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# GREAT ILLUSTRATED CLASSICS

# LITTLE WOMEN

**Louisa May Alcott**



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**LITTLE  
WOMEN**

**Louisa May Alcott**

**adapted by  
Lucia Monfried**

**Illustrations by  
Pablo Marcos Studio**



**BARONET BOOKS, New York, New York**

# **GREAT ILLUSTRATED CLASSICS**

**edited by  
Malvina G. Vogel**

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## About the Author

Louisa May Alcott was born in 1832, the second daughter of four. Her father, A. Bronson Alcott, was an idealistic educator and philosopher. She spent most of her life in Boston and nearby Concord, Massachusetts.

Seeing how hard her mother had to work, Louisa resolved early to make life easier for her. She took various jobs—seamstress, companion, governess and teacher—to support the family. But it was at her writing table that she was most successful. While she was in her twenties, a variety of thrillers, poems, potboilers and “sensation stories” poured forth from her pen under other names.

In 1868, her Boston publisher suggested that she write a novel for girls using scenes and people familiar to her. So, with her family's encouragement, she wrote *Little Women*, which originally appeared in two volumes.

She was able to write the book very quickly—for she had prepared for thirty-five years, and her cast of characters was her own family!

The story was an immediate and huge success. The publisher could not print copies fast enough to keep the orders filled. The demand for more of Louisa's stories was so great that she followed up with a book nearly every year till the end of her life. Among them are *Little Men*, *Eight Cousins*, *Jo's Boys* and *Under the Lilacs*.

Louisa was a great champion of causes, such as better working conditions for women and women's suffrage. She was the first woman in Concord to register to vote.

Louisa became very famous, and though life was comfortable, she felt her freedom restricted because of her fame. Her success brought her little happiness, and she died, nervous and exhausted, at the age of fifty-six.

## Characters You Will Meet

### *The March Sisters*

Meg

Jo

Beth

Amy

Marmee, *their mother*

Mr. March, *their father*

Hannah, *the servant*

Theodore Laurence, called Laurie, *their neighbor*

Mr. Laurence, *his grandfather*

Aunt March, *Mr. March's aunt*

John Brooke, *Laurie's tutor*

Esther, *Aunt March's maid*

Aunt Carrol, *another of the March's aunts*

Mrs. Kirke, *a friend of Mrs. March in New York*

Mr. Friedrich Bhaer, *a boarder at Mrs. Kirke's house*





The March Sisters

## Chapter 1

### Four Sisters

The four March sisters sat around the fire knitting while they waited for their mother to come home.

"Christmas won't be Christmas without any presents," grumbled Jo.

"It's so dreadful to be poor," sighed Meg.

"Some girls have all the pretty things, while others have nothing," sniffed Amy.

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

"But we haven't got Father. We shall not have him for a long time," said Jo. Father

## LITTLE WOMEN

was off where the fighting was. Though too old to fight, he had gone as a chaplain.

Each girl had a dollar to spend on something she wanted for Christmas. But there were to be no presents this year. Mother thought they should not spend money on pleasure when the men were suffering in the dreadful American Civil War.

Although they were poor, they were a happy and close family. The room in which they sat was comfortable and warm, though the furniture was plain.

Margaret, or Meg, was the oldest of the four at sixteen. She was pretty, with soft brown hair. Fifteen-year-old Jo was tall and thin, and something of a tomboy. Her one beauty was her long, thick hair. Beth, who was thirteen, was very shy. She had a timid voice, and she seldom left the house. Amy, though the youngest, felt herself to be very important. She had big blue eyes and curly



Father Is a Chaplain.

## LITTLE WOMEN

golden hair.

The clock struck six and reminded them that Marmee, as they called their mother, would soon be home. Suddenly they all had the same idea. They would each buy something for Marmee with their dollars.

"We must go shopping tomorrow, Meg," said Jo, marching up and down. They were all excitedly planning when Marmee, a tall, motherly lady opened the door. She was not elegantly dressed, but they thought her noble-looking. The girls helped her get her wet things off and get settled by the fire.

"I've got a treat for you after supper," said Mrs. March. "A letter from Father! A nice long letter. He is well and sends loving wishes for Christmas."

"Oh, when will he come home, Mother?" asked Beth with a quiver in her voice.

"Not for many months, unless he is sick. He will stay and do his work," said Mrs.



**Getting Marmee Settled**

## LITTLE WOMEN

March sadly.

They all drew to the fire to hear the letter. It was cheerful and full of news, but everyone sniffed when they came to the end. Father said he would not be back for a year. Everyone was quiet, and then they again fell to their work.

At nine they stopped work and sang before they went to bed. Beth, the musical one, played the old piano. Meg and Marmee led the singing while Jo gave a croak or two in the wrong place, and Amy chirped like a cricket. Then they all went up to bed.



The Evening Sing





"Where Is Mother?"