

***Little Women* Audition Readings**

In addition to your prepared 1 ½-2 minute monologue of your choice, please read through these short pieces of text below and **choose one that you are prepared to read if asked** during your audition slot.

There is no need to memorize this piece of text in advance, but please be familiar enough with it that you can read it comfortably while still engaging with the audition panel.

Note: *Indented light grey text is provided as indication dialogue has been removed, but is not intended to be read aloud. Italicized text is for scene context and also not intended to be read.*

<i>Character</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Text</i>
<i>JO</i>	<i>Speaking to her sisters and mother after cutting off her hair in order to get money so Marmee can visit Father who was wounded in the Civil War.</i>	<i>(Very fast.)</i> I was wild thinking of Father, and us not being able to make the rent, or, or – do anything—and you always say we each can play our part—and I thought of the wigmaker’s shop, and how I always see tails of hair there. And so I ran down the street and pounded on the wigmaker’s door and burst into his Christmas and scared his wife half to death, but their son is in the army, so once I blubbered it all out she made him give me a good price—twenty-five, see?!!! I never felt a thing, just a big weight off my shoulders. And I saved a lock for you so you could lay it away, as you did when we were children. I bet it’s the last girl’s lock you’ll ever have from any of us—from, from me. <i>(Anxiously.)</i> Marmee—aren’t you pleased?
<i>JO</i>	<i>Speaking to Aunt March and Amy following Aunt March’s awful tirade. See Aunt March monologue. Please skip Amy’s lines when reading aloud.</i>	You’re right! You’re so right, Aunt March! You’re so right, Amy! We never should have gotten into the war! Who cares if people are being enslaved? That’s hundreds of miles away, why should it bother us?! Why should we take any action?!! <i>AMY. Josephine—</i> Who cares if families are starving in the tenements?! That’s right in our backyards but why should we lift a finger? No, no, I think we should sit on our hands and shut our mouths, lest we disturb the others! Civility at all costs, that’s what I say! Civility before humanity! <i>AMY. Jo—</i> We should have no objections, isn’t that it, Amy, no egocentric aspirations to change the world! We should be adults! And the adult thing is to do nothing and say nothing—and if we accomplish nothing, then that’s for the best! We should just stay at home, and close our eyes, and accept the SAME EVILS, FOREVER!

JO	<i>Speaking to Laurie following his marriage proposal to her. Please skip Laurie lines when reading aloud.</i>	Laurie, you'll get over this after a while, and find some girl who will adore you and be a lady for your fine house. Me—you'd grow ashamed of me by and by, and you'd come to hate my writing, and we would be unhappy! LAURIE. That's not true— You've just built up something—in your head—you're playing a part, some idea of being a Man that you picked up from your friends or college or the world. It's <i>not</i> me—but it's not even you! WE can go right back to who—what—we were. All you have to do is shake off this—childish fantasy, and— LAURIE. —It's not childish, Jo. It's called growing up. It's real. And we can never go back. <i>She looks at him—it's as if the world has dropped away from beneath her feet. The clock only runs one way.</i> ...Why can't you want what any other woman would want? Because I'm not—I'm not like other women. I thought you understood.
AMY	<i>Spoken to Jo (and Beth) as Amy reminds Jo that she is supposed to call on Aunt March instead of see Laurie off to college.</i>	—Maybe it's time to be realistic, Josephine, about your prospects. Give up childish—and, frankly, egocentric—fantasies about Showing Them All and setting the world on fire—and you'll resent people less. It's not everyone else's fault that you don't feel like you're living up to your potential.
AMY	<i>Spoken to Jo (Marmee and Beth are present) following Aunt March's declaration that Amy will accompany her to Europe instead of Jo, which had been the plan for years.</i>	You think I'm stupid, Josephine, but I know more about the world than you ever did! You think that if you go to <i>Europe</i>, things will be so different: that you'll get to do and be whatever you want. But Europe isn't the set of one of your theatricals! You don't get to make up what happens in life! There are rules over there, just like here! Aunt March is taking me along because I'm smart enough to keep my peace! Because I act like a lady and you never do! So be what you are, Josephine. And live with the consequences.

BETH	<i>Spoken to Jo as they both come to terms that Beth is dying. Skip Jo's line when reading aloud; please note this is the only time we see anger from Beth.</i>	I'm not like the rest of you. I never made plans about what I'd do when I grew up; thought of being married, or moving on—I couldn't imagine myself anything but stupid Beth, sitting at home. —But I never wanted to go away! I'm afraid of being homesick, Jo. And I worry about all of you, without me. JO. Beth—I have finally grown up. I have no heart for writing anymore and I thought you'd be pleased. So, you'd play the new Beth to them, Jo? That's not the part for you! You get the privilege of growing up, so use it! Don't waste your life trying to be a violet if you're—a chestnut burr, prickly on the outside and soft inside, or a—a big rigid oak tree, or a stupid ROCK, even—or whatever you find out that you are, Jo. I don't want that!
MEG	<i>Enters the March home covered in red jam. She's exhausted and crying and "assumes a scrap of dignity" as she speaks to Jo.</i>	Well—I'm home with the babies all day, you know, and Demi is starting to crawl. I can't leave him alone for a moment but I find him headed toward the fire— And Daisy has the colic, she won't stop crying—and they're both teething— And I never realized what an angel Hannah is here, with all the chores, they just never end—and we can't afford any help, John works hard enough just to keep a roof over our head—I'm so tired of being poor—it's not fun at all being mistress of the house, really. So I'm home alone with the twins, Jo—alone, all day. And all day every day I'm fighting—I'm fighting a battle against all the nappies and bottles and swaddling clothes in the world, and I'm always losing. But today—today! They finally took a nap at the same time and it was so quiet and sat and thought, what if I could have anything I wished in the world right now? And I thought, I want—all I want—is—JAM.
MEG	<i>Rehearsing one of Jo's plays with her sisters. Meg is playing the role of Lucella. Please skip Jo's line when reading aloud.</i>	<i>O sad, my heart! O mad, my part! O, what end of a maiden's art!</i> Jo, I have some questions about this rhyme scheme. JO. Keep going! <i>I loved you once, Rodrigo</i> <i>But those days are no more—</i> <i>I can't go back to being</i> <i>Who I was before!</i> <i>All things change, Rodrigo</i> <i>Whatever spell you say!</i> <i>You can't turn me to stone</i> <i>And you can't make me stay—</i>

AUNT MARCH	<i>Spouting hateful speech to Jo and Amy...which leads to Jo's blow-up (see Jo monologue).</i>	Mind your fingers. How does your father fare, child? Better! Not for long, I'm sure. He ought never to have gone to the war! But then, we should never have had a war at all. Why should we poke our noses down South? Lincoln ought never to have pressed his agenda! We ought to focus on the Union—and put the homeland first! But your parents are the same—your father and his radical abolitionism— And your mother, and her immigrant trash! I <i>told</i> her, I said, you go amongst that filthy boat rabble—you never know what will come trailing home after you! And look what happened! She never listened to sage advice from cooler heads, she always wished to slum around amongst the lesser classes—and so she nearly killed your half-wit sister!
MARMEE	<i>Coming home from caring for the Hummel family and speaking to her daughters.</i>	Do you remember the immigrant woman with the baby: Mrs. Hummel? Her little boy came begging. I went with him and found Mrs. Hummel terribly ill, with her children crying from hunger, in conditions— Well. I tried to help. I've been thinking, girls: Christmas is almost here, but it's a hard winter for so many, with the war. Perhaps we shouldn't spend for pleasure. With Father away we can't do much, but we can make some sacrifices. We can each play our part. <i>General dismay.</i> We'll be together, and we'll have Jo's theatrical! But perhaps no presents. You are becoming adults. That means learning what you need—and what you don't. <i>Silence.</i> It is only a proposal.

MR. DASHWOOD	<i>A publisher. Speaking to Jo who is dressed in pants and a cravat about her novel that she is attempting to sell him. Please skip Jo's lines. When reading aloud.</i>	Novel? I'm not in the market for ladies' novels. The books downstairs are works of literature. Not sentimental pieces. I assume you're a woman? Then this is a ladies' novel. Doesn't matter how you dress it up. Listen, Miss March—there's a legitimate place for women's voices—bring me another sweet little story, it helps sell powder if I run it next to the ads. Fifteen for a story. Put some heaving bosoms in it. JO. Fifteen? Last time you paid me thirty. —Seems to me that last time, you had a cooler head negotiating for you. Where's your "agent"? Some gentlemen won't pay a lady at all—but I'm forward thinking. Miss MArch—a little advice: Next time you step into this world, you bring that "agent"—or your father—or your husband. Remember—I'm one of the good ones.
LAURIE	<i>Meeting Jo for the first time as they hide out at the Mingott's Ball (neither is thrilled to be there). Please skip Jo's line when reading aloud.</i>	I know something about doing the bidding of cross old people. I get tutored. My grandfather has great plans for me, and bought me out of the draft. I am someday to be a tedious titan of industry! SO I must grind away 'til college, where I will learn how to do what I don't wish to do, in order that I may do MORE of what I don't like in the future. JO. Lucky—lucky to go to college! How can you complain of that? — I'm sorry, I'm being— I'm so awkward, I always talk too openly. If Meg was here she'd cough herself into a fit over me being boyish. I'm not very good at being a "gentleman." So perhaps we should—be ourselves. <i>Pause.</i> I'd rather be a girl than a boy. Then I wouldn't have to do all the things that men are supposed to: waste away life in billiards and business, march off to war, be as unfeeling as granite! If I were a lady, I'd compose on the piano all day, and nobody would bother me.

LAURIE	<i>Preparing to head off to college, Laurie stops by the March home for conversation with Jo. Please skip Jo's lines when reading aloud.</i>	Why don't you want to play Lucella? She gets to drag around in costume jewelry and scream thrillingly. And you'd get to flirt with the loyal-hearted Valentino. JO. Marmee doesn't approve of flirts. Flirting is just a game men and women play. You like games! JO. Not that kind. —well—I'm glad! Some of the ladies I meet go on at such a rate that I'm embarrassed for them. Like Sally Mingott, if you had heard how she spoke to me at last week's dance! And if she knew how us men talked about her afterwards...huh. If you could be in my place, you'd see things that would astonish you. JO. Why should you mock girls for doing just what you all do? Ladies can never win that game can they? Don't be thorny, Jo. I only meant, SOME girls do flirt with me, you know, in life. But I prefer what you do! Don't do. I prefer you, old fellow. Just as you are.
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