

Excerpt terms and conditions



This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

You may view, print and download any of our excerpts for perusal purposes.

Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

A short excerpt is not always indicative of the entire work, and we strongly suggest reading the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity.

Dramatic Publishing

LOUISA MAY ALCOTT'S

**LITTLE
WOMEN**

Adapted by
SARA SPENCER

LITTLE WOMEN

A faithful, playful adaptation with plenty of dramatic action that will appeal to young actors and audiences alike.

Drama. Adapted by Sara Spencer. From the book by Louisa May Alcott. *Cast: 2m., 10w.* Set in 1863 New England. Jo, Amy, Beth and Meg, four spirited teenaged sisters, find ways to bring life to troubled times. With their chaplain father away serving in the Civil War and their mother doing all she can to hold things together at home, the girls employ creativity and courage to help their mother while pursuing their passions—Jo’s writing, Amy’s art, Beth’s service to the poor, and Meg’s pursuit to become a proper young lady. Next-door neighbor, Theodore “Laurie” Laurence, a lonely but charming teen, can’t resist the energy and grace of these Little Women and helps them to endure one trial after another. In the end, Jo gets published, Amy gets to travel abroad, Beth overcomes a serious bout of scarlet fever and Father arrives safely home. *One set. Victorian costumes. Great roles for young women. Code: LG4.*

ISBN-10 1-58342-762-7
ISBN-13 978-1-58342-762-0



9 781583 427620 >

Little Women (Spencer)



Dramatic Publishing

311 Washington St.
Woodstock, IL 60098-330
ph: 800-448-7469

www.dramaticpublishing.com

LITTLE WOMEN

Adapted by

SARA SPENCER

(based on scenario by Robert St. Clair)

From the story by

LOUISA MAY ALCOTT



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

*** NOTICE ***

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. Current royalty rates, applications and restrictions may be found at our website www.dramaticpublishing.com, or we may be contacted by mail at: DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, 311 Washington St., Woodstock IL 60098.

COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AUTHOR'S AGENT THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES. This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including, but not limited to, the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication and reading, are reserved.

For performance of any songs, music and recordings mentioned in this play which are in copyright, the permission of the copyright owners must be obtained or other songs and recordings in the public domain substituted.

© 1940 by ANCHORAGE PRESS, INC.

Printed in the United States of America

All Rights Reserved

(LITTLE WOMEN)

ISBN: 978-1-58342-762-0

LITTLE WOMEN

By SARA SPENCER

CAST

JO }
BETH } the little women
MEG }
AMY }
MARMEE, their mother
AUNT MARCH, their wealthy aunt
MR. MARCH, their father
LAURIE, a young neighbor
HANNAH, the family servant
FIRST GIRL }
SECOND GIRL } family friends
THIRD GIRL }

SYNOPSIS

ACT ONE

SCENE 1: Two days before Christmas.

SCENE 2: Christmas Eve night.

ACT TWO

Several weeks later.

ACT THREE

Two months later.

The entire action of the play takes place in the sitting-room of the March home in Concord, Massachusetts, in the winter of 1863.

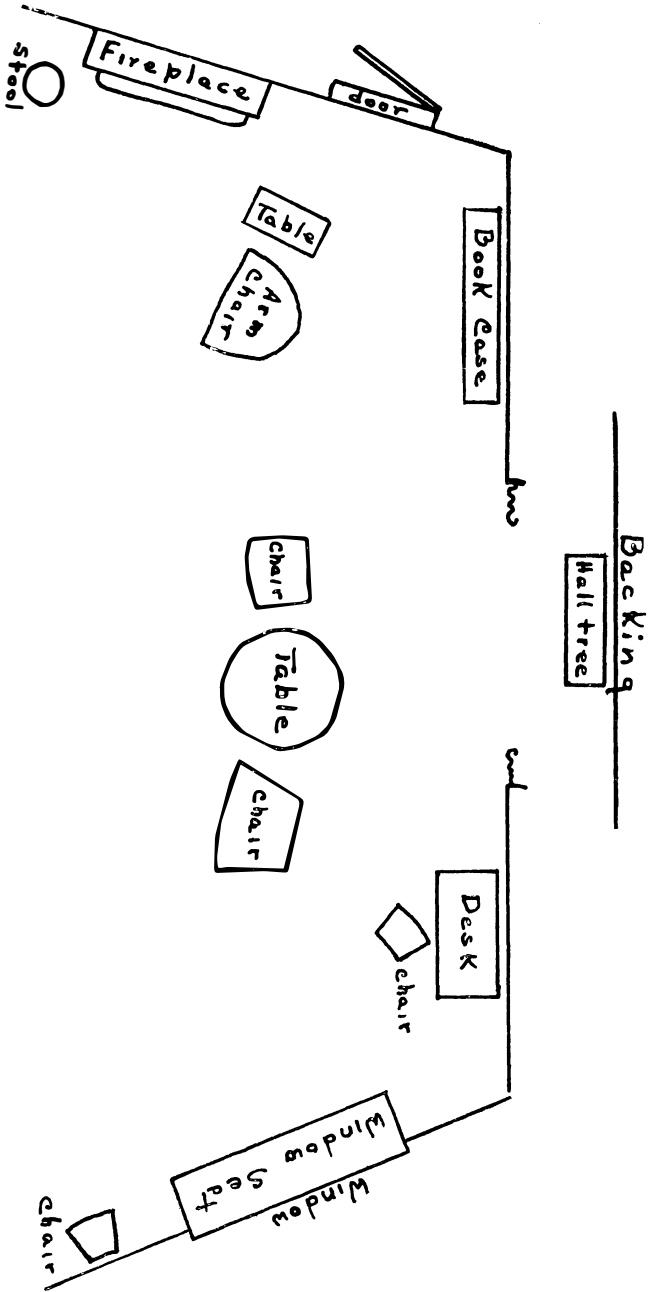
This play was given for the first time in December, 1939, by the Junior League of Charleston, West Virginia, who contributed this production to the repertoire of the Charleston Children's Theatre. The pictures and technical material used in this book are taken from this production, and are reproduced here by courtesy of the Charleston Junior League.

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of the play *must* give credit to the author(s) of the play in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and in all instances in which the title of the play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the play and/or a production. The name of the author(s) *must* also appear on a separate line, on which no other name appears, immediately following the title, and *must* appear in size of type not less than fifty percent the size of the title type. Biographical information on the author(s), if included in the playbook, may be used in all programs. *In all programs this notice must appear:*

Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY
of Woodstock, Illinois.

To the best of all 'Marmee's—*my own*



Floor Plan for "Little Women"

Little Women

Adapted by SARA SPENCER

ACT ONE

SCENE: *The sitting room of the March home in Concord, Massachusetts—a comfortable room with a pleasant atmosphere, though the carpet is faded, and the furniture quite plain. A few good pictures hang about the walls, and there is a profusion of books on the desk, and in the hanging book rack on the rear wall. A cozy fire is burning in the fireplace down right, and the big easy chair before it looks very inviting. Up right, above the fireplace, is a door leading to the kitchen. Up center back, two steps lead up to a wide archway, which opens out into the hall. Stage left is a big window with a window seat, comfortably piled with pillows, and a row of potted flowers resting on the window ledge. Center stage is a capacious round table, which is general headquarters for most of the family possessions. Right now, it contains Meg's sewing basket, Amy's school books, the*

family Bible, and a bowl of apples. On each side of it is a comfortable chair. The desk is placed against the rear wall, at left. There are incidental chairs, and other furnishings of the period, a hall tree in the hall, and perhaps a glimpse of the stairs. The time is late afternoon of December, 1863.

When the curtain rises, Jo is stretched out full-length on the rug in front of the fireplace, lying flat on her stomach, with her head facing the audience, frowning darkly over a manuscript. Beth sits on a footstool down right, below the fireplace, knitting. Amy and Meg sit on either side of the table, Amy busily making a long evergreen chain, to hang at the mantel; Meg tying a big red bow on a holly wreath, and sewing it in place. It is two days before Christmas.

JO (*suddenly scratching out two or three pages of manuscript with her pencil*): It's no use! I'm stuck. Can't write a word.

BETH: Jo! You're scratching out everything you've written today.

JO: Can't help it. It's not worth reading. If Father were here, he'd tell me to throw it in the fire.

MEG: Put it away for a while, Jo dear, and give your mind a rest. You've been working over it all day.

JO: I know it. And nothing to show for it. Oh dear! Sometimes I'm afraid I'll never learn to be a writer.

BETH: Oh, yes you will! One of these days, you'll write a great book.

And people will read it all over the world. And you'll be very famous.

MEG: And very rich!

AMY: Pre-sum-tuously rich!

JO (*laughing*): Well, I wish it would happen right this minute, then—so we could all give presents for Christmas.

AMY: So do I. Christmas won't be Christmas without any presents.

MEG: Well, Mother thinks we ought not to spend our money for pleasure, when our men are suffering so in the army.

JO (*sits upright, crossing her legs beneath her*): Christopher Columbus, Meg! The little money we have wouldn't do the army any good. We've only got a dollar each, and the army wouldn't even notice if we gave that. I agree not to expect a present from Marmee or you girls, but I would like to buy "Undine and Sintram" for myself. I've wanted it so long, and I'm such a bookworm.

BETH (*softly*): I planned to spend mine on new music.

AMY (*decidedly*): I shall get a nice box of drawing pencils. I really need them.

JO (*draws her knees up under her chin, puts her arms around them, boyishly*): Let's each buy what we want, and have a little fun! I'm sure we've worked hard enough to earn it.

MEG: I know I do, teaching those tiresome children all day, when I'm longing to enjoy myself at home.

JO: You don't have half such a time as I do, with Aunt March. How would you like to be shut up for hours with a nervous, fussy old lady,

who keeps you trotting all day, and worries you till you're ready to fly out the window? (*rises, fuming*).

BETH: It's naughty to fret, but I do think washing dishes and keeping things tidy is the worst work in the world!

AMY: I don't believe any of you suffer as I do, for you don't have to go to school with impertinent girls who laugh at your dresses, and—label your father if he isn't rich.

JO (*laughs gaily, and leans one arm on the mantel*): If you mean libel, Amy, I'd say so, and not talk about labels, as if Papa were a pickle bottle.

(*They all laugh but Amy.*)

AMY (*draws herself up, speaking with dignity*): I know what I mean, and you needn't be so—so statistical about it, Jo March. It's proper to use good words, and improve your vocabillary. (*Jo laughs at her, shrugs her shoulders, and strides toward the window-seat, whistling like a boy.*) Don't whistle, Jo. It's so boyish.

JO: That's why I do it.

AMY: I detest rude, unlady-like girls.

JO: And I hate affected, niminy-piminy chits!

MEG: There, I've finished my wreath. You may hang it, Jo, while I light the lamps.

JO (*taking the wreath to hang it at the window*): See? What would you do without a boy in the family to hang the greens?

AMY (*haughtily*): I can hang my own, thank you.

(*She takes her evergreen chain to the fireplace, and drapes it very artistically in festoons over the mantelpiece, standing back from it occasionally, to view the effect.*)

MEG (*as she lights the lamps*): Really, Jo, you are old enough to leave off your boyish tricks, and behave better. It didn't matter so much when you were a little girl, but now you are so tall, and turn up your hair, you should remember that you are a young lady.

JO: I'm not a young lady! And if turning up my hair makes me one, I'll wear it in two tails until I'm twenty! (*She works at the wreath with unnecessary violence.*) It's bad enough to be a girl anyway, when I like boys' games and work and manners. It's worse than ever now, for I'm dying to go to the war and fight with Papa, and I can only stay home and knit, like a poky old woman! There, is that straight, Meg?

MEG: Jo, look at Amy's mantelpiece!

JO (*smitten with admiration*): Well, Christopher Columbus!

BETH: Amy, it's lovely!

MEG: You've really made it look like Christmas, dear.

JO: Amy, I take back anything I said about you. It's a great comfort to know that we have an artist in the family—even if we don't have a writer.

AMY: Don't tease me, Jo. I really wanted some silver bells, but we didn't have any, so I used pine cones instead.

(The clock on the mantelpiece strikes six.)

MEG: Six o'clock!

BETH *(winds up her knitting)*: Marmee will be coming home!

MEG: We must warm her slippers.

JO *(fishing the slippers out from under the window-seat)*: I'll get them.

BETH: That's what Marmee needs—a new pair of slippers. I'll get them for her with my dollar.

AMY: No, I shall!

MEG: Now Amy, I'm the oldest, and—

JO *(interrupts firmly, as she brings the slippers to the hearth)*: I'm the man of this family, now that Papa is away, and I shall provide the slippers, for he told me to take special care of Marmee while he was gone.

BETH: I'll tell you what let's do! Let's each get her something for Christmas, and not get anything for ourselves!

JO: That's like you, dear. What shall we get?

MEG *(as they all look thoughtful)*: I shall get her a nice pair of gloves.

JO *(firmly)*: Slippers, best to be had!

BETH: Some handkerchiefs, all hemmed.

AMY: I'll get her a little bottle of Cologne. She likes it, and it won't cost much, so I'll have some left to buy my pencils.

JO: We won't have much time to shop, Meg. There is so much to do about the play tomorrow night.

AMY *(in a tone of exasperation)*: That play!

MEG: Now listen, Jo. I don't mean to act any more, after this time. I'm getting too old for such things.

BETH *(protesting)*: Oh, Meg!

JO: Oh, you can't stop, Meg. You're the best actress we've got, and there'll be an end of everything, if you quit the boards. *(She snaps her fingers, as she looks around.)* We ought to rehearse now, while we're waiting for Marmee. Come here, Amy, and do the fainting scene, for you're as stiff as a poker in that.

AMY: I can't help it, Jo. I never saw anyone faint, and I don't choose to make myself all black and blue, tumbling down flat, as you do. If I can go down easily, I'll drop. If I can't, I shall fall into a chair and be graceful. I don't care if Hugo does come at me with a pistol.

JO: Well, do it this way. Clasp your hands in front of you—so. And then stagger across the room, crying frantically—*(She becomes very dramatic)*—"Roderigo! Roderigo! Save me! Save me!"

(She utters a wild scream, and falls down in a heap on the floor. Meg applauds.)

BETH: Oh Jo, you're marvelous!

JO *(jumping up and brushing herself off)*: Now come on, Amy. You do it!

AMY (*looking like a martyr*): Oh, dear! (*She sticks her hands out stiffly before her, and lopes across to a chair, giving a feeble imitation of Jo's performance.*) Roderigo! Roderigo! Save me, save me!

JO: Scream, Amy! Scream!

AMY: Owwww!

(*She drops daintily down into the chair. Meg and Beth laugh.*)

MEG (*between bursts of laughter*): She jerked herself along, as if she went by machinery.

JO (*despairingly*): It's no use. Do your best, when the time comes, and if the audience laughs, don't blame me.

(*Amy takes off her pinafore, and primps a little.*)

BETH: I don't see how you can act so splendidly, Jo. And to think you wrote the play, too! I believe you're a regular Shakespeare!

JO (*modestly*): Not quite, Beth. Of course, "The Witches' Curse" is a nice piece of work, but I'd like to do Macbeth. I've always wanted to do the killing part. (*She suddenly seizes the toasting fork from the fireplace.*) Is this a dagger I see before me?

(*With melodramatic seriousness, she plunges it downward, and brings up one of Marmee's slippers on the prong.*)

MEG (*laughing*): No, it's the toasting fork, with Mother's shoe on it, instead of the toast!

(*They are all laughing gaily, as Mrs. March enters from outside, wearing her bonnet and wraps.*)

MARMEE: I'm glad to find you so merry, my girls.

BETH: Marmee!

(*They all rush toward her, surrounding her as she comes down removing her gloves.*)

MARMEE: Well, dearies, how have you got on today? Meg dear, I noticed your holly wreath as I came in. It looked very pretty at the window.

MEG: Thank you, Marmee. Look what Amy did.

MARMEE: Amy, did you do that? How perfectly splendid! I didn't know we had such a clever little artist. Come and kiss me, baby.

(*Jo takes Marmee's bonnet, and puts it on the hall tree. Meg takes her gloves and wrap. Amy kisses her, and leads her to the armchair before the fire.*)

BETH: Do sit down and rest your tired feet, Marmee. I'll help you with your slippers.

(*She kneels in front of Mrs. March, and takes off her shoes. During the lines that follow, she puts on her mother's slippers.*)

MEG: We need some more wood.

JO (*going toward the kitchen*): I'll fetch it. (*Exit.*)

AMY (*sitting on the arm of Marmee's chair*): Oh Marmee, dear, it's so good to have you home.

MARMEE (*stroking her hair*): It's good to be home, darling. But then,

it's good to be helping the poor soldiers, too. By the way, girls, I've a nice surprise for you.

(She brings an opened letter out of her reticule.)

BETH *(joyously)*: A letter! A letter!

MEG: From Father!

AMY: Oh, how nice!

BETH: What does he say? Is he well?

MARMEE *(smiling as she opens the letter)*: Yes, darling. He sends all sorts of loving wishes for Christmas, and here is a special message to you girls. I haven't read it yet.

(Jo enters from the kitchen, with an armload of wood.)

AMY: Jo! A letter—from Father!

JO: Well, Christopher Columbus!

AMY *(reprovingly)*: Jo!

BETH *(as the girls all crowd around the armchair)*: Read it, Mother. Read it.

MARMEE *(glancing through the pages)*: It's a cheerful, hopeful letter, full of lively descriptions of camp life—

AMY: It must be very disagreeable to sleep in a tent, and have to drink out of a canteen.

JO: Canton!

(They all laugh at Amy's mistake.)

MARMEE: Here's his message to you. "And now for my four little girls. Give them all my dear love, and a kiss. Help them to outgrow their little faults and shortcomings, and teach them your bravery and kindness and your human wisdom, so that they may grow up to be as much as possible like their mother. I can wish them nothing better than this, for their mother is the loveliest little woman in all the world."

(Marmee smiles at this, but the girls are taking it very seriously.)

"I know my girls are growing up, and the greatest happiness I can hope for, when I come home, is to find them grown up into four gracious, lovely—little women."

(She sighs, smiles, and lowers the letter to her lap. The girls are all subdued, looking as if they could cry. Beth takes Father's letter and kisses it.)

AMY *(puts her head on Marmee's shoulder, sobbing)*: I am a selfish girl, but I'll truly try to be better, so he mayn't be disappointed in me by and by.

MARMEE *(patting her)*: That's my Amy.

MEG: I think too much of my looks. But I won't any more, if I can help it.

JO: I hate having been born a girl, but I'll stop hating it, that's what I'll do! Oh Marmee, I think if I could just be like you, I might almost enjoy being a little woman.

MARMEE: You're dears, all of you. And Father is going to be very proud of you. And now, I want to say a word to you about Christmas.

(The girls exchange uneasy glances. Beth gets hastily to her feet. Amy surreptitiously claps a hand over her mouth.)

You know about the Hummel family, who have just moved into that little shack across the back fence. *(The girls are greatly relieved.)* She is a poor woman with a little new-born baby, and six other children. I stopped in there tonight, and found them suffering from the cold and lack of food. My girls, will you give them your breakfast as a Christmas present?

BETH: Of course, Marmee! I'll help carry it over to them.

AMY *(heroically)*: I'll take the porridge and cream.

MEG: I'll take the buckwheats and syrup.

MARMEE *(proudly)*: I knew my girls would be cheerful about it. We'll make it up at dinner time.

JO: And at night, we'll have the play.

MARMEE: Yes, and at night we'll have the play. *(She starts toward the kitchen door.)* Perhaps we can induce Aunt March to come over and be a part of the audience. *(She opens the kitchen door, and calls offstage.)* Oh Hannah, I'm home! *(She goes out to the kitchen.)*

JO *(to the girls, making a rueful grimace)*: Aunt March!

MEG: She won't come, of course.

AMY: Well, I hope not. She'd just say it was nonsense.

BETH: Maybe she'd like it.

(A door-bell rings offstage.)

JO *(calls loudly off toward the kitchen door)*: I'll answer it, Hannah.

AMY: I do so like porridge and cream. I suppose I'll have to be a satyr, and give them up.

BETH: You mean martyr, don't you, Amy?

VOICE *(offstage)*: Good evening, Miss March. Here's a note for you.

(Amy raises her eyebrows, and runs up center to peep out into the hall.)

JO *(offstage)*: Thank you.

VOICE *(offstage)*: I hope you have a merry Christmas.

JO *(offstage)*: The same to you, and many of them.

(She re-enters the room, peering closely at the note. Amy follows at her elbow.)

MEG: Who's it for, Jo?

JO: The Misses March.

AMY: That's us!

(Jo opens a note, and gives it a glance.)

JO: Christopher Columbus!

MEG: What is it?

JO *(excitedly)*: It's a regular note of invitation—to a dance!

MEG: A dance?

(Amy claps with pleasure, and throws her arms around Beth.)

JO *(reading)*: "Miss Gardiner would be happy to see Miss Margaret and Miss Josephine at a little dance on New Year's Eve."

AMY (*dejected*): Only you two?

MEG: We're the oldest, darling.

AMY: Humph!

JO: And listen! "Mr. Theodore Laurence will call for them!"

MEG (*rushing to look at the note for herself*): Jo!

AMY: You mean those stuck-up Laurences in that big house next door?

BETH: I wouldn't call them stuck-up, Amy.

MEG: Well, they're certainly not very neighborly, Beth. As long as we've been here, living right next door, we haven't even a bowing acquaintance with the old gentleman.

AMY: I'd sooner bow to a lion! One of the girls at school says old Mr. Laurence is too proud for the town, and doesn't like to mix with his neighbors. And he keeps his grandson shut up in that big house all the time, and makes him study with his tutor. And nobody's gotten acquainted with him.

JO: Well—apparently we're going to get acquainted with him. I'm glad! Whenever I see him, he always looks as if he wanted to speak. I don't think he's stuck-up. I think he's only a little bashful.

BETH: Isn't it exciting to think that you two will be the first to meet him!

AMY: Are you sure Marmee will let you go?

MEG: Of course she will—to Mrs. Gardiner's. Now what shall we wear?

JO (*eating an apple*): What's the use of asking that, when you know we shall wear our poplins, because we haven't got anything else.

MEG (*sighing*): If I only had a silk!

JO: Oh, our pops look like silk. Yours is as good as new, but mine—oh dear! It's got a burn right in the seat! Whatever shall I do?

MEG: Burn?

JO: Yes. I scorched it, standing with my back to the fire. It shows dreadfully.

AMY: That's what you get for having such mannish habits. Standing with your back to the fire!

MEG: Oh dear, Jo. I guess you'll just have to stay still, and keep your back out of sight. Your front is all right, isn't it? How about your gloves?

JO: My gloves are spoilt with lemonade, so I shall have to go without.

(*Amy throws up both hands in despair at her incorrigible sister.*)

MEG (*horrified*): Oh, you must have gloves, or I won't go! I should be so mortified! Can't you make them do?

JO: No. I tell you how we can manage. Each carry one bad one, and wear a good one.

MEG: Your hands are bigger than mine, and you'll stretch my glove.

JO (*indifferently*): Then I shall go without. I don't care what people say.

MEG: Oh Jo, you may have it, you may. Only don't stain it, and do behave nicely. Don't put your hands behind you, or say "Christopher Columbus." And Jo, don't call things "plummy" will you, Jo?

JO (*with an elaborate show of priggish, formal manners*): Don't worry

about me. I'll be as prim as I can be. And I'll have a perfectly plummy time! (*Amy is horrified.*)

MEG: Oh, Jo!

JO (*laughing at them*): Come on, let's go tell Marmee.

BETH: Yes, let's do!

(*They are on their way to the kitchen, when the door-bell rings.*)

JO: You all go ahead. I'll be there as soon as I've answered the door.

MEG (*to Amy and Beth as they go out toward kitchen*): I'll use my real lace frill, and my high-heeled slippers.

AMY: How will you ever be able to dance in those slippers?

(*They close the kitchen door behind them. Jo has gone out into the hall to answer the door, and has admitted a visitor.*)

LAURIE (*offstage*): Good evening. It's Miss March isn't it?

JO (*offstage*): Yes. Miss Josephine March.

LAURIE (*offstage*): I'm Teddy Laurence, your next-door neighbor.

JO (*offstage, very self-conscious*): How do you do? Ah—won't you come in? ·

LAURIE (*offstage*): Thank you.

(*Jo flies into the room, and gives a quick look-around.*)

JO: Christopher Columbus! (*She grabs Amy's pinafore, and jams it under a cushion, out of sight. Then as Laurie appears in the doorway, she faces him, and pretends to be at ease.*) Do come in. Ah—won't you take off your coat?

LAURIE (*taking his coat off*): I thought we really ought to get acquainted, since I'm to have the pleasure of taking you to the Gardiner's dance.

JO (*embarrassed*): Yes. It's very kind of you.

LAURIE: And anyway, I've been wanting to meet you all for some time.

JO (*thunderstruck*): Really?

LAURIE: Really.

JO: We've been wanting to meet you.

LAURIE: Do you mean that?

JO: Cross my heart. (*Both laugh. The ice is broken.*) Now we're all met, aren't we? Won't you sit down? Beth said you wouldn't bite us.

LAURIE: Is Beth the rosy one, who stays at home a good deal, and sometimes goes out with a little basket?

JO: Yes, that's Beth. She's my girl, and a regular good one she is, too.

LAURIE: The pretty one is Meg.

JO: Right.

LAURIE: And the curly-haired one is Amy, isn't it?

JO: How did you find all that out?

LAURIE: Oh, I know a lot about you all. You seem to live such a jolly life that—please don't think me rude—but sometimes you forget to pull the curtain at that window, and I love to look over here and watch you. I haven't got any family of my own, you know—only Grandfather.

JO (*touched*): We'll never draw that curtain any more, and I give you leave to look as much as you like. I just wish, though, instead of peeping, you'd come over and see us. Wouldn't your grandfather let you?

LAURIE: I think he would, if your mother asked him. He's very kind, though he doesn't look so. He lets me do what I like pretty much—only he's afraid I might be a bother to strangers.

JO: We're not strangers. We're neighbors, and we want to know you better. Tell you what. We're giving our Christmas play tomorrow night. Maybe you could come over to see it.

LAURIE: I'd like to. What's it about?

JO: Oh, it's very exciting. I wrote it myself.

LAURIE: Now I've got to see it! What do you call it?

JO: "The Witches' Curse", An Operatic Tragedy!

LAURIE: How wonderful! May I come?

JO: If you promise not to laugh.

LAURIE: Cross my heart and hope to die. I didn't realize you were an author.

JO: Oh yes! This is the second play I've written. And—shall I tell you a secret?

LAURIE: Please do.

JO: I'm working on a story!

LAURIE: You mean—to be published?

JO: Yes! Do you think I'm crazy?

LAURIE: No. I think you're great.

JO: I mean to be a writer—a good writer. But I haven't had anything published yet.

LAURIE: If you keep at it, you might. Even Shakespeare didn't find a publisher at first, Miss March.

JO: Don't call me Miss March, Mr. Laurence. I'm only Jo.

LAURIE: Well, I'm not Mr. Laurence. I'm only Laurie.

JO: Laurie Laurence?

LAURIE: Well, my real name is Theodore, but I don't like it, because the fellows called me Dora. So I made them say Laurie or Teddy instead.

JO: I hate my name, too—Josyphine. So sentimental! How did you make the boys stop calling you Dora?

LAURIE: I thrashed 'em.

JO (*thinking it over*): Oh! . . . Well, I can't thrash Aunt March, so I guess I shall just have to let her go on calling me Josyphine!

(*She indicates an old woman calling the name. They laugh.*)

MARMEE (*calling offstage*): Oh, Jo dear!

JO: That's Mother. She'll want to meet you. Let me bring her in.

LAURIE: I'm sorry, but I have to get back. I can meet her tomorrow night, can't I, when I come to the play?

(*He retrieves his coat.*)

JO: Of course. And bring your grandfather too. I'm so glad you came.

LAURIE: So am I. Good night—Jo.

JO: Good night—Laurie.

(Jo watches him till the outside door is heard to bang, then she lets out a long-drawn-out whistle, whirls around, and races for the kitchen door, shouting wildly:)

Marmee! Amy, Beth, everybody! Look—we've met the Laurences!

CURTAIN