

中文导读英文版

Little Women
小妇人

[美] 路易莎·梅·奥尔科特 原著
王勋 纪飞 等 编译

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内 容 简 介

Little Women, 中文译名《小妇人》, 是 19 世纪最伟大的文学巨著之一, 它是由美国著名作家路易莎·梅·奥尔科特编著而成。这部小说以家庭生活为背景, 以家庭成员的感情纠葛为线索, 叙述了马奇一家的天伦之爱。书中对四姐妹的性格刻画深入细致、栩栩如生, 四姐妹对自立的追求、对家庭的忠诚眷顾构成了一对贯穿全书的矛盾, 故事情节生动、感人。马奇一家有四个姐妹, 生活清贫、简单而又温馨, 但四姐妹性格迥异: 老大梅格漂亮端庄, 有些爱慕虚荣; 老二乔自由独立, 渴望成为作家; 老三贝兹善良羞涩, 热爱音乐; 老四艾米聪慧活泼, 骄傲任性, 爱好艺术。马奇家的四姐妹中, 无论是为了爱情甘于贫困的梅格, 还是通过自己奋斗成为作家的乔, 以及坦然面对死亡的贝兹和以扶弱为己任的艾米, 虽然她们的理想和命运都不尽相同, 但是她们都具有自强自立共同特点。

该书一经出版, 很快就成为当时最受关注和最畅销的文学作品。该书问世一百多年以来, 多次被搬上银幕, 并被译成几十种文字, 成为世界文学宝库中的经典名作。无论作为语言学习的课本, 还是作为通俗的文学读本, 本书对当代中国的青少年都将产生积极的影响。为了使读者能够了解英文故事概况, 进而提高阅读速度和阅读水平, 在每章的开始部分增加了中文导读。

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路易莎·梅·奥尔科特（Louisa May Alcott, 1832—1888），美国著名作家，生于美国宾夕法尼亚州，父亲布郎逊·奥尔科特是一位哲学家、学校改革家和乌托邦主义者。她的父亲一生沉迷于对理想的追求，以至无力负担家庭，因此奥尔科特在很小的时候就开始承担养家的责任。由于家境清贫，她 16 岁就外出谋生，当过佣人、裁缝、护士、乡村教师和家庭教师等。

路易莎年少时就开始尝试写作，而且显示了卓越的才能，二十一岁开始发表诗歌及小品。1865 年，她编著出版了自己的第一部小说《心境》，之前在报刊上还发表过一些惊险小说及散文。然而，让路易莎一举成名的是她于 1868 年出版的《小妇人》。该书一经出版，就受到读者的热烈欢迎，打动了无数的美国读者，尤其是女性读者的心弦。书中许多故事取材于路易莎一家的现实生活，作者把自己描写为乔·马奇，她的姐妹安娜、亚碧·梅和伊丽莎白分别为梅格、艾米和贝兹。《小妇人》出版后，同时也受到评论家的一致好评，被称为美国最优秀的家庭小说之一。“哈利·波特”系列小说的作者 J. K. 罗琳曾深情地描述了《小妇人》一书对她的影响：“读过《小妇人》，有那么几个月，我觉得自己就是乔·马奇。”路易莎的传记作家埃德拉·切尼评论说：“……又一代人已经成长起来，但是《小妇人》仍然保持着稳定的销量。母亲们读着这些姐妹的童年故事，延续着自己当年的欢乐……”之后，路易莎又陆续出版了《旧式女孩》、《小男人》和《工作》及其他一些儿童作品等。

《小妇人》是世界文学的瑰宝，该书出版一百多年来已被译成几十种文字，受到了全世界各国人民的喜爱。以《小妇人》故事为内容的连环画、纪念册、版画、邮票等至今风行世界各地。在中国，《小妇人》同样是最

前言



受广大青少年读者欢迎的经典文学作品之一。目前，在国内数量众多的《小妇人》书籍中，主要的出版形式有两种，一种是中文翻译版，另一种是中英文对照版。而其中的中英文对照读本比较受读者的欢迎，这主要是得益于中国人热衷于学习英语的大环境。而从英文学习的角度上来看，直接使用纯英文的学习资料更有利于英语学习。考虑到对英文内容背景的了解有助于英文阅读，使用中文导读应该是一种比较好的方式，也可以说是该书的第三种版本形式。采用中文导读而非中英文对照的方式进行编排，这样有利于国内读者摆脱对英文阅读依赖中文注释的习惯。基于以上原因，我们决定编译《小妇人》，并采用中文导读英文版的形式出版。在中文导读中，我们尽力使其贴近原作的精髓，也尽可能保留原作风格。我们希望能够编出为当代中国读者所喜爱的经典读本。读者在阅读英文故事之前，可以先阅读中文导读内容，这样有利于了解故事背景，从而加快阅读速度。我们相信，该经典著作的引进对加强当代中国读者，特别是青少年读者的人文修养是非常有帮助的。

本书主要内容由王勋、纪飞编译。参加本书故事素材搜集整理及编译工作的还有郑佳、刘乃亚、熊金玉、李丽秀、熊红华、赵雪、王婷婷、孟宪行、胡国平、李晓红、贡东兴、陈楠、邵舒丽、冯洁、王业伟、徐鑫、王晓旭、周丽萍、熊建国、徐平国、肖洁、王小红等。限于我们的科学、人文素养和英语水平，书中难免会有不当之处，衷心希望读者朋友批评指正。



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第一部
Part one

第一章 朝 圣

Chapter 1 Playing Pilgrims



圣诞节快到了，马奇家的四位姑娘各有心事，只有四姑娘贝兹感到有爸爸、妈妈和姐妹们就很满足，四姐妹们听到贝兹的话感觉很温馨，但想到爸爸还在遥远的地方作战，心中又有些悲伤。

妈妈觉得这个圣诞节处在战争中，不应该把钱花在享乐上，但四姐妹各有苦衷。

梅格抱怨陪小孩子辛苦，乔感到陪脾气暴躁的姑妈简直不能忍受，而贝兹看着僵硬粗糙的手直叹气，艾米因在学校经受的种种遭遇而哭泣起来。

她们说起小时候爸爸失去财富的情景，又看到金家虽有钱，但明争暗斗的烦恼，虽然自己必须干活，但乔称她们是快乐的一伙。艾米说她用的“一伙”这种字眼很粗俗，而乔干脆吹起口哨学起了男孩子。

这时，长着丰满身材，棕发，大眼睛，漂亮的十六岁的姐姐梅格要求乔把头发盘起来，因为她已经是个淑女了。姐姐同时告诉艾米不要苛求自己，故扮高雅。十五岁的乔放开浓密的栗色长发宣誓自己不要长大，她喜欢男孩的作风，希望和爸爸一起作战，不想做这些编织的活。十三岁的贝兹没有吭声，她总是把头发收拾得柔顺光滑，举止平稳，被爸爸称作“小宁静”。最小的艾米长着一双蓝色的眼睛，金黄的披肩长发，苗条的身材，她时刻注意着自己的淑女形象。

六点钟了，贝兹把妈妈的拖鞋放在壁炉旁，大家看到拖鞋太旧了，争

着给妈妈买新拖鞋。最后，贝兹建议每人送给妈妈一件圣诞礼物，这得到了大家的赞同。

她们最后商定好要买的礼物，决定把礼物放在桌上，给妈妈一个惊喜。乔提议明天下午她们就把礼物买回来。她又让艾米表演一下她们排演的歌剧中晕倒的一幕，并给她做示范，可她怎么也学不像，乔也失去了耐心，让她尽力就行了。

接下来的排练都很顺利，梅格认为这是排练最好的一次。贝兹激动得直夸乔剧本写得好，表演也好。这时发现贝兹把妈妈的鞋叉着当面包烤，惹得大家笑了起来，排练在大家的愉快笑声中结束了。

这时门口传来妈妈愉快的声音，大家一看，是妈妈回来了。

妈妈进屋，一边向大家问候，一边换下湿衣服，穿上温暖的拖鞋，大家都帮助准备晚饭，妈妈告诉大家，晚饭后要给大家好东西。

姑娘们猜到是爸爸的信，妈妈说是的，父亲送来了充满爱意的圣诞祝福。梅格对父亲那么年纪参加战斗而钦佩，乔为自己不能去战场而感叹，艾米为战场环境的艰难而叹息，吃完饭，大家围在妈妈身边看着爸爸的来信。

爸爸在信中提醒她们不要浪费时间，要战胜心中的敌人，尽职尽责地完成任务，做大家喜爱的小妇人，并在信中流露出对女儿们的思念之情。大家看后，非常激动，决心按照爸爸的要求，克服缺点，成为父亲心目中的小妇人。

马奇又提到她们小时候喜欢演的《天路历程》，勾起了大家的回忆，感到当时很有趣，妈妈说现在不是演戏，而是在现实生活中，要从毁灭之路开始，通过努力，往上走，一直走上去到达天国。

妈妈的话把她们从迷茫中引导出来，增强了大家克服困难的信心，妈妈告诉她们，圣诞礼物就是给她们的指导书，姑娘们讨论着以后的计划，缝制着姑妈的床单，工作进行得非常顺利。

九点，贝兹弹起那架古老的钢琴，大家有的唱，有的跳，度过了美好的一天。

“Christmas won't be Christmas without any presents,” grumbled Jo,

lying on the rug.

"It's so dreadful to be poor!" sighed Meg, looking down at her old dress.

"I don't think it's fair for some girls to have plenty of pretty things, and other girls nothing at all," added little Amy, with an injured sniff.

"We've got Father and Mother, and each other," said Beth contentedly from her corner.

The four young faces on which the firelight shone brightened at the cheerful words, but darkened again as Jo said sadly, "We haven't got Father, and shall not have him for a long time." She didn't say "perhaps never," but each silently added it, thinking of Father far away, where the fighting was.

Nobody spoke for a minute; then Meg said in an altered tone, "You know the reason Mother proposed not having any presents this Christmas was because it is going to be a hard winter for everyone; and she thinks we ought not to spend money for pleasure, when our men are suffering so in the army. We can't do much, but we can make our little sacrifices, and ought to do it gladly. But I am afraid I don't." And Meg shook her head, as she thought regretfully of all the pretty things she wanted.

"But I don't think the little we should spend would do any good. We've each got a dollar, and the army wouldn't be much helped by our giving that. I agree not to expect anything from Mother or you, but I do want to buy *UNDINE AND SINTRAM* for myself. I've wanted it so long," said Jo, who was a bookworm.

"I planned to spend mine in new music," said Beth, with a little sigh, which no one heard but the hearth brush and kettle holder.

"I shall get a nice box of Faber's drawing pencils. I really need them," said Amy decidedly.

"Mother didn't say anything about our money, and she won't wish us to give up everything. Let's each buy what we want, and have a little fun. I'm sure we work hard enough to earn it," cried Jo, examining the heels of her shoes in a gentlemanly manner.

"I know I do. —teaching those tiresome children nearly all day, when I'm

longing to enjoy myself at home,” began Meg, in the complaining tone again.

“You don’t have half such a hard time as I do,” said Jo.

“How would you like to be shut up for hours with a nervous, fussy old lady, who keeps you trotting, is never satisfied, and worries you till you’re ready to fly out the window or cry?”

“It’s naughty to fret, but I do think washing dishes and keeping things tidy is the worst work in the world. It makes me cross, and my hands get so stiff, I can’t practice well at all.” And Beth looked at her rough hands with a sigh that any one could hear that time.

“I don’t believe any of you suffer as I do,” cried Amy, “for you don’t have to go to school with impertinent girls, who plague you if you don’t know your lessons, and laugh at your dresses, and label your father if he isn’t rich, and insult you when your nose isn’t nice.”

“If you mean libel, I’d say so, and not talk about labels, as if Papa was a pickle bottle,” advised Jo, laughing.

“I know what I mean, and you needn’t be statirical about it. It’s proper to use good words, and improve your vocabulary,” returned Amy, with dignity.

“Don’t peck at one another, children. Don’t you wish we had the money Papa lost when we were little, Jo? Dear me! How happy and good we’d be, if we had no worries!” said Meg, who could remember better times.

“You said the other day you thought we were a deal happier than the King children, for they were fighting and fretting all the time, in spite of their money.”

“So I did, Beth. Well, I think we are. For though we do have to work, we make fun of ourselves, and are a pretty jolly set, as Jo would say.”

“Jo does use such slang words!” observed Amy, with a reproving look at the long figure stretched on the rug.

Jo immediately sat up, put her hands in her pockets, and began to whistle.

“Don’t, Jo. It’s so boyish!”

“That’s why I do it.”

“I detest rude, unladylike girls!”

"I hate affected, niminy-piminy chits!"

"Birds in their little nests agree," sang Beth, the peacemaker, with such a funny face that both sharp voices softened to a laugh, and the "pecking" ended for that time.

"Really, girls, you are both to be blamed," said Meg, beginning to lecture in her elder-sisterly fashion. "You are old enough to leave off boyish tricks, and to behave better, Josephine. It didn't matter so much when you were a little girl, but now you are so tall, and turn up your hair, you should remember that you are a young lady."

"I'm not! And if turning up my hair makes me one, I'll wear it in two tails till I'm twenty," cried Jo, pulling off her net, and shaking down a chestnut mane. "I hate to think I've got to grow up, and be Miss March, and wear long gowns, and look as prim as a China Aster! It's bad enough to be a girl, anyway, when I like boy's games and work and manners! I can't get over my disappointment in not being a boy. And it's worse than ever now, for I'm dying to go and fight with Papa. And I can only stay home and knit, like a poky old woman!"

And Jo shook the blue army sock till the needles rattled like castanets, and her ball bounded across the room.

"Poor Jo! It's too bad, but it can't be helped. So you must try to be contented with making your name boyish, and playing brother to us girls," said Beth, stroking the rough head with a hand that all the dish washing and dusting in the world could not make ungente in its touch.

"As for you, Amy," continued Meg, "you are altogether too particular and prim. Your airs are funny now, but you'll grow up an affected little goose, if you don't take care. I like your nice manners and refined ways of speaking, when you don't try to be elegant. But your absurd words are as bad as Jo's slang."

"If Jo is a tomboy and Amy a goose, what am I, please?" asked Beth, ready to share the lecture.

"You're a dear, and nothing else," answered Meg warmly, and no one

contradicted her, for the “Mouse” was the pet of the family.

As young readers like to know “how people look”, we will take this moment to give them a little sketch of the four sisters, who sat knitting away in the twilight, while the December snow fell quietly without, and the fire crackled cheerfully within. It was a comfortable room, though the carpet was faded and the furniture very plain, for a good picture or two hung on the walls, books filled the recesses, chrysanthemums and Christmas roses bloomed in the windows, and a pleasant atmosphere of home peace pervaded it.

Margaret, the eldest of the four, was sixteen, and very pretty, being plump and fair, with large eyes, plenty of soft brown hair, a sweet mouth, and white hands, of which she was rather vain. Fifteen-year-old Jo was very tall, thin, and brown, and reminded one of a colt, for she never seemed to know what to do with her long limbs, which were very much in her way. She had a decided mouth, a comical nose, and sharp, gray eyes, which appeared to see everything, and were by turns fierce, funny, or thoughtful. Her long, thick hair was her one beauty, but it was usually bundled into a net, to be out of her way. Round shoulders had Jo, big hands and feet, a flyaway look to her clothes, and the uncomfortable appearance of a girl who was rapidly shooting up into a woman and didn’t like it. Elizabeth, or Beth, as everyone called her, was a rosy, smooth-haired, bright-eyed girl of thirteen, with a shy manner, a timid voice, and a peaceful expression which was seldom disturbed. Her father called her “Little Miss Tranquility”, and the name suited her excellently, for she seemed to live in a happy world of her own, only venturing out to meet the few whom she trusted and loved. Amy, though the youngest, was a most important person, in her own opinion at least. A regular snow maiden, with blue eyes, and yellow hair curling on her shoulders, pale and slender, and always carrying herself like a young lady mindful of her manners. What the characters of the four sisters were we will leave to be found out.

The clock struck six and, having swept up the hearth, Beth put a pair of slippers down to warm. Somehow the sight of the old shoes had a good effect upon the girls, for Mother was coming, and everyone brightened to welcome

her. Meg stopped lecturing, and lighted the lamp, Amy got out of the easy chair without being asked, and Jo forgot how tired she was as she sat up to hold the slippers nearer to the blaze.

"They are quite worn out. Marmee must have a new pair."

"I thought I'd get her some with my dollar," said Beth.

"No, I shall!" cried Amy.

"I'm the oldest," began Meg, but Jo cut in with a decided, "I'm the man of the family now Papa is away, and I shall provide the slippers, for he told me to take special care of Mother while he was gone."

"I'll tell you what we'll do," said Beth, "let's each get her something for Christmas, and not get anything for ourselves."

"That's like you, dear! What will we get?" exclaimed Jo.

Everyone thought soberly for a minute, then Meg announced, as if the idea was suggested by the sight of her own pretty hands, "I shall give her a nice pair of gloves."

"Army shoes, best to be had," cried Jo.

"Some handkerchiefs, all hemmed," said Beth.

"I'll get a little bottle of cologne. She likes it, and it won't cost much, so I'll have some left to buy my pencils," added Amy.

"How will we give the things?" asked Meg.

"Put them on the table, and bring her in and see her open the bundles. Don't you remember how we used to do on our birthdays?" answered Jo.

"I used to be so frightened when it was my turn to sit in the chair with the crown on, and see you all come marching round to give the presents, with a kiss. I liked the things and the kisses, but it was dreadful to have you sit looking at me while I opened the bundles," said Beth, who was toasting her face and the bread for tea at the same time.

"Let Marmee think we are getting things for ourselves, and then surprise her. We must go shopping tomorrow afternoon, Meg. There is so much to do about the play for Christmas night," said Jo, marching up and down, with her hands behind her back, and her nose in the air.

"I don't mean to act any more after this time. I'm getting too old for such things," observed Meg, who was as much a child as ever about "dressing-up" frolics.

"You won't stop, I know, as long as you can trail round in a white gown with your hair down, and wear gold-paper jewelry. You are the best actress we've got, and there'll be an end of everything if you quit the boards," said Jo. "We ought to rehearse tonight. Come here, Amy, and do the fainting scene, for you are as stiff as a poker in that."

"I can't help it. I never saw anyone faint, and I don't choose to make myself all black and blue, tumbling flat as you do. If I can go down easily, I'll drop. If I can't, I shall fall into a chair and be graceful. I don't care if Hugo does come at me with a pistol," returned Amy, who was not gifted with dramatic power, but was chosen because she was small enough to be borne out shrieking by the villain of the piece.

"Do it this way. Clasp your hands so, and stagger across the room, crying frantically, 'Roderigo Save me! Save me!' and away went Jo, with a melodramatic scream which was truly thrilling."

Amy followed, but she poked her hands out stiffly before her, and jerked herself along as if she went by machinery, and her "Ow!" was more suggestive of pins being run into her than of fear and anguish. Jo gave a despairing groan, and Meg laughed outright, while Beth let her bread burn as she watched the fun with interest. "It's no use! Do the best you can when the time comes, and if the audience laughs, don't blame me. Come on, Meg."

"Then things went smoothly, for Don Pedro defied the world in a speech of two pages without a single break. Hagar, the witch, chanted an awful incantation over her kettleful of simmering toads, with weird effect. Roderigo rent his chains asunder manfully, and Hugo died in agonies of remorse and arsenic, with a wild, "Ha! Ha!"

"It's the best we've had yet," said Meg, as the dead villain sat up and rubbed his elbows.

"I don't see how you can write and act such splendid things, Jo. You're a

regular Shakespeare!” exclaimed Beth, who firmly believed that her sisters were gifted with wonderful genius in all things.

“Not quite,” replied Jo modestly. “I do think THE WITCHES CURSE, an Operatic Tragedy is rather a nice thing, but I’d like to try McBETH, if we only had a trapdoor for Banquo. I always wanted to do the killing part. Is that a dagger that I see before me?” muttered Jo, rolling her eyes and clutching at the air, as she had seen a famous tragedian do.

“No, it’s the toasting fork with Mother’s shoe on it instead of the bread. Beth’s stage-struck!” cried Meg, and the rehearsal ended in a general burst of laughter.

“Glad to find you so merry, my girls,” said a cheery voice at the door, and actors and audience turned to welcome a tall, motherly lady with a “can I help you” look about her which was truly delightful. She was not elegantly dressed, but a noble-looking woman, and the girls thought the gray cloak and unfashionable bonnet covered the most splendid mother in the world.

“Well, dearies, how have you got on today? There was so much to do, getting the boxes ready to go tomorrow, that I didn’t come home to dinner. Has anyone called, Beth? How is your cold, Meg? Jo, you look tired to death. Come and kiss me, baby.”

While making these maternal inquiries Mrs. March got her wet things off, her warm slippers on, and sitting down in the easy chair, drew Amy to her lap, preparing to enjoy the happiest hour of her busy day. The girls flew about, trying to make things comfortable, each in her own way. Meg arranged the tea table, Jo brought wood and set chairs, dropping, over-turning, and clattering everything she touched. Beth trotted to and fro between parlor kitchen, quiet and busy, while Amy gave directions to everyone, as she sat with her hands folded.

As they gathered about the table, Mrs. March said, with a particularly happy face, “I’ve got a treat for you after supper.”

A quick bright smile went round like a streak of sunshine.

Beth clapped her hands, regardless of the biscuit she held, and Jo tossed up