

Louisa May Alcott

LITTLE WOMEN

Retold for easy reading

Для учнів середнього
та старшого шкільного віку



ТЕРНОПІЛЬ
НАВЧАЛЬНА КНИГА – БОГДАН

ББК 81.43.21я721
А56

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А56 Little Women. *Retold for easy reading*/Упорядник Г.Д.Сидорко. –
Тернопіль: Навчальна книга – Богдан, 2003. – 132 с.

ISBN 966-692-186-3

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ББК 81.43.21я721

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макет, художнє оформлення, 2003

ISBN 966-692-186-3

Навчальне видання

Упорядник Сидорко Ганна Дмитрівна

Little Women.

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Підписано до друку 14.03.2003. Формат 60х84/16. Папір друкарський.
Гарнітура Garamond. Умовн. друк. арк. 7,67. Умовн. фарбо-відб. 7,67.

Видавництво «Навчальна книга – Богдан»
Свідоцтво про внесення до Державного реєстру видавців
ДК №370 від 21.03.2001 р.

46008, м.Тернопіль, вул. Танцорова, 14. А/с 529.
тел./факс (0352) 43-00-46; 25-18-09; 25-37-53
E-mail: publishing@budny.te.ua
www.bohdan-books.com

Playing Pilgrims

Christmas won't be Christmas without any presents, grumbled Jo, lying on the rug.

"It's so dreadful to be poor!" sighed Meg, "looking down at her old dress".

"I don't think it's fair for some girls to have lots of pretty things, and other girls nothing at all, added little Amy."

"We've got Father and Mother and each other", said Beth from her corner.

Then Jo said sadly: "We haven't got Father, and shall not have him for a long time". And the girls thought of Father far away, where the fighting was.

Nobody spoke for a minute; then Meg said: "Mother thinks we ought not to spend money for pleasure when our men are suffering in the army. Each girl had a dollar and each wanted to buy something for Christmas. Jo was a regular bookworm and she wanted to buy a book. Beth planned to spend hers in new music, and Amy needed a box of pencils." "Let's each buy what we want, and have a little fun. I'm sure we work hard enough to earn it", cried Jo. Meg began that it was not easy to teach those dreadful children and she was longing to enjoy herself at home. "You don't have half such a hard time as I do", said Jo. "How would you like to be shut up for hours with a nervous, fussy, old lady, who keeps you trotting, is never satisfied, and worries you till you're ready to fly out of the window or box her ears". Beth said that washing dishes and keeping things tidy was the worst work in the world. And she looked at her red, rough hands with a sigh.

"I don't believe any of you suffer as I do", cried Amy, "for you don't have to go to school with impertinent girls, who plague you when you don't know your lessons, and laugh at your dresses, and label your father

“He isn’t old, not anything bad, but good and kind, and the best friend I’ve got, next to you. So we’ll be good friends all our lives.”

“Yes, we will, if we get the chance”, muttered Laurie. Jo said she would never marry him and it would be better for both of them. Laurie was not one of the weak sort who are conquered by a single failure. He flung his hat and coat into his boat, and rowed away with all his might.

Jo went slowly home, feeling as if she had murdered some innocent thing.

“Now I must go and prepare Mr. Laurence to be very kind to my poor boy”, she thought and she told her story bravely but then broke down crying bitterly that the kind old gentleman, though disappointed, knew even better than Jo that love cannot be forced; so he shook his head sadly and resolved to carry his boy out of harm’s way.

When Laurie came home, dead tired, but quite composed, his grandfather met him as if he knew nothing. But when they sat together in the twilight, it was hard work for the old man to ramble on as usual and he said as gently as a woman, “I knew my boy, I knew”. Laurie asked, sharply, “Who told you?” “Jo, herself. Take it as a man. Why not go abroad, as you planned, and forget it?”

“I can’t.”

Mr. Laurence said, “There’s business in London that needs looking after. I meant you should attend to it. I will go, too. My partners do almost everything; I’m merely holding on till, you take my place. We can be off at any time.” Now, Laurie felt that his heart was entirely broken and the world a howling wilderness; but the broken heart gave an unexpected leap, and a green oasis or two suddenly appeared in the howling wilderness.

“Just as you like, sir”, he said quietly.

“It doesn’t matter where I go or what I do.”

When Jo came home that spring, she had been struck with the change in Beth. Jo decided to take Beth to the seashore, where they could live much in the fresh air.

66. Everything looked ... in the dark cave.
a) weird
b) odd
67. The old man was always ... against his ideas.
a) murmur
b) mumble
68. Let's go to the information desk and ... about the train.
a) interrogate
b) inquire
69. Little children are often very ...
a) curious
b) odd
70. The ship was in
a) distress
b) affliction
71. He was a ... of circumstances.
a) sacrifice
b) victim
72. I don't want to see that ...
a) benefactor
b) well-wisher
73. She felt a great relief after their ... talk.
a) trustworthy
b) confidential
74. We ... violently against his departure.
a) oppose
b) object
75. The road ... up the hill.
a) wind
b) twist
76. Hearing his voice she
a) glow
b) blush
77. It was a ... action
a) mean
b) low
78. Many young people ... pop singers.
a) praise
b) idolize
79. His speech bristled with ...
a) ridicule
b) wit
80. Did you read the book "Jude, the ..."?
a) humble
b) obscure
81. It was a ... deceit.
a) mere
b) simple
82. Are you in ... ?
a) serious
b) earnest
83. He was not so ... to stand his ground.
a) decisive
b) determined
84. This medicine won't do you any ...
a) harm
b) injure
85. He is a very ... person.
a) alert
b) vigorous
86. You should not ... her whims.
a) please
b) gratify
87. At last they have achieved their ...
a) goal
b) aim
88. Don't ... her so much.
a) praise
b) laud

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