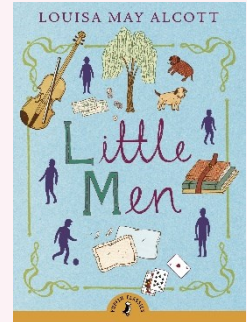




TEEN'S BOOK CLUB GUIDE

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 (Goldilocks)

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 Plumfield adventures?

2 QUESTION TWO

Who was your favourite character? Why?

3 QUESTION THREE

“‘Help one another’ was a favorite Plumfield motto, and Nat learned how much sweetness is added to life by trying to live up to it.”

Discuss the high moral standards at Plumfield. How did these standards impact the boy's lives?

4 QUESTION FOUR

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

5 QUESTION FIVE

Mrs Jo says, “I only want to give these children a home in which they can be taught a few simple things... Honesty, courage, industry, faith in God, their fellow-creatures, and themselves; that is all I try for.” Why do you think Jo’s method of ‘love’ was successful?

6 QUESTION SIX

Dan was very influential at Plumfield and initially led the boys astray, whereas Bess (Goldilocks) positively impacted the children. Why is it important to be surrounded by people who love us and desire goodness for us?

7 QUESTION SEVEN

When Nat is accused of stealing and lying about Tommy's money, he adamantly denies it was him. Do you think Nat was treated fairly by the boys and Mr Bhaer? How did this hard lesson benefit Nat in the end?

8 QUESTION EIGHT

After Tommy's money is returned, Dan takes the fall. Discuss this "Damon and Pythias" situation and how it represents a crucial moment in Dan's transformation.

9 QUESTION NINE

Why do you think nature study was so highly commended at Plumfield? What are the benefits of learning about creation? What does creation tell us about the Creator?

10 QUESTION TEN

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? How did the children help one another to grow and flourish into Little Men and Women?

NOTES

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