

JO

And at that moment, Rodrigo appears in magnificent splendor!

RODRIGO & JO

(HE appears, brandishing a sword)

Unhand that woman, villain!

BRAXTON, CLARISSA & JO

Who are you?

RODRIGO & JO

I AM YOUR DESTINY!

YOUR BITTEREST FOE!

RODRIGO

YOU STOLE WHAT WAS RIGHTLY MINE

TEN LONG YEARS AGO!

YOU LEFT ME COLD, ALONE AND FORGOTTEN,

NOW I'M BACK TO SETTLE THE SCORE!

PROFESSOR BHAER

(Interrupting her diplomatically)

Miss March!

(HE smiles at her)

Tell me, what is it you are writing here?

JO

Blood-and-guts stuff. It's all the rage. The magazines and periodicals are full of it.

PROFESSOR BHAER

Violence and seduction on every page?

JO

Read Shakespeare. Read history. Read the newspapers.

PROFESSOR BHAER

It is getting late. Perhaps it is best we pursue this some other time.

JO

No. I want to know what you think, Professor.

PROFESSOR BHAER

Blood and guts stuff? What you think the world wants to hear? If I have noticed nothing else about you, Miss March, I have noticed you are unique. Something you should try not to forget. I think you could do better.

JO

(taken aback)

Better? ... And who are you anyway: an aging German professor, close to 50 - ?

PROFESSOR BHAER

(taken aback)

I am 34.

JO

34, really? Well - you look a lot older.

PROFESSOR BHAER

I worry a lot.

JO

And just what do you worry about?

PROFESSOR BHAER

How to avoid a conversation such as this! Now I will go to dinner.

(HE starts away, immediately turns back)

Miss March, since you have been here - six weeks now, is it? - you shout, you rant, you upset the whole order of this boarding house. I am a serene and peaceful man.

JO

You're aloof, you're arrogant -

PROFESSOR BHAER

Arrogant? Miss March, I spoke my mind, as you spoke yours. Obviously, it was not appreciated on either side.

(HE goes)

#2 - Better

JO

Obviously!

(HE goes)

My stories were a great success in Concord.

(SHE looks at her story)

BETTER?

BETTER THAN WHAT?

BETTER THAN THIS DAZZLING PLOT?

BETTER?

THIS STORY WILL BE MY 'KING LEAR'.

(MEG, BETH & AMY)	(JO)
WHEN BRAVE RODRIGO SCREAMS, WHEN THE EVIL VILLAIN'S GLASSY EYEBALL GLEAMS!	I'VE TAKEN A SOLEMN VOW WITH ALL THAT I AM, SOMEHOW:
	JO
(triumphing) My dearest Mamah, there will be Christmas after all!	
	AMY
CHRISTMAS	BETH
CHRISTMAS	MEG
CHRISTMAS	JO
CHRISTMAS	ALL
WILL EXCEED OUR FINEST DREAMS!	

JO

Christopher Columbus, I'm bursting with energy! Someone give me a task to do!

BETH

I want you - to bring father home.

JO

I shall write President Lincoln tonight! Another!

MEG

I want you - to get Annie Moffat to invite me to her St. Valentine's Day ball!

JO

I'll wring her bloody little neck if she doesn't! Another!

AMY

I want you - to get us a Christmas tree.

JO

Rodrigo will go chop one down immediately!

AMY

Where?

JO

There! Across the road!

BETH

But that's on Mr. Laurence's property.

AMY

You'll go to prison for it!

JO

(SHE exits with an exaggerated flourish)

Prison? What care I for prison?

(The GIRLS rush to the window to watch her as the scene segues to THE MARCH

PARLOR: #1)

#3a – Transition To March Parlor

BETH

Jo is an incredible human being.

MEG

Look, it's Mr. Laurence. He's standing there at the window glaring out.

AMY

He looks sinister.

BETH

I think he looks sad.

AMY

I wouldn't be sad living in such a house.

BETH

Has anyone ever been inside?

AMY

He'd never let any of us in.

MEG

They say he's a very angry and bitter man. Jo's going to get us all into deathly trouble.

AMY

We'll be known as the family with the criminal sister.

(MARMEE, the girls' mother, enters. Her strength and spirit hold the family together)

MARMEE

What criminal sister?

(BETH, MEG & AMY rush to her, helping her with her things)

└

BETH & MEG

AMY

Marmee!

Marmee, you're home!

MARMEE

(Seeing them all in parts of costumes)

What's happening here?

MEG

Jo's written an Operatic Tragedy.

AMY

And she's inviting all of Concord to come see us perform it.

BETH

And I'm the mother in it.

MEG

And I die in it, but it's a beautiful death.

AMY

And I play Clarissa, who's very sweet.

MARMEE

It sounds wonderful!

BETH

Oh, Marmee, it's Jo's best.

AMY

Tell us about your day.

MARMEE

Well - we knitted socks and blankets for the Soldier's Aid Society. And a letter came from father.

AMY

(shouts)

A letter from father!

MEG

Read it to us, Marmee!

MARMEE

Where's Jo?

BETH

She's outside.

AMY

Read the letter, Marmee!

MARMEE

We'll wait for Jo.

AMY

She may be hours.

MARMEE

I want to hear all the things you did today.

(BETH, AMY & MEG quickly gather around her, speaking all at once)

BETH

I baked a dozen biscuits.
Then I practiced the
piano.

AMY

Charlotte Fenton teased me
mercilessly at school. I was so
humiliated.

MEG

I hate being a governess, Marmee.
I do try. But the children get the
best of me.

JO

(SHE enters, breathless, trailing a very large evergreen behind her)

Rodrigo has returned!

MARMEE

Jo!

JO

(surprised)

Marmee!

MARMEE

Where did you get that tree?

JO

I borrowed it from Mr. Laurence.

MARMEE

Jo! You didn't -

JO

(passionate)

I took it for us, Marmee!

MARMEE

(coming right in)

You'll take it back immediately.

JO

Take it back? That's like bringing back a chicken after you've chopped off its head.

AMY

Do let us keep it.

MEG

It's Christmas, Marmee.

MARMEE

No. Destroying someone else's property - ?

BETH

(coming right in)

Well, we could give it to the Hummels. They have so little.

MARMEE

Good. The tree goes to the Hummels then. Now what about Mr. Laurence?

(MR. LAURENCE, a very stern, solidly-built man in his early 70s, appears in the doorway. Standing behind him, almost unnoticed is his grandson, LAURIE)

MR. LAURENCE

What about him?

MEG

(surprised)

Mr. Laurence?

MR. LAURENCE

Yes, Mr. Laurence!

(To Jo)

You!

JO

Me?

MR. LAURENCE

You chopped down my perfect Douglas fir. I should have you arrested!

JO

I'll make it up to you, sir.

MR. LAURENCE

With what?

JO

I'll plant six more.

JO

(Having tried to sneak past her)

Good morning, Aunt March.

AUNT MARCH

Do you know the hour?

JO

Almost ten, I believe.

AUNT MARCH

Your workday begins with me at nine! You've missed reading to me. And still haven't repaired the latch on the cellar door -

JO

I got delayed finding you this beautiful flower.

AUNT MARCH

Don't trifle with me, Josephine. You were dawdling.

JO

I wasn't dawdling. I was writing a story.

AUNT MARCH

You are what happens to a girl when she has no father.

JO

I have a father.

AUNT MARCH

(pointed)

Never here when you need him. And now my nephew has the audacity to be an army chaplain when he can't even support his own family!

(coming right in, strong)

Josephine, listen to me: You are on the verge of womanhood!

JO

Christopher Columbus!

AUNT MARCH

And just look at you! You go about writing senseless stories, constantly trying to save the world - and you can't save yourself!

JO

I don't need saving.

AUNT MARCH

There are many pitfalls a girl can fall into, and Josephine -

(AUNT MARCH)

(With deliberate emphasis, digging into her)

- you are heading towards all of them!

(With a great burst of enthusiasm)

I want to see you shine. Even if you're not rich - you can at least marry well.

JO

I'll never marry.

AUNT MARCH

You'll marry! All girls marry!

JO

I'm not all girls.

AUNT MARCH

With a good marriage, you can have power. You can take your place in society.

JO

I don't give two figs about society!

AUNT MARCH

Then there is no point in our having this conversation. It's clear to me I could never take you to Europe.

JO

(taken aback)

Take me to Europe?

AUNT MARCH

It was an idle thought of mine.

JO

Do you know how important it is for a writer to travel? It's been my dream, Aunt March.

AUNT MARCH

(coming in strong)

We earn our dreams in this world. It's foolish of me to think you could ever change your ways.

#5 - Could You

JO

I could try!

LAURIE

Mr. Brooke, I want you -

MR. BROOKE

Your grandfather will be furious. He wants you to meet some important people -
(HE starts to pull Laurie away)

LAURIE

I have. These are the March girls I've been telling you about, the ones from across the way.

(HE pulls apart from Mr. Brooke)

This is Meg - right?

MEG

Yes.

LAURIE

And that's Jo. She cuts our firewood on occasion. This is Mr. John Brooke. He's a scholar from Boston.

MR. BROOKE

I'm Laurie's tutor. Come, Laurie.

(HE quickly picks up Laurie's things, including, accidentally, Meg's dance card and starts away)

MEG

(calls)

Sir! You've taken my dance card!

MR. BROOKE

Your dance card?

(HE looks at what he is holding)

Oh? Is this yours? Sorry.

(HE returns the card. Suddenly notices how striking looking Meg is)

So - you're Margaret March?

MEG

Yes, I am.

MR. BROOKE

It's - a splendid party, isn't it?

MEG

Yes, it is. Quite - 'lovely.' So you're from Boston?

MR. BROOKE

Actually Maine.

MEG

I've never been to Maine.

MR. BROOKE

You should go. It's beautiful country. Very primitive.

MEG

I like primitive.

MR. BROOKE

Really?

LAURIE

Mr. Brooke is a romantic.

MEG

Is that true?

MR. BROOKE

Well, no, no. I read Sheats and Kelley. I mean - Keats and Shelley.

MEG

So do I.

#7a – Moffat Underscore

If using a chorus, when the MUSIC resumes (SCORE #7a, measure 1) the pairs of dancers begin to exit, and all are off stage by measure 18.

MR. BROOKE

You read Keats and Shelley?

MEG

All the time.

MR. BROOKE

(suddenly inspired)

Would you like to dance, Miss March?

SCENE 4

Mr. L/Beth

(THE MARCH PARLOR: #4.

BETH is at the piano playing. The piano has one broken note which BETH hits and hits again. MR. LAURENCE appears in the doorway)

MR. LAURENCE

That piano sounds terrible.

BETH

It needs a tuning, sir.

MR. LAURENCE

(Entering)

Where is my grandson, Laurie?

BETH

I'm sure he'll be home soon.

MR. LAURENCE

The boy's missed six lessons - fallen behind in all his work. I have strictly forbidden him to associate with this family.

BETH

Why, sir?

MR. LAURENCE

Because a man needs an iron will if he's to succeed in this world. And this family will only soften him.... Which one of the dreadful little March girls are you?

BETH

I'm dreadful Beth.

MR. LAURENCE

Oh, yes, Laurie said you're the one who wants to play my priceless piano. It's out of the question. The piano belonged to my daughter, Laurie's mother. It's been locked since she passed away, and that's how it shall stay...

Are you afraid of me?

BETH

A little.

MR. LAURENCE

Why?

BETH

It might have something to do with your face, sir. It's very hard.

MR. LAURENCE

I cannot help my hard face. Continue what you were playing.... Come now, I haven't all day.... Are you going to play or not?

#13 - Transition

SCENE 5/6

Sisters/Marmee
Mr. L/Laurie*(THE SUN PORCH - outside the March House. Spring 1865)*

MR. LAURENCE

(HE enters, urgent)

Mrs. March, we must be getting to the station.

MARMEE

(calls)

Amy, darling! Are you ready? Amy, Aunt March will be here soon!

MR. LAURENCE

You don't want to miss your train.

MARMEE

I'll need a few more minutes. I'm waiting for Jo. Tell me I'm doing the right thing.

MR. LAURENCE

You're doing the right thing.

MARMEE

I've never left my girls before.

MR. LAURENCE

Your husband has pneumonia and needs you with him in Washington.

MARMEE

I feel like I'm being torn in two. One part of me here, the other part -

MR. LAURENCE

I'll look in on the girls every day.

MARMEE

Thank you, Mr. Laurence.

MR. LAURENCE

I'll just take this to the carriage.

(HE takes the valise. As HE goes, HE greets BETH who has just entered)

Good morning, Beth.

BETH

Morning, sir.

(To Marmee)

I fixed you a basket of food.

MARMEE

Thank you, Beth.

LAURIE

(HE enters from inside with a small valise)

Amy's almost ready. She's packing up half the house.

(HE goes to load the valise in Aunt March's carriage)

MARMEE

Where's Jo? I sent her to Aunt March's hours ago. She should have been back by now.

BETH

I'll go find her.

(SHE goes)

MEG

(SHE rushes in)

Here's the shawl Father loves so much.

AMY

(SHE rushes in)

Marmee, please don't make me go to Aunt March's house. It scares me.

Everything's so old in it. I drew this picture of you - with apple blossoms in your hair. The Goddess of Spring. It's for Father. Is he going to die?

MARMEE

(Hugs her)

No, Amy, I'll see to it that he recovers. Go get the rest of your things.

(JO rushes in, her head covered, followed by BETH)

JO

Marmee, Marmee, I'm sorry I'm so late. I did get the money though -

MARMEE

Thank you, Jo. I know how difficult it is for you to ask Aunt March -

JO

I didn't ask her. I couldn't. So I walked to the town common and stood there all morning trying to sell my stories. And when that failed ... I sold my hair.

(SHE rips off the head covering, revealing a shorn head)

BETH

Jo!

MEG

Oh, my!

AMY

You're bald.

JO

I'm not bald.

AMY

But your hair was your best feature.

BETH

She looks beautiful.

JO

Now Marmee'll have money enough to get to Washington and stay with Father for as long as he needs her. Here: 27 dollars and 25 cents. I threw in a few coins I had stashed away.

MARMEE

You shouldn't have done this, Jo. I'm so -

JO

Disappointed?

MARMEE

Proud. It was a very courageous thing to do. Thank you, Jo.

(SHE embraces Jo)

LAURIE

(HE returns)

The carriage is ready, Mrs. March.

(HE stops)

Jo? You look - different.

MR. LAURENCE

(HE rushes in and out)

Mrs. March, we must hurry if we want to make it to the train!

LAURIE

(To Jo)

By summer I guarantee that every girl in Concord will be wearing her hair -

JO

(stopping him)

Laurie!

(HE smiles and goes)

MARMEE

Come, let me hold my girls.

(SHE embraces them.)

AMY

We've never been parted before. I feel awful-

MEG

(not wanting Marmee to worry)

Amy!

JO

I'll look after everything, Marmee. Don't worry.

AUNT MARCH

(SHE enters swiftly)

My dear Margaret, make certain your husband recovers.

MARMEE

Yes, Aunt March. Thank you for taking Amy. Amy, tell Aunt March how excited you are.

AMY

I'm so excited about living with you while Marmee's in Washington.

AUNT MARCH

Naturally.

MARMEE

(to the Girls)

No glum faces. And no tears. I'll be back as soon as possible. How did you all grow up so fast? Goodbye, Aunt March.

(SHE goes, followed by The GIRLS. AMY says)

AMY

And you'll tell Father how much I miss him- and love him.

AUNT MARCH

(bellows, shocked, sees JO's shorn hair for the first time)

Josephine, what have you done?!

JO

I sold my hair so Marmee could have a safe journey to Washington.

AUNT MARCH

(furious)

You did what? I've told you, if you need money, come to me!

LAURIE

It was my first kiss. I've thought about it a long time -

WE COULD LIVE A MILLION DREAMS,

BUT ONLY IF WE DARE.

WE COULD GO TO SUCH EXTREMES.

THERE'S SO MUCH WE COULD SHARE.

(HE comes at her again)

Jo/Laurie

JO

(Holding him off)

What's got into you?

LAURIE

Look here I took a part of my inheritance and I bought you this ring.

JO

A ring? What are you talking about?

LAURIE

I want to marry you.

JO

Marry me? Stop this, Laurie - it's not funny.

LAURIE

I practiced saying the words over and over: 'Marry me. Marry me-

JO

Have you gone mad?

LAURIE

...I love you, Jo. And I want you to be my wife.

JO

No. No. No, find someone else! Find - find some accomplished girl!

LAURIE

I don't want an accomplished girl. I want you!

JO

Well, you can't have me!

LAURIE

At least say you'll think about it.

JO

There's nothing to think about. I'll never marry.

LAURIE

You don't mean that?

JO

I do mean it!

LAURIE

You'll marry.

JO

I won't!

LAURIE

You will. Just not me. That's what you're really saying. You'll find someone -

JO

Go away! I thought you understood me.

LAURIE

You knew all along how I felt. Everybody knew!

JO

You knew all along who I am - what I want. I bared my soul to you, Laurie. Go away.

LAURIE

Jo!

JO

Please, just go!

(HE rushes off)

16 - Astonishing

WHO IS HE, WHO IS HE WITH HIS 'MARRY ME,'
WITH HIS RING AND HIS 'MARRY ME'?
THE NERVE, THE GALL.
THIS IS NOT, NOT WHAT WAS MEANT TO BE.
HOW COULD HE RUIN IT ALL WITH THOSE TWO WORDS?

I THOUGHT I KNEW HIM, THOUGHT THAT HE KNEW ME.
WHEN DID HE CHANGE, WHAT DID I MISS?
A KISS? WHEN I THOUGHT, ALL ALONG,
THAT WE WERE MEANT TO FORGE FRONTIERS.
HOW COULD I BE SO WRONG?

(JO)

I WILL NOT DISAPPEAR WITHOUT A TRACE.
I'LL SHOUT AND START A RIOT,
BE ANYTHING BUT QUIET.
CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS,
I'LL BE ASTONISHING,
ASTONISHING,
ASTONISHING
AT LAST.

(End of Act One)

Prof. Bhaer/Kirk

ACT TWO

SCENE 1

(THE PARLOR OF MRS. KIRK'S BOARDING HOUSE: June 1865.)

MRS. KIRK, a middle-aged Irish woman, rushes in)

#17 – Entr'acte

MRS. KIRK

(excited, calling)

Miss March! Has anyone seen Miss March?

(PROFESSOR BHAER enters with a stack of books he has just purchased)

Professor? Have you seen the whereabouts of Miss March?

PROFESSOR BHAER

No, Mrs. Kirk, I have not seen the whereabouts of Miss March.

MRS. KIRK

(shouts)

Helga! - do we have enough sheets for the new boarders? Since the war ended, Professor, people are coming from everywhere. Miss March!

PROFESSOR BHAER

What is it, Mrs. Kirk?

MRS. KIRK

Miss March received a telegram. A telegram, Professor! She may have inherited a great deal of money. She could be an heiress. Then again it could be a terrible tragedy. There is no telling, is there? As her good friend, I'd think you'd be concerned for her.

PROFESSOR BHAER

We are not good friends. We are simply acquaintances.

MRS. KIRK

I see. Helga!

PROFESSOR BHAER

You and others in this house are under the impression that Miss March and I have some sort of kinship. We have simply gone places together.

MRS. KIRK

The theater.

PROFESSOR BHAER

Yes. I took her to see *Hamlet*.

MRS. KIRK

A pathetic tale it is.

PROFESSOR BHAER

Very pathetic. And I have given her three German lessons.

MRS. KIRK

Three - that many?

PROFESSOR BHAER

And I've taken her to lectures, to the park to hear speakers, but Miss March hardly seems to know I exist. She is preoccupied. She rushes past me like the wind.

(JO rushes past him, excited, having just come in from outside)

JO

Christopher Columbus! Mrs. Kirk, have you seen the Professor?

MRS. KIRK

Behind you, darlin'.

JO

(turns and stops)

Aah! Guten teg.

PROFESSOR BHAER

Guten tag, Miss March. The word is Tag. Guten tag means 'good day.'

JO

I know what it means. But when you taught it to me, you said, Guten teg.

TROLL

I'LL TAKE YOU TO YOUR FATE.

If using a chorus, the Chorus of Trolls crosses the stage with the Troll and all exit together at SCORE #18, measure 133

(The TROLL takes CLARISSA across the rapids, as JO sings the following to PROFESSOR BHAER and MRS. KIRK)

JO

SOMETIMES WHEN YOU DREAM
YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE
IN EXTRAORDINARY WAYS.
SUDDENLY A DAY CAN BE SO AMAZING.
AND SOMETIMES WHEN YOU YEARN YOU BURN THE AIR
AND SOMEONE ELSE FEELS THE FLAME
YOU ALWAYS KNEW WAS THERE!

(CLARISSA has crossed the rapids and continued on her journey. An old and feeble KNIGHT appears.)

Story Characters

(Knight, Clarissa,
Braxton, Rodrigo 2, Jo)

KNIGHT

(calls)

Stop, please.

CLARISSA

I cannot stop.

KNIGHT

Can you not give a tired old knight some assistance?

CLARISSA

I have nothing left to give.

KNIGHT

Give me your time.

CLARISSA

My fate awaits me.

KNIGHT

Can you not care for me? It's been years since I felt the touch of another hand.

CLARISSA

(stops and looks at him)

Then take mine.

(SHE touches him)

And take my shawl. Ragged as it is.

(SHE wraps it around him)

KNIGHT

You have completed your journey. My sword is yours. It will protect you against your enemies. You can now return to the moors.

YOUR FATE IS IN YOUR HANDS.

JO

And Clarissa raced from the forest, raced to the moors, where she called: 'I have returned, Braxton! I will free the moors of your tyranny! Fight me!'

BRAXTON

(appearing)

I always knew you'd come back to me. They always do!

(CLARISSA and BRAXTON battle on the moors as JO illustrates the sword fight in the boarding house.)

JO

Clarissa thrusts. She parries. She backs up Braxton, pins him against the tree. She leaps up on a craggy rock, her sword swishing and swooshing. Never has she been so determined. She is on fire! Pity she hadn't taken dueling lessons. Out of nowhere—who should appear—the long forgotten Rodrigo.

(BRAXTON knocks the sword from her hand. RODRIGO 2 appears, seemingly out of nowhere, and grabs the sword out of thin air and puts the blade through BRAXTON's heart.)

RODRIGO 2

This is your end, villain! I've waited a lifetime to destroy you.

BRAXTON

(to Rodrigo)

Who ARE you?

RODRIGO 2

I am your worst nightmare, Braxton. I am — her sister!

(RODRIGO 2 rips the plumed hat from her head, revealing long curls that cascade down her shoulders and back. Everybody, including PROFESSOR BHAER and MRS. KIRK, gasps audibly. BRAXTON dies.)

JO

No, Marmee!

BETH

Stay.

Jo/Beth

MARMEE

I'll go write a letter to Father and tell him how beautiful the Cape is this time of year.
I love you.

(SHE goes)

JO

Oh, Beth, this is a dream come true. Come, out of the chair. Help me put this kite together.

(SHE helps her out of the stroller)

BETH

Tell me again about New York.

JO

It's a circus.

BETH

(laughs)

A circus?

JO

Clowns. Waltzing camels. Dancing horses. Sometimes you see them right out on the street. And museums. And theaters, Beth, everywhere.

BETH

And the women - are they shameless?

JO

Some of them anyway. It's an amazing place, Beth. I'm going to take you there.

BETH

(laughs)

To New York?

JO

And we'll dine in the best restaurants. And see Shakespeare. And ride the omnibus. And mingle with unsavory characters....

BETH

(interrupts)

Jo, I have something for you. Marmee says this shell is over a thousand years old. And I believe that once upon a time it had an amazing life. If you put it to your ear, it talks to you.

JO

What does it say?

BETH

It says, 'We grow up too fast,' You're a woman of the world now. I'm so proud of you, Jo.

#21 - Some Things Are Meant To Be

JO

When you were first born, not an hour old, I told Marmee -

BETH

'Beth is mine!'

JO

Everyone has someone special in the world, and I have you. My sweet Beth, give me a task to do!

BETH

LET'S PRETEND
WE'RE RIDING ON A KITE.
LET'S IMAGINE
WE'RE FLYING THROUGH THE AIR.

JO

(SHE sends the kite into the air)

WE'LL ASCEND
UNTIL WE'RE OUT OF SIGHT.
LIGHT AS PAPER, WE'LL SOAR.

BETH

LET'S BE WILD, UP HIGH ABOVE THE SAND.
FEEL THE WIND, THE WORLD AT OUR COMMAND.
LET'S ENJOY THE VIEW AND NEVER LAND.

JO

FLOATING FAR FROM THE SHORE.

BETH

SOME THINGS ARE MEANT TO BE:
THE CLOUDS MOVING FAST AND FREE.

JO

THE SUN ON A SILVER SEA.

BETH

Can I tell you a secret?

JO

Anything.

BETH

I never made plans about what I would do when I grew up. And I'm not afraid to die. The hardest part, Jo, is leaving you.

JO

I won't let it happen. You'll get better. You will.

BETH

SOME THINGS ARE MEANT TO BE.
THE TIDE TURNING ENDLESSLY,
THE WAY IT TAKES HOLD OF ME
NO MATTER WHAT I DO.
BUT SOME THINGS WILL NEVER DIE:
THE PROMISE OF WHO YOU ARE,
YOUR MEMORIES WHEN I AM FAR FROM YOU.

ALL MY LIFE I'VE LIVED FOR LOVING YOU.
LET ME GO NOW ...

(SHE lets go of the kite string)

Amy/Aunt March
Meg/Marmee/Jo

SCENE 4

(THE MARCH PARLOR: #8. Winter 1865.

AMY returns from Europe with AUNT MARCH. SHE rushes in excited, holding an armful of things. SHE looks different, having left Concord a child and returned a young woman)

AMY

Everybody? I'm home!

AUNT MARCH

Look at this house!

AMY

Marmee! Jo!

AUNT MARCH

We left it in shambles - and it's still in shambles.

AMY

Meg!

(AMY)

(SHE puts down the things she is holding, removes her bonnet)

Did you see the look I gave the coachman, Aunt March? His impertinence! He caught every bump in the road.

AUNT MARCH

One should always be civil to a coachman. You must respect those who have the reins - until you wrench the reins from them.

AMY

Yes, Aunt March.

(SHE shouts)

Jo! Marmee!

AUNT MARCH

And remember, Amy, you're a lady now.

AMY

Yes.... I'm a lady.

(SHE shouts in a ladylike way)

Meg! ... When did this house get so small?

AUNT MARCH

As we grow grand, Amy, the world around us often diminishes in size. I have known people who have almost disappeared before my very eyes.

AMY

(Running to Aunt March, embraces her, almost in tears)

You're such a dear, Aunt March! Thank you for everything.

AUNT MARCH

(Breaking from her)

I'll go see to that wretched coachman.

AMY

Remember, Aunt March, respect those who have the reins.

AUNT MARCH

Very good.

(SHE goes)

MEG

(Surprised. Entering)

Amy?!!

AMY

(Rushing to her)

Meg! Meg! Meg! It's really you?

MEG

(calls)

Marmee!

MEG

Let me look at you. You're so beautiful.

AMY

Let me look at you.

AMY

You're a mother now. Twins. I can't believe it.

MEG

Neither can I.

AMY

Marmee! Marmee! Marmee!

(AMY rushes to Marmee, who has entered)

MARMEE

Amy? My baby is home!

MEG

Look at her, Marmee!

MARMEE

(Stepping back)

You're all grown up.

AMY

(full of emotion)

I am, Marmee. I really am. I feel older. I'm sophisticated. You can't imagine all the experiences I had. And wherever I was, I'd think if only Meg were here, if only Jo, if only Beth-

(SHE holds back tears)

MARMEE

(consoling)

Amy -

AMY

I was so sorry I wasn't here to say goodbye to her. I cried for weeks. I couldn't stop. Aunt March said I was being unreasonable. But my heart was breaking not to be here with her

JO

(Having entered)

Beth understood.

AMY

(overwhelmed with emotion)

Jo! Jo! Jo!

(SHE rushes to embrace her)

JO

She said tell Amy not to fret.

AMY

Did she really say that?

JO

She was so brave - to the very end. You'd have been proud of her.

AMY

I'd bought her this metronome. The man said there wasn't another one like it....

(SHE pulls herself together)

Where did we get that magnificent piano?

JO

Mr. Laurence gave it to Beth.

AMY

He's a dear, isn't he? It's so good to be home. In our dear house.

(Taking up some of her things)

MARMEE

Come, Amy. Show us what you brought back.

AMY

It's a king's ransom. I have so many things to tell you all. I ate frogs, actual frogs. And how is John? Is he still romantic?

MEG

More so.

AMY

I knew it! Men are so amazing.

(THEY go but JO. LAURIE comes on carrying several pieces of luggage)

LAURIE

Jo/Laurie

(calls)

It's almost everything!

JO

Laurie?

(HE stops, seeing Jo)

I hadn't realized you were coming back too.

LAURIE

Yes. We all sailed on the same ship.

(HE puts down the luggage)

JO

You look different.

LAURIE

Do I? I'm taller. An inch or so.

JO

It was so good of you to comfort Amy and Aunt March after our loss of Beth.

LAURIE

When I heard the news I was devastated. I didn't come to see you when I was in New York. I wanted to. I thought of it -

JO

I don't blame you, Laurie. I was horrible to you. I was so unfeeling.

LAURIE

You said what you felt.

JO

No.... Guess what? I sold a story.

LAURIE

I knew you would! I always had that sort of faith in you, Jo.

JO

I know you did.

LAURIE

You look different too, you know. Very distinguished.

JO

(laughs)

Really? ... I've missed you.

LAURIE

I've missed you too. You know, I've learned something about myself.

JO

What's that?

LAURIE

I was never meant 'to fly on golden wings.'

JO

Who is?

LAURIE

You. You, Jo. You were meant to soar. Me? - I was meant for more mundane things. I've decided to go into grandfather's business. I know it's the last thing in the world I would have thought for myself. But the truth is, I'm sort of fascinated with the prospects. I shall be wily and shrewd...

AMY

(SHE comes back)

Laurie, there you are -

(SHE stops seeing the two of them)

LAURIE

Amy, did you tell Jo?

JO

Tell me what?

#22 - The Most Amazing Thing

AMY

THE MOST AMAZING THING...

LAURIE

REALLY QUITE A THING...

AMY

You tell her.

LAURIE

No, you tell her.

AMY

All right, I'll tell her.

AMY

(Continued)

WE WERE UNDER THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS -

LAURIE

IN A GONDOLA.

AMY

Yes, you can. We'll be close, Jo. That will never change.

JO

Never.

(AMY starts out)

Amy, thank you. Your drawings are beautiful.

Jo/Marmee

#22a – To The Attic

(AMY turns back, smiles and goes. JO looks at all the things, at the piano, and the baby things Meg has left about, and the drawings.)

SHE goes up to THE ATTIC: #6. SHE has not been there for months. Everything is covered with sheets or blankets. SHE starts to break down, catches herself.

MARMEE enters. SHE looks at Jo)

MARMEE

It's been awhile since you've been up here.

JO

I know.

MARMEE

The room needs an airing. And a dusting.

JO

I'll get to it.

MARMEE

The attic used to be such a sanctuary for you. Whenever you were sad or disappointed, you'd run up here, bolt the door, and come back hours later so full of life. I haven't seen that Jo in a long time.

JO

... I can't write. I can't do anything really. You're right, in the past I could always come up with something. I was always so good at that. Beth would say, 'Jo can make the clouds disappear.'

(SHE cries out)

I want Beth back!

(SHE struggles - manages to collect herself)

I never should have broken the promise. I never should have gone to New York. If I'd stayed here -

MARMEE

Jo -

JO

- everything would have been different.

MARMEE

Jo, stop it! No one could have done more for Beth than you did. You could not have changed what happened.

JO

How do you manage? How do you go on day-in, day-out, as if nothing has happened?

MARMEE

You think that's how I go on?

JO

You're strong and wise. How can I be like you? How can I find your strength?

#23 - Days Of Plenty

MARMEE

Don't make so much of me, Jo.

I NEVER DREAMED OF THIS SORROW.

I NEVER THOUGHT I'D HAVE REASON TO LAMENT.

I HOPED I'D NEVER KNOW HEARTBREAK.

HOW I WISH I COULD CHANGE THE WAY THINGS WENT.

I WANTED NOTHING BUT GOODNESS.

I WANTED REASON TO PREVAIL.

NOT THIS BARE EMPTINESS.

I WANTED DAYS OF PLENTY.

BUT I REFUSE TO FEEL TRAGIC.

I AM ACHING FOR MORE THAN PAIN AND GRIEF.

THERE HAS GOT TO BE MEANING.

MOST OF ALL WHEN A LIFE HAS BEEN SO BRIEF.

I HAVE GOT TO LEARN SOMETHING.

HOW CAN I GIVE HER ANY LESS?

I WANT LIFE TO GO ON.

I WANT DAYS OF PLENTY.

YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE THERE IS REASON FOR HOPE.

YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE THAT THE ANSWERS WILL COME.

YOU CAN'T LET THIS DEFEAT YOU.

PROFESSOR BHAER

(coming right in)

It touched me deeply, Miss March. I saw you on every page. I heard your voice. I felt your spirit. It was magnificent!

(MEG rushes in)

MEG

Jo, Amy is driving me insane. Now she's talking about changing her veil.

(SHE sees Professor Bhaer)

Oh, excuse me.

JO

Jo/Prof. Bhaer

This is my sister Meg. This is Professor Bhaer.

PROFESSOR BHAER

Aah, yes, I recognize you now from your sister's book.

MEG

(with a smile)

So you're the one she's let read it.

JO

It be right there.

(MEG goes)

PROFESSOR BHAER

I have come at a bad time.

JO

No, it's just a wedding.

PROFESSOR BHAER

A wedding?

JO

(coming right in)

I often think about you, Professor. I wonder how you were doing.

PROFESSOR BHAER

I bought a kite.

JO

You bought a kite?

PROFESSOR BHAER

Soon after you left. I bought a kite and took it to the park. I never had a kite. You know you were right to think I was old. I was old.

JO

No, I -

PROFESSOR BHAER

I was. But since we meet - everything is different. Everybody noticed. My students even. They say, 'Professor Bhaer, you are smiling today.' Miss March -

JO

Jo.

PROFESSOR BHAER

Jo. We are not at all alike.

#25 - *Small Umbrella In The Rain*

We have our differences. May I be blunt?

JO

Be blunt. By all means.

PROFESSOR BHAER*(Fumbling with the umbrella)*

I THINK, PERHAPS, IT LOOKS LIKE RAIN.

JO

THE SKY GETS BLUER BY THE HOUR.

PROFESSOR BHAER

THE WATER FALLS IN LITTLE DROPS.

JO

THAT'S WHY IT'S CALLED A SUN SHOWER.

PROFESSOR BHAER

AH, AND NOW IT STOPS.

(HE fidgets more)

JO

You were about to be blunt?

PROFESSOR BHAER

IF I SAY RAIN, THEN YOU SAY SUN.

IF I SAY YES, THEN YOU SAY NO.

IT SEEMS BEFORE WE START, WE'RE DONE.

WE EVEN ARGUE AT "HELLO"

IF I SAY, SHARE WITH ME THIS SMALL UMBRELLA.