

Little Women: Temper and Skates

Little Women by Louisa May Alcott was published in 1869. It is the story of four sisters: Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy March. In the passage below, Jo is angry with her little sister Amy. Amy had burned the book Jo was writing because Jo wouldn't allow Amy to go with her to the theater. Now Jo has gone skating with Laurie, the boy who lives next door. Amy has followed without permission.

Chapter Eight — Jo Meets Apollyon

Jo heard Amy panting after her run, stamping her feet and blowing on her fingers as she tried to put her skates on, but Jo never turned and went slowly zigzagging down the river, taking a bitter, unhappy sort of satisfaction in her sister's troubles. She had cherished her anger till it grew strong and took possession of her, as evil thoughts and feelings always do unless cast out at once. As Laurie turned the bend, he shouted back...

"Keep near the shore. It isn't safe in the middle." Jo heard, but Amy was struggling to her feet and did not catch a word. Jo glanced over her shoulder, and the little demon she was harboring said in her ear...

"No matter whether she heard or not, let her take care of herself."

Laurie had vanished round the bend, Jo was just at the turn, and Amy, far behind, striking out toward the smoother ice in the middle of the river. For a minute Jo stood still with a strange feeling in her heart, then she resolved to go on, but something held and turned her round, just in time to see Amy throw up her hands and go down, with a sudden crash of rotten ice, the splash of water, and a cry that made Jo's heart stand still with fear. She tried to call Laurie, but her voice was gone. She tried to rush forward, but her feet seemed to have no strength in them, and for a second, she could only stand motionless, staring with a terror-stricken face at the little blue hood above the black water. Something rushed swiftly by her, and Laurie's voice cried out...

"Bring a rail. Quick, quick!"

How she did it, she never knew, but for the next few minutes she worked as if possessed, blindly obeying Laurie, who was quite self-possessed, and lying flat, held Amy up by his arm and hockey stick till Jo

dragged a rail from the fence, and together they got the child out, more frightened than hurt.

"Now then, we must walk her home as fast as we can. Pile our things on her, while I get off these confounded skates," cried Laurie, wrapping his coat round Amy, and tugging away at the straps which never seemed so intricate before.

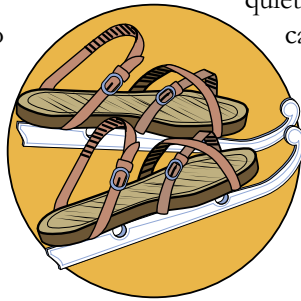
Shivering, dripping, and crying, they got Amy home, and after an exciting time of it, she fell asleep, rolled in blankets before a hot fire. During the bustle Jo had scarcely spoken but flown about, looking pale and wild, with her things half off, her dress torn, and her hands cut and bruised by ice and rails and refractory buckles. When Amy was comfortably asleep, the house quiet, and Mrs. March sitting by the bed, she called Jo to her and began to bind up the hurt hands.

"Are you sure she is safe?" whispered Jo, looking remorsefully at the golden head, which might have been swept away from her sight forever under the treacherous ice.

"Quite safe, dear. She is not hurt, and won't even take cold, I think, you were so sensible in covering and getting her home quickly," replied her mother cheerfully.

"Laurie did it all. I only let her go. Mother, if she should die, it would be my fault." And Jo dropped down beside the bed in a passion of penitent tears, telling all that had happened, bitterly condemning her hardness of heart, and sobbing out her gratitude for being spared the heavy punishment which might have come upon her.

"It's my dreadful temper! I try to cure it, I think I have, and then it breaks out worse than ever. Oh, Mother, what shall I do? What shall I do?" cried poor Jo, in despair.



Name: _____

Understanding the Text: Little Women

Part I. Short Answer

Answer each question below.

1. Where was the ice unsafe? _____
2. What did Laurie and Jo use to get Amy out of the ice? _____
3. What was one reason Jo cried when she told Marmee about the accident? _____
4. What did Jo blame for the accident? _____
5. Why didn't Jo warn Amy about the ice? _____

Part II. Who Was It?

The passage has four characters: Jo, Laurie, Amy, and Marmee. Write the correct character for each event below.

1. _____ Reached Amy first when she fell through the ice
2. _____ Said Amy wouldn't catch cold
3. _____ Had hands that were cut and bruised
4. _____ Laid flat on the ice to rescue Amy
5. _____ Stood still with fear when Amy fell

Name: _____

Vocabulary in Little Women

I. Vocabulary Match

Match each word in Column A with its meaning in Column B

Column A

1. _____ harboring
2. _____ resolved
3. _____ self-possessed
4. _____ confounded
5. _____ intricate
6. _____ bind
7. _____ remorsefully
8. _____ treacherous
9. _____ penitent
10. _____ condemning

Column B

- A. calm
- B. fasten or tie
- C. frustrating or bewildering
- D. regretful for doing wrong
- E. firmly decided
- F. complex or difficult
- G. disapproving or blaming
- H. dangerous
- I. keeping
- J. filled with sadness or sorrow

Part II. Meaning in the Text

Below are phrases from the text. Circle the correct meaning of the underlined word.

1. "During the bustle Jo had scarcely spoken"
A. accident B. excited or noisy activity C. argument D. part of a woman's dress
2. "her hands cut and bruised by ice and rails and refractory buckles."
A. metal B. skating C. pretty D. stubborn or difficult
3. "It's my dreadful temper!"
A. terrible B. often or frequent C. youthful D. quiet
4. "sobbing out her gratitude for being spared the heavy punishment"
A. amazement B. thankfulness C. sadness D. fear
5. "Laurie had vanished round the bend"
A. crept B. returned from C. disappeared D. sped or gone quickly

Name: _____

Find the Supporting Evidence: Temper and Skates

Below is one of the main ideas of the passage. Write three quotations from the passage that support this main idea.

Jo was sorry that her
temper had almost hurt Amy.

Name: _____

Little Women: Giving Advice

The passage ends with Jo asking Marmee, “What shall I do?” She wants to control her temper, but doesn’t know how. What would you tell Jo to do? Write a letter to Jo and tell her what steps you think she should take to manage her anger. Why you think it is important that she control her temper? How will learning this help her in the future?

[illegible]

Name: _____ **KEY**

Little Women: Temper and Skates

Word Search

Circle each word from the list in the puzzle. The words can go in any direction.



AMY
ANGER

BLANKETS
CRASH

ICE
JO

LAURIE
PENITENT

SKATES
TEMPER

Little Women: Temper and Skates

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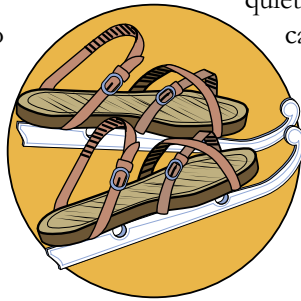
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Name: KEY

Understanding the Text: Little Women

Part I. Short Answer

Answer each question below.

1. Where was the ice unsafe?

Student's answers will vary. Example of correct answers:

In the middle

2. What did Laurie and Jo use to get Amy out of the ice?

A rail and a hockey stick

3. What was one reason Jo cried when she told Marmee about the accident?

She was thankful that Amy hadn't died.

4. What did Jo blame for the accident?

Her temper

5. Why didn't Jo warn Amy about the ice?

She was angry and thought Amy could take care of herself.

Part II. Who Was It?

The passage has four characters: Jo, Laurie, Amy, and Marmee. Write the correct character for each event below.

1. Laurie Reached Amy first when she fell through the ice

2. Marmee Said Amy wouldn't catch cold

3. Jo Had hands that were cut and bruised

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**“Mother, if she should
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fault.”**

**“sobbing out her
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KEY

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