



Little Women

Louisa May Alcott (1832 - 1888)

Read by:	Cast	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case, jewel case, and paper sleeve
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Genre:	Fiction		

Little Women follows the lives of the four sisters as they grow from childhood through their teen years into womanhood. The book is based loosely on the lives of author Louisa May Alcott, her three sisters, and their friends and family. The four sisters each embody aspects of the “All-American girl”. Meg, the eldest at 16, is beautiful and traditional. Jo, age 15, is an impulsive tomboy with a temper and a love of writing. Beth, 13, is timid and frail and is the peacemaker in the group. Amy, the youngest at age 12, is possessed of an artistic temperament and a taste for the better things in life. The family lives in genteel poverty, owing to their father’s loss of much of his fortune. In weaving together the stories of the girls’ growth and engagement with the world Alcott created a new kind of literature that combined

elements of children’s fiction with others from more mature sentimental novels and showed how women’s lives were built around three main themes: domestic life, endless work, and the nature of love. It was written at request of her publisher, who asked her to write a book about girls that would have widespread appeal, and was published in two volumes. The first, written in 1868, became an immediate commercial and critical hit and prompted Alcott to quickly write a sequel, which was published in 1869 and titled *Good Wives* in Great Britain. The two were combined as a single volume in 1880 as *Little Women*. The book has been adapted for film six times and for television six times, most recently by the BBC in 2017, aired by PBS in 2018.

Louisa May Alcott (November 29, 1832 – March 6, 1888) was an American writer best known as the author of *Little Women*. She was born to noted transcendentalists Abigail May and Amos Bronson Alcott and raised in New England among literary luminaries such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Like the family in the novel, the Alcotts were financially challenged and Louisa worked to help support the family at an early age. She was educated by her father and received instruction in writing from Emerson, Thoreau, and Hawthorne as well as Margaret Fuller and Julia Ward Howe. She found an outlet in writing and began writing for the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1860. An abolitionist, she served as a nurse in Georgetown, DC when the Civil War broke out but contracted typhoid fever after six weeks. Her letters home during her recovery were collected and published as *Hospital Sketches* and brought her critical recognition. She wrote fiery novels for young adults and sensational stories under the pen name A. M. Bernard. Following the success of *Little Women* and its sequels *Little Men* (1871) and *Jo’s Boys* (1886) she shied away from publicity but was a strong voice in a group of female authors that addressed women’s issues with candor. She suffered from chronic health problems, possibly from mercury poisoning or lupus, and died of a stroke at age 55 two days after her father’s death. She is buried on a hillside in Concord, Massachusetts known as “Author’s Alley” alongside Emerson, Hawthorne, and Thoreau.