



LITTLE WOMEN BY LOUISA MAY ALCOTT

Questions for Group Discussion

1. What do the first nine lines of the novel tell us about the contrasting characters of the four March sisters?
2. Little Women is set in the years during and after the American Civil War and the war is often alluded to. Do you think this is critical to the story, or could it have been told in any other time or setting?
3. Louisa M. Alcott was a supporter of women's suffrage and the abolition of slavery - do these values come through in the book?
4. How relevant are the trials and tribulations Jo faces to the modern reader? Do young women today face similar issues?
5. Jo has a masculine sounding name and Alcott sometimes describes her in a male way, such as when she examines her shoes in a 'gentlemanly manner' or that she will bear her unhappiness 'like a man'. Why do you think the author does this?
6. Towards the end of the book Aunt March is trying to dissuade Meg from marrying impoverished Mr Brooke, and declares: 'You ought to marry well and help your family; it's your duty to make a rich match.' But Meg defies her and accepts his proposal for love. Alcott herself never married. What do you think she is saying about marriage in Little Women?
7. Which social media channels do you think the March sisters would use today? Why?
8. What effect does Mr March's absence have on the March sisters? What effect does it have on Marmee? Do you think events would have panned out differently if he had been home?
9. The book contrasts the lives of the rich and the poor in descriptions of the Kings, Gardiners, Laurences, Marches and Hummels. Does the author imply any moral judgements associated with money, or lack of it?
10. How do you feel about Amy burning Jo's book? Do you think Jo would have forgiven her so soon if Amy hadn't fallen through the ice when they went skating?
11. In Hannah's opinion 'work was the panacea for all afflictions'. Do you see work as one of the themes of the book? How broadly do you think the author defines the concept of work?
12. Think about other famous sets of sisters (in reality or fiction). The Kardashians for instance. . . Do they share any similarities or values with the Marches?