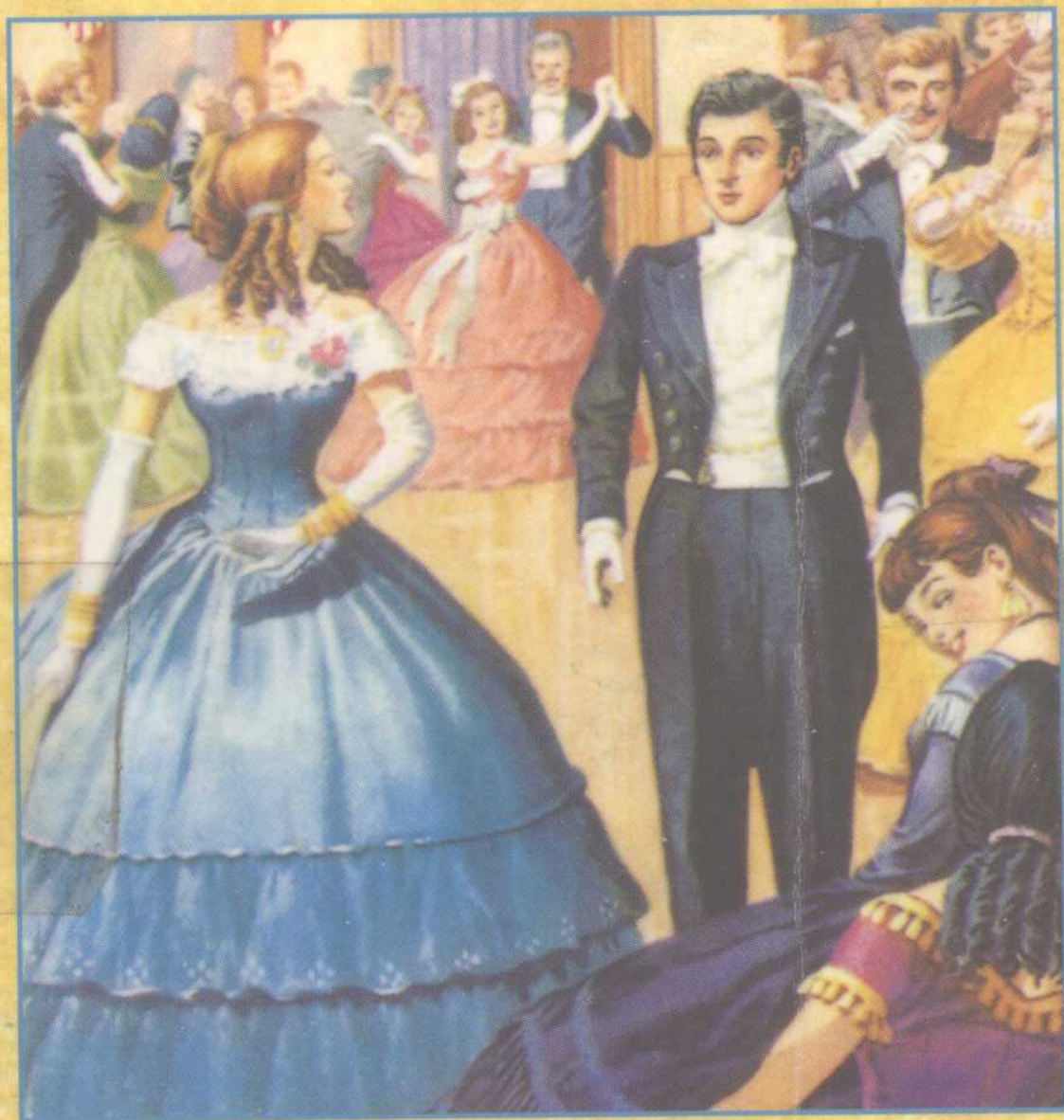


世界名著缩写（插图）· 英汉对照读物

小 妇 人

LITTLE WOMEN

Louisa M. Alcott



- 世界知识出版社
- 英国格迪斯—格罗塞出版公司

Little Women

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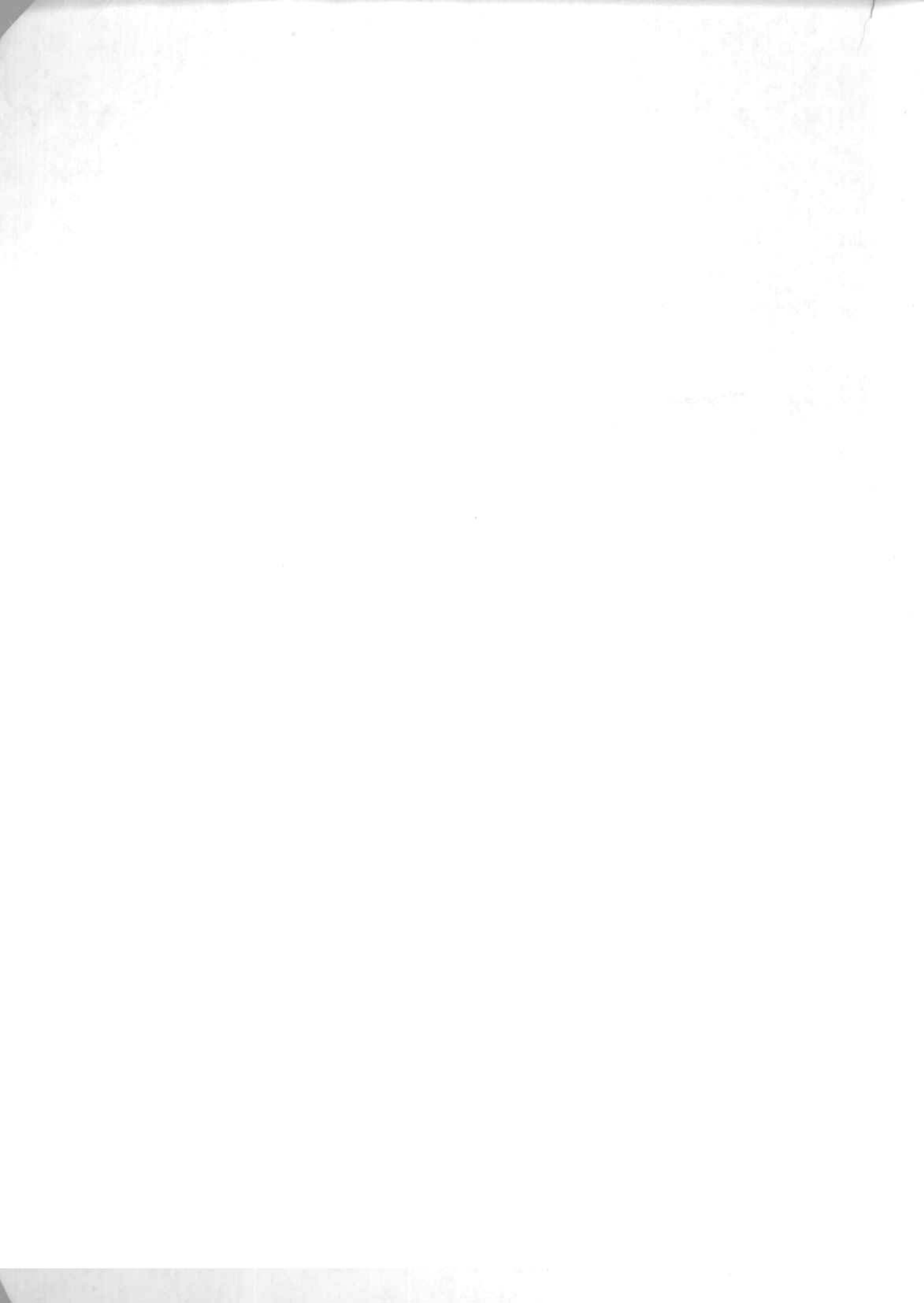
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致 读 者

在你看过并欣赏一部由名著改编的电影或电视剧后,你或许想读一读这本名著。

那么会是一种什么情景呢?你找到这本书,并且极有可能为之一振。你翻了一二十页,却好像什么也没“发生”。那些可爱的人物和动人的故事都哪儿去了?哎呀,作者什么时候才真正开始讲故事呢?最后你很可能把书丢在一边,不读了。这到底是怎么回事?

其实,可能作者是针对成年人而不是青少年写的这本书。也许这本书是好多年前写的,当时人们有充裕的时间读书,并且没有任何一种别的东西能像书那样让他们享受好几周。

但是,今天我们的想法不同了。这就是要为你们改编这些好书的原因。如果你喜欢这个简明读本所写的作品的话,你在年龄大些时会再找来原著去欣赏和品评她的原汁原味。

这儿的每本书分英文、中译文两部分,分别独立成篇,但又相互对应,便于读者在阅读时对照查看。

作者简介

路易莎·梅·奥尔科特 1832 年出生于宾夕法尼亚，她是美国哲学家和诗人布朗森·奥尔科特的女儿。她主要接受的是家庭教育，后来在美国内战期间做过护士。

像《小妇人》中女主人公乔一样，她年轻时就决定从事写作。由于他父亲设计了几项本意良好但花费昂贵的慈善和教育计划，结果，她曾有一个时期成了家中负责养家糊口的成员，写第一部小说时她仅有 16 岁。《小妇人》开始写作于内战时期，出版于 1869 年，并立即获得了成功。她还写过其他几部流行小说，包括《小妇人》的两部续集，《小男人》和《乔的男孩们》。她于 1888 年去世。

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CHAPTER ONE

Four Sisters

It wanted three days to Christmas.

The small American town where the March family had their home lay hushed and still under a blanket of snow that had lain over all the countryside for weeks past; snow that seemed as settled as the sadness in the hearts of so many American women in that winter of 1861 – the sadness of knowing that Christmas had come round once more, with their menfolk still away fighting in the terrible Civil War that raged to and fro across the hills and plains of their great land.

The four March sisters knew something about that sadness. They sat at home in the twilight before a crackling fire.

“You know, Christmas won’t be Christmas without any presents,” grumbled Jo, who was lying on the rug.

“It’s so dreadful to be poor,” sighed Meg.

Little Amy sighed and sniffed. “I don’t think it’s fair for some girls to have lots of pretty things, and other girls nothing at all,” she said sorrowfully.

“We’ve got Father and Mother and each other, anyhow,” said Beth from her corner.

"We haven't got Father," said Jo, "and we shan't have him for a long time."

The four young faces darkened at the words. Nobody spoke for a minute. They were all thinking of Father, far away where the fighting was.

They made a pretty picture, sitting there in the fire-light. Meg, the eldest, was sixteen: a fair, plump girl with large eyes, plenty of soft brown hair and a sweet mouth. Fifteen-year-old Jo was tall and thin and brown. She had a comical nose, grey eyes, big hands and feet, a flyaway look to her clothes, and the appearance of a girl who was shooting up into a woman and didn't like it. Beth was a rosy, smooth-haired girl of thirteen, with a shy manner and a quiet voice. Amy, who had blue eyes, was pale and slender and had long yellow curling hair.

Meg sighed again and said, in an altered tone, "You know why Mother doesn't want us to have presents this year. It's going to be a hard winter for everyone, and she thinks we ought not to spend money for our own pleasure, when our men are suffering in the Army. We ought to go without *gladly* – but I'm afraid I can't!"

She shook her head, thinking sadly of all the pretty things she wanted – and wouldn't get.

"Well, we've each got a dollar," cried Jo. "I don't expect anything from Mother or you, but I *would* like to buy something for myself. I'm sure we've worked hard enough to earn it."



"I know I have — teaching those dreadful children all day!" said Meg.

"You don't have half such a hard time as I do," answered Jo, indignantly. "How would *you* like to be shut up for hours with a fussy old lady like Aunt March, who keeps you trotting to and fro the whole time?"

"What about me?" cried Amy. "You don't have to go to school with girls who laugh at your dresses, and label your father if he isn't rich—"

"If you mean *libel* then say so, and don't talk about *labels* as if Father's a bottle of pickles," said Jo, laughing.

"I know what I mean," Amy snapped.

"Be quiet, girls," said Meg. "Don't start fighting. Try to be ladylike."

Jo at once sat up, put her hands in her apron pockets, and began to whistle through her teeth.

"Jo, don't!" cried Meg. "It's so *boyish*!"

"I know," answered Jo, simply. "That's why I do it. I always wanted to be a boy. I'm dying to go and fight with Father — and I have to stay at home!"

The clock struck six. Mother would soon be home from her work at a club for wounded soldiers.

Beth rose, swept up the hearth, and put a pair of slippers down to warm. Meg got up and lit the lamp, Amy arranged the cushions in the easy chair, and Jo sat up to hold the slippers nearer to the blaze.

She frowned. "These slippers are quite worn out," she



said. "Mother *must* have a new pair. I'll buy her some with my dollar."

"No, I shall!" cried Amy.

"I'm the man of the family while Father is away," said Jo, "and *I'll* get the slippers."

"I'll tell you what," said Beth. "Let's each get Mother something for Christmas, and not bother about things for ourselves."

"Yes!" cried Jo. "I'll get the slippers. What will you others buy?"

Everyone thought for a minute.

"A pair of gloves," said Meg at last.

"I'll get her some handkerchiefs," said Beth.

"And I'll get her a bottle of cologne," said Amy. "She likes it, and it won't cost much, so I'll have some money left to buy something for *me*."

Jo got up and began marching up and down with her hands behind her back. "We'll surprise her," she said. "We'll have to go shopping tomorrow afternoon, Meg. We've still got a lot to do about the play for Christmas night."

"It'll be the last time I do any acting," answered Meg. "I'm getting too old for such things."

"You're the best actress we've got," said Jo warmly. "We ought to rehearse tonight. Come here, Amy, and do the fainting scene. You're as stiff as a poker when you fall!"

"I can't help it," said Amy, ruefully. "I'm not going to

