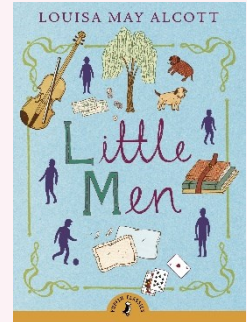




## GIRL'S BOOK CLUB GUIDE

# LITTLE MEN

By Louisa May Alcott



“It takes so little to make a child happy, that it is a pity in a world full of sunshine and pleasant things, that there should be any wistful faces, empty hands, or lonely little hearts.”

## GENRE

Children's Literature

## THEMES

Influence

Family

Friendship

Coming of Age

Goodness and Virtue

**Influence:** An act of persuasion, the way others lead us for better or worse.

## CHARACTERS

### Mrs Jo and Professor Friedrich Bhaer (Fritz)

Jo and Mr Bhaer run Plumfield School. They are kind, compassionate and endearing teachers who all students look up to and admire. They expect the best of their boys and direct their growth through moral lessons, but they also allow just the right amount of mischief and drama for the boy's imagination to blossom.

### Nat Blake

Nat is the newest boy to arrive at Plumfield. After his father's death, Nat became an orphan and could not make a living on the streets. He is shy, scared

and unused to kindness, having grown up in a poor situation. Plumfield becomes his home and family, and Nat blossoms under Jo's tender and watchful care.

### *Daniel Kean (Dan)*

Dan is a 14-year-old boy who comes to Plumfield because of Nat. He is often moody and distrustful, exhibiting rudeness and violence, earning the nickname 'black sheep'. However, under the influence of the Bhaers, his sensitivity for beauty and passion for justice shines through, and he proves to be one of the best of Jo Bhaer's boys.

### *Franz Hoffmann*

Franz is the oldest boy at 16. He is German, bookish, musical and domesticated.

### *Emil Hoffmann*

Emil is a quick-tempered and restless boy, bent on going to sea.

### *John 'Demi' Brooke*

Demi is a serious yet cheery soul. He loves books, is incredibly intelligent, and adores his twin sister Daisy, who also lives at Plumfield.

### *Daisy Brooke*

Daisy is a sunshiny, charming 10-year-old girl who loves mothering her dolls. She could not get along without her twin brother, Demi, and innocently idolises him.

### *Tommy Bangs*

Tommy Bangs is a boisterous young troublemaker and often leaves tornado-like damage in his wake! Deep down, he adores the Bhaers and does try to do the right thing.

### *Nan*

Nan is a fearless and strong-willed little girl who comes to live at Plumfield after her mother's death. Although she is incredibly feisty and unladylike, Jo sees the gold underneath and through love, lessons and patient endurance, Nan becomes a little lady.

### *Rob Bhaer*

Rob is Jo's oldest son and Teddy's big brother. He is an energetic boy whose lack of bravery keeps him out of trouble.

### *Teddy Bhaer*

Teddy is Jo's young son. All the boys love and care for him because "they believed in babies at Plumfield."

### *Ned Barker*

Ned is known as "Blunderbuss" because of his clumsiness. He has a bad habit of bragging and bullying little boys while flattering the older ones and is at risk of being easily led astray.

### *George Cole (Stuffy)*

George was a spoilt and sick little boy until he arrived at Plumfield, where the better diet, exercise and fresh air did him good.

### *Dick Brown*

Dick is a good-natured boy who suffers from a crooked back.

### *Dolly Pettingill*

Dolly is a quiet and ordinary lad, content with life and happy to do his duty as required.

### *Billy Ward*

Billy Ward is a thirteen-year-old boy who struggles to learn and comprehend his lessons after suffering from brain fever.

### *Jack Ford*

Jack is a sharp but sly lad who was sent to this school because it was cheap. His father is quite wealthy but incredibly selfish with his money.

### *Bess (Goldielocks)*

Bess is Mr Laurie's little daughter. The boys regard 'Goldilocks' as a mixture of child, angel, and fairy because she is a lovely little girl.

### *Mr Theodore Laurie*

Mr Laurie is Jo's brother-in-law and a benefactor of Plumfield. He takes a deep interest in the boys, and his kindness towards them greatly encourages them.

## STORYLINE

Little Men is a delightful tale about a group of rambunctious but good-hearted boys who dwell at the Plumfield boarding school run by Jo and her husband, Professor Bhaer. As we follow the lives of these delightfully cheeky and heroic boys - who often get into mischief and learn important life lessons on virtue and growing up - we witness them blossoming into the Little Men Jo knows they are capable of!

With just the right amount of cheeky drama, this story is a heartwarming and funny coming-of-age tale about friendship, faith, learning to be good, and the importance of being surrounded by good influences and a loving home.

### 1 QUESTION ONE

What did you enjoy most about the story, and who was your favourite Plumfield character? Why?

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### 2 QUESTION TWO

Discuss how Mr Bhaer and Mrs Jo disciplined the children at the Plumfield. What lesson from the story would you like to remember?

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### 3 QUESTION THREE

How did you feel when Nat was accused of stealing Tommy's money and lying about it? Was he treated fairly?

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### 4 QUESTION FOUR

Dan was very influential at Plumfield and initially led the boys astray. How did Dan change throughout the story?

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### 5 QUESTION FIVE

Jo hopes that Nan's presence at Plumfield will encourage the boys to become more gentlemanly and Nan more ladylike. Do you think this plan was successful? What was your favourite 'Nan' adventure from the story?

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