gets along well with people, but displays an unusual dislike of John Brooke, who has been kind, courteous, and pleasant in his exchanges with family members. As Brooke's interest in Meg develops, Jo is more aware of the potential for disruption in the girls' lives than Meg seems to be. After Brooke keeps one of Meg's gloves as a love token and displays unusual kindness to Marmee on her journey to Washington, Jo begins to accept him as a future brother-in-law.)
The event that cinches Brooke's place in the family is Aunt March's disapproval and her threat to disinherit Meg for accepting a poor man. Meg defends him, then admits that she loves him. Laurie caps the scene with an

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oversized bouquet of flowers for "Mrs. John Brooke." At the beginning of Part 2, three years have passed, moving the relationship between Brooke and Meg to engagement. The wedding seems like a natural development to Jo, who is mature enough to accept change in the family structure.)

4. Why is Beth's invalidism significant to the whole family? (After Beth contracts scarlet fever while tending the Hummels in Marmee's absence, she becomes headachy, feverish, then gravely ill. Into the night, Mr. Laurence paces the floor as Hannah and Dr. Bangs attend her. The adults realize that she could die before Marmee returns. After Marmee's arrival on the train from Washington, the girls rejoice that Beth is recovering. They return to their interests without understanding that Beth is only temporarily improved.)

When Jo returns from New York, she perceives the change in Beth, who had been recuperating with Father, lying on the sofa, and playing with her cats. As Alcott describes the change, "It came to [Jo] then more bitterly than ever that Beth was slowly drifting away from her, and her arms instinctively tightened their hold upon the dearest treasure she possessed." No longer assured that she will survive, Beth confesses to Jo that she has thought about death, which, like the tide, is sweeping her inexorably toward an end. Beth is preparing herself to face a permanent separation.)

5. How does family life change for Marmee? (The final scene of the altered family is filled with compromise. At age sixty, Marmee never recovers from the loss of Beth, but she welcomes her sons-in-law and grandchildren. Meg is happy at Dovecote with Demi and Daisy. John is an attentive husband and father. Amy and Laurie seem right for each other. Their little Beth is a welcome substitute for her departed aunt.)

Jo, the least domestic of the group, seems immersed in Plumfield, which is her home, her school, and the source of her contentment. Much in love with Friedrich Bhaer, she complements his quiet strength and maturity with youthful vigor and high spirits. His nephews, Emil and Franz, their students, and their sons, Rob and Teddy, comprise a suitable family for the Bhaers, whose marriage completes the next layer of the March family.)

Questions 6-8 Interpretive Level

6. Why does Louisa May Alcott arrange events around holidays?

(The Victorian custom of depicting family gatherings around holidays derives from the English delight in their queen, Victoria, and her husband Albert and their nine children. Victorians emulated the royal family's display of unity and contentment. Charles Dickens, the notable social novelist of the nineteenth century, helped to disseminate the picture of family oneness by emphasizing domestic celebrations, holidays, and rituals. His influence on Alcott is apparent through her description of the *Pickwick Club*, which takes its name from one of Dickens's popular novels.)

Little Women opens at Christmas as the March girls fret about poverty and dream of buying art supplies, music, and an opportunity for Jo to write and Meg to depart from domestic drudgery. They celebrate by buy-

ing gifts for their selfless mother. By the next Christmas, their lives alter demonstrably as Father returns from Washington after more than a month in the hospital. Alcott stops short of an idyllic holiday by depicting the girls as happy with a full set of parents at last, but close to losing Beth, who is ill from the effects of scarlet fever.)

7. Contrast Jo's style as she develops her career as a writer.

(In the beginning of her career, Jo follows the tastes of the popular press and provides adventure stories to *The Spread Eagle*. She agrees to follow Mr. Dashwood's editorial parameters and to adopt Mrs. Northbury as a model. "Like most young scribblers, [Jo] went abroad for her characters and scenery; and banditti, counts, gypsies, nuns, and duchesses appeared upon her stage, and played their parts with as much accuracy and spirit as could be expected." Unknown to Jo, Dashwood exploits her inexperience and willingness to work for low wages because "one of his hacks, on being offered higher wages, had basely left him in the lurch.")

Jo's ambition to "do something splendid, no matter how hard" lies unfulfilled after Beth's passing. Jo longs to do as her sister asked and devote herself to their parents, but is uncertain of her next career plateau. Marmee suggests that she "write something for us." Seated among a stack of half-finished manuscripts, Jo scratches away. She surprises herself by composing a story that her family loves. After her father submits it for publication, Jo finds that readers of a popular magazine create a demand for her work. "Newspapers copied it, and strangers as well as friends admired it. For a small thing it was a great success.")

8. How does Professor Bhaer propose to Jo?

(Like Jo's serendipitous fall into literary success, her afternoon shopping trip precipitates a proposal. Pursuing a shopping list in the town's commercial district, Jo has no umbrella to keep her dry. Bhaer offers to carry her bundles and hold his umbrella over her. Their tentative exchange on his last day in town leads to her regret that her is leaving. Bhaer intends to go out West to teach in a college to pay for the education of his motherless nephews, Emil and Franz. He buys almonds, dates, honey, daisies, and grapes for the twins. Jo helps him shop for Tina.)

As she waits for the omnibus, Bhaer spies tears on Jo's cheeks. Her admission that she will miss him gives him courage to profess his love. The proposal comes at an inopportune time—his hands are full of packages; her boots are splashed with mud. When she calls him Friedrich, he rejoices that she is the first since his sister Minna died to offer intimacy and warmth. The exchange of endearments in the formal "thou" expresses his love for Jo. He comments that reading a sentimental poem she wrote about her sisters made him return to her.)

Questions 9 and 10 Critical Level

9. Where does Alcott make the strongest contribution to American literature?

(Alcott had much to say about virtue and family life. It is obvious that her knowledge of family is strongest in the depiction of the parent-daughter relationship, for her realistic description of the give and take among four sisters rings true. Her descriptions of manners and morals,

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fun and studies, quarrels and regrets, and the learning experiences that make them mature are an invaluable glimpse of life during the Civil War.

The book is weak in Alcott's recreation of Meg's marital problems. Her attempt to please John and the domestic adjustment that restores their marital bliss sounds contrived. Another weakness is the odd courtship between Jo and Professor Bhaer, which lacks the solidity of true male-female bonding. The strength of the final passage rebuilds the joy of *Little Women* by returning to Marmee, Father, and the three remaining sisters. The promise of their five children continues to overshadow the marital relationships of Jo and Fritz, Meg and John, and Amy and Laurie by continuing to stress the March girls.)

10. Why is the theme of sacrifice significant to the story? (*Sacrifice is the focal theme in the novel's most moving episodes. Marmee's sacrifice for the Hummels sets the standard for family altruism. She greets them on Christmas with a reminder that "not far away from here lies a poor woman with a little newborn baby. Six children are huddled into one bed to keep from freezing, for they have no fire. There is nothing to eat over there, and the oldest boy came to tell me they were suffering hunger and cold." At her suggestion, the girls learn about charity by her compassion and respond accordingly by giving up their Christmas breakfast to the Hummels. Their continued kindness to the poor immigrants precipitates Beth's scarlet fever, which causes the death of the Hummel baby. In the falling action, sacrifice forces Beth to face impending death and Jo to acknowledge that her sister is slipping away.*)

The image of Jo as altruist falls short of her true nature. She offers her hair as a source of money for Marmee's trip to Washington, but the gesture is really superfluous since Aunt March lends Marmee the money for the journey. Jo continues to flounder, finding herself unfit for domestication and never quite at home with her own personality. Through Marmee's prodding, Jo stops imitating the sacrifices of others and lets her honest feelings flow from her pen. The composition that makes her famous serves as the release of guilt and regret that Beth has left them. Fulfilled as an aunt and published author, she receives her reward in Fritz. He further validates her worth by accepting her tendency toward sentiment and cherishing her love for an older man who is uncertain that he has anything to offer as a husband.)

Questions 11 And 12 Creative Level

11. Compose an interview with students playing the roles of Amy Laurence, Meg Brooke, and Jo Bhaer at their mother's sixtieth birthday dinner. Question each about information they omit, for instance, how their father has accepted Beth's passing, how they manage to emulate their parents' goodness and virtue, and what their hopes are for their five children.
12. Read aloud from books such as *Life with Father*, *I Remember Mama*, and *Across Five Aprils*. Determine how hardship keeps a family close, even though they temporarily lose oneness. Compare celebrations of holidays, religious worship, triumph, marriages, graduations, and minor successes with the happy moments that Alcott describes in *Little Women*.

LITERARY TERMS AND APPLICATIONS

For a better understanding of Louisa May Alcott's style, present the following terms applications to her novel:

autobiographical fiction: a long narrative written by a person about his or her own life and accomplishments, which may be disguised under false names and settings or obscured with a blend of actual and fictional details. Louis May Alcott's use of personal events and family memories undergirds the story of the March family, who inhabit a New England home much like the Alcott's Orchard House. The separation between the real and fictional families is implicit in the story, which carries Jo beyond Alcott's experiences to courtship, marriage, motherhood, and the supervision of an inherited property which she turns into a boys' school.

historic framework a milieu or era that undergirds a story, impinging on character's actions, thoughts, and philosophies, but not in itself the focus of the plot. In *Little Women*, Alcott remains true to the lives of the March family without emphasizing Father March's role in the war or the causes and political ramifications of the South's secession from the Union. After Father is wounded and transferred to a Washington, D.C., hospital, he becomes a crucial authority figure to the girls and their mother. However, his wartime role as chaplain receives little commentary, except from Aunt March, who disapproves of his volunteering for service.

motif [moh teef'] a pattern or predictable arrangement of events in a story, drama, dance, painting, or other artistic work. A motif orders events and defines a character's behaviors and expectations, such as Jo's frequent return to her love of writing. Composition is a necessary part of her life, an ordering and sharing of thoughts and values that becomes her outlet just as domesticity is Meg's world and Amy's art offers the creative field on which to display her sense of self and belonging. Beth, the musician of the family, dies before her artistic expression reaches maturity. Her playing of carols and recital pieces implies that she never evolved beyond the imitative level. The absence of accomplishment enhances the tragedy of her death at an early age.

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Art

1. Draw flash cards or illustrated definitions containing examples of unfamiliar vocabulary or terms, e. g., omnibus, tarlatan, *Pilgrim's Progress*, banditti, Promenade des Anglais, Victor Emmanuel, *Rasselas*, Queen of the Sandwich Islands, equipage, Picadilly, Halifax, Bath, Liverpool, Regent Street, Hyde Park, Duke of Wellington, dyspepsia, Murillo, Rubens, Turner, Rembrandt, palettes, belladonna, barouche, Pickwick, truckle, coupé, Tudor, fete, and weathercock.
2. Using dolls, art sketches, or shadow boxes, create a series of character groupings to illustrate important moments. Feature Father's arrival from Washington, Meg's jelly-making, Amy and Laurie's return from Paris, Fritz and Jo shopping in the rain, Meg's wedding, Amy's rescue from the ice, Marmee's visits to the Hummels, the picnic with the Vaughns, the birth of Demi and Daisy, the arrival of the piano, or Beth's burial.
3. Make an itinerary and curriculum for young students like Amy who want to learn art by traveling in Europe.

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Geography

1. Mark maps with the travels of Aunt March, Jo, Fritz, Marmee, Father, Laurie, Mr. Laurence, the Vaughns, and Amy. Create travel brochures to accompany Amy's study in Nice, Fritz's intended travels West, Jo's sojourn in New York, Laurie's work in London, the Vaughns' visit to the United States and Canada, and Father's return from Washington.
2. Compose a U. S. map showing slave states and free. Give a chalk talk on the controversy surrounding the creation of the state of Missouri. Discuss how these explosive issues affected Louisa May Alcott and her family and friends, especially Henry David Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, and Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Social Studies

1. Discuss the implications of Louisa May Alcott's work for women's rights, temperance, and abolition. Explain why the Union Army would want an inexperienced girl for a hospital nurse.
2. Debate the issue of corporal punishment in school. Support Marmee's decision to remove Amy from Mr. Davis's class.
3. Act out social exchanges and courtesies from the novel that seem old-fashioned. Include celebrations of Christmas and weddings, letter-writing, condolence, graduation, births, shopping, meeting friends, making introductions, receiving guests, parties, picnics, dinners, musicales, teas, and receptions.

Mathematics and Economics

1. Define these terms in the context of the novel: rag money, charity, inheritance, boardinghouse, governess, and coming out. Enumerate ways that the March girls exercise thrift, such as sharing clothes, generating their own entertainments, making jelly, borrowing books from Aunt March, and planting a garden.
2. Express at current rates Jo's sacrifice of her hair. Explain why the girls hate to borrow money from their aunt. Suggest other ways that Jo and her sisters might have earned Marmee's expenses in Washington, for example, by doing chores or cooking for Mr. Laurence, taking in sewing, selling herbs or nuts, or teaching art and music to children.

Science and Health

1. Explain why scarlet fever can be a deadly disease. Contrast the use of belladonna with current treatment.
2. Describe these causes of a majority of war deaths during the 1860s: gunshot, trauma, bacterial infection, and communicable diseases, particularly measles, typhoid, and typhus. Make a wall chart of these contributing factors: vermin, shock, exposure, malnutrition, hypothermia, loss of blood, pneumonia, and lack of bandages and professional medical care.
3. Explain the phenomenon of "rotten ice." Describe the safest method of extracting Amy from freezing water. List the first aid measures that restore her body temperature.

Literature and Language

1. Present an oral summary of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Explain how this work influences the March family's attitude toward vanity, envy, jealousy, and laziness.

2. Read summaries of Dickens's novels. Propose scenes for the Pickwick Club to discuss and act out. Name scenes from *Great Expectations*, *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Pickwick Papers*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *Hard Times*.
3. Prepare a typical nineteenth-century curriculum for home-schooling Amy. Stress penmanship, accuracy in arithmetic, and knowledge of geography and history. List tools for the home classroom: ruler, pencil, pen, ink, blotter, notebook, and foolscap.
4. Write a theme on the difference in tone, diction, and style between thrillers, sentimental literature, melodrama, personal letters, philosophical essays, and memoir.
5. Compose a definition of genre. Name memoir, fiction, drama, essay, adventure tales, satire, verse, gothic romance, and other genres in which Alcott excelled. Discuss with a small group why she used pseudonyms for her adult works.
6. Explain the purpose of a sequel. Read aloud scenes from *Little Men* that parallel scenes in *Little Women*.

Language Arts

1. Explain why Fritz likes the formal second person, (thee, thou, thy, and thine). How do poets use these pronouns? Why do Americans consider them sentimental or reserved for religious scripture? Why does Fritz encourage Jo to be sentimental?
2. Explain the importance of "Die erste Liebe ist die beste" to Chapter 46. Translate the line along with other foreign terms and phrases, for example, "Ach, mein Gott," "salle à manger," "Sonata Pathétique," "Nil desperandum," "Que pensez-vous," and "mouchoir."

History

1. Name the political issues that divided Americans during the 1860s. Under the opposing sides, list pros and cons of each. For example, under slavery, note that abolition of ownership and sale of slaves would free the black population and restore liberty, but the sudden change would disrupt the national economy and put poor blacks on the streets with no jobs, housing, or education.
2. Make a time line of American slavery. Begin with the arrival of the first slaves and conclude with the arrival of the *Clothilde*, the last slave ship to carry African slaves to the United States. Name and describe these and other important figures: Tituba, Dred Scott, Frederick Douglass, Toussaint L'Ouverture, abolitionists, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Thaddeus Stevens, John Brown, Nat Turner, Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, transcendentalists, John Brown, Sarah and Evelina Grimké, Marcus Garvey, Harriet Tubman, Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. DuBois, and Sojourner Truth.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Compose a fair division of household chores for three teenage girls and one preteen. Name tasks that were more common in the mid-nineteenth century, such as kneading bread, sorting and selling rags, heating irons on the stove, chopping firewood, collecting and sorting mail, shopping for thread and other notions, mending and sewing, and drying herbs and medicinal roots.
2. Compare the interaction of the March family with fictional

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families in literature, on television, and in the movies. Discuss certain character types, such as the tomboy, homebody, social butterfly, scholar, dreamer, artist, and spoiled pet.

3. Contrast the behavior and relative contentment of these figures: boarder, soldier, tutor, college student, world traveler, foreign visitor, writer, newspaper editor, parent, housekeeper, debutante, suitor, actor, singer, banker, teacher, and rich aunt.
4. Summarize scenes in which the March girls learn a valuable lesson, for example, the death of Pip, cooking for a husband, traveling with Aunt Carrol, skating on thin ice, attending socials at the homes of wealthy people, losing a glove, trading pickled limes with friends, and treating a sprained ankle.
5. Write a short note to one of the minor characters in the story to express curiosity, interest, suggestions, or affection. For instance, ask why Amy likes Fred or why Aunt March disapproves of her nephew's role in the Civil War. Suggest ways that Meg can share family responsibilities with John and how Jo and Fritz can make the most of their school at Plumfield.
6. Using desktop publishing or other media, create a family tree that displays links between Father, Marmee, Jo, Beth, Meg, and Amy March and John Brooke, Mr. Laurence, little Beth, Tina, Aunt Carrol, Aunt March, Fritz Bhaer, Franz and Emil, Demi and Daisy, Rob and Teddy, and Laurie and his parents.
7. Write a theme on the phases of womanhood as they apply to Louisa May Alcott, Marmee, Hannah, Mrs. Hummel, Anna Moffat, Belle Moffat, Miss Elliott, Miss Lamb, May Chester, Aunt Carrol, Mrs. Kirke, Meg, Jo, Beth, Amy, Laurie's mother, Kate Vaughn, and Aunt March.
8. Join with a group and make a chalkboard time line of events from the story. Give details of when and where events take place. Name the New Year's Eve party, Meg's and Amy's weddings, the establishment of a school at Plumfield, scarlet fever among the Hummels, the births of Rob and Teddy, Marmee's train trip to Washington, Jo's first sale, and Aunt March's death.
9. Sketch twelve views of the March family for a Louisa May Alcott calendar. Key scenes to the seasons of the year. For instance, show the March girls taking their ease after school lets out for the summer or show Laurie proposing to Jo after he graduates from college.

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

1. List examples of joy, sharing, work, differences of opinion, arts and music, neighborliness, charity, love, concern, loss, grief, separation, growth, celebration, and anticipation in the March family.
2. Compile lines that express the March sisters' devotion to each other.
3. Compose a scene in which the March girls demonstrate their complementary nature.
4. Make a character list and explain the relationship of each to the March family. Include Belle Moffat, Miss Elliott, Mr. Davis, John Brooke, Hannah, Mr. Laurence, the Hummels, Dr. Bangs, Fred and Ned, Tina and Kitty, Emil and Franz, Mrs. Moffat, Scott, and Laurie.

LOUISA MAY ALCOTT'S OTHER PUBLISHED WORKS

- Flower Fables* (1854)
Hospital Sketches (1863)
Moods (1864)
The Rose Family: A Fairy Tale (1864)
On Picket Duty, and Other Tales (1864)
V. V.: or Plots and Counterplots (1865)
Nelly's Hospital (1865)
A Long Fatal Love Chase (1866)
Merry's Museum Magazine (ed. and contributor, 1867)
The Mysterious Key, and What It Opened (1867)
Morning Glories (1868)
Kitty's Class (1868)
Camp and Fireside Stories (1869)
An Old-Fashioned Girl (1870)
Little Men: Life at Plumfield with Jo's Boys (1871)
Shawl Straps (1872)
Work: A Story of Experience (1872)
Something To Do (1873)
Eight Cousins, or The Aunt-Hill (1875)
Beginning Again, Being a Continuation of Work (1875)
Rose in Bloom: A Sequel to Eight Cousins (1876)
Silver Pitchers and Other Stories (1876)
Independence, A Centennial Love Story (1876)
A Modern Mephistopheles (1877)
Under the Lilacs (1878)
Aunt Jo's Scrap-Bag (1879)
Meadow Blossoms (1879)
Water Cresses (1879)
Sparkles for Bright Eyes (1879)
Jack and Jill (1880)
Proverb Stories (1882)
Spinning Wheel Stories (1884)
Jo's Boys and How They Turned Out (1886)
A Garland for Girls (1887)
Lulu's Library (1889)
A Whisper in the Dark (1889)
Comic Tragedies Written by Jo and Meg and Acted by the Little Women (1893)
A Round Dozen: Stories (1963)
Glimpses of Louisa: A Centennial Sampling of the Best Short Stories (1968)
Behind the Mark: The Unknown Thrillers of Louisa May Alcott (1975)
Louisa's Wonder Book: An Unknown Alcott Juvenile (1975)
Plots and Counterplots: More Unknown Thrillers of Louisa May Alcott (1976)
Diana and Persis (1978)
Transcendental Wild Oats (1981)
The Selected Letters of Louisa May Alcott (1987)
The Works of Louisa May Alcott (1987)
A Double Life: Newly Discovered Thrillers of Louisa May Alcott (1988)
Alternative Alcott (1988)

RELATED READING

- Rudolfo Anaya's *Bless Me, Ultima*
John Van Druten's *I Remember Mama*
Esther Forbes's *Johnny Tremain*
Frank Gilbreth and Ernestine Gilbreth Carey's *Cheaper by the Dozen*
S. E. Hinton's *Tex*

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Jeanne Houston and James Houston's *A Farewell to Manzanar*
Irene Hunt's *Across Five Aprils*
Howard Lindsey and Russel Crouse's *Life with Father*
Sylvia Lopez-Medina's *Cantora*
Gordon Park's *The Learning Tree*
Wilson Rawls's *Where the Red Fern Grows*
Betty Smith's *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*
Suzanne Fisher Staples's *Shabanu*
Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*
Yoko Kawashima Watkins's *So Far from the Bamboo Grove*

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VOCABULARY TEST

Compose sentences with the words in parentheses about these subjects from the novel:

1. (condescended) Amy's sojourn in Nice _____

2. (sportive) Laurie's attitude toward Fred _____

3. (shorn) The sacrifice of "woman's glory" _____

4. (impracticable) Laurie's gifts to Beth _____

5. (soupçon) Meg allows makeup _____

6. (repress) Professor Bhaer lies groaning with homesickness _____

7. (rations) Laurie invites Jo to the picnic _____

8. (envious) The March girls regret being poor _____

9. (surfeit) Amy orders the party food sent to the Hummels _____

10. (conducive) John wants his wife to set a tone _____

11. (mortification) Mr. Davis's style of discipline _____

12. (melodramatic) Jo's refusal of the proposal _____

13. (resolved) Jo intended to change her behavior _____

14. (sundry) Scattered among Amy's letters _____

15. (palette) With subtler water colors, Amy _____

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COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (30 points)

Match the following descriptions with characters. Choose your answers from the list of characters below. You may use some of the answers more than once and some not at all.

- | | | | | |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------|---------------|--------------|
| A. Fritz | D. Mr. Laurence | G. Jo | J. Hummels | M. Amy |
| B. John | E. Mrs. Kirke | H. Beth | K. Aunt March | N. Meg |
| C. Hannah | F. Marmee | I. Laurie | L. Father | O. Mr. Davis |

- _____ 1. believes girls should not marry for money.
- _____ 2. lose a baby to scarlet fever.
- _____ 3. falls through rotten ice.
- _____ 4. allows the girls to play and neglect home responsibilities.
- _____ 5. returns in time for Christmas.
- _____ 6. leaves Plumfield to Jo.
- _____ 7. runs a boardinghouse.
- _____ 8. doubts that Father should be serving as a chaplain.
- _____ 9. helps Jo read *Märchen*.
- _____ 10. is wounded and permanently returned from the war.
- _____ 11. fails to make firm jelly and to welcome her husband's guest.
- _____ 12. wants Jo to fill Beth's place.
- _____ 13. practices corporal punishment.
- _____ 14. is quarantined from scarlet fever.
- _____ 15. prefers singing quiet hymns.

Part II: Identification (10 points)

Explain the significance of the following details:

- 1. little cabinet piano

- 2. Pickwick Club

- 3. singed hair

- 4. jelly

- 5. Nice

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Part III: Fact/Opinion (20 points)

Mark each statement either **T** for true, **F** for false, or **O** for opinion. Explain your answer on the line that follows.

- _____ 1. Jo rejects Laurie's proposal because she prefers being his friend to being his wife.

- _____ 2. Laurie changes his attitude toward work after he realizes that Amy considers him lazy.

- _____ 3. Fred Vaughn is the quieter of the two twins because he is moved by regard for Amy.

- _____ 4. On her sixtieth birthday, Marmee delights in her grandchildren because she misses Beth.

- _____ 5. Mr. Dashwood clearly assesses Jo's talents.

- _____ 6. Miss Elliott enjoys the Moffats' party, but spoils Meg's fun by gossiping about her shabby dress and lack of makeup.

- _____ 7. The theft of a glove proves that John loves Meg.

- _____ 8. Jo prefers that her sisters never marry.

- _____ 9. The inheritance of Plumfield changes Jo's mind about marriage.

- _____ 10. Giving up Christmas breakfast to the Hummels is the girls' only gift to their mother.

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

- 1. Account for Beth's final words to her sister.
- 2. Explain why Jo sells her hair.
- 3. Describe the sisters' leisure activities.
- 4. Summarize ways that Meg learns to please John.

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COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Setting Identification (20 points)

Identify the characters who fit the following descriptions. Select your answers from the list that follows.

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------|------------------|----------|--------|------------|-------|
| Aunt March's house | Canada | London | Nice | shady nook | train |
| Berlin | Hummels' cottage | New York | school | town | war |

- _____ 1. Fritz holds the umbrella for Jo.
- _____ 2. John escorts Marmee.
- _____ 3. The March girls frolic after school is out.
- _____ 4. Laurie accompanies his grandfather on business.
- _____ 5. Jo teaches Kitty and Tina.
- _____ 6. Laurie stays a month.
- _____ 7. Amy is quarantined.
- _____ 8. Mr. Davis strikes Amy.
- _____ 9. John is injured.
- _____ 10. The Vaughns go on vacation.

Part II: Fill-In (20 points)

Fill in the blanks in each statement.

- 1. Because Amy mourns the death of _____, _____ comes to comfort her and marries her at the embassy in _____.
- 2. Fritz and Jo settle at _____, rear sons Teddy and _____, and educate Franz and _____.
- 3. _____ and Laurie take pride in her sculpture of _____, who is named for her sister _____.
- 4. _____ longs to serve _____ salad at her party, which only _____ attends.
- 5. _____, a chaplain in the _____, writes to his girls that they are his little _____.

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Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Choose a correct answer to complete each statement. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left.

- _____ 1. After the girls give their Christmas breakfast to the Hummels, A. Father writes that he is proud of them.
B. Mr. Laurence sends a surprise spread of treats. C. Meg gives up the rag money for limes.
D. the girls pool their money to buy Christmas gloves for Marmee.
- _____ 2. Belle Moffat and the maid A. dress Meg in a low-cut dress. B. invite Laurie to the dance.
C. present the flowers that Mr. Laurence sends Meg. D. put snow on Meg's sprained ankle.
- _____ 3. Jo is angry that A. Laurie proposes to Amy. B. she must spend her afternoons reading aloud to her aunt.
C. John Brooke admires Meg. D. Father will not be home for Christmas.
- _____ 4. Amy's fall through rotten ice occurs after A. Meg gives up her job as governess. B. she burns Jo's book.
C. the Vaughns invite her to a picnic. D. Pip dies of hunger.
- _____ 5. The telegram A. announces Laurie's graduation. B. requests that Jo accompany Aunt Carrol.
C. summons John to take care of his ailing parents. D. calls Marmee to Father's bedside.
- _____ 6. Both Hannah and Dr. Bangs realize that A. Amy needs belladonna.
B. Jo and Meg are immune to scarlet fever. C. Beth is gravely ill.
D. Beth will die before Marmee gets home on the train.
- _____ 7. Professor Bhaer thinks that Jo is A. wasting her talent on thrillers.
B. the right teacher to escort Emil and Franz out West. C. buying gifts only for Tina.
D. not capable of reading the works of Hans Andersen.
- _____ 8. Jo wants to A. spend her earnings on a trip to the seaside for Marmee and Beth.
B. edit for *The Spread Eagle*. C. stop the wedding and return Meg to the family.
D. take the omnibus to Mrs. Kirke's boardinghouse.
- _____ 9. A signboard reads A. Demi and Daisy. B. Professor Friedrich Bhaer, Berlin.
C. Josephine March, author. D. Miss Elizabeth March.
- _____ 10. Jo wants the Pickwick Club A. to act out a melodrama. B. to perform for Fred and Ned.
C. to invite Laurie to join.
D. to complete a newspaper with messages to be delivered to Father in Washington.

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Explain the significance of the following quotations:

1. I let the sun go down on my anger.
2. I'd rather see you poor men's wives, if you were happy, beloved, contented, than queens on thrones, without self-respect and peace.
3. I write a little word to tell you with how much satisfaction I watch your efforts to control your temper.
4. Meg has John and the babies to comfort her, but you must stand by Father and Mother, won't you?
5. We Germans believe in sentiment.

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VOCABULARY TEST

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (30 points)

- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. K | 11. N |
| 2. J | 7. E | 12. D |
| 3. M | 8. K | 13. O |
| 4. F | 9. A | 14. M |
| 5. L | 10. B | 15. H |

Part II: Identification (10 points)

Answers will vary.

Part III: Fact/Opinion (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. F |
| 2. T | 7. O |
| 3. F | 8. T |
| 4. O | 9. F |
| 5. O | 10. F |

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.

ANSWER KEY

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Setting Identification (20 points)

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| 1. town | 6. Nice |
| 2. train | 7. Aunt March's house |
| 3. shady nook | 8. school |
| 4. London | 9. war |
| 5. New York | 10. Canada |

Part II: Fill-In (20 points)

- Beth, Laurie, Paris
- Plumfield, Rob, Emil
- Amy, little Beth, Beth
- Amy, lobster, Miss Elliott
- Father, army, women

Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. B | 6. C |
| 2. A | 7. A |
| 3. C | 8. A |
| 4. B | 9. D |
| 5. D | 10. C |

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.



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