

# Skokie Public Library's Book Discussion Guide

## March by Geraldine Brooks

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- In what ways is March a frustrating yet sympathetic character? How are his pacifist ideas challenged and how does he cope?
- Describe the courtship between March and Marmee. What attracts them to each other?
- How does Marmee's account of their relationship differ from March's? (p.209 – 260, her point of view) What did the Marmee-narrated section bring to the novel?
- Talk about the authenticity of letter writing in reporting history/facts.
- Have you read *Little Women*? Do you feel that *March* complemented the tale? Would you have preferred more or less of March's daughters to be featured in *March*?
- In 1841 March first encounters Grace on the Clement plantation; how does this change and/or shape him?
- What makes March so susceptible to August Clement's influence?
- What is Ethan Canning's role in the novel? Talk about his character.
- How about the other workers at Oak Landing – Ptolemy, Zannah, Jimsie, Zeke, Jesse?
- What is March's experience at the Shout? (p.156)
- What are his views on education, and what scenes in the book illustrate this? (p. 28; p. 62 Marmee's wishes on educating women)
- March is conflicted about courage vs. cowardice throughout the book – how does this shape his feelings and actions?
- Did this book change your thinking about the Civil War? (Northerners managing southern plantations, D.C. as a swamp, racial bigotry on both sides, different/complex motivations on both sides; Zeke's sons on the Confederacy side?)
- The historical fiction genre is a popular presentation of history. Do these novels enhance or distort our understanding of history?
- Real historical figures such as Thoreau, Emerson, and John Brown appear in the novel. How do they advance the story? How does March fit in with these real events/people?
- How does March accept his limitations and go home to his family?
- How does Marmee accept the changes in March and realize there are things she will never know about his experiences?
- How did you like Geraldine Brooks' writing style? Would you recommend this book to others to read?



**Skokie Public Library**

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