

# **Little Women Book Notes**

## **Little Women by Louisa May Alcott**

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## Author/Context

Louisa May Alcott was born in 1832 in Germantown, Pennsylvania. She was the second of four girls. Her father, Bronson Alcott, was philosopher and teacher who had a difficult time earning money for the family because of his untraditional methods and ideas. Because of this, the family was constantly on the move in areas in and around Boston, Massachusetts.

Bronson Alcott, friend to essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson and writers Henry David Thoreau and Nathaniel Hawthorne, brought his family up in an atmosphere of intense moral convictions. The family did not wear cotton, as it was produced by slave labor in the south. At one point, Bronson Alcott had his own school for children; he was forced to close it after he admitted a black girl. The family lived for a while in a utopian community called Fruitlands, a project started by Alcott and his friends. The community failed after two years. After briefly courting the idea of becoming Shakers, the family instead opted to live at a house called The Wayside in Concord, near Emerson and Thoreau. Although they still moved several times after this, they finally settled in the Orchard House, which Emerson purchased for them. Louisa wrote *Little Women* in the Orchard House and based the March family story there.

Louisa began writing adventure stories and fables at a young age and published what she could, earning little notice. It was not until she published the semi-autobiographical novel *Little Women* in 1868 that she began to achieve acclaim. She followed *Little Women* with several other successful novels, such as *Little Men* and *Jo's Boys*. She was able to establish financial security for her family through the success of her writing. She also became active in the women's suffrage movement and the temperance movement.

In 1862, during the Civil War Louisa worked as a nurse in Washington. Here she contracted mercury poisoning from medicine used to treat the wounded. She suffered from the effects of mercury poisoning for the rest of her life, finally dying of it in Boston in 1888.

### Bibliography

Alcott, Louisa May. *Little Women*. New York: Pocket Books, 1994.



## Plot Summary

The story begins at Christmas time. The March girls, Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy, are unhappy because they have agreed to give up their Christmas presents. They have done this because it is war time, and, since their father is in the war, they have no means of support and very little money. The girls have a little money and decide to all buy their mother presents instead of buying things for themselves.

On Christmas, the girls give their large breakfast to some needy neighbors, the Hummels. This act of kindness is noticed by their wealthy neighbor, James Laurence, who sends them a large dinner. On Christmas afternoon, the girls put on a play, written by Jo and put together with various props found around the house, for an audience of girls.

Jo and Meg are invited to a party at the Gardiners' house. They dress up in their best and attend. Jo, hiding in an alcove, meets Laurie, James Laurence's grandson. They talk and become friends. Meg sprains her ankle and Laurie brings the girls home in his carriage.

After the holidays, the girls go back to their various duties. Meg is a governess. Jo is a companion for Aunt March. Beth studies and home and helps with the housekeeping. Amy goes to school.

Jo decides one day that Laurie is kept inside his house more than a boy should be. She throws a snowball at his window and gets his attention; he invites her over. She meets his grandfather, who realizes that Laurie is lonely.

The Marches and the Laurences become good friends. Beth begins going to the Laurences' to play the piano there. She makes Mr. Laurence a pair of slippers to thank him and he gives her a little piano of her own as a gift.

At school, Amy brings some pickled limes to trade with other girls and is caught by the teacher. He hits her hands and has her stand in front of the class. She goes home at recess and her mother agrees that she doesn't need to go back, but says that she disobeyed the rules by having the limes in class.

One Saturday, Meg and Jo go to a play. Amy is very upset that she is not invited. Jo is rude to her about it, so, when they have gone, Amy burns the book that Jo has been writing. Jo discovers this the next day and is very upset. She won't forgive Amy. Jo and Laurie go ice skating and Amy wants to go with them, so she follows them. Jo refuses to pay attention to her and skates away. Amy skates onto the ice and hits a thin patch. She falls through. Jo panics, and Laurie helps pull Amy out of the water; they get her home. Jo forgives Amy for burning her manuscript.

Meg is invited to stay with the Moffats for two weeks. She spends the time shopping, calling, and riding with the other guests. The Moffats have a party, and because Meg's



dress is plain the girls offer her one of their dresses, then dress her up fashionably. At the party, Laurie sees her and disapproves of her appearance. She tells him not to tell her family. When she gets home, she confesses to her mother about the party and admits that it wasn't right for her, even though it was nice to be complimented on the way she looked.

At this point, readers discover that the girls have secret society called the Pickwick Club, which puts out a paper each week. When Laurie gives them the gift of a mailbox set up between their yards to send letters and gifts to each other, Jo convinces her sisters to allow him into the club.

It is now summer, and the girls have a little vacation from their everyday duties. They decide to try an experiment: they will also take a vacation from housework. After a week has passed they cannot take it any more, and they decide it is no fun to play all the time.

Laurie has some English friends visiting him. He invites the girls to Camp Laurence, a picnic with food, croquet and games.

One day when Laurie is bored he sees the March sisters going into the woods. He follows them and finds that they are having a meeting of the Busy Bee society, a club in which they each have to keep busy while they sit outdoors. Laurie joins them, and they talk about what they each want to do some day. They decide to meet in ten years to see if they got their wishes.

Jo submits some stories to a local newspaper They are published. She tells Laurie about this; in return he tells Jo that his tutor, Mr. Brooke, has kept one of Meg's gloves because he has a crush on her.

In the fall, a telegram comes that tells the family their father is sick in a Washington hospital. Their mother goes to him, escorted by Mr. Brooke. The girls take care of the house while their mother is gone, but they start to get lazy. Because no one else is willing, Beth takes the needed food to the Hummels. Their baby has scarlet fever and dies in her arms while she is there. She comes home sick, having caught the fever from the baby. Because Amy has not yet had scarlet fever, she is sent to Aunt March's while Beth is sick. Beth has a high fever. The family at first doesn't contact their mother about it, but Beth gets so bad that the doctor advises them to do so. Just before she returns, the fever breaks.

While their mother has been in Washington, Mr. Brooke has told her and the girls' father about his feelings for Meg, but they agree she is too young to marry. Laurie sends Meg a few fake love letters from Mr. Brooke, and Meg is upset by them. Their mother make Laurie apologize.

Beth health improves, as does that of her father. Christmas arrives, and Mr. March comes home to the family. Soon after all of this, Mr. Brooke speaks to Meg about marriage; she says she isn't interested. Just at that moment, Aunt March comes in and



forbids Meg to marry Mr. Brooke because he is poor. Because of this, Meg agrees to marry Mr. Brooke after all.

Time passes. Mr. March becomes a minister, and John (Mr. Brooke) goes to war briefly, then returns. Amy becomes Aunt March's new companion Jo begins to publish stories in the newspaper every week. John gets a bookkeeping job and a house; he and Meg are married in a simple ceremony at the Marchs' home.

Amy has been working on her drawing and has been improving. She invites her drawing class to her house, but none of them show up. She is very disappointed.

Jo wins a writing contest. She receives one hundred dollars and uses it to send her mother and Beth to the seaside for a vacation. Jo begins writing to help her family financially, and she publishes her first novel. Unfortunately, it is not very good.

Meg tries to be a good wife. She goes through several cooking disasters, including trying to make jam. She also struggles with money: she wants more things than she has or can afford, and at one point she buys a dress she cannot afford. She sells it and buys her husband a new coat instead to cover her mistake. Meg is pregnant, then gives birth to twins, Daisy and Demi.

Amy drags Jo out of the house to visit several friends. Jo is in a bad mood and behaves poorly, which upsets Amy. Their last visit is to Aunt March, who notes how pleasant Amy is, and how rough Jo is.

There is a fair. Amy is asked to sit at the art table, but because of the jealousy of one of the other girls she is later asked to sit at the floral table instead. She takes the things she made for the fair with her when she moves from the art table to the floral table, but she later decides to do the kind thing and replace her wares on the art table. Jo has Laurie and her friends buy all the flowers at Amy's table, then has them buy all the vases at the art table, as well.

Because of her sweetness, Amy is asked to go abroad with Aunt Carroll. She does. They tour Europe. While there, Amy runs into Laurie's English friends and becomes friends with them. At home, Mrs. March is worried about Beth, who doesn't seem as happy as usual. Jo tries to find out what is wrong. She decides that Beth is in love with Laurie, then realizes that Laurie loves her, not Beth. Once she understands Laurie's feelings for her, Jo decides to go to New York as a governess in order to be out of the way for a while. In New York, Jo meets Professor Bhaer, a kindly German man. She writes for a newspaper until she finds out that Bhaer disapproves of her sensation stories, at which point she stops writing.

Laurie graduates from college and Jo leaves New York to go back home. Laurie asks Jo to marry him, but Jo turns him down, explaining that she does not love him. Laurie is heartbroken and goes to Europe with his grandfather in order to recover.



Jo notices that Beth doesn't look very well. She takes her to the seaside for a vacation. She realizes that Beth is getting weaker and that she will not live long. Beth is relieved that Jo knows this because she had known it herself for a while.

In France, Laurie and Amy meet again. They begin spending time together. Amy notices there is a change in Laurie, but she can't figure out what it is. She discovers that Jo has turned down his offer of marriage. She tells him to take it like a man. He leaves her to go back to his grandfather, and he begins spending time on his music again.

Meg becomes so absorbed in her children that she doesn't spend enough time with her husband. Because he is lonely at home, Mr. Brooke begins spending evenings at a friend's house. Recognizing his need, Meg begins to include her husband more in taking care of the children and makes an effort to spend time with him.

The March family accepts that Beth is going to die, and they make things as comfortable as possible. She dies, and Jo falls into a depression. She doesn't know what to do, but her mother tells her to write. Jo writes a story from the heart, which is so good that her father publishes it for her. The story gets a great deal of attention, and Jo writes more like it.

When Laurie hears of Beth's death, he goes to Amy to comfort her. The two begin spending time together; they eventually fall in love. They marry in order for Amy to be allowed to go home with Laurie, and they surprise the family with this news when they arrive. Jo wonders if she will ever marry. Professor Bhaer unexpectedly makes a visit and stays for some time. The March family grows fond of him. They notice the change in Jo when the Professor is around. Soon the two are engaged. The Professor does not have money for marriage yet, however. He goes out west for a year to teach and earn money. Aunt March dies, leaving her house to Jo and thus making it possible for her and the Professor to marry. Jo starts a school for boys in the large house.

At the end of the book, there is an apple picking festival at Jo's house. The March family reflects on the dreams they had for themselves when they were young and decide that everything has turned out for the best.



# Major Characters

**Josephine March or Jo:** She is the second oldest of the March sisters, tall and skinny-- a tomboy who always says and does the wrong thing.

**Margaret March or Meg:** The oldest of the March sisters, she is pretty, simple and interested in the finer things in life.

**Elizabeth March or Beth:** The third March sister, she is very shy and timid. She loves music and her doll collection and her many cats.

**Amy March:** The youngest March sister, a little artist and a very important person-- she thinks.

**Mother or Marmee:** The mother of the March girls, she tries very hard to raise her girls to be little women--intelligent, kind, and modest

**Father:** The father of the March family, he is at war at the beginning of the story. He is a very intelligent and philosophical man.

**Theodore Laurence or Laurie or Teddy:** The grandson of James Laurence, a fun-loving boy with musical talent and charm.

**Mr. James Laurence:** Laurie's grandfather, who has taken care of the boy since his parents died.

**Hannah Mullet:** A servant for the March family, who has been with the family since the girls were born, and who is considered part of the family.

**John Brooke:** Laurie's tutor and eventually Meg's husband.

**Aunt March:** Mr. March's wealthy and grouchy widowed aunt.

## Minor Characters

**The Hummels:** A family of German immigrants whom the March family helps when they can.

**Sallie Gardiner (Moffat):** A rich friend of Meg's. Later marries Ned Moffat.

**Ned Moffat:** Annie Moffat's brother, who marries Sallie Gardiner.

**Annie Moffat:** A fashionable and wealthy friend of Meg's and Sallie Gardiner's.

**The King family:** A wealthy family with four children for whom Meg works as a governess.



**Mr. Davis:** The schoolteacher at Amy's school.

**Susie Perkins:** A girl at Amy's school.

**Mrs. Gardiner:** Sallie Gardiner's mother.

**Mrs. Crocker:** An old spinster who likes to gossip and who has few friends.

**The Vaughns:** English friends of Laurie's who come to visit him.

**Grace Vaughn:** The youngest Vaughn sibling.

**Kate Vaughn:** The oldest, very prim and proper.

**Fred Vaughn:** The elder twin of Frank, proposes marriage to Amy when she is in Europe.

**Frank Vaughn:** The younger twin of Fred.

**Esther or Estelle:** A French woman employed as a servant for Aunt March.

**The Chesters:** A well-to-do family with whom the Marches are acquainted.

**May Chester:** A girl about Amy's age, who is rich and jealous of Amy's popularity and talent.

**Mrs. Chester:** May Chester's mother.

**The Lambs:** A well-off family with whom the Marches are acquainted.

**The Carrols:** A family related to the Marches. They invite Amy to go to Europe with them.

**Aunt Carrol:** Invites Amy to go abroad.

**Flo:** Aunt Carrol's daughter and Amy's companion in Europe.

**Margaret Brooke or Daisy:** Meg's daughter, twin sister to Demi.

**John Laurence Brooke or Demijohn or Demi:** Meg's son, twin brother to Daisy.

**Mrs. Kirke:** A woman who runs a boarding house in New York. Jo works for her as a teacher for her children and as a seamstress.

**Kittie and Minnie:** The daughters of Mrs. Kirke.

**Miss Norton:** A rich and intellectual young woman whom Jo meets at the boarding house in New York. She invites Jo to concerts and lectures.



**Mr. Dashwood:** Publisher and editor of the Weekly Volcano.

**The Scotts:** Husband and wife, friends of Meg and John. John Brooke is friends of Mr. Scott from work.

**Rob :** Jo's son.

**Teddy:** Jo's son.

**Professor Bhaer:** A nice, poor man from Berlin who stays at Mrs. Kirke's boarding house. Jo befriends him by secretly mending his clothes. He teaches her some German.



## Objects/Places

**War:** The Civil War, 1861-1865. The March girls' father has gone off to war. Because their father is gone and because of the war, the March family is forced to give up many things to help the war effort, as well as to help them get by.

**Pilgrim's Progress:** A book by John Bunyan, a biblical allegory about a man named Christian and his journey from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. The March girls played a game of Pilgrim's Progress when they were younger. They would carry 'burdens' and hike from the cellar, which they called the City of Destruction, to the attic, which was the Celestial City. During this story, they often refer to their game, as it helps them get through the difficult wartime and family struggles.

**Scrabble:** The rat in the attic that Jo befriends that eats her manuscripts.

**Beth's dolls:** The worn and torn dolls that Beth takes in and cares for when her sisters throw them out. She creates a home for infirm dolls and repairs them as well as she can without using a needle, which might hurt them.

**pickled limes:** A treat traded at Amy's school for popularity with the other girls. They were forbidden at school, but girls traded them anyway, a crime that Amy was caught in by the schoolteacher.

**Camp Laurence:** A gathering of the Laurences, Marches, Vaughns and other friends at Longmeadow one day. They eat, play croquet, and talk the entire day.

**Joanna:** Beth's favorite doll, inherited from Jo, who abused her. Beth rescues her from the rag bag and repairs her.

**The Pickwick Club:** A secret society founded by the March sisters that publishes a weekly newspaper. They each have a pseudonym and publish in the newspaper. Laurie is allowed to join after he gives the family the post office on the border of their two properties..

**Busy Bee Society:** A game that the March sisters play in which they have to keep busy all the time doing something.

**scarlet fever:** A contagious disease contracted mainly by children, its symptoms are reddened skin and a high fever. Beth catches scarlet fever from the Hummel baby, who dies of it in her arms. Most people at this time had scarlet fever as children. Once they did, they were immune to it.

**camphor:** Used in medicine for mild pain and itching.

**The Weekly Volcano:** A newspaper that publishes Jo's sensation stories while she is in New York. Jo publishes anonymously and earns money she hopes to use to buy things



for Beth. When she finds out that Professor Bhaer disapproves of such newspapers as being immoral, she stops writing for them.

**The Spread Eagle:** A newspaper in which Jo first publishes sensation stories for a dollar a column. This is her first success as a writer.

**the mailbox:** A mailbox that is set up by Laurie between the Laurence and March yards. It is used to send messages and gifts to one another.



## Quotes

Quote 1: "Christmas won't be Christmas without any presents." Chapter 1, pg. 3

Quote 2: "Don't laugh at me, Jo! I didn't mean anyone should know until the time came, and I gave *all* my money to get it, and I'm truly trying not to be selfish any more."  
Chapter 2, pg. 18

Quote 3: "Little Raphael,' as her sisters called her, had a decided talent for drawing, and was never so happy as when copying flowers, designing fairies, or illustrating stories with queer specimens of art." Chapter 4, pg. 47

Quote 4: "'That boy is suffering for society and fun,' she said to herself. 'His grandpa does not know what's good for him, and keeps him shut up all alone. He needs a party of jolly boys to play with, or somebody young and lively....'" Chapter 5, pg. 55

Quote 5: "But Beth, though yearning for the grand piano, could not pluck up courage to go to the 'Mansion of Bliss,' as Meg called it." Chapter 6, pg. 69

Quote 6: "Jo began to dance a jig,...Amy nearly fell out of the window in her surprise, and Meg exclaimed, with uplifted hands, 'Well I do believe the world is coming to an end!'" Chapter 6, pg. 76

Quote 7: "During the fifteen minutes that followed, the proud and sensitive girl suffered a shame and pain which she never forgot. To others it might seem a ludicrous or trivial affair, but to her it was a hard experience, for during the twelve years of her life she had been governed by love alone...." Chapter 7, pg. 81

Quote 8: "'It's my dreadful temper! I try to cure it; I think I have, and then it breaks out worse than ever. Oh, Mother, what shall I do? What shall I do?' cried poor Jo, in despair." Chapter 8, pg. 93

Quote 9: "'I'm not Meg tonight, I'm 'a doll' who does all sorts of crazy things. Tomorrow I shall put away my 'fuss and feathers' and be desperately good again.'" Chapter 9, pg. 111

Quote 10: "'You may try your experiment for a week and see how you like it. I think by Saturday night you will find that all play and no work is as bad as all work and no play,'" their Mother said. Chapter 11, pg. 127

Quote 11: "'If we are all alive ten years hence, let's meet, and see how many of us have got our wishes, or how much nearer we are then than now,' said Jo, always ready with a plan." Chapter 13, pg. 169

Quote 12: "How still the room was as they listened breathlessly, how strangely the day darkened outside, and how suddenly the whole world seemed to change, as the girls



gathered about their mother, feeling as if all the happiness and support of the lives was about to be taken from them." Chapter 15, pg. 186

Quote 13: "...Beth quietly put on her hood, filled her basket with odds and ends for the poor children, and went out into the chilly air with a heavy head and a grieved look in her patient eyes." Chapter 17, pg. 205.

Quote 14: "As if waked by the stir, Hannah started out of her sleep, hurried to the bed, looked at Beth, felt her hands, listened at her lips, and then, throwing her apron over her head, sat down to rock to and for, exclaiming, under her breath, 'The fever's turned, she's sleepin' nat'ral, her skin's damp, and the breaths easy. Praise be given!'" Chapter 18, pg. 220

Quote 15: "The little girl was very sincere in all this, for being left alone outside the safe home nest, she felt the need of some kind hand to hold by so sorely that she instinctively turned to the strong and tender Friend, whose fatherly love most closely surrounds his little children." Chapter 19, pg. 227

Quote 16: "'Indeed, sir, I cannot tell. Mother forbade it. Laurie has confessed, asked pardon, and been punished quiet enough. We don't keep silence to shield him, but someone else, and it will make more trouble if you interfere.'" Chapter 21, pg. 250

Quote 17: "Of course there was a general stampede, and for several minutes everybody seemed to lose their wits, for the strangest things were done, and no one said a word. Mr. March became invisible in the embrace of four pairs of loving arms." Chapter 22, pg. 257

Quote 18: "Now Aunt March possessed in perfection the art of rousing the spirit of opposition in the gentlest people, and enjoyed doing it. The best of us have a spice of perversity in us, especially when we are young and in love." Chapter 23, pg. 268

Quote 19: "'If 'genius is eternal patience,' as Michelangelo affirms, Amy had some claim to the divine attribute, for she persevered in spite of all obstacles, failures, and discouragements, firmly believing that in time she would do something worthy to be called 'high art.'" Chapter 26, pg. 302

Quote 20: "...When the first soreness was over, she could laugh at her poor little book, yet believe in it still, and feel herself the wiser and stronger for the buffeting she had received." Chapter 27, pg. 321

Quote 21: "'I only did as I'd be done by. You laugh at me when I say I want to be a lady, but I mean a true gentlewoman in mind and manners, and I try to do it as far as I know how. I can't explain exactly, but I want to be above the little meannesses and follies and faults that spoil so many women,'" Amy says. Chapter 30, pg. 363

Quote 22: "'No, it is a new [pain], but I can bear it.' And Beth tried to check her tears." Chapter 32, pg. 387



Quote 23: "There is a demand for whisky, but I think you and I do not care to sell it. If the respectable people knew what harm they did, they would not feel that the living was honest." Chapter 34, pg. 418-9

Quote 24: "I've loved you ever since I've known you, Jo, couldn't help it, you've been so good to me. I've tried to show it, but you wouldn't let me; no I'm going to make you hear, and give me an answer, for I *can't* go on so any longer." Chapter 35, pg. 426

Quote 25: "For a minute her eyes were too dim for seeing, and, when they cleared, Beth was looking up at her so tenderly that there was hardly any need for her to say, 'Jo, dear, I'm glad you know it. I've tried to tell you, but I couldn't.'" Chapter 36, pg. 438

Quote 26: "You have grown abominably lazy, and you like gossip, and waste time on frivolous things, you are contented to be petted and admired by silly people, instead of being loved and respected by wise ones." Chapter 39, pg. 480

Quote 27: "When morning came, for the first time in many months the fire was out, Jo's place was empty and the room was very still. But a bird sang blithely on a budding bough, close by, the snowdrops blossomed freshly at the window, and the spring sunshine streamed in like a benediction over the placid face upon the pillow--a face so full of painless peace that those who loved it best smiled though their tears, and thanked God that Beth was well at last." Chapter 40, pg. 493

Quote 28: "...There was no need of having a scene, hardly any need of telling Amy that he loved her, she knew it without words and had given him his answer long ago." Chapter 41, pg. 505-6

Quote 29: "An old maid, that's what I'm to be. A literary spinster, with a pen for a spouse, a family of stories for children, and twenty years hence a morsel of fame, perhaps..." Chapter 43, pg. 517

Quote 30: "Jo, I haf nothing but much love to gif you; I came to see if you could care for it, and I waited to be sure that I was something more than a friend. Am I? Can you make a little place in your heart for old Fritz?' he added, all in one breath." Chapter 43, pg. 558

Quote 31: "Touched to the heart, Mrs. March could only stretch out her arms, as if to gather children and grandchildren to herself, and say, with face and voice full of motherly love, gratitude, and humility--'Oh, my girls, however long you may live, I never can wish you a greater happiness than this!'" Chapter 47, pg. 578



# Topic Tracking: Gender

## Chapter 1

Gender 1: Amy tells Jo to stop using slang words. Jo is lying on the rug. She sits up and puts her hands in her pockets, then starts to whistle. Immediately she is told to stop because it is boyish. She defiantly says that that's why she does it.

Gender 2: Jo says that it is bad to be a girl when she likes boys' games, jobs and mannerisms. She says that she is disappointed because she was born a girl. She wants to go fight in the war instead of staying home knitting and sewing.

Gender 3: Jo announces that she is the man of the family while their father is away, as they have no brothers.

## Chapter 12

Gender 4: The girls are going to Camp Laurence. As a joke, Jo puts on an old-fashioned, big-rimmed hat. Meg protests and asks Jo if she is really going to wear that silly hat. She tells Jo that she will not behave like a boy.

## Chapter 14

Gender 5: Jo tells Laurie that she wishes she was a horse that could run for miles without losing her breath. She races Laurie down the side of a hill and enjoys it completely, her eyes excited and her cheeks red. She says that this make her look boyish.

Gender 6: Jo has published her first story. The editor tells her that he will pay for the next one. Jo tells Laurie that she will keep writing and publishing, and she will be able to support herself and help her sisters.

## Chapter 15

Gender 7: When the news arrives that Mr. March is sick in a Washington hospital, Mrs. March decides to go to him immediately. To help financially, Jo sells her hair. She comes home later that day with cropped hair. She tells her family that she will soon have short curls, like a boy, and that they will look good and be easy to take care of.

## Chapter 22

Gender 8: Mr. March says that even though Jo's hair is short, she is not the "son" he left before but a young lady who dresses neatly and has stopped whistling, using slang, and lying on the rug.

## Chapter 47



Gender 9: Jo discusses the boys' school she has made out of Aunt March's house. She says she has always loved boys and never had enough. She plans to have them fill the house someday, and she will play with them as much as she likes.



# Topic Tracking: Poverty

## Chapter 1

Poverty 1: The girls, upset because they are not getting Christmas presents this year because of the war and other difficulties, are brooding over the fact that some girls are rich, and some have nothing at all. They think this is unfair, and they think that having nothing is hard to deal with.

## Chapter 2

Poverty 2: On Christmas morning, the March girls find that their mother has gone to help a poor family after a person came begging at their house. She went to them immediately to see what was needed. Hannah says that their mother is one of the most giving people she has seen.

## Chapter 3

Poverty 3: After the party at the Gardiners', Jo says that fine young ladies probably don't have more fun than she and her sisters do, even though the March girls do not have the money to afford nice gowns, gloves and other fancy things.

## Chapter 6

Poverty 4: The March girls decide that the Laurence mansion is the Palace Beautiful, just as in the book, *Pilgrim's Progress*. But, also just as in the book, they have to get past the lions to get inside. One of the lions is the fact that the Laurences are rich and the Marches are poor. The Marches are uncomfortable allowing the Laurences to offer them favors, as the Marches cannot return them.

## Chapter 7

Poverty 5: Amy says that she wishes she had the money Laurie spends on his horse. She says this out loud to get her sisters' attention because she wants to buy pickled limes to bring to school. She believes the limes will surely bring popularity to her. Meg decides to give Amy a little money to spend on the limes, in order to make her feel more respected in school.

## Chapter 9

Poverty 6: Meg is preparing for a party at the Moffats while she is staying with them for a visit. The girls ask her what she will wear. When they find that she only has one dress which she has already worn, they are surprised and think it odd. One of the girls offers a dress of her own for Meg to wear to the party, so that she will be properly turned out.

Poverty 7: Mrs. March tells her daughters that she does not plan to have them marry for money, but rather for happiness. She tells them that they should not marry for money



because love truly makes a home. Money can be a noble thing if it is used well, but it should not be a goal.

### **Chapter 13**

Poverty 8: Meg says that her "Castle in the Air" or the thing that she most wants in life is a big house with a great deal of food, clothes, furniture, people, and money. There, she would have servants and wouldn't need to work.

### **Chapter 18**

Poverty 9: While Beth is sick with scarlet fever, Jo begins to realize what makes Beth wonderful. She realizes that Beth is unselfish and lives for others, to make them happy. Beth's small virtues are more valuable than all the money in the world.

### **Chapter 23**

Poverty 10: Aunt March does not approve of Meg marrying Mr. Brooke, because he is poor. She asks if any of his relatives are rich. Meg says he has no rich relatives, but he has many good friends. Aunt March tells her that they can't live on friends, and that if they try it they'll find they haven't got any.

### **Chapter 24**

Poverty 11: Ned Moffat marries Sallie Gardiner. They receive a big house, carriage, outfits, and nice gifts. Meg is jealous when she compares what she has to that.

### **Chapter 25**

Poverty 12: Sallie says that Meg's wedding was the best one she has been to in a while. She says she doesn't know why that should be, since it wasn't stylish or rich.

### **Chapter 26**

Poverty 13: When asking her mother if she can have the girls from her drawing class over for lunch, Amy says that, although the girls know that she is not rich, it has never made any difference, and they have always been kind to her. Her mother says that money is not a reason for them to be unkind to others.

### **Chapter 27**

Poverty 14: Jo finds that she is satisfied to earn money. Poverty has a good side, in that it forced her to work for what she needed; necessity was her inspiration.

### **Chapter 28**

Poverty 15: Meg and John find that they are happy even though they do not have much money and realize that love wouldn't feed and clothe them.



Poverty 16: Meg is allowed access to the money that John earns for them. The only thing that he asks is for her to keep track of every penny spent and remember that they aren't rich.

Poverty 17: Even though Meg knows that she and John can't buy many things, the temptation to spend money comes in the form of a new dress.

Poverty 18: Meg is tired of being poor. She sees her rich friend Sallie being able to buy many things and is jealous because she cannot do the same.

Poverty 19: Meg feels guilty because she is John's wife and is supposed to help and support him. Instead she expressed her frustration at being poor and spent the money he earned carelessly, on things that weren't necessary.

### **Chapter 31**

Poverty 20: Amy decides that she can't stand being poor if she can help it. She decides that one of the sisters should marry a rich man, and that it might as well be her if she has the opportunity.

### **Chapter 37**

Poverty 21: Amy tells Laurie that foreign life will polish anybody. As for her appearance, she tells him, she makes herself look good on the small budget she has; she is used to make the most of the little that can be afforded.

### **Chapter 41**

Poverty 22: Amy finds that she needs more than money to support her through the troubles she has.

### **Chapter 44**

Poverty 23: Amy tells Laurie to not worry about Jo and Professor Bhaer marrying. She says that it should not matter how old or how rich Bhaer is. All that should matter is whether they are in love. She adds that women should not ever marry for money.

Poverty 24: Amy and Laurie decide that they will use their money to do good. They will help those ordinary people who are not beggars, and who are too proud to ask for what they need. She says that she will help them not with outright charity, but in delicate ways which will not upset their pride.

### **Chapter 46**

Poverty 25: Jo tells Professor Bhaer that she doesn't mind him being poor. In fact, she tells him, she could not marry someone who was rich because she would not like it. She tells him that she has no fear of poverty.



# Topic Tracking: Young Ladies

## Chapter 1

Young Ladies 1: Meg tells Jo that she is old enough to begin behaving like a lady and not a boy. Jo says that she is not a young lady and that she doesn't want to be one if that means putting her hair up and wearing long gowns.

## Chapter 9

Young Ladies 2: Mrs. March says that she doesn't have plans for her daughters to marry well. Her only wish is that her daughters be beautiful, smart, good, respected and have loving marriages. She tells them that to marry the right man is the best thing that could happen to a woman.

## Chapter 14

Young Ladies 3: Meg asks Jo when she will stop being so wild and boisterous. Jo says that she never will until she is too old to walk, and that it is hard enough that Meg is changing into a young lady all of a sudden.

## Chapter 24

Young Ladies 4: While Meg waits to marry John Brooke, she learns more about keeping house and being a wife, and she grows prettier than ever.

## Chapter 26

Young Ladies 5: Amy insists to Jo that the girls in her drawing class care for her, even though Amy's background is not as fashionable. She points out that Jo doesn't take an interest in making people like her, being in good society and having good taste.

## Chapter 29

Young Ladies 6: Amy tells Jo that she wants people to like her, and in order for that to happen Jo must dress neatly and nicely. Amy coaches Jo on the most flattering and artistic way of dressing. This annoys Jo, who is very uncomfortable being dressed up.

Young Ladies 7: Amy tells Jo how to hold her skirt gracefully in a way that will suit her and make her look like a lady. She tells her to hold her skirt when she walks and drop it once she is in the house, because the sweeping and trailing look is the best for her. She insist that Jo learns how do to this well.

Young Ladies 8: Amy and Jo have been making visits to family friends in town. Amy is upset because after all her coaching, Jo took Amy's directions on how to behave so literally that Amy was embarrassed at her sister's behavior. Amy requested that Jo be dignified and polite and Jo was so stiff and silent that the family she and Amy visited



pronounced Jo a bore. On their way to another house visit, Amy requests that Jo be talkative and gossip a little about clothes and whatever topic is introduced. She stresses that Jo make a good impression because this family is an important one to know.

Young Ladies 9: Amy says to Jo that if the sisters were pretty or rich they would have the ability to choose to whom they were kind and could use their influence in that direction. But because they are not, they can't openly disapprove of some gentlemen and approve of others. It would make people think the family was odd.

### **Chapter 30**

Young Ladies 10: Amy behaves well over the petty troubles of the art table at the fair. She tells her family that she only treated others as she would have like to have been treated herself. She says that while they may laugh at her because she tries to be a lady, a real lady is made by manners. She says while hoping to be a young lady, she only hopes to be above the stupid little mean things that other girls ruined by.

### **Chapter 31**

Young Ladies 11: Amy, while in London and thinking over the possibility of marrying Fred Vaughn, decides that one of the March sisters should marry well, and it might as well be her if she gets the chance. She is excited to see all the rich things that Fred and his family have, and she is excited to realize that they could be hers if he proposes.

### **Chapter 32**

Young Ladies 12: Jo realizes that she and her sisters are growing up fast--that Meg is married and a mother, Amy is in Paris doing very well, and Beth has fallen in love. She realizes that she is the only one who has kept out of all of that nonsense. She says that she's not interested in getting into it, either.

### **Chapter 43**

Young Ladies 13: When Amy arrives home from Europe, her family is surprised and delighted to see how she has changed. Her voice is polite and sweet, and the way she carries herself is that of a woman. Her kind manner is the best part of her, because it marked her as the lady she had hoped to become.

### **Chapter 44**

Young Ladies 14: As Amy and Laurie make plans for a life together, Amy resolves that she will make a home with a good wife in it before she becomes a society lady with many friends.



# Chapter 1

It is Christmas time, and the four March sisters, Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy, are in their home and grumbling about giving up Christmas presents because of the war.

"Christmas won't be Christmas without any presents," Jo says. Chapter 1, pg. 3. But they each have a dollar, and they decide that, rather than buy things for themselves, they will buy presents for their mother.

They practice the play they are putting together for Christmas night. Their mother comes home with a letter from their father, who has gone to war as a chaplain, as he is not fit to fight. Their mother speaks to them about the difficult time they are having. She reminds them of a game they used to play as children, called *Pilgrim's Progress*, and how they would carry bags for burdens and climb from the City of Destruction, which was the cellar, to the Celestial City, or the attic. Then they all sing together before they go to bed.

Topic Tracking: Poverty 1

Topic Tracking: Gender 1

Topic Tracking: Gender 2

Topic Tracking: Gender 3

Topic Tracking: Young Ladies 1



## Chapter 2

Each daughter finds a little copy of *Pilgrim's Progress*, from her mother, under her pillow when she wakes. Their mother has gone to help someone who came begging at their house. The daughters begin to prepare their gifts for their mother and await her arrival to give them to her. Amy has been missing since early morning. When she finally comes into the house, she reveals that she has exchanged the little perfume flask she bought for her mother for a larger one. "Don't laugh at me, Jo! I didn't mean anyone should know until the time came, and I gave *all* my money to get it, and I'm truly trying not to be selfish any more," Amy says when she arrives. Chapter 2, pg. 18

Mother comes in and says that the Hummels, a poorer family in town, are hungry. She asks the girls if they would mind giving their Christmas breakfast to them. The girls and Hannah, the family's servant, help their mother bring their breakfast to the Hummels, then return home to have bread and milk for breakfast. They give their mother the presents they bought for her.

Later, they perform their play about romance, revenge, and adventure in front of an audience of girls, as no boys are allowed. Jo plays the men's roles. They have built all the scenery and costumes out of what they could find around the house.

Their rich neighbor, Mr. Laurence, has sent them a dinner after hearing that they gave away their breakfast. They discuss Mr. Laurence and his grandson, and remark on how much of a gentleman the grandson seems to be.

Topic Tracking: Poverty 2

## Chapter 3

Meg is looking for Jo, who is in the attic, wrapped in a comforter, eating apples and crying over a book with the company of a pet rat named Scrabble. Meg says that they have received an invitation from Mrs. Gardiner for a party the next night. They discuss what they will wear and the fact that they don't have anything fancy for the occasion. They will have to wear the simple dresses they have.

On New Year's Eve, Meg and Jo dress for the party with the help of Beth and Amy. Jo accidentally burns Meg's hair trying to curl it. Jo doesn't have a pair of good gloves because she stained hers, so she borrows one of Meg's, and Meg takes one of her stained ones. Because she once stood too close to a fire, Jo's dress is burned ; she agrees to keep her back to the wall during the party.

At the party, Meg joins the girls there in gossiping. Jo decides to escape by hiding in a alcove, but finds that the Laurence boy is already hiding there. They begin talking and get along very well. He asks her to dance, but she tells him she can't because of her dress. They go into the hallway to dance where no one will see them. Meg later seeks out Jo, who is still talking to Laurie, and tells her that she has sprained her ankle. Meg won't let anyone give her a ride home and decides to wait for Hannah to come to see them home. Jo goes to get Meg coffee and spills it, so Laurie helps her. Jo decides they need a carriage, because Meg can't walk, and Laurie offers her his. When they get home, the two younger girls are waiting for them to hear about the party.

Topic Tracking: Poverty 3

## Chapter 4

The holidays are over, and the March sisters have to go back to work and school. Meg is a governess for the King family's children. Jo is a companion to Aunt March, their father's aunt, who is a wealthy widow. Amy has to go to school. Beth studies at home and helps around the house. Mother was involved with the Soldier's Aid Societies.

They each have big troubles, but talent as well. Meg's big trouble is the fact that they are poor. Amy's biggest problem is that her nose is too flat. But Amy could draw very well. "'Little Raphael,' as her sisters called her, had a decided talent for drawing, and was never so happy as when copying flowers, designing fairies, or illustrating stories with queer specimens of art." Chapter 4, pg. 47 Beth takes care of kittens and dolls that are tossed aside. Jo likes to write.

That evening they sew together. They tell each other about their days. Jo tells the others that she had to read boring essays to Aunt March until she fell asleep, at which point Jo could take out another, more exciting book, to read for herself. Jo accidentally laughed out loud while reading and woke Aunt March up. To show how frivolous Jo's preferred book was, Aunt March asked Jo to read her book to her, but she became so involved that she then asked her to go back and start at the beginning. When she was about to go home, Jo realized she forgot something and went back into Aunt March's house, where finds her reading Jo's book.

Amy tells her sisters about Susie Perkins, a girl at her school, who drew a picture of the teacher on her chalkboard. She tells them that Susie was made to stand in front of the class holding the picture as punishment.

Beth tells that she saw Mr. Laurence give a fish to a woman who was turned down by the shopkeeper when she asked to do work in exchange for food.



## Chapter 5

Jo goes out to shovel paths in the yard for Beth and her dolls. She looks over at the Laurence mansion, wishing she could go over. "'That boy [Laurie] is suffering for society and fun,' she said to herself. 'His grandpa does not know what's good for him, and keeps him shut up all alone. He needs a party of jolly boys to play with, or somebody young and lively....'" Chapter 5, pg. 55 She sees Laurie through one of the windows, studying, and she gets his attention by throwing a snowball. Laurie opens the window and asks Jo to come over. Laurie cleans himself up for Jo's visit, and Jo gets her mother's permission to go and bring over food and Beth's kittens. Laurie quickly straightens his parlor for her, and Jo sets about trying to amuse him. They talk about Jo's sisters. Laurie knows a great deal about them, having watched them from his window. He is envious of the family and the little things they do together, as he has no family except for his grandfather. Jo says they will never close the curtains again, so that he can continue to watch them. Jo tells him about their plays and games and says that he should come over and have fun with them now and then. Laurie gives Jo a tour of his house. When they are in the library, a maid comes in and tells Laurie the doctor has come to see him. Laurie leaves for a minute; Jo stares at a portrait of Laurie's grandfather. Jo starts talking to herself about the portrait being of a kind but willful man, not realizing that Mr. Laurence has entered the room. She is surprised, but then begins to tell the old man of how her visit came about. She tells him that Laurie needs cheering up. The tea bell rings. Mr. Laurence offers Jo his arm, and they go to tea. Laurie is surprised to see them arm in arm. Jo says that she will leave after tea, but Laurie has one more thing to show her. He brings her to the drawing room, where there is a grand piano. Laurie plays for her, and Mr. Laurence stands by the fire. Mr. Laurence asks Laurie to stop playing, saying that it is time for Jo to go home. Jo asks Laurie if she has been rude, but Laurie says that his grandfather doesn't like to hear him play -- he will tell her why another day.

Jo goes home and tells her family of the day's adventures. She tells them that Laurie's father married a lady who was an Italian musician against his father's will, and that both Laurie's parents died when he was very young. Jo's sisters think that this is romantic. Beth says she is thinking about Pilgrim's Progress and how they must get past the Wicked Gate and up a steep hill to get to the Palace Beautiful. Maybe the Laurence house is the Palace Beautiful, she says.



## Chapter 6

The March girls decide that the Laurence house is the Palace Beautiful from Pilgrim's Progress. In order to reach it, however, they have to get past becoming friends with old Mr. Laurence, of whom they are all a little bit scared, and past the fact that the Laurences are rich and the Marches are poor.

Laurie and the Marches become good friends, and Laurie's tutor, Mr. Brooke, finds that Laurie's studies are suffering because of it. But old Mr. Laurence tells Mr. Brooke to let Laurie have break from studying because his need for friends is greater than his need for his studies.

"But Beth, though yearning for the grand piano, could not pluck up courage to go to the 'Mansion of Bliss,' as Meg called it." Chapter 6, pg. 69 She is terrified of Mr. Laurence and cannot overcome her fear of him. In conversation, however, Mr. Laurence says that Laurie isn't playing the piano as much as he used to, and that because of this the piano isn't being used. He asks if any of the girls would like to play it. Beth is very excited about this, but she is too shy to say she would like to play. Mr. Laurence says that if any of the girls would like to play the piano, they won't need to see or talk to anyone; they can just go in and play it, and it wouldn't disturb him because he is always in his study at the other end of the house. Beth can't hold back any longer and says she would very much like to come and play. The old man smiles and says that he had a little girl once, with eyes like hers.

Beth is so excited about the piano that she wakes Amy in the middle of the night by playing piano on her face. The next day, Beth watches the old man and the others leave the house and shyly goes to play the piano. She finds some easy music left on the piano. She begins to play and soon forgets her fear.

After this, Beth goes to the big house to play almost every day. She makes Mr. Laurence a pair of slippers to thank him. She waits a few days for the present to be acknowledged. One day she is coming home with her doll Joanna and she sees her sisters looking out the window at her. They tell her there is a letter from Mr. Laurence, and she is to come see it. They show her that he has given her a little cabinet piano with a letter on it. Beth is so happy that she can't believe it. The girls beg her to read the note on the piano. Jo reads it for her. It says that her pair of slippers are the nicest he has ever had and to pay his debt he has sent her something that once belonged to the granddaughter he lost. The girls discuss how nice the note is and tell Beth she must go thank him. So Beth goes over to the Laurence's house and knocks on Mr. Laurence's study door. She is unable to speak because of her happiness, but she gives him a hug and a kiss. The old gentleman is very touched. She stays there for a while, talking to him, and is not afraid of him any more. He, for his part, feels as if he has gotten his granddaughter back. Mr. Laurence walks Beth back home and when her sisters see this, "Jo began to dance a jig,...Amy nearly fell out of the window in her surprise, and Meg exclaimed, with uplifted hands, 'Well I do believe the world is coming to an end!'" Chapter 6, p.76

Topic Tracking: Poverty 4



## Chapter 7

Laurie rides past the girls on horseback and Amy wishes she had a little of the money he spent on his horse. She says she is in debt and doesn't have any money. Her sisters ask her what she means, and she says she owes some pickled limes and can't repay them. She says all the girls at school have them and trade them for things, and she has had many and hasn't repaid them. Meg gives her some money to buy them. The next day Amy comes to school with twenty-four limes. The other girls find out, and they all try to be her best friend to get some limes. Amy says to one girl who had made a mean comments about her nose before, "You needn't be so polite all of a sudden, for you won't get any." So the girl informs the schoolteacher that Amy has limes in her desk.

Mr. Davis ,the schoolteacher, doesn't allow limes in school. He promised to punish the first person who broke the rule. He tells Amy to come up to the front and bring all of the limes, and he makes her throw them out the window. He tells her to hold out her hand, and he hits it several times, then makes her stand in front of the class until recess. All of this hurts Amy's pride very much. "During the fifteen minutes that followed, the proud and sensitive girl suffered a shame and pain which she never forgot. To others it might seem a ludicrous or trivial affair, but to her it was a hard experience, for during the twelve years of her life she had been governed by love alone...." Chapter 7, pg. 81 At recess, Amy gets her things and "left the place 'forever'". She tells her family, who know how hurt she is. Her mother agrees that Amy can study at home, like Beth, but she must be serious about it. Her mother disapproves of Mr. Davis hitting Amy, but tells her that she did break the rules about the limes. Her mother says she is not sorry that the limes are gone. Her mother tells Amy that she is too proud and needs to learn to be modest. Laurie, who is in the corner playing chess with Jo, says that Amy should try to be more like Beth. Jo lets Laurie win the game.

Amy asks her mother if Laurie is a good person, and if he is conceited. Her mother says that he is not and that is why everybody likes him. Amy says, "I see. It's nice to have accomplishments and be elegant, but not to show off or get perked up." Jo says "Any more than it's proper to wear all of your bonnets and gowns and ribbons at once, that folks may know you've got them." (p.84)

Topic Tracking: Poverty 5



## Chapter 8

Meg and Jo are going out on Saturday, and Amy wants to know where they are going. She is bored and lonely because Beth is playing her piano. Amy guesses that they are going somewhere with Laurie. Meg and Jo say she is right, but tell her to stop bothering them. Amy realizes that they are going to the theater to see *Seven Castles*. She is upset when her sisters tell her she has a cold, and so must wait to go next week with Beth and Hannah. Amy says that she has been indoors so long that she can't take it anymore. Her sisters debate whether to take her or not. Jo says that she will be too fidgety. Amy gets mad and starts putting on her boots. Jo tells her it is rude to want to go when she wasn't invited, and that their seats are reserved, so Laurie will have to give up his place and get a seat somewhere else, which would spoil their fun. Amy begins to cry, and Meg tries to reason with her. The sisters prepare to leave, and Amy yells down the stairs "You'll be sorry for this, Jo March, see if you ain't." Jo slams the door and is gone.

Meg and Jo have a good time at the play, but Jo feels a little bitter. Her temper and Amy's often clashed. Jo tries to be good.

When they come home, Amy is reading in the parlor and doesn't ask any questions about the play. Beth asks, and it is described to her. Jo goes to her room and looks around, because during her last fight with Amy, Amy had dumped out one of her dresser drawers. Everything is in its place, so Jo assumes Amy has forgiven her.

The next day, though, Jo discovers that the manuscript of a book she has been writing is missing. Jo notices a change in Amy's face and asks her where it was. Amy says she doesn't have it. "'Scold me as much as you like, you'll never see your silly old book again,' cried Amy, getting excited in her turn." (p.88) Amy says that she burned the book. Jo turns pale. She says that Amy is a wicked girl and that she will never forgive her.

Beth tries to comfort Jo and Meg rescues Amy. When their mother comes home she makes Amy understand what she has done. Amy asks for Jo's forgiveness. Their mother didn't say anything else, because Jo was moody, and the best way to let her learn to control her temper is to let her come around on her own. That night, as her mother is kissing her goodnight, she advises Jo to not let the sun go down on her anger. Jo can't forgive Amy and says so. Amy can hear that she doesn't deserve to be forgiven.

The next day, because her family is a little hateful to her for not forgiving Amy, Jo goes looking for Laurie to go skating with her. Amy hears Jo get her skates and follows her and Laurie. Jo has promised that she would bring Amy with her the next time they went skating. Jo sees Amy following them, but ignores her. Laurie goes to make sure the ice can hold them before he and Jo race on it. Laurie tells Jo to keep to the shore because the ice in the middle isn't safe. Jo thinks to herself that she doesn't care if Amy heard that; she can take care of herself. Laurie skates away, and Jo skates after him, but something makes her turn around in time to see Amy fall through the ice. Laurie rushes by her, telling her to get a rail for Amy to hold on to. They get Amy out of the water and get her home quickly. Jo feels horrible about this, feeling that it would have been all her



fault if Amy died. "It's my dreadful temper! I try to cure it; I think I have, and then it breaks out worse than ever. Oh, Mother, what shall I do? What shall I do?' cried poor Jo, in despair." Chapter 8, pg. 93 Her mother says that her own temper was like Jo's, but she learned how and when to keep it back. She says that Jo can learn this, too. Jo resolves to do this. When Amy is asleep Jo goes to her. Amy wakes up as Jo gives her a hug and a kiss and forgives her.

## Chapter 9

The Kings children have measles, and Meg has been invited for a two-week visit with Annie Moffat. Her sisters help her get ready, each of them giving her best things to take. The Moffats are very fashionable, and the girls staying there spend their time shopping, riding and visiting people all day. Meg feels shabby compared to the other girls; she finds that her dresses are inappropriate.

While Meg is there, Laurie sends her flowers. The others suspect there is a romantic relationship between them. Meg overhears some of them gossiping about her and Laurie, saying that it is unfortunate that Meg doesn't have a better dress. She hears them decide to lend Meg one of their old dresses and to invite Laurie to their party that week. They also say that Meg's mother is probably planning to marry Meg to Laurie, because her daughters need to marry into money.

Meg is hurt by the gossip, but lets the other girls dress her up in the latest fashion. Dressed up, she looks prettier than the other girls, who are a little jealous. Meg socializes at the party and enjoys herself until Laurie spots her and tells her he doesn't like or approve of the way she looks. Meg says he is being rude. "I'm not Meg tonight, I'm 'a doll' who does all sorts of crazy things. Tomorrow I shall put away my 'fuss and feathers' and be desperately good again." Chapter 9, pg. 111 Laurie asks her to dance, and Meg asks Laurie to not tell her family about the way she is dressed. Then Meg goes off to dance with Ned Moffat. She drinks some champagne.

The next day she feels sick. She goes home the day after that, and tells her mother about her adventures, about the party and the gossip. Her mother is happy that Meg has learned that being rich doesn't mean happiness and that nice dresses don't make one beautiful. She is upset, though, about the gossip which says she is attempting to have her daughters marry into money. She tells Meg that she only has plans for her daughters to be pretty, accomplished, admired, respected, and chosen by good men.

Topic Tracking: Poverty 6

Topic Tracking: Poverty 7

Topic Tracking: Young Ladies 2



## Chapter 10

Spring has come, and each girl has a part of the garden that they plant themselves in accordance with their varying tastes. Their secret society, The Pickwick Club, puts out a weekly newspaper. They each publish in it under a pen name. In the newspaper they publish their poetry, stories, fables, letters, death notices of beloved pets, advertisements, and a weekly report on each sister's behavior.

At one meeting of the Pickwick Club, Jo sneaks Laurie in. The girls object to him joining at first, but they agree to it when they find out that Laurie has set up a mailbox between their yards in which they can leave messages to each other.



## Chapter 11

The Kings go on vacation for the season, and Meg does not have to tend to their children. Aunt March is gone as well, so Jo is free. The girls ask to take time off from their housework for a week, too, as an experiment. "You may try your experiment for a week and see how you like it. I think by Saturday night you will find that all play and no work is as bad as all work and no play," their Mother says. Chapter 11, pg. 127 They spend the whole week being lazy and playing. By the end of the week they are tired of it and glad the week is over.

Their mother wants to help them learn the lesson more, so she takes a vacation, too, and gives Hannah the day off. She stays in her room the whole morning and leaves her girls to take care of themselves. The girls are relieved to have a little work and decide to make breakfast for their mother. They work hard and bring it up to her, but the breakfast is horrible. After her daughters leave, their mother throws it away and laughs.

The girls decide to make dinner, and Jo invites Laurie over to eat with them. Meg is in charge of decoration, and Jo is in charge of cooking. Beth is crying over her pet canary, which died because she didn't feed it for the whole week. Jo starts cooking, gets the fire going, and goes out to buy a few groceries. She thinks she is getting a good deal on her purchases, but what she buys is old and doesn't taste good. Jo works hard cooking her things, but makes a horrible mess. Meg is with Sallie Gardiner, who came to visit, and the two of them laugh at Jo.

Their mother leaves the house, but peeps into the kitchen to see what is going on. Unexpectedly, Mrs. Crocker, an old spinster who loves to gossip, stops by and invites herself to dinner. Laurie comes as well. The dinner turns out to be a disaster; no one will eat it. The guests have a funeral for the canary before they all leave.

The girls clean up after the event. Their mother asks if they want another week off, and they all agree to go back to doing their work.



## Chapter 12

Beth gets the mail from Laurie's mailbox every day. On this particular day in the mailbox is one of Meg's missing gloves, a note of appreciation from their mother to Jo about controlling her temper, a flower for mother, and an invitation from Laurie to Camp Laurence with some English friends who are visiting him, the Vaughns. There four Vaughns: Kate is the oldest, Fred and Frank are twins about Jo's age, and Grace is nine or ten.

The girls each prepare for the adventure. Beth takes her doll Joanna to bed with her, because they will be apart. Amy sleeps with a clothespin on her nose to try to fix its shape. Jo decides to wear an old-fashioned large, broad-brimmed hat.

The March sisters, Laurie, Mr. Brooke, and the Vaughns row to Longmeadow, where the pitch tents. They spend the day eating, playing (and cheating at) croquet, telling stories, playing games like "truth," where each one asks questions which must be answered truthfully. They discuss the differences between the English and the Americans. Beth talks to Frank a little, and her sisters think this is amazing because she is afraid of boys.

Topic Tracking: Gender 4



## Chapter 13

Laurie is lazy and in a bad mood. He sees the March sisters going out carrying bundles and wants to know what they're up to. He decides they must be having a picnic and is bothered that he wasn't invited. But he decides to bring the key to the boat, as they must have forgotten it. He runs down to the boathouse to wait for them, but they don't appear. So he climbs a hill to see if he can spot where they went and finds them sitting in a grove of trees. Meg is sewing; Beth is sorting pine cones to make things out of; Amy is drawing; and Jo is knitting and reading aloud. Laurie watches for a while, then asks if he can join them. They tell him this is a meeting of the "Busy Bee Society," in which they each have to keep busy all of the time. Jo tells Laurie that he can read aloud. Laurie reads and shakes cones down from the trees for Beth. The sisters tell Laurie that have been playing *Pilgrim's Progress*, and that they were imagining that the hill they are on is the Delectable Mountain. They tell him that they each have Castles in the Air, like the characters in the book. They tell each other what their Castles in the Air are. Meg says she wants to be rich and have a large house, and a husband, too. Jo says she wants to be a famous writer and get rich from it, but she wants to do something heroic and wonderful, too. Laurie says he wants to see the world and then settle in Germany and surround himself with music. Beth says she wants to take care of the family, but that she already has her piano and that is all that she wanted. Amy wanted to be a great artist and go to Rome. Jo tells Laurie that he should aspire to be as good as Mr. Brooke, and that he should not trouble his grandfather, but rather stick by him. Laurie decides to do this. "'If we are all alive ten years hence, let's meet, and see how many of us have got our wishes, or how much nearer we are then than now,' said Jo, always ready with a plan." Chapter 13, pg. 169

Topic Tracking: Poverty 8



## Chapter 14

Jo has been busy writing and decides to submit two manuscripts to a local newspaper, called *The Spread Eagle*. Laurie spots her on her way to the publisher, but thinks she is visiting the dentist, as the dentist is nearby. When he finds out this isn't true, he wants to know what she is up to and says he has a secret he will tell, if she tells him hers.

Jo tells him that she submitted her manuscripts and will hear if they got in the next week. Laurie then tells her that he knows where Meg's missing glove is-- Mr. Brooke kept it for himself.

Both Jo and Laurie act strangely the whole week. Jo eyes Meg, because she knows the secret about Mr. Brooke, and Laurie makes jokes to Jo about *The Spread Eagle*. Laurie comes in at the end of the week with the newspaper and shows Jo that her story has been published. Her family are very proud of her.

Topic Tracking: Gender 5

Topic Tracking: Gender 6

Topic Tracking: Young Ladies 3



## Chapter 15

It is November, and the girls are depressed. The weather is getting bad; they have nothing to do. Their mother comes home and they see Laurie coming through the garden. Their mother asks if there has been any letter from father, but there hasn't. She is worried, because his letters always arrive on the same day. Laurie asks if anyone wants to go for a drive; he is tired of studying. Just then a telegram comes, saying that their father is very sick. "How still the room was as they listened breathlessly, how strangely the day darkened outside, and how suddenly the whole world seemed to change, as the girls gathered about their mother, feeling as if all the happiness and support of the lives was about to be taken from them." Chapter 15, pg. 186 Their mother decides to go the hospital in Washington where their father is. Laurie sends a return telegram informing the hospital that Mrs. March is on her way. A note is brought to Aunt March, since money for the trip must be borrowed. Their mother begins to pack. Mr. Laurence sends things to help their father. He also sends Mr. Brooke as an escort, as he cannot go himself. In the flurry of all the preparations, no one noticed that Jo has gone. She comes home later and gives her mother twenty-five dollars to help pay for the trip. Her mother asks how she got the money and Jo takes off her hat. She has cut off her hair and sold it. She pretends that it is nothing important, but that night Meg hears Jo crying. She asks if she is crying about their father, but Jo says she is crying about her hair.

Topic Tracking: Gender 7



## Chapter 16

Mrs. March leaves early in the morning; the girls wake to see her off. Their mother tells them that Hannah and Mr. Laurence will watch over them. Laurie and his grandfather come over to see off Mrs. March and Mr. Brooke. The girls decide to keep busy taking care of the house, and each does her best.

The girls often write to their mother, telling her that they are each doing their work and wish their father well. Each of the girls writes a little in the letters to their mother, as do Hannah, Laurie, and Mr. Laurence.

## Chapter 17

After a little while, the girls do not keep as busy as they do the first week. They fall back into their old ways. Beth, remembering their promise to their mother to take care of the Hummels, asks if they will take food over to them, but the others are wrapped up in what they are doing. Beth decides to go herself. "...Beth quietly put on her hood, filled her basket with odds and ends for the poor children, and went out into the chilly air with a heavy head and a grieved look in her patient eyes." Chapter 17, pg. 205.

Beth comes back late and creeps upstairs to her mother's room. Jo finds her half an hour later looking ill and standing near their mother's medicine cabinet with a bottle of camphor in her hand. Beth said that the Hummels' baby died in her arms of scarlet fever while a doctor was being called. Beth hasn't had scarlet fever yet and, having been exposed to it, is likely to get it. Jo and Meg have had it as babies, but Amy hasn't yet. Amy is sent away to Aunt March's quickly, and Hannah is called for help, as she is familiar with scarlet fever. They call the doctor, as well.

Amy is very upset about having to go to Aunt March's, and she puts up a fight. The girls decide not to trouble their mother about Beth's illness, as she is busy with their father and scarlet fever can be treated.



## Chapter 18

Beth is sicker than expected. Meg stays home from work so that she wouldn't infect the Kings. She and Jo stay close by Beth's bed. Beth is feverish and unaware of things around her. Hannah doesn't think their mother should be called, but finally Dr. Bangs says that she must be. The girls are relieved when Laurie announces that he has already telegraphed their mother and that she will be there soon.

Laurie goes to meet their mother at the train station . Meg and Jo wait for their mother, but she is late in coming because her train has been delayed by a snowstorm. Jo hears movement from Beth's bed. She sees that Beth is very still and peaceful. Jo is afraid that Beth is dead and goes to her. "As if waked by the stir, Hannah started out of her sleep, hurried to the bed, looked at Beth, felt her hands, listened at her lips, and then, throwing her apron over her head, sat down to rock to and for, exclaiming, under her breath, 'The fever's turned, she's sleepin' nat'ral, her skin's damp, and the breaths easy. Praise be given!'" Chapter 18, pg. 220 They hear their mother and Laurie coming into the house downstairs.

Topic Tracking: Poverty 9



## Chapter 19

Amy doesn't like being sent away. Aunt March makes her work around the house, and Amy takes Jo's place in attending to her Aunt. Esther, a French woman and servant of Aunt March's, is the only person who takes notice of Amy. She showed Amy the treasures which belong to Aunt March. Esther says that it would be good for Amy to pray for her sister and father each day and sets up a little closet as a chapel for Amy. "The little girl was very sincere in all this, for being left alone outside the safe home nest, she felt the need of some kind hand to hold by so sorely that she instinctively turned to the strong and tender Friend, whose fatherly love most closely surrounds his little children." Chapter 19, pg. 227 Amy begins to spend time in her chapel each day and is very obedient and well-behaved. She decides to make a will, saying what she will leave to her sisters in case that she dies. She has Laurie witness it.



## Chapter 20

The first things that Beth sees when she wakes are a budding rose and her mother's face. As Beth recovers, her mother sleeps next to her. Laurie is sent off to comfort Amy. Aunt March has given Amy a turquoise ring to reward Amy's good behavior while looking after her. Laurie, who has been up all night, is told to rest on the sofa.

When she sees her mother, Amy shows her the ring. Her mother says that it is too fancy for a girl her age. Amy asks her mother to be allowed to wear it, because it reminds her not to be selfish. She tells her mother about the little chapel she had and says she would like to set one up in her room so that she may go there every day and reflect. Her mother agrees this is a good idea.

Jo tells her mother about Meg's missing glove and that Mr. Brooke had it. She tells her mother that Mr. Brooke loves Meg. Her mother tells her that she knows, that Mr. Brooke has spoken to her and the girls' father about it and agreed that it was too early-- that he had to earn a comfortable home first. Jo says that she doesn't want Meg to fall in love and get married, but that she realizes Meg probably will.



## Chapter 21

Meg knows that Jo has a secret. The best way to find it out, she decides, is to not say anything and to wait for Jo to tell her. This doesn't happen. Laurie has already wheedled the secret about John (Mr. Brooke) out of Jo. Jo notices that a change has come over Meg and that one day a sealed note comes for Meg in the little mailbox. Meg is upset by the note and accuses Jo of writing it. It turns out that Laurie has written two notes, this one and a previous one. They were supposedly from John, revealing the whole matter of his love for Meg and his wish to marry her.

Jo runs to get Laurie while her mother finds out Meg's true feelings for John and tells her John's true feelings for her. Laurie is brought in and made to apologize. He goes home. Jo, feeling she has been hard on him, goes over to his house to see him. Laurie tells Jo he has gotten into a fight with his grandfather because Laurie refused to tell the old gentleman what sort of trouble the Marches were having. Jo speaks to Mr. Laurence, saying, "Indeed, sir, I cannot tell. Mother forbade it. Laurie has confessed, asked pardon, and been punished quite enough. We don't keep silence to shield him, but someone else, and it will make more trouble if you interfere." Chapter 21, pg. 250 She says that Laurie has been honorable and should not be punished. Mr. Laurence understands and asks Jo how he can make peace with Laurie, who has shut himself in his room. Jo suggests that he write a note to Laurie with an apology.



## Chapter 22

Beth and her father are both improving in health. Her father is still in the hospital, but he is waiting until he is strong enough to come home. It is Christmas time again, and the family spoils Beth with presents. This Christmas is so happy that they all swear it couldn't be better. Half-an-hour later they hear Laurie's voice shouting that there is one more present for the March family. Their father has come home. "Of course there was a general stampede, and for several minutes everybody seemed to lose their wits, for the strangest things were done, and no one said a word. Mr. March became invisible in the embrace of four pairs of loving arms." Chapter 22, pg. 257 Beth, who is still weak, even comes out to greet him. Mr. Brooke and Laurie leave the family to let them have time together.

Their father tells them that they have all grown, and Beth sings and plays a on her piano a song from *Pilgrim's Progress* which she put to music.

Topic Tracking: Gender 8



## Chapter 23

The family is still hovering around their father and being very kind to him while Laurie continues to tease Meg about John. Jo asks Meg what she will say if Mr. Brooke asks her to marry him. Meg says that she will say that she can't because she is too young. Mr. Brooke shows up and Jo laughs and slips out of the room. Meg is nervous and tries to leave. Mr. Brooke tells her not to go. He asks her if she cares for him. Meg can't give the calm speech she prepared. Mr. Brooke tells her he will wait, and asks her to learn to love him if she can. Meg says no.

Just then, Aunt March comes in, intending to visit Mr. March, but finds Meg and Mr. Brooke. Meg is startled, and Mr. Brooke withdraws into the study. Aunt March tells Meg that if she marries Mr. Brooke, Meg will not get any money from her. Aunt March tells Meg to marry for money. "Now Aunt March possessed in perfection the art of rousing the spirit of opposition in the gentlest people, and enjoyed doing it. The best of us have a spice of perversity in us, especially when we are young and in love." Chapter 23, pg. 268 Meg defends Mr. Brooke and herself, saying that she will marry whom she likes and that Mr. Brooke is a great man. Angry, Aunt March drives off again.

Mr. Brooke, having overheard Meg, realizes that she does care for him. He asks her again and Meg can't object. Jo comes into the room finding Meg sitting on John's lap. Mr. Brooke tells Jo to congratulate them, but Jo, a bit upset, runs upstairs to tell everybody. Much to her irritation, they are all thrilled.

Later, Laurie tries to make Jo feel better about it, telling her that she is not losing a sister, that she just has to "go halves" on Meg.

Topic Tracking: Poverty 10



## Chapter 24

After getting better, Mr. March finds a position as minister to a small parish and becomes a person to whom many people go for advice. John Brooke goes to war for a year, is wounded, and is sent home. He takes a job as a bookkeeper, as he does not want to start off married life on borrowed money.

Sallie Gardiner marries Ned Moffat and are very well off financially. Meg compares herself to them and wishes she had the same, not appreciating the work John has put into a little house for her.

Jo never works for Aunt March again. Amy made such an impression during her stay there that she became the new favorite. Of course, she was bribed by drawing lessons. Jo dedicates her time to literature and Beth. She earns one dollar a column in *The Spread Eagle*, and also has a growing manuscript in the attic.

Amy learns to use her gifts of charm to "lord" over the boys Laurie brought home from college, and they all worship her. Jo enjoyed the boys as well. She is in her element, but none of them ever fell in love with Jo.

Meg and John prepare their home for marriage with the help of the family but no help from the absurd little gag presents Laurie brings home every weekend. Laurie begins to tease Jo, saying that she will be the next to marry.

Topic Tracking: Young Ladies 4

Topic Tracking: Poverty 11



## Chapter 25

Meg and her family put together a very simple wedding, with their closest friends attending. The ceremony is to be in the garden, and Meg's dress is very plain and simple. She has made it herself. The sisters dress the bride, a feast is spread in the dining room, flowers decorate the house.

Aunt March arrives. She is horrified to see the groom nailing a garland up, and the bride running to welcome her. Meg explains that she is not for show, that she doesn't need a fancy dress or wedding. The wedding begins without a procession and their father, as a minister, marries the couple under a green arch in a simple ceremony. Afterwards there is a small lunch. Laurie asks where the bottles of wine are. He is told that they were given to the Soldier's Home, with a little kept for medicinal purposes, as their parents don't approve of serving men alcohol under their roof. Laurie says he likes that idea.

The final touch to the wedding comes from Laurie when he notices the bride and groom standing together in the middle of the lawn. He has all the married couples join hands and dance around them, and the single people dance in another circle around them, as the Germans do at weddings. After this the guests leave, Sallie Moffat tells her husband that it was the best wedding she has been to, but that she can't understand why, since it didn't have any style at all. After all is done, Meg and John walk together to their little house with the family all saying goodbye to them, even though they are not going far away.

Topic Tracking: Poverty 12



## Chapter 26

Amy struggles and works at her art. She moves from drawing to painting to charcoal and crayon. Then she begins wandering all over, looking for landscapes. "If 'genius is eternal patience,' as Michelangelo affirms, Amy had some claim to the divine attribute, for she persevered in spite of all obstacles, failures, and discouragements, firmly believing that in time she would do something worthy to be called 'high art.'" Chapter 26, pg. 302

Amy decides to invite her drawing class over for lunch to show them the land nearby that they have seen in her sketchbooks. She asks her mother, informing her that they must have a proper meal such as the other girls are used to, and that they will hire a wagon to get around. Amy says to not worry because she will pay for all of this herself. Her mother allows her, although Jo tells her that the whole thing is silly.

Preparing for the lunch does not go smoothly. The cost is more than expected, and Amy's sisters weren't able to help as they had planned. It starts to rain just before the guests are to arrive. None of the guests come, even though most of them had promised they would, so the family must to eat what is perishable of the lunch.

The next day there is still hope that they might come. There isn't anything in the house to make a decent meal, so Amy goes into town to get a lobster herself. Then she takes the carriage to meet her guests and comes back with one girl, the only one to come. The family quickly clear away the extra places so as not to embarrass Amy. But Amy has a nice time and the two girls eat and go riding together. The leftovers of the dinner are sent to the Hummels.

Topic Tracking: Poverty 13

Topic Tracking: Young Ladies 5



## Chapter 27

Every few weeks Jo writes furiously for a time and gives herself to it completely. She finds out about a contest with a prize of \$100 for a sensation story. She writes a story and secretly enters it in the contest. She waits six long weeks to hear back. Just when she thinks nothing will come of it, a letter comes, and out of it falls a check for \$100. Jo is thrilled and tells her family. Her father tells her to stop thinking about the money and aim higher with her stories. Her sisters think the money is the best part of it. Jo decides to send her mother and Beth to the seaside for a vacation. Her mother and Beth go and come back, but Beth still isn't as plump and rosy as Jo had hoped. But her mother says that she feels ten years younger, so Jo is satisfied.

Jo sets about writing to buy things for her family. She decides to do something bold, and she takes her novel and submits it to three places. One place says it will publish it if she cuts out the parts that she happened to like the most. But she decides to publish it anyway. Although she earns \$300 from the venture, she also earns a great deal of criticism, both good and bad, none of it helpful to her at all. "...When the first soreness was over, she could laugh at her poor little book, yet believe in it still, and feel herself the wiser and stronger for the buffeting she had received." Chapter 27, pg. 321

Topic Tracking: Poverty 14



## Chapter 28

Meg is determined to make her little home a paradise. She decides that nothing will need cleaning or fixing, and that she will always be cheerful. Meg goes on a cooking spree which produces both good and bad results, the bad results usually sent to the Hummels. Meg decides to make currant jam one day, wishing to have a supply of jam through the winter. She has seen Hannah make jam many times and assumes she can make it, too. She works at it all day but can't get the jelly to 'jell'. The kitchen is a mess and she is tired.

Meanwhile, John has invited a friend, Mr. Scott, home to dinner, remembering that Meg once said he could feel free to have people over any time, as she would always have the house ready for him. John and his friend come to the house and find the front door closed; John knows something is wrong. He excuses himself and goes in the back way, only to find Meg sobbing, with her apron over her head. John starts laughing, then tells her that he has brought someone home to dinner. She tells him that she has not made dinner. He tells her to just go fix something, but Meg says she will not exert herself for anyone because she is too tired. She goes upstairs. John and Mr. Scott eat by themselves. After this incident, John and Meg don't speak to each other for a while, but Meg ends it with a kiss, and all is forgiven. They later have Mr. Scott over again with an invitation, and the visit is so warm he feels the hardship of being a bachelor.

Meg, having not much to do around the house, has begun spending time with Sallie Moffat. They go shopping together, and more and more Meg finds herself giving in and purchasing unnecessary items.. One day they find a violet silk dress on sale, and, in a moment of weakness and pressure from Sallie, Meg buys it. Meg feels as guilty about owning it as she would have if the dress was stolen. It doesn't fit very well, and it doesn't look good on her at all.

That night John sits down to look over the bills, and Meg is afraid of her husband. She tells him about her overspending, admitting to him she doesn't like being poor. John is very hurt by this because he does the best he can. Nonetheless, he gives up a coat he ordered, so that they can cover the cost of the dress. Meg feels bad and asks Sallie to buy the silk. Then she gets John his coat.

Laurie comes to Meg's house one Saturday to see Meg, who has given birth. Hannah says she will "send 'em down" with a laugh, and Jo appears, putting a bundle in Laurie's arms. Laurie looks at the bundle and is surprised, for he is holding not one baby, but two. Jo laughs, thinking it funny. The twins are a boy and a girl. The boy is named John Laurence and the girl Margaret, after her mother and grandmother. The girl will be called Daisy, in order not to have two "Megs" in the house, but they don't know if they want to call the boy "Jack". Laurie suggests they call the boy Demijohn, or Demi for short. That is the name that sticks.

Topic Tracking: Poverty 15

Topic Tracking: Poverty 16



Topic Tracking: Poverty 17

Topic Tracking: Poverty 18

Topic Tracking: Poverty 19



## Chapter 29

Amy is forcing Jo to make half a dozen calls with her, as Jo promised she would do if Amy finished a drawing of Beth. Amy dresses Jo up to look proper and gives her directions on how to behave. Jo resents this, and irritates Amy by taking literally her demand that Jo be "calm and cool and quiet". At the first house, the Chesters, Jo is quiet, and when she does speak she is cold. Amy, upset about this, tells her to be sociable and to gossip a little. At the next house, the Lambs, Jo imitates a charming girl and tells wild stories about Amy, but Amy can't stop her because Mrs. Lamb has her wrapped up in conversation. Then, as soon as the conversation turns to Jo's stories, Jo imitates Amy's friend May Chester and announces that they must leave. Amy is fed up with Jo and tells her to just be herself at the next house. Amy talks to the adults while Jo ends up sitting on the lawn surrounded by boys and a dog, telling them stories about Laurie. Amy is horrified by this, as well, and glad that the ladies at the next house are busy. They then go to Aunt March's house, where Aunt March has Aunt Carrol over for a visit as well. Jo is in a bad mood while Amy is in a very friendly mood, which makes an impression on Aunt Carrol.

Topic Tracking: Young Ladies 6

Topic Tracking: Young Ladies 7

Topic Tracking: Young Ladies 8

Topic Tracking: Young Ladies 9



## Chapter 30

Mrs. Chester is having a fair. It is considered an honor to be asked to attend to a table. Amy is asked; Jo is not. Amy's talent and taste are recognized; she is made responsible for the art table. May Chester is jealous of Amy, especially since she has heard that she was made fun of by the March sisters, something that Jo should have been credited for alone. Amy is more popular than May, more boys want to dance with her, and her pen and ink work is better than May's painted vases. Amy is unaware of all of this. Mrs. Chester tells Amy that there were some feelings hurt when the art table was given to Amy and not one of her daughters. She suggests that Amy take another table, such as the flower table. Amy is a little surprised and bothered about this. May then suggests that Amy could bring the art pieces she brought to sell with her to another table. Amy takes her things and walks off, feeling insulted.

The girls at the floral table welcome her, and Amy does her best to make it look good. That night she tells her family about it. Beth thinks that Amy shouldn't go the fair at all, and Jo says that she should take all of her things away. But Amy returns the next day, and, as she is setting up, she looks at an antique book she carefully painted. There is a passage that says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Amy overhears May say to her friends that the art table is all spoiled because Amy took her things. Amy returns her things to the art table.

Amy is bored at the flower table. It is not doing very well, because the flowers have all wilted. Amy wishes she were at the art table. At home that night Jo hints that the tables are about to be turned and Amy is fearful that Jo will do something stupid.

Jo tells Laurie what has happened, and they arrange for the floral table to have more flowers. Laurie brings his friends the next day to keep a crowd around the floral table. His friends buy all the flowers they can, to help Amy out. Jo finds out that Amy put her things back on the art table and goes by to see them. She notices that none of her sister's things are there and suspects they have all been hidden away. She finds out that all of Amy's work sold right away and that May was very polite about it. Jo is happy and goes over to all of Laurie's friends, ordering them to buy at the art table. Her family is proud of how Amy handled herself. "I only did as I'd be done by. You laugh at me when I say I want to be a lady, but I mean a true gentlewoman in mind and manners, and I try to do it as far as I know how. I can't explain exactly, but I want to be above the little meannesses and follies and faults that spoil so many women," Amy says. Chapter 30, pg. 363

Aunt Carrol hears the story and said something quietly to Mrs. March that makes her glow, but Mrs. March does not reveal until later what pleased her so much.

At the end of the fair, May kisses Amy goodnight. Jo says that she respects Amy with all her heart. A week later, Amy receives a letter from Aunt Carrol saying that she is going to Europe and would like Amy to come with her. Jo is upset, thinking it is her turn, but she hasn't been invited because of her blunt manners. She feels better about it when



Beth tells her that she couldn't spare her and that she's glad that Jo isn't going just yet. Amy is excited about going to Europe because it will tell her whether she has talent or genius. The house is in a flurry until Amy leaves, and Jo is strong until Amy disappears; then she cries. Amy doesn't cry until the steamer sails.

Topic Tracking: Young Ladies 10



## Chapter 31

Amy writes from England about how beautiful the landscape is and how the boat ride was. They stopped in Liverpool for a few hours, then took a train to London. In London, she and Flo took a cab around the city, which turned out to be improper for young ladies to do alone. She tells all about the places that she visited, such as Westminster Abbey and Hyde Park.

Laurie's English friends, Fred and Frank Vaughn, who visited him long ago, come to greet Amy. They become regular company and give her the tour of London. She and the Carrols then go to Paris, and Amy spends time at the museums. Fred Vaughn shows up again, claiming to be on his way to Switzerland for a holiday. Amy is happy to have him around because he speaks French and they continue sightseeing. They go on to Germany and Switzerland next.

Amy confides to her mother in a letter that she suspects Fred likes her and intends to ask her to marry him. She says that if he asks, she will accept, because he is handsome, young, clever, and richer than the Laurences, even though his manners are not as good as Laurie's. But Fred is called back home because his brother, Frank, is ill. He has to leave immediately. Fred asks Amy to not forget him. She thinks that he would have spoken to her if he had not had to leave, and if his father was not worried about him marrying a foreign girl. Amy tells her mother not to worry, because she will be careful and not rush into anything.

Topic Tracking: Poverty 20

Topic Tracking: Young Ladies 11



## Chapter 32

Marmee is worried about Beth's spirits. Her health is getting better but she seems to be depressed. Marmee doesn't want to pry, so she speaks to Jo, who is very close to Beth. Jo says she will watch Beth and try to find out what is the matter.

One day, Beth is sewing and Laurie's voice is heard outside. Beth puts down her sewing more than once and stares off. Jo sees a tear in Beth's eye and jumps to the conclusion that Beth is in love with Laurie. She begins to watch Laurie's behavior with Beth. It is as kind and gentle as always, but it has never occurred to her that he cared more for Beth. Laurie falls in love every week at college, which amuses Jo, but he has suddenly stopped speaking of the topic at all with Jo and become more studious. Jo gets carried away thinking of this and decides she needs to distract herself somehow. She sits on the sofa to think about this. When she sits on this sofa and doesn't want anyone to bother her, she usually barricades it with a long pillow. This time she forgets, and soon Laurie sits next to her, wanting attention. Jo tells him to go away and teases him about his former loves. She tells him to find a pretty and modest girl whom he respects and to wait until he's through with college, because he's not half good enough for whoever the girl is.

Jo stays up late that night, but just as she is falling asleep she heard Beth sobbing in the next room. She asks Beth if it is the old pain again. "'No, it is a new one, but I can bear it.' And Beth tried to check her tears." Chapter 32, pg. 387 Jo asks if it would help to tell her troubles but Beth says she won't just yet. Jo believes she knows what it is. They fall asleep next to each other.

Jo confides to her mother that she thinks Beth is in love with Laurie, but that Laurie is getting too fond of Jo. Her mother had not realized that the situation was so full of romance. She and her mother both agree that Laurie is getting too attached to her and that they would not make a good couple because they are too much alike. Jo is not interested in marrying Laurie, so she proposes that she go to New York for a while to teach the children of Mrs. Kirke, a friend of her mother. Her mother agrees that this is a good idea.

Jo leaves, asking Beth to take care of Laurie for her. Laurie tells her that going away won't do her a bit of good and that his eye is on her.

Topic Tracking: Young Ladies 12



## Chapter 33

Jo writes home when she gets to Mrs. Kirke's boarding house. She has been given a little sky parlor for a room, with a table, a good view, and a lot of stairs. Mrs. Kirke has two little girls, Kittie and Minnie. There is a man named Professor Bhaer who is from Germany, and a very kind man. Jo sees him carry coal upstairs for the servant and finds him intriguing. He is poor and from Berlin and gives lessons to support himself and two orphaned nephews he is educating in the States, according to the wishes of his sister, who married an American.

Jo tells her parents that Mr. Bhaer stays in the room next door, which is separated by paned glass windows. She peeps through the door because she is curious. She sees a little girl come in carrying a book, then sit down and pretend to study. Jo stops when two students of Professor Bhaer come in.

She is finally introduced to Professor Bhaer by Mrs. Kirke's two children. Mr. Bhaer is a bachelor, and unkempt, so she begins secretly to mend his socks and clothes. Bhaer figures this out and offers to teach her German in return. For Christmas, Bhaer gives presents to everybody in the boarding house including Jo, who receives a book of Shakespeare.



## Chapter 34

Jo dreams of having the money to give Beth everything she could want or need. To earn money, Jo begins writing sensation stories. She goes to see Mr. Dashwood, publisher of the *Weekly Volcano*, and submits a story. The next week, when she returns, he says he will print it if it can be altered. Jo notices that he has crossed out all of the moral reflections. Mr. Dashwood tells her that morals don't sell because people want to be amused, not preached to. Jo agrees when she finds she can get \$25 to \$30 for each story, but she chooses to not have her name published on them. She tells Mr. Dashwood that she has more stories.

Jo felt guilty writing and publishing trashy sensation stories, and she decides to not tell her family because they wouldn't approve. She writes more stories, and she begins to go to police records and lunatic asylums and newspapers for story ideas. She gets a glimpse of a tragic world she was unfamiliar with before.

Jo and Professor Bhaer get invited to a writer's Symposium by a woman in the boarding house, Miss Norton. Here Jo first meets other writers and realizes that they are very ordinary people. A philosophical discussion begins, and Jo is transfixed by it even though she has no clue what anyone is talking about. She watches Professor Bhaer speak and decides that he is a great man because he expresses his ideas and holds his ground.

One day Bhaer comes to see Jo for her German lesson with a paper hat he has made out of a newspaper. He is unaware that it is still on his head, and Jo decides not to tell him. He asks why she is smiling, and she tells him that he has not taken off his hat. He discovers the paper hat. He unfolds it and looks at the newspaper and says that he does not approve of newspapers such as that. Jo thinks for a minute that it is the *Weekly Volcano*, but it is not. But in that moment she blushes and gives herself away. Professor Bhaer burns the newspaper and says that he would rather give young boys gunpowder to play with. Jo tries to defend herself by saying that there is a living to be made on sensation stories. "There is a demand for whisky, but I think you and I do not care to sell it. If the respectable people knew what harm they did, they would not feel that the living was honest." Chapter 34, pg. 418-9

Jo thinks what a fire her stories will make. She burns them all and wishes that she didn't have a conscience. She tries to write a moral tale, then children's stories, and fails at both. She decides that she doesn't know anything and won't write until she does. Bhaer knows she has stopped writing because she doesn't have ink on her hands anymore and she goes downstairs in the evening more often.

She stays at the boarding house until June. She says goodbye to everybody the night before she leaves, as she is leaving early in the morning. She tells the Professor to come visit her family because she thinks they would all like him very much. She invites him to come to her best friend Laurie's graduation, but the Professor, thinking that

Laurie is more than a friend, says that he cannot make it. The Professor sees her off at the station early the next morning.



## Chapter 35

Laurie studied hard at school and graduates with honor. His grandfather and the March family go to his graduation, and they are all very proud of him. Laurie has to stay for a dinner afterwards, so he asks them all to meet him at the train station even though he knows Jo is the only one that ever does.

Jo meets him, but she is a little scared when she sees him. They talk and walk home casually until suddenly Jo finds Laurie staring down at her. She tells him to stop, and not to talk, knowing what he is about to say. Laurie tells her to listen. "I've loved you ever since I've known you, Jo, couldn't help it, you've been so good to me. I've tried to show it, but you wouldn't let me; no I'm going to make you hear, and give me an answer, for I *can't* go on so any longer." Chapter 35, pg. 426 Jo has been afraid of this. Laurie tells her that he has changed himself just for her. Jo can't change her feelings and cannot make herself love him the same way. Laurie thinks that she loves the Professor and says that if she does he'll do something desperate. Jo tries to explain that she and he are not right for each other, that they would quarrel too much, that he will find another charming, beautiful lady, and that she will never marry him. Laurie runs off, angry.

Jo goes to Mr. Laurence and tells him the story. The old man is disappointed that she won't marry Laurie, but he knows that love can't be forced. When Laurie gets home, Mr. Laurence pretends that he doesn't know what has happened. Laurie begins playing depressing music on the piano, and his grandfather tells him to play something happier. Laurie does, but he stops when he hears Mrs. March calling Jo outside. Mr. Laurence can't bear it any longer and tells Laurie that Jo spoke to him. Laurie is upset about this. Mr. Laurence suggests that Laurie should go abroad for a time and that he will go with him. Laurie agrees to go.

Laurie says goodbye to all of the Marches and leaves. He tries to ignore Jo, but hugs her anyway and asks her again to marry him. She says no and feels as if she has stabbed her best friend. She knows that Laurie will never be a boy again.



## Chapter 36

Since she had been away for a while, when Jo comes home from New York, she notices a change in Beth that must have been so gradual that her family didn't see it. Beth looks thinner and weaker and empty. Once Laurie has gone, there was peace again. But the anxiety about Beth returns.

Jo takes Beth to the seashore, hoping to put color back into her face. At the seashore, Jo begins to realize that Beth is fading away. One day, Beth tells her the secret that she has been keeping. They are on some rocks together near the ocean. Jo stares at Beth's face hoping to just see a little color, thinking that Beth is asleep. Then she realizes that Beth is fading and clutches her harder. "For a minute her eyes were too dim for seeing, and, when they cleared, Beth was looking up at her so tenderly that there was hardly any need for her to say, 'Jo, dear, I'm glad you know it. I've tried to tell you, but I couldn't.'" Chapter 36, pg. 438 Beth says that she gave up hoping in the autumn, when that Jo mistakenly believed that Beth's secret was that she loved Laurie. Jo tells her this. Beth says that she thought that Jo was in love with Laurie but Jo says that she will not marry Laurie, and that Amy is the only one left for him. Beth asks Jo to tell her secret to the rest of the family, but Jo knows they will see it on Beth's face when they return home. Not giving up hope, Jo insists that Beth will be rosy again when Amy comes home in the spring.

There is no hope left, Beth insists, and her family knows this when she comes home. They know this unconsciously when they see her and they all, especially Jo, dedicate themselves to making her happy.



## Chapter 37

Laurie is walking along a road in Nice, France. A carriage comes by; in it is Amy. She spots Laurie and gets his attention. Laurie gets into her carriage and they ride and catch up on news. Laurie tells her about his grandfather, who is staying in Paris for the winter while Laurie moves around at will.

Amy notices that something is different about Laurie, but she can't put her finger on it. Laurie notices the Amy has been refined and polished by life abroad, and that she is more charming than ever. She lets Laurie read her letters from home and tells him about how her family is doing. She tells him that Beth is getting worse, but her family keeps telling her to stay, so she does.

There is a party that night in Amy's hotel, and Amy dresses nicely for it. Laurie greets her there with flowers and they dance and flirt and get reacquainted with each other.

Topic Tracking: Poverty 21



## Chapter 38

Meg has been absorbed in her children, as all young mothers tend to be. But her house is being neglected, and her husband as well. John feels as if he has no wife. He is always being told to be quiet, he will disturb the children. There doesn't seem to be anything to keep his attention, and he is lonely at home, so he begins to go to the Scotts who live nearby.

Meg feels that she is uninteresting and becoming less attractive every day. She is unhappy because she does all the work and John amuses himself. She asks her mother for advice. Her mother points out that while she may feel neglected, she is neglecting her husband. She suggests that John help with caring for the children because that is what should bring young couples together. She also suggests that Meg take an interest in what John likes and talk with him about it.

One day, therefore, Meg decides to have a social evening with her husband. She dresses up as she used to and tries to put the children to bed early. John comes home and is thrilled about having his wife back. But Demi won't go to sleep. Meg bribes him with cake and tells him she will give it to him in the morning if he falls asleep but Demi is back downstairs in a minute. John decides to take care of Demi, and once John does, Demi is scared and upset because he knows that his father won't give in. Meg is worried that John is being too hard on her son, but when she hears silence from upstairs, she peeks in and sees Demi asleep in John's arms. Meg goes back downstairs and begins to sew. John comes downstairs and sits with his wife. Meg asks John to tell her about the elections. He finds this charming, and in return he asks her about the hat she is sewing.

Meg tells him her new plan about their family and home, and John is very happy with this arrangement. Instead of him going to visit the Scotts, the Scotts come to visit them now and then.



## Chapter 39

Laurie stays in Nice for a month, spending a great deal of time with Amy and enjoying her attention. While they are together, their opinions of each other change. Laurie's opinion of Amy improves, while Amy's opinion of Laurie sinks.

One day, Amy says she is going to Valrosa to sketch. She invites Laurie to come with her. While they are there relaxing, Amy urges Laurie to return to his grandfather soon. Amy begins to sketch Laurie as they talk. She tells him that he has changed from the boy that she used to know and she's ready for his secrets, for she knows that there is something on his mind. Laurie wonders if she knows what took place between him and Jo, but he doesn't say anything, except to ask about her secret: he has heard rumors about her and Fred Vaughn. She tells him that she will say yes if Fred asks her to marry him.

Laurie asks Amy to tell him what is wrong with him. "You have grown abominably lazy, and you like gossip, and waste time on frivolous things, you are contented to be petted and admired by silly people, instead of being loved and respected by wise ones." Chapter 39, pg. 480 Amy tells Laurie that she despises him because he is lazy and that he does nothing but waste time, money, and disappoint his friends. He has been lazy and miserable and it doesn't look like he's had very much fun either. Laurie is hurt by this. Amy wishes that Jo was with them to help, and Laurie agrees in a way that Amy can guess what Laurie's problem is. Laurie explains what happened with Jo, and hopes to find comfort in Amy, but Amy tells him to take it like a man and to not throw his life away over Jo. She shows him the quick sketch she has done of him lying on the grass smoking a cigar, and then takes out another sketch she made of him years ago, back home, taming a horse. The older picture isn't as well drawn, but it has a spirit that Laurie can see, and the two sketches next to each other drive Amy's point home.

When they get home, Amy asks when she will see Laurie, but he says that he has a prior engagement. Laurie sends word soon after that he has gone to be with his grandfather in Paris.



## Chapter 40

The March family accepts that it is inevitable that Beth will soon die. They all work hard to make her as comfortable as possible. The first months are happy, but soon little things like sewing became too difficult for her. Her soul is strong, but her body is not. Beth says that she is stronger with Jo around, and Jo doesn't leave her alone after that. Beth keeps herself as happy as possible by singing and reading.

One day, Jo has fallen asleep. Beth is looking over *Pilgrim's Progress* and she finds a little paper with a poem by Jo scribbled on it. It is about Beth and all the virtues he has taught her sisters. Then a log falls off the fire and Jo wakes up. Beth tells her that she found the poem and read it, and that she is glad she did because she felt guilty about never doing anything with her life. She tells Jo that the poem assures her that she has not been useless after all.

"When morning came, for the first time in many months the fire was out, Jo's place was empty and the room was very still. But a bird sang blithely on a budding bough, close by, the snowdrops blossomed freshly at the window, and the spring sunshine streamed in like a benediction over the placid face upon the pillow-- a face so full of painless peace that those who loved it best smiled though their tears, and thanked God that Beth was well at last." Chapter 40, pg. 493.



## Chapter 41

The lecture that Amy gave Laurie did him a lot of good. Laurie returns to trying to compose symphonies and operas until he realizes that he has talent but not genius. Still, after spending the time in Europe with Amy and his music, he realizes that he is getting over Jo. He is a little angry at himself for having let go so easily. He writes her one last letter asking her if she has changed her mind, but she hasn't. So he puts her letters away and takes off the ring that she once gave him.

He wants to go back to Amy in Nice very badly, but he waits until he is invited. In the meantime, Fred Vaughn returns to Amy and asks her to marry him. But, even though Amy had expected to say 'yes' when he asked her, she turns him down because she needs something more than money and position.

Amy and her chaperones, the Carrols, decide to go to Switzerland to avoid the heat. The letter telling Amy that Beth is failing never reached her. The next one told her about Beth's death. Amy decides that since it is too late to shorten her visit in order to see Beth one last time, she will stay. She is very weighed down by Beth's death and longs to have Laurie to comfort her.

Laurie comes to see her as soon as he hears about Beth. As soon as he and Amy are together, they realize that they are meant to be together always. When Aunt Carrol sees the way Amy brightens up when Laurie arrives, she realizes that they are falling in love and invites Laurie to stay. They spend time together and, now that Laurie is no longer "Lazy Laurence," they find that they get along easily together without any quarrels. Laurie doesn't have to propose marriage to Amy. It is simply understood that they are engaged.

Topic Tracking: Poverty 22



## Chapter 42

Jo feels as if the warmth and beauty has gone from the March household after her sister's death. She is in despair, and finds comfort in having her father talk to her as if she were Beth, and in doing the things that Beth used to do around the house. These little things comfort her family, especially her father, and the two of them grow closer in mourning.

Jo begins to wonder if she too will blossom in marriage, like Meg. She has never thought about it before, but she begins to feel that she needs to do something for herself. Her mother suggests that she go back to writing because that always helped her before. Jo thinks that she doesn't have the heart for it, and that the rest of the world doesn't care for what she writes, but her mother urges her to just write a story for their family, never mind the rest of the world.

Jo tries it, and her mother soon finds her scribbling away furiously in the attic once more. Jo produces a little story that has more truth and heart in it than any of her others. She reads it to her family, who laugh and cry over it. Against her wishes, her father sends it to a magazine. When it is published, letters begin pouring in from people all over who read her story and loved it and want more like it. She writes more.

Amy writes home with the news of her engagement. Her mother admits that she had hoped that this would happen after she heard from Amy that she had turned down Fred Vaughn's proposal.

Jo is restless. She goes to the attic, where there is a trunk for each of the daughters with their childhood things inside. She opens her own trunk and begins to go through it. She finds a note written to her from Professor Bhaer. It says to wait for him because he will always come. Jo wishes that he would.



## Chapter 43

Jo is lying on the old sofa thinking, "An old maid, that's what I'm to be. A literary spinster, with a pen for a spouse, a family of stories for children, and twenty years hence a morsel of fame, perhaps..." Chapter 43, pg. 517 She falls asleep thinking this. She is woken up by Laurie's face staring straight into her own. She jumps up and greets him, asking where Amy is. Laurie says that his "wife" is at Meg's with her mother. Jo asks if they are already married and Laurie says that they are. Jo asks how it came about. Laurie tells her that Mr. Laurence wanted to come home but the Carrols decided to stay longer and wouldn't let Amy go home with the Laurences unchaperoned. So they convinced the Carrols that there was no time to write home for permission and that it would have to be so. They married quietly in the American Consulate in Paris. His grandfather decided that he didn't want to leave for a month and urged the couple to go on a honeymoon.

Laurie tells Jo that he has not stopped loving her, but that he sees things as they are and that he has learned his lesson. She is glad, but knows that they have both grown up since that time.

The whole family comes into the house. Mr. Laurence looks much better and heartier after the time abroad. Amy is polished and has a Parisian look about her. The whole family greets and kisses each other. They all look at their returned members, especially Amy. They tell her how well and beautiful she looks. Mr. and Mrs. March are pleased with the lady that their daughter has become. They all have tea, and began to catch up on three years of being apart.

Jo watches all of this alone. She doesn't know whom to lean on now. Beth is gone and both her and her other sisters are married. There is a sudden knock at the door. She opens it and discovers Mr. Bhaer. Bhaer, noticing the family gathering, is about to suggest that he has come at a bad time when Jo invites him in. She introduces him to her family, and at first they are merely kind, but as they get to know him they begin to like him.

Jo observes Bhaer. She notices how well he is dressed, with new clothes and a haircut. She thinks he is dressed as if he was going to impress a woman -- then she suddenly realizes that that is exactly what he is doing. She begins to blush and drops her yarn ball so that she can hide her face. Mr. Bhaer bends to pick up the yarn and their heads bump.

Bhaer doesn't realize that Amy and Laurie are married. He still has suspicions about Jo and Laurie, until the end of the night when all is clarified.

Jo wonders to herself why he has come, and why at this moment.

Topic Tracking: Young Ladies 13



## Chapter 44

Jo asks Laurie and Amy what they will do once they have settled. Laurie says that he is going to go into business, as he wants the satisfaction of working every day. Amy says time will show, but to herself she is resolves to have a good home and to be a good wife. The family watches the couple and concludes that they are happy.

Amy tells Laurie that she would have married him even if he hadn't had any money. She is no longer the type who desires money and position; she has changed. She sometimes wishes that Laurie didn't have any money, so that she could prove this to him.

Privately, Amy and Laurie think to each other that Jo should marry Mr. Bhaer. They wish that they could help, since he doesn't have any money. Amy is glad that she can give freely now, and the two of them agree that they will do that always.

Topic Tracking: Young Ladies 14

Topic Tracking: Poverty 23

Topic Tracking: Poverty 24



## Chapter 45

Daisy and Demi grow fast. Daisy is a very charming little girl, nicknamed "Little Beth" by Mr. March. Demi shows a philosophic bent very young, asking what made his legs go. Meg tries her hardest to govern the children with the help of her family. They love their "Aunt Dodo," who plays wild games with them, and they become acquainted with the "Bearman" or Professor Bhaer, who genuinely loves them. They were just getting know their Aunt Amy, who had been away for a while, and the memory of their Aunt Beth was fading quickly to them.



## Chapter 46

Everyone notices changes for the better in Jo's face now that Professor Bhaer is around. Jo has started to fall in love with Bhaer, but tries to stifle her feelings for him. For two weeks, the Professor comes and goes regularly to the March household. The family comes to like him. Jo's father finds in him a kindred spirit, and her mother feels that he is a very kind soul. Then, without a word, the Professor doesn't visit for three days. Jo fears that he has left without saying goodbye.

Every evening Jo takes a walk, and now and then she runs into Professor Bhaer. One evening, Jo is going out for her customary walk. Her mother tells her to bring an umbrella because it looks like rain, asks her to get a few things for her in town, and to give the Professor an invitation to tea if she runs into him.

Jo leaves, forgetting the umbrella, and wanders to the part of town where people usually congregate, a little out of the way of the shops. It starts to rain, and even though she has a new hat she forces herself to keep going in the rain as punishment for forgetting her umbrella. Without noticing at first, she finds Professor Bhaer holding an umbrella over her as she walks. He says that he will go with her on her errands because she needs an umbrella. He offers her his arm and she takes it, telling him she was afraid that he had left and that everyone has missed him. Bhaer tells her that he will leave soon, as he has no more business in the area. He has gotten a professorship at a college out west where he can make enough money to support his nephews.

Jo is a little flustered as they shop, and she buys the wrong things accidentally. Bhaer decides to buy some food for a little feast for her family that evening, as he is leaving them. He asks Jo to help him buy presents for all of the people in the boarding house as well.

On the way home, he notices that Jo is crying and he asks her why. She tells him it is because he is leaving. Professor Bhaer is happy, and he says that that is good. He knows he is in her heart. "Jo, I haf nothing but much love to gif you; I came to see if you could care for it, and I waited to be sure that I was something more than a friend. Am I? Can you make a little place in your heart for old Fritz?" he added, all in one breath." Chapter 43, pg. 558 Jo says yes and is plainly happy to spend her life beside him.

The professor confesses to Jo that he has not done this sooner because he did not know whether Laurie was a friend or more than that to Jo. Bhaer had come to visit Jo because of a poem she published anonymously about her sisters that he recognized as hers, and recognized as being lonely.

Jo tears up the poem, saying that although it was heartfelt, it was bad poetry. After all, she say, it has now served its purpose.

Bhaer is to go out west to teach and earn money for a while, and Jo agrees to wait for him until they can get married.

Topic Tracking: Poverty 25



## Chapter 47

Professor Bhaer has been away for a year working hard. He and Jo wrote letters and kept hoping. The second year didn't seem to look any better as a possibility for marriage. Just as Jo was beginning to wonder how long they would have to wait, Aunt March passed away.

The first sadness of her passing faded, and her family is in better spirits, as she left her house, Plumfield, and its grounds to Jo. Initially, the family doesn't know how Jo can support the upkeep of the house and grounds, as neither she nor Professor Bhaer have the skill or the money. But Jo proposes an idea which both she and Bhaer wish for-- to open a boys school for poor boys with no mothers, who, without a good home, would never succeed. She will admit wealthy boys as well, because even they need some help, and perhaps their families can't give it to them. The idea is settled, and she and Professor Bhaer are married and settled at Plumfield with a family of six or seven boys.

Jo soon has two boys of her own, Rob and Teddy, to add to her collection.

The estate was famous for its apple picking festivals. One such festival happens five years later. The Marches, the Laurences, the Brookes, and the Bhaers and all of their boys eat and sing together. The March sisters talk about the plans they made for themselves as girls and whether they had now come true. They tell their mother that she has raised a good crop of girls, after all. "Touched to the heart, Mrs. March could only stretch out her arms, as if to gather children and grandchildren to herself, and say, with face and voice full of motherly love, gratitude, and humility-- 'Oh, my girls, however long you may live, I never can wish you a greater happiness than this!'" Chapter 47, pg. 578

Topic Tracking: Gender 9