

The Revelation of LOUISA MAY

MICHAELA MACCOLL

ABOUT THE BOOK

Louisa May Alcott can hardly believe her ears—her mother is leaving for the summer to earn money for the family and her father won't do anything to stop her. How is Louisa to find the time to write her stories if she has to add taking care of her father and sister to her list of chores? And why can't she escape the boredom of her small town to have an adventure of her own?

Little does Louisa know just how interesting her small world is about to become. Before long she is juggling her stubborn father, a fugitive slave who is seeking safety in the Alcotts' home along the Underground Railroad, and possibly even love where she least expects it. Add the mysterious murder of a slave catcher to the mix, and Louisa has her hands full.

Michaela MacColl has once again intertwined the facts of a beloved author's real life with a suspenseful fictional tale that will not only have readers on the edges of their seats but also, like Louisa, debating right versus wrong, family versus independence, and duty versus love.

978-1-4521-3357-7 • \$16.99 HC

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Ages 12 and up • F&P Text Level Gradient: Z

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This teacher's guide contains discussion questions and activities aligned with the Common Core State Standards. See inside for reference to the Reading and Writing strands and grade-specific standards.

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Write about a time in which you were given unexpected responsibility. Why were you given this role? How did you feel about assuming this obligation? What did you gain from this experience? Share your experiences in small groups.

Correlates with Common Core Writing Standards: Production and Distribution of Writing, 6-9.4

Conduct an Internet search for one of the following: Louisa May Alcott, Ralph Waldo Emerson, or Henry David Thoreau. Using reliable sources, write the three most intriguing facts you learn about this historical figure. Print out an image related to your research topic. Share your findings in small groups.

Correlates with Common Core Writing Standards: Research to Build and Present Knowledge, 6-9.7

WHILE READING: TEXT-BASED QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Characterize Bronson Alcott, Louisa's father. Is he a responsible father and husband? Why or why not? Describe his relationship with his daughters and his ideas about their education. What character traits does he most want to instill in them? Does he change as the story progresses, or does his character remain static? Give examples from the story to support your response.

In contrast, examine Abigail Alcott ("Marmee"), Louisa's mother. Is she a responsible mother and wife? Why or why not? Describe her relationship with her daughters and her ideas about their education. What character traits does she want to instill in them?

Given the author's note at the end of the book, which character traits did Louisa May Alcott inherit or learn from her parents?

Correlates with Common Core Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details, 6-9.1, 6-9.2

Compare three dominant female characters in the novel: Edith Whittaker, Lidian Emerson, and Louisa May Alcott herself. Create a comparison chart in which you note significant actions and statements made by each character in the novel. Look up and discuss the literary term foil. Use your charts to explain how Edith and Lidian serve as foils for Louisa May.

Correlates with Common Core Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details, 6-9.1, 6-9.2

Document how Louisa's relationship with Fred develops throughout the novel. Identify two key events that effect a change in their relationship. Do you think they would have been a good match if Fred hadn't acted the way he did?

Correlates with Common Core Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details, 6-9.3

Discuss the following statement: “I would have stood by you if the killing was all there was. Even the robbery. But what you tried to do to George was cowardly and unforgivable. I thought better of you” (235). What does this tell you about Louisa’s character?

Correlates with Common Core Reading Standards for Literature: Craft and Structure, 6-9.4

This novel centers on the theme of responsibility. When does Louisa act responsibly in the novel? Is she ever irresponsible? Use specific examples to support your response.

Correlates with Common Core Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details, 6-9.2, 6-9.3

In conversation with Fred, Louisa quotes Thoreau’s reasons for choosing to live in the woods and discusses the impact that Thoreau’s writing has on her own beliefs about life (120-1). In *The Revelation of Louisa May*, does Louisa live by this philosophy? Discuss.

Correlates with Common Core Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details, 6-9.2, Craft and Structure, 6-9.5

WRITING AND RESEARCH CONNECTIONS: LONG TERM PROJECTS TO CONSIDER FOR YOUR STUDENTS

LIFE AND TIMES RESEARCH PROJECT

Partner your students up. Have them complete a full research project on the life of Louisa May Alcott, Henry David Thoreau, or Ralph Waldo Emerson. They may also choose to research the Underground Railroad and slavecatchers like Russell Finch. Have each pair prepare a joint five-minute class presentation that employs technology.

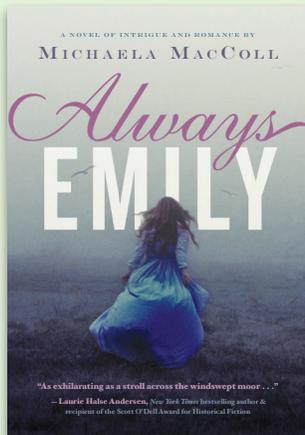
Correlates with Common Core Writing Standards: Research to Build and Present Knowledge, 6-9.7, 6-9.8; Common Core Speaking & Listening Standards: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, 6-9.5

CHARACTER JOURNALS

Have each student assume the identity of a character in the novel. After reading each chapter, ask them to write a brief journal entry commenting on the chapter’s events from the point-of-view of their chosen character. Challenge students to adapt the voice of their character! In class, have students partner up to exchange and read each other’s journal entries as a daily review.

Correlates with Common Core Writing Standards: Text Types and Purposes, 6-9.3

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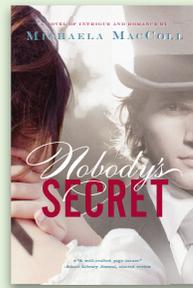
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Ages 12 and up

F&P Text Level Gradient: Z

Emily and Charlotte Brontë are about as opposite as two sisters can be. Charlotte is practical and cautious; Emily is headstrong and imaginative. But they do have one thing in common: a love of writing. This shared passion will lead them to be two of the first published female novelists and authors of several enduring works of classic literature. But they're not there yet. First, they have to figure out if there is a connection between a string of local burglaries, rumors that a neighbor's death may not have been accidental, and the appearance on the moors of a mysterious and handsome stranger. The girls have a lot of knots to untangle— before someone else gets killed.

★—*School Library Journal*, starred review



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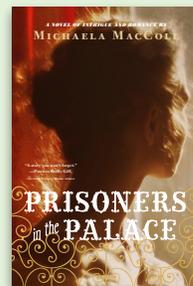
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★—*Shelf Awareness*, starred review

★—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review



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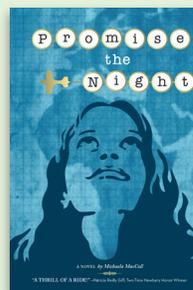
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Ages 12 and up

Guided Reading Level: Z

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Ages 9 to 12

Guided Reading Level: X

★—*School Library Journal*, starred review

★—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michaela MacColl studied multidisciplinary history at Vassar College and Yale University, which turns out to be the perfect degree for writing historical fiction. She lives with her husband and two daughters in Connecticut.

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