



Marmee & Louisa: The Untold Story of Louisa May Alcott and Her Mother

Eve LaPlante

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Louisa May Alcott was one of the most successful and bestselling authors of her day, earning more than any of her male contemporaries. Her classic *Little Women* has been a mainstay of American literature since its release nearly 150 years ago, as Jo March and her calm, beloved “Marmee” have shaped and inspired generations of young women. Biographers have consistently attributed Louisa’s uncommon success to her father, Bronson Alcott, assuming that this outspoken idealist was the source of his daughter’s progressive thinking and remarkable independence.

But in this riveting dual biography, award-winning biographer Eve LaPlante explodes these myths, drawing from a trove of surprising new documents to show that it was Louisa’s actual “Marmee,” Abigail May Alcott, who formed the intellectual and emotional center of her world. Abigail, whose difficult life both inspired and served as a warning to her devoted daughters, pushed Louisa to excel at writing and to chase her unconventional dreams in a male-dominated world.

In *Marmee & Louisa*, LaPlante, Abigail’s great-niece and Louisa’s cousin, re-creates their shared story from diaries, letters, and personal papers, some recently discovered in a family attic and many others that were thought to have been destroyed. Here at last Abigail is revealed in her full complexity—long dismissed as a quiet, self-effacing background figure, she comes to life as a fascinating writer and thinker in her own right. A politically active feminist firebrand, she was a highly opinionated, passionate, ambitious woman who fought for universal civil rights, publicly advocating for abolition, women’s suffrage, and other defining moral struggles of her era.

In this groundbreaking work, LaPlante paints an exquisitely moving and utterly convincing portrait of a woman decades ahead of her time, and the fiercely independent daughter whose life was deeply entwined with her mother’s dreams of freedom. This gorgeously written story of two extraordinary women is guaranteed to transform our view of one of America’s most beloved authors.

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