

# THE WAR ON LITTLE WOMEN

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A short comedy by  
Laura King

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

MEG, oldest sister (mid to late teens), prim and proper.

JO, second sister (mid to late teens), adventuresome and tomboyish.

BETH, third sister (mid teens), gentle and sickly.

AMY, youngest sister (early teens), childish and conceited.

## SETTING

The living room of the sisters' home during the American Civil War.

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*(Lights up on a cozy living room. MEG is knitting. AMY is drawing. BETH is darning socks.)*

**AMY:** Christmas won't be Christmas without any presents.

*(JO enters dressed in full male military gear. She grabs the fireplace poker. As she yells, the other sisters throw up their instruments [knitting needles, darning egg, drawing pencils] in surprise. Beth faints.)*

**JO:** Christopher Columbus! Presents! You're worried about presents at a time like this. Don't you know there's a war on?

**MEG:** Oh, for heaven's sake, Jo. You nearly scared us to death. And don't say "Christopher Columbus." It's so boyish.

**AMY:** Why do you have to be so dramatical?

**MEG:** Are you all right, Beth?

**AMY:** She's always fainting.

**BETH:** Don't mind me. I'm fine.

*(Jo rushes around securing the room.)*

**JO:** You're not fine. None of us are fine. They're coming for us.

**AMY:** What's she going on about, Meg?

**MEG:** Oh, you know Jo. She sees trouble around every corner.

**BETH:** Are you talking about Papa's war, Jo? The Civil War?

**JO:** I'm talking about our war. The war on little women.

**BETH:** Are we in danger?

**JO:** More danger than you'll ever know.

**BETH:** Oh dear.

*(Beth faints. Meg tends to her.)*

**MEG:** Jo, you've got to stop this. Look at poor Beth.

**BETH:** *(Awakening:)* Don't mind me. I'm fine.

**JO:** I'm doing this for Beth and for both of you.

**MEG:** Doing what?

**JO:** Protecting you from the enemy!

**AMY:** The confederates?

**JO:** Men!

**MEG:** I knew it. This is all because John Brooke has been paying attention to me.

**AMY:** I wish somebody would pay attention to me.

**MEG:** Give it time.

**JO:** It's about Brooke and Laurie and all the other men who want to make good wives out of us.

**MEG:** And what's wrong with that?

**AMY:** Yes, why do you have to be so problematical, Jo?

**JO:** I'm not the problem, they are. They're going to break in here and take us hostage, dragging us back to their lairs for lives of housework and babies. I don't know about the rest of you, but that's not my plan.

**MEG:** And what exactly is your plan?

**JO:** I plan to be astonishing.

**BETH:** You already are, Jo.

**AMY:** I want to be astonishing, too.

**MEG:** Settle down, Amy.

**AMY:** Please, Meg. Please be astonishing with us.

**MEG:** Well, I would like to have a lovely house full of all sorts of luxurious things, heaps of money, and plenty of servants.

**JO:** More likely you'll end up with a husband bossing you around and children needing all your attention. You'll never have a minute's peace.

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**AMY:** I want to be a famous artist.

**JO:** Until some roving Romeo shows up and sweeps you off your feet. Then the only thing you'll end up painting is your kitchen walls.

**AMY:** Well, what's your plan?

**JO:** I want to write books and get rich and famous.

**BETH:** I just want us all to be together.

**JO:** We won't be together if the men have their way.

**AMY:** I want to be together, too. Don't you, Meg?

**MEG:** Yes, but—

**AMY:** *(Starting to cry:)* Please, Meg. Let's help Jo. I don't want to be a house painter.

**MEG:** Now, Amy, don't cry.

*(Meg rushes to Amy.)*

**BETH:** I don't know what I'd do if we weren't together. I feel faint.

*(Meg rushes to her.)*

**AMY:** *(Continuing to wail:)* This is catastrophic!

*(Meg rushes back to Amy.)*

**BETH:** Don't mind me. I'm fine.

*(Meg rushes back to Beth. A knock at the door.)*

**JO:** Everybody freeze.

*(The sisters freeze. Another knock at the door.)*

Hit the dirt!

*(All the sisters drop to the floor in unison. Jo crawls military style to the window and looks out.)*

**MEG:** *(Whispering:)* Who is it?

**JO:** It's John Brooke.

**MEG:** (*Starting to get up:*) John! I wonder what he—

**JO:** (*Brandishing the fireplace poker at Meg:*) Stay down!

**MEG:** (*Getting back down:*) Sorry.

**JO:** (*Looking out the window again:*) And Laurie's with him.

**AMY:** I like Laurie.

**JO:** We all like Laurie. But let's not forget, names aside, he's still a man.

**BETH:** What are we going to do?

*(Another knock on the door.)*

**JO:** Arm yourselves, girls.

*(Meg, Beth, and Amy race around the room looking for weapons. Meg retrieves her knitting needles, Amy her drawing pencils, and Beth her darning egg. They hold them out like weapons.)*

**MEG:** We're ready, Jo.

**JO:** Back me up, and we'll keep these wolves at bay.

*(Jo gives a loud battle cry and charges out the door.)*

**AMY:** (*Screaming:*) Oh, Meg. Whatever should we do?

**MEG:** (*Screaming:*) Be quiet! I'm trying to think.

**BETH:** I feel faint.

*(The sound of Jo in battle is heard. Meg and Amy run around in circles screaming. Beth faints. Jo reenters. She steps over Beth's body.)*

**JO:** It's done.

**AMY:** Laurie?

**MEG:** John?

**JO:** I ran them off. They won't be coming back.



*(Meg and Amy start to cry.)*

**MEG:** Oh no, now we'll be old maids for sure.

**JO:** But I thought that's what you wanted. Now we can be astonishing.

*(Meg and Amy cry harder. Beth awakens.)*

**BETH:** What happened?

**JO:** I got rid of John and Laurie, and all these two niminy-piminy chits can do is cry. Come, come, now. We've said all along we wanted to be together forever and I've made it possible.

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