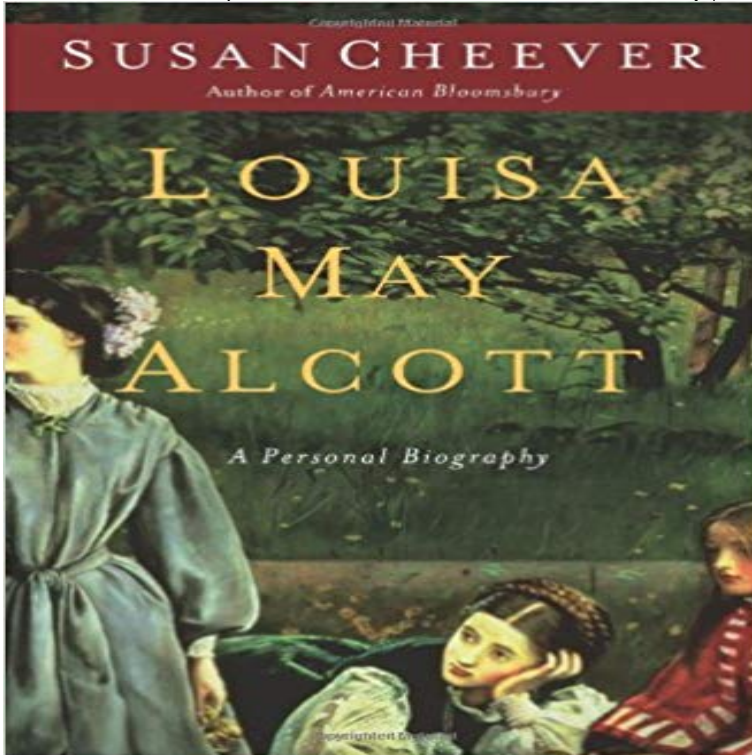


## Louisa May Alcott: A Personal Biography



Louisa May Alcott never intended to write *Little Women*. She had dismissed her publishers' pleas for such a novel. Written out of necessity to support her family, the book had an astounding success that changed her life, a life which turned out very differently from that of her beloved heroine Jo March. In *Louisa May Alcott*, Susan Cheever, the acclaimed author of *American Bloomsbury*, returns to Concord, Massachusetts, to explore the life of one of its most iconic residents. Based on extensive research, journals, and correspondence, Cheever's biography chronicles all aspects of Alcott's life, from the fateful meeting of her parents to her death, just two days after that of her father. She details Bronson Alcott's stalwart educational vision, which led the Alcotts to relocate each time his progressive teaching went sour; her unsuccessful early attempts at serious literature, including *Moods*, which Henry James panned; her time as a Civil War nurse, when she contracted pneumonia and was treated with mercury-laden calomel, which would affect her health for the rest of her life; and her vibrant intellectual circle of writers and reformers, idealists who led the charge in support of antislavery, temperance, and women's rights. Alcott's independence defied the conventional wisdom, and her personal choices and literary legacy continue to inspire generations of women. A fan of *Little Women* from the age of twelve, and a distinguished author in her own right, Cheever brings a unique perspective to Louisa May Alcott's life as a woman, a daughter, and a working writer.

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