



Scarlett Curtis, feminist writer and activist, introduces

The Sisterhood Collection

'I am lucky enough to live a life surrounded by strong and powerful women. More often than not, when I ask any of these incredible people where their inspiration comes from, they cite a character from a novel they read in their childhood. I've spent a long time thinking about why it is that some of the strongest female characters in literature were created at a time when the rights of women were hardly established. Women have always been strong but their strength and resilience is more often than not missing from the history books. Laws that denied women the chance to play key roles in society have starved modern women of the female icons we need in order to know that the path we now follow is not one we need to embark on alone. When looking for a hero to guide our way, we didn't have a Winston Churchill, a Mahatma Gandhi, a John Lennon or a Muhammad Ali. We had Jo, Bobbie, Anne, Beth, Sarah, Heidi and Elizabeth – fictional women who live extraordinary, ordinary lives within the pages of books that were disguised as novels but were secretly handbooks.'

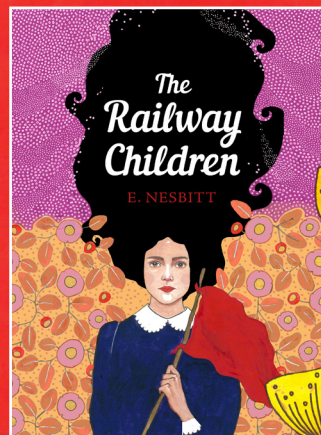
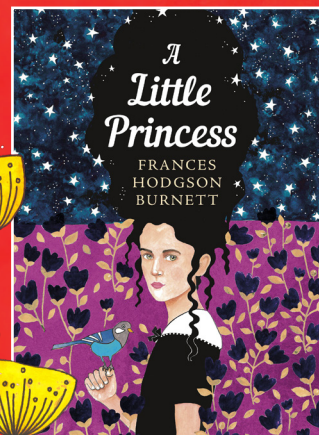
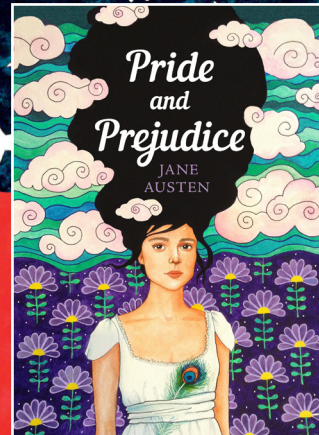
The Sisterhood collection published for International Women's Day is not only a story. It is a feminist toolbox filled with defiant girls who refuse to conform and whose authors allowed them to grow and take up space in a society that wanted them to shrink. I hope you love it as much as we do.'

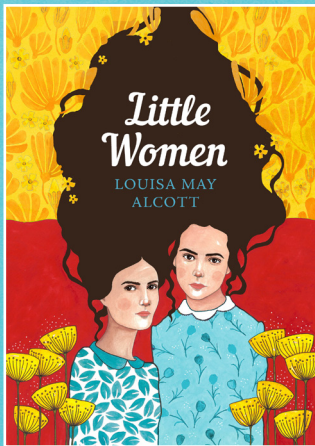


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Cover illustrations by Hülya Özdemir

THE
SISTERHOOD
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Little Women

The four March sisters sweep everyone up in their adventures – including Laurie, the boy next door. Despite their sisterly squabbles, the bond between them is strong, but as they strive to become independent young women their lives follow very different paths.

Little Women is part of The Sisterhood collection, a stunning set in celebration of iconic female writers of the 19th and early 20th century.

Rally your friends and start a **#SisterhoodBookClub**

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Book Club Questions

1. What do the first nine lines of the novel tell us about the contrasting characters of the four March sisters?
2. *Little Women* is set in the years during and after the American Civil War and the war is often alluded to. Do you think this critical to the story, or could it have been told in any other setting or time?
3. Louisa M. Alcott was a supporter of women's suffrage and the abolition of slavery – do these values come through in the book?
4. How relevant are the trials and tribulations Jo faces to the modern reader? Do young women today face similar issues?
5. Jo has a masculine sounding name and Alcott sometimes describes her in a male way, such as when she examines her shoes in a 'gentlemanly manner' or that she will bear her unhappiness 'like a man'. Why do you think the author does this?
6. Towards the end of the book Aunt March is trying to dissuade Meg from marrying impoverished Mr Brooke, and declares: 'You ought to marry well and help your family; it's your duty to make a rich match.' But Meg defies her and accepts his proposal for love. Alcott herself never married. What do you think she is saying about marriage in *Little Women*.
7. Which social media channels do you think the March sisters would use today?
8. What effect does Mr March's absence have on the March sisters? What effect does it have on Marmee? Do you think events would have panned out differently if he had been home?
9. The book contrasts the lives of the rich and the poor in descriptions of the Kings, Gardiners, Laurences, Marches and Hummels. Does the author imply any moral judgements associated with money, or lack of it.
10. How do you feel about Amy burning Jo's book? Do you think Jo would have forgiven her so soon if Amy hadn't fallen through the ice when they went skating?
11. In Hannah's opinion 'work was the panacea for all afflictions'. Do you see work as one of the themes of the book? How broadly do you think the author defines the concept of work?
12. How do the Marches compare with the Kardashians? Are there any similarities? Do they share any values?



Louisa May Alcott

was born in 1832 and grew up in Concord, Massachusetts. Like her fictional character Jo March, she struggled against society's expectations of young women of that era. She became a staunch feminist and never married – unwilling to make the sacrifices to her career that marriage would entail – and, as a fervent supporter of women's suffrage, was the first woman to register to vote in Concord. Louisa May Alcott was a prolific author, writing industriously right up until her death in 1888.



Hülya Özdemir

is an illustrator from Turkey, who describes her style in three words: *colour, harmony, sensibility*. Her enchanting watercolour portraits of female figures are full of magical surrealism, and bring an imaginative new dimension to the classics.