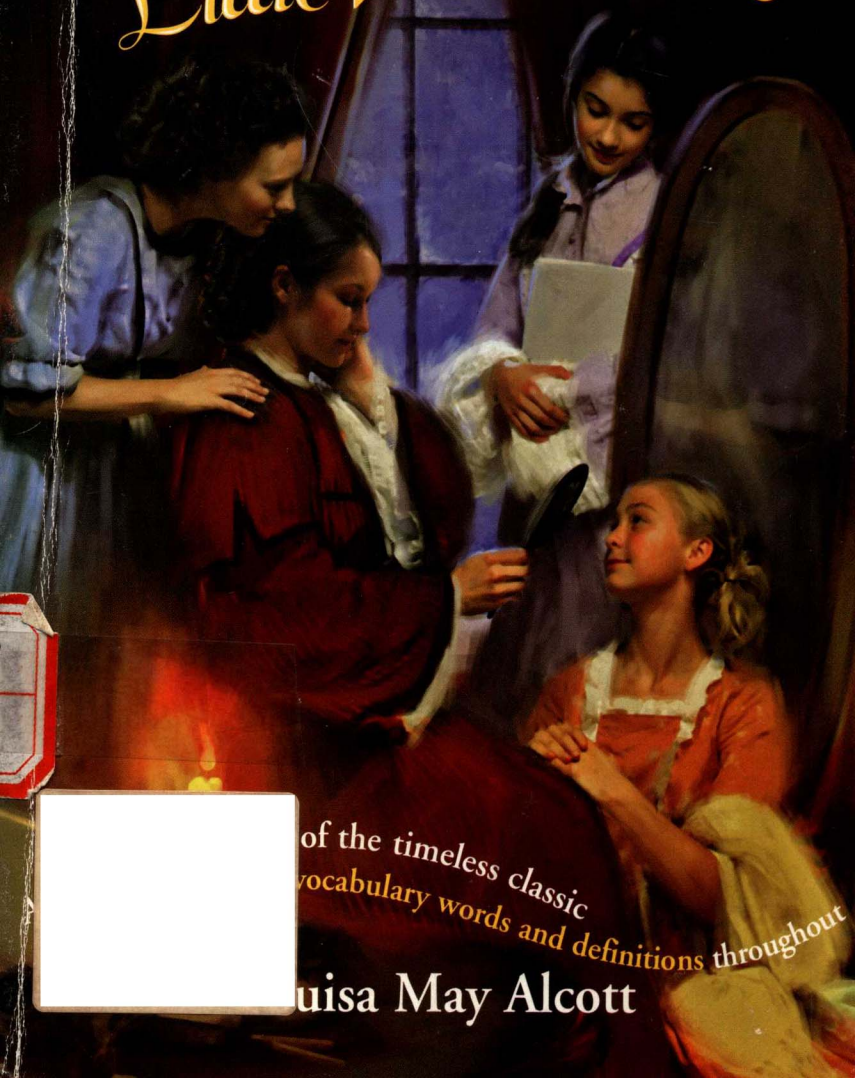


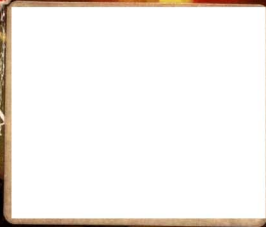
• A VOCABULARY-BUILDING CLASSIC for YOUNG READERS •

Little Women



of the timeless classic
vocabulary words and definitions throughout

Louisa May Alcott



LITTLE WOMEN

A Kaplan Vocabulary-Building Classic for Young Readers

LOUISA MAY ALCOTT

ABRIDGED

SIMON & SCHUSTER

NEW YORK LONDON SYDNEY TORONTO

Kaplan Publishing
Published by SIMON & SCHUSTER
Rockefeller Center
1230 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020

Additional material copyright © 2006 by Kaplan, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by an information storage and retrieval system, without the written permission of the Publisher, except where permitted by law.

Kaplan[®] is a registered trademark of Kaplan, Inc.

SIMON & SCHUSTER and colophon are registered trademarks of Simon & Schuster, Inc.

Editorial Director: Jennifer Farthing
Project Editor: Anne Kemper
Content Manager: Patrick Kennedy
Abridgement and Adaptation: Nick Davis for Ivy Gate Books
Interior Design: Ismail Soyugenc for Ivy Gate Books
Cover Design: Mark Weaver

Manufactured in the United States of America
Published simultaneously in Canada

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

April 2006

ISBN-13: 978-0-7432-6653-6

ISBN-10: 0-7432-6653-6

For information regarding special discounts for bulk purchases, please contact Simon & Schuster Special Sales at 1-800-456-6798 or business@simonandschuster.com.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* is a classic tale of young women and their journey toward adulthood. It also is a way for today's students to enrich their vocabularies – for tests as well as for daily writing and speaking.

Kaplan makes it as easy as 1-2-3 for you to learn dozens – even hundreds – of new words just by reading this classic story. On the right-hand pages you will find the words of Alcott's famous novel. On each page you will find words that have been bolded (put into heavy, dark type). These are words found on tests you take, both for your school subjects and for standardized tests. On the left-hand pages you'll find information about those words: how to pronounce them, what part of speech they are, what they mean, and even what synonyms they might have. In short, you'll find everything you will need to master each of these special words in the story.

Not all of the challenging or unusual words in *Little Women* are usually found on tests. Some are words that were used most often in Alcott's

day, more than 125 years ago. Others are words that are specific to people's occupations or to other things that were common at that time. You might want to learn these words as well, even though they are not likely to appear on tests you might take. For this reason we have underlined them and put information about them in the glossary at the back of this book.

You'll also find other helpful features in this book. One of them is "Louisa May Alcott and *Little Women*." It provides useful information about Alcott's life and this particular book, all of which will help you enjoy your reading even more.

The back of the book contains a section that will assist you in writing a book report about *Little Women*. Use it as an organizer to develop and order your thoughts and ideas about the book. You will also find discussion questions. These will get you thinking about the characters, events, and meaning of this classic novel. They will also help you get ready to discuss it in class, with friends, or even with your family members.

LITTLE WOMEN

Now that you have found out what is in the book – and how to use it – you can get started reading and enjoying one of the most famous classics of all time.

LOUISA MAY ALCOTT AND *LITTLE WOMEN*

Born in 1832, Louisa May Alcott was part of a New England family well known for its progressive values. Although the Alcotts were of “genteel,” middle-class stock, they were poor. As a result, much like the March sisters in *Little Women*, the Alcott children took on a variety of jobs.

By the time Louisa was 18, she was a successful professional writer, earning enough to support herself, her parents and sisters, and a number of nieces and nephews. Her true fame came, however, with *Little Women*, a book whose first printing sold out in only a month. A second volume, which continued the tale of the March sisters through adulthood, appeared in 1869 to equal popular response. Since then, *Little Women* has not been out of print. But more important, it has managed to communicate with generation after generation of readers.

Devoted to her family, Alcott struggled to remain alive in order to nurse her dying father until his death in 1888. She died in 1888 just two months after he passed away.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

How to Use This Book	vii
Louisa May Alcott and <i>Little Women</i>	xi
Chapter 1	3
Chapter 2	21
Chapter 3	35
Chapter 4	63
Chapter 5	105
Chapter 6	123
Chapter 7	131
Chapter 8	157
Chapter 9	165
Chapter 10	179
Chapter 11	215
Chapter 12	233
Glossary	281
Writing a Book Report	287
Discussion Questions	289

LITTLE WOMEN

DREADFUL (dred feh1) *adj.*

1. causing fear

Synonym: terrible

2. very bad or unpleasant

Synonym: awful

CONTENTEDLY (kehr ten tid lee) *adv.*

in a satisfied way

Synonyms: happily, gladly



CHAPTER 1

“Christmas won’t be Christmas without any presents,” grumbled Jo, lying on the rug.

“It’s so **dreadful** to be poor!” sighed Meg, looking down at her old dress.

“I don’t think it’s fair for some girls to have plenty of pretty things and other girls to have nothing at all,” added little Amy, with an injured sniff.

“We’ve got Father and Mother and each other,” said Beth **contentedly** from her corner.

The four young faces darkened as Jo said sadly, “We haven’t got Father, and we shall not have

ALTERED (awl terd) *adj.*

made different

Synonyms: changed, transformed

PROPOSE (preh pohz) *v.* **-ing, -ed**

to put forward an idea or plan

Synonyms: suggest, advise, recommend

DECIDEDLY (deh sy did lee) *adv.*

without doubts

Synonyms: firmly, resolutely

TIRESOME (tie er sum) *adj.*

making one tired or bored

Synonyms: boring, annoying, tedious

him for a long time,” reminding them that Father was far away, where the fighting was.

Nobody spoke for a minute. Then Meg said in an **altered** tone, “You know the reason Mother **proposed** not having any presents this Christmas. It is going to be a hard winter for everyone. And she thinks we ought not to spend money for pleasure when our men are suffering so in the army.”

“I don’t think the little we spend would make any difference. We’ve each got a dollar, and the army wouldn’t be much helped by our giving that. I agree not to expect anything from Mother or you, but I do want to buy something to read. I’ve wanted it so long,” said Jo, who was a bookworm.

“I planned to spend mine on new music,” said Beth, with a little sigh, which no one heard.

“I wanted a nice box of drawing pencils. I really need them,” said Amy **decidedly**.

“Mother didn’t say anything about our money, and she won’t wish us to give up everything. Let’s each buy what we want and have a little fun. I’m sure we work hard enough to earn it,” cried Jo.

“I know I do – teaching those **tiresome**

FRET (freht) *v.* **-ing, -ed**

to be disturbed or bothered

Synonyms: worry, brood

IMPERTINENT (im pur tin ehnt) *adj.*

without proper respect or manners

Synonyms: rude, impolite, fresh

PLAGUE (playg) *v.* **-ing, -ed**

to bother or trouble

Synonyms: annoy, irritate

LIBEL (lie bell) *v.* **-ing, -ed**

to say untrue things

Synonyms: lie, slander

PECK (pek) *v.* **-ing, -ed**

to speak sharply or with criticism

Synonyms: insult, criticize

children nearly all day when I'm longing to enjoy myself at home," began Meg, in the complaining tone again.

"You don't have half such a hard time as I do," said Jo. "How would you like to be shut up for hours with a nervous, fussy old lady who keeps you trotting, is never satisfied, and bothers you till you're ready to fly out the window or cry?"

"It's naughty to **fret**, but I do think washing dishes and keeping things tidy is the worst work in the world. It makes me cross, and my hands get so stiff that I can't practice well at all." Beth looked at her rough hands with a sigh.

"I don't believe any of you suffer as I do," cried Amy, "You don't have to go to school with **impertinent** girls who **plague** you if you don't know your lessons and laugh at your dresses and label your father if he isn't rich, and insult you when your nose isn't nice."

"If you mean **libel**, I'd say so, and not talk about labels, as if Papa was a pickle bottle," advised Jo, laughing.

"Don't **peck** at one another. Don't you wish we

SLANG (slang) *n.*

informal language

Synonym: street talk

REPROVING (reh proo ving) *adj.*

not agreeing, finding fault

Synonyms: scolding, criticizing

VAIN (vane) *n.*

overly proud, thinking too highly of oneself

Synonyms: conceited, self-satisfied

had the money Papa lost when we were little, Jo? Dear me! How happy we'd be if we had no worries!" said Meg, who could remember better times.

"You said the other day you thought we were happier than the King children, for they were fighting and fretting all the time in spite of their money."

"So I did, Beth. Well, I think we are. For though we do have to work, we make fun of ourselves. And we are a pretty jolly set, as Jo would say."

"Jo does use such **slang** words!" observed Amy, with a **reproving** look at the long figure stretched on the rug.

As readers like to know how people look, we will take this moment to give them a little sketch of the four sisters who sat knitting away in the twilight, while the December snow fell quietly without, and the fire crackled cheerfully within.

Margaret, the eldest of the four, was sixteen and very pretty, with large eyes, plenty of soft brown hair, a sweet mouth, and white hands, of which she was rather **vain**. Fifteen-year-old Jo was very tall, thin, and reminded one of a colt, for she never seemed to know what to do with her long