

CHAPTER 3

The party

'Jo! Jo! Where are you?' called Meg.

'Here!' answered Jo.

Meg ran up to the top of the house. Jo was in her favourite place by the window ... with a book.

'Look!' cried Meg. She had a paper in her hand. 'It's from Mrs Gardiner. She's having a New Year party tomorrow night. She wants us to go! What can we wear?'

'Well, that's not a problem,' said Jo. 'You've only got one dress. Me too.' She thought for a minute. 'But my dress has a big hole in the back.'

'Then you must sit all evening,' said Meg, 'with your back to the wall.'

'My gloves have got holes in, too,' said Jo. 'I can't wear them.'



'No gloves?' cried Meg. 'Gloves are so important, Jo. You must have gloves! I can't go with you if you haven't!'

'I've got an idea,' Jo said. 'Give me one of your gloves. Then we can each wear one good glove. We can have a bad glove in the other hand.'

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At last, Meg and Jo were ready. They walked out of the house and across the garden.

'Have a good time, girls!' Mrs March called after them. 'Have you got nice handkerchiefs?'

'Yes,' cried the girls and they laughed. Marmee always asked that question when they went out.

Meg and Jo didn't go to parties often. They were a little

shy. At the party, they met Mrs Gardiner's daughter, Sallie. Sallie's friend, Annie Moffat, was there too. Meg, Sallie and Annie talked about clothes and fashion. It was boring for Jo. She stood with her back against the wall and watched a group of boys. She heard the word 'skating'. Now *that* was interesting. Jo loved skating. She wanted to talk to the boys. A young man with red hair walked across the room.

'Help! He's coming to ask me to dance!' Jo thought. She quickly moved into a little room. She wanted to be alone.

She looked around. She wasn't alone. There was a boy in the room.



'Oh, I'm sorry,' said Jo. 'I didn't know ...' She started to go out again.

The boy laughed. 'That's all right,' he said. 'Please stay.'

'I think I know you,' said Jo. 'Don't you live near us?'

'Next to you,' said the boy. He and Jo both laughed.

'Thank you for your nice Christmas present, Mr Laurence,' Jo said.

'My grandfather gave it to you, Miss March,' said the boy.

'I'm not Miss March. I'm only Jo,' said Jo.

'And I'm not Mr Laurence,' said the boy. 'I'm only Laurie. My name's Theodore but I don't like it. So I'm Laurie.'