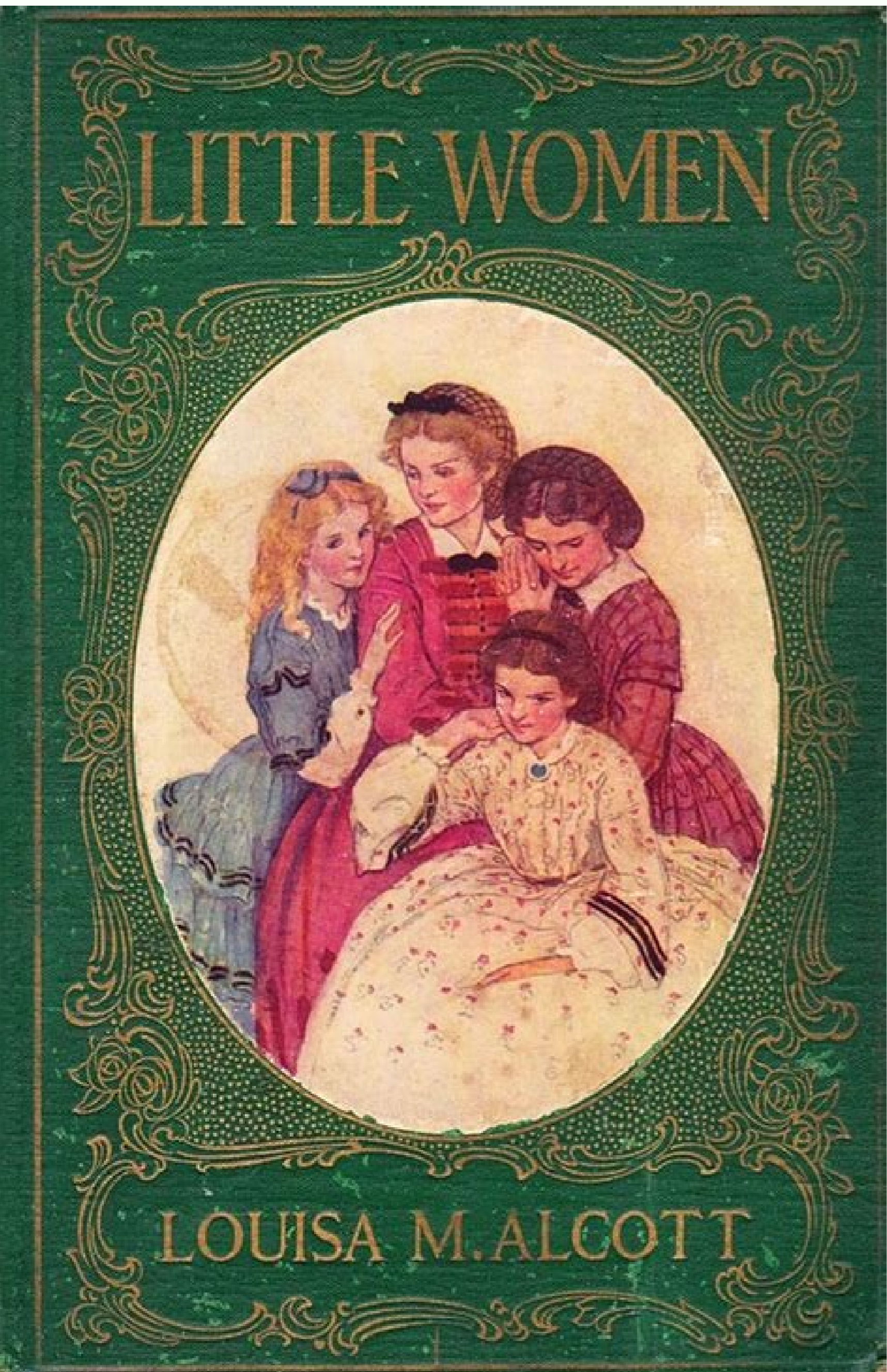


Continue



DVD - \$26.98 - DVD - \$45.95 - \$2.95 DVD - \$56.93 - DVD - \$29.99 - Myth of American Women. Bedell About the cover artist: Anna Bond works at Rifle Paper Co., a world-renowned stationery and gift brand based in Winter Park, Florida. designed the unique illustrated covers for the Puffin in Bloom collection, which includes such classics as Anne of Green Gables L.M. Montgomery, Heidi by Joanna Spyrie and A Little Princess by Frances Hodgson Burnett. 1888) grew up in Concord, Massachusetts, and began her writing career at an early age, writing short stories for newspapers and magazines. What began as a series of short stories in the 1860s became the classic American children's novel we know today as Little Women. "Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without presents," grumbled Jo, lying on the carpet. "How terrible to be poor!" Meg sighed and looked at her old dress. Some girls have lots of pretty things and some girls have nothing," added little Amy, snorting resentfully. "We have a father and a mother, and certainly each other ... Four young faces that reflected the firelight, brightened by happy words, but darkened again as Jo said sadly, "We have no father and won't for a long time." She didn't say maybe never, but they all added it together, thinking of their father in the distance where the battle was going on. No one spoke for a minute; then, in a different tone, Meg said, "You know, Mum suggested not giving presents this Christmas because winter would be hard on everyone; and says we shouldn't spend money on pleasures when our soldiers are suffering so much. There is little we can do, but we can make our little sacrifices, and we must make them joyfully.DVD - \$26.98 - DVD - \$45.95 DVD - \$2.95 - \$56.93 - DVD - \$29.99 The Myth of the American Woman. - Madelon Bedell About the cover artist: Anna Bond of Rifle Paper Co., a world famous stationery and gift brand based in Winter Park, Florida, an artist best known for her whimsical drawings, which often include hand-drawn illustrations and lettering. She created unique illustrated covers for Bloom's Puffin book collection, which includes classics such as L.M. Montgomery Ann of Green Gables by Heidi, Frances Hodgson Burnett, Joanna Spyrie and The Little Princess. About the Author: Louisa May Alcott (1832-1888) grew up in Concord, Massachusetts and began her writing career at an early age, writing stories for newspapers and magazines. What began as a series of short stories in the 1860s became the classic American children's novel we know today as Little Women. The Pilgrims are playing "Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without presents," Joe grumbled as he lay on the carpet. "How terrible it is to be poor!" Meg sighed as she looked down at her old dress. Some girls have a lot of beautiful things, while others have nothing," little Amy added with an offended sob. "We have a father and a mother, and we don't care about each other." Beth said contentedly from her corner. The four young faces, on which the light of the fire shone, brightened after the cheerful words, but darkened again when Joe sadly said: "We don't have a father, and he won't be long." She didn't say "maybe never," but everyone silently added it, thinking of her father far away, where the fighting was going on. Nobody spoke for a minute; Then Meg said in a changed tone, "You know, my mother advised us not to give presents this Christmas, because everyone will have a harsh winter, and she doesn't

think we should spend money on pleasures when our men suffer so much in the army . There is little we can do, but we can and should enjoy our little sacrifices. I don't know," Meg shook a head, regretfully thinking about all the nice things she wanted. We each have a dollar, and the military will not benefit from it. I agree not to expect anything from my mother or you, but I want to buy Online and Sintram: I wanted it for so long!" said Joe, who was a bookworm. "I intend to devote my life to new music," Bess said with a small sigh heard by no one but the brush stand and the kettle. "I'm going to buy a nice box of Faber pencils. I really need them," Amy stated firmly, we desire and rejoice: I'm sure we work hard enough to deserve it," exclaimed Joe, peering gentlemanly at the heels of his boots. I really want to have fun at home," Meg began again in a pitiful tone. "You're not half as hard as I am," said Joe. "How would you like to spend a few hours locked up with a cranky, restless old lady who makes you trot, is never satisfied, and harasses you until you're ready to fly out the window or kick her ears?" It's not a good thing to worry about, but I think doing the dishes and tidying up is the worst job in the world. It annoys me, and my arms are so stiff that I cannot exercise a little." And Bess looked at her rough hands with a sigh that anyone could hear at the time. "I can't believe any of you are suffering like I am," cried Amy. "Because you won't have to go to school with stupid girls who tease you when you don't know your lessons, laugh at your clothes and call your father names when he's not rich, and insult you when you're not well, the nose. "If you mean defamation, I'd say that rather than talk about labels like dad is a pickle," Joe suggested with a laugh. 1 Everyone in Shaker Heights was talking about it that summer: like Isabella,The Richardson children finally turned the corner and burned down the house. All spring there have been rumors about little Mirabelle McCullough—or, depending on which side you're on, Mei Ling Chow—and now, finally, there's something new and sensational to talk about. Just after noon on this Saturday in May, shoppers pushing their grocery carts into Heinen's heard the fire trucks come to life and drive off towards the duck pond. At a quarter to twelve, the four of them parked on the chaotic redline along Parkland Drive, where the six bedrooms of the Richardson house were on fire, and everyone for half a mile could see the smoke rising from the trees like a thick black thundercloud. . . . Later, people said that the signs were there all the time: that Izzy went a little crazy, that there was always something wrong with the Richardson family, that as soon as they heard the sirens in the morning, they knew something terrible had happened. By then, of course, Izzy would be long gone, no one would be able to protect her, and people would be able—and were told—to say whatever they wanted. Until the arrival of the fire engines and for some time after that, no one knew what was going on. Neighbors huddled as close as possible to the makeshift roadblock—the police car was a few hundred meters away—and watched the firemen unwind their hoses, the sullen faces of people recognizing a hopeless case. Across the road, the geese at the pond were poking their heads under the water in search of seaweed, completely discouraged by the turmoil. Richardson stood on the lawn clutching the collar of a pale blue dressing gown. Even though it was noon, she was still asleep when the smoke alarms went off. She went to bed late and fell asleep on purpose, thinking she deserved it after a pretty hard day. The night before, she had watched from an upstairs window as the car finally stopped in front of the house.The driveway was long and circular, a deep horseshoe winding from the curb to the front door and back so that the street was a good hundred feet away, too far away for her to see clearly even at eight o'clock in May. Besides, it was almost dark. But she recognized her tenant Mia's small brown Volkswagen with its lights on. The passenger door opened and a slender figure stepped out, leaving it ajar: Mia's teenage daughter, Pearl. The dome light illuminated the interior of the car like a box of shadow, but the car was filled almost to the ceiling with bags, and Mrs. Richardson could only see the faint outline of Mia's head, a messy knot stuck on top. chapter. Pearl bent over the mailbox, and Mrs. Richardson imagined the faint creak of the mailbox door opening and closing. Pearl then jumped back into the car and closed the door. The brake lights flashed red, then went out, and the car disappeared into the night that followed. Relieved, Mrs. Richardson went downstairs to the mailbox and found a bunch of keys on a plain ring without a note. She planned to go there in the morning to check on the rented house on the Winslow Road, although she already knew they were gone. Because of this, she allowed herself to fall asleep, and it was already half-past twelve, she stood on the lawn in her son Trip's bathrobe and sneakers and watched their house burn. Awakened by the piercing scream of the smoke detector, she ran from room to room looking for him, Lexi, Moody. She was shocked that she wasn't looking for Izzy as if she already knew Izzy was to blame. Every bedroom was empty except for the smell of gasoline and a small, crackling fire that burned in the center of each bed as if a mad Girl Scout slept there. When she checked the living room, family room, living room and kitchen, smoke began to spread and she ran away,finally hearing the warning and approaching sirens of their home security system. In the driveway, she saw that Trip's Jeep had disappeared, along with Lexie's Explorer, Moody's motorcycle, and, of course, her husband's limousine. He usually came to the office on Saturdays to play catch-up. Someone at work should call him. It was then that she remembered that, thank God, Lexi had stayed with Serena Wong last night. She wondered where her sons were and how she would find them so she could tell them what had happened. When the fire went out, despite Mrs. Richardson's misgivings, the house did not burn to the ground. All the windows were gone, but the brickwork of the house was damp and black and smoking, as was most of the roof, dark slate tiles that gleamed like fish scales from a recent wetness. The Richardsons would not be allowed in for the next few days until fire engineers had inspected each of the still-standing beams, but they even entered from the treetops, as close as the yellow warning tape would allow. I saw that there was little that could be saved inside. "Oh my god," Lexie said. She was sitting on the roof of her car, parked across the road, on the grass by the duck pond. She and Serena were still asleep, curled up on their backs in Serena's king size, when Dr. S. Wong shook her shoulder little by little and whispered, "Lexi. Lexi, honey. Get up. Your mom just called." They got up around two in the morning, talking, as they had all spring, about little Mirabelle McCullough, arguing about whether the judge's decision was right or not, whether her new parents should do it ... Will she get custody or will she have to be returned by her own mother. "For God's sake, her name isn't even Mirabelle McCullough," Serena finally said, and they fell into a grim, unsettling silence until they both broke off.Lexie watched the smoke billow from her bedroom window, the front window overlooking the lawn, and thought about everything that had gotten inside. Every t-shirt in her dresser, every pair of jeans in her closet. All the notes Serena had written her since sixth grade were still folded into balls of paper she kept in her shoebox under her bed; the bed itself, sheets and blankets charred. The bunch of roses her boyfriend Brian had given her when she got home was hung to dry on the dressing table, the petals darkening from ruby to a dried blood red. Now it was just ashes. In the change of clothes she had brought for Serena, Lexi suddenly realized she was doing better than the rest of the family: she had a bag, jeans and a toothbrush in the back seat. Pajamas. She looked at her brothers, at their mother, still in her dressing gown on the lawn of their trees, and thought: they were wearing nothing but dresses. Literally was one of Lexi's favorite words to use even when the situation wasn't literal. In this case it was more or less true. Trip, who was sitting next to her, absentmindedly ran a hand through his hair. The sun was high overhead now, and the sweat was making his curls look quite wicked. He was playing basketball at the community center when he heard the fire truck roar, but thought nothing of it. (He was extremely busy this morning, but probably wouldn't have noticed.) At one point, when everyone was hungry and decided to call it fun, he drove home. True, even with the windows down he didn't notice the huge plume of smoke coming towards him, and he began to realize something was wrong when he saw a police car blocking his street. After ten minutes of explaining, he was finally allowed to park the Jeep in front of the house where Lexie and Moody were already waiting. All three were sitting on the roof of the carlike all the family portraits that once hung in the stairwell and now lie in ashes. Lexie, Trip, Moody: Senior, Junior, Sophomore. They could feel the hole left by Izzy, the new black sheep, the Joker, right next to them, though they were all still convinced that the hole would only be temporary. "What was she thinking?" Moody muttered, and Lexie said, "Even she knows she went too far this time, so she ran away. Mom will kill her when she gets back." "Where are we staying?" Trip asked, silence as they considered their situation. "We'll get a hotel room or something," Lexie finally said. "I think Josh Trammell's family did it." Everyone knew the story: how a few years ago, Josh Trammell, a sophomore, fell asleep with a lit candle and burned his parents down alive.The house was downstairs, according to school tradition, it was not a candle, but a joint, but the house was gutted so thoroughly that it was not visible and Josh stuck to his candle story. Everyone still thought he was the stupid kid who burned down the house, even though it's been a long time since Josh recently graduated with honors from Ohio State University. Of course, the Josh Trammell fire will no longer be the most famous fire in "Shaker Heights. A hotel room? For all of us? Everything. Two rooms. Or we could stay in the embassy suites. I don't know." Lexie tapped her knee with her fingers, in front of her mother and ten firefighters, she didn't dare light a cigarette. "Mom and dad will know. And the insurance pays for it." problem ma is for adults, not for them. The last of the firefighters left the house and removed the masks from their faces. Majorityit was gone, but everywhere was still stuffy, like the air in a bathroom after a long hot shower. The roof of the car started to heat up, so Trip stretched his legs against the windshield and tapped the end of the flaps against the wipers. Then he started laughing. "What's funny about that?" Lexi asked. "I picture Izzy running around in circles and telling everyone about the woods." He snorted. "Crazy." Moody drummed his finger on the roof rack. "Why is everyone so sure it was her?" "To leave." Trip jumped out of the car. "This is Izzy. And we're all here. Mom's here, Dad's on his way. Who's missing?" "So Izzy isn't here. Only she can be responsible? - Responsible? Lexie interjected. - Izzy? "Dad was at work," Tripp said. "Lexi was with Serena. I was in Sussex playing soccer. You? Moody hesitated. "I was riding my bike to the library." See? The answer was obvious to Tripp. "The only people here were Izzy and mom. And my mother was sleeping." Or maybe someone left the oven on. Firefighters said there were small fires all over the place," Lexie said. à Multiple starting points. The use of an accelerator is possible. It's not a coincidence. We all know she's always been crazy. Tripp leaned against the car door. "Maybe that's why she's acting crazy." Across the street, fire trucks began rolling hoses. Richardson's other three children watched as the firefighters put down their axes and take off their smoky yellow coats. "Someone should come and stay with mom," Lexie said, but no one moved. After a minute, Tripp said, "If Mom and Dad find Iz, they're going to lock him up in a psych ward for the rest of his life." No one thought about Mia and Pearl's recent departure from the house on Winslow Street. Mrs. Richardson watches as the fire chief makes minute notes in his notebookShe forgot her former tenants. She did not tell her husband or children about it, Moody had only noticed her absence this morning and still didn't know what to make of it. Far down Parkland Drive, a small blue dot was approaching in her father's BMW. "Why are you so sure they'll find her?" Moody asked, he asked.