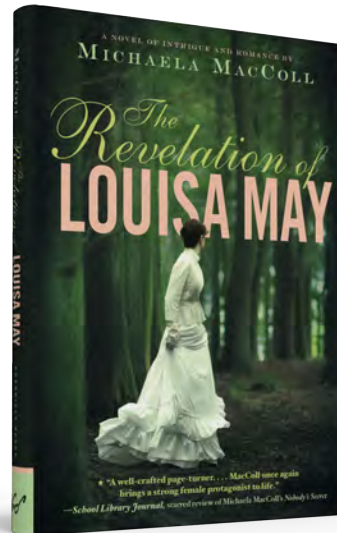
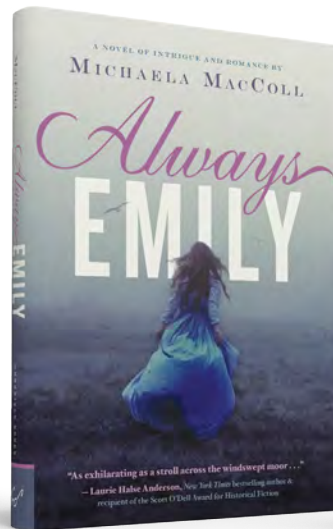


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NOVELS OF INTRIGUE AND ROMANCE

BY MICHAELA MACCOLL



Nobody's
SECRET

Always
EMILY

The
Revelation of
LOUISA MAY

Secrets
in the
SNOW

The critically-acclaimed, irresistible YA series featuring beloved authors as mystery-solving heroines!

“Filled with life, death, mystery and witty humor.” –*School Library Journal*, starred review, *Always Emily*

“Seamlessly weaves fact and fiction together. . . . Fans of historical fiction will relish this.”

–*Booklist*, review, *The Revelation of Louisa May*

ABOUT THIS GUIDE



This guide contains discussion questions designed to spark conversation about themes and ideas raised by this novel.

For all Chronicle books by Michaela MacColl visit chroniclebooks.com/michaelamaccoll.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR MICHAELA MACCOLL

Michaela MacColl studied multidisciplinary history at Vassar College and Yale University, which turns out to be the perfect degree for writing historical fiction. She lives with her family in Connecticut.

PRAISE FOR THE NOVELS OF ROMANCE AND INTRIGUE:

The Revelation of Louisa May

A Grateful American Book Prize Honorable Mention

A Junior Library Guild selection

“Masterfully drawn. Reads like a contemporary young adult novel that will draw in a whole new audience.”

–*School Library Connection*, starred review

“Tantalizing. . . . An intriguing introduction to young Louisa May Alcott as a spunky heroine.”

–*Kirkus Reviews*

Always Emily

“A fictional tale of suspense and romance that is guaranteed to bring new readership to MacColl, as well as to the classic tales by both Brontë sisters.”

–VOYA: Voice of Youth Advocates, starred review

Nobody's Secret

“A well-crafted page-turner.”

–*School Library Journal*, starred review

“Intriguing.” –*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

RECOMMENDED READING

After reading the Novels of Intrigue and Romance, go back to the treasured classics that helped to inspire these books. What connections can you make between MacColl's novels and these works?

Always Emily

Jane Eyre, Charlotte Brontë

Wuthering Heights, Emily Brontë

The Revelation of Louisa May

Little Women, Louisa May Alcott

Secrets in the Snow

Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen

Northanger Abbey, Jane Austen

Nobody's Secret

“I'm Nobody! Who are you?”, Emily Dickinson

“I felt a Funeral, in my Brain”, Emily Dickinson

“Tell all the truth but tell it slant”, Emily Dickinson

“Because I could not stop for Death”, Emily Dickinson

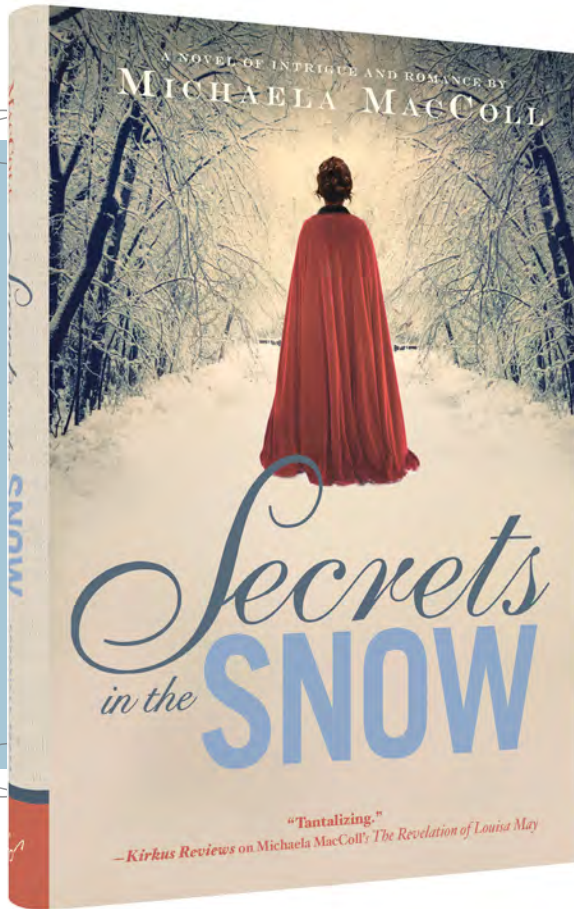
“My Life had stood – a Loaded Gun”, Emily Dickinson

As an additional resource, see the Poetry Foundation's biography of Emily Dickinson for more insight into the voice and context of Dickinson's poetry.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS TEACHER GUIDE, CONTACT JAIME WONG AT JAIME_WONG@CHRONICLEBOOKS.COM.



DISCUSSION GUIDE



Secrets *in the* SNOW

MICHAELA MACCOLL

ABOUT THE BOOK

Jane Austen's family is eager to marry her off. Coming from a family of little means, it is the only way she can be assured of a comfortable future. Jane is much more interested in writing her novels, and finds every suitor lacking in one way or another. That is, until the mysterious Mr. LeFoy arrives on the scene.

But when her cousin is suspected in aiding the French, England's enemy, Jane is suddenly sidetracked trying to prove her cousin's innocence, solving a murder, and ultimately facing a decision that might just cost her true love.

978-1-4521-3358-4 • \$16.99 HC

978-1-4521-3802-2 • \$10.99 E-book

Ages 12 and up • F&P Text Level Gradient: Z+ • Lexile® Measure: HL650L

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

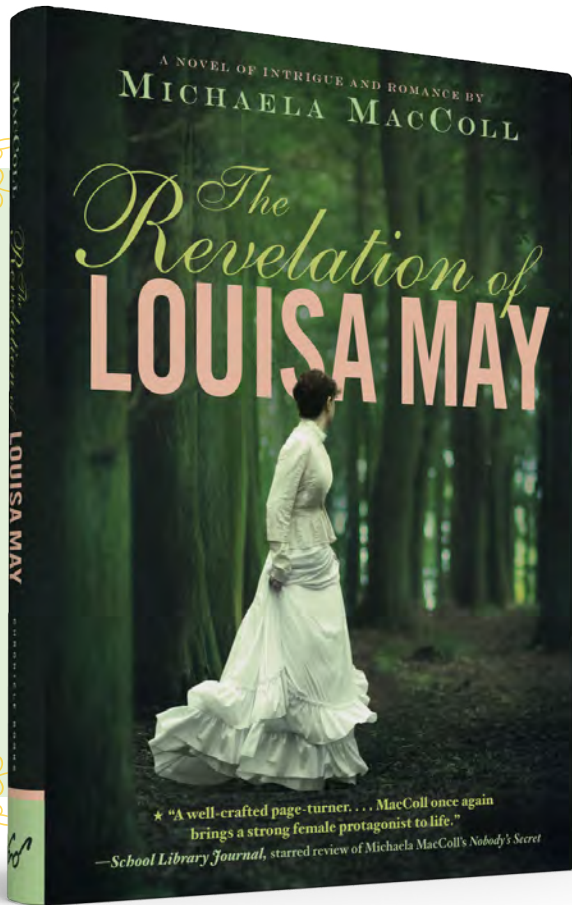
This guide contains discussion questions designed to spark conversation about themes and ideas raised by this novel.

1. The novel opens, “Jane lay in bed, listening to the sounds only heard in a rich man’s house. The slight creak as the door was shoved open by a servant’s hip...The thud of coal being fed to the fire. All done without any effort on Jane’s part.” What does this simple but effective first paragraph tell you about Jane and her world?
2. Sibling relationships are often one of the most formative in childhood and adolescence. How would you describe the relationship between Jane and her sister Cassandra? What different perspective might Jane give to Cassandra about their shared lives, and Cassandra to Jane? Reflect on your own relationships with your siblings. Do you see any similarities with Jane and Cassandra?
3. One of Jane’s key qualities is her tendency to speak her mind. What is your opinion about the way that she engages with other characters in the novel, in particular her brother Edward and sister-in-law Elizabeth?
4. How would you describe the dynamic between Jane and Tom Lefroy? What do you think fuels the attraction between the two? Are they a good match?
5. Dating today is challenging, but making a match in Georgian England could be even more difficult. Discuss the various couples in the novel—Jane and Tom Lefroy, cousin Eliza and James Austen, Eliza and Henry Austen, Edward and Elizabeth, and Cassandra and Thomas Fowle. What do you think were the largest considerations and greatest complications for love, romance, and marriage in the early 19th century? Do any of these still apply today?
6. In a key scene in the novel, Jane and her beloved cousin Eliza disagree over whether or not Eliza and her son Hastings should join her husband in America. What do each of their positions tell you about their sense of duty and responsibility to family? If you were Jane, what would you advise Eliza to do?
7. On discovering the body of the Comte, Jane, Tom Lefroy, and Henry Austen have very different ideas about what is the right thing to do. Discuss each character’s position and rationale. Who do you agree with most?
8. Were you surprised by the outcome of Jane and Tom’s romance? Why or why not? Jane received several marriage proposals but remained unmarried until her death at 41. Did the novel supply any possibilities to you about why Jane did not marry?

For a concise, beautifully illustrated biography of Jane Austen’s life, see *Library of Luminaries: Jane Austen* by Zena Alkayat (Chronicle, 2016).



DISCUSSION GUIDE



The Revelation of LOUISA MAY

MICHAELA MACCOLL

ABOUT THE BOOK

Louisa May Alcott can hardly believe her ears—her mother is leaving for the summer to earn money for the family and her father won't do anything to stop her. How is Louisa to find the time to write her stories if she has to add taking care of her father and sister to her list of chores? And why can't she escape the boredom of her small town to have an adventure of her own?

Little does Louisa know just how interesting her small world is about to become. Before long she is juggling her stubborn father, a fugitive slave who is seeking safety in the Alcotts' home along the Underground Railroad, and possibly even love where she least expects it. Add the mysterious murder of a slave catcher to the mix, and Louisa has her hands full.

Michaela MacColl has once again intertwined the facts of a beloved author's real life with a suspenseful fictional tale that will not only have readers on the edges of their seats but also, like Louisa, debating right versus wrong, family versus independence, and duty versus love.

978-1-4521-3357-7 • \$16.99 HC

978-1-4521-3801-5 • \$12.99 eBook

Ages 12 and up • F&P Text Level Gradient: Z

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

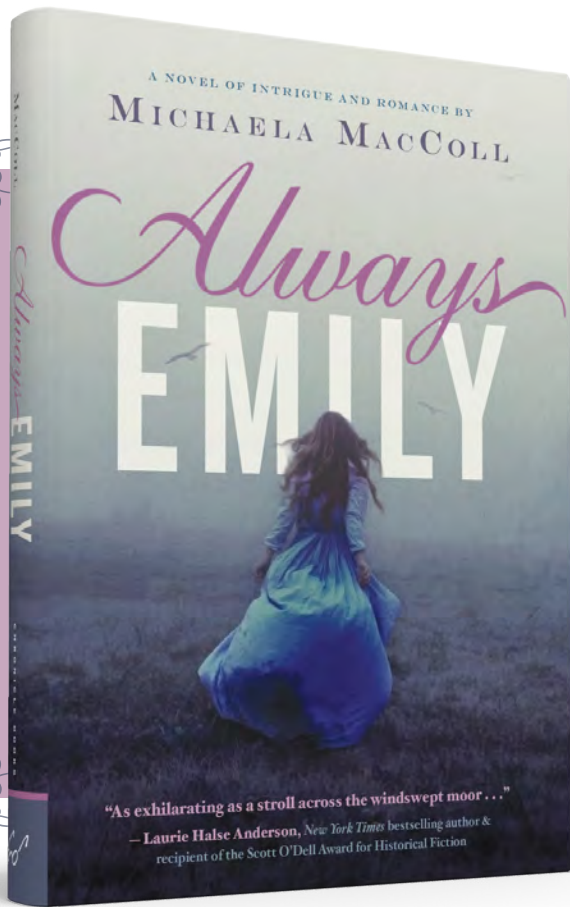
This guide contains discussion questions designed to spark conversation about themes and ideas raised by this novel.

1. Characterize Bronson Alcott, Louisa's father. Is he a responsible father and husband? Why or why not? Describe his relationship with his daughters and his ideas about their education. What character traits does he most want to instill in them? Does he change as the story progresses, or does his character remain static?
2. In contrast, examine Abigail Alcott ("Marmee"), Louisa's mother. Is she a responsible mother and wife? Why or why not? Describe her relationship with her daughters and her ideas about their education. What character traits does she want to instill in them?
3. Given the author's note at the end of the book, which character traits did Louisa May Alcott inherit or learn from her parents?
4. Compare three dominant female characters in the novel: Edith Whittaker, Lidian Emerson, and Louisa May Alcott herself. How are Edith and Lidian foils for Louisa May?
5. Document how Louisa's relationship with Fred develops throughout the novel. Do you think they would have been a good match? Why or why not?
6. Discuss the following statement: "I would have stood by you if the killing was all there was. Even the robbery. But what you tried to do to George was cowardly and unforgivable. I thought better of you" (235). What does this tell you about Louisa's character?
7. This novel centers on the theme of responsibility. When does Louisa act responsibly in the novel? Is she ever irresponsible? Use specific examples to support your response.
8. In conversation with Fred, Louisa quotes Thoreau's reasons for choosing to live in the woods and discusses the impact that Thoreau's writing has on her own beliefs about life (120-1). In *The Revelation of Louisa May*, does Louisa live by this philosophy? Discuss.

Curriculum guide written by Pam B. Cole, Ph.D., Associate Dean and Professor of English Education and Literacy, Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, GA.



DISCUSSION GUIDE



Always EMILY

MICHAELA MACCOLL

ABOUT THE BOOK

Charlotte is practical and cautious; Emily is headstrong and imaginative. But they do have one thing in common: a love of writing. This shared passion will lead them to be two of the first published female novelists and authors of several enduring works of classic literature. But they're not there yet. First, they have to figure out if there is a connection between a string of local burglaries, rumors that a neighbor's death may not have been accidental, and the appearance on the moors of a mysterious and handsome stranger. The girls have a lot of knots to untangle—before someone else gets killed.

978-1-4521-1174-2 • \$16.99 HC

978-1-4521-4130-5 • \$9.99 PB

978-1-4521-3746-9 • \$7.99 E-book

Ages 12 and up • Grades 6 and up

F&P Text Level Gradient: Z

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

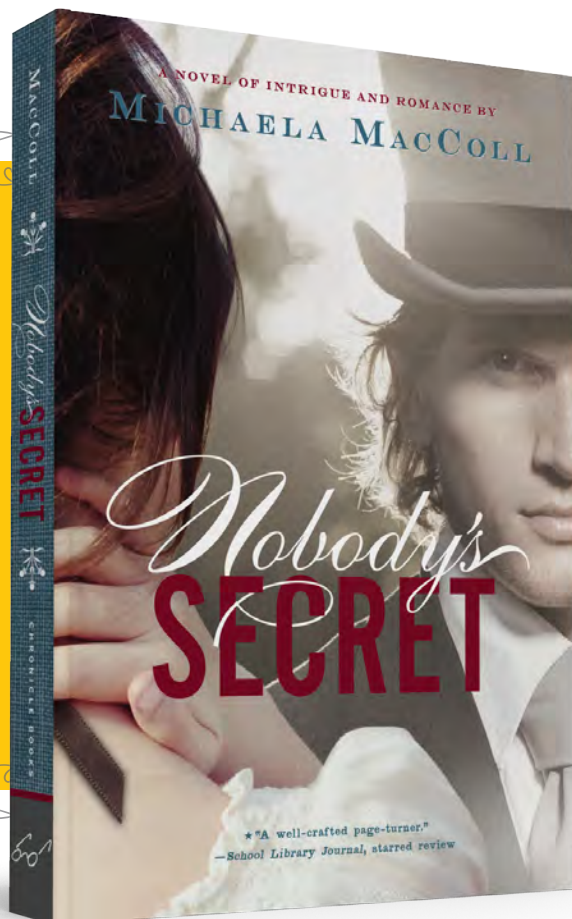
This guide contains discussion questions designed to spark conversation about themes and ideas raised by this novel.

1. In the prologue of *Always Emily*, readers witness the Brontë children huddling in the family pew during the funeral of their sister, Elizabeth. How does their behavior during this difficult time help create an understanding of the personalities of each of the three surviving siblings? Does this remain consistent throughout the rest of the course of the novel?
2. Though they are sisters, Emily and Charlotte Brontë are quite distinctive. Describe Emily's relationship with her sister, Charlotte. How are these two girls similar from each other? How are they different? Do you believe them to be close? Why or why not?
3. What is it about the boarding school where Emily is sent to that makes her so unhappy? Why does Charlotte believe it is the best place for her sister? Do you agree? Consider Charlotte's own experiences there—do you find her to be happy? Why or why not?
4. Though the rest of her family fear for her safety, the Moors are the place where Emily seems happiest. What is it about this landscape that speaks to Emily? In what ways does it inspire her writing?
5. Though readers aren't given much time with Harry, what is it about him that attracts the two sisters? What can you infer about his character and approach to life? Why does he ultimately chose to take his mother away rather than staying on to develop a relationship with Emily?
6. Consider the quotes from the Brontë sisters' own writing that are used to introduce the chapters; how do their words help set the tone for the story? Did you have a particular favorite or one you enjoyed most?
7. When Miss Wooler questions Charlotte about her father's position regarding the business practices of mill owners, Charlotte states, "My father tells the truth even when it's not to his benefit. He's very brave." Consider Charlotte's position about her father—do you agree with her opinion? What does Reverend Brontë risk by choosing to speak out for the employees of the mills?
8. In your opinion, why do Emily and Charlotte feel so determined to solve the mystery of Mr. Heaton and his sister? Do you think the danger they put themselves in is justified? Why or why not?
9. Why do you believe Branwell succumbs to Mr. Heaton's demands? What is it about the Masonic lodge that attracts Branwell? What can we infer about his character based on his actions? How would you describe him? Is he a likeable character? Why or why not?
10. After discovering her overhearing him tell another that he is not permitted into his father's study alone, Branwell states, "Go to bed, Emily. My business is none of your concern." What is it about this statement that makes Emily grow suspicious of her brother and his actions? *Always Emily* is told in third person; how would the story be different if either Emily or Charlotte were telling it? Do you think changing the point of view would make the story better or worse? Why?
11. *Always Emily* is told in third person; how would the story be different if either Emily or Charlotte were telling it? Do you think changing the point of view would make the story better or worse? Why?

This guide was created by Dr. Rose Brock, a teacher and school librarian in Coppell, Texas. Dr. Brock holds a Ph.D. in Library Science, specializing in children's and young adult literature.



DISCUSSION GUIDE



Nobody's SECRET

MICHAELA MACCOLL

ABOUT THE BOOK

One day, fifteen-year-old Emily Dickinson meets a mysterious, handsome young man. Surprisingly, he doesn't seem to know who she or her family is. And even more surprisingly, he playfully refuses to divulge his name. Emily enjoys her secret flirtation with Mr. "Nobody" until he turns up dead in her family's pond. She's stricken with guilt. Only Emily can discover who this enigmatic stranger was before he's condemned to be buried in an anonymous grave. Her investigation takes her deep into town secrets, blossoming romance, and deadly danger. Exquisitely written and meticulously researched, this novel celebrates Emily Dickinson's intellect and spunk in a page-turner of a book that will excite fans of mystery, romance, and poetry alike.

978-1-4521-0860-5 • \$16.99 HC

978-1-4521-2854-2 • \$9.99 PB

978-1-4521-2438-4 • \$7.99 E-book

Ages 12 and up • Grades 6 and up

Guided Reading Level: Z

★—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

★—*School Library Journal*, starred review

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide contains discussion questions designed to spark conversation about themes and ideas raised by this novel.

1. As *Nobody's Secret* begins, readers are introduced to Emily Dickinson as they observe her lying in a field of tall grass and wildflowers, hoping to entice a bee to land on her nose. What can readers infer about Emily from this opening scene of the novel?
2. What is it about Mr. Nobody that catches Emily's attention from their very first encounter? Do you think he is equally taken by her? Why or why not?
3. When she questions him about whether he is a student at nearby Amherst College, Mr. Nobody tells Emily, "I've been too busy living. What could I learn in college that I couldn't learn traveling the world?" What do you think of his dismissive attitude toward formal education? Do you agree with his position? Why or why not?
4. Describe Emily's relationship with her sister, Vinnie. How are these two girls similar to each other? How are they different? Do you believe them to be close? Why or why not?
5. While discussing the possibility of her being stung by a bee, Emily tells Mr. Nobody, "It's a new experience. If you are sequestered at home, as I am, new experiences are to be savored." What are the ways Emily copes with her lack of freedom? Given what you've learned about her family, do you think her approach is the right one? Why or why not?
6. Consider the lines from Emily Dickinson's poetry that are used to introduce the chapters; how do her words help set the tone for the story? Did you have a particular favorite or one you enjoyed most?
7. The Dickinson's family home sits next to a graveyard, which Emily considers one of the house's assets. How would you feel about living in close proximity to a graveyard? What is it about these "neighbors" that she appreciates?
8. In your opinion, why does Emily feel so determined to solve the mystery of Mr. Nobody? Do you think the danger she puts herself and her sister in is justified? Why or why not?
9. While sharing about her family's very visible presence at church, Emily states, "Wouldn't it be lovely if we could worship wherever we wished?" Why do you think she feels that way? Have you ever had a similar sense of obligation that stemmed from your family's expectation? What makes this so challenging?
10. Consider the visit of Ursula Langston and her mother to the Sewing Circle held at the home of the Dickinsons. Why is Mrs. Langston's behavior deemed so inappropriate? In what ways does her daughter try to censor her mother? Have you ever been in a similar position with a family member or friend? What did you do to deal with the situation?
11. After getting confirmation of her involvement in their cousin's murder, Henry tells his sister, "Ursula, you have done a wicked thing." Do you think Henry is sincere in his profession to Ursula? Do you think he and the rest of the family should share the blame for James's death? Why or why not?

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