

## Little Women - When Beth Dies

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In this image we see Louisa May Alcott and her family. In her famous novel, *Little Women*, Meg was Anna; Louisa was Jo; Elizabeth ("Lizzy") was Beth and May was Amy. Click on the image for a better view.

Chapter 40, of *Little Women*, is one of the saddest chapters in the story. <u>Beth</u>—the third daughter of the March family—has contracted an illness which will ultimately take her life.

Louisa May Alcott, author of *Little Women*, also lost a sister. It must have been difficult, and perhaps cathartic, for her to write chapter 40.

On the 14th of March, 1858—after losing her own 22-year-old sister, Elizabeth—Alcott wrote this in her personal journal:

My dear Beth died at three in the morning after two years of patient pain. Last week she put her work away, saying the needle was too heavy ... Saturday she slept, and at midnight became unconscious, quietly breathing her life away till three; then, with one last look of her beautiful eyes, she was gone.

Readers familiar with the novel, *Little Women*, will recognize those words. It is another example of how authors use real-life events to create their stories.

You can listen to Carole Bos (creator of AwesomeStories) <u>read/dramatize "Valley of the Shadow"</u> as you delve into a list of essential questions about this pivotal part of Alcott's story.

For Classics at AwesomeStories

Credits:

Chapter 40, of Little Women, by Louisa May Alcott. Dramatized by Carole Bos, creator of Awesome Stories.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Little-Women-When-Beth-Dies</u>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Little-Women-When-Beth-Dies

Media Stream



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