

Comparative analysis of the novel 'Little Women'
by Alcott with the 2019 adaptation of the movie.

Little Women, authored by Louisa May Alcott, (born November 29, 1832, Pennsylvania) was published in 1868 and 1869 in two volumes. The book was written by L. Alcott on the demand of the publisher, and it took several months for Alcott to complete it. The first volume was successful commercially and widely appreciated by the readers.

The readers would write letters addressing Louisa M. Alcott, and they would demand to know more about the characters of the book. Soon, Alcott penned the second volume of the Little women. The title “Good Wives” was assumed by the publishers (it is still printed under the same title in the United Kingdom) and not by the author herself. The second volume was also widely celebrated by the audience.

“Little women” is said to be a partially biographical story where the author is inspired by her own life. It is set around the March family and the life progress of the four sisters - Meg, Jo, Amy, and Beth. Louisa wrote herself as Jo and her sisters respectively. The plotline of Little women has a realistic approach and that is what perhaps has made it more appealing to readers of all time.

The main theme of the novel revolves around family, work, and relationships. It not only holds the humorous side but also withholds a soft corner for sentimental values towards motherhood, considering sacrifices that women make, and even the traditions. However, through Jo, Alcott manages to present the woke feminist values and questions regarding societal pressure women face. The realistic portrayal of the struggles of the March Family in the writing of Louisa M. Alcott has played a crucial role in “Little Women” being widely appreciated.

The book is said to be never out of print which also adds to the talk of how Little women has been adapted in other forms of entertainment. “Little Women” has been adapted as musicals and operas, theatre drama, mute drama, audio drama, Television series, and movies.

The novel was written in a time when women were only bound to the housework and nothing more than that. It is noted from the records that Louisa herself didn't expect her book to become so popular and successful. The main ideas of the novel are surrounded around family, work, moral values, and love. The hope and agenda behind writing this book were to make young readers realize their own worth, and the book should become a source of guidance to the young girls in their growth from childhood to adulthood. The idea of individualism is hinted through Jo March in the book. Jo, is the short-tempered one who eventually learns her way to channelize it towards her writing. Her other sisters are softer and more womanly whereas Jo is more like a tomboy. Laurie, the next-door boy, becomes friends with Jo and also eventually falls in love with her but Jo doesn't. Jo and Laurie share really good bonding and the readers of that time expected both Jo and Laurie to fall in love by the end of the first volume.

As mentioned earlier, there have been a lot of adaptations of "Little Women". And, Little Women 2019, directed by Greta Gerwig, is the most recent and different one. The women have fought and moved ahead and we get to witness the same energy in Greta Gerwig's Adaptation of the Little Women. The Storytelling in this adaptation is way different than how it is in the book. The new techniques of scriptwriting and direction have vibrantly changed the way Louisa told the story. Greta Gerwig chose to have non-linear storytelling where timelines of all the characters were going back and forth between their childhood and adulthood.

The movie starts with Jo being an adult woman who is trying to sell her stories to a publisher in New York. The style of narration in the movie is non-linear whereas we see, or to phrase it more accurately, we grow up with the March family. The book starts with the sisters lamenting over their poverty and they come to a decision of buying themselves a present for Christmas. And from there we watch the family grow. We see the Laurence family mixing with the March family. In the book, there is a lot of coverage to that part. Jo and Laurie become friends when Laurie is sick. There are scenes that happen both in the book and the movie where Jo spends time with Laurie at the ball dance and Mr. Laurence gives piano to Beth because she reminds him of her deceased daughter. There are a lot of instances given in the book where both Laurence and the March family get together and spend time with each other and grow closer.

If you look closely at the details, one would realize there's a lot of things that are rectified or changed for better cinematography. The part where Meg is invited to spend some time with more pretty and wealthier girls is included in both the book and the movie, but what is changed here is that the gown Meg wears is different, it's pink instead of blue. In the movie, Laurie is shown to cause discomfort to Meg by disapproving her of her behaviors but later on, lets her have her moment. In the book, Louisa gave this side of the story some more details like Meg falling sick the next day in order to make her novel more of a cautionary tale.

And since it is the details covered in the movie we are talking about then it should be said very straightforwardly, that it is difficult to portray every incident of the novel inside the movie. There are a lot of scenes of the girls in the book where they are sharing glances and connecting with each other in scattered incidents. There is more of Amy and Jo's fights and them not getting along. There is more of Mr. Brooke's and Meg's relationship background and details of their love story. How Pa feels about his *Little Women* is also beautifully described in the book with much more detail. Greta carefully picked up scenes to build the characters carefully well using most likely a similar pattern as the book in order to maintain familiarity.

Aunt March in the book is shown to be more of a silent, in the background character type because we get to hear about her a lot and less from her. In the movie, she is actively playing the role. She does not have the parrot in the movie. Her presence is direct. And it made the movie a bit more catchy. About Jo, we see her character in the book, as someone gradually improving with time. Earning through her writings, becoming a better person, and controlling and channelizing her anger issues towards her art of writing. In the movie, we get to see Jo already setting a bar, negotiating and counter offering the publisher to pay her for the stories. She also watches her book get published in the movie whereas in the book it is only portrayed that Jo puts the pen down and she tells the story to the schoolboys and says one day she will write a story. Mr. Bhaer and Jo are not portrayed in the movie as they are in the book. In the book, Jo invites Mr. Bhaer when she goes back to her home and believes she will befriend him for a lifetime. In the movie Mr. Bhaer offers his opinions about Jo's literary work and she lashes out at him showing him she doesn't care about his opinions. And in the end, they find a way back to each other. The timeline of them coming closer to each other in the movie is different, but they do meet and come together as one.

A lot of the details from the book are skipped in the movie adaptation. It happens because there's a lot of details that can't be totally shown in the book, otherwise the movie would turn out to be ten-hour long or even more and it wouldn't be fun to watch.