

Patte dans le sac entre le lectorat, John et Agnès mais également de l'accroître. Cette distanciation attendue se manifeste également dans le choix des patronymes qui caractérise d'entrée de jeu les personnages secondaires comme ce D. Pression.

Mentionnons également les réseaux sémantiques qui permettent d'élargir les métaphores filées des chaînes synonymiques—travail suscite boulot qui renvoie à l'espèce arbre qui à son tour donne le clé pour le sentier à suivre et ainsi de suite. En fait, ce sont ces regroupements linguistiques qui facilitent la résolution des problèmes rencontrés. En bref, l'efficacité de cette aventure est rendue grâce à plusieurs procédés qui visent à maintenir le rythme, créée par la présence des nombreux rebondissements et péripéties, ce qui a pour effet de maintenir l'intérêt et le plaisir des dénouements inattendus.

Après la lecture, on attend déjà la suite tant on se sent bien en compagnie de cette fratrie. Les illustrations de Sylvestre soulignent avec justesse les émotions suscitées par les situations dramatiques ou encore résumant les événements qui scandent le récit comme cette entrée impromptue de Bob les Oreilles Gingras dans la chambre des trois compères.

En somme, ce roman amuse, surprend et rassure, car la tension dramatique ne dure jamais trop longtemps; aussi plaira-t-il à tous les fanas de Notdog et des autres. On peut difficilement imaginer une fin à cette série—sinon peut-être la lassitude de l'auteure—tant les situations propices à créer de nouvelles aventures, vécues par le quatuor, sont nombreuses et quasi inépuisables.

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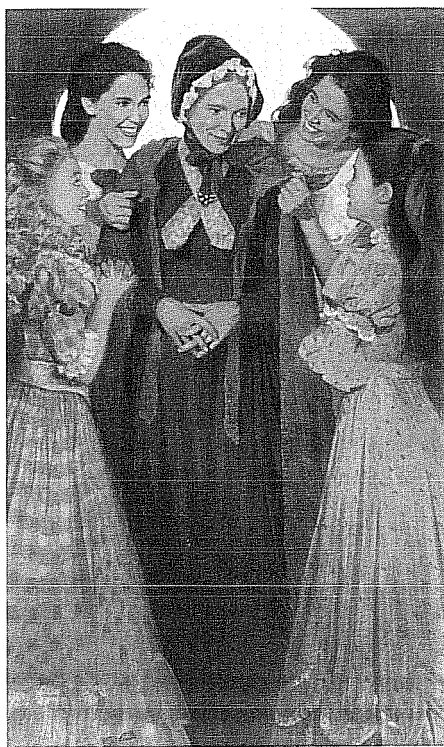
LITTLE WOMEN: A TIMELY BUT SENTIMENTAL ABRIDGEMENT

Little women. Louisa May Alcott. Abridg. Barbara Greenwood. Illus. Greg Ruhl. Key Porter Books, 1992. 94 pp., \$14.95 cloth. ISBN 1-55013-414-0.

Barbara Greenwood's abridgement of Book I of Louisa May Alcott's *Little women* makes timely reading for junior readers who may be experiencing problems of interpersonal relationships, family financial losses and changes in circumstances, separation from parents, or serious illness similar to those Alcott presented to her own generation. The March sisters learn to enjoy and share what they have, to make do, and to be creative, imaginative, and frugal in their daily lives—all qualities today's reader needs to consider developing.

Greenwood eliminates Alcott's preachy tone and overt didacticism. She also reduces her detailed descriptive passages. Although these changes will make the book appeal to a young, modern audience, Alcott's vision has been diminished in the process. Greenwood maintains the liveliness of the March girls, especially Jo's exuberant language and uninhibited behaviour, and the importance of both family interactions and self-development through experience. Nevertheless, the

abridgement minimizes the sisters' negative qualities—Meg's vanity and Jo's temper that in the original leads to Amy's nearly drowning and her absorption with books as the indirect cause of Beth's illness—and omits the memorable scenes of the donated Christmas breakfast and of the Hummel baby's death in Beth's arms. Because Greenwood ends with Book I, she also omits Beth's death, a key event in the original. Greenwood's abridgement is designed to appeal to contemporary readers but, by omitting or minimizing the painful realities of human existence—especially the ways people hurt others and themselves and the harsh facts of poverty and death, she has increased delight at the expense of instruction.



The book itself is attractively printed in large type on glossy paper and has end papers that resemble old lace to recall Alcott's era. Greg Ruhl's plentiful (38—six of which are full-page), lively, and colourful illustrations add to the book's appeal. The March girls' contemporary faces and their brightly-coloured clothing will attract today's reader. He captures moments of feeling with facial expressions and body language and clearly shows the seriousness of Beth's illness and Jo's wide range of response to situations of surprise, anger, pleasure and distress. He illustrates the sense of family, the centrality of Marmee, and the absence of Mr. March by twice showing the girls grouped around their mother who holds a letter. By depicting some of the events in an impressionistic style and others in the sepia tones of a daguerreotype,

Ruhl evokes the time but also reinforces the abridgement's sentimentality.

Although young readers will find this an enjoyable and accessible text, when they finally read the original version, they will be surprised by Alcott's starker vision of the human condition.

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