



FEEL ALL THE FEELINGS: THE FILMS OF GRETA GERWIG

Little Women

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Directed by: Greta Gerwig

©: Columbia Pictures Industries Inc.,

Monarchy Enterprises S.à.r.l.,

Regency Entertainment (USA) Inc

a Pascal Pictures production

Presented by: Columbia Pictures,

Regency Enterprises

Tax: New York State Governor's Office for Motion

Picture & Television Development's Post

Production Credit Program

Executive Producers: Adam Merims, Evelyn O'Neill,

Rachel O'Connor, Arnon Milchan

Produced by: Amy Pascal, Denise Di Novi,

Robin Swicord

Unit Production Manager: Adam Merims

Production Supervisor: Damiana Kamishin

Production Co-ordinator: Hannah Roble

Production Accountant: Thomas Bianco

Location Managers: Douglas Dresser,

Timothy Gorman

Post-production Supervisor: Catherine Farrell

1st Assistant Director: Jonas Spaccarotelli

2nd Assistant Director: Katie Valovcin

Script Supervisor: Anna Rane

Casting by: Francine Maisler,

Kathleen Driscoll-Mohler

Extras Casting: Kendall Cooper

Written for the Screen by: Greta Gerwig

Based on the novel by: Louisa M. Alcott

Director of Photography: Yorick Le Saux

2nd Unit Director of Photography: Igor Meglic

Camera Operator (2nd Unit): Igor Meglic

B Camera/Steadicam Operator: Colin Hudson

Still Photographer: Wilson Webb

Visual Effects Supervisor: Brian Drewes

Visual Effects Producer: Catherine Farrell

Visual Effects by: Zero VFX, Crafty Apes,

Instinctual

Special Effects Co-ordinators: Mike Ricci,

Andy Weder

Editor: Nick Houy

Production Designer: Jess Gonchor

Art Directors: Chris Farmer, Bryan Felty,

Sean Falkner

Set Decorator: Claire Kaufman

Property Master: David W. Gulick

Construction Co-ordinator: Joseph Kearney

Costume Designer: Jacqueline Durran

Costume Supervisors: Amy Andrews,

Caroline Errington

Make-up Department Head: Judy Chin

Hair Department Head: Frida Aradóttir

DI Colourist: Joe Gawler

Music by: Alexandre Desplat

Score Conducted by: Alexandre Desplat

Orchestrations: Jean-Pascal Beintus, Colin Fowler

Choreography: Monical Bill Barnes

Production Mixer: Pud Cusack

Re-recording Mixers: Kevin O'Connell,

Skip Lievsay, Paul Urmsion

Supervising Sound Editor: Kevin O'Connell

Stunt Co-ordinator: Scott Rogers

19th Century Technical Advisers: Kristin Martin,

Kenneth Pierce

Unit Publicist: Scott Levine

Cast:

Saoirse Ronan (*Jo March*)

Emma Watson (*Meg March*)

Florence Pugh (*Amy March*)

Eliza Scanlen (*Beth March*)

Laura Dern (*Marmee March*)

Timothée Chalamet (*Laurie*)

Across disparate countries and radically different eras, Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* has come to life in a million different ways. It is a book that is unsparing in its depiction of the way the world is hard on ambitious girls, but also offers a comfort: that ambition – a vibrant inner life that breaks the bonds of the world – is its own reward. It is a book that we first encounter as children, when the world's possibilities are wide open and there is nothing in the world that can hold us back; we return as young adults, when the constraints of adulthood and society begin to shape who we are; and we return again, as older readers, with the bittersweet nostalgia of what it meant to be young and bold, joined with the exciting joy of seeing a new generation experience that daring for themselves. The insistent power of the book is its distinctly individual call to grapple with life's many clashing lures – with family, art, money, love, freedom, and the hope of being 100% who you are, creating your own unique story.

This deeply personal, fiercely alive idea of *Little Women* is the one writer-director Greta Gerwig wanted to transport to the screen. Gerwig approached the material with a determination to capture the sweeping, epic nature of the story that captures the enormity of what Alcott created, but also an honest, disarming emotional intimacy that brings the characters to life. As every reader brings her own personal interpretation and meaning to the story, Gerwig puts her own stamp on the story. The novel was originally published in two halves, the first focusing on the March sisters in auspicious girlhood, and the second covering the stark realities of adulthood. Gerwig pulls apart the novel, switchbacking between the two halves, with Jo's story of determination and spirit providing the natural through-line and reconstruction between its parts. With its fluid approach to time, the film immerses the audience in the memories, moments, accidents of fate and acts of will that form the March sisters – ink-stained, defiantly independent writer Jo; nurturing, principled, would-be actor Meg; fragile, open-hearted musician Beth; clever, aspirational painter Amy – into their full, complicated adult selves, each so different but united in an unswerving sisterhood.

The picture that emerges is of four women looking back with affection at how they became who they are. It is also one of a world where the dailiness of women's lives – their discoveries, sacrifices and anger, their financial, artistic and domestic concerns – deeply matters. What does it mean to take the reins of your life when so much that happens, from a crack in the ice to a mistimed letter, is out of your control? And how does that look to four sisters with four divergent dreams?

These are the questions Gerwig brings to the fore in a visually ravishing film with a look inspired by the bold artists who were changing the way people saw the world in Alcott's time. The questions feel modern, yet it was Alcott who latched onto these oppositions that still stop us in our tracks: money vs. art, love vs. personal satisfaction, ideals vs. real life, caring for family vs. finding your own voice.

Even before Gerwig demonstrated her powerful voice with *Lady Bird*, she told producer Amy Pascal she believed she was the right person to adapt *Little Women*. 'I flung myself at it with everything I had,' says Gerwig. 'I had a very specific idea of what it was about: it's about women as artists and it's about women and money. That is all there in the text, but it's an aspect of the story that hasn't been delved into before. For me, it was something that felt really,

Tracy Letts (*Mr Dashwood*)
 Bob Odenkirk (*Father March*)
 James Norton (*John Brooke*)
 Louis Garrel (*Friedrich Bhaer*)
 Jayne Houdyshell (*Hannah*)
 Chris Cooper (*Mr Laurence*)
 Meryl Streep (*Aunt March*)
 Rafael Silva, Mason Alban, Emily Edstrom
 (*Friedrich's friends*)
 Maryann Plunkett (*Mrs Kirke*)
 Hadley Robinson (*Sallie Gardiner Moffat*)
 Lonnie Farmer (*Concord sales clerk*)
 Charlotte Kinder (*Viola*)
 Ana Kayne (*Olivia*)
 Edgar Damatian (*Jo's beer hall dance partner*)
 Erin Rose, Lizzie Short (*girls at ballroom*)
 Dash Barber (*Fred Vaughn*)
 Edward Fletcher (*Laurence's servant*)
 Sasha Frolova (*Mrs Hummel*)
 David J. Curtis (*train porter*)
 Harper Pilat, Eowyn Young, Lucy Austin
 (*school girls*)
 Bill Mootos (*Mr Davis*)
 Lewis D. Wheeler (*Josiah Workman*)
 Jen Nikolaisen (*Evelyn Meriwether*)
 Jonathon Acorn (*Concord play pianist*)
 Abby Quinn (*Annie Moffat*)
 Lilly Englert (*Kate Vaughn*)
 JM Davis (*Susan Robbins*)
 Tom Kemp (*Asa Melvin*)
 Daniel Shea (*soldier with telegram*)
 Anthony Estrella (*doctor*)
 Adrienne Krstansky (*Mrs Dashwood*)
 Sophia Gialloreto, Lily Elizabeth Gavin,
 Finola Weller Baldet (*Dashwood girls*)
 USA 2019©
 135 mins

The screening on Sun 30 Jul will be presented with subtitles, including descriptions of non-dialogue audio

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really close to the surface and even now, this movie feels more autobiographical than anything I've made.'

Gerwig read *Little Women* so many times as a child, she doesn't remember the first time. Like a long list of fellow writers and artists, she felt such an intense identification with Jo March – tomboy, misfit and would-be novelist struggling against the status quo to become the woman she imagines – that Jo felt less like a made-up person and more like a charismatic mentor. She was the girl who knew what she wanted. To be freer. To create. To transcend all that was not allowed and yet to give of herself fully to her loved ones. That's part of why Gerwig wanted to plunge audiences into the fabric of Jo's world – its emotional oscillations and personal dynamics – in the most visceral way she could.

'*Little Women* has been part of who I am for as long as I can remember,' Gerwig notes. 'There was never a time when I didn't know who Jo March was, and she was always my girl, the person I wanted to be and the person who I hoped I was.'

While Gerwig stays true to Alcott's original voice, she reconstructs the novel in an inherently cinematic way, unmooring the story from linear time, transforming the March's most unforgettable events into the stuff of memories and creative inspiration. This invites audiences to engage with the March sisters as something new: as adults looking back, and as the living source for Jo's writing.

'Every time I read the book, it became something different,' observes Gerwig. 'I first knew it in the cosiness of childhood, and then as I got older, new parts of it jumped out at me. As I began writing the screenplay, the part of it that was in clear relief was how the sisters' lives as adults are so poignant and fascinating, because they're trying to figure out how to honor the fearless youth they had as grown-ups.'

Gerwig also went deep into research, reading Alcott's letters and papers, to draw on aspects of Alcott's real life to give her adaptation a formidable, modern voice. For example, the real Alcott wrote, 'I had lots of troubles, so I write jolly tales'; in the film, Marmee says, 'I'm angry nearly every day of my life.'

In drawing early inspiration from *Little Women*, Gerwig has a lot of company. The late sci-fi master Ursula K. Le Guin called Alcott 'close as a sister'. Novelist Erica Jong said *Little Women* sparked a belief that 'women could become writers, intellectuals – and still have rich personal lives.' The heroines of Elena Ferrante's masterwork *My Brilliant Friend* bond over a tattered copy of Alcott's book, vowing to write their own. Poet Gail Mazur thanked Alcott for helping writers 'to live with, knowing we're not alone, the conflict between the writer's need for solitude and self-absorption and the yearning for the warmth of love.' Harry Potter creator J.K. Rowling said of Jo March: 'It is hard to overstate what she meant to a small, plain girl called Jo, who had a hot temper and a burning ambition to be a writer.'

For women, carving out any individualistic path, particularly an artistic life, has been perilous in any era. But that's also why Jo hit home so hard with Gerwig. 'There's a rebel spirit contained in Jo, and a hope for a life beyond what your gender dictates that is completely exciting to us still,' says Gerwig. 'She's this girl with a boy's name who wants to write, and she's ambitious and she's angry and she's so many different things that we identify with. It's like she allowed us to be free.'

Production notes