

Little Men

US : 1940 : dir. Norman Z McLeod : R.K.O : 84 min
 prod: Graham Towne & Gene Baker : scr: Mark Kelly & Arthur Caesar : dir.ph.:
[Jimmy Lydon](#); [Sammy McKim](#); [Richard Nichols](#); [Ann Gillis](#)
 Kay Francis; Jack Oakie; George Bancroft; Charles Esmond; William Demarest;
 Sterling Holloway; Isabel Jewell; [& Elsie the cow...]

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	KBytes	Ω □ € Z ♀	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 1996 review:

“Occasionally cute, but otherwise slight, predictable adaptation of the Louisa May Alcott novel, focussing on rough adolescent Lydon "learning the ways" at Francis' school. Oakie easily steals the film as an irrepressible con-man. ** ”

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review:

“Louisa May Alcott's story is rewritten and placed in a contemporary setting. A story of growing youth which has not worn well. ** ”

Halliwell's Film Guide postscript to 1935 original:

“... A remake emerged from RKO in 1940, but was ill received. Running 84 minutes, it starred Kay Francis, Jack Oakie, James Lydon, and Ann Gillis, not to mention Elsie the cow. Mark Kelly and Arthur Caesar wrote it, Norman Z McLeod directed; for Graham Towne and Gene Baker. ”

Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89 review:

“Louisa May Alcott's sequel to her classic "Little Women" is pleasant entertainment for the kids. Francis is very good as the grown up Jo March, who marries and runs an unconventional school for boys. **½ ”

Video Movie Guide 1993 review:

“Louisa May Alcott's classic of childhood turned into a travesty. **Turkey** ”

[no listing in "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "A Pictorial History of the Talkies", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

No further information currently available. As regards Oakie stealing the film, many of the "**ST TRINIAN'S**" farces were similarly stolen by George Cole's shambling performance as an amiable spiv. It's difficult to see why this story should have been tackled by RKO so soon after the Mascot version, itself having been no great success. Perhaps RKO hoped to capitalise on Lydon's starring role the same year in the Hollywood version of "**TOM BROWN'S SCHOOL DAYS**", (where also he must "learn the ways") co-starring Freddie Bartholomew as East.

Lydon was already 17. He'd been seen the previous year in "**BACK DOOR TO HEAVEN**", and later (age 24) made "**LIFE WITH FATHER**". A decade on, Dean Stockwell was to play very similar roles to this one in "**THE HAPPY YEARS**" (50) and "**KIM**" (50), but he was 14 at the time, not army recruiting age.

Sammy McKim for his part was 15 and Richard Nichols 5. Holmstrom describes Nichols as a "*limpid, curly child.. It's not Richard's fault that because he looked angelic he was made to play, by and large, a series of lacrimose little creeps*". Ann Gillis was 13. Best recalled for her Becky Thatcher in the 1938 Selznick "**ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER**", her other titles included "**THE UNDERPUP**" (39), "**NICE GIRL**" (41) and "**SINCE YOU WENT AWAY**" (44).

See the 1935 original and "**LITTLE WOMEN**", and subject index under **SCHOOL**.