

EPISODE 146: **The Astonishing Impact of Louisa May Alcott**

- Sarah: [00:12](#) You are listening to the Read-Aloud Revival podcast. This is the podcast that helps you make meaningful and lasting connections with your kids through books.
- Sarah: [00:28](#) Hello, hello, Sarah Mackenzie here. You've got episode 146 of the Read-Aloud Revival podcast. I have such a good episode for you today. I just love making this show for you and it's getting more and more fun as time goes on. I'm talking today to Jan Turnquist. Jan is the Executive Director of Orchard House, Louisa May Alcott's home in Concord, Massachusetts. She's also the Co-executive Producer, Director and host of the documentary called Orchard House: Home of Little Women, which tells the story of the Orchard House property and that documentary actually won an Emmy in 2019. It's excellent. It's short and lovely and really worth your time and at the time I'm recording this, you can watch it on Amazon Prime. I would encourage you to do that.
- Sarah: [01:17](#) I got to meet Jan when I visited Orchard House. Again, that's the home of Louisa May Alcott, and of course Louisa May Alcott wrote Little Women among many other works and I got to visit the home, which is where she wrote Little Women, and it's also the setting of Little Women, since much in Little Women is autobiographical. We're going to talk more about that in today's show. I visited last summer and it was a visit I will not soon forget. You're going to hear me talk about it in my conversation with Jan. If you're ever in the New England area visiting Orchard House in Concord, Massachusetts it's well worth your time. I mean, go out of your way to visit it. It's worth it. Anyway, I'll have pictures of my own visit in today's show notes. In fact, you can find out more about Orchard House, the documentary and everything we talk about in today's show in the show notes along with those pictures. Those show notes are at [readaloudrevival.com/146](http://readaloudrevival.com/146). Okay, let's go ahead and tackle this episode's listener question and this week's question comes from Katie.
- Katie: [02:22](#) Hi Sarah. I'd love to hear your opinion on if it's okay to allow my children to watch the movie adaptation of a book right after we have finished reading that novel. I know that in school when I was growing up, we always watched the movie right after we finished reading the book in class, but I didn't know as a homeschooling mom if that actually was beneficial or not. I know there's a lot to be said about

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letting their own imagination take the story to the places that they want to take it, but is it hurting them? Is it harming them? Because I know sometimes it can make things seem clearer as well. I'd love to hear your opinion on this and opinions of anybody else. Thank you.

Sarah: [03:06](#) Hey Katie, this is a perfect question for this episode because we're going to be talking today about Little Women and Little Women, of course, has several movie adaptations. Okay, so first reading a book and then following it up with a movie is actually a fantastic learning experience for your kids. It offers a lot of organic, natural ways to start talking about what's similar and what's different between the book and the movie version. If you've read my book, Read-Aloud Family, you know one of the questions that I say is the best questions to ask your kids after reading together is, you take two characters or two things that happen in the book and ask what's the same about them and what's different. This is how we help our kids learn to think in metaphor and it comes in handy when they're doing all kinds of writing and thinking down the road as well.

Sarah: [03:56](#) So this is a way for you just to ask... Your kids will naturally... Actually you don't even have to ask usually, your kids will naturally start telling you how the movie and book were different. It's like we zone in on that, we just can't help it. This just happened in our house this week actually where my kids are pinpointing all the things in the movie that were different from a book we had just finished reading. So that can be a really, really good conversation starter, and a really good learning experience. If you've read the book first, chances are pretty good that your kids have images in their mind of what each character looks like and those kinds of things, so their imaginations have already fired quite a bit. I don't think there's any harm at all in watching the movie.

Sarah: [04:34](#) That said, I'm actually also a fan of watching the movie first, which I know, is probably a little counterintuitive and not what you thought I would say, but I'll tell you this: A well done movie can really inspire your kids to read the book. It's a lot like an abridged version or a shortened version of a classic. Has many times in my home inspired my kids to read the full length, unabridged classic. This happened with Heidi by Johanna Spyri. My second

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daughter read an abridged beginner reader version of the book when she was small, and then she loved it so much that she chose to read the whole unabridged classic version, even though it really was a stretch for her as far as her reading level. It's not a book she would have been able to pick up otherwise. So I think a movie can act in the same way where it inspires our kids to pick up the book, and a really well done movie will probably inspire your kids to pick up the book.

Sarah: [05:29](#) Today's conversation about Little Women is going to be a good case in point where I think if your kids or you go see the new movie, Little Women, and you haven't read the book, you're going to be inspired to read the book. It's not going to prevent you from reading it. I liked the way Kristin put it in a recent conversation in our Read-Aloud Revival Premium forum. She said in their family they like to enjoy books and films in their own medium and not worry too much about which comes first. That's so smart I think because movies are stories, right? They're just a story told in a different medium.

Sarah: [06:00](#) Each medium conveys the story a little differently because of the medium it's being told in. So Kristen goes on to say, "Sometimes it's the film version that inspires someone to read the book. Sometimes the book is so dear and so beautiful that no film version can ever hold a candle to it. For me, it's not either or, or before or after, rather it's yes, let's enjoy this story in various forums and see which imaginings of it are rendered more artfully and effectively." Isn't that great, Kristin? I just loved how you said that by the way.

Sarah: [06:34](#) One more thought before I wrap up here. In many cases a hard book or maybe a classic that might use different language than we commonly read today, that can be really wonderful as a movie first. It can help your kids know what's going on, keep up with characters and plot lines. Pride & Prejudice is an example of what we did with this in our home. Watching the BBC version, the dramatization of that with Colin Firth, it's not going to dampen your enjoyment of the novel one bit, I promise. There is no way Colin Firth as Mr. Darcy takes away any enjoyment of the actual novel.

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- Sarah: [07:08](#) All in all I really think there's not a right or wrong way to do this. Enjoying stories with our kids in any order is always a worthwhile pursuit, so I hope that helps Katie. Go watch a movie of something you guys have read together. I bet your kids will really enjoy it and it can be a fun family activity.
- Sarah: [07:24](#) Okay, so we're ready to turn our attention to the conversation I had with Jan Turnquist. Now Jan Turnquist is going to be coming to Read-Aloud Revival Premium this spring because our Mama Book Club selection in Premium is Little Men, which is of course the sequel to Little Women, although you don't have to have read Little Women to enjoy Little Men. Of course, both are very worth reading, but I love Little Men. For one thing, for all the ways it can inspire us, especially if we're homeschooling. It's just a wonderful book. There's so many thoughts on education and learning and the way children grow. It's so good. I can't wait to read it with RAR Premium members.
- Sarah: [08:03](#) We're going to be reading the book over the spring, chatting about it in the Premium forum and then Jan Turnquist will join us for a live video stream where she shares even more about Louisa May Alcott and Little Men than we can get into on today's show. So we'd love to have you join us. RAR Premium is definitely the best thing we do at Read-Aloud Revival. If you love today's episode, you want to join RAR Premium, so go to rarpremium.com to get all the details. We are open now.
- Sarah: [08:53](#) Jan Turnquist is not just the Executive Director of Orchard House, she's also an award winning impersonator of Louisa May Alcott among some other historical figures. She's a true expert on the Alcott family and I started my conversation with her by asking, what first swept her up into the world of Louisa May Alcott?
- Jan: [09:13](#) Like many young women, I was introduced to Little Women by my librarian. Usually it's someone who introduces it to a young woman, a young girl, a mother, an aunt, a grandmother. In my case it happened to be a librarian, but my real focus on Louisa really began when I moved to Concord and learned about the real woman, as you did when you visited Orchard House. That's exactly what happened to me. I learned so much, and I fell in love with Louisa and the whole family because they were so

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progressive, so unusual compared to many, many people of that era. Even sometimes compared to people today. I mean they really believed that you should care about other people more than amassing material goods. You should help other people, even if they're strangers.

- Jan: [10:15](#) They were part of the underground railroad. They were willing to take people in who were running away from danger. This would be perhaps an abused wife. The laws were not protecting women in those days at all, but Alcott's were really willing to go out on a limb to help people in need, and I just thought that was amazing and so admirable.
- Jan: [10:38](#) And then of course Bronson's educational ideas were apparent to me, all of this from visiting Orchard House, which is exactly what happened to you, and I think that all of her writing took on even more significance for me. The more I knew about her personally and her family personally, because I could see how much of their actual lives were reflected in Louisa's writing.
- Sarah: [11:04](#) I read Little Women as a girl, like you and loved it, and then I read something else and I'm trying to think... Good wives, is that technically part of Little Women or was that separate?
- Jan: [11:20](#) Yes, no. Little Women was written in two parts.
- Sarah: [11:24](#) Okay.
- Jan: [11:25](#) And in the United States part one and part two were put together in Louisa's lifetime, and then the whole thing was just known as Little Women.
- Sarah: [11:35](#) Okay, got it.
- Jan: [11:37](#) But in England and in some other countries, you know it was published all over the world fairly quickly, it has been translated into more than 50 foreign languages.
- Sarah: [11:48](#) Oh, wow.
- Jan: [11:48](#) So depending on where you are, there are some countries and England is one, where they just kept them separate and it was Little Women and Good Wives, and they just kept it that way.

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- Sarah: [11:59](#) Okay.
- Jan: [11:59](#) And people who don't know that sometimes get very excited, "I discovered a new Alcott book."
- Sarah: [12:04](#) Yes. You know it's funny because I think I did feel that way when I saw... I'm remembering, I think this must have been about 10 years ago, I was on an airplane go to go visit my sister and I was reading Good Wives, and I remember thinking this feels kind of familiar, but also being really excited about it, but I think I had a whole new... You know how when you read a book in a different season in your life, it speaks to you in a whole different way?
- Jan: [12:29](#) Oh yeah.
- Sarah: [12:29](#) So I think I was having this new relationship with Little Women, but I didn't realize because the actual book I was holding my hand said Good Wives on the front. I thought I was reading a different story, so it was sort of like this is vaguely familiar but it's also fresh and new probably because of me being in a different season of my life, now being a wife and a mother, it's a whole different experience.
- Jan: [12:52](#) That is such a good point that you're making, because I think that's exactly what happens when people read Little Women let's say when they're 11 or something, and then they read it when they're 20 and then maybe they read it when they're 50 and at whatever age, some people read it every year. I know a few people who do that. But it is different in different seasons of your life. Very, very good point.
- Sarah: [13:17](#) So I came to Orchard House this last summer and I was familiar, a little bit, with Louisa May Alcott because I've read Little Women, right? So you think, "Oh yes I know who that is," and then you come to Orchard House and the doors of curiosity blew open in wonder for me. First of all, I did not realize her family was so counter-cultural and brave and independent, and so help us set the scene a little bit. What can you tell us about the time she lived in and why the family that Louisa was raised in was an important thing for us to know about her?
- Jan: [13:54](#) Well, first of all, in that era women had very, very few rights. They were dependent upon kind husbands or at

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least decent husbands, because the men really did have all the power. If a woman was unmarried, in polite society it would be expected that she was under the protection of her brother or an uncle or some other gentlemen was going to be watching over her, protecting her. And when we say protecting, that sounds really good. In the sense of today, if you were walking in a dangerous neighborhood, but that's not really what it amounted to back then. It was like, well don't worry your pretty little head about it, and they really did believe that the female brain was not capable of what the male brain was capable of. So that meant you don't manage money, you don't really make the worlds fear your place of occupancy. You make the home fear your place.

Jan: [15:12](#) Man goes out in the public, woman stays in the home. You cook, you clean, you take care of children, you take care of the ill family members, you sew. Those are the things that have to be done. We aren't going to have the men doing it so it's going to take all your time and that's what you should do, and that's better for your brain. That makes Bronson Alcott and Mrs Alcott too, Abba, very unusual in that they didn't pay attention to any of that.

Jan: [15:46](#) Bronson built a desk for Louisa when it would be considered, first of all, unladylike to have a desk and secondly, dangerous for her health. Physicians have even said in some publications, yes we've now proved brainwork will destroy a woman's health. It's too big a risk, you shouldn't be doing it. And brainwork included writing for publication. Now writing letters was okay, so the ability of a woman to do very much was just curtailed at every turn.

Sarah: [16:18](#) Yeah. That struck me on so many... I mean there are so many things that surprised me when I was at Orchard House, which actually maybe we should back up a little bit and talk about Orchard House where you're the Executive Director, which we know as the place where Louisa wrote and set Little Women. I loved my time there. I could have spent hours more there.

Sarah: [16:38](#) I got to meet my friend Jamie Martin, who listeners will know as the lady behind thesimplehomeschool.net website and some of our favorite books, and she and I spent an afternoon there and it was just... It was not her

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first time, but it was mine and it did feel like a... I just felt like my curiosity and wonder about their whole family, about all the different people in their family from Louisa's father Bronson who has these educational maxims that were so unusual for the time, about how a student should be educated, will really resonate with a lot of the listeners today.

Sarah: [17:16](#) Let me just tell you a couple of them. I think there's 50 something, 58 maxims, but a couple of them are to teach with reference to eternity, to teach an imitation of the savior, to teach by the exercise of reason, to teach by clear and copious explanation, to teach by short and perfectly obtained lessons. That sounds so Charlotte Mason. I know my listeners are going, wait a second. To teach interestingly, to teach without indolence and discouragement, to teach pupils to teach themselves. I mean I'm looking at this list of maxims, they're in the Orchard House shop, thinking, "Oh this is what I'm trying to do in my homeschool. This is amazing." And then to know that Louisa's father was... I mean she was raised by these counter-cultural parents who were smart and brave and courageous and strong, and then to learn more about her sisters and realizing too that all four girls in Little Women represent the real Alcott sisters.

Sarah: [18:17](#) So tell us more about that too, because I think some of us don't realize that Louisa was actually writing about her own family.

Jan: [18:22](#) Yes, she really was. They did call their mother Marmee, and they did have very similar personalities to Meg Jo, Beth and Amy in Little Women. Sometimes slight changes or exaggerations or shifts a little bit, but mostly very, very similar. Beth really was very shy, and Louisa was the one who was the [inaudible 00:18:49] type of person who loved to write, who loved to make up all these plays, who was very bold. She was very active. People don't know that the real Louisa loved to run, and that was considered unladylike as well, and she just felt like it was a joy. One quotation of hers that I love was just, "it's such a joy to run." She actually said that in reaction to when she was young, some criticism by a neighbor saying it's not ladylike and little girls don't run.

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- Sarah: [19:26](#) Now do you have favorite parts about Orchard House itself? About the home itself?
- Jan: [19:40](#) No, I love the whole place so much and I've spent so much time there. I will say, the very first visit that I ever had to Orchard House, the little owl that's painted over the fireplace in Louisa's bed chamber...
- Sarah: [19:58](#) Yes.
- Jan: [19:58](#) It just captured me somehow. I loved that owl, and I still do. And I think maybe for that reason I've always had a little extra affinity for Louisa's bed chamber, only because... the whole house feels cozy and comfortable, I think. I love the way the light comes into that house, and there's just something about it, even though the furnishings are very old, it's still feels homey and comfortable instead of just old and stuffy or something, but Louisa's bed chamber, I think, does have a little special pull on my heart, because I picture her writing there. It seems like a wonderful place where you could do a lot of writing, and reading and just relaxing in your own quiet little space. So if I had to pick one spot to be my favorite, I guess I'd say that.
- Sarah: [20:52](#) That would be it. Oh, there were so many little things like that. Like that little touches where it would take me by surprise and I'd find myself thinking about them days later. Actually May's room, and May was Amy, right? So Louisa's sister, May, the youngest?
- Jan: [21:09](#) Yeah.
- Sarah: [21:09](#) Amy in Little Women.
- Jan: [21:10](#) Yes.
- Sarah: [21:10](#) And I didn't realize her younger sister was this artist. Going into May's room and seeing all the art all over the walls. Okay, I just... Oh my goodness, this girl drew on her walls and it's beautiful, and I just, yeah.
- Jan: [21:25](#) Yeah, that is really special and sometimes people who visited Orchard House even 50 years ago, you know, I was here when I was 10 now I'm 60. Are those drawings still on the walls? People remember that and love that.

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- Sarah: [21:44](#) I mean she did art on her walls. That alone is sort of like... How many of us let our children do art on the walls? And aren't we so glad that they did? Because now we get to... It's was my favorite part of Orchard House because you know what I think it represented to me? It represented that their parents were so committed to them and to their daughters fully growing into and displaying whatever God put in them to give to the world, that it was almost like whatever was conventions said should or shouldn't be done didn't matter, because their eyes were so fixed... This is... I might just be making a whole bunch of... I could be projecting so much here.
- Jan: [22:26](#) No, I agree with what you're saying 100%. I think that's accurate. It's really true. I think they were much more interested in the real person of each of their children, than what society might think or what the normal path would be. Mrs. Alcott was like Mrs. March in saying I'd rather have you marry for love than... Remember Aunt March was always saying, "You must marry well, your family..." Mrs. Alcott would deject the opposite.
- Sarah: [23:06](#) Another thing I learned that day, Jan, that I didn't know before was that Louisa was a nurse in the Civil War, that she volunteered, right?
- Jan: [23:13](#) Yes.
- Sarah: [23:14](#) Can you tell us any more about that? For anybody who's ears perked up and went, "Huh? I didn't know that."
- Jan: [23:20](#) Yeah. Well one thing that people assume if they've read Little Women, is that why` wouldn't father have gone? That's what usually happens, but Bronson Alcott was really too old at that point to go. Unless you were already a military man, people were not usually taking older gentlemen into the service. So there was no one in the family eligible, except a woman, in this case Louisa, and I think they all felt... I mentioned they were part of the underground railroad and I think they all felt a very strong, I guess you could say duty to do what they could to help that cause, even though initially freeing the slaves was not necessarily what the war was being fought about, but then eventually it was named to be a goal of... I mean that was a part of winning the war, was to free the slaves eventually and that did become an official card.

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- Jan: [24:25](#) So they felt very strongly about those things. Louisa felt strongly as well, but Louisa also actually wrote about this, that she longed for adventure. She wanted to see something dramatic and exciting and powerful, and she felt that going to war would fulfill that desire. Now you have to keep in mind that in those days people did not understand war the way we do today. The weapons, as awful as they were, were not as all encompassing, really awful as they became later. And the coverage was not very good up until... I think in the Civil War people did start to realize the horrors in a way they hadn't before, because they didn't have film footage and photography and lots of coverage the way eventually we have developed that.
- Jan: [25:22](#) Furthermore, it was the Civil War where photography first came into use. So it was the Civil War where you now had photographs of what the battlefields look like with bodies on it and other horrors of war, and more reporting. And it was of course, an all encompassing war because it was [inaudible 00:25:45] of the whole thing because both sides were American.
- Sarah: [25:49](#) Yeah.
- Jan: [25:49](#) So she was not aware at the beginning, nor were many people aware at all, of what it would really be. And I think most people did think that the Army of the Potomac was so powerful and there were so many soldiers that had been recruited from Lincoln's Army, this war would be over in no time. So it was just going to be... and some people would go and watch battles. They'd bring a picnic and they'd not get too close to the battle, but they'd watch it. Very different than how we think about war today.
- Sarah: [26:27](#) Yeah.
- Jan: [26:27](#) Now I'm not trying to say that she didn't take it seriously. She did take it seriously. She really did want the slaves to be free and for us to stay one country, a union. She did believe in the real goals of the work and she also loved nursing. She had taken care of her sister Beth, who by this time had died, but she had just devoted herself to caring for her sister. And any time anyone in the family was sick, there were always going to be opportunities to be helpful as a nurse. Nursing was not a trained profession for the most part, you just went by your own experience, and then

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if you did some reading in addition to that, well then you were that much ahead and she read a book on gunshot wounds and then she felt like, "I've got to go and make a difference." So she did volunteer.

Jan: [27:27](#) In Little Women you can see that she gives her father her war experience. She didn't fight, but she took care of those who did, as a nurse. In Little Women, the Reverend Mr. March does not fight, but he takes care of soldiers spiritually, who have come in off the battlefield.

Jan: [27:44](#) So she wanted that story to be about her younger life, so she just change time a little bit and took her young years that were lived before the Civil War, and put those young years into wartime and then father could be younger and he goes off to war and he gets to feel the way Louisa did. In real life there was a telegram that came to Orchard House just as you would read in Little Women, only in Little Women it's about father and in real life it's about Louisa. In Little Women it's Mrs. March who gets on the train and goes down to Washington City, but in real life it was Louisa's father Bronson, who got on the train and found Louisa and brought her home.

Sarah: [28:43](#) What is it? What do you think it is about Little Women that makes it endure? Why do we still love this book so much? There's a lot of wonderful books. There's two parts to this question I guess. One part of the question is why this book? Because she wrote a lot. How many books did she write actually? Do you know off hand?

Jan: [29:00](#) Well it depends on sometimes how you want to count them because sometimes there were short story collections and then they redid them, but if you think in terms of approximately 30, you're in the right ballpark.

Sarah: [29:11](#) Okay. So this book of all of them, seems to be the one that most of us know about. What is it about this particular book that caused it to endure? Why do you think we love it so much today still?

Jan: [29:25](#) Well, I think one thing that is true, not only of a good model or of good writing, but a good song or good piece of art, something from the creative process that is very, very true to the soul of that person, that is expressing something real inside that person, somehow has more power. It just does. I think it's one of those mysteries of art, but you

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can't always know why that is. But I think that's first of all true, and I think this was coming right out of Louisa's soul. Secondly, the way her family lived. What you've already found when you visited Orchard House that was so amazing. They were amazing people. They had strong values that were so terrific, that were kind.

Jan: [30:22](#)

I once read recently, I think it might've been a bumper sticker or something, but I loved it. It said, in a world where you can be anything, be kind. And I feel as if that was a guiding philosophy for all of that family. For Mr. Alcott, Mrs. Alcott, the girls, and really it can come down to the word love in the end. It doesn't have to be romantic love. Love can be expressed on so many different levels. You have the love of the neighbor, the love of the stranger, but things that you do out of either the kindness, you can use that word, or the love that you feel for your fellow human, in whatever capacity you are doing that kind of work, I think that resonates and that keeps feeling alive to people. It doesn't feel dated because of that.

Jan: [31:16](#)

And then there's also this sense of agency. That these young women in Little Women could be themselves, could be strong, could make mistakes. If you were living under the restrictive social norms for women in that era, the Victorian era, and you wanted to be strong and do something that was against society, and then you failed, there'd be people who would say, "See, you can't do that. No, we told you women shouldn't be doing that," where in Little Women, you get the feeling you can have your own agency. You can go ahead and be yourself, even if nobody else understands it, just don't hurt anyone. Do the right thing, but be yourself, and if you make a mistake and if your flaws are showing, dust yourself off and start over. Don't take that as a sign that you were wrong. Just figure out what you need to learn from it and then keep moving.

Jan: [32:20](#)

I think that's a powerful message for anybody of any age, and then the whole sense of how important family is. We love, it's a universal thing. We love those people that we are so bonded with, whether it's a wonderful mother-daughter relationship or one with your siblings, your spouse, and I know it varies all over the place, people have breaks in their families and hard things, but either you're fortunate and you do have the positive, strong

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bonds within your family, or if you don't, you know that that's possible and you long for it.

Sarah: [33:00](#)

Right.

Jan: [33:02](#)

And that is another important point. One time a news reporter actually made a comment like this, when you think about it how many difficult times the Alcott family went through, both in their era, the Civil War, losing Beth, poverty, they really did have a very hard time on many levels. Every single one of Louisa's books is hopeful, and you could think she could write that something that was not.

Sarah: [33:35](#)

Yes.

Jan: [33:36](#)

But she clearly had that seed of hope very strongly planted within herself and she never really gave up on striving for the best she could do.

Sarah: [33:47](#)

Hope is one of the things that we talk about at Read-Aloud Revival. I really feel like that is the mark of a masterful book, is that it leaves you with hope no matter how desperate the times get in the story, or what the characters have to encounter, a masterful author can still leave the reader with this sense of hope. When you say this and I think, okay, now knowing what I know about Louisa May Alcott's family and her life and her history and the things that they lost, and yet she still had the courage to write and leave her readers with hope. That just makes me love her even more.

Sarah: [34:28](#)

I'm going to interrupt my conversation with Jan Turnquist just for a wee second because I know you're all waiting for me to ask her about the newest movie Little Women. If you follow me on Instagram or Facebook, you probably saw me raving about it. I went and saw with my mother-in-law and all three of my daughters, my 18, 16 and seven year olds, and we loved everything about it. I did ask Jan Turnquist in fact, about the movie. When I had this conversation with her, the movie had not come out yet, but she did get to work with the Production Designer quite a bit. So listen to what she has to say about the Production Designer and working on the movie.

Jan: [35:08](#)

He reconstructed Orchard House, he made an exact replica. I'm not talking about a facade, I'm talking about

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the entire house. You could walk all the way around this house that he built.

Sarah: [35:21](#)

That's amazing.

Jan: [35:21](#)

It looked exactly like Orchard House, down to the paint color, everything. So it was amazing, and it was quite thrilling to be a part of that and to help him to do that. And then Greta Gerwig, the Director of this new Little Women, was one of the first people I met in the production as well, and she came to Orchard House several times with producers and other people who are behind the scenes, but then she brought all of the actors through as well. She wanted me to give tours to all of them. The only one we weren't able to get through the house was Meryl Streep, but all the rest of the actors we did, and they had so many questions. They were just wonderful to meet and I just had a tremendous respect for all of them. The way they were working and wanting to do a spectacularly accurate job. Then I also was really fortunate to be an extra in some of the scenes.

Sarah: [36:29](#)

Oh I didn't know that. How fun is that?

Jan: [36:31](#)

That was a lot of fun, and they filmed part of the movie right on our grounds, not inside Orchard House, because there's just not enough room with cameras and dollies and lights and all the things they have. There's just not enough room in Orchard House, plus we have so much... as you saw when you were in Orchard House, you saw that well over 75% of what we have in the house, was theirs.

Sarah: [36:57](#)

Yes.

Jan: [36:57](#)

So we can't afford to say, "Oops oh sorry, you broke that chair. Well don't worry, we'll just get another replica." These are the real things, and they know that and they didn't want to risk it either, so many scenes were shot elsewhere, but there was one scene in particular, it was filmed on our grounds in an old building. You saw it, I'm sure, right next to Orchard House. It looks like a barn, but it was never a barn. It was a School of Philosophy that Bronson Alcott built for his adult education facilities later in his life when he wanted to teach adults, and they filmed a scene in there.

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- Jan: [37:41](#) So I was there, not as an extra, just because this was our property and I needed to be there, and it was fascinating to watch Greta Gerwig direct. I just loved watching her and the actors of course, and then when I got to be an extra, again I had the experience of being able to watch her direct and just watch how things were going. I was completely impressed again and again and again. So I expect that I'm going to really love the movie.
- Sarah: [38:12](#) Well, you know that I asked her afterwards, right? So after the movie came out and she had seen it, I wrote to Jan and asked her what she thought and she loved it. So you've got thumbs up from Jan and thumbs up for me if you haven't seen it yet. Go watch it. It's so, so delightful.
- Sarah: [38:35](#) Now it's time for let the kids speak. I love this part of the podcast because kids share the books that they've been loving lately.
- Devon: [38:59](#) My name is Devon and I am three, and my favorite book is [inaudible 00:39:00] Big Ears by [inaudible 00:39:01].
- Teagan: [39:04](#) My name is Teagan. I am six years old. I live in Columbus, Georgia. My favorite book is Roxaboxen, and what I like about it is that they use their imagination to make really cool stuff. They use their imagination to make a town and it would be really cool to play in that.
- Austin: [39:28](#) My name is Austin and I'm five years old. I live in Columbus, Georgia and my favorite books are A to Z Mysteries, and I like what the mystery is going to be.
- Eli: [39:48](#) Hi, my name is Eli. I am seven years old. I live in Houston, Texas. My favorite book is The Princess in Black. One of the books [inaudible 00:40:09]. I really like this story. The bunnies act like monsters because they're eating everything and the monsters are afraid of the bunnies and The Princess in Black has to stop them.
- Hannah: [40:28](#) Hello, my name is Hannah. I am nine years old and I am from Houston, Texas, and my favorite book is The Penderwicks Series, and I love it because each of the girls represent me in a way, and I love the adventure in it.
- Speaker 9: [40:51](#) My name is [inaudible 00:40:53] and I am four years old, and I live at Houston, Texas, and my favorite book is Nibbles: the Book Monster.

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- Speaker 10: [41:05](#) Nibbles: the Book Monster?
- Speaker 9: [41:05](#) Nibbles: the Book Monster.
- Speaker 10: [41:07](#) And why do you like Nibbles?
- Speaker 9: [41:08](#) I just do.
- Speaker 10: [41:09](#) You just do?
- Speaker 9: [41:10](#) Yeah.
- Speaker 10: [41:11](#) Okay.
- Justin: [41:11](#) My name is Justin. I'm eight years old and I live in Thailand. I love Echo. It's so exciting about a magical harmonica that travels from child to child, and it tells the story of all the hardships they go through and how the music helps them all be brave.
- Hava: [41:28](#) Hello, my name is Hava. I'm eight years old. I live in Virginia. My favorite book is The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, and my favorite part is when Lucy find Narnia.
- Susanna: [41:40](#) My name is Susanna Nichols. I am 10 years old. I live in Virginia. My favorite book that has been read aloud to me is The Mysterious Benedict Society. My favorite part is when Milligan stuffs Martina and Jackson and Jillson with sleep darts.
- Sammy: [41:57](#) My name is Sammy and I am five years old and I'm from Virginia, and my favorite book is Sneetches by Dr. Seuss and my favorite part is when they don't have stars and they do have stars.
- Speaker 15: [42:18](#) Hello, my name is [inaudible 00:42:21] and I'm six years old. I am from Virginia and my favorite book is Laura Ingalls, The Long Winter, and my favorite part is when they have lots of blizzards.
- Sarah: [42:41](#) Oh my goodness. We are reading Laura Ingalls Wilder at my house right now too. I love, love those books. Hey, thanks for tuning in today. All of the links and everything we mentioned on today's show can be found at [readaloudrevival.com/146](http://readaloudrevival.com/146). That's it for today. I'll be back in two weeks with another episode of the podcast. In the

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meantime, go make meaningful and lasting connections with your kids through books.