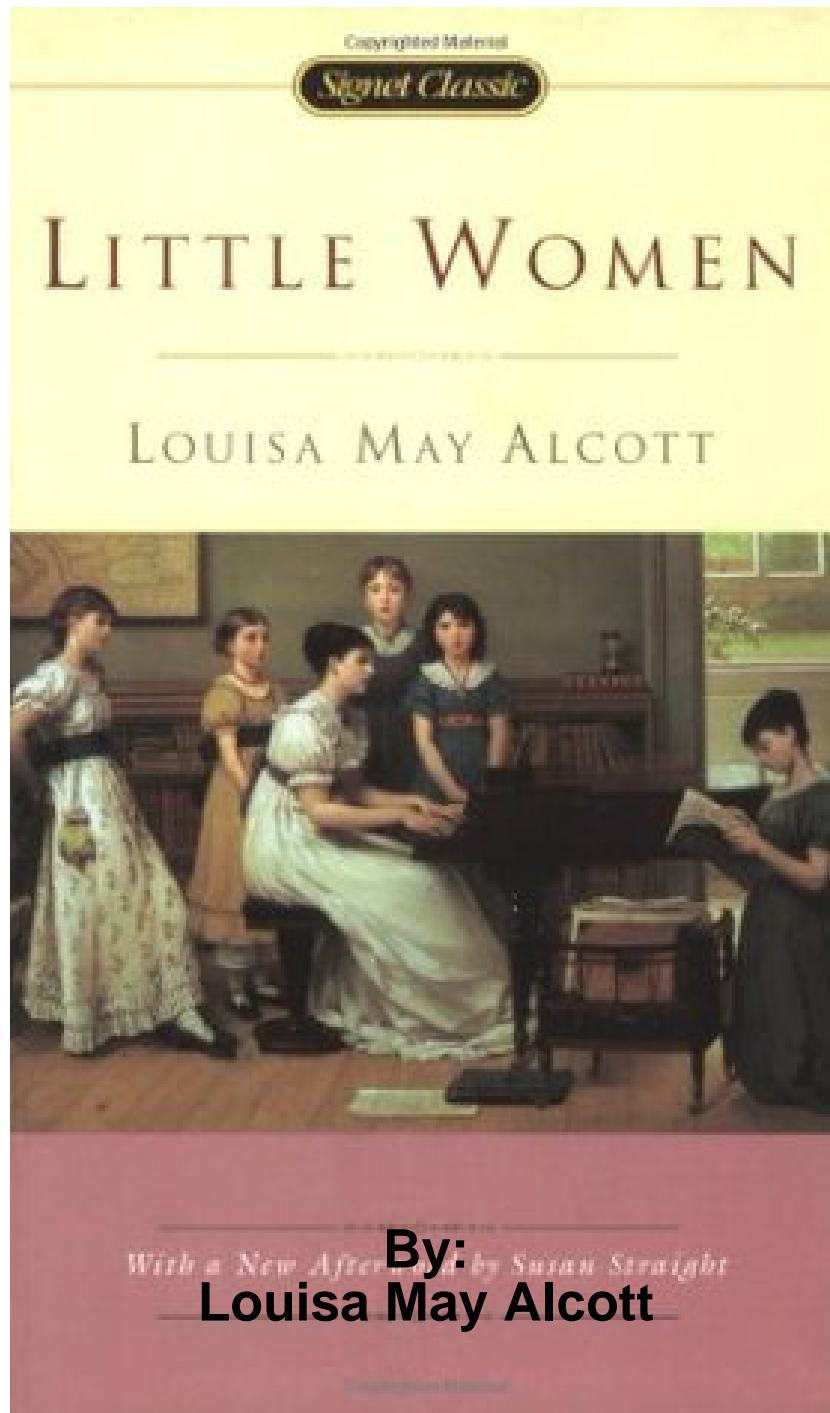


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## What people Say:

### Susan

Someone I know claimed this no longer has value, that she would never recommend it because it's saccharine, has a religious agenda, and sends a bad message to girls that they should all be little domestic homebodies. I say she's wrong on all counts. This is high on my reread list along with *Pride and Prejudice*, *Jane Eyre*, and *a Tree Grows in Brooklyn*--you could say that I'm pretty familiar with it.

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Let's see--there's a heroine who not only writes, but is proud of the fact and makes a profit from it in a time that this was somewhat out-of-the-ordinary. Reading this, and especially knowing later that the main character is (for all practical purposes) Alcott herself, inspired me to write myself, and I haven't forgotten the writing lessons even today: don't let money cloud your vision, write for yourself first, take criticism, write what you know. Still wise even today. Also in this book, we see the perspective of a family coping with the financial and emotional strain of having a loved one away at war, something that is unfortunately all too relatable today. There's also (extraordinary in those times, common in ours) a platonic, though not uncomplicated, friendship between a man and a woman that is sort of a different kind of love story in a way and a powerful one at that. We see people getting married, but marriage is never portrayed as *The Answer to Everything*--many of the matches involve sacrifice and struggling. The girls, though good at heart, aren't a picture-perfect family of saints. They're flawed and human. The paragon Beth would seem the exception, but the message with her is more about how even the quietest among us can make an impact on the world--not parading her isolated life as an example, only her kindness.

I won't lie. Someone dies, there's a war and a father's away--so yes, God is mentioned: I think there's a few *Pilgrim's Progress* references in passing and there's some talk of faith at moments when the characters most need it. To contemporary readers, this may seem like a lot, but heavy-handed it is not. It was probably somewhat unusual for its time. The thought that everyone's relationship and perception of God could greatly vary, and that to be true to your religion was entirely non judgmental and meant being kind to other people and trying to make yourself better, not other people? The thought that each person must be allowed to deal with these feelings in their own time in their own way? Wacky stuff.

I admit it seems like a tough sell to today's kids, packaged in somewhat formal sounding-language, and bearing every indication of being literary broccoli, but this book is a classic for a reason. It might be a tough sell, but I don't think we should give up on trying to think of ways to do it anyway. What's inside still counts. Don't write it off.

## **Barry Pierce**

Okay I'm just gonna say this. I liked Little Women. I'm an 18-year-old guy and I liked Little Women. What. It's quaint. It's quaint as fuck. I'm such a Jo.

## **Fabian**

Yes, yes. I'm a grown ass man reading this, but I'm not ashamed. I also read the "Twilight" sa-ha-ha-ga & a bunch of Charlaine Harris as well, remember? Some rules simply don't apply.

What I tried to do here was dispel the extra melodrama and embrace the cut-outs (fat trimmed out) of the Winona Ryder film. I was on the hunt for all the "new" (ha!) stuff that the regular person, well informed of the plot involving four young girls growing up (or in the case of Beth, NOT) never even knew existed.

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This one stands as outstanding soap opera theatrics woven intelligently with history herself. Good stuff, like a wise mentor of American Lit. would say.

**Rory**

I hated this book.

I can't even begin to go into all the reasons I dislike this novel. It's dull and preachy through out most of it--aside from Jo who is a truly inspired character. But everyone else seems one note, most of the chapters come off as morality plays than solid scenes or plots. And just when Miss Alcott has something seemingly interesting she breaks it for no other reason than to do something.

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Whether its the pairing of Amy and Laurie (huh?), the point made CONSTANTLY that Beth's life isn't useless because she is an angel and showed them that angels do exist and is a total Mary Sue(Really? Cause I'm glad she died before I died of boredom), the forced pairing of Jo and the Professor (Why? I mean--really... Just keep her single) there is also the message that pursuing art is selfish. (Jo giving up her writing, Laurie gives up his music, Amy gives up her sketching...)

It's not a message I expected--this book is always lauded as one that has inspired countless girls... To do what? Because outside of Jo's spirit I dont really see much to aspire to in this tsory? The overall message seems to be that as a good Christian one should sacrifice being an artist, being in love with who you want and any hope of independence...

It's not because I'm from the modern era that I dislike this book. (Or that I'm an adult reading it.) If you look at other works being done in the same time period you will see that there were stories with less moralizing being done--including by Miss Alcott herself. I was just really disappointed

## Corrie

The book begins:

"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."

There's an undercurrent of anger in this book and I think Louisa May Alcott would have gone much further

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