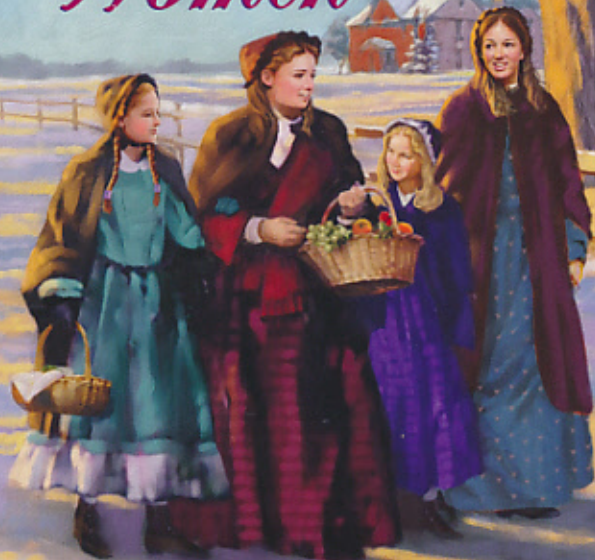


STEPPING STONES™
a chapter book

CLASSIC

Little Women



by Louisa May Alcott
adapted by Monica Kulling

Chapter One

A Merry Christmas

The four March sisters sat in the living room. A fire crackled in the fireplace. It was the day before Christmas, but the girls weren't very happy.

"Christmas won't be Christmas without presents," said Jo. She was lying on the rug.

"It's awful to be poor," said Meg, sighing. She was the oldest. She looked at her shabby dress as she spoke.

"And it's not fair!" exclaimed Amy. She was the youngest. "Some girls have lots of pretty things. And other girls have nothing at all."

"We've got Father and Mother and one another," said Beth. Beth was the shy one. She always looked on the bright side of things.

"We haven't got Father," said Jo sadly. "And we might not have him for a very long time."

The girls were suddenly silent. Light from the fire shone on their faces. They were thinking of Father. He was fighting in a war far away. He wouldn't be home for Christmas. And there wouldn't be Christmas presents because there was no money.

"We each have a dollar!" exclaimed Jo. "We could at least buy something for ourselves." Jo loved to read and wanted to buy a new book.

"I'll spend my dollar on music," said Beth.

"I'll spend mine on drawing pencils," said Amy. She was always drawing.

Meg didn't say a word. She wanted so many pretty things that she didn't know where to begin.

Beth put Marmee's slippers in front of the fire to warm them. The girls' mother would soon be home. This thought cheered them up.

"Marmee needs a new pair," said Beth. She looked at her mother's worn slippers.

"I'm the man of the family now that Papa's gone," said Jo. She was the second-oldest and a tomboy. "It's my job to take care of Marmee. I'll buy the slippers."

"I'll tell you what," said Beth. "Let's each get Mother something for Christmas and not get anything for ourselves."

The girls were excited as they planned what to get their mother. After deciding on the presents, they worked on the Christmas night play.

Every Christmas Jo wrote a play. The girls put on the play for family and

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This is the classic story of four very different sisters. Meg loves beautiful things. Beth is shy and thoughtful. Amy, the youngest, can't wait to grow up. And tomboy Jo's sense of humor and high spirits often get her into trouble. The family doesn't have much money, but the sisters' lives are full of fun and dreams. Share the joys and sorrows of these four unforgettable girls as they learn how to be little women.

