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年级

Little Women

小妇人

Louisa May Alcott (美国) 原著
Pieter Koster (澳大利亚) 改写

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Girls, Girls, Girls!

Preview Questions

1. Who do you think the little women will be?
2. Is it easier to be poor if you have never been rich?
3. Do you have any sisters? Are they your friends?

This is the story of four sisters. They lived in Boston in America during the Civil War. Their father was away helping the army, so they lived in the house with their mother and Hannah, their **servant**.

Margaret was the oldest. She was sixteen and was very pretty. She had **blonde** hair. Her family called her Meg.

Next came Josephine. She was a tall fifteen-year-old with long legs. She wished that she were a boy. Her family called her Jo.

The third sister was Elizabeth. She was thirteen. She was a very quiet, shy girl. Her family called her Beth.

The youngest sister was Amy. She was thin and had blue eyes. She thought she was very important and behaved like a lady.

Their mother was Mrs. March, and they all loved her very much and tried to please her. She worked hard to help the army by making clothes. The girls called her Marmee.

The March family did not have much money. They used to be rich, but Mr. March tried to help some friends and lost all his money. They still had their house and Hannah to help them, but their clothes were old, and sometimes they



did not have enough to eat. Life was sometimes difficult, but they always tried to be happy and help each other.

Christmas was coming, and Marmee told the girls that there was not enough money for Christmas presents this year. The girls had a little money and talked about what they would do. Each of them wanted to buy something for herself. Meg wanted something pretty. Jo wanted a new book to read. Beth wanted some music to play on the old piano, and Amy wanted some new pencils because she loved to draw.

The clock struck six. Marmee would be home soon. The girls got ready. They cleaned the fireplace and lit the lamp. They made sure that Marmee's chair was near the fire, and Jo held her slippers in front of the fire to make them warm.

"Marmee's slippers are very old," said Jo. "We should buy her a new pair."

This made them think. They decided that they would not buy anything for themselves this Christmas after all. They would buy some things for Marmee. Meg decided to buy some new gloves. Jo thought new slippers would be very useful. Beth wanted to give her some nice handkerchiefs.

"I'll buy some perfume," said Amy. "It won't cost much, and I can still buy some pencils for myself."

While they waited for Marmee to come home, they practiced their Christmas play. Jo wrote a play every year, and everyone thought it was wonderful. When Marmee arrived, they made her sit by the fire. They put warm slippers on her feet. After supper, Marmee read them a letter from their father. He was well and told his daughters to be good so that he would be proud of his little women when he came home. They all thought about the letter and decided to be

very good.

That evening, the girls took out their sewing. At nine o'clock, they put away their work and sang some songs around the piano.

5 Jo was the first one to wake up on Christmas morning. It was a strange feeling because there were no presents to open. Marmee had put a small book under each girl's pillow. As soon as they woke up, they began to read their new books. Then, they went downstairs to their mother, but she
10 wasn't there. Hannah told them someone came to the door asking for food, and she had gone out with them.

The girls got their presents ready. Amy surprised everyone by hurrying off to the shop to buy a larger bottle of perfume. She said that she was feeling guilty for buying such a small
15 bottle of perfume, but now she felt better. Breakfast was ready when Marmee arrived home. She told them that she had visited the Hummel family, who were very poor. The mother had a new baby and six other children. They had no food to eat and no fire to keep them warm. Marmee and
20 the girls decided that they would give them their breakfast. They carried the food and some wood to the Hummels' house. They gave the food to the children, and Hannah lit a fire to keep them warm.

When the four girls went home, they were hungry but
25 happy. They knew that they had been good. They had bread and milk for breakfast, and then they gave Marmee her presents. She was very surprised and pleased.

That afternoon, the girls put on their play for their friends. About ten girls came to see the play. They got onto a bed and
30 watched as the four sisters acted out Jo's play. It was about

a **witch** and a bad man and two people in love. Everybody enjoyed it very much, even when part of the set fell down. At the end of the play, the bed broke, and all the girls fell onto the floor. Nobody was hurt, and they all laughed.

When they went to have some supper, they were very surprised to see a lot of food on the table. They didn't know where the food came from until Marmee told them that it came from Mr. Laurence. He was a rich man who lived in the house next door. The girls had met his grandson. They called him "the Laurence boy." Jo wished that she could get to know him better, but his grandfather made him study a lot.

Mr. Laurence heard about the breakfast that the March family gave to the Hummels and decided to reward the children with this food. They were very pleased and enjoyed it very much.

A few days later, Jo was reading in her favorite chair near a sunny window. Meg called out to her and showed her a letter from Mrs. Gardiner. It invited them to come to a dance on New Year's Eve, which was the next day. Meg was very worried about what she should wear. Jo laughed at her. She knew that they did not have much choice. Meg wished that she had something nicer to wear. Jo's best dress had a burn mark and a tear in it. Meg was worried that her gloves were not very nice. Jo's gloves had terrible marks on them because she spilled some **lemonade** on them. They decided that they would each wear one of Meg's gloves and carry one of Jo's. Then nobody would see the lemonade marks.

Jo tried to make Meg's hair prettier, but she did something wrong, and Meg's hair looked terrible. Beth and Amy helped to make it nicer. Marmee made sure they had handkerchiefs,

and they walked excitedly to Mrs. Gardiner's house.

When they got there, a boy asked Meg to dance almost immediately. Jo stood against the wall. She did not dare to move because she was hiding the burn and tear marks on her dress. She moved along the wall and knocked into the Laurence boy. He was not dancing because he did not know anybody. Jo talked about the wonderful feast that his grandfather had sent on Christmas day. She discovered that his name was Theodore, but he liked it better if people called him Laurie. She also found out that he had been to Paris and Switzerland. He could speak French. He was fifteen years old. He told Jo that he thought that Meg was very pretty. He invited Jo to dance, and she told him that she couldn't because of her dress. He took her out of the room to a hall where they could still hear the music, and there they danced.

Meg came to find Jo because her shoe broke, and she hurt her foot. She could not dance any more. They wondered how they were going to get home because Meg's foot was badly hurt, and she could hardly walk. Luckily, Laurie was ready to go home just then, even though it was early, and he gave them a ride in his grandfather's carriage.

They told the two younger sisters about the dance. Meg wished that she could always go to dances in fine clothes and ride in carriages, but Jo didn't care. She thought they were just as happy as rich people anyway.

Review Questions

1. Where is the girls' father?
2. How old is Beth?
3. Who wrote the play that the girls performed at Christmas?

New Friends

Preview Questions

1. Will Jo and Laurie become friends?
2. One of the girls will become Mr. Laurence's special friend. Who do you think it will be?
3. Meg and Jo both work. What kind of work do you think they do?

After the excitement of Christmas and the New Year's Eve party, the girls went back to their usual lives. This is how they spent their days:

Meg went to the King family, where she was a teacher for the younger children. The Kings paid her, and she was very happy that she could help her family with the money. However, she was sometimes **envious** of the older King girls. They had a lot of money and often had new dresses and gloves. Meg wished that she could live like that, but she knew that she was poor. She thought that she would never have the nice things that other girls had.

Jo also had a job, though she was only fifteen. She went to her very rich Aunt March and helped look after her every day. Aunt March asked her to wash the dog or read to her. Jo loved to read, but she didn't like Aunt March's choice of books. Aunt March was often **annoyed**, and Jo sometimes came home quite unhappy. Aunt March had a lot of books. Jo liked reading her favorites while Aunt March was asleep.

Beth was too shy to go to school. Her father used to teach

her, but he was at the war, and her mother was busy working. She taught herself as well as she could. She liked being at home and helped Hannah to keep the house comfortable. She spent a lot of time playing with her dolls. Some of them were very old, but she loved them all. She tried hard to make nice music on the old piano, but it was not a very good piano, and sometimes she cried about the noise it made.

Amy went to school. She loved to draw, and the teachers **complained** that she drew pictures instead of doing her school work. Amy loved to dress up nicely and wear good clothes, and she was often unhappy because her clothes were the wrong color. She had to wear them, however, because she had no others.

On the day after the party, each of the girls spent their day in the usual way. That evening, they were all at home together. Meg told them that there was trouble at the King home. One of the children told Meg that the oldest brother had done something very bad, and his father had sent him away. Mrs. King was crying, and Mr. King was talking very loudly. Meg was pleased that she didn't have any older brothers who would bring trouble to the family.

Amy told them about Susie Perkins, who was wearing a beautiful ring at school that day. She wished that she were Susie Perkins so that she could wear lovely rings like that. Then, Susie did something wrong at school, and the teacher was very angry with her. Suddenly, Amy stopped wishing that she were Susie Perkins.

Jo had a story, too. She was reading for Aunt March. It was a boring book, and Aunt March fell asleep. Jo began

to read one of her favorite books. She came to a funny part and laughed. That woke Aunt March. She told Jo to read her book instead of the other one. Jo began to read it for her. Aunt March made her go back to the beginning.

5 Beth went to the shop to get something for Hannah. A poor woman came in and asked if she could do some cleaning for the shopkeeper because she had no food to give her children that night. The shopkeeper refused. Mr. Laurence was in the shop. He bought a large piece of fish and gave it to the
10 woman.

Marmee told them about an old man she met while she was making clothes for the army that day. He had four sons. Two of them were killed in the war. One was a prisoner, and the last one was in the hospital. He was very proud
15 that he could help his country in this way.

The girls were sometimes unhappy because they weren't rich like they used to be. These stories helped them remember that they still had many things to be thankful for.

20 Not long after that, Jo began to make friends with Laurie. He was sick, and she saw him looking out through the window of his large house. She thought he needed some friends. She began to talk to him, and he asked her to come in and visit him. Jo went in and talked happily with Laurie. He told her that he sometimes watched her family
25 from his window.

"You always look so happy," he said. He was sad because he had no mother. Jo told him some funny stories, and Laurie laughed. Then, he showed her around the house. Jo was excited to see the library. There, she met Mr. Laurence.
30 She was a little afraid of him at first, but he was very kind.

He told her that he knew her grandfather before he died and said that her grandfather was a good friend of his.

“He was a brave and honest man,” he said.

Jo was very pleased. Mr. Laurence saw that Laurie was happy to have a visitor. He invited Jo to come again and said that Laurie could visit the girls when he was better. As they went to the door, Jo saw a beautiful piano and asked if Laurie would play it for her. Laurie agreed, though his grandfather was not happy about it.

Marmee told the girls that Laurie’s mother was Italian and that his grandfather did not like her. Laurie was born in Italy, and both his parents died when he was very young. His mother played music, and Mr. Laurence did not want his grandson to be like his mother. That’s why he didn’t like him playing the piano.

Laurie and the girls became very good friends. He came to visit them often, and they went to the big house to see him. Mr. Laurence came to visit as well, and soon they were no longer afraid of him. Only Beth was still afraid of him, and she was too shy to go into the Laurence house. She wanted to go and see the wonderful piano, but she did not dare.

One day, Mr. Laurence came to the March house. He said that Laurie could not play the piano because he had more important things to do. He wanted someone to come and play it to keep it in tune. Beth heard him say this. She was very brave. She said she would love to come and play it.

She played it almost every day. Mr. Laurence secretly listened and made sure that she had good music to play.

Beth decided to make him a pair of slippers, and the other

girls helped her. A few days later, the girls were surprised when some men brought a small piano to the house with a letter from Mr. Laurence.

“This piano belonged to the granddaughter I lost,” he said in the letter.

Beth was so pleased that she decided to go to the big house and say thank you. When Mr. Laurence opened the door, she kissed him. Everybody was very happy.

Review Questions

1. Why did Amy want to be Susie Perkins?
2. Did Aunt March like the book that Jo was reading? How do you know?
3. What did Mr. Laurence give Beth?

Dealing with Anger

Preview Questions

1. Should teachers hit students?
2. What is the best way to control anger?
3. Do you need to be rich to be happy?

All the girls at Amy's school brought limes to eat. Her friends had given Amy some, and she wanted to give them some back, but she had no money left to buy any. She got some money from Meg and bought a bag of limes to take to school. At school, she showed them to her friends and put them in her desk. They were going to eat them later. Amy decided not to give any to Jenny Snow because Jenny had made her angry the day before.

Jenny was angry with her and told Mr. Davis, the teacher, that Amy had limes in her desk. Mr. Davis had told them not to bring limes to school, and he punished Amy. He hit her hand with his ruler and made her stand in front of the class. Nobody had ever hit Amy before, and she was very **upset**. She went home and told Marmee about it. Marmee said she could stay home from school for a while. She told Amy that she was wrong to bring the limes to school. However, she did not agree with Mr. Davis. She did not think that teachers should hit students.

One Saturday afternoon, Amy found Meg and Jo getting dressed in their good clothes.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

They would not tell her. Amy guessed that they were going to the theater with Laurie and said that she wanted to come.

“I have my own money,” she said. “I can pay for myself.”

Jo did not want to look after Amy while she was at the theater, so she told Amy that she could not come. Amy was very angry and cried.

While Jo and Meg were at the theater, Amy took Jo’s book of writings from her room and threw it in the fire. This book of stories was very precious to Jo. It had in it all the stories that she had written.

When she came home and found out what Amy did, she was very, very angry. She shouted at Amy, but Amy did not care. That night, Marmee said to Jo that she should forgive her sister, but Jo refused.

“She was very, very bad, and she does not deserve forgiveness!” she said.

The next day, Jo went to the river with Laurie to skate on the ice. Amy followed them, but Jo pretended that she was not there. Laurie warned Jo to stay away from the middle of the river, where the ice was thin. Jo heard him, but Amy did not. Jo saw Amy go towards the middle of the river, but she was still so angry that she did not warn Amy to stay away.

Suddenly, the ice broke, and Amy fell into the river. Laurie saw what happened and rushed to help her. Jo helped, too. They pulled Amy out of the water and put some of their clothes on her to keep her warm. Then, they took her home. Both girls were crying. They were both very cold.

When Marmee had put Amy to bed, Jo told her what