

Little women by louisa may alcott

Literature



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The mother-daughter relationship in *Little Women* has the element of a deep-founded understanding between the two (staff. wwcc. edu, n. pag.).

The novel revolves around four sisters, and their mother, Marmee, who live against all odds and struggle through their individual lives, all the while helping each other, to live up to their dreams. Jo looks up to her mother, who manages the whole March household single-handedly in the absence of her husband, and through her, learns to be independent just like her, and to hold her head high despite all deprivations and calamities of life, always aware that her mother would always be there for her in times of need.

The novel was written in 1868, a period when marriage and family were the only options available to a woman (Elbert, 1). Despite that, Marmee tells her daughter that she " would rather see you poor men's wife, if you were happy, beloved, contented than queens of the thrones, without self-respect and peace." (*Little Women* 84) That is just one example of the bond the mother and the daughter share; that mutual respect, understanding, and support, not to mention love. Marmee's daughters grow up to be self-reliant and confident because they knew that their mother will always support them and will always be there to comfort them in the symphony of life.

Unlike the relationship between Jo and Marmee, that of Francie and her mother Katie is a complex one. *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* has the element of a daughter's desire to be connected to her mother (staff. wwcc. edu, n. pag.). She wants to get closer to her mother, know her, form a bond, and learn from her the methods of dealing with life. The mother and the daughter in Smith's novel have their differences, because while Katie tries hard to push them toward a better life and away from the ugliness of poverty by trying to make them work hard, Francie, a free-spirited dreamer, dwells in <https://assignbuster.com/little-women-by-louisa-may-alcott/>

her own world which she has forged out of her fantasies. Treating her daughter as an adult, Katie respects her decisions and values her opinions. There are several incidences in the novel that bolster this observation, for instance, when Katie seeks Francie's approval before deciding to marry McShane. Her practice of taking her daughter around with her sisters as a part of "Rommely women" (Little Women) for family emergencies is another example. Due to such adult treatment, she grows up fast and soon begins to see herself as equal to her mother. Unfortunately, Katie's secret preference of her son over her daughter, and her greater inclination toward her son than her daughter deprives Francie of that motherly love, bond, and guidance that would prevent a young girl from making a lot of mistakes associated with coming-of-age. Despite this distance between them, and Katie's unequal treatment of her children, Francie knows that in her heart, her mother holds the best for her, and so she loves her back dearly, albeit reservedly. The distance between them, unfortunately, is always there. And this, too, is depicted in the novel on several occasions, for instance, Francie's decision to fend for herself after losing her job in New York and not to even share her dilemma with her mother.

Despite their differences in fashion, the mother-daughter relationships in Little Women and A Tree Grows in Brooklyn are distinctly American through their promotion of American values, such as independence, fairness, farsightedness, and equality. And by doing so, literature has once again managed to use the said kinship to analyze society and promote social change.

The social and political environments in which the two novels are set to portray the mother-daughter relationship as an element of change. In Little <https://assignbuster.com/little-women-by-louisa-may-alcott/>

Women, Marmee's connection with her daughters enables them to establish their own identities outside the bounds of society. How Katie brings up Francie in *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* drives the latter to strive to lift her family and herself out of poverty. Hence, it would be fair to say that Alcott and Smith's goal in their respective novels was to impart the message that the path to the realization of one's dreams begins at home.