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Little Women

18 Chapters

Day 1-18

W31-W36

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 1: Four Sisters at Christmas

Christmas was coming, but the four March sisters sat by the fire with long faces. "Christmas won't be Christmas without any presents," grumbled Jo, lying on the rug. Their father was far away serving as a chaplain in the army, and money was tight since the family had lost most of its fortune. Meg, the eldest, was sixteen and pretty, and she remembered the days when they had worn fine dresses. Jo, fifteen, was tall and awkward, and she loved books and writing more than anything. Beth, thirteen, was shy and rosy, and she played the old piano in the corner. Amy, the youngest, was twelve and she drew pictures all day. Their mother, whom they called Marmee, came home from her work and gave them each a warm hug. She reminded them that they had each other, and that many families had even less. The girls decided to buy small gifts for her instead of for themselves. Each sister had a different dream, and the challenge was to share them without quarrels. The consequence of their talk was a plan: they would act a play for Christmas night. This was a significant way to bring cheer to the house. Jo wanted to determine who would play which part. The fire crackled, and the snow fell softly against the windows. Marmee's old armchair stood empty beside the hearth, waiting for her return. ★ **Four sisters had very different dreams.** Meg dreamed of wealth, Jo of fame, Beth of peace, and Amy of art.

THINK Who is the eldest March sister?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 2: Marmee's Gift

On Christmas morning, each girl found a little book beneath her pillow, a gift from Marmee. They read a few pages together, as they had promised to do. Then Marmee came in with a serious look. She told them about a poor German family, the Hummels, who lived nearby. The mother had six small children, and they had no fire and no breakfast on that bitter day. "Will you give them your breakfast for a Christmas gift?" she asked. The girls looked at their hot muffins, buckwheat cakes, and cream, and hesitated for a moment, because they were hungry. Then Jo said, "I'm so glad you came before we began!" and Beth added, "May I help carry the things?" They wrapped the food and walked through the snow to the cold little house. The poor children stared in wonder as the sisters lit a fire, mended the broken window, and set a hot meal on the table. Meg and Jo fed the smallest ones while Amy and Beth stood by. It was a simple deed, but the consequence was joy for everyone. They had learned a significant lesson. The challenge of sharing is real, but it brings happiness. The sisters did not investigate why it felt so good; they simply knew. That morning established a habit of giving. They determined to do it again. Hannah, the faithful old servant, watched from the kitchen door and wiped her eyes with her apron. ★ **Four sisters had very different hopes and dreams.**

THINK Who were the Hummels?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 3: The Pilgrims' Game

Christmas night came, and the whole family gathered in the little house. Jo and Meg had written a play, and Amy had painted the curtains. The girls acted out a dramatic story with a castle, a witch, and a brave hero, and the audience laughed and clapped. Afterward there was a surprise: their neighbor, old Mr. Laurence, sent over ice cream, cake, and fruit. The children ate with delight, and the old house was full of laughter. Marmee told them stories from her own childhood, and she read from a favorite book, "The Pilgrim's Progress," about a traveler climbing toward a bright city. She said that life was a journey and that each of them had a burden to carry and a hill to climb. The sisters made a game of it, imagining that each had a bundle on her back. They decided to investigate how to become better each day. The consequence of this small plan was that they grew closer. It was a significant moment, for it would establish their way of life for years. Each sister would determine her own goal, but they would meet again at the fire each evening. Beth played softly, and the others hummed along. Their dreams, so different, fitted together like the notes of a song. Even Amy, who had been sulking earlier in the day, forgot her bad mood and sang louder than anyone. ★ Four sisters had very different hopes and dreams for the future, and their small warm house was always full of laughter and real hope.

THINK Who sent ice cream and cake?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 4: Jo and Her Pen

Jo March had a secret hope: she desperately wanted to become a writer. Every spare hour she climbed to the attic, wrapped herself in an old blanket, and wrote on a sofa with a bag of apples beside her. Her stories were full of heroes, villains, and storms. She wore her "scribbling suit," a plain old dress and a cap with a bow, so that people would know not to disturb her while she wrote. Her sisters teased her gently, and her rich Aunt March scolded her for being too wild. Aunt March thought a young woman should sew, keep her hair neat, and marry well. But Jo felt that there was a different path inside her. When she was alone, she imagined seeing her name on the cover of a thick book. It was a significant dream for a girl in those days. She knew the consequence of not trying would be regret. Jo liked to investigate people's lives, and she gathered ideas from everything she saw. She determined to work hard and establish a career with her pen. The challenge was that very few people at the time believed that women could earn a living by writing. Yet she kept on, line after line. Sometimes she read her stories aloud to the sisters, who clapped and begged for more. Beth, who understood her best, would say quietly, "Someday everyone will read them, Jo." Those few kind words kept the young writer going on days when the pages would not behave. ★ Jo wanted to write famous stories someday.

THINK Where did Jo write?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 5: Jo's Hair

One cold morning, a letter came from Washington. Their father had fallen ill in an army hospital, and Marmee must go to him at once. The family was poor, and the train fare was expensive. The girls wished to help but did not know how. That night Jo went out quietly. When she came home, she took off her bonnet, and the family gasped: her long chestnut hair, which she had always called her "one beauty," was cut short like a boy's. She had sold it to a wigmaker for twenty-five dollars and put the money in her mother's hand. "My dear girl," said Marmee, with tears in her eyes, "you did a generous deed." Jo laughed to hide her own tears, but later, in the dark, she cried into her pillow. The consequence of the sale was that Marmee could take the train the next morning. It was a significant sacrifice. Jo had always been desperately proud of her hair, yet she was even more determined to help her father. She did not hesitate for a moment. The challenge for Jo was to be brave and keep her feelings quiet. Amy gave up her toys, Meg gave up her dresses, and Beth gave up her songs, and so the family learned how to establish hope in dark times. Even Beth felt her heart ache for the lost hair, yet she held her sister's hand and said nothing, and that was the kindest thing to do. ★ Jo

desperately wanted to write famous stories one day.

THINK *How much did Jo get for her hair?*

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 6: A Story in the Newspaper

With their mother away, the girls had to look after the house themselves. Jo kept on writing her thrilling stories in the evenings. Soon she had written a long one, and she secretly sent it to a newspaper. A few weeks later, a paper arrived, and there on the page was her story, with her name below it. She screamed with joy and danced around the room. Her family was astonished, and Meg hugged her. Jo's pride was strong, but life taught her a lesson too. Years later, when she lived in New York, she met a kind German professor named Mr. Bhaer who read her sensational stories and told her gently that she could do better. He said that she should write about true feelings and honest people instead of crime and tricks. Jo was hurt at first, since she had desperately wanted praise, but she saw that he was right. She began to investigate her own heart for stories. The consequence was that her writing grew deeper and more real. It was a significant change. She was determined to find her own voice. The challenge, she knew, was to write the truth even when it was hard. She decided to establish a daily habit and determine her own path, even though society did not expect much from women who wanted to be authors. It was a lesson she would carry all her life. ★ Jo desperately wanted to write famous stories one day, even though the society she lived in did not expect much from ambitious young women.

THINK Where did Jo send her story?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 7: Beth and the Piano

Beth March was the quiet sister. She was afraid of strangers, and she stayed close to home, dusting the rooms, caring for her dolls, and playing the old piano in the parlor. It was out of tune, and some keys did not work, but she loved it. Next door, in a grand house, lived the rich old Mr. Laurence and his grandson Laurie. Beth often heard music floating from their windows, and she longed to play on their splendid piano. One day Mr. Laurence heard about her wish. He called on Mrs. March and politely asked if the girls would like to come and play on his piano, for it was never used. Beth was terrified of the old gentleman, but she wanted the music more than she feared him. One afternoon she crept in on tiptoe and sat at the keyboard. When her fingers touched the keys, her fear vanished. Mr. Laurence listened from the next room and smiled. Soon she went every day, and he never disturbed her. It was a significant friendship. The consequence of her courage was a joy that would stay with the family. Beth did not investigate big plans; she simply wished to play. She would determine to thank him in her own way. The challenge was small but real. Her family would establish a tradition of listening to her every evening. Years later, whenever she heard that piano, Jo would remember how brave her little sister had been on that first day. ★ Beth loved playing music for her family.

THINK Who lived in the grand house next door?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 8: Slippers for Mr. Laurence

Beth wanted to thank Mr. Laurence for letting her play, but she was too shy to speak to him. So she sat in her room and stitched a pair of slippers, with violets embroidered on the toes. She worked patiently, since stitching was something she did well. She sent the slippers to him with a short note. The next morning she found a surprise waiting for her in the parlor: a small cabinet piano with a card that said, "Miss March, from her friend, James Laurence." She stared at it in silence, then ran to Mr. Laurence's house, climbed up on her tiptoes, and kissed him on the cheek. Her fear of him was gone for good. He said it was the best present he ever had, and that her slippers were worth a hundred pianos. From that day, the old gentleman and the shy girl were fast friends. Every evening Beth played for her family, and the soft notes drifted through the little house like a warm blanket. Everyone fell silent, listening. She never wanted fame. It was a significant gift, and its consequence was peace. She needed no audience to determine what mattered. Others might investigate great careers, but Beth chose to establish a home filled with music. The challenge of staying humble was easy for her. Laurie, passing by the window one evening, heard the music and stopped in the garden, and he decided that he had never heard a lovelier sound.

★ **Beth quietly loved playing beautiful music for her family.**

THINK What did Beth embroider on the slippers?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 9: Quiet and Beautiful

Beth never became famous, and she did not ask to be. When Meg said she wished to marry a rich man, and Jo said she wished to write a great book, and Amy said she wished to go to Europe and paint, Beth only said, "I'm happy at home." She kept her wishes small: to stay with her family, to see them all safe, and to play her songs. Her sisters sometimes teased her for being so quiet, but they also looked to her for comfort. When Meg was upset or Jo was angry, Beth's kindness could calm them like a gentle breeze. In the evening, after supper, she would sit at her piano while the others sewed, read, or wrote. She would play old songs and new ones, and her mother would sing along softly. The firelight made the room golden. It was a significant lesson for the family that happiness does not need a crowd. The challenge of busy lives is to remember what matters. The consequence of Beth's love was that every member of the household learned to be gentler. Each one would investigate her own heart and establish her own dream, but all would come back to the same warm room. Jo would later determine that Beth's music had taught them more than any book. Marmee, watching her daughters at the fireside, felt that no fortune on earth could equal this quiet hour. ★ Beth quietly loved playing beautiful music for her whole family, clearly showing that a simple and quiet happiness can also be truly beautiful.

THINK What did Beth say she wished for?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 10: A Hard Winter Begins

The winter after Jo's hair was cut was the hardest of all. Mr. March remained far away in the army hospital, and money for medicine and food was short. Marmee left to nurse her husband, and the girls were left with their maid, Hannah, and with a promise to be good. At first they worked cheerfully, but the work was tiring. Meg taught small children for pennies, Jo read aloud to Aunt March for pay, Beth did the dusting, and Amy kept the house tidy. Each sister felt the challenge of doing more than before. The days were short, the wind howled, and the fire sometimes burned low. Letters from Marmee came rarely. Then one morning a telegram arrived with bad news: Mr. March was very ill, and Marmee asked Meg and Jo to wait and be brave. The girls clung to each other. The consequence of the news was a heavy sorrow in the house, yet no one gave in to despair. They helped each other and decided to determine what must be done. They established a daily list of tasks. They also tried to investigate how to keep spirits high, and it was a significant effort. Beth even hummed a few notes while she swept. Jo, who had always been the boldest, found that she now spoke more softly, and Meg, who loved pretty things, put away her wishes for new gloves. The house had never felt so quiet, and yet each girl was growing in her own way.

★ **The family faced serious trouble that winter.**

THINK *Who looked after the girls?*

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 11: Beth Falls Ill

Beth had been visiting the Hummels, the poor family with the baby, and the baby had fallen sick with scarlet fever. Beth caught the fever too. She stayed quiet in bed for days, and the doctor said she must be kept calm. Jo cared for her night and day. When Beth's fever grew worse, Jo wrote to Marmee, and Hannah told the girls that their mother must be sent for at once. Amy, who could not catch the fever, was sent to Aunt March for safety. The house became silent. There was no music, no laughter, only the ticking of the clock and the soft footsteps of Jo carrying water and medicine. Jo prayed every night for her gentle sister. Laurie sent flowers, and his grandfather offered the best doctor. After many anxious days, Marmee came home, and Beth slowly turned the corner and began to recover. The whole house cried with joy. The challenge had been great, and it was a significant test of the sisters' love. The consequence was a deeper bond. Jo made a promise to determine to be gentler, and she would never again be careless with her temper. They would establish a new rule of kindness. Everyone felt the need to investigate how precious each day was. Beth, though frail, smiled again. Hannah brewed broth and tea without rest, and Laurie's grandfather sent up jellies and warm blankets, which made the weary girls smile through their tears. ★ The whole family faced very serious trouble that cold winter.

THINK What illness did Beth catch?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 12: Stronger Together

When spring came, Mr. March returned home, thin but alive, and the whole family gathered around him. Jo flung herself into his arms, Amy ran from Aunt March's house, and Meg wept with happiness. Beth was carried downstairs and placed in a chair by the window, where the warm sun fell on her face. Marmee sat with her husband's hand in hers, as if she would never let go. The family had been through a hard winter, but every member had learned something. Meg had discovered that she did not need fine dresses to be happy. Jo had learned to keep her temper. Amy had found out that kindness mattered more than prettiness. Beth had taught everyone to be patient. They remembered the Christmas morning when they had given away their breakfast, and they felt they had been given something far greater in return. It was a significant lesson that love is the best wealth. The consequence of the trial was a family bond stronger than before. The challenge had made them kinder. They would determine to stay united. Together they would establish a home where hard times were met with hope. They felt no need to investigate who was to blame for the troubles; they only wished to be thankful. That night they all gathered around the fire, and for the first time in months, the sound of the piano filled the parlor again. ★ **The whole family faced very serious trouble that cold winter, but they stayed deeply united and came out much stronger than they had been before.**

THINK *Who came home in spring?*

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 13: The Boy Next Door

Laurie, the boy next door, was about fifteen. He had curly dark hair, laughing eyes, and a polite manner. Because his parents were no longer with him, he lived with his strict grandfather, Mr. Laurence, in a large and silent house. He often looked across the hedge at the cheerful March house and wished he could join the fun. One cold evening Jo noticed him at his window. She waved, and soon the two became friends. Laurie loved their games, their plays, and their jokes. He had been lonely, and now he had four sisters. They invited him to their parties, and he gave them sleigh rides in the winter, and sent them flowers in the summer. When he heard Beth play, he sat quietly and listened with respect. He brought Jo books and took her walking in the woods. He was loyal to all four sisters. It was a significant friendship for everyone, and it would establish happy memories. The consequence was that the old house next door became cheerful again. Mr. Laurence smiled more often. Laurie decided to study hard so that he could make his grandfather proud. He would determine his own career. The challenge for him was to find his purpose and to investigate which path to follow. When the sisters put on their plays in the barn, he cheered the loudest, and he even wrote a funny letter to the audience. His grandfather laughed for the first time in years, and the whole house seemed brighter. In the long summer evenings he lay on the grass with Jo and talked about the future, and she listened to his plans with her chin in her hand. ★ Laurie was a loyal friend to all four sisters.

THINK Who did Laurie live with?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 14: Laurie to the Rescue

Laurie proved his loyalty many times. When Amy fell through the thin ice while skating, Laurie dashed to the pond and pulled her out. When Beth was ill, he stayed near the house in case anyone needed anything. When Jo worried about money, he gave her advice and kept her secret. At a New Year's dance, he stood by Meg and helped her when her shoes pinched and her dress was singed, so that nobody would laugh. When Jo felt lonely, he walked with her through the snowy lanes and made her laugh with his jokes. He was the sort of friend who showed up without being asked. He made small sacrifices with a smile, and he never asked for anything in return. The sisters often said that he was like a brother. His loyalty was significant to them, since their father was away and they sometimes felt unprotected. Laurie never forgot the day when Jo stood up for him with Aunt March. The consequence of such small acts was a lasting bond. It was a real challenge for a boy of his age to be so thoughtful, but he determined to be a man of honor. He wanted to establish trust, and he did not need to investigate whom to rely on. On the ice, he held out his coat to wrap around Amy, and he carried her home safely through the dark. The family never forgot that frightening afternoon, nor the quick, steady courage of the boy next door. Jo, who had often called him a pest, said afterward that she never wanted a better friend. ★ Laurie was a truly loyal and devoted friend to all four sisters.

THINK Who fell through the ice?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 15: Jo Says No

Years passed, and Laurie went away to college. He grew tall and handsome, and he began to feel that his love for Jo was more than friendship. He wrote to her often and visited at holidays. One day, in a quiet garden, he told her he loved her and asked her to marry him. Jo was shocked and saddened. She cared for him deeply, but she did not love him in that way. "I can't," she said gently. "We are too much alike, and we would quarrel. You are my dearest friend, and I could not bear to lose that." Laurie was hurt. He argued, then grew quiet, and then walked away down the lane with his hat pulled low. Jo cried, because she did not wish to hurt him. The consequence of the refusal was a painful time for both of them. Laurie traveled to Europe to clear his head, while Jo felt the loss of her companion. It was a significant moment of growing up, and it showed that love and friendship are not the same. Jo needed to determine her own heart. Laurie had to establish a new life. Both faced a real challenge, and each would investigate what they truly wanted. In time, they would be friends again. Meg and Marmee understood, and they said that no one can force the heart. Jo walked alone for a long time that evening, thinking of him, and she wished things were simpler. ★ Laurie was a truly loyal friend to all four sisters, teaching Jo that deep friendship can sometimes be just as meaningful as love.

THINK What did Laurie ask Jo?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 16: Meg, Jo, Amy, and Beth Grow

The years went by, and the girls became young women. Meg married a gentle man named John Brooke, and they lived in a small house that she filled with love, though it never held great riches. Soon she had twin babies and learned to be patient with them. Jo, restless and eager, went to New York to teach and to write. There she met Professor Bhaer, the kind German who encouraged her to write from her heart. Amy traveled to Europe with Aunt March, where she studied art and learned that she was talented, though not a genius. Beth, still frail but always cheerful, stayed at home and played her piano, and her sweet music kept the family close. Each sister faced her own challenge. Meg had to learn to manage a house on little money. Jo had to learn to put away her pride. Amy had to determine what kind of artist she wished to be. They did not investigate easy ways. It was a significant time of change, with many consequences. Through letters and visits, the sisters stayed in touch and gave each other courage. They would establish different lives, yet each would take something from the old house with her. In the evening Beth read their letters aloud, and the sisters, so far apart, seemed to be sitting in the same room. Marmee wrote back to each one with the same words: "Be brave, be kind, and come home when you can." Those simple words held the whole family together through many years. ★ **They grew into strong and kind women.**

THINK Whom did Meg marry?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 17: Different Paths, One Home

Back in Concord, Marmee watched her daughters with pride. Meg had become a loving wife and mother. Jo had returned home, and she had written a book about her family, which sold well and brought her real success. Amy, in Europe, had met Laurie again. Both had grown up, and they discovered that they shared many interests and ideas. Laurie, who had been sad for a time, found that Amy was kind, funny, and wise, and she was no longer a spoiled little girl. They fell in love and were married in Europe, to everyone's delight. Jo was glad, for she knew that her friend had found a good match. Marmee told her daughters that she was proud of each of them, because each had chosen her own way. Meg had chosen a quiet home, Jo a pen, and Amy a brush. Their different paths were all valuable. It was a significant joy for the old house. The sisters sometimes sat together and told stories about the past, and they felt Beth's gentle music still present in the room. They had faced many a challenge, with great consequence. Each one had to determine her own direction, to establish a place of her own, and to investigate her own dreams. At the wedding, the old friends laughed and cried together. Jo, in her best dress, kissed her little sister, and she said that Laurie could not have chosen better. When the music started, Meg took Marmee's hand, and they danced a little, as they used to in the parlor at home. The whole family agreed that it was one of the happiest days they had seen. ★ **They each grew into strong, independent, and kind women.**

THINK Whom did Amy marry?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 18: Plumfield

When Aunt March grew old, she left her large house, Plumfield, to Jo. Jo and Professor Bhaer, who had married, decided to turn it into a school for boys. Plumfield soon rang with the shouts of children, who played in the garden and climbed the apple trees. Jo taught them to be honest, and Professor Bhaer taught them to love learning. Meg and John visited with their twins, and Amy and Laurie came with their little daughter. At harvest time, the whole family gathered under the old apple trees and shared a feast. Mr. and Mrs. March sat at the head of the table, as proud as they had ever been. Marmee told her daughters that this was the happiest day of her life. Jo, looking around, thought of the stories she once dreamed of and understood that this home, with its noise and love, was her best story. She spoke softly, "I have my wish, though not in the way I thought." It was a significant moment, and the sisters held hands. The challenge of growing up had made them wise. Each had found her own path, but none had forgotten the small warm house where it began. Together they would determine the future, establish traditions, and investigate new dreams. The children called her "Mother Jo," and she loved the name. In the evening, when the house was quiet, she went to the window and looked at the stars, thinking of all that had passed. ★ **They each grew into strong, independent, and kind women, each finding her own unique path but never forgetting the warm home she came from.**

THINK What house did Jo receive?