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LITTLE
WOMEN

Маленькие женщины

Луиза Мэй Олкотт

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**Little women. Маленькие
женщины. Адаптированная
книга на английском**

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Мэй Олкотт Л.

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Роман о четырех не похожих друг на друга сестрах и их взрослении. Самой младшей – одиннадцать, старшей - семнадцать. Они веселятся, играют, заводят дружбу с соседским мальчиком и его дедушкой, а также сталкиваются с серьезными испытаниями. В каждой главе описываются разные истории, из которых можно извлечь уроки морали. Текст сокращен и адаптирован под уровень А2+. Подойдет для чтения, начиная с 7-го класса, а также взрослым, изучающим английский язык. В конце книги имеется небольшой словарик и упражнения.

Little women

Chapter 1

"Christmas won't be Christmas without any presents," said Jo.

"It's so sad that we are poor!" sighed Meg.

"It's sad that some girls have everything, and we have nothing," added Amy.

"But we have mother and father, and each other," said Beth.

All four sisters smiled at those words, but then Jo said "We don't have father, and we won't have him for a long time."

For a moment there was silence. Then Meg said "You know mother said we wouldn't get any presents this Christmas because it will be a hard winter for all of us. She thinks we shouldn't spend money on nice things while our men are suffering in the army."

Margaret, or Meg in short, was sixteen and pretty, she had white hands and were proud of them. Jo was fifteen years old, she was tall and had a suntan. Everyone called her boyish, and she was. Her only beauty was her long hair, but it always was such a mess. Next, Elizabeth, or Beth, was thirteen and shy. Usually she was calm and lived in her own world. Amy, the youngest, eleven, was very important, as she thought.

It was Christmas time and girls thought about present for mother. They talked a little and then decided to give her four different presents.

Then they went to learn their parts. Girls had a tradition of home performances. As there were only four of them, one actress played two or three different parts and needed to learn a lot of words.

Suddenly, they heard their mother came home. She asked the girls how their day was and came to table. After dinner, she took a letter from father, and they read it together.

"Tell the girls I love them. One year is a long time to wait until I come home. We all should work hard these days so they pass faster. But when I come home and see them, I will be so happy and proud of my girls."

When they finished the letter, Jo had a tear on her face.

Chapter 2

The next morning Jo woke up first. She didn't see any stockings* at the fireplace and was sad for a moment. But then she put her hand under the pillow and found a book. She woke her sister Meg, said "Merry Christmas!" and told her to look under the pillow, too. Meg also found a book. Then Beth. And then Amy. All had books about wonderful journeys but in different colours.

Soon, all the girls started reading their books. The room was calm, the sun was shining, the pages turned softly.

Then the girls went downstairs. But mother wasn't there.

"Where's mother?" Meg asked Hannah, their housekeeper.

"I don't know. Some poor people called her and she went to help them. You know, she always helps others and gives them food and drink. She should be back soon."

Then the door opened, but it wasn't their mother. It was Amy. He returned from the shop, she ran there to buy a bigger perfume for mother's present.

Then the door opened again and this time their mother came in.

"Merry Christmas, mummy!" they all said at once.

"Merry Christmas, little daughters!"

"Thank you for the books. We read some pages and we will read more!"

"I'm glad you began reading them," said mother. But you know, there is a woman, a little baby and other six children. One of their boys came to me and told me they are cold and don't have food to eat. Will you give them your breakfast as a Christmas present?"

The girls were hungry but after a moment of silence they said yes. They asked their mother if they could help her to carry food and clothes for that poor family.

'I'm glad you want to help', said mother and they all went outside.

They came into a small room with broken windows and no fire. They saw a sick mother, a crying baby and a group of pale hungry children trying to get warm with one blanket.

Hannah made a fire, covered broken window with old hats and coat. Mother dressed the baby. Girls made the table. The hungry children ate the food and warmed their purple hands.

When the girls left the poor house, they were very happy.

They came home and girls gave mother her presents: new slippers, handkerchief, perfume, and a nice pair of gloves. There were beautiful flowers on the table.

The rest of the day they spent on preparing to the performance. There were no boys so Jo played boys parts.

The guests came to the room and sat on the bed. They read the brochure: "a dark forest. They looked at the stage and saw flowers in pots. Jo played a man who went into the forest to save the girl and then met a witch.

The guests heard some noise when the girls prepared for the next part of the performance. But then, a big tower appeared on the stage. The performance continued, but suddenly, the bed closed and all the guests fell down. Sisters came to save the guests, although everyone was laughing. Then Hannah appeared and asked little ladies to go downstairs for dinner.

It was a surprise for sisters too. They came downstairs and saw ice-cream, pink and white, cakes, fruits, French candies and flowers in the middle of the table.

"It's from Santa Claus", said Beth.

"No", said mother. "Old Mr. Laurence sent it. Hannah told his servants how you helped a poor family with breakfast and he sent this as a present for you."

"I think his grandson told him to do this. We don't know him, but I think he is nice. I often see him when we pass the street. I want to be friends with him."

"You mean that old mister and boy who live in the big house near here?" asked one of the girls. "My mother knows old Mr. Laurence, she says he is very proud and doesn't like talking to other neighbours. He makes his grandson study a lot."

"I like his manners, he looks like a gentleman. He brought these flowers himself. I don't mind* if you want to be friends with him", said Mother.

"I wish we could send flowers to father. I think he isn't having such a merry Christmas", said Beth.

*stocking – носок, который дети вешают на Рождество, чтобы Санта Клаус положил в них подарки

*I don't mind – я не против

Chapter 3

Jo was reading a book when suddenly Meg called her and showed her an invitation card from Mrs. Gardiner for a New Year's Eve.

"But what should we wear?" asked Meg.

"What a silly question. You know that we don't have new fashionable dresses so we can only wear our old dresses."

"I wish I had silk dresses. Mother says I will get one when I'm eighteen. But two years more to wait!"

"Your dress looks new, but I burned mine at the back, and one of my gloves is spoiled with lemonade."

The girls decided that Meg should give Jo one of her gloves. They both would have only one glove and wouldn't wear it but keep in hand. Also, Jo shouldn't dance but stand near the wall so people wouldn't see her burned back of the dress.

Meg wrote to Mrs. Gardiner, saying thanks for invitation. The girls dressed up and were ready to go.

"Have a good time!" said Mrs. March.

Meg was a lady but Jo, who jumped and ran and shouted like a boy, didn't know what to do. Should she shake hands* with boys? "Of course, no!" said Meg. She said she would lift her eyebrows if Jo would do anything wrong.

At the Eve's night, Jo saw boys who were talking about skates. Oh, how she loves skates! She wanted to go to them and talk with them. "No!" – Meg's eyebrows went high and Jo didn't move.

Soon Jo was tired of standing there and found a small dark room. She decided to stay there and rest from happy girls and boys dancing and talking.

"Oh dear! I didn't know someone was here" said Jo when she met a boy.

"You can stay. I don't mind. I am here because I wanted to have rest from all those people."

"So did I", said Jo. "You live near our house, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Thank you for your Christmas present! We had such a wonderful dinner."

"My grandpa sent it."

"But you told him to do so, didn't you, Mr. Laurence?"

"Please, Miss March, call me Laurie", asked the boy.

"Then I am just Jo and not Miss March."

They talked and talked. Laurie told her about his voyage to Paris, how he learned French. Jo was very curious how old he was, and he told her that he was going to be sixteen next month. Then they heard nice fast music and Laurie said he wanted to go dancing.

"But I can't go!" said Jo.

"Why?"

"You won't tell anyone?" asked Jo

"Never!"

"I stood near the fireplace and burned the back of my dress. You can laugh, if you want."

Laurie didn't laugh. "You know what? We can go to the hall, there are no people in the hall, we can dance there. No one will see your burned dress."

The went dancing and danced until they saw Meg. She went looking for her sister. Her shoes were too small and she hurt her foot. Laurie offered to go in his carriage and they went talking about this evening.

*shake hands – здороваться за руки

Chapter 4

Christmas holidays were over.

"I wish it were Christmas or New Year all the time!" said Jo.

"What's the use of* looking pretty if no one sees it, only my sisters?" said Meg angrily.

Beth was lying on the some with her cat and three kittens.

"Beth, keep your cats in the cellar. I don't want them here!" said Meg.

Amy was crying because she couldn't do Maths' exercise.

"This is such an angry family!" cried Jo.

"But you are the angriest!" said Amy.

"Girls, can you be quiet for a minute! I need to finish my mail," said Mother.

Soon, the girls left the house but continued arguing.

When Mr. March lost a lot of money, two eldest girls asked to help the family. Margaret found a job as a nurse and felt rich with her small salary. It was harder for her to live like this because she remembered the times when they were rich. She was envious of dresses, concerts, pretty things and happy friends other girls had.

Jo helped Aunt March. He didn't like the job very much but took it anyway as there wasn't anything better. No one could understand how Jo could be friendly with such a grumpy lady. But the old lady had a big library with books which Jo liked very much. Every time Aunt March went to sleep and wanted to sit in silence, Jo went into the library and read books.

Beth was very shy and couldn't go to school so she had lessons at home. She studied with father, but then he went to the army and she studied alone. Every morning she dressed her six old and broken dolls which she got from her sisters, but she loved them. After that she helped Hannah.

She also loved music. She wanted to have a good piano and music lessons but the family only had old broken piano which played very bad. She sometimes cried when the broken piano couldn't make the sound she needed.

Amy was said because she didn't like her nose. She hoped the nose would grow better. She also liked drawing and could spend hours drawing flowers and animals. She also didn't like the clothes she wore. They were good and net, but didn't have the taste.

The evening came and the girls returned home. Jo told them how today, she took a nice book from the library and read it to the Aunt March. And she liked it better than her old boring book she usually read!

Then the girls asked their mother to tell a story.

"Once upon a time there were four girls," mother started. "They had food and clothes, friends and kind parents but they were not happy. They always complained and wanted more. Once they met an old woman who knew magic and they asked her for a spell. The old woman said 'When you feel unhappy, think about what you already have and say thanks for this.' The girls tried saying thanks for what they had and soon became happy. They had food and clothes; they were young and could play games with each other."

"Thank you, mother, for the story. Now we understand. And we will never forget this story."

*What's the use of – в чем смысл

Chapter 5

A few days passed and Jo didn't see Laurence. Then once, she went outside and saw his pale face in the window and decided that he needed help.

She threw a snowball at his window.

"How are you? Are you sick?" shouted Jo.

Laurie opened the window and said in a quiet voice. "Better, thank you. I had a cold* and my grandpa closed me in for a week."

"Do you want me to read to you? I can come."

"Will you?" asked Laurie.

"Yes, I will go and ask my mother."

She came to Laurie with a dish from mother, dessert from Meg and kittens from Beth. Jo helped him to clean the room and they talked a lot. Jo understood that Laurie is lonely in this big house with no sisters or brothers and invited him to go her house. She also found that Laurie liked books too and read more books than Jo.

"You can come to our house and read books," said Laurie. "Don't be afraid of my grandpa."

"I'm not afraid of anyone! Well, maybe a little of your grandpa," said Jo.

Laurie went to show Jo rooms and books in the library. Then the doctor came and Laurie left Jo for a few minutes. Jo came to a portrait of his grandpa and looked at it.

“You know, your grandpa is not that scary. His mouth looks angry, but he has kind eyes. I like him.”

“Thank you, young lady,” said an old voice. It wasn’t Laurie, it was Mr. Laurence.

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