

## *A Little Women* for the 21st Century

By: Caroline Bodan

Greta Gerwig's *Little Women* artfully juxtaposes the classic nostalgia of the March sisters with a more modern conversation about the economic struggles of women. Her adaptation joins a long line of work based on Alcott's beloved tale. What stays consistent is the enduring goodness of the women. Their stories are full of sacrifice, from giving their Christmas breakfast to the poorer family next door to Jo's departure from New York to take care of the sickly Beth. It is this trait that has asserted their place in the hearts of countless generations. Anchored in this familiarity, Gerwig takes control of the rest of narrative through a disjointed sequence. As a result, the film explores new areas of the story.

The break in the traditional telling of the story dethrones Jo March for the first time in literary or film history, as her narrative no longer guides the story. Because of this, an unlikely star emerges in Amy March. Often depicted as the fussy little sister, it becomes obvious that Amy possesses the most wisdom and maturity. We see Amy in a new light, as a woman that struggles with being the sole person to secure her family's financial security as Jo forges her own path. She grapples with the choice between love and economic advancement, because this is a choice that she and other women have to make, as she triumphantly states to Laurie in the scene stealing moment of the film. Though Jo criticizes Amy for, "having a knack for getting out of the hard parts of life," it becomes apparent that Amy is left to grapple with the harsh realities that Jo trades in for fictional worlds.

Perhaps because she must make these choices, Amy is the one who encourages Jo to write about domestic struggles, when Jo dismisses them as not being worthwhile. Amy believes that Jo can make them important through writing. Though Jo's headstrong nature is eventually what gets the book published, it is safe to say that the concept would not have come to be without the realistic guidance of her sister. Though Jo is the traditional female heroine in the way that she rejects societal expectations, Gerwig's film voices the idea that women like Amy, who live within them, are just as important to examine.