



LOUISA MAY ALCOTT

Little Women



JVA Editora

LOUISA MAY ALCOTT

Little Women

First published: 1868

Public domain edition

JVA Editora

Little Women

by Louisa May Alcott

Contents

PART 1

CHAPTER ONE PLAYING PILGRIMS

CHAPTER TWO A MERRY CHRISTMAS

CHAPTER THREE THE LAURENCE BOY

CHAPTER FOUR BURDENS

CHAPTER FIVE BEING NEIGHBORLY

CHAPTER SIX BETH FINDS THE PALACE BEAUTIFUL

CHAPTER SEVEN AMY'S VALLEY OF HUMILIATION

CHAPTER EIGHT JO MEETS APOLLYON

CHAPTER NINE MEG GOES TO VANITY FAIR

CHAPTER TEN THE P.C. AND P.O.

CHAPTER ELEVEN EXPERIMENTS

CHAPTER TWELVE CAMP LAURENCE

CHAPTER THIRTEEN CASTLES IN THE AIR

CHAPTER FOURTEEN SECRETS

CHAPTER FIFTEEN A TELEGRAM

CHAPTER SIXTEEN LETTERS

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN LITTLE FAITHFUL

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN DARK DAYS

CHAPTER NINETEEN AMY'S WILL

CHAPTER TWENTY CONFIDENTIAL

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE LAURIE MAKES MISCHIEF, AND JO MAKES PEACE

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO PLEASANT MEADOWS

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE AUNT MARCH SETTLES THE QUESTION

PART 2

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR GOSSIP

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE THE FIRST WEDDING

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX ARTISTIC ATTEMPTS

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN LITERARY LESSONS

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT DOMESTIC EXPERIENCES

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE CALLS

CHAPTER THIRTY CONSEQUENCES

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE OUR FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO TENDER TROUBLES

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE JO'S JOURNAL

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR FRIEND

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE HEARTACHE

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX BETH'S SECRET

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN NEW IMPRESSIONS

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT ON THE SHELF

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE LAZY LAURENCE

CHAPTER FORTY THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE LEARNING TO FORGET

CHAPTER FORTY-TWO ALL ALONE

CHAPTER FORTY-THREE SURPRISES

CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR MY LORD AND LADY

CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE DAISY AND DEMI

CHAPTER FORTY-SIX UNDER THE UMBRELLA

CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN HARVEST TIME

PART 1

CHAPTER ONE

PLAYING PILGRIMS

“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 Sintran* 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.