



# Plot Development in *Little Women*



Answer the following questions about the adapted excerpt from Louisa May Alcott's novel *Little Women*.

### Sample Answers

1. What do Meg and Jo's words at the opening of the excerpt reveal about their feelings regarding the events happening in the story?

Their words reveal that they are both terribly sad and feeling hopeless in the face of a potentially tragic event.

2. What event happens in paragraph 3 that moves the plot forward to what eventually happens at the end of the excerpt?

Laurie quietly leaves for the station in the middle of the night. At the end of the story, he returns to the house with the girls' mother.

3. **Part A:** When Jo hears a sound and turns to see Meg kneeling beside their mother's chair with her face hidden, what does Jo assume?

- A. She thinks Meg has fallen ill as well.  
B. She thinks Meg is worried about Mother.  
**C. She thinks Beth must have died.**  
D. She thinks Mother has finally returned.

3. **Part B:** How does Jo's assumption affect how she interprets what she sees when she returns to Beth's bedside?

Jo's assumption is that Meg's actions were because Beth had died, so she interprets Beth's lack of fever and pain as signs that she's passed away.

4. In paragraph 5, Jo feels no desire to cry, and she says, "Goodbye, my Beth. Goodbye!" Why?

- A. Jo must leave to get Mother from the station.  
**B. Jo believes that Beth is at peace in death.**  
C. Jo knows Beth will have to go to the hospital.  
D. Jo is relieved that she can leave soon.

5. What do Hannah's actions and words in paragraph 6 reveal?

Hannah awakens and checks on Beth, and she explains that Beth is not actually dead. Instead, Beth's fever has broken, meaning she is going to recover.

6. When Jo looks out at the wintry scene a little after two in the morning, she thinks how dreary it looks. When she and Meg look outside later in the early morning, they both think the world has never seemed so lovely. What does this show?

Jo saw the snowy world as dreary because she was in such despair over Beth's health. Then the girls think the snowy world seems lovely because they're joyful that Beth's fever broke and things are looking up.